

**In-Person Meeting**

**February 3rd, 2022 @ 8:40 AM to 2:40 PM**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE)**

**Missing Endangered Persons Clearinghouse (MEPIC) Advisory Board (MEPICAB)**

**FDLE Attendees:**

Deputy Assistant Commissioner David Binder, Special Agent in Charge Mike Phillips, Assistant Special Agent in Charge Chad Brown, Deputy General Counsel Jeff Dambly, Assistant General Counsel Phillip Lindley, Acting Planning and Policy Administrator Heather Faulkner, Special Agent Supervisor Jeremy Gordon, Inspector David Bullard, SMAS Brendie Hawkins, SMAS Alan Moses, SCIA Kandace Zachary, Ashley Bullard, Reneé Strickland, Alexis Snell, Alyssa Beck, Megan Bohnenberger, Quentin Harris

**Board Member Attendees:**

Chairperson Dan Campbell, Vice-Chair Assistant Chief Antonio Gilliam, Major Jerry Hensley, David Brand, Jessica Janasiewicz, Karen Mazzola, Carolyn Goedert, Brian Moore, Honorable Walt McNeil, John Pitta, Peggy Pitta, Hilary Sessions, Susan Smith, Dr. Kim Spence, Mike Vasilinda, Major Tracy Clark, Mark Young, Terri Lynn, AUSA Frank Williams, Director Gary Howze, Kristin Morgan, Captain Peter Bergstresser, Lt. Jim Beauford

**Organizations/Individuals Represented:**

Affected missing child families, former law enforcement, Florida Sheriff’s Association, St. Petersburg Police Department, Florida Police Chiefs Association, Florida Association of School Administrators, Florida PTA State Office, Leon County Sheriff’s Office, Florida Association of District Superintendents, Florida Governor’s Legal Office, UCF’s Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, former media, Tallahassee Police Department, the Jimmy Ryce Center for Victims of Predatory Abduction, Northern District of Florida’s United States Attorney’s Office, Florida’s Office of the Attorney General, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Highway Patrol

**Welcome and Roll Call**

Motion to approve previous meeting minutes; seconded and passed.

**Agenda Items**

MEPICAB Logo

* Suggestion to merge first and second logo options, with image from second logo rendered in the style of the first logo.
* Suggestion to add a figure in a wheelchair.
* Brian Moore moves to table the discussion; no objections; motion passes.

Winter Newsletter Discussion

* Members are asked to bring up any events that may have been missed during the time frame covered by the newsletter.
* Mr. Pitta suggests putting recovered children on the front page.
  + Dr. Spence suggests highlighting recovery of an autistic child.
  + Typically, recoveries featured in the newsletter are long-term missing cases.
* Suggestion to reduce the number of quote boxes in the future.
* Newsletter will be posted on Foundation website today, 2/3, and on FDLE website soon after.

Chairperson Campbell reminds Board members to vote on board matters via Surveymonkey when relevant.

**MEPICAB Election for June 2023 – June 2025 Term**

Chairperson Campbell invites board to nominate members to be the next chairperson.

Vice-Chair Gilliam announces his resignation from his position, citing personnel reorganization. His replacement from St. Petersburg Police Department is Major Jerry Hensley.

Clarification from SMAS Hawkins regarding election; the Board can nominate and vote on members to take positions today, but they will not be effective until June 2023.

* Are there any nominations for a member to fill the Vice-Chair position until the June election?
* Bill Corfield, John Pitta, Peggy Pitta, Dr. Spence, Dr. Gomez nominated
* If there are any further nominations, please email them to Ashley Bullard, and she will contact the individual to see if they are interested.

**Spring Newsletter Article Discussion**

* Kristin Morgan suggests Training Development for Missing Persons Cases
* Hilary Sessions suggests an article about how affected families can push new legislation and how important it is for law enforcement to continue pursuing cold cases.
* Dr. Spence suggests “Perspectives of Special Populations on the Spectrum”
* “Sibling Survivor Interview”
* SMAS Hawkins suggests “MEPIC Success Stories”
* “Prosecutor Perspective on Human Trafficking”
* There had been previous discussion of a story bank; currently we have no stories, so members are encouraged to sign up by March 1st to write articles to be featured in the next couple of newsletters.
* MEPIC-DARE partnership
  + David Bullard: DARE is pushing hard to remind children not to get into cars with strangers. Officers are encouraged to bring up issues local to schools that they visit to drive the point home.
* New National Anthem Contest for FMCD
  + Karen Mazzola suggests to include poster and essay contest information early enough for distribution to be effective in pulling in entries.
  + This year, information on contests was sent out to every school across the state, on FDLE social media, and was passed out at events attended by EIS.
* FDLE has approached the foundation regarding a new annual contest to find a national anthem singer. The Foundation will cover travel for up to five children.
  + Karen Mazzola suggests that the contest include children up to age 18.
* Suggestion for an article remembering Claudine Ryce

**Event Summary**

Trunk or Treat presented by Capitol Police

Winter Festival presented by City of Tallahassee

Soul Santa presented by City of Tallahassee

ORE/CART/ICAC Conference

**Possible 2023 Conferences/Safety Events**

Missing Adult’s Day, Justice Coalition, February 24th

* Event established by a family with a missing adult, has now been picked up by the Justice Coalition.
* This event is in Jacksonville and covers the surrounding counties.
* FDLE has been asked to attend and speak.
* Ashley will attend the event and discuss at the next Board meeting.

Take Your Child to Work Day, FDLE, Spring 2023

FASRO Conference, July 2023

Parent Teacher Association Training Conference, July 2023

FSA/FPCA, Summer 2023

Trunk or Treat, October 2023

Soul Santa, Winter 2023

Most events listed have been previously attended by FDLE with great success.

Board members are encouraged to let Ashley Bullard know if there are any events not listed that FDLE may be able to attend.

**Review Strategic Plan for 2023 Projects**

Law Enforcement Centered Awareness and Education

* FDLE has been working hard at education on missing persons issues and has had great success with new trainings and educational materials. FDLE is now planning how to jump off of successful trainings to continue educating law enforcement.

Increase Diverse Professional MEPICAB Membership

* Board members are encouraged to provide recommendations of possible new members to Ashley Bullard.
* Dr. Spence has a contact in Orlando Victim Service Center who may be a valuable addition.
* Karen Mazzola requests that a list of current board members be issued to all members.
  + Membership update: Tawana Spann has resigned in order to devote more time to her podcast.
  + Larry Small has resigned.
  + Craig Weidele has resigned, and Universal Studios is working to continue providing prize packages to contest winners.

Public Awareness and Education

* FDLE has massively increased safety event attendance in order to educate the public, and is continuing to collaborate on media PSAs.

**25th FMCD Anniversary**

Commemorative Logo

Mike Vasalinda Anniversary Video

* Mr. Vasalinda is currently working on a video for the 25th anniversary, including information on previous Florida Missing Children’s Days.
* Board members are encouraged to make suggestions relating to the content of the video.
* Video is expected to be around ten minutes long.
* FDLE’s PIO office can send out snippets of the video on social media.

Poster Display

* Stand will have winning poster on one side, and on the other side, the last 24 years of winning posters.
* Last year, 26 families RSVP’d for the FMCD event and 23 families attended, an increase from the previous 16-20 families.
* Ryce goal – bloodhound in every county

**Human Trafficking Overview – AUSA Frank Williams**

In 2021, calls came in regarding 1700 children believed to be victims of human trafficking, and 60% of those were verified by DCF.

Vice-Chair Gilliam requests for Mr. Williams to provide a list of top 5 risk factors to children for human trafficking.

Question to Mr. Williams regarding what an individual can do to help:

* Any effort put into mentoring or educational services for at-risk children is human trafficking prevention.
* Kristin Morgan: Traditional foster homes for teens are in extremely short supply, so another way to help is to foster a teen.
* Mr. Williams invites Board members to reach out to him for information on organizations near them that need help.

**Florida Missing Children’s Day**

Hotel Logistics

* There were considerable difficulties with 2022 hotel regarding arrangements for FMCD and the FASRO reception.
* FDLE will be pursuing other options for hotels; needs include no fee or a very reasonable fee for K9 guests, and either a restaurant included that will cater, or else a meeting space large enough to accommodate everyone.
* Suggestion to use Resident’s Inn for hotel and Civic Center meeting rooms across the street for reception.
* Possibility of using Star Metro for shuttle, or parking at Kleman Plaza, where weekend parking is free of charge.
* Suggestion from Ms. Mazzola to use TCC Innovation Center on opposite side of Kleman Plaza for reception; it accommodates 150 people and has its own kitchen.

**National Crime Victim’s Rights Week (April 2023)**

Awards will be issued to nominated law enforcement officers who have lessened the impact of crimes on their victims.

**CART Update**

Recovery of a 6yo child who had been abducted by her non-custodial father and taken to Canada.

Recovery of a child abducted by her non-custodial aunt and taken across multiple states

Recovery of a missing child from Arizona, recovered in Florida

Several CART trainings have taken place in Florida the last 6 months

Suggestion for SAS Gordon to write a newsletter article on CART

**MEPIC Update**

(stats given at 2:28 PM)

17-year-old from Georgia missing in 2021, believed to have traveled to an unknown location in Florida, and was located by MEPIC analysts who had found a Florida driver’s license and located her on social media.

EMCA issued November 26 2022 for 17-year-old who had left his residence on foot. First responders notified FDLE that the child had autism, and within 20 minutes of the EMCA being issued, FDLE was notified that the child have been recovered; a citizen had seen the alert on their phone, found the child, and called in.

Direct recoveries are when a recovery is made after a citizen saw an alert and located the missing person, or when MEPIC analysts locate a child.

Motion from to adjourn; Ms. Mazzola seconds; meeting adjourned at 2:38 PM.