

update

A publication of Gabriel's Gifts / Fall 2004

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Gabriel's

G I F T S
Missing Children's Organization

a 501(c)(3) charity dedicated to
helping families locate missing
and abducted children.



From left: Bob Walcutt, Beth Alberts, CEO, Gabriel's Gifts Missing Children's Organization, Ernie Allen, CEO of the National Center on Missing and Exploited Children, Tim Miller, and Sgt. Trish Cooper.

Congressman Sponsors Child Safety Forum

Congressman Nick Lampson sponsored a Child Safety Forum in September. Presentations were provided by Bob Walcutt of the Laura Recovery Center, Beth Alberts, Gabriel's Gifts, Ernie Allen CEO of the National Center on Missing and Exploited Children, Tim Miller, Texas Equusearch and Sgt. Trish Cooper, Harris County Sheriff's Office Runaway Division. More than 100 people attended the day-long event.

Looking for new ideas for this holiday?

Participate in Gabriel's Gifts Missing Children's Organization's fall fundraising campaign through one of these efforts:



Gift Cards: for those on your shopping list who don't need new slippers, honor them with a gift to Gabriel's Gifts in their names. You send us a check

and your gift list with each person's name and address and we'll do the rest!

Holiday Cards: we also have holiday cards for you to send to your Christmas card list. They are priced at 10 cards for \$12 and all proceeds benefit Gabriel's Gifts missing child programs.

iGive.com: Internet shopping helps you avoid the mall and you can shop long after the stores are closed. Just go to www.igive.com and select Gabriel's Gifts as your charity. We will receive a percentage of each of your purchases – at no

cost to you! See the enclosed iGive flyer for a list of some of the more than 500 stores!

Birdies for Charity Early Bird Campaign: the Shell Houston Open may be a few months away but be sure to check the mail for your Birdies for Charity pledge form in January. You can support Gabe's Gifts and enter the drawings to win great prizes including a new Buick.

Of course, as always, you can just send a check or fill out your credit card info on the donation form on the back of this newsletter.

Program Activities

Gabriel's Gifts program efforts have already reached 11,700+ people – exceeding 2003's outreach activities by 15% and we still have a month left in the year! Here are just a few of our recent events:

The Woodlands Children's Festival – staff and volunteers provided Child Safety packets including ID kits including photographs to more than 900 children.

House Beautiful Show – DMG Media again donated two booth spaces to Gabriel's Gifts for the fall House Beautiful Show in August. Volunteers prepared more than 400 Child ID Cards and handed out an additional 115 take-home Child ID Kits. Many thanks to our volunteers: Lori Dougan, Liz Farrar, Stefani & Taylor Lorange, Camille Lovins, Ann Shepley, Zanta and Ashley



Zanta Stroud and her daughter Ashley

Stroud, Serena Hightower, John Willia, Katie LaPorte, Maria Morales and Soraira and Ingrid Pacheco.

Gabriel's Gifts Benefits At Scotch Club Outings

Many thanks to McCormick and Schmick for choosing us as their charity of the month for July – November. And many thanks to all of those who joined us during one or more of our months! November was a little soggy, but we still went out with a bang. McCormick and Schmick raised more money for Gabe's Gifts through the Scotch Club than any of their other charities to date.



Gabriel's Gifts Board Members Loretta Nemer and Judy Carnahan-Webb enjoy the October Scotch Club Meeting at McCormick and Schmick.

Resolve to Make a Difference!



Gabriel's Gifts youngest volunteer, Taylor Lorange, right, photographs a child in her class for a Child ID Card.

As 2004 draws to a close, people begin to evaluate the past year and consider their New Year's Resolutions. Often, we focus on the personal, resolving to make changes to improve our health, breaking bad habits and replacing them with new, healthier ones.

Why not try something different this year? Make a New Year's Resolution to help make a difference in your community. Gabriel's Gifts Missing Children's Organization needs your help. Whether in the form of a donation of time or money, resolve to give to your community. The rewards you receive in return will be "priceless".



MRC Employees take time out to learn more about Gabriel's Gifts and volunteer opportunities.

MRC Employees Participate In Volunteer Orientation

Gabriel's Gifts held a volunteer orientation for 32 MRC employees in October. CEO Beth Alberts provided an overview of the history and services of Gabriel's Gifts and the Houston Regional Amber Plan. Kim Dougan, Program Coordinator provided information about volunteer opportunities and the web-based Volunteer Activity Tracking System (VATS). The VATS system, created and maintained by Gabriel's Gifts Board Member, Loretta Nemer, allows for online volunteer

registration. Once registered volunteers can sign up for one of many opportunities to contribute to our child safety efforts. Once a volunteer assignment is complete the volunteer logs back into VATS and enters his or her hours in the tracking system VATS allows for report to be generated for each event, each volunteer or quarterly and annual reports for all events and volunteers. Fourteen new MRC volunteers signed up in VATS and began volunteering last month!



Volunteer Camille Lovins discusses child safety with a parent while preparing a Child ID kit.

State, Regional & National Amber Alert News



Texas to Hold Training Session for Regions Without Amber Alert Programs

The Texas Department of Public Safety is sponsoring a workshop for the nine Council of Government regions in Texas that do not currently have regional Amber Alert programs. Representatives from each region are being invited to attend the Amber

Alert Plan Development Workshop which will be held in conjunction with the Governor's Division of Emergency Management State Conference in March 2005. Attendees will learn how to create and implement a regional Amber Alert Plan.



HOUSTON REGIONAL AMBER PLAN

15 Amber Alerts Issued for Year

This year has been a busy one for our Amber Alert! We have had 15 Amber Alerts issued for 17 children. All but one have been recovered safely.



Jesus Martinez-Alvarado whose father abducted him after shooting his mother is still missing.

Three of our Amber Alerts this year have been issued for young girls lured away over the

internet by older men. We must dedicate education efforts aimed at teaching young people about the dangers of predators on the Internet. Most likely these girls would not have left with perfect strangers they met on the street, but they reach a comfort level by getting to know the men on line first. It is crucial that we teach our children that there is no fairy tale answer to be found on the Internet.

Nationally, the Amber Alert has been credited with the safe recovery of 174 children!

Regional Trainings and Worksessions Planned for 2005

Regional AMBER Alert Coordinator Meetings are scheduled for the Spring of 2005. The South Region, which includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina,

states and regions. The regional meetings will also serve as the vehicle for identifying issues to be addressed in a follow-up worksession in each region. This is important to the overall Amber Alert efforts and impacts the local, regional, state and national program development.

Two-Day AMBER Alert

Regional Worksessions

will be conducted to

provide opportunities

for AMBER Alert

Coodinators and their

partners...

Two-Day AMBER Alert Regional Worksessions will be conducted to provide opportunities for AMBER Alert Coodinators and their partners from the media/broadcast industry, transportation, missing children clearinghouse, and local law enforcement. The South Region Worksession will be held in Austin, Texas August 31 – September 1, 2005.

Sponsored by the Department of Justice, these training and technical assistance efforts are designed to increase collaboration, improve skills, and develop more effective practices and policies to protect and safely recover missing children.

Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia will meet March 3 - 4 in Knoxville, Tennessee. These trainings will be conducted to improve and enhance inter-state collaboration and coordination and to increase information sharing within, and among,

Bellaire, Harris County, Houston & Pasadena Participate in Law Enforcement Training

Gabriel's Gifts sponsored a missing person training session for law enforcement officers in October. Chief Steven Sparks made a presentation on using the Incident Command System for multi-discipline, multi-agency efforts; Special Agents Glenn Gregory and Jack Webb of the Houston FBI Office provided training in missing child response techniques and FBI resources; and Patty Subia and Melissa Goodson of the

Texas DPS Missing Person Clearinghouse provided an overview of the Texas Statutes on Missing Persons and the resources the Clearinghouse provides to law enforcement agencies in Texas.

Attendees represented the Bellaire Police Department, the Harris County Sheriff's Office, the Houston Police Department and the Pasadena Police Department.

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Missing Children's Organization

HOLIDAY GIFT CARD

ORDER FORM

My check for \$_____ is enclosed.

Please send _____ gift cards to me at:

Or (check one)

my mailing list is attached or

I will email it to you at balberts@mrchouston.org

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Missing Children's Organization

DONOR FORM

Yes, I want every child to be safe.

Name _____ Company (if applicable) _____

Mailing Address: City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

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

Enclosed is a matching gift form from my company. _____

(check our website at www.gabrielsgifts.org to see if your employer matches contributions!)

I want to volunteer. Please call me. _____

Make check payable to Gabriel's Gifts

MasterCard VISA Discover

Card No. _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ Amount \$ _____

CITY, STATE OR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

You can contribute to Gabriel's Gifts via payroll deduction by choosing our charity. Our numbers are:

2416

Houston's Combined Municipal Campaign

334163

State Employee Charitable Campaign

4140

Combined Federal Campaign

GABRIEL'S GIFTS

6330 West Loop South • Suite 105 • Bellaire, Texas 77401

www.gabrielsgifts.org 713.521.2694

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