



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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Justice Department Honors Law Enforcement Officers, School Administrator in Missing Children's Day Ceremony

WASHINGTON – Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch presided over the Justice Department's Missing Children's Day ceremony on Wednesday, May 20, 2015, at 2 p.m. The event honored three law enforcement officers and an assistant principal for their efforts to recover missing children, rescue children from abuse and prosecute sexual predators.

"This Department of Justice will never pause; will never rest; and will never cease in our effort to protect this country's young people," said Attorney General Lynch. "We will do everything we can to find children who have gone missing, to reunite them with their loved ones, and to stand beside them and their families as they do the hard work necessary to recover their lives and restore their futures. And we will continue to expand and advance this work together."

Speakers included Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs Karol V. Mason, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Administrator Robert L. Listenbee, and abduction survivor and child advocate Carlina White, as well as Patty Wetterling, Board Chair of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, and Judge William Campbell from the United States Postal Service. More than 250 people attended the annual ceremony, including families of missing children, law enforcement officers, advocates, and others who support programs to recover missing and exploited children.

During the ceremony, the department recognized efforts to protect children and presented the following awards:

The **Attorney General's Special Commendation** recognizes an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force or affiliate agency for significant investigative contributions. **Recipient:** Special Agent William Thompson, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, for identifying 28 child victims in 10 states who were manipulated into sharing sexually explicit images of themselves.

The **Missing Children's Law Enforcement Award** recognizes a law enforcement officer who made a significant investigative contribution to the safety of children. **Recipient:** Cpl. Christopher Heid, Child Recovery Unit, Maryland State Police, for investigating 109 missing children cases and recovering 99 children, as well as participating in 227 human trafficking investigations, and developing an anti-trafficking training program that has educated more than 550 law enforcement officers and victim advocates.

The **OJJDP Administrator Missing Children's Citizen Award** honors private citizens for their unselfish acts to safely recover missing or abducted children. **Recipient:** Assistant Principal Jenee' Littrell, Chaparral High School, El Cajon, California, for supporting an investigation by local law enforcement and the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security that led to the arrest of 22 people who had recruited nearly 100 middle and high school girls for a gang-related prostitution ring.

The **Missing Children's Child Protection Award** honors a law enforcement officer who made a significant investigative contribution to protect children from abuse or victimization. **Recipient:** Special Agent Paul Wolpert, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, for uncovering the videotaped sexual abuse of children between one and five years old. His investigation led five women to plead guilty to producing child pornography, and to the conviction and life sentence of one man on 31 counts, including producing child pornography.

Since 2000, OJJDP has also hosted a national poster contest for fifth-graders to raise greater awareness about missing children. This year Sydney Kekel from City School in Grand Blanc, Michigan, received the Missing Children's Day Art Contest Award.

Affirming its long-standing commitment to help find missing children, the U.S. Postal Service® issued a new stamp on May 18, 2015. Designed by Ethel Kessler, the new Forever® stamp features a photograph by Harald Biebel showing a small bunch of purple forget-me-nots with a lone flower against a white background. The forget-me-not is the symbol for International Missing Children's Day, which occurs on the same day as National Missing Children's Day, May 25.

President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25, 1983, the first National Missing Children's Day to remember 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.

About the Office of Justice Programs (OJP)

OJP, headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six components: 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. More information about OJP can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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