



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, May 25, 2016

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### ATTORNEY GENERAL LYNCH RECOGNIZES LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PRIVATE CITIZEN AT JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY CEREMONY

WASHINGTON—Commemorating National Missing Children's Day today, Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch recognized four law enforcement officers, a private citizen, and an Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force for their tireless efforts to recover missing and abducted children and prosecute sexual predators.

“The extraordinary people we honor today remind us that our nation has no more solemn obligation and no greater responsibility than the protection of our children,” said Attorney General Lynch. “The Department of Justice is proud to stand with them—and with law enforcement officers, advocates and families throughout the country—as we work toward a safer and brighter future for all our young people.”

Other speakers included Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Beth McGarry; John Clark, President and Chief Executive Officer for National Center for Missing & Exploited Children; Retired Arlington Police Department Sergeant Mark Simpson from Arlington, Texas; Sayeh Rivazfar, a survivor of sexual assault and abuse and an advocate; and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Administrator Robert L. Listenbee.

During the ceremony, the following awards were presented:

**Attorney General's Special Commendation:** Recognizes the extraordinary efforts of an Internet Crimes Against Children task force or affiliate agency for making significant investigative or program contributions. **Recipient:** The Arizona Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, Phoenix Police Department, Phoenix, Ariz., received the commendation for arresting a woman who was abusing and sexually exploiting two young boys in her care, recording the abuse on her cell phone, and sharing the videos with others. Based on forensic evidence uncovered on the woman's cell phone, the task force developed and pursued leads to others who received and shared the videotaped abuse. To date, the investigation is still open and has resulted in the arrest of more than 25 suspects across the United States and Europe.

**Missing Children's Law Enforcement Award:** Recognizes the extraordinary efforts of a law enforcement officer who made a significant investigative or program contribution to the safety of children. **Recipient:** Detective Jose DelFierro of the Irving Police Department, Irving, Texas, whose investigative work led to the recovery of several girls ranging in age from 11 to 14 who

ran away from a mental health facility and were sexually exploited through prostitution by several young men.

**OJJDP Administrator Missing Children's Citizen Award:** Honors the extraordinary efforts of private citizens for their unselfish acts to safely recover missing or abducted children.

**Recipient:** Walter "Tim" Watson, a bus driver for Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Fremont, Calif., for his efforts to help law enforcement identify a man aboard his bus who had kidnaped a small boy, apprehend the kidnapper and return the boy to his family.

**Missing Children's Child Protection 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. **Recipients:** Special Investigations Program Director Ray Romo and Special Investigators Owen Hinkle and James Backfisch, Department of Family and Protective Services, San Antonio, Texas, were presented the award for their development of a runaway recovery protocol program that is used throughout Texas and for their work with law enforcement in Texas to recover runaway foster children.

Michael Wu, a fifth grader from Walnut Elementary School, Walnut, Calif., was also recognized as the 17<sup>th</sup> winner of the Annual National Missing Children's Day Art Contest.

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.

The Office of Justice Programs (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. For more information about OJP, please visit: [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).