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We offer help, and hope, to the missing and their families.

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Texas Center for the Missing Activities

Southeast Texas Child Abduction Response Team Regional Trainings

Southeast Texas Child Abduction Response Team and Texas

Center for the Missing are sponsoring three training sessions this fall.

Case Management: Missing and Abducted Children is a one-day, two-part training designed for first responders and investigators. Topics covered include the critical first steps in a missing child incident and



how to conduct a thorough investigation.

The October and November trainings held at Pasadena Police Academy and Fort Bend ISD Police Department, respectively, provided training to 62 law enforcement officers from 23 different area agencies.

The upcoming December 12th training, hosted by Shenandoah Police Department, still has room for more participants. Contact Beth Alberts at 713.314.3644 or via email at balberts@tcftm.org.

Special thanks to our host agencies. We appreciate your support!

Association of Missing and Exploited Children's Organizations (AMECO)* Conference



The Annual AMECO Membership Meeting was held in St. Louis in October.

New Board Members and officers were elected. TCM CEO, Beth Alberts was elected the 2007-08 President. Members present also drafted a new mission statement and an ambitious 2008-2010 strategic plan.

**AMECO consists of 38 North American Missing Children's Organizations.*

Texas Center for the Missing is:

- **A Gathering Place** where those delivering services to the families of the missing find peers, share knowledge, and form collaborations.
- **An Incubator** of new training, technology, methods, organizations, programs, and projects.
- **A Rainmaker** mobilizing new resources to expand the capacity of organizations to find missing persons and support their families.
- **A Think Tank** scanning the horizon for new advancements, analyzing their potential applications, and communicating these to community partners and the public at large.

Donor Form

All donations are tax deductible.

Name _____ Company (if applicable) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Please accept my gift of \$ _____ This donation is in honor / memory of _____

Make check payable to Texas Center for the Missing

MasterCard VISA Discover

Card No. _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ Amount \$ _____

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update

A Publication of Texas Center for the Missing (formerly known as Gabriel's Gifts)/Fall 2007

Mobile Search and Education Lab Unveiling Events

Three ribbon-cutting ceremonies were held in September to kick-off the launch of the Mobile Search and Education Lab made possible by the 2007 Humana Houston Benefits philanthropic awards program.



Beth Alberts, Texas Center for the Missing and Pattie Dale Tye, Humana

Texas Center for the Missing began a whirlwind tour at Rice University (hosted by Rice University Police Department) on September 18th, where Humana President-Houston, Pattie Dale Tye welcomed attendees. Mrs. Tye and Texas Center for the Missing CEO, Beth Alberts, cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony.

A parent whose child was abducted via an Internet lure

spoke poignantly about her family's experience, highlighting her gratitude for Texas Center for the Missing's assistance to her family during the incident and after her daughter's recovery.

Additionally, Members of Los Carnales Motorcycle Club were on hand to present a \$4,700 check raised for the Southeast Texas Child Abduction

Response Team sponsored by Texas Center for the Missing.

Representatives of many law enforcement agencies and the Harris County District Attorney's Office attended.

The launch proceeded to the Galveston County Justice Center on September 19th and then the tour wrapped up at the Shenandoah Police Department on September 20th.

Special thanks to all of our host agencies, and especially to:

Humana Houston Benefits

who made these celebrations possible!

3rd Annual Charity Golf Tournament Presented by American Business Machines Sets New Fundraising Record!

Texas Center for the Missing's Third Annual Charity Golf Tournament was held October 9th at Wildcat Golf Club. With the generous title sponsorship provided by American Business Machines (ABM) and the underwriting sponsorship from Reliant Park secured by Event Chairman Justin White, the event raised over \$40,000.

Coincidentally, American Business Machines won the tournament for the second year in a row! The 2nd place team was sponsored by Rajin' Cajun,

and the 3rd Place team was sponsored by DRDA.

Mark your calendars now for the 2008 tournament to be held on October 7th at Wildcat Golf Club!

Contact Melissa at 713.314.3673 or mhulin@tcftm.org to reserve a foursome or for questions regarding 2008 sponsorship opportunities.



ABM 1st Place team members from left to right: Kelley Chisholm, Ron Goodwine, Jason Williams, and Mark Donnelly

Staff

Beth Alberts
Chief Executive Officer

Melissa Hulin
Associate Director

Formerly known as Gabriel's Gifts, Texas Center for the Missing is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering help, and hope, to the missing and their families.



Houston Regional
Amber Alert

Holiday Safety Tips*

The holidays are a fun time of year for most children, with the anticipation of getting gifts, seeing family and being out of school. It is also an important time of year to be mindful of your children's safety.

Holiday decorations, traveling, new toys, and visiting homes that may not be childproofed, can put your children in danger. Some simple precautions can help to make sure your children have a fun and safe holiday.

Childproofing for the Holidays

Most parents understand the importance of childproofing their homes. Gates on stairs, using smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and keeping medicines and poisons out of reach are fairly standard in many homes. In addition to the risks of holiday decorations, younger children can get into trouble if they visit a home during the holidays (or any time of year) that is not childproofed.

It is especially likely that a home is not childproofed if you are visiting grandma and grandpa and they do not usually have children in the house. In addition to not having safety locks on cabinets, gates on stairs, covers on electrical outlets, etc., they may also have prescription medications that aren't in a child resistant container. Things to be especially watchful for, and which you may want to ask about, include:

- Do they have a pool? Does it have a fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate? Can the children get to the area where the pool is located?
- Are there guns in the house? Are they stored unloaded in a locked box with the bullets locked separately?
- Are there small objects, such as hard candy or nuts in candy dishes, where

younger children can get them?

- Are there gates on the stairs?
- Are medications, poisons, and household cleaners out of reach?
- Do they have a pet that may harm the children, such as a Rottweiler, pit bull, or German shepard?
- If your child has food allergies, will they be serving that food?

You may think that you will just watch your child more closely, even if the house isn't childproofed, but this is hard if there are a lot of family members and friends present and the kids are all playing together. If there are going to be a lot of younger children present at a holiday gathering, you might consider volunteering to go over beforehand and childproof the house for them.

Toy Safety

The following tips will help consumers choose appropriate toys:

- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills, and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards to younger children.
- For infants, toddlers, and all children who still mouth objects, avoid toys with small parts which could pose a fatal choking hazard.
- Look for sturdy construction, such as tightly secured eyes, noses, and other potentially hazardous small parts.
- For all children under age 8, avoid toys that have sharp edges and points.
- Do not purchase electric toys with heating elements for children under age 8.
- Be a label reader. Look for labels that give age recommendations and use that information as a guide.
- Check instructions for clarity. They

should be clear to you, and when appropriate, to the child.

- Immediately discard plastic wrappings on toys, which can cause suffocation, before they become deadly playthings.
- If your child is going to be getting something that he can ride, such as a bicycle, inline skates, scooter, or a skateboard, be sure that he also gets the appropriate protective equipment, including a helmet and pads.
- Discourage your kids from playing with BB and pellet guns.

Before You Shop

The crowds in malls and large shopping complexes can pose their own threats to your child. Be prepared before you head out for crowded shopping centers to avoid separation from your child:

- Have a completed child identification kit with you, including a recent photo, height, and weight.
- If your cell phone has a camera, take a photo of your child **THAT DAY** so you will be able to describe what your child is wearing.
- Talk to your child about what to do if you get separated in a crowded place
 - Pick a safe location to meet if you are separated.
 - Review your family code word in case an adult approaches your child and offers to return them to you.
 - Your child should find a uniformed security officer or retail employee with a name tag to ask for help.
 - Remember: **S.A.F.E. Say** where you are going, never go **Alone**, accept no **Free** stuff, and **Escape**: run, yell and tell.

*Portions of this article were extracted from a document by Vincent Iannelli, M.D., on About.com.

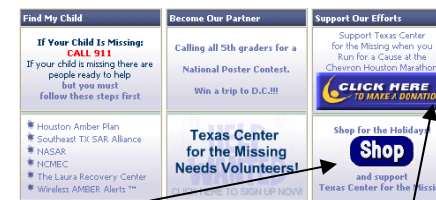


How You Can Help

Online Shopping

As the holidays approach, if you are considering shopping online, access Amazon.com through Texas Center for the Missing's website (www.thetexascenter.org). We will receive a "kickback" for every purchase made that originates via our website.

Select the "Shop" button on our home page, and it will take you directly to Amazon.com and Texas Center for the Missing will receive a percentage of the proceeds -- at no extra cost to you. Celebrate the season and support a great cause!



Chevron Houston Marathon January 2008

Texas Center for the Missing is a charity in the Chevron Houston Marathon. Runners have raised over \$2,180 so far – almost half of our \$5,000 goal! If you plan to participate as a runner in the Marathon, half-

marathon, or 5K please consider running for Texas Center for the Missing.

Creative Gift Giving/Receiving

Are you tired of the hustle and bustle, selecting and shipping, responsibilities and returns? In lieu of gift exchanges at holiday parties or with your relatives, consider asking for donations of money or gas cards for Texas Center for the Missing. The Mobile Search and Education Lab gasoline expense is expected to be substantial during 2008 and donations of money or gift cards could truly make a difference!

Calling All 5th Graders: Win a Trip to D.C.!

Each year, the Department of Justice coordinates a national poster competition to promote awareness and education among children about child abduction prevention.

This year, Texas Center for the Missing is coordinating the National Missing Child Day Poster Contest for the State of Texas. All 5th graders in Texas may participate and the winning entry will be sent to the National Competition.

The national winner will be selected by a committee and the student, his/her parents, and his/her teacher will be flown to Washington, D.C., for National Missing Child Day in May 2008. In addition, the winner and his/her parents will be flown to the 2009 ceremony as well.

Do you or your organization serve 5th graders who like art and would like to win this amazing prize? If so, please consider helping us promote this wonderful collaboration that partners the arts with education regarding the missing child issue.

The link with all of the contest rules and a more detailed description of the contest is: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/programs/postercontest/index.html>

Contest Rules:

1. Applicant must be in the 5th grade.
2. Artwork should reflect the theme, "Bring Our Missing Children Home." This phrase **must** appear somewhere on the poster.
3. The theme must be depicted visually in one or a combination of mediums, such as: acrylics, watercolor, pencil, charcoal, magic markers, spray paint, crayons, pastels, etc.
4. The finished poster must measure 11 x 14 inches.
5. The poster must be submitted with a completed application, which includes a description of the poster and a brief biography of the artist (neither to exceed 100 words) either legibly written or typed.

Important Dates:

January 13, 2008
AMBER Alert Awareness Day

March 1, 2008
All entries due to
Texas Center for the Missing

May 5, 2008
National winner notified and travel arrangements are initiated for attendance at the National Missing Child Day ceremony

For questions or to submit an application in Texas, contact Melissa Hulin at 713.314.3673 or mbulin@tcfm.org.

2007 Winning Poster

