

**AMECO Holds Annual Training Conference**

The Association of Missing and Exploited Children's Organizations (AMECO), an organization of member agencies in the United States and Canada who provide services to families with missing and exploited children, will hold its annual training conference for member agencies in Indianapolis May 3-5.

The goal of the training conference is to share best practices among member agencies and to ensure that each agency is aware of all

that is happening in the rapidly changing field of missing and exploited children. Gabriel's Gifts' CEO, Beth Alberts, serves as the Secretary of the Board of AMECO and will be participating in a training session on Amber Plan and nonprofit organization partnerships.



**Texas Amber Alert Coordinators Conference**



The Governor's Division of Emergency Management is once again convening Texas Amber Alert Coordinators on May 11 in Austin so that they can share best practices and actively help improve the overall Amber Alert effort. Gabriel's Gifts' CEO, Beth Alberts, will give the Coordinators an overview of the national efforts to develop regional CART teams.

**Gabriel's Gifts:**

- **provides** public awareness about missing children, missing child prevention and education programs and training for volunteers and law enforcement agencies;
- **administers** the Houston Regional Amber Plan, a 13-county child abduction alert that goes out to all law enforcement and media outlets as well as to the public and business partners;
- **coordinates** the Southeast Texas Search and Rescue Alliance — a consortium of 8 volunteer search and rescue organizations working together to provide training, education, and search support.

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 All donations are tax deductible.

# update

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**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Champagne Brunch to Honor the Houston Police Department's Missing Person Division**



Gabriel's Gifts' Champagne Brunch and Silent Auction is fast approaching. Plan to join us on Sunday, April 30, 2006 from 12 noon – 3:00 p.m. at Crapitto's Italian Cucina at 2400 Mid Lane.

Tickets are \$250 for Archangel Sponsor level and \$100 for Gabriel's Angels individual level.

Auction items include: \$500 in airfare and a week-long stay in a condo in beautiful Sedona, Arizona; hunting and fishing trips; golf outings; spa, hotel, theater and restaurant gift certificates and much more!

Contact Melissa Hulin at (713) 314-3673 or [mbulin@gabrielsgifts.org](mailto:mbulin@gabrielsgifts.org) to learn more!

**Internet Predators**

On February 3, 2006, NBC's Dateline aired "To Catch a Predator III," its third installment of videotaping adult men that showed up at a house expecting to have sex with a 12- or 13-year-old girl or boy. All had reached their intended victim on MySpace.com. The house was in Southern California, but it could easily have been in any of our communities.



Between Friday evening that week and Sunday afternoon, 50 men were arrested. Who are these men? A high school teacher, a rabbi, an actor and oh, wait, *two registered sex offenders*—a 68-year-old and a 42-year-old, both of whom have a history of preying on children! One of the 42-year-old's victims watched as he approached the house on television. He molested her for several years starting when she was 8 years old. He was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison but is out walking the streets, and trolling the internet seeking new victims.

Many of the blogs blame parents for not supervising their children and monitoring their online activities, but how are parents supposed to do this 24-7?

Kids can get online at the library, at an Internet Café, or at a friend's house. Surely, parents must do all they can, but what about the hosts of sites like MySpace.com and the internet service providers? Do they have no responsibility or accountability?

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They line their pockets with money while defending their sites in the name of a “free press.” Purveyors of alcohol and cigarettes must place warnings on their products, provide prevention and education programs, and defend themselves against litigation. Perhaps that is the route for those profiteers who enable predators frequent and ready access to our children.

Also, internet predators must be charged as severely, and prosecuted as aggressively, as the old snatch-and-grab guys. The series of Dateline episodes reveals that these predators are just as menacing. Many of the men who showed up at the house had children of their own and had seen the previous Dateline episodes on Internet predators!

If we do not take drastic measures **now** to educate parents and children and hold Internet Service Providers and child predators responsible for their actions, we will see this crime grow exponentially each year for many years to come.

### Chatroom Lingo Every Parent Should Know

121 one to one	MOTOS member of the opposite sex
AFK away from keyboard	MUSM miss you so much
A/S/L? age, sex, location	NIFOC naked in front of computer
BEG big evil grin	NP nosy parents
BF boyfriend	OL old lady
CNP continued (in my) next post	OLL online love
CP chat post	OM old man
CYO see you online	P911 my parents are coming!
DIKU do I know you?	PA parent alert
EG evil grin	PAL parents are listening
F2F face to face	PANB parents are nearby
GF girlfriend	PM private message
GFN gone for now	POS parent over shoulder
GTSY glad to see you	RL real life
H&K hug and kiss	RPG role playing games
IANAL I am not a lawyer (but)	RSN real soon now
ILU I love you	SO significant other
IPN I'm posting naked	STW search the web
IRL in real life	TAW teachers are watching
IWALU I will always love you	TCOB taking care of business
KOC kiss on cheek	TOY thinking of you
KOL kiss on lips	TPTB the powers that be
LDR long distance relationship	WIBNI wouldn't it be nice if
<b>LMIRL let's meet in real life</b>	WTGP want to go private?
LTR long term relationship	WUF where are you from?
LUWAMH love you with all my heart	YBS you'll be sorry
LY love you	YL young lady
MOSS member of same sex	YM young man

- Beth Alberts, CEO, Gabriel's Gifts Missing Children's Organization

### Child Abduction Response Team Training

“One of the greatest challenges law enforcement faces is responding to the report of a missing child. But the activation of available officers, coordination across multiple jurisdictions and securing the necessary expertise can often eclipse the assets of any one department,” said Joe Estey, Chief of the White River Junction, Vt., Police Department.

**First Texas Child Abduction Response Team (CART) Attends Training** in Louisville, Kentucky – Nine Texans attended CART Training February 27 - March 3. The members, whose participation was solicited and coordinated by Gabriel's Gifts and the Houston Regional Amber Plan, attended the in-depth 5-day training provided by Fox Valley Technical College and walked away with an action plan and a lot of questions!

Members from Texas included: Houston Police Department's Lt. Mike Waterwall, Sgt. Stu Harris and Officers Danny Do and Jennifer Coffelt; Harris County Sheriff's Office's Detective JD Gideon; Southeast Texas Search and Rescue Alliance's Mary Jane Boyd; Gabriel's Gifts' CEO and Houston Amber Plan Director, Beth Alberts; as well as Austin Police Department's Lt. Pete Morin and Sgt. Jessica Robledo.

### 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Amber Hagerman's Abduction and Homicide



January 10, 2006, marked the tenth anniversary of Amber Hagerman's disappearance. While the perpetrator of this heinous crime remains unknown, Amber's legacy is a nationwide system dedicated to finding abducted children quickly and reuniting them with their families.

Since the first Amber Alert went out in the Dallas/Fort Worth area in 1997, 256 children have been

recovered through the highly-effective public/private partnership of law enforcement, media and local communities across the country.

There are Statewide Amber Alert programs in every State and more than fifty regional and local plans. Houston's Regional Amber Plan is nationally recognized and is the model for the national system.

### 2005 Program Service Report and History

Year	Child ID Kits	Numbers Served		Total People
		Children	Adults	
2002	2,969	3,691	2,339	6,030
2003	6,619	5,852	5,031	10,883
2004	10,707	6,022	6,529	12,551
2005	12,667	11,517	6,905	18,422
<b># increase '04 to '05</b>	1,960	5,495	376	5,871
<b>% increase '04 to '05</b>	18%	91%	6%	47%

### Special Thanks to Our Supporters!

Recently, several corporate and private foundations have made generous contributions to Gabriel's Gifts Missing Children's Organization:

- The Vivian L. Smith Foundation provided a \$10,000 Grant for the Texas Center for the Missing.
- The Combined Federal Campaign (made up of employees of Federal Government Agencies) almost tripled their pledges to Gabriel's

Gifts: from \$3,500 in 2005 to \$10,700 in 2006!

- The UPS Foundation generously donated a \$1,000 Grant.
- The United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast provided a \$3,142 grant for the S.A.F.E. Child Puppet Show. The program, a twenty-minute puppet show for elementary school children, is designed to teach children ways to stay safe in an entertaining, effective way.

We are currently seeking sponsors for:

- **Internet Safety Programs** for Parents, Children and Teens.
- **Child ID Kits:** these important tools are provided to families, many of whom can not afford to pay for them, along with safety education programs.
- **Missing Child Kits:** Response Kits for Law Enforcement Agencies including resources needed for fast response, recovery and reunification.