

# KLAAS ACTION REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARC KLAAS FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN



## A MESSAGE FROM MARC

**F**or months, we have been assaulted by the political posturing of Republican and Democratic presidential candidates who wrap six-year-old Cuban national Elian Gonzales in the American flag and pontificate on his right to freedom. Little Elian has been treated with rare celebrity status: Network news broadcasts have allowed us to join Elian in Disney World and thrill to his every coming and going.

Unfortunately, on December 9, 1999, two weeks after finding Elian, seven-year-old Xiana Fairchild disappeared without a trace near her home in downtown Vallejo, California. Even more unfortunately, Xiana's scenario is played out in varying degrees, thousands of times a day across America. Therein lies the problem. None of our would-be presidents are talking about drugs, poverty, welfare, parole, bureaucratic bungling, or the other myriad issues that surround her tragedy and prevent us from finding the truth.

Born in prison and given up at birth, Xiana was raised by her great-grandmother in a stable and loving environment for the first six and a half years of her life. During the summer of 1999, Xiana's biological mother, Antoinette Robinson, sought and secured custody of her estranged daughter. Xiana traded the beaches of Hawaii and the blue skies of Colorado for a 60-watt light bulb, a bed in a walk-in closet, in a tenement in a scrappy blue-collar town.

The squalid studio apartment she shared with Antoinette and her boyfriend Bobby Turnbough, on parole for felony child endangerment, barely housed two, yet it often times hosted many. The dominant piece of furniture, an unmade queen-sized bed with dirty sheets, was Party Central for a motley gang of misfits, drug enthusiasts, porno fans, and unemployable riff-raff. Xiana's refuge was the closet where she slept, played, and tried to avoid the crank, the Marlboros, the profane language, and deviate lifestyle. The closet became her altar, the church of a faded past life she prayed to regain even as it slipped away from her tiny grasp.

Little Xiana's fortunes, once measured in love, nurturing, and family, were now valued in bureaucratic terms: as a \$500 housing stipend and \$200 worth of food stamps per month. Instead of breakfast, lunch, and dinner, Xiana ate scraps and her box of cereal shared a cupboard with a bottle of Jack.

Xiana's glitter faded as her

*(Continued on page 7)*

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# REFLECTIONS ON A FRIEND: DON RICHARD

By John Brodie

**O**n January 9, 2000, Don Richard, the Executive Director of The Kevin Collins Foundation for Missing Children, died at the age of 42. He was the most loving person I have ever met. The medical examiner determined that he died of a big heart. How appropriate.

Don and I met 17 years ago, although it seems I knew him all my life. I have learned in my experience that humans are unconsciously and unintentionally in a constant state of service through the example of self. As we become more conscious of ourselves, we develop our own inner peace, and move into a level of service in which we live with intention from the heart.

Don Richard was such a person. He truly lived with intention from his heart.

## A Leader in the Fight for Child Safety

I had the pleasure of knowing Don and the different “hats” he wore in his later life. We recently co-authored our soon-to-be-released book, *Don't Take My Child*, a parents' guide to keeping kids safe.

*Humans are in a constant state of service through the example of self... Don touched so many in his life and shared not only of himself but what he had gleaned from others.*

Don earned his Master's Degree in Administration of Justice from Northern Arizona University. He had been a policeman, college instructor, restaurant owner, consummate chef, connoisseur of fine wines, and host of the California Shakespeare Festival.

As an intern and consultant to the California Department of Justice in 1983 and 1990, Don also

helped pave the safety highway for children by assisting in the development of the sex offender tracking system known as S.H.O.P., as well as the violent criminal tracking system known as the Violent Crime Information Center.

In May of 1999 Don volunteered as the Executive Director of The Kevin Collins Foundation for Missing Children, and in that capacity he used his talents to assist families of missing children.

Don was a loving husband to his



Don Richard (right) with friend John Brodie

wife Gabi, the greatest dad to his son Taylor, a son, grandson, brother, uncle, and cousin to many. Most of all, Don was a friend to those who knew him and even to those who didn't.

## Touching Other Lives

When I think of Don, the following metaphor comes to mind. I was traveling by train. It was a rainy day and the train was slowing down to pull into the train station. I became intent on watching the raindrops on the window. Two separate drops, pushed by the wind, merged into one for a moment and then divided again—each carrying with it a part of the other. Simply by that momentary touching, neither was what it had been before. As each went on to touch other raindrops, it shared not only itself, but, what it had gleaned from the other.

Just like the raindrops, Don touched so many in his life and shared not only of himself but what he had gleaned from others.

Thank you, Don, for touching my life. Even though your song has ended, your melody remains. You are truly missed. ■

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## FOUNDATION LAUNCHES CENTURY 21 PROGRAMS

**A**t the beginning of each year, the KlaasKids Foundation lays out its plan of activities for the coming 12 months. A number of important efforts are already underway in areas important to child safety. Many of these programs were actually launched at the end of 1999:

- December: The Foundation participated in a training video and press conference to announce the CARE (Child Abduction Response Emergency) Alert in Orange County, California (see story, page 5).
- December: Marc Klaas traveled to Michigan for a two-day press tour announcing and promoting the Amber Alert with United States Senator Spencer Abraham (see story, page 4).
- December: The Foundation became actively involved in the recovery effort for seven-year-old kidnap victim Xiana Fairchild in Vallejo, California.

### Support for Key New Legislation

Starting in 2000, the Klaas Kids Foundation is lending its support to important legislation around the country. Some of these pending bills include:

- HB 1239, Colorado's version of the "Two Strikes and You're Out" law. If a previously convicted sex offender goes on to assault another child, the cell door should shut on him for a long, long time.
- HB 1232 requires the Colorado Bureau of Investigation to post on the state's website the names, addresses, pictures and other pertinent information of anyone convicted under the state's violent sexual predator law.
- SB 1363 Lifetime Parole on Child Molesters - This California legislation

allows the parole authority to impose lifetime parole on child molesters upon their release from prison. The authority would have the discretion to discharge that person from parole for good cause. This bill will be permissive rather than mandatory; it will allow our law enforcement officials to expend their resources on child molesters whose history indicates they will likely re-offend. Introduced by Senator Ross Johnson.

- At the request of the KlaasKids Foundation, California State Senator Adam B. Schiff has introduced SB 1565 to eliminate e-commerce profiteering from the sales of criminal memorabilia and artwork.

The bill would amend the "Son of Sam" law to provide for the seizure of profits from the sale of memorabilia not only by a felon, as currently allowed, but also by the felon's representative or by a third party. Recent items for sale have included paintings by serial killers Henry Lee Lucas and John Wayne Gacy, signed letters by Richard Ramirez, and hair from the head of "cannibal killer" Arthur J. Shawcross.

- SB 1818 Speier establishes a database of DNA samples from California children missing under suspicious circumstances, for comparison with unidentifiable remains of children.
- SB 1335 Rainey establishes a process by which the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning will receive a \$2 million General Fund appropriation to establish a program to assist local and state law enforcement agencies in acquiring and maintaining the technological tools and necessary to combat child kidnappings and abductions. ■

## OPERATION TRACI TESTED

**O**peration TRACI (To Rescue Abducted Children Immediately) underwent Phase One testing in Corcoran, CA, to determine immediate response times in the case of predatory abduction. Similar to the Amber Alert concept, this program tested the alertness of law enforcement and media in responding quickly to a child abduction. Results indicate:

- 305 personal responses in 30 minutes.
- 387 responses in 90 minutes.
- An eight-point road and highway perimeter was created within 15 minutes.
- Air support was one minute for helicopter, 10 minutes for airplane.
- A missing child flyer was created and distributed within 35 minutes.
- Television broadcast response ranged from 5 to 60 minutes.
- The National Weather Service was able to conduct an emergency alert within 10 minutes.

Program creators Chief Jim Harbottle and Lt. Scott Carlton say improvements are necessary. Lt. Carlton said, "We did better than we expected for this phase of the operation. We had seven bad phone numbers, not enough phone lines, and some minor glitches with radio stations. But these problems are easily fixed."

Operation TRACI and the TRACI Alert were named after kidnap and murder victim Traci Rene Conrad, who disappeared from Hanford, California, on February 24, 1996, exactly four years prior to the test. More information on Operation TRACI can be found online at [www.angelfire.com/ca4/CPD/Traci.html](http://www.angelfire.com/ca4/CPD/Traci.html). ■

# AMBER ALERT MOVES INTO MICHIGAN

By U.S. Senator Spencer Abraham, Michigan

**T**he people of Michigan are launching an important new program to save kids from abduction. Called Amber Alert of Michigan, this is a cooperative effort between the radio and television stations and local law enforcement agencies. Participating agencies provide the media with an alert upon the immediate confirmation of a child abduction. Participating stations break into their regularly scheduled programming to broadcast the alert

and any subsequent information.

*Because 95% of people driving in their cars are listening to their radios, this is an extremely effective way of getting out the message that a child has been abducted, with descriptions.*

Amber Alert is named for Amber Hagerman of Arlington, Texas. This eight-year-old girl was abducted from a store parking lot in 1996 and later found murdered. The murderer was never found, but local authorities put together a program to help prevent tragedies like hers from recurring.

Because 95% of all people driving in their cars are listening to their radios, this is an extremely effective way of getting out the message that a child has been abducted, as well as descriptions of the child, the kidnapper, and any vehicle or accomplices.

## Proven Child Recovery Programs

Arlington police credit their system with recovering at least six children. For example, in November 1996, after a babysitter abducted an infant, authorities put the system into use. Within 15 minutes of the broadcast, a motorist spotted the woman's pick-up and called police. The child was safely returned.

The people of Arlington and Dallas-Ft. Worth have implemented this program because they know it will work, and they know it is needed. I strongly believe we need this program in Michigan and it is one of my top priorities. I am working along with Robin Trumbull of Marshall—who first brought this program to my attention—the Michigan State Police, and the Michigan Association of Broadcasters to get Amber Alert implemented.

Robin Trumbull's effort actually got its start at a KlaasKids town meeting in Battle Creek, Michigan. That same evening Trumbull formed a small committee of women to put an Amber Alert program into action. They spoke with the police in Arlington, Texas, to gather information, and then went to work.

"From the beginning, we clearly saw that this program must be statewide in order to be fully effective," Robin has said. "A child abducted in Calhoun County could be in any one of three different counties in a matter of minutes. The goal of our program is to protect all of Michigan's children, not just those of Calhoun County."

Robin then came to Washington, D.C. and met with Michigan legislators. That's how I met her. The implications of instituting such a simple, easy-to-use program in our state were clear, and I pledged my support.

Every year in America up to 850,000 children are reported missing. At least one child is abducted in this country every day. In Michigan alone, 1,900 children are currently listed as missing. Too many Michiganders live in fear that their child may be next.

## The KlaasKids Foundation Matching Grant

Other states and communities may participate as well. The KlaasKids Foundation is offering a \$3,000 matching grant for anyone who will help fund the Michigan program, and Marc Klaas has been working hard to publicize it. In fact, Marc joined me, Robin, and the Michigan State Police to launch Amber Alert of Michigan and urge Michiganders to contribute so that all of our communities can better protect their children. Because of his support and the hard work of Robin Trumbull, we were successful in garnering much support for this program across the state.

We are hoping to make Amber Alert a statewide program, but we still need your help. Please join us by sending your donation to:

Amber Alert of Michigan  
14141 P Drive North  
Marshall, Michigan 49068  
Phone: 616-789-1302  
Email: [amberalertofmi@juno.com](mailto:amberalertofmi@juno.com) ■

# NEW C.A.R.E. ALERT PROGRAM MODELS AMBER PLAN IN CALIFORNIA

By Nina Salarno, Director, Office of Victim Services

In 1998, approximately 3,000 children were abducted in California. Child abduction, both by parents and strangers, has become a serious problem in this state—one with which so many of us are all too familiar.

Once a child is abducted, time becomes a critical issue. Unfortunately for many victims, time passes too quickly, and it is far less likely that a child will be recovered unharmed. After an abduction ends in tragedy, we find ourselves surrounded by questions. Law enforcement asks itself, “What can we do differently?” The public asks, “How can we help?” Everyone wants to find a way to prevent a child from being harmed.

In response, California is piloting the Child Abduction Regional Emergency, or C.A.R.E. Alert, which is adapted from the Texas Amber Plan (see related story on page 4). This new program provides answers to our questions and one innovative solution to the nightmare of child abduction.

## Adapting the Amber Plan for California

Under the guidance of California Attorney General Bill Lockyear, the Office of Victim Services was created to develop policy on such cases for the Attorney General’s Office. As director of the Office of Victim Services, I learned of an innovative and successful child abduction recovery program, called the Amber Plan, being used in Texas. Although little Amber Hagerman was not found alive, her legacy program has already saved lives.

Marc Klaas and Kim Swartz, whose own children can never benefit from the C.A.R.E. Alert, helped in the development of California’s version of this program. Like its companion program in Texas, C.A.R.E. Alert links two of our most important social entities: law enforcement, sworn to protect us; and media, sworn to inform us, so that other children can be spared the tragedies of Polly and Amber.

In cooperation with the Orange County Sheriff and Police Chiefs Association, the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, the Southern California News Media Association, and the Office of the Attorney General, a pilot program has been activated in Orange County.

## The C.A.R.E. Alert Plan

Briefly outlined, the program’s protocol is as follows:

1. Law enforcement determines that a child abduction has taken place. In the case of a parental abduction, the child must be in danger of bodily harm or being taken from the jurisdiction.
2. Once an abduction is determined, law enforcement completes a special fax form including information about the abduction and surrounding circumstances.
3. That form is then faxed to the key media stations in the Orange County area.
4. These two media stations have agreed to immediately send the information to all surrounding radio and television stations.
5. Once received, all media stations have agreed to interrupt programming to broadcast the information to the public, and encourage listeners to contact the designated law enforcement agency with any information.



Nina Salarno, Director,  
Office of Victim Services

## Initiating the Plan Throughout California

I am very proud of the C.A.R.E. Alert program developed in Orange County. I am even more proud of the combined efforts of law enforcement agencies and the media that have made this idea a reality.

We at the Office of the California Attorney General hope to bring C.A.R.E. Alert to your county, with the goal of making it a statewide program over the next year. The Office of Victim Services is willing and able to help with program development in each county. Please contact us for more information at:

Attorney General’s Office  
Office of Victim Services  
1300 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: (877) 433-9069 ■

# GETTING ON TRAK TO SAVE LIVES

By Todd Bower

**P**ublic outrage at the tragic abduction and murder of Polly Klaas in the fall of 1993 has produced an abundance of positive change for our nation's children. From parent/child education to community preparedness to state and federal laws, Polly continues to make a difference.

That outrage also led to the harnessing of Silicon Valley technology to address a critical missing link in the effort to safeguard our children: the ability for local law enforcement to respond quickly and effectively when a child is at risk. This solution is TRAK—Technology to Recover Abducted Kids.

## Speeding Up Information Distribution

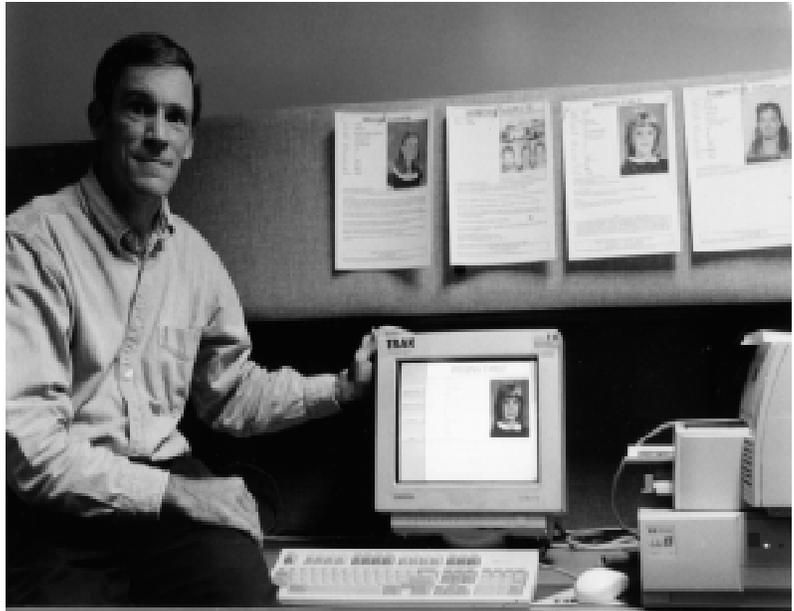
SocialTech, Inc., a nonprofit organization based in Burlingame, CA, has partnered with Hewlett-Packard (HP) and AT&T to equip the nation's police agencies with technology that puts the power of images to work in the first minutes a child is missing. TRAK allows any officer at any time to create and electronically distribute photo bulletins to an unlimited number of destinations—other police agencies, schools, businesses, media—and all are received simultaneously, within minutes.

Before TRAK, most police agencies relied on verbal descriptions or on photo copiers, fax machines, and manual distribution of information. Images were often unrecognizable, and, when minutes make a difference, the response most often had to be measured in hours or days.

With TRAK, color images of a child move across jurisdictional lines faster than the abductor. Media have immediate access to a color image of the child and the community receives high-quality fax images. Anyone who can help in the safe recovery of that child can be alerted and activated in the first critical minutes.

## Getting Results Across the Nation

The first TRAK systems were placed in the San Francisco Bay Area in early 1996. Today, as a result of broad private sector support (from HP, United Way, Chevron, private foundations, and service clubs), TRAK is installed in over 400 law enforcement agencies in 22 states, including a number of FBI offices and state missing children



Todd Bower demonstrates the new TRAK technology

clearinghouses. Nevada has implemented TRAK statewide and New Jersey is in the process of doing the same.

TRAK has produced remarkable results. The system has contributed to the safe recovery of many children, including victims of stranger abductions, kidnap for ransom, and parental abductions, as well as numerous runaways. TRAK is so fast and easy to use that investigating officers can respond to every report of a missing child right away with high quality color photo bulletins.

SocialTech has consistently encouraged cooperation between law enforcement and the broadcast media. Another technology, called TRAK-to-TV, makes it possible for local police agencies to use TRAK to deliver color images and case information directly to the news rooms of television stations within minutes. Currently, TRAK-to-TV is operating in San Francisco, Houston, Las Vegas, Reno, and Boise.

## The TRAK Abduction Alert Protocol

In October 1999, SocialTech extended the TRAK-to-TV concept in the San Francisco Bay Area to include a regional abduction response protocol. The program was based on the success of Amber Alert and takes advantage of TRAK to include a color image of the victim.

Developed in partnership with San Jose Police Department and Bay City News, the TRAK Abduction

Alert Protocol (TAAP) links 130 TRAK police agencies with over 80 media outlets. When a life is in danger and the protocol is activated, a color image is posted to a website and an urgent advisory goes out to all media outlets. The media is able to alert the region's 7 million residents to help in the recovery effort, and a color image of the victim is available to the media and the public.

### Working Together to Make TRAK a Success

TRAK establishes the first shared imaging technology that links multiple independent jurisdictions with each other, the media, and the community at large. Implementing a common solution across 17,600 independent jurisdictions requires private sector leadership to deliver the solution from the outside in. TRAK has received a great deal of support from individuals, corporations, and foundations to make its success possible. SocialTech is now developing partnerships to extend the TRAK solution to communities across the nation.

The best way to safeguard our children is to build active, aware, and involved communities. Parents, schools, and businesses must work cooperatively with law enforcement to ensure that everything possible is done to prevent the type of tragedy that befell Polly and too many others. TRAK has proven to be an integral part of the community-building process, equipping law enforcement with the tools needed to respond quickly and effectively when a child is at risk.

For more information about SocialTech and the TRAK Program, visit [www.trak.org](http://www.trak.org) or call SocialTech at 800/724-8725. ■

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## MARC'S MESSAGE

*Cont. from page 1*

prospects diminished. One neighbor, fearing the worst, contacted Child Protective Services, but no response was forthcoming. Often locked out of the apartment paid for by her stipend, Xiana would visit neighbors or wait for hours in the hallway in teary-eyed silence. She walked to the school bus stop alone through a minefield of intersections, parking lots, and more than 100 registered sex offenders. According to the ever-shifting stories of Antoinette and Bobby, it was during one such trip to the bus stop that she disappeared.

At best, Antoinette Robinson is responsible for creating an environment that made Xiana's fate inevitable; at worst she is complicit in her disappearance. Her public

rages, inability to maintain eye contact, and refusal to cooperate with law enforcement mirrors Bobby's reluctance to accept his past or explain his present. Their lies, murky histories, drug abuse, shiftless existence, and bankrupt morality have created a confusion of circumstances that has seemingly stalled efforts to recover this unfortunate little girl.

But as the prospect of recovering Xiana diminished, so conversely did Vallejo begin to shine, to exude the luster of pride and accomplishment. Vallejo Police and the FBI maintained a 25-member investigative task force for almost three months and an open appeal for searchers that resulted in almost 700 volunteers. Media representatives continue to offer ways to keep the story alive, and the local business community supports the Xiana Fairchild Volunteer Center through fundraising activities and donations. Governor Gray Davis' offer of \$50,000 brings the reward for information leading to the recovery of Xiana or the conviction of those responsible for her disappearance to \$75,000.

The disappearance of Xiana Fairchild is receiving the kind of long-term attention usually reserved for upper- or middle-class white children with pretty smiles and functional families. She is a poor Hawaiian child from a dysfunctional welfare background whose gap-tooth smile has touched a public nerve. Even if she is never recovered, Xiana's legacy will make it impossible to overlook the next minority child that falls victim to circumstances beyond his or her control.

As this issue of the *Klaas Action Review* illustrates, the KlaasKids Foundation accepts the new millennium's challenge to make children America's top priority. Our Century 21 criminal justice agenda opens doors to public access and closes doors of opportunity to predators and others who wish to harm our children. We continue to promote programs and unique partnerships that create multidisciplinary tools to protect America's children.

However, as important as these issues are, they exist in the abstract, and pale in comparison to the reality of Xiana Fairchild. Unlike Elian Gonzales, little Xiana does not sleep in a warm bed every night. In the search for the truth about Xiana Fairchild, one glaring fact is obvious: This little girl flew under our radar and disappeared without a trace. In order to avoid future Xiana Fairchilds, we need to hear less patriotic pandering from our presidential candidates and more substance on the issues relevant to her case. ■

# 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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

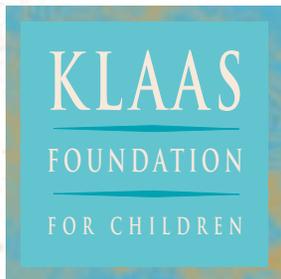
Enclosed please find my tax-deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Discover Card       Visa       MasterCard

Credit card number is: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

*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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