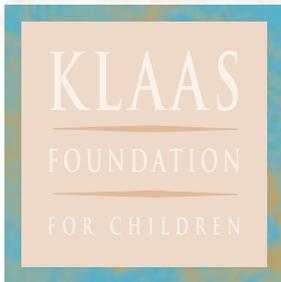


KLAAS ACTION REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KLAASKIDS FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN



A MESSAGE FROM MARC

When 14-year-old Kip Kin- kel recently murdered his parents and two high school students and wounded 18 others in Springfield, OR, we were forced once again to ask ourselves the question: What is it about our society that has led young people to decide that killing is the only answer to problems with schools or parents? Nine middle and high school boys have murdered 18 peers, teachers, and parents with guns in school- yard related incidents just since October 1, 1997.

I think that the trouble with America's children is America's adults. We are a self-indulgent society obsessed with fantasies of violence. Misguided children blowing each other away on the school- yard have internalized the messages of a culture that considers gun violence a solution to problems of stress, anger, and alienation.

We think nothing of waiting in line to see the latest Tinseltown pyrotechnic extravaganza, or watching as television serves up a constant diet of unedited violence in both entertainment and news. The increasingly popular Internet publishes serial killer manifestos and makes recipes for explosive devices readily available. Two hundred million guns adorn our walls, hide in our cupboards, and linger in personal armories as we await an Armageddon of our own creation.

Children Carrying Guns

Increasingly, our children have become both the perpetrators and victims of gun violence.

- In 1976, 59% of juvenile homicide offenders killed with a gun. By 1991, this figure had grown to 78%.
- Despite federal regulations, 34% of students reported easy access to hand- guns and 6.4% reported owning a handgun.
- According to a recent report issued by the Department of Education, over 6,000 students were expelled in 1996- 97 for bringing guns to school.
- As of 1993, fatal gunshot wounds replaced vehicular accidents as the most common cause of death for children—every day in America guns kill 16 kids aged 19 and under.
- Twice as many Americans were killed by guns in the three years between 1992-94 as were killed in battle during the eight and a half years of the Vietnam War.

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FIRST KLAASKIDS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Elliott Groves is the first recipient of the KlaasKids Scholarship, presented annually by the KlaasKids Foundation. In memory of Polly Klaas, the \$4,000 scholarship is available to the best-qualified students, regardless of financial status, and is to be used for tuition/books and other college related expenses. Applications must be submitted to the Foundation along with an essay on the student's goals and qualifications. Recipients must have a record of volunteer activities and agree to do one year of volunteer work for the KlaasKids Foundation. The following article is written by Elliott's father, Michael Groves.

My son, Elliott Groves, and Polly Klaas were born within a few months of each other in 1981. Since I was a close friend of Polly's father, Marc Klaas, it was natural that our two families would visit frequently, share birthdays and holidays, mutually delighting in Polly and Elliott, our first children. And what a fascinating, charming, and loving pair of children they were. From the beginning, they longed for each other's company, and would babble and play for hours. They both benefited from overlapping, loving families. We all enjoyed hiking, beachcombing, bike riding, and picnicking together.

It is rare for unrelated children to remain close through the various phases of childhood. Not only did Polly and Elliott's bond continue and strengthen, but as far as I can remember, they never fought. Each child was,

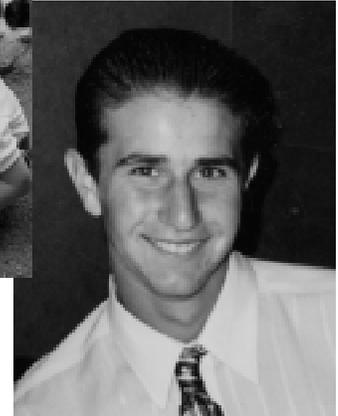
of course, occasionally selfish, demanding, or just generally pig-headed, but at those times, the other child would compromise, disarm through charm or, these failing, simply submit!

The sky crumbled and the stars fell on that fateful day in October 1993, when Elliott's

mother and I told him of the kidnapping. He at first could not comprehend the reality of the event and flatly denied the possibility. Shortly thereafter, he developed an amazing strength and optimism regarding the inevitability of her safe return. Elliott and his nine-year-old sister, Victoria, constructed a beautiful little shrine of candles and flowers. Their mother led them in nightly prayer.



Polly Klaas and Elliott Groves as children



KlaasKids Scholarship winner Elliott Groves

During the next two months, Elliott visited and helped at the search headquarters in Petaluma as much as he could. I will never forget the moment when he ran into my bedroom to tell me that Polly's mother, Eve Nichol, had just called to say the kidnapper has been caught. For Elliott, this news meant that Polly would be found and returned home within hours. Telling my children of Polly's death was the most painful act of my life. Through the tears, Elliott said simply, "No one ever told me life could be like this."

During the past five years, Elliott has rebounded remarkably. His profound feelings about Polly and her fate are stored deeply within him. Polly's family has been a source of strength, particularly Polly's stepsister, Jessica Nichol, and Polly's parents. Marc and Eve's example of dedication and strength has been an inspiration to Elliott.

Elliott is now 17 and a junior at Bishop O'Dowd High School in Oakland, California, where he maintains a better than 3.5 GPA. Through his first three years, he has excelled in the science, math, and computer disciplines,

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ALIEN CHILD MOLESTERS ARRESTED IN STING

The United States Border Patrol, working with Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and the Florida Department of Correction Probation and Patrol Services, arrested 36 convicted criminal aliens in Miami, Florida, on March 12. More than half of those arrested have criminal convictions for sex crimes, including many with convictions for sexually abusing children.

Border Patrol agents, probation and parole officers, and agents from the FDLE took part in the enforcement action aimed at removing aliens with aggravated felonies. Border Patrol Chief Billy Kring said, "The individuals arrested today are aggravated felons, who under federal law can be removed from the United States. All law-abiding residents of Florida have a right to live safe from sexual offenders and other criminal aliens who have refused to obey our laws."

All those arrested are either in the United States illegally or have Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR) status. Under immigration law, LPRs

who have been convicted of crimes involving moral turpitude or aggravated felonies are deportable. They were arrested at various locations in the Miami area, and were tracked through their arrest and probation records. All will face immigration removal proceedings, and will be detained until then. According to court and conviction records, 30 of the individuals arrested have been convicted of sex crimes including sexual assault, sexual assault of a child, lewd assault, sexual battery, and kidnapping.

Acknowledging the value of the cooperative law enforcement effort, Kring said, "Without the Florida law enforcement officials, operations such as this would be difficult, if not impossible, for the U.S. Border Patrol to conduct." ■

SAFETY VIDEO NOW AVAILABLE

The KlaasKids Foundation's first video release, *Missing... What to do if Your Child Disappears*, is now available to the public. This 27-minute production utilizes the expertise of the FBI, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the California Department of Justice, and many other child

safety experts to help families prepare in case their child should ever be missing. It is the first training video for parents, children, and communities seeking kidnap prevention, child finding, and crime solving techniques.

In an innovative effort to break away from the standard talking head format and offer entertainment as well as educational value, the video was filmed as a quiz show, complete with informative commercial breaks. Hosted by retired FBI Special 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 Linda Fefferman assemble police, federal experts, parents, child advocates, and noted journalists from across the nation. The fast pace and wealth of information is supported by written information and a child identification packet included with every copy.

If you wish to purchase a copy of *Missing... What to do if Your Child Disappears*, call the Video Learning Library at (800) 383-8811. The video can also be previewed on the KlaasKids website at <http://www.klaaskids.org>. ■



VOLUNTEER PROFILE

(from previous page)

as well as religious studies and history. Although neither my wife nor myself ever played, Elliott has become an accomplished tennis player, ranked number three on the varsity team.

Volunteer activities are important to Elliott. In 1997 he volunteered at a community hospital working with senior citizens who were recuperating from recent surgery prior to

discharge. In 1998, Elliott began volunteering for the KlaasKids Foundation, working with Greg Hyde, a remarkably generous and greatly talented Webmaster. Greg, who has maintained the KlaasKids Web site, is now training Elliott to perform this important task.

With the love and assistance of so many people, Elliott's future will be exciting and meaningful. Polly must be proud of her dear friend. ■

NEW FEDERAL LAWS FOCUS ON INTERNET STALKING, ENFORCEMENT

A new federal bill that targets strengthening child-protection laws was passed on June 11 by a rare unanimous vote in the House of Representatives. The bill, H.R. 3494, was sponsored by House representative Bill McCollum, and focuses on protecting children from sexual predators and child pornography, especially over the Internet; tightens laws for punishing sexual offenders; and makes it easier for law enforcement to track down pedophiles, kidnappers, and serial killers.

The bill protects children from sexual predators and child pornographers, and tightens laws for tracking down and punishing sexual offenders.

Several amendments were appended to the bill, including one sponsored by Florida Representative Mark Foley, which enables nonprofit organizations to run fingerprint checks on persons volunteering to work with children (see story opposite). President Clinton has already said that he supports the measures. The new law does the following:

1. Protects Children from Predators and Pornographers

- Prohibits contacting a minor over the Internet for the purposes of engaging in illegal sexual activity.
- Prohibits knowingly transferring obscene materials to a minor over the Internet.
- Doubles the maximum prison sentence from five to ten years from enticing a minor to travel across state lines to engage in illegal sexual activity.
- Doubles the maximum prison sentence from 10 to 15 years from persuading a minor to engage in prostitution or a sexual act.
- Establishes a minimum sentence of three years for using a computer to commit the above offense.
- Allows prosecution for production of child pornography when materials used to make the pornography were transported via interstate or foreign commerce.
- Increases penalties for possessing 50 or more images of or items containing child pornography.
- Authorizes criminal forfeiture for federal sex offenses, including transporting a minor across state lines for

sexual purposes, coercion, or crossing state lines in order to have sex with a minor.

- Authorizes pre-trial detention of federal child sex offenders.
- Doubles the maximum prison sentence for repeat sex offenders.

2. Increases Punishment for Sexual Offenders

- Mandates life in prison for serial rapists (two previous convictions)
- Increases the maximum prison sentence from ten to 15 years for transporting a minor across state lines for sexual purposes.
- Doubles prison sentences for abusive sexual contact if the victim is under the age of 12.
- Doubles the maximum prison sentence available for second-time sex offenders.
- Authorizes civil suits for personal injuries resulting from some sex crimes against children.
- Requires life imprisonment for serious felonies or sexual exploitation of a child, if the victim is under 14 years old and dies as a result of the offense.

3. Aids Law Enforcement

- Allows for administrative subpoenas in certain child exploitation investigations.
- Allows for immediate commencement of federal investigations in kidnapping cases.
- Authorizes federal jurisdiction in kidnapping cases if interstate or foreign commerce was involved in any way.
- Authorizes the Attorney General and the FBI to investigate serial murders when such an investigation is requested by the state or local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction.
- Restructures the currently existing Morgan P. Hardiman Missing and Exploited Children's Task Force into a resource center to improve its effectiveness in kidnapping and serial murder investigations.
- Prohibits unsupervised access to the Internet by federal prisoners, encourages states to enact laws regulating prison access, and requires the Attorney General to report on the status of states' regulation of Internet access by prisoners. ■

FINGERPRINT CHECKS FOR NONPROFITS: THE VOLUNTEERS FOR CHILDREN ACT

By Mark Foley, Congressional House of Representatives

In 1993, Congress passed a critical safeguard for children, the National Child Protection Act, commonly known as the Oprah Winfrey Act. The law gave groups such as schools, day care facilities, and youth volunteer organizations access to FBI fingerprinting checks to help

ensure that they weren't inadvertently hiring convicted child molesters to tend their charges.



Florida Representative
Mark Foley

But there is a hitch. Under the law, these national fingerprint-based checks are only available if states put into place laws approved by the U.S. Attorney General, that specifically allow access to them. As a result, while nearly all states have approved

laws providing background checks for school personnel, day care workers, and so on, only six

states have laws giving nonprofit youth-serving organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, access to national fingerprint checks on would-be volunteers.

That is 44 states too few.

I therefore authored an amendment to H.R. 3494 called the Volunteers for Children Act, which allows youth-serving nonprofit organizations to request national fingerprint background checks, in the absence of state laws providing that access. Most states have recognized how critical it is to do thorough background checks of people with institutional care of young children. But we do not entrust our children to strangers solely at schools or day care facilities. After hours there are baseball games, scouting, camping, and a host of other activities that are often supervised by volunteers.

Many nonprofits would like to have the ability to do the best background check possible in order to ensure the safety of the children in their care. Yet, according to existing federal law, unless there's a state law giving them access to fingerprint checks, they're out of luck. They have had no access until now to the only true method for positively identifying convicted sexual predators.

As a January 1997 report by the General Accounting Office put it: "National fingerprint-based background checks may be the only effective way to readily identify the potentially worst abusers of children, that is, the pedophiles who change their names and move from state to state to continue their sexually perverse patterns of behavior."

We took an important step in enacting Megan's Law to protect children from sexual predators in their neighborhoods. Now we will be able to help volunteer organizations protect their children as well. ■

WISCONSIN TAKES A STAND AGAINST SEX OFFENDERS

The Wisconsin legislature has passed the first two portions of an aggressive package of child protection legislation known as the Klaas Agenda for Wisconsin, in honor of Polly Klaas. The bills were driven by State Representative Mark Green, who has been a strong supporter of the KlaasKids Foundation since he first met Marc Klaas in early 1997. He and Marc developed the set of proposed bills at that time.

"Perhaps the greatest achievement in my legislative career has been successfully championing Wisconsin's new 'Two strikes and you're out' law for child sex offenders," Green said. "Because of this initiative, offenders in Wisconsin will get only one chance to reform their deviant behavior before spending the rest of their life in prison. Marc came to Wisconsin to testify in support of this bill, and I am positive that his passionate testimony was instrumental in passing this legislation."

Another new Wisconsin law gives judges the option to sentence most sex offenders to state monitoring for their entire life. This lifetime monitoring provision will ensure that the state keeps track of sex offenders wherever they may go.

"Do we still have a long way to go to change the criminal justice system? Sure we do," Green said. "But as of 1998, being a sex offender in Wisconsin became a much more difficult proposition." ■

A MESSAGE FROM MARC

(Cont. from page 1)

• According to the FBI, there were 10,744 firearm murders in the U.S. in 1996, over 700 of them perpetrated by offenders under the age of 18.

Prior to the recent schoolyard killings in Pearl, West Paducah, Jonesboro, and Springfield, public response to these alarming statistics has been lukewarm. Social and legislative efforts to control the epidemic have been ineffectual and vague. The lessons to be learned from these tragedies must focus on preventing future incidents through education and legislation.

How Can We Change?

Dr. Joe Marshall, founder and executive director of the Omega Boys Club, recently suggested that we adopt a policy toward gun violence similar to that used in the current battle against cigarette smoking.

We are the most heavily armed civilization in the history of the world—there are nearly 200 million privately held guns in America.

From Christopher Columbus' introduction of tobacco to western culture, through the macho appeal of the Marlboro Man and Joe Camel, millions of Americans have been attracted to and adversely affected by the lure of tobacco. Private litigation representing the ruined and lost lives of innocent consumers, supported by hard scientific evidence, heroically

challenged the well-rehearsed testimony of industry spokespersons.

Despite well-documented collusion between elected officials and the tobacco industry, public outrage resulted in a series of consumer victories. On June 27, 1997, the tobacco industry and their legal opponents reached a tentative agreement that addresses smokers' liability claims and allows cigarettes to be regulated by the government as addictive drugs. Finally, we have reached a level of intolerance that shows tobacco use declining in most consumer demographics. The same thing needs to happen with gun control. We are the most heavily armed civilization in the history of the world—there are nearly 200 million privately held guns in America.

For now, parents who insist on keeping a gun in the home should empty it out and lock it up. Placing a trigger lock on each gun is an additional effective and very low-cost precaution. Police recommend that bullets be locked and stored in a separate place. According to the National Rifle Association, the best time to introduce the subject of gun safety is when a child begins asking questions about firearms. Parents should answer their youngster's questions honestly and openly, eliminating some of the mystery and glamour surrounding guns. Since a child's risk of being injured or killed by a gun does not end at home, they should be educated on the four basic rules of gun safety:

- 1) Stop
- 2) Don't Touch
- 3) Leave the Area
- 4) Tell an Adult

Solutions that are Already Working

Too many of us tend to drop-kick responsibility to political leaders more concerned with getting votes than protecting our future. They become talking heads, spouting philosophies that deny reality. Unwilling to emulate the proactive solutions to violence favored by other first world countries, we are reassured that "isolated schoolyard incidents" are perpetrated by misguided youth rebounding from their own personal victimization. Sociopaths of any age are not responsible for their actions; we are not accountable for fostering an environment that nurtures the brooding dark side of humanity, they say.

Yet, solutions carried out in other countries are already working.

- In 1989, a lone gunman killed 14 college women in Quebec, providing the impetus for the Canadian government to ban semi-automatics and big-rifle ammunition.
- In March 1996, 43-year-old Thomas Hamilton massacred 16 children and their teacher at a primary school in Dunblane, Scotland. Within seven months, the British government banned all handguns of more than .22 caliber.
- In April 1996, Martin Bryant killed 35 people in Port Arthur, Australia. One month later, semi-automatic and pump-action firearms were banned in that country.

In the United States, there too is an occasional glimmer of hope.

- Since 1994, the Brady Law has blocked the sale of handguns to over 250,000 prohibited users. Of this

(Cont. on page 7)

number, over 47,000 were felons.

- From March 1994 through July 1996, over 70,000 purchases of handguns by felons were stopped because their record was uncovered as part of a criminal background check.
- Fifteen states have enacted State Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws, requiring gun owners living in households with minor children to store their guns locked and out of reach, under penalty of criminal prosecution. In Florida, the first state to pass a CAP law, unintentional shooting deaths dropped by more than 50% in the first year.
- In Massachusetts, Attorney General Scott Harshbarger banned the manufacture and sale of "Saturday night specials," cheap handguns of inferior quality, by issuing consumer-protection regulations that require all handguns to meet high standards, including child-proofing features, tamper-proof serial numbers, and detailed consumer safety warnings.
- Boston has reduced youth homicide to unprecedented low levels through a citywide collaboration of schools, police, businesses and youth organizations that emphasize prevention-based solutions.

Gun advocates and gun opponents agree that widespread gun ownership in America has a profound impact on society, but this is where common ground ends. We owe it to our children to sit down and mediate our differences, seeking a common ground that sensibly addresses the issue of youth violence. If we fail to do so, our children will continue to follow our lead and work out their aggressions by pursuing the darkest side of human nature. ■

TEENS USING GUNS TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS

October 1, 1997: 16-year-old Luke Woodham opened fire at his high school in Pearl, MS, killing two students and wounding seven others. The authorities found the suspect's mother stabbed to death at home in her sleep, police say. They also discovered a small, avowedly satanic clique that calls itself "Kroth." In addition to Woodham, six students face conspiracy charges. "My mother started going out partying all the time," he said. "She was never there."

December 1, 1997: Michael Carneal, described as an "ordinary 14-year-old boy," fatally shot three classmates and wounded five others at a West Paducah, KY, high school. At the time, Carneal was armed with several weapons, including a .22 caliber handgun with three extra clips. The weapons were allegedly stolen from a neighbor's garage.

December 15, 1997: Two students were shot and wounded in Stamps, AR. A local resident commented, "We're a very close-knit community ... it's like a member of your own family being shot." Joseph "Colt" Todd, 14, was arrested in the nonfatal shootings four days later.

March 24, 1998: Firing from woods overlooking their school, a 13-year-old and an 11-year-old shot and killed four middle school students and a teacher and injured ten other students in Jonesboro, AR. The two students were found with three rifles, seven handguns, and more than 500 rounds of ammunition. The weapons were taken from the home of the 11-year-old's grandfather and father.

April 27, 1998: Andrew Jerome Wurst, 14, walked into the James W. Parker Middle School Dance at Edenborough, PA, and opened fire with .25 caliber semi-automatic handgun. John Gillette, a popular science teacher, was killed and two other students wounded. Wurst had stolen the pistol from his father.

May 21, 1998: In Springfield, OR, high school freshman Kip Kinkel jumped onto a table in the Thurston High School cafeteria and opened fire. Kinkel, who had been suspended the day before for having a gun in his locker, fired off 51 rounds—nearly all from a rifle—before a wrestler, himself critically wounded, tackled him, police said. When it was all over, 17-year-old Mikael Nickolauson was dead at the scene. Sixteen-year-old Ben Walker died the next day. Several others were in critical condition. The teenager had shot his parents to death prior to the high school rampage.

Information sources include wire service and news reports.

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: _____

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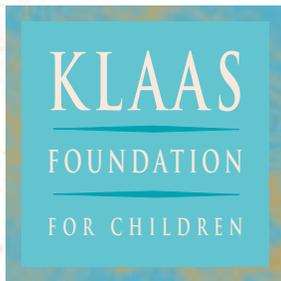
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Be sure to check out our Website at <http://www.klaaskids.org/index.htm> for regular updates and information on child safety. Give us your feedback!



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