

KLAAS ACTION REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARC KLAAS FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

A MESSAGE FROM MARC

During a recent tour of the Smithsonian's Museum of American History in Washington D.C., I repeatedly heard the phrase "America's Promise" as tour guides discussed the immigrant migrations that gave birth to our society. But I was unable to locate a definition of America's Promise.

Hope, freedom, and equal opportunity is not enough to explain how a country created around the concept, the value, and the rights of the individual, has, for more than 200 years, evolved into history's most powerful nation. Something fundamental that defines our existence is at the core of America's promise: an unspoken promise to our children that we will give them a better world than was given to us.

We anxiously move into the new millennium, though we have more knowledge and information than had been compiled by all previous generations combined. We have a bellwether opportunity to create a new vision of the future, yet deferred responsibility, lack of accountability, and misplaced priorities seem to have jeopardized our ability to create one.

Unfortunately, many of us can't see beyond the projected lack of champagne on New Year's eve. If we can't see beyond the party or the hangover, we are doomed to repeat the past and risk becoming an historical footnote like the Egyp-

tians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the other great civilizations we now only find in museums.

One need only look at the state of children in America today to realize that this is a time of limited possibilities and opportunities:

- 1 in 5 children lives in poverty.
- 1 in 4 preschool children is not immunized.
- 1 in 6 children has no health insurance.
- 1 in 4 children will not graduate from high school.
- 1 in 4 female children will be molested by age 18.
- 1 in 6 males will be molested by the age of 18.

The cornerstone of the promise to our children can be traced to the Georgian period in England, from 1730 until 1830. This is the first time western culture perceived childhood as a special time of innocence and development. Prior to that, children were represented as the passage of bloodlines, an agrarian work force, or artistically portrayed as ornamentation or

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CHILD SAFETY NONPROFITS PULL TOGETHER

Too often today, the nonprofit child safety and recovery industry is plagued by a deficit of cooperation among child safety agencies. Lack of resources, poor communication, and territorial and control issues sometimes cloud their vision and agencies seem to lose track of their true clientele: the children.

Through shared resources, ideas, and programs, the KlaasKids Foundation, the Vanished Children's Alliance, the Interstate Association for Stolen Children, and the Amber Foundation for Missing Children are bucking this trend by working closely together on important projects and initiatives designed to benefit America's missing and exploited children. All of these organizations and individuals mentioned below cooperated in the Foundation video, *Missing: What to Do if Your Child Disappears*.

The Vanished Children's Alliance

Following a successful four-and-a-half year search for her own kidnapped daughter, Georgia Hilgeman founded the Vanished Children's Alliance (VCA) in March 1981. "I really hadn't anticipated starting an organization," she said. "When I recovered my daughter, it hit the national press and people started to call me for advice. This was back when most people didn't think that missing children were a problem. We incorporated as a support group and expanded the mission as we went along."

Today a nationally recognized expert in the development and implementation of effective and meaningful education and prevention programs, Georgia manages offices in San Jose, CA, and Silver Spring, MD. VCA's national and international network aids in the prevention, investigation, location, recovery, and reunification of missing and abducted children.

Georgia advocates an interdisciplinary approach to all components of the missing children's issue. "Too often, each component sees their role myopically," she said. "The real solution is to evolve through defining individual roles and learning from each other. Law enforcement won't trust us until and unless we demonstrate our usefulness. The same goes for families, the media, and any other entities. Once you get the components together, you can form a plan and save time. Time is the killer."

After having consulted on cases and fundraising efforts for many years, the KlaasKids Foundation is currently assisting the VCA with a

Kidnap Response Guide. This much-needed and long awaited publication will ensure that families faced with the daunting task of recovering a missing child will be able to draw upon decades of knowledge and experience unavailable in any other form. (Phone: 800-VANISHED)

The Interstate Association for Stolen Children

The Sacramento, CA-based Interstate Association for Stolen Children (IASC) intervenes nationally to recover missing children and facilitates "Kids In Dire Straits," a citywide street intervention program. "This program gives children opportunities they would not normally have," said Founder and President Greg Mengell. "We don't have much money, so sometimes we have to be creative, even beg. Give me \$10,000 and I will produce \$120,000 worth of benefits."

Mengell says, "Deep down, these kids want to be like everybody else. These are the children who have fallen through the cracks, and without us they would end up as lost souls, without options. When a 12-year-old with a dysfunctional background gives me a hug with tears in his eyes, it's worth it."

The KlaasKids Foundation works with the IASC to find funding and share resources so that both organizations can draw upon a greater library of knowledge and experience. (Phone: 916-631-7631)

The Amber Foundation for Missing Children

Kim Swartz lost twice. On May 3, 1980, her husband, Pinole, CA, Police Officer Floyd "Bernie" Swartz was gunned down in the line of duty. Two weeks after Bernie Swartz' killer was sentenced to death, their seven-year-old daughter Amber was kidnapped while jumping rope in her front yard. "I formed the Amber Foundation for Missing Children in late June," Kim said. "Realizing that I would have to do something to keep Amber's face in the public eye and help other families with missing loved ones. We still do not know where she is; yet, because of her Foundation, Amber's case continues to generate

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KLAASKIDS ON THE ROAD

The KlaasKids Foundation has continued to carry the message of child safety around the country during the spring months. In April, Marc Klaas embarked upon a series of speaking appearances at Western Connecticut State University; the Melanie Rieger Conference in Waterbury, CT; and the Justice for Murder Victims memorial in San Francisco, CA. He was also the keynote speaker at the John J. Tyler Victim Rights Conference in Richmond, VA, and at the Victim Rights Memorial Dinner in St. Charles, MO. In addition, Klaas addressed the U.S. Congress Missing and Exploited Children Caucus in May.

The Foundation has also participated in fundraising and press events

around the country, as well as a heavy schedule of Child Safety Events (see calendar below). With the Interstate Association for Stolen Children, the Foundation took part in the Safe in Our World fundraiser on May 20. Marc Klaas spoke on *The 11th Hour* on KDBI-TV in Denver, CO in May, and appeared on PBS's *POV: The Legacy* on June 1.

The Foundation also had a presence at the press conference for Massachusetts Omnibus Privacy Legislation, hosted by Lt. Governor Swift and the Office of Consumer Affairs on June 23; and appeared at the "Fight Crime: Invest in Kids" press conference on investment funding for at-risk youth, held on July 8. ■

AIMEE'S LAW IS VOTED IN

The federal Aimee's Law, or "No Second Chances" bill, has just passed the Senate by an 81-17 vote and the House by a 314-15 vote—making it some of the fastest moving legislation seen in Washington for some time. This bipartisan effort, sponsored by Senator Rick Santo and House Representative Matt Salmon requires states to assume fiscal responsibility if they release a murderer, rapist, or child molester who then goes on to commit one of those crimes in another state. The state that releases the convict is now required to compensate the second state. Exemptions will be made for states with truth-in-sentencing laws requiring that convicted criminals serve at least 85% of their sentence. ■

Cooperating Foundations (cont.)

potential leads."

The KlaasKids Foundation and the Amber Foundation for Missing Children work together on child safety day events throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. In partnership with the San Diego-based Child Safety Network, we are creating a program that will offer free long distance telephone service to the families of children abducted by predators.

"I continue my work with the Amber Foundation, educating the public and helping families," Swartz added. "Media coverage can be a double-edged sword, but the press, along with law enforcement and the missing child's family, can create the ongoing pressure necessary to find a missing child or track down the perpetrator. This is still the best hope I have for finding Amber." (Phone: 800-541-0777) ■

UPCOMING CHILD SAFETY DAY EVENTS

August 3, Montgomery Police Department, Montgomery, IL

August 7-8, Comcast Cable, Little Rock, AR

August 11-12, Indiana State Fair (WFMS Radio), Indianapolis, IN

August 12-15, Yorktown Mall, Lombard, IL

August 31-Sept. 1, Imperial Chevrolet, Milford, MA

September 3-4, Sarasota Ford, Sarasota, FL

September 9-10, Williams Pontiac, Boyertown, PA

September 10-11, Galpin Ford, Prescott, AZ

September 10-11, Orlando Pil Toyota, Tinley Park, IL

September 16-19, Springhill Mall, West Dundee, IL

September 17-18, Eastgate Ford, Dayton, OH

September 17-20, Anthony Pontiac, Waukegan, IL

September 25-26, John Hall Chevrolet, Daytona Beach, FL

September 25-26, Milke Daugherty Chevrolet, Sacramento, CA

September 25-26, Atlantic Star Broadcasting, Hartford, CT

September 25-26, Palanker Chevrolet, West Babylon, NY

A series of 30 events will take place throughout the San Francisco Bay Area each weekend from Aug. 21 to Sept. 30, in cooperation with General Mills and Safeway Stores. Locations are yet to be determined. Services will include SentryKIDS portable electronic fingerprinting and imaging systems, to be donated to selected law enforcement agencies at the end of the program.

COMMUNITY CENTER WORKS TO BAN BOMBMAKING WEBSITES

By Dennis Saffran and Joe Diamond, Center for the Community Interest

Before America Online removed it, Columbine High School killer Eric Harris' website provided explicit instructions and diagrams for assembling pipe bombs and other lethal devices. One of Harris' pages instructed, "Shrapnel is very important if you want to kill and injure a lot of people."

If you surf over to another part of the Internet, you will find that industry giant Yahoo still hosts, "Nuke the World Chemistry: A place to discuss the preparation of bombs ... for those who want to damage people/property."

These are just some examples of the growing number of bombmaking resources freely available in cyberspace. The Center for the Community Interest (CCI) has launched a campaign calling on America Online, Yahoo, Microsoft, and other Internet firms to pull the plug on these deadly sites.

Supporting Policies that Make Sense

CCI is the common sense alternative to the American Civil Liberties Union when it comes to crime and quality-of-life issues. We support prudent policies that strike a

We support policies that strike a balance between rights and responsibilities, and defend those policies when civil liberties demands are carried to unreasonable extremes.

balance between rights and responsibilities, and defend those policies when civil liberties demands are carried to unreasonable extremes that hurt or endanger others, or erode our shared quality of life.

We're proud to have Marc Klaas serve on our National Advisory Board. Marc's success in getting AOL to remove a site glorifying serial killers is one of the inspirations for

our campaign against bombmaking sites.

CCI is calling on the cyberspace industry to police itself by taking the following steps:

1. Internet Website hosting firms such as AOL and Microsoft, and firms that provides "newsgroups" or other public posting forums such as AOL and Yahoo should run

automated search engine programs that continuously scan their computers for red-flag keywords suggesting the presence of bomb making instructions. If a staff review of the site or posting then turned up actual instructions for making bombs, it should immediately be shut down or deleted.

2. Firms that operate World Wide Web search engines should run similar automated scans of the entire web, and program their product not to provide links to confirmed bomb-making sites. They should also alert sponsoring Web hosts of the presence of dangerous and inappropriate information on their servers. (Microsoft, Yahoo, and Disney's "Go.com" all operate Internet search engines.)

3. Internet firms should also remove sites or postings that specifically threaten or encourage physical violence against named private individuals—such as Eric Harris' AOL Website which contained threats against a classmate.

Becoming More Proactive

Our focus is the large companies through which most people gain Internet access. With their vast technical and financial resources, these companies can easily implement the steps we've recommended. All it takes is the moral commitment.

AOL did remove the Eric Harris website. But as this demonstrates, too often Internet companies remove such dangerous content only after there has been a tragedy. How many people visit these sites before they are removed? How many sites continue to develop and metastasize while our attention is diverted? How many sociopaths are currently using these sites to obtain and



CCI Executive Director
Dennis Saffran



CCI Public Affairs
Director Joe Diamond

disseminate life-threatening information? Even one active site that teaches others how to make bombs is one more than the public interest can tolerate. Basic human decency and common sense require a more proactive effort.

The Internet industries cannot hide behind the First Amendment as an excuse for refusing to clean house. The First Amendment does not restrict the actions of private companies like AOL and other Internet firms. No one has a constitutional right to use an Internet company's property to facilitate murder. Rather, the companies have the right—and the moral obligation—to end the proliferation of bombmaking instructions on the Net.

The industry defensively notes that bombmaking information is available in the dusty sub-reaches of university libraries—while they typically boast about how the Net gives any 15-year-old access in a click to information once available only in the dusty sub-reaches of university libraries. They can't have it both ways.

Victims and Families Step Forward

Among those working with CCI on its campaign are David Kaczynski, the brother of the Unabomber; Marsha Kight, leader of the Oklahoma City bombing survivor group; and Gary Wright, a Salt Lake City computer expert and Unabomb victim.

After conducting an investigation of bombmaking websites, Gary reported to us that, "In 15 minutes of research on the Web, I was able to find at least ten sites that could give a person with little technical sophistication the information on how to commit mass murder."

What You Can Do

So far, the companies we've contacted have not responded to us. This is shameful on their part, and we will continue to put pressure on them to take action against the escalating menace of online bombmaking instructions.

You can help by writing letters urging the chief executives of the companies we've targeted to take the steps outlined above. A letter we sent to AOL head Steve Case is reproduced on CCI's website at www.communityinterest.org. This letter can be used as a guide for your own correspondence. If you don't have access to the Internet and would like a copy, or need further information, please call us at (212) 689-6080.

Stephen M. Case
Chairman and CEO
America Online, Inc.
22000 AOL Way
Sterling, VA 20166

Michael D. Eisner
Chairman and CEO
The Walt Disney Company
500 South Buena Vista Street
Burbank, CA 91521

William H. Gates, III
Chairman and CEO
Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052-6399

Tim Koogle
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
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3420 Central Expressway, 2nd Floor
Santa Clara, CA 95051

Harry M. Motro
President and Chief Executive Officer
Infoseek Corporation
1399 Moffett Park Drive
Sunnyvale, CA 94089 ■

PRISON PINUPS BAN UPHELD

An appeals court has reversed the "pinups for pedophiles" decision in which a federal judge likened a New Jersey law banning imprisoned sex offenders from keeping porn in their cells to Nazi persecution of the Jews. New Jersey enacted the ban last year after members of a child molestation task force toured the state's Avenel prison for sex offenders (the facility that released Megan Kanka's murderer) and were shocked to find nude pinups and other sexually explicit material. Two Avenel inmates, one who raped an 11-year-old girl and one who sexually abused a 14-year-old boy, sued alleging that the restriction violated their constitutional rights—and Federal District Judge Alfred Wolin agreed.

CCI drew national attention to the case in a *Wall Street Journal* article last July, prompting New Jersey's Attorney General to reverse his initial refusal and appeal Judge Wolin's decision to the U.S. 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals. Last week, the court upheld the ban, stressing that inmates' rights are limited and that prison management decisions should be reviewed with deference. The court reasoned that "common sense tells us that prisoners are more likely to develop self control and respect for others if prevented from pouring over pictures that are degrading and disrespectful." ■

MARY VINCENT: FROM VICTIM TO VICTOR

On her big night, Mary Vincent thanked California Governor Gray Davis for his support of crime victims and presented him with the charcoal portrait of him she had sketched, using only her plastic forearms and hooks for hands.

"I never looked better," the governor told her as he accepted the lifelike drawing. At that moment, Mary Vincent never felt better. Wearing a new cocktail dress with long sleeves discreetly covering her mechanical arms, she stood beaming on the podium as 350 people applauded.

That evening was a coming out of sorts for the 36-year-old woman, whose forearms and hands were hacked off by Lawrence Singleton,

who left her for dead near Modesto when she was 15. His final words made her shrivel: "If it's the last thing I do, I'm going to finish the job."

Over the last several months, however, Vincent has rediscovered her hands for drawing and her soul for speaking out. "I lost 20 years of my life. I'm not going to lose another 20," Vincent said. "I'm going to do everything I can to make a difference in life."

Left to Die

In the fall of 1978, Vincent was a high school dropout and runaway from Las Vegas. Hitchhiking on a freeway on-ramp in Berkeley, CA, Vincent hopped in Singleton's blue van.

Singleton, a former seaman, pulled off Interstate 5 near Modesto. In a flash, Vincent saw a hammer behind her, cracking down on her head. Singleton tied Vincent's hands behind her back and raped her repeatedly. She screamed for him to release her.

"You want to be set free? I'll set you free," he said. He untied her hands, then sunk an ax into her left forearm. Three blows and it was gone. It took four blows to sever the right. Singleton dumped her into a culvert off a lonely road.

Somehow she survived the night, then wandered naked and bloody until the sun came up. The young men in the first car that stopped were so horrified they sped away. Eventually, a second vehicle came along—newlyweds who were lost—and they took her to call for help.

Vincent remained in the hospital for a month and was fitted with prosthetic arms with crab-like pincer hooks for hands. She testified against Singleton, and as she left the witness stand, he swore he would kill her.

Three years later, at her marriage to her first husband, a guest told her that Lawrence Singleton had been freed from San Quentin. He had served just eight years.

A New Life

Vincent barricaded herself in her home and felt faint at every knock on her door. But in February 1997, her mother called with the news. "He struck again." Vincent dropped the phone. Singleton had been arrested for killing a Florida woman.

Vincent flew to Florida to testify at Singleton's sentencing. Now 69, he was sent to death row. This was the beginning of Vincent's return to life.

BY: REGINA SUND

Most of us know of the kidnapping and murder of Carole Sund, with her daughter Julie and friend Silvina Pelosso, at Yosemite National Park in early 1999. The following is a poem contributed by Carole's 13-year-old daughter, Regina.

Late at night I await for your return.
But deep in my heart I know something my mind doesn't want to learn.
What is this thought?
Even I do not know.
Soon the running river, will become solid snow.

I shiver at the thought of what I might have to see.
Whether or not my mother will be.

At a time when I need my mother's touch most,
All I see of her are pictures nailed to a post.
When it is time for bed, I rock myself to sleep,
With memories of you held tight in my heart.
Memories that I will always keep.

Each day that you are gone,
A part of me has gone with you.
If you are never to return,
It will seem like I am gone too.

I try to stay strong, because I know that's what you'd want your baby to be.
But mommy...I don't want you to leave me.

MESSAGE FROM MARC (CONT.)

She was flooded with media interviews across the country. The public donated money for new limbs. U.S. Rep. Matt Salmon, R-Ariz., called and asked her to speak on behalf of his bill, "Aimee's law," which places financial responsibility for repeat violent offenders on the state that releases them from prison (see page 3 for the latest news).

With a new set of arms and her attacker removed from society forever, Vincent and her oldest son moved last fall to Orange County, where she got a job with the welfare fraud unit.

But she was still plagued by demons. When someone would come up behind her unexpectedly, she would let out a piercing scream. She quit after three months, but not before she met Tom Wilson, an investigator with the district attorney's office. They married in March.

"Blessed and Happy"

Along with her sketching, Vincent is beginning to record her thoughts and memories for a possible book. In the past, she always turned down any suggestion of a book because she thought her story was too horrific. Now she has a happy ending.

"I knew if I just had hope and faith, God would come through," she said. "I'm very blessed and happy."

"Mary has the capacity to really move people," Salmon said. "I really hope that the heavens smile down on her, because it's her turn." ■

Written by staff writer Julia Prodis Sulek, a longer version of this article was published May 30, 1999, in the San Jose Mercury News. It is reprinted with permission.

religious symbols. It was a unique time during which the fate of the child and the future of the adult hung in delicate balance, overwhelming the doctrine that children were inherently evil beings who had to be taught goodness. It was a time of possibilities, a time of high expectations and aspirations.

It was also a time of great social responsibility. The Industrial Revolution fueled a massive urban migration. London and other large cities, overwhelmed with more people than they could handle, had great numbers of vagrant children, living on the streets, dying and being sacrificed to poverty. This pitiful state of affairs gave birth to the charity movement in western society: London's Foundling Hospital, begun to save children's lives and give them a chance in life through training and education.

The 18th century also introduced the birth of vaccines and pediatrics. The infant custody act of 1839 gave women the right, in the event of legal separation, to custody of children under 7. This is the first time books were specifically written for and available to children in even the poorest households, allowing young minds to develop their potential and contribute to society.

The American vision built upon this foundation by encouraging minds, promoting ideas, and expanding the world of possibility and opportunity. Our founding fathers bestowed upon us the gift of their far-sighted vision through a constitution and other documents that guaranteed our continued evolution based on the value of the individual and the perpetuation of continued achievement. Later, Abraham Lin-

coln's courage in the face of great adversity enabled previously trod upon populations to participate in the American experience.

In the late 19th century, another American, Thomas Edison, took the world to the next level of achievement by harnessing electricity. Edison's breakthrough discovery shaped the 20th century and established the foundation from which most modern developments can be traced. It accelerated the pace of progress. Without electricity there is no mass communication and limited development of ideas.

Today, communication promotes and encourages accomplishment on every level. It shrinks our world, expands our personal and social horizons and enhances our understanding of the human condition. The instantaneous mass distribution of information allows us to track significant social change, better understand cultural differences, and heightens our awareness. It gives us the ability to understand the philosophies and teachings of profound leaders such as Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela: who rejected anger and violence in favor of peaceful strategies to change the world and return the gift of equality to more than a billion oppressed humans.

Our future depends on our embracing and evolving philosophies that create lasting, positive change so that future generations can give their children a better world than was given to them. Then, and only then, will we have an enlightened culture devoid of mass poverty, crime, hate, and fear. ■

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: _____

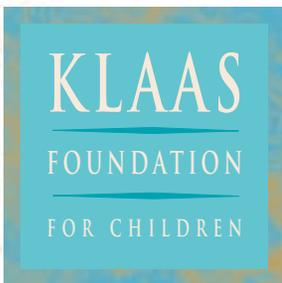
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Be sure to check out our website at <http://www.klaaskids.org> for regular updates and information on child safety. Give us your feedback!



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