



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT OBSERVES MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

Deputy Attorney General Honors State Task Forces, Law Enforcement Officers, Private Citizen for Recovery of Missing Children and Investigations of Sexual Predators, Child Pornography; Annual Poster Contest Winner Announced

WASHINGTON – Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein today recognized two law enforcement officers, two state-level task forces, and a private citizen for their efforts to recover missing and abducted children and investigate cases of sexual exploitation of children and child pornography.

The awards, coordinated by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the Office of Justice Programs, were presented during a formal ceremony at the Robert F. Kennedy Department of Justice Building.

“The people we recognize today remind us of our responsibility to protect all children from harm,” said Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein. “Their actions epitomize the values of courage, selflessness, and determination. The Department of Justice is proud to honor their inspirational achievements, and I am proud to stand with them.”

The ceremony included recognition of a student artist who best conveyed the theme “Bringing Our Missing Children Home.” Audrey Link, a fifth grader at Resurrection Catholic School in Lakeland, Fla., is this year’s national poster contest winner.

In addition to Link’s recognition, Rosenstein presented the following awards:

Attorney General’s Special Commendation: This commendation recognizes the extraordinary efforts of an Internet Crimes Against Children task force or affiliate agency for making significant investigative or program contributions. **Recipients:** The Alabama and Georgia Internet Crimes Against Children task forces launched a coordinated investigation into individuals suspected of possessing and distributing child pornography. The investigation spanned more than 70 law enforcement agencies across two states and resulted in 54 search warrants, 29 arrests and the seizure of 731 digital devices as evidence.

Missing Children’s Law Enforcement Award: This award recognizes the extraordinary efforts of a law enforcement officer who made a significant investigative or program contribution to the safety of children. **Recipient:** Special Agent Kathryn Gamble of the U.S. Department of

Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations, Nogales, Ariz., initiated a global investigation targeting those who use the online chat service Kik to sexually exploit minors. Her efforts led to the execution of nearly 60 search and arrest warrants, identification of 30 child victims, the rescue of 22 child victims from ongoing sexual abuse, and the prosecution of five individuals to date.

Missing Children's Child Protection Award: This award honors the extraordinary efforts of a law enforcement officer who made a significant investigative or program contribution to protect children from abuse or victimization. **Recipient:** Forensic Detective Eric Kjorness of the Idaho Internet Crimes Against Children task force, Moscow, Idaho, assisted in the investigation of 15 cases of possession or distribution of child pornography in 2016. Those 15 cases resulted in the examination of 40 electronic devices and the recovery of more than one million child pornography images and videos. Detective Kjorness also provides presentations to public schools, PTA groups, and civic groups to educate children, parents, and educators about child enticement via the Internet and online chat rooms.

Missing Children's Citizen Award: This award honors the extraordinary effort of private citizens for their unselfish acts to safely recover missing or abducted children. **Recipient:** Springfield, Mo., bus driver T.J. Davis's actions led to the recovery of a 13-year-old girl with autism who was reported missing in December 2016. While driving his route, Davis noticed a girl fitting the police description sitting in the lap of a man in a wheelchair. The man approached Davis's bus, told him the girl needed help and left her with Davis, he then proceeded down the sidewalk. Recognizing him as a regular bus rider, Davis contacted his dispatcher and later described the man to authorities. Police arrested and charged the man with first-degree child kidnapping and enticement of a child.

President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25, 1983, the first National Missing Children's Day in memory of Etan Patz, a six-year-old boy who disappeared from a New York City street corner on May 25, 1979. Missing Children's Day honors his memory and the memories of children still missing. Although Patz' killer was convicted this February for the 1979 murder, Etan Patz remains missing and his case active with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children because his remains were never found.

Additional information is available online about [National Missing Children's Day](#).

The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Alan R. Hanson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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