

Find Monica Foundation

Child Identification Program

Children are our most valuable natural resource.
-- Herbert Hoover

Children are one-third of our population and all of our future.
-- Select Panel for the Promotion of Child Health, 1981

What is more important to a parent than the safety of his/her child?

Child ID Program is a community service program designed to prevent, locate and return missing youth of Gray and Roberts County.

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FIND MONICA FOUNDATION CHILD IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

I. Find Monica Foundation —Who We Are

Monica Lynn Appleton was last seen in Amarillo, Texas on October 13, 1999. At the time of her disappearance, she was a petite 5'5", 120lb., blonde hair, hazel eyed beauty. She is the mother of two children, a sister and a daughter to a family that love and care for her including a brother who is an officer with the Pampa Police Department. Prior to her disappearance, Monica had gotten involved with the wrong crowd. After she disappeared, it took a few weeks before anyone was certain that she had in fact disappeared. Her family became convinced when she had not had any communication with her children. It took law enforcement a bit longer to believe something may have happened. Valuable time and potential evidence was lost. The family had no source of information for what they could be doing other than waiting patiently, as instructed, for any new leads or sources of information. They are still waiting over 5 years later; only, no longer passively. Donny Brown has done his homework. He has researched, studied and is now actively seeking information on the whereabouts of his sister. The family held a candle light vigil Christmas night 2005 in honor of Monica. Billboards went up in Pampa and Amarillo asking for information. Monica is listed in just about every missing person web site that can be found. Another candlelight vigil is planned for May in Amarillo. All of Donny's efforts have been aimed at trying to reach someone with information. Someone knows where Monica is, or what happened to her. Her family wants answers, they want to bring their sister, mother and daughter home.

No matter when or if the family ever gets the answers they so desperately seek, Donny hopes to make a difference and see all departments implement specific procedures to follow in missing persons cases. The Find Monica Foundation was developed to hopefully help others not to endure what he and his family did. The Find Monica Foundation web site has resource information not only for families but for law enforcement and the public in general. The first twenty four to forty eight hours are the most crucial in these types of investigations. Many hours were spent researching and gathering information for the web site and Child ID Programs by Donny, his family and friends. Donny's goal is to get the message out to the public in every form. The family's goal is to help in preventing delays in the gathering of vital information on a child or young adult.

II. Overview—Texas Problem

Anyone who reads newspapers or obtains news from TV or radio, is aware that many high profile missing children cases occur in other parts of the United States. In light of all the publicity surrounding missing children in other states, what is the situation in Texas?

According to the Texas DPS Missing Person Clearing House:

- A) In 2004 there were 69,291 Missing Persons entered into NCIC.
- B) By years end (2004) a total of 70,439 NCIC cancellations. Some of these cancellations were from the previous year(s).
- C) 59,911 of those reported in 2004 were juveniles. Most of which are classified as “runaways”.
- D) 9,380 of those that were reported in 2004 were adults.
- E) Currently there are 4,306 active missing juvenile cases.
- F) Currently there are 2,621 active missing adult cases.

III. Overview—Abducted Children a National Problem

The national statistics on child abduction are startling.

- A) 114,600 attempted abductions of children by non-family members¹
- B) 4,600 non-family abductions are reported to law enforcement²
- C) Two-thirds or more of abductions involve sexual assault³
- D) There is typically over a two hour delay in making the initial missing child report (60%)⁴
- E) 74% of the children murdered by non-family members are **killed within the first three hours** of their abduction⁵

¹⁻³U.S. Department of Justice. *Fact Sheet on Missing Children: National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrown-Away Children* based on the research of David Finkelhor, Gerald Hotaling, and Andrea Sedlak. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, May 1990, page 2.

⁴⁻⁵Kenneth A. Hanfland, Robert D. Keppel, and Joseph G. Weis. *Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation: Executive Summary*. Olympia, Washington: Office of the Attorney General, State of Washington and U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, May 1997, page 3.

IV. Overview—Current Child Identification Programs

Most child identification programs are in essence parent do-it-yourself programs. In other words, materials are provided to parents with minimal instructions, and the parents are required to supply the requested information and either perform the necessary functions or obtain third party assistance (e.g. fingerprinting, DNA sampling, pictures, teeth imprints). Please see the attached chart for a comparison of various child identification programs.

That approach diminishes the likelihood that the materials will be reviewed, completed accurately, and the forensic samples will be useful to law enforcement, if they are ever needed.

Additionally, the vast majority of child identification programs are limited to completing biographical information, photographs of the child, and fingerprints. They fail to provide the types of forensic samples (DNA) useful to modern law enforcement.

With recent developments in technology, child identification has entered the 21st Century. The “good old” days of paper records are now a thing of the past.

It is clear that for an Identification Program to achieve maximum effectiveness it must be:

- a) substantially completed for the parents on each child,
- b) designed in a manner for timely, efficient and maximized usefulness by law enforcement,
- c) inexpensive or free to families,
- d) designed to make available competent/useful forensic evidence, if it is subsequently needed by law enforcement,
- e) part of an ongoing program which will periodically (annually?) update each child’s information to maximize the program’s effectiveness, and
- f) implemented with a signed authorization from each parent/guardian (please see the attachment).

V. **The Find Monica Foundation Child Identification Program**

OUR GOAL: To offer every child/youth and young adult in Gray and Roberts County the opportunity to participate in the Find Monica Foundation **Child Identification Program** either at their school or through public registration events. This will be accomplished in stages over time.

For a modest cost we can implement a Child Identification Program which will be:

- 1) available and free to all children in Gray and Roberts County,
- 2) substantially completed for the parent on each child at the registration site,
- 3) in compliance with collection and storage standards to assure that the forensic samples are created and maintained in a manner that is convenient/easy for the parent and will, in all likelihood, result in forensic material that will be useful to law enforcement in the identification/location of a missing child,
- 4) time efficient for the parents and children at the school or public registration session with the option to register biographical information confidentially on the internet,
- 5) in compliance with recent technological advancements and F.B.I. guidelines for collecting and preserving information on each child,
- 6) if the need arises, efficient and timely dissemination of that information by law enforcement through automated and pre-established channels, and
- 7) economically efficient both in its implementation and continuing operation.

VI. **The Information Provided For Each Child**

Of primary importance to each parent is that the information collected on their child will not be retained by us or disseminated to a third party (police). **The parent will be the only recipient of the information and will be the *only* source of information should a Missing Child Report be filled.**

The following items, a through n, will be collected on each child at the registration site, while the *items listed in item o, below, will be available for the parent to complete, if they so desire at a later date:*

- a) child's full name,
- b) parent's/guardian's full name,
- c) residence address of child and parent/guardian,
- d) child's height,
- e) child's weight,
- f) child's hair color,
- g) child's eye color,
- h) distinguishing characteristics,
- i) frontal picture,
- j) left side picture,
- k) right side picture,
- l) possibly obtain a two minute digital video clip of the child answering standard/designated questions (the interview captures the appearance, speech, mannerisms, and other important personal characteristics of each child),
- m) digital fingerprints of all ten fingers,
- n) two swabs of DNA material obtained from the inside of each child's mouth; one swab from the inside, left cheek and one swab from the inside, right cheek; both samples will be placed in the provided storage envelope,
- o) **the following will be included in the Child ID registration packet or available from dentists or orthodontists; however, it will be strongly recommended that the parent complete these steps subsequent to registration in the Child ID program, if they so desire:**
 - (1) storage envelope and detailed instructions for hair sample collection from each child/youth for subsequent DNA analysis (parent completion),
 - (2) we will encourage all parents/guardians to obtain a free DNA/blood specimen test kit available from a medical professional; the sample should be taken by a medical professional and the specimen should be retained with the Child ID materials; we will provide the contact name and phone number so that all parents/guardians can request the free DNA specimen kit, and
 - (3) dental bites performed at a dentist or orthodontist's office; this will occur with the cooperation or sponsorship of the _____; the parent/child will obtain the bite at a regular, dental appointment or

by visiting a participating dentist or orthodontist on the list we will provide in each registration packet, or at the Texas Department of Health. **Hopefully, the dentists or orthodontists will provide this service for free.**

All of the foregoing information (except for the oral swabs, blood sample, hair sample, and dental bite) will be provided to each parent on a CD ROM. The CD ROM may be easily duplicated by the parent on their personal computer, if the need arises. It may also be easily updated by copying the original CD ROM to a re-writable CD and then editing the information. The CD will also be formatted so it complies with the computer software we will provide (free of charge) to the Pampa Police Department, Gray County Sheriff's Department, and the Roberts County Sheriff's Department.

A poster with each child's information will also be given to the parent. For lack of a better term, it will resemble a "wanted poster".

The parent will also receive two laminated identification cards for each child. Each card will contain:

- 1) child's full name,
- 2) parent's/guardian's full name,
- 3) residence address of child and parent/guardian,
- 4) child's height,
- 5) child's weight,
- 6) child's hair color,
- 7) child's eye color,
- 8) distinguishing characteristics,
- 9) frontal picture, and
- 10) a single fingerprint.

In summary, the parent will receive for each child, a large pre-labeled, re-sealable envelope identifying its contents, which will include the following:

- a) one CD ROM with all digital information on each child (biographical information, at least three digital pictures, possibly a two minute video clip, and digital fingerprints of all ten fingers),
- b) oral swabs with two DNA samples in a storage envelope,
- c) instructions on how to obtain a free DNA blood sample for inclusion with the Child ID materials,
- d) detailed instructions and envelope for collecting and storage of hair samples,

- e) two laminated identification cards for each child,
- f) poster containing identification information for each child,
- g) list of participating dentists and orthodontists where the dental bites may be obtained,
- h) instructions of what to do when a child is missing,
- i) list of recommendations relative to child safety,
- j) instructional, child safety coloring book, and
- k) other brochures on child safety.

VII. How Child ID Works

When a child/youth is determined to be missing, a parent/guardian takes the CD ROM to the police station or e-mails the information. After verifying that the child is missing, the police use that information to send the Missing Child Alert to all designated recipients within a 100-mile radius of Pampa. The CD ROM contains all information necessary to send an immediate Alert.

Law enforcement can instantly access all biographical information collected on each child using the CD ROM coupled with the software we will provide. Furthermore, the system will allow the immediate dissemination of a missing child's biographical information, pictures and fingerprints to a predetermined recipient list [other police/sheriff departments, Highway Patrol offices, DOT highway signs, EBS (Emergency Broadcast System) radio and TV stations, newspapers, etc.] located within a 100-mile radius. With this system, dissemination of all biographical information can occur **within five minutes** of law enforcement receiving a confirmed/verified missing child report.

VIII. Funding

A. Corporate Partners

By stressing the customer/community goodwill value of our program, we will approach local community spirited corporations to serve as our sponsors.

Our corporate partners will provide financial sponsorship for the ongoing operation of the Child ID Program. Please see the attachment for more details.

Each corporate sponsor's name will appear on all the Child ID Program promotional materials and the materials distributed to each child/parent. There

are three distinct sponsorship levels. Please see the attachment and contact Donny Brown for more information.

B. Find Monica Foundation Costs/Contributions

The Find Monica Foundation believes the Child ID Program is so important to our community that the Foundation will finance all supplies costs related to the “pilot program” at _____. It is our intention to obtain corporate partners to finance the costs of child registrations.

If the Child ID Program receives widespread acceptance in our community, Find Monica Foundation and/or our sponsors may decide, later, to increase funding for additional registration site equipment. That will enable simultaneous registration at two or more different sites.

It is envisioned that Find Monica Foundation members and volunteers will provide the necessary staffing. Each registration session will require a number of individuals. Please see the discussion below concerning sessions on school property for additional sources of labor.

IX. Program Rollout

Our corporate partners may request that the registrations be conducted at their facilities/stores to increase customer traffic. The Find Monica Foundation would be happy to do this.

At the school registration events, the Foundation should be able to obtain staffing from PTA volunteers, any school staff, senior adult groups and possibly police resource officers. Additionally, we will distribute forms (program description, authorization and child biographical questionnaire) to be reviewed and completed by each parent/guardian prior to the registration. We have established a *secure* internet site (www.findmonica.org) as a source of program information and to provide parents/guardians with the option of registering each child on the internet. The internet registration is more confidential than filling out a form and having a PTA volunteer (see below) enter information on each child. Internet registration would significantly reduce the number of PTA volunteers we will need to operate the Child ID Program.

All volunteers will undergo background checks prior to their work.

Hopefully, we will be able to get individual teachers to stress the importance of the Child ID Program and strongly urge registration on line or completion and return of the forms. If the forms are completed and returned, we would like for the PTA volunteers to enter the biographical information into our data base. Once all information has been entered and proofed, we will schedule the registration session during school hours with the approval of school administrators. During that session, we will confirm the accuracy of the biographical information, obtain the digital fingerprints and the oral swab samples, as well as, take three pictures, and possibly record a short video clip. Our volunteers will take the digital pictures and ask the standard questions during the video filming. Once we have completed the registration process for all students, we will produce the posters and ID cards. We will also create the CD ROM for each child and distribute all of the materials to the parents/guardians through the school.

X. Program Continuation

In order for the Child ID Program to maintain viability, some of the information (height, weight, pictures, possible video clips and dental bites) will have to be collected periodically (annually?). Thus, it will be an ongoing program because as children age, much of the information we collect becomes inaccurate and worthless.

XI. Program Development/Implementation

The program software and hardware has already been designed and implemented throughout the United States and is ready for immediate purchase and implementation. Delivery takes four to six weeks.

The steps for the creation and implementation of the Child ID Program will be:

1. Obtain the support, cooperation and endorsement of the Pampa Police Department, Gray County Sheriff's Department, and Robert's County Sheriff's Department.
2. Obtain the support, cooperation and endorsement of the Respected School Board's, Superintendent, Administration, as well as the Faculty, Staff and PTA at each school.

3. Obtain the support, cooperation and endorsement of the administrators, faculty, staff and PTA's of all private schools in Gray and Robert's County. Additionally, we will need to secure support/cooperation from home school organizations/parents, pre-schools, and day care centers in the city/county area—**On Going**.
4. Obtain the support, cooperation and endorsement of local Dentist and Texas Department of Health Department to add the component of dental impressions for each child to the Child ID Program. These dental impressions will be performed at a dentist/orthodontist office or Health Department, with little or **NO** cost, and provided to the child's parent for inclusion with our packet of the Child ID Program information.
5. Obtain the financial support of a corporate sponsors.
6. Purchase the software and hardware. Delivery time is 4-6 weeks from date of order. Design and establish the web site for general information and child registration.
7. Obtain estimated enrollments of each school and an estimate of the number of young people, in Gray and Roberts County. Please see the attachment. Additionally, we need to determine the order and timing of the program rollout.
8. Print all forms and envelopes, possibly obtain sample envelopes/kits from third party vendors, and child safety brochures from third parties.
9. Obtain an inventory of all items needed for program operation.

XII. Advisory Board

In order to obtain the advice of community leaders, we will be creating an Advisory Board. The purpose of the Board is to provide guidance relative to designing, and implementing the Child ID Program, as well as, obtaining community acceptance and participation.

The members of the Advisory Council include:
To Be Announced

XIII. Attachments

- A. Parental/Guardian Authorization Form
- B. What Is the Child ID Program? (program description for parents/guardians)
- E. Sponsorship Packages