

News Release
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NATIONAL CHILD SAFETY CAMPAIGN MARKS NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

Children's Actions Result in Escape From 84 Percent of Attempted Abductions

Alexandria, VA – May 1, 2009 -- The third annual, national Take 25 child safety campaign will take place during the month of May in hundreds of communities across the country. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) launched the campaign in 2007 to encourage families to take 25 minutes to talk to their children about safety and abduction prevention. A website for the campaign, www.Take25.org, lists 25 safety tips that can help save a child's life. The campaign begins May 1 and continues through National Missing Children's Day on May 25. Nationwide, more than 1100 events are scheduled in 400 communities in all 50 states and Canada.

Every year in America, an estimated 800,000 children are reported missing, more than 2,000 children each day. Of that number, 200,000 are abducted by family members and 58,000 are abducted by non-family members, for which the primary motive is sexual. Each year, 115 children are the victims of the most serious abductions; they are taken by non-family members and either murdered, ransomed or taken with the intent to keep. An analysis of attempted abduction cases by NCMEC found that in 84% of the cases, the child escaped would-be abductors through their own actions. Thirty-five percent actively resisted (yelling, kicking, pulling away, running away or attracting attention) while 49% recognized something was not right and responded by walking or running away.

May 25 has been observed as National Missing Children's Day since it was first proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan in 1983. The Take 25 campaign will help parents and others teach children to be alert to potential threats and provide simple preventative steps that children can take to stay safe.

"We know teaching children about safety works. Children's actions enable them to escape attempted abductions more than half of the time. It is important that parents and others take the time to talk to their children about these issues," said Ernie Allen, president and CEO of NCMEC. "The campaign is designed to provide information to make it easy for parents, grandparents and others to teach their children about safety and prevention. There is no better way to mark National Missing Children's Day than with an initiative designed to empower children and help keep them safe."



The Take 25 campaign is proudly sponsored by Lifetouch, the largest employee-owned photography company in the world. Lifetouch provides professional portraits for preschools and schools, houses of worship and the retail market in all 50 states and Canada. National partners include the National PTA, the United States Secret Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, the Council for Exceptional Children, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and 57 Minor League Baseball teams. In addition, more than 200 other local and national organizations have partnered with NCMEC on this campaign.

A list of cities where events will be held can be found at www.take25.org or on the Spanish language site, www.toma25.org.

This year the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children celebrates its 25th anniversary. NCMEC has played a role in the recovery of more than 138,500 children. Today more children come home safely than ever before. In 2008, NCMEC helped recover more children than any other year in the organizations 25-year history, raising the recovery rate from 62% in 1990 to 97% today. And more of those who prey upon children are being identified and prosecuted. Yet too many children are still missing and too many children are still the victims of sexual exploitation. There is much more that needs to be done.

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About the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Since it was established by Congress in 1984, the organization has operated the toll-free 24-hour national missing children's hotline which has handled more than 2,377,000 calls. It has assisted law enforcement in the recovery of more than 138,500 children. The organization's CyberTipline has handled more than 683,400 reports of child sexual exploitation and its Child Victim Identification Program has reviewed and analyzed more than 22,494,000 child pornography images and videos. The organization works in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice's office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

To learn more about NCMEC, call its toll-free, 24-hour hotline at 1-800-THE-LOST or visit its web site at www.missingkids.com.