

KLAAS ACTION REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARC KLAAS FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN



A MESSAGE FROM MARC

America is in denial that evil exists in the hand that rocks the cradle. We prefer to think of our monsters as shrouded, faceless men lurking in the dark. However, recent criminal cases illustrate that as convenient as this perception may be, middle class white women can also be infected with anti-social impulses, destructive compulsions, and violent tendencies.

Former schoolteacher Mary Kay LeTourneau, released from jail following a conviction for second-degree child rape, was re-arrested for violating a court order after being caught with her victim in the back seat of a car at 3 a.m. Like many before her, LeTourneau betrayed the public's trust by using her status as a public schoolteacher to lure and ultimately rape a child entrusted to her care.

Her conduct has been defended in the name of romantic love, despite her blatant disregard for the law and the fact that she thrust a 12-year-old boy into the responsibilities of adulthood and unwed teenage parenthood.

The typical prison sentence for child rape in Washington State ranges from four to seven years. In news coverage of her initial sentencing, the *Seattle Times* identified LeTourneau as a former teacher. She was placed on parole. In another recent case involving schoolteacher Mark Blilie and a

female student, the *Seattle Times* identified Blilie as a convicted sex offender. He was sentenced to four years in prison for third-degree child rape.

An international public relations campaign was recently waged to commute the death sentence of convicted killer Karla Fay Tucker in Texas. Fourteen years ago Tucker confessed to viciously murdering two people and leaving a pick-axe in the chest of her female victim. Only 437 criminals or 6.5% of the 5,534 sentenced to death have been executed since reinstatement of the death penalty in 1977. Prior to Tucker, only one woman, or 1% of females sentenced to death since 1977, had been executed.

Even pro-death penalty stalwarts like religious activists Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell succumbed to Madonna-like images of Tucker on her

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FILM-MAKERS DONATE NEW SAFETY VIDEO

By Joe Klaas

The new half-hour production of *Kids...Lost and Found* will be released early this year in major video outlets, according to Producer/Director Linda Feferman of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"It is the first training video for parents, children, communities, and law enforcement to reveal the invaluable kidnap-prevention, child-finding, and crime solving techniques learned from the Polly Klaas kidnap-murder," said Feferman, an award-winning Sundance Film Festival director and producer. "*Kids...Lost and Found* has only one purpose—to save children's lives!"

Hosted by retired FBI Agent Gordon McNeill, the video stars a *Who's Who* of kidnapping experts, family survivors, and crime reporters. FBI Special Agent Candice DeLong helped Director Feferman assemble police, federal experts, surviving parents, child advocates, and noted journalists from across the nation.

Starring in the child-saving training tape are Detective Eric Kong of the San Jose Police Department, Crime Reporter Erik Ingram of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, former CNN White House Correspondent Faith Fancher of San Francisco Bay Area KTVU-TV, Georgia Hilgeman of the Vanished Children Alliance, Greg Mengell of the Interstate Association of Stolen Children, Jeannine Willie of the California Department of Justice—Missing Persons Unit, and Joan Davis, mother of kidnap and murder victim Jonathan Davies, who also helped raise funds for the project.

"I heard a Klaas family member's speech about totally new and effective ways to ward off kidnapping, quick decisive action to help law enforcement, exploit the media, and recruit volunteers and find missing children," Feferman said. "I was impressed by the simplicity of how parents and the community could help in such cases, so I asked whether or not this valuable information had yet been captured on video. The answer was no, so I volunteered for the task. The rest, as they say, is history."

Others appearing are former ABC broadcaster and grandfather of Polly Klaas, Joe Klaas; surviving parent and Amber Foundation founder Kim Swartz; Los Angeles KCBS-TV reporter Kyra Phillips; Polly's father and Executive Producer Marc Klaas; Former Sonoma County TV news director Mary DeLuco; Sonoma District Attorney's investigator Mike Mease, who for the Petaluma Police Department solved the Polly Klaas case; Ora Owens, whose kidnapped son Mitchell is still

missing; and Peter Banks of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

"Sherry Ayala is the mother of a San Jose child recovered safely within hours because San Jose Police Detective Kong, local media, and the community followed the KlaasKids Foundation guidelines taught in *Kids...Lost and Found*. She tells how these techniques caught the kidnapper before it was too late to save her child," Feferman said. "Our working motto for this video was 'Save the kids and save the world.'"

Carmel's teenage Pacific Repertory Playhouse actress Ashley Rose Miller of Pacific Grove, California is featured as FBI Agent McNeill's assistant. Director of photography for *Kids...Lost and Found* was top documentary cinematographer Bob Elfstrom who regularly shoots for *Bill Moyers*, *Frontline*, *The American Experience*, and *Nova*.

"Line producer Eden Johnson, owner of 360 Films in Sausalito, donated three weeks of time to the video. She put together a terrific crew and secured myriad contributions to the project," Feferman said. "Associate Producer and Research Director Lisa Diener of Santa Fe, New Mexico, helped get it into the can so Online Editor David Nicholson could put it to bed for release to video stores early this year."

Others in the film crew were Alan Filippi, Daniel Peters (sets), Jennifer Sloan, John Kiffmeyer (gaffer), Jon Fontana (gaffer), Joseph Edward Scott, Nathan Belove (art director), Robert Odham, Sandra Badillo (PA), Sara Guterman (assistant line producer), Steve Albrecht (sound), and Steven Balick (video).

Funding was by Club Corporation of America; Laurence and Jean DeLynn of Morgan Town, West Virginia; Radio Astronomer Nicholas Scoville of the California Institute of Technology; Richard and Martha Feferman of Albuquerque, New Mexico; and several anonymous donors.

In charge of marketing and publicity is Leslie McClure of Pebble Beach, California. She can be reached at 1-800-383-8811. ■

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WE'VE GOT A NEW NAME!

If you take a look at the logo on this issue of the *Klaas Action Review*, you'll see that the Foundation has a new name: the KlaasKids Foundation. As of the end of 1997, we have changed our title to more accurately reflect what the Foundation is all about—helping America's kids grow up in safety, secure from the threat of molestation, abuse, and family violence.

The Foundation continues to move forward with goals that have been carefully defined and prioritized for this year. The KlaasKids National Child Safety Awareness Project oversees hundreds of events which take place around the country each year, encouraging communities to create child safety plans for their citizens, and fingerprinting and photographing children to assist

police in case of a kidnapping or attack.

The new video *Kids...Lost and Found*, is now in release, and will be available to the public very shortly (see page 2 for more information).

Promotions for child safety legislation continue to move forward, focusing on truth in sentencing, enabling the National Child Protection Act (see page 4 for more), a federal victims' rights amendment, and keeping children off direct mailing lists.

We'll also be keeping up our Website, which is now located at a new address: www.klaaskids.org/index.htm. ■

KLAASKIDS APPEARANCES AROUND THE COUNTRY

The KlaasKids Foundation remains in the forefront of publicizing the need for more community involvement, better legislation, and increased focus on parenting and child-raising through the spring of this year.

An important appearance for Marc Klaas recently was to provide legislative testimony before the Washington State House and Senate on February 4, speaking on behalf of a new bill that would make first-degree child molestation, first-degree child rape, and murder by abuse all one-strike offenses in that state.

Additional speaking engagements around the U.S. during the spring include appearances at a Bound Brook, NJ, community meeting and at four institutions of

higher learning: the University of New Hampshire (March 4), John Tyler Community College (March 11), Ohio Northern University (March 24); and Michigan State University (April 2).

Klaas will give two conference keynote addresses, at the Utah Correctional Association Conference (March 31) and the Melanie Rieger Memorial Conference (April 8).

He also appeared on national TV three times recently, on Inter-night, MS-NBC (January 13), the Oprah Winfrey Show (January 27), and the Larry King Show (Feb. 3). ■

UPCOMING CHILD SAFETY EVENTS

Join the KlaasKids Foundation the next time we're in your state, as part of our ongoing series of Child Safety events.

- March 7 Hollywood Video—Springfield, IL
- March 13 & 14 Sunshine Toyota—Battlecreek, MI
- March 16 Anthony Pontiac—Waukegan, IL
- March 17 & 18 Gustman Pontiac—Greenbay, WI
- March 20 & 21 Grossman Chevrolet—Burnsville, MN
- March 21 & 22 Wittmeier Ford—Chico, CA
- March 25 Radio station WFMS 95.5—Indianapolis, IN
- March 26 Stenger Ford—Dayton, OH
- March 26 Frick Chiropractic (William D. Frick, D.C.)—Cahokia, IL
- March 27 & 28 Ford Motor Credit—Cincinnati, OH
- March 27 & 28 Ahrens Cadillac-Oldsmobile—Madison, WI
- April 10 & 11 Fulton Auto—Fulton, NY
- April 13 & 14 All American Chevrolet—Middletown, NJ
- April 15 & 16 State College, PA
- April 17 & 18 Denooyer Chevrolet Inc.—Albany, NY
- April 24 & 25 Zimmerman Ford, Inc.—St. Charles, IL
- April 25 Benoy Motor Sales—Woodstock, IL
- May 9 & 10 Van Chevrolet—Scottsdale, AZ
- May 15 & 16 Cecil Lawton—Oklahoma City, OK

This series of KlaasKids Foundation child safety events is sponsored by Discover Card and the event site hosts.

MAKING BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS INTO LAW

By Bruce Johnson, State Senator, Ohio

On September 18, 1997, I introduced legislation in the Ohio Senate that would allow a criminal records background check on employees and volunteers who have unsupervised access to children, if such a request is made by the child's parent or guardian. Senate Bill 172 is intended to protect children from sexual predators and other potentially violent felons, and is part of enabling legislation required by Congress to support the National Child Protection Act.



State Senator Bruce Johnson

Ohio is one of the first states to consider this enabling legislation for the National Child Protection Act. The bill was drafted with assistance from Marc Klaas, who has actively supported similar initiatives in other states around the country.

The National Child Protection Act

In 1993, the United States Congress passed the National Child Protection Act establishing procedures allowing for national criminal background checks, based on fingerprints of volunteers and employees of organizations who have access to children.

Why is such legislation necessary? Studies show that 46% of child molesters are non-family members known to their victims—trusted friends and colleagues such as scoutmasters, teachers, coaches, clergy, counselors, and neighbors. In 1994, 345,000 cases of sexual abuse nationwide were the result of non-family perpetrators known to their child victims.

Senate Bill 172 is necessary because there is clearly a problem. One out of three girls and one out of six boys have been or will be subjected to some form of sexual abuse by the age of 18. An average of 5.5 children per 10,000 enrolled in day care are sexually abused. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction reports that sex offenders account for 14% of the prison population. There are currently 629 sex offenders registered with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (OBCII).

Since child sexual abuse victims are particularly

vulnerable, society has a greater obligation to protect them. We can provide much-needed increased protection by requiring state and national criminal background checks on adult non-family members who have unsupervised access to our children. It is my belief that Senate Bill 172 can provide that additional protection.

How Senate Bill 172 Works

This new bill requires an organization to request the OBCII to conduct a criminal records check of an employee or volunteer

who on a regular basis has unsupervised access to children. The bill specifies that an employing organization may include a religious, charitable, scientific, educational, athletic, or service institution or local government entity that provides care, treatment, education, training, recreation, or supervision to children.

If the volunteer or employee fails to provide the information necessary to complete the form or fails to provide fingerprints, the organization is required to remove them from any position that enables that person to have unsupervised access to a child. Once the background check has been performed, the OBCII is required to notify the organization whether the check did or did not show that the person has previously been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any felony offense or sexually oriented offense.

Upon receipt of the results of the record check, the organization is to notify the parent or guardian that the employee or volunteer has been convicted or pleaded guilty to one of the listed offenses. The legislation does not require the organization to impose any other sanction against the employee or volunteer. From that point, it would be up to the parents and the organization to take any further action.

Parents' Right to Know

This legislation is intended to be a "Right to Know" bill, meaning that every parent should be allowed to know

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YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE GROWN UP TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Caroline Gladowski

Caroline Gladowski is just 11 years old, but she already knows the important part she can play in helping to keep her fellow children safe. Caroline got to know us here at the Foundation in a rather unusual way, and has been an enthusiastic supporter ever since. She contributed the following story about becoming involved with child safety.

As we all know, phone calls can bring tidings of joy, or bring our hopes down to a point that it no longer exists. However, in my case it was the beginning of an important adventure.

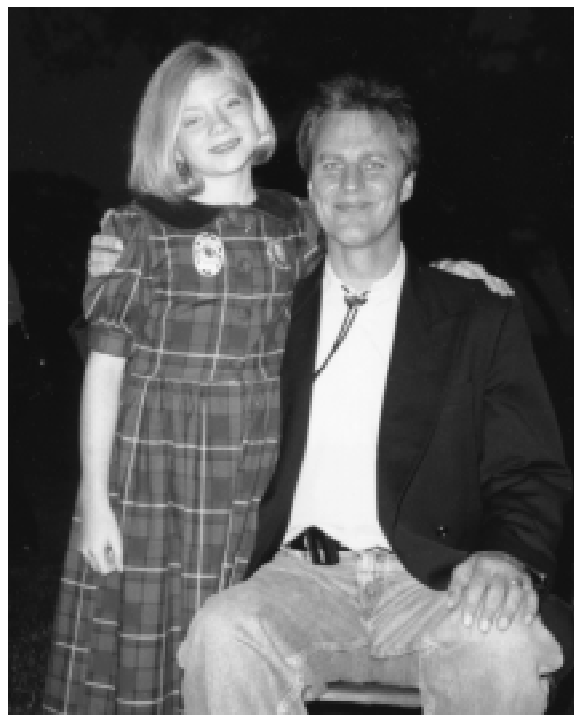
I came home from school to hear some wonderful news: I had been asked to thank Mr. Marc Klaas on behalf of all the kids of Texas for what he and the Foundation have done for child safety, as part of the 1997 Texas Tour for Children Kickoff in Arlington, TX, last October. I was selected because I had given a speech once before.

Mr. Klaas and I worked well together from the beginning. During his Texas Tour, he was in the Dallas-Fort Worth Area for four events, and I attended every one. This experience was more fabulous than I could have imagined. I was able to help with the fingerprinting, and I learned a lot, too. The best part was knowing that even as a child myself I was helping children across my state.

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who is working with his or her child and whether or not that person poses a threat. As the father of four young children myself, I want to be certain that parents have the opportunity to check the relevant criminal history of any person who spends time with their children. By requiring a criminal records check at a parent's request, we can reduce the risk of placing our children in danger for a simple lack of information.

Since its introduction, Senate Bill 172 has had two hearings in the Ohio Senate Criminal Justice Committee, and is scheduled for further hearings in early 1998. It is my hope that Bill 172 will pass the Senate during this year and be scheduled for hearings in the Ohio House of Representatives, where the process continues until it is eventually signed into law by the Governor of Ohio. ■



Caroline Gladkowski with Marc Klaas at an October Texas Tour event.

I was also invited to the Dallas Brookside Country Club event. I've never been to a country club before, so I enjoyed it immensely! My brother and I had all sorts of fun, like face painting, entertainment, tennis, and pictures with the Dallas Cowboys mascot. But the best part was when the Foundation was given a big check to support its work for child safety!

I was happy being involved with what the Foundation does for children they don't even know. I know that there are bad people out there, but there *are* ways to keep them from getting you. There are also many people who try to keep the bad people in jail away from kids.

I feel as though I am the one who really benefited most from this worthwhile experience. It opened my mind to what goes on and what you can do to stop it. I especially loved the purpose of it and the people who were working so hard to make child safety a reality. I truly believe that all the Foundation has accomplished is incredible and well worth supporting. ■

A MESSAGE FROM MARC

(Cont. from page 1)

knees, eyes and hands thrust toward heaven. Despite a constitutional separation of church and state, her religious conversion was cited as a valid reason to overturn her death sentence. Perhaps Tucker was or will be judged by a higher power, but that should not preclude her punishment for heinous crimes committed here on earth.

In this case, the execution was carried out on schedule. However, Tucker's defenders blamed everything from drugs to the law to Governor George Bush for her plight. Her crime was mentioned only as a side issue.

In November, 1997, 19-year-old nanny Louise Woodward was sentenced to a mandatory life sentence for the second-degree murder of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen. Inexplicably, Judge Hiller Zobel reduced the jury's verdict to involuntary manslaughter and said that the 279 days in prison the British au pair had already served would suffice as the entirety of her sentence. Woodward now awaits permission to return to a hero's welcome in Great Britain.

In this case, Judge Zobel said, "I do not denigrate Matthew Eappen's death nor his family's grief. I do, however, recognize that mercy does not lessen opprobrium. It is, in my judgment, time to bring the judicial part of this extraordinary matter to a compassionate conclusion."

In his total disregard for the jury's finding Judge Zobel blamed Matthew Eappen's death on "confusion, inexperience, frustration, immaturity, and some anger." Woodward's responsibility for the care of the infant was apparently

immaterial. By ignoring the jury's verdict and imposing his own vainglorious standards, the judge not only denigrated Matthew Eappen's life but also trivialized his death.

In October 1995, Susan Smith strapped her young sons into car seats and drove them into a watery grave in John B. Long Lake in Union, South Carolina. As cold water and darkness enveloped Michael and Alex in death, their mother concocted an alibi that betrayed their memory, her husband, family, friends, and ultimately the entire nation. For ten days, Smith publicly wept and blamed the crime on a phantom black stranger before her lie was exposed.

Everything from an ongoing sexual relationship with her stepfather to a desire to please a potential would-be suitor was blamed for this hideous crime. In this case, the cold-blooded killer's ability to grovel and cry on cue assisted her in escaping the death penalty. Smith will be eligible to return to society before she reaches her fiftieth birthday.

In all four of these cases, the criminals are attractive white women and far more emphasis was placed on them than their victims. Although women are historically perceived to be weaker, more fragile, and emotionally driven than men, this indulgence toward white female criminals is alarming in its consistency and blind disregard for facts.

Racism, sexism, and economic conditions influence our perception of crime and punishment and reflect the sentences imposed. Blacks are perceived as a greater threat than whites and men are considered more

threatening than women. Sentencing statistics reflect this perception.

Men are over eight times more likely than women to be incarcerated in prison at least once during their lifetime. A male has a 9.0% (or one in 11) chance in his lifetime of going to prison, while a female has a 1.1% (or one in 91) chance. Among men, blacks (28.5%) are about twice as likely as Hispanics (16.0%) and six times more likely than whites (4.4%) to be admitted to prison during their life. Among women, blacks are more than twice as likely as Hispanics (1.5%) and seven times more likely than whites (0.5%) to be admitted to prison during their lives. Of the 1,085,363 persons confined to state and federal prisons in 1995, only 31,700 or 2.92% were white women.

Women sentenced to prison are given shorter maximum sentences than are men for equivalent crimes. For drug offenses, 18 months shorter; and for violent offenses, 39 months shorter. Black women, on average, receive longer jail time and higher fines than do white women for the same crimes.

Although greater sympathy is attached to women and on some level we are more forgiving of their transgressions, in these cases—as in all cases—the forgotten victims were somebody's children. In a criminal justice system routinely criticized for economic and racial discrimination a sexist dynamic further clouds impartiality. We must look beyond stereotypes and apply our laws proportionately to all segments of society. ■

CHILD SAFETY WORKBOOK OFFERS PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES NEW SOLUTIONS

Despite recent downward crime trends, U.S. parents remain very concerned about the safety of their children. Molesters are still far too active—in California alone, 69,000 sex offenders are subject to the community notification clause of Megan’s Law. The latchkey problem is epidemic while after-school options for these children are lacking. Recent FBI statistics prove that the peak hours for juvenile crime triples in the first hour after school lets out.

Further, only 2% of the nation’s 17,000 law enforcement agencies have a response protocol to stranger abduction. Although the media features crimes against children, political priorities continue to lie elsewhere.

However, citizens, community groups, private enterprise, the media, law enforcement, and certain politicians have all devised viable child safety solutions that should be shared and duplicated throughout the country.

The KlaasKids Foundation has collected the best ideas we found in 1997 in a solutions based workbook called *Missing Kids...What to Do If Your Child Disappears*. These 26 concepts are categorized as personal; community; business; media; law enforcement; military and legislative solutions. Some are easily implemented and can have an immediate impact. Some require partnerships: a roll-up-the-sleeves approach bringing longer-term benefits. However, all are viable and proactive.

- A woman in Portland, Oregon, told us that because of tolerant zoning policies, an adult book and sex paraphernalia shop opened in her neighborhood. Complaints to the

zoning commission and city council fell on deaf ears. Picketing the sex shop during peak business hours as a form of non-violent protest only resulted in drawing attention to the sex shop, thereby increasing business. Finally, in a creative expression of free speech, the neighbors videotaped the license numbers of customer’s vehicles for publication in the local newspaper.

This approach to a neighborhood outrage demonstrates that a group of citizens working together can determine their own destiny. Home-owners, families with small children, and other long-term residents of the neighborhood proactively worked to maintain the integrity of their own community.

- A creative business solution is an Employee Volunteer Program allowing full-time employees to take up to five hours of paid time per month to volunteer at a non-profit organization. Not only is this a benefit for the company and your employees, it also gives you a chance to give back something to the community that has supported you over the years. Obviously, you can offer to place a percentage of the volunteer duty on the clock or produce a list of authorized nonprofit organizations.

- Many of America’s 17,000 law enforcement agencies are understaffed and under-budgeted. This partially explains why police officers never seem to be available when we need them most. Law enforcement agencies all over America have devised clever solutions to this universal dilemma, devising ways for a volunteer force of citizens to augment their staffs and allow trained officers to do

what they do best—fight crime. In Maricopa County, Arizona, a civilian posse of 6,000 patrol parking lots, implement safety seminars, and guard the streets, easing the burden on the sheriff and his deputies. Every posse member undergoes an extensive training period that outlines vol-unteer duties and limitations. In Oxnard, California, volunteers patrol neighborhoods armed with cell phones looking for suspicious persons and activities.

- The Amber Alert is a cooperative effort between electronic media outlets and local law enforcement agencies in the Dallas-Fort Worth area of Texas, in which law enforcement notifies radio stations immediately upon confirmation of a child kidnapping. Radio stations then interrupt regularly scheduled programming to broadcast the alert and any subsequent information provided by the police.

- In many ways, the workbook’s suggested personal solutions are the most easily achieved. Know your neighborhood. Know the best places for your children to play and places to avoid like alleys and dark stairwells. Show your children the safest routes to and from school and insist that they use the buddy system. Know your children’s friends, where they live, their addresses, and phone numbers. Insist that your children be home before dark. The more you know about your neighborhood the safer your family will be.

To receive a copy of the *Missing Kids* workbook, contact the Foundation at: 1-415-331-6867 or e-mail us at klaas@crl.com. ■

JOIN THE FOUNDATION AND HELP FIGHT CRIME!

To join the KlaasKids Foundation, please fill out this form and return it to the address below. Your tax-deductible membership costs just \$15.00 per year, and includes a subscription to the quarterly *Klaas Action Review*, with news and information, practical tips, events, and more.

Members may also receive:

- Information on starting a National Community Empowerment program.
- Safety information for your children.
- Information about how to support legislation against crime in your state.
- Other: _____

As a personal gift, you will also receive the Children's Identification Packet and a beautiful "Polly, We Love You" pin, in memory of our inspiration, Polly Klaas.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Enclosed please find my tax-deductible donation of \$_____.

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Be sure to check out our Website at <http://www.klaaskids.org/index.htm> for regular updates and information on child safety. Give us your feedback!



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