

Missing and Endangered Persons Information
Clearinghouse Advisory Board

MISSING & ENDANGERED

Fall 2020
Issue 2

Missing and Endangered Persons Information
Clearinghouse Advisory Board
2331 Phillips Road
Tallahassee, FL 32308

www.fdle.state.fl.us/mcicsearch/AdvisoryBoard.asp

AS OF 11/1/2020 IN FLORIDA:

**18 AMBER Alerts with FOUR
Direct Recoveries**

**27 Missing Child Alerts with SIX
Direct Recoveries**

**206 Silver Alerts with TWENTY-
TWO Direct Recoveries**

What is MEPICAB?

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse Advisory Board (MEPICAB) was created in 1996 to address issues dealing with Florida's missing children. The MEPICAB is a diverse mix of law enforcement officials, victim parents, government agencies, missing children non-profit organizations, and members of the business community with interest in missing children issues.

The mission of the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse Advisory Board is to support awareness, education, and training for the prevention, response, and recovery of missing and endangered persons.

The Advisory Board meets quarterly to discuss and implement plans and policies to combat and create an awareness of the large number of children that go missing every year. Board members are chosen by FDLE's Commissioner from around the state, to provide balanced representation of Florida.

Want to support Florida Missing Children's Day?

Florida Missing Children's Day (FMCD) is an annual ceremony that was held on September 14, 2020 to honor the families of missing children as well as law enforcement officers and citizens who have made great contributions protecting Florida's citizens.

Any person, business, or agency interested in donating to the Florida Missing Children's Day Foundation for 2021 can visit the FMCD Foundation website.



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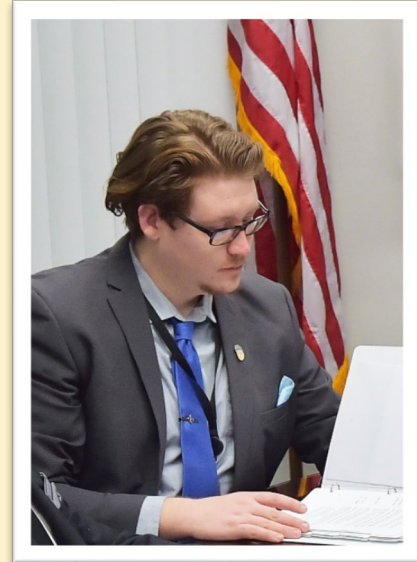
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A Special Thanks to Craig Schroeder

In July 2016, former FDLE member Craig Schroeder joined the Enforcement and Investigative Support (EIS) Bureau as the FMCD coordinator supporting staff for MEPICAB and the Florida Missing Children's Day Foundation (FMCDF).

During his tenure, Craig facilitated logistics for the FMCD event and supported the meetings and vision of the MEPICAB and FMCDF. Craig developed the inaugural edition of the MEPICAB Newsletter.

Craig was a jovial and respected member of the EIS team who departed this summer to become an English teacher for middle school students. The MEPICAB extends a special THANK YOU for all of Craig's hard work over the last 4 years.



2020 Florida Missing Children's Day

Florida's First Lady Casey DeSantis expressed hope and remembrance for the children who are missing on Florida Missing Children's Day, September 14, 2020. Florida is dedicated to finding and preventing future tragedies. First Lady DeSantis encouraged Floridians to sign up for missing person alerts and to "be aware, be on the lookout, and be alert, because one missing child is too many." FMCD is held to honor and remember Florida's missing children and to recognize individuals for the work they do to keep children safe in Florida. The ceremony is broken into two parts; recognition for outstanding service to the state's missing and endangered persons and a Time of Remembrance for the missing children in Florida. You can sign up for alerts at <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/>.

Governor Ron DeSantis said, "Missing Children's Day is a solemn day of commemoration, where we look for hope in a shadow of tragedy and stand together to remember our most vulnerable citizens. We praise our most heroic who work every day to protect our children and bring those missing home safely."

FDLE Commissioner Rick Swearingen said, "The safety of Florida's children and families remains the top priority for FDLE, as is the successful recovery of those who are currently missing."

Florida Missing Children's Day

Have You Seen These Missing Persons?



ALI
GILMORE



CRISTINA
VALASQUEZ



ERIK
PATCHIN



PORTESHA
MORRIS

MissingChildrenAlert.com
FMCDF.org
1-888-FL-Missing (356-4774)



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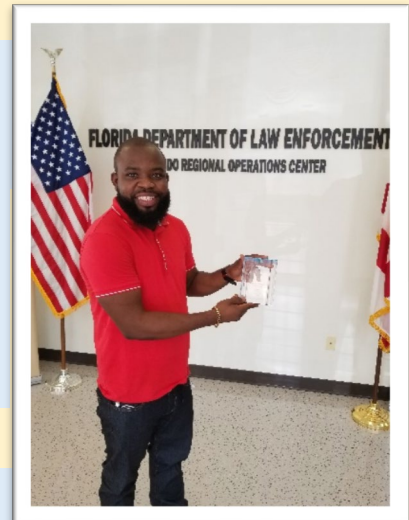


Officer of the Year Award- Detectives Justin Murray and Maria Pita,

Clearwater Police Department Detectives Murray and Pita received information that a suspect was sexually abusing a child and had to work quickly to identify the child, build a case and arrest the suspect before he had the opportunity to further abuse the child.

Citizen of the Year- Rosler Pierre

Mr. Pierre was in the parking lot of an Orlando big-box store when he noticed a woman crying and chasing a suspect. Mr. Pierre was able to apprehend the man and held him until police arrived. The suspect, a sexual offender, was arrested for lewd molestation after he lewdly touched a child inside the store.



Bus Operator of the Year- Twanna Meeks

When a Leon County middle school student failed to return home, a worried parent called the school. Ms. Meeks was able to assist authorities by confirming the child was on the school bus, the location where the child was dropped off and even the clothing worn at the time. Ms. Meeks remained alongside the transportation team until the child was found safely around 9 p.m. the same day.

Commissioner's Award- Jamie Meeks

A retired United States Marine, Mr. Meeks has been a life-long advocate for Florida children. He was a school resource officer in Leon County for 21 years and served as the president of the Florida Association of School Resource Officers Board of Directors. He has also been the president of the MEPICAB.



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Jimmy Ryce K9 Trailing Team of the Year- Sergeant (Sgt.) Frederick Gimbel II and K9

Flagler County Sheriffs Office's Sgt. Gimbel and Holmes, searching for a missing juvenile, pursued a scent trail through woods, a cul-de-sac and several undeveloped wooded lots, but found nothing. Undeterred, Sgt. Gimbel and Holmes searched near a wood line, back and forth until entering a small game trail. Sgt. Gimbel found a red blanket and a backpack 10 feet into the woods, along with the boy, who was not injured.



Law Enforcement Task Force of the Year-

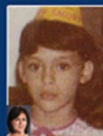
Lieutenant (Lt.) Luis Poveda, Sgt. David Quintas, Detective Jessica Bermudez, Detective Johnpaul Valentine, Detective Chaz Fedler, and Victim Advocate Elba Suarez



The Human Trafficking Squad of the Miami-Dade Police Department investigated 288 human trafficking cases (281 sex trafficking and 7 labor trafficking cases) from January 2019 to April 2020, all occurring within the jurisdiction of Miami-Dade County. During the time period, 18 victims of human trafficking were recovered- six of whom were missing juveniles- and eight people were charged with human trafficking. The team rescued a missing 16-year-old runaway from North Carolina who was being trafficked for sex. They rescued a missing juvenile from Tamarac and in the process shut down an organized sex trafficking operation. During Super Bowl LIV, the team fielded 141 tips and recovered 13 victims of human trafficking.

Florida Missing Children's Day

Have You Seen These Missing Persons?



MARIBEL
OQUENDO-CARRERO



NICKI
ELKINS



VIVIAN
TROUT



JENNIFER
PERRY

MissingChildrenAlert.com
FMCDF.org
1-888-FL-Missing (356-4774)



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John and Revè Walsh Award- Major Milo Thornton

Indian River County Sheriff's Major Thornton is known for his efforts to provide children with after-school activities and learning opportunities. In 2019, he coordinated the acquisition of a tracking bloodhound from the Jimmy Ryce Center, increasing his department's tracking capabilities for missing children. As a youth football coach and mentor for at-risk children in his community, Major Thornton started a program to provide bicycles to children from low-income households and during Covid-19.



Evelyn D. Williams Memorial Award- Gwendolyn Johnson

Ms. Johnson recently retired from FDLE where she left the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) as the senior management analyst supervisor for 13 years. Some of her accomplishments during her 22 years with MEPIC include helping create Florida Missing Children's Day in 1999, helping establish Florida's AMBER Alert Plan in 2000, its expansion in 2003 and Florida's Silver Alert Plan in 2008.



SINCE THE AMBER ALERT PLAN'S INCEPTION:

234 AMBER Alerts Have Been Issued

73 of which directly aided in the recovery of children

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State/Federal Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award-

Special Agent Supervisor (SAS) Patrick Crough

In two separate cases last year, FDLE SAS Crough rescued two Guatemalan teenagers who were smuggled into the United States illegally and trafficked. In the first case, an 18-year-old male was forced to work at a landscaping service, was physically abused, had his wages stolen and was forced to live in a storage shed. In the second case, 16-year-old female was sexually abused by her trafficker and his brother. Both victims were rescued.



Combating Human Trafficking Award-

Officer Jeffrey Arbogast

In February, Officer Arbogast at the Margate Police Department, stopped a stolen vehicle. When questioning the driver of the car, a 15-year-old girl, he became suspicious. The teen, a runaway, was frightened and became upset when Officer Arbogast mentioned the vehicle's owner. Even though the child refused to speak, he continued his investigation thinking the situation involved more than a stolen vehicle. Officer Arbogast confirmed the girl was a human trafficking victim who stole the car to escape from the man that was trafficking her.

Florida Missing Children's Day

Have You Seen These Missing Persons?

AMANDA BROWN

JENNIFER MARTELIZ

SABRINA AISENBERG

KRISTY ROSARIO

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