Child snatching

Ken Tippett fights to get her son back

PLEASE find my baby!

Thankful grandparents start local drive to find missing children

ANNUAL REPORT 2015
A MESSAGE FROM CHILD FIND’S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

When Child Find of America was founded 35 years ago, the nation’s awareness of missing children’s issues was limited to the Lindbergh kidnapping case.

Today, child abduction by strangers fills the news. As I write this, the jury is still deliberating the fate of a suspect in the horrific 1979 abduction of Etan Patz, still making headlines in NYC newspapers. John Walsh, whose 6-year-old son, Adam, was abducted from a Florida shopping mall and found murdered in 1981, continues his television campaign against predators determined to harm our children. PEOPLE magazine covers feature the recovery of missing girls Jaycee Dugard and Elizabeth Smart. Stranger Danger safety lessons are still being taught in many elementary schools.

And we now know that missing children issues also include runaways. More often than not, a runaway’s life goes from bad to worse. Most are running away from family conflict to homelessness and street violence. Many are lured into prostitution and sex trafficking.

We also know that most abducted children are abducted by parents involved in overwhelming family conflict to a life in hiding and on the run. Child Find’s founder, Gloria Yerkovich was a left behind parent...as was Lisa Riccio, whose struggle to recover her son, John, is recounted in this annual report.

For 35 years, Child Find of America’s programs and services have addressed all issues surrounding missing children - those kidnapped by strangers, running from hopelessness or abducted by a parent - and always with a focus on prevention.

With your help we will continue our vital work...
...Bringing Kids Home and Keeping Them Safe.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

To help Child Find continue “Bringing Kids Home and Keeping Them Safe,” please send your gift check to:

Child Find of America
PO Box 277
New Paltz NY 12561-0277

For more giving options including Visa, MC, Discover, AmEx and PayPal please visit our website: childfindofamerica.org

Rated A+ by Charity Watch for 18 consecutive years!
ON THE COVER – DEDICATION

Last June, Child Find received a generous gift check and a letter from Lisa Riccio – in memory of her father, John E. Riccio: “My son, John Vincent, was abducted by his father in July 1982... In February 1983 we retrieved my son. Once safely home, my father John E. Riccio was dedicated in always supporting Child Find, Inc. Also he tirelessly worked and ultimately achieved his goal of having Southeastern Wisconsin place pictures of missing children on the milk cartons distributed in the public schools. I know that it would please him and I want to honor him by this donation.”

We asked Lisa permission to use her note – and her story – as an inspiration to others. She kindly consented, sending along a lovely family photo from Christmas 2012. Lisa also included copies of local newspaper clippings reporting on the family’s ordeal leading up to her son, John’s recovery – and the work her father, John E. performed as a community activist on the behalf of missing children – and Child Find.

To complete the picture, we retrieved Lisa’s case file and - much as we pieced together the montage on the cover - we pieced together the story of a boy born in 1980, the same year in which Child Find was founded by another searching mother.

Lisa’s relationship with Child Find is rooted in the events of July 17, 1982, when her world was shattered. Lisa had commenced divorce proceedings earlier in the year – having been granted temporary care, custody and control of their son, John. There had been many arguments. Family Court had granted the boy’s father 3 hours supervised visitation, weekly – an arrangement that didn’t sit well with him. On the morning of the 17th John’s father picked up the 20-month-old just before 9 a.m. But when he hadn’t returned the child by 12:15 p.m., Lisa anxiously phoned to find out why they were running late. An operator cut in, telling her that the number had been disconnected. What Lisa had feared all along had finally happened. She knew immediately her son had been abducted by his father who had somehow evaded the visitation supervisor.

Lisa did all the right things in the search for her son. She immediately notified the local police, who confirmed John’s father’s home had been abandoned. Within 24 hours a warrant was issued for his arrest. Lisa also notified the FBI – who could offer no help – as protocol dictated that they would need proof that her child was endangered physically. (Child Find later advocated, and was instrumental in changing that policy.) Having been tipped off by a neighbor that the abductor had talked about moving to Mexico, Lisa managed to convince officials to waive the 24-hour waiting period before airport security could be notified of the abduction. She even rummaged through her husband’s trash cans to find letters and other documentation of the planned abduction, including a list of items he would need to take along for his young son.

Five days after the abduction, Lisa contacted Child Find. Her caseworker gathered information, launched the investigation and disseminated pertinent materials through Child Find’s network of partners. All of this was handled via telephone and the mail - before the internet. Child Find also put Lisa in touch with an investigator who would in turn connect her with lawyers on the border and in Mexico.

Months passed. John’s 2nd birthday came and went. The sinking feeling Lisa described as lead in her stomach grew heavier each day. Finally, in December 1982, Child Find suggested Lisa get in touch with a private investigator from New Jersey who specialized in cases such as hers. The PI eventually determined the abductor’s location in Mexico. He and Lisa flew down – and spent another 3 weeks with her Mexican attorneys negotiating the legal system there. Finally – on February 17th, seven months to the day since the abduction, the PI along with other authorities safely retrieved John and returned him to the waiting arms of his mother.

(Continued on page 3)
“... I am lucky to have had help from people like you and never-ending love and support from what I feel is the best family a person could ask for in life. ... Having John home makes our family complete again. I grew up with loving, concerned parents and I want to give my son the security of such a family. Now with him safely home with me, I am able to do just that.”

—Lisa Riccio, April 15, 1983

This 35th anniversary issue of Child Find’s annual report is dedicated to John E. Riccio, Lisa Riccio and son, John Vincent — and all families and friends of the missing - that we may never lose hope.

THAT FIRST CALL — HOW DO WE SAFELY GET THERE FROM HERE?

A sampling of caller’s presenting issues... Hats off to our caseworkers!

- The caller is an Afghani vet with PTSD and traumatic brain injury seeking location services. She is searching for her child and is in pursuit of full custody with federal criminal actions against her spouse for parental kidnapping.

- The caller is the adoptive parent of one of two children whose biological mom is currently incarcerated in another state. The second child is likely in the custody of the incarcerated mom’s “friend” at an unknown location. Having custody of the first child, the caller would like to locate and seek non-parental third party custody of the second child - possibly against the wishes of the incarcerated biological mother. The caller has never met the second child.

- Caller is requesting location services for “abduction”. The call is interrupted by police and CPS at his door investigating the physical assault on his 8 and 3 year old children.

- A child in foster care – sent to a residential center after attempting to run away from the foster parents’ to his own home – is missing from the residential center. The caller (mom) has been told by CPS that the child is “safe” now. However mom doesn’t trust their answer and is seeking to navigate the system to find her child and reunify.

- A call is received from a domestic violence shelter from a mother who doesn’t want to be accused of child abduction; though she needs to leave the state soon for her safety as the child’s father – the alleged perpetrator of DV – has discovered her location.

- The caller is claiming that her children’s biological father has abducted them; later disclosing she is under investigation for the use of methamphetamines and that her husband (the non-bio dad) is suspected of child sexual abuse.
WHAT WE DO – PARENT HELP, LOCATION AND PREVENTION

Child Find does so much more than locate missing children. In the case of parental abductions, while locating the missing child is the presenting issue that often prompts a left behind parent’s or caretaker’s first call to our 1-800-I-AM-LOST helpline, there are urgent underlying issues that must be addressed as well – for the safety of the caller, and the well-being of the child and other family members involved.

The following sampling of case notes from this past year illustrates the multitude of issues that can complicate the delicate process of recovery. Also noted are some of the personal, legal and safety hurdles that encumber the course towards a positive outcome – including those that occur after the child has been recovered.

JARED - RUNAWAY OR ABDUCTION?

15 year old “Jared” was recovered after Child Find shared address information with law enforcement for purpose of a child welfare check. At the time of her initial call to Child Find, Mom wasn’t sure if Jared had run away or had been abducted. Jared never knew his biological father and always saw his legal father as his dad. The legal father had signed the acknowledgement of paternity at Jared’s birth knowing he was not the biological father, but still wanting to play a part in raising Jared. Matters became complicated when Jared’s legal father fell into issues with substance abuse, causing a separation with Jared’s mother. Her financial situation deteriorated after their separation and she was staying in transitional family housing at the time of the call. The mother had lost current contact information with the legal father and was told by police that he was not at his last known address. After Child Find located and shared the current address with police, they found Jared and facilitated his return. Police discovered that his legal father had kept him from calling anyone. Police contacted Child Protective Services out of concern for substance abuse in the household and the legal father is currently being offered rehabilitative services. Child Find’s case work evolved at this point to discuss with Mom the value of connecting Jared with mental health services. At last call, Mom reports that she’s transitioned into permanent housing, is in a job training program and has been in active communication with the local mental health services over ways to support her son.

LILY - LIFE-THREATENING RISKS

3 month old infant “Lily” was recovered after Child Find located her living with extended family in another state. Lily had been taken by her father and brought to live with his mother. Lily’s paternal grandmother. Lily’s father had a history of extreme violence against her mother during pregnancy. After the abduction he began texting and leaving voice mails for Lily’s mom threatening to kill her – at one point even threatening to kill Lily. As this case involved extreme risks, it was imperative for our caller to work with Domestic Violence services for safety planning and coordination with police. Child Find connected Mom to local DV services and began coordinating with advocates. Once the potential location of Lily was found, it was shared with an attorney who specialized in issues of domestic violence, who in turn assisted the caller in securing an emergency order. Additional assistance was provided by Child Find to coordinate enforcing the order across state lines. Connections to appropriate DV services and law enforcement were made. Lily was safely recovered through these efforts and the caller receives ongoing services and safety planning through her local domestic violence agency.

(Continued on page 8)
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Founded in 1980 to ensure that every child thrives in a safe, healthy and legal environment, Child Find of America’s mission is to prevent and resolve cases of missing children augmented by programs and services that promote healthier family environments and strengthen parents – the key to child well-being. All of Child Find’s programs and services are free to families.

Child Find searches for missing, kidnapped, runaway and parentally abducted children through investigations and targeted distribution of missing child photos and posters nationwide. Child Find’s free programs and services are available nationally and internationally if the child or a parent is a US citizen.

Child Find’s Parent Help program provides professional services designed to defuse family conflicts that can lead to abduction and abuse such as: crisis intervention, conflict management, communication/parenting skill-building, safety planning and more. Our information & referral service provides additional options and resources regarding legal assistance, financial challenges, child support, kinship care, domestic violence, child abuse, youth-at-risk and other issues related to child well-being.

LOCATION SERVICES: 1-800-I-AM-LOST

In fiscal year 2014 there were 44 cases registered with Child Find’s location services. (Additional locations were provided through the Parent Help program, below.)

Child Find’s 1-800-I-AM-LOST toll-free number receives calls for assistance from all 50 states and internationally. An in-house location staff investigates each case of a missing child using computer technology and a national network of partners, including the FBI, local law enforcement, state missing children clearinghouses, schools and other non-profit organizations. Photos of missing children are disseminated nationwide via the internet and through the support of media outlets, businesses and volunteers who post, circulate, print or air Child Find missing children posters.

Because of safety, confidentiality and legal concerns, Child Find only posts images of missing children registered with us. Additionally, the majority of cases under our investigation involves family abduction and do not result in the publication due to endangerment and legal factors.

PARENT HELP: 1-800-716-3468 OR 1-800-A-WAY-OUT

Connecting families and parents living apart to experienced family service professionals, Child Find’s Parent Help registered 1,569 new cases in 2014, bringing active enrollments in the program to 6003.

Of those new cases, 186 involved family/parental abduction; 27 reported endangered missing children/runaways, including 3 who were lured by strangers through internet contact. 167 callers required skill-building assistance with parenting & co-parenting. An additional 205 cited concerns for child safety and domestic violence. The remainder of cases dealt with conflict management over issues such as visitation, custody and child support.
EDUCATION & TRAINING

In 2014, Child Find’s staff conducted trainings and participated in 35 national and regional conferences with service professionals and agencies regarding safety, missing children, domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, mediation, healthy families and more.

Child Find’s educational materials are available to individuals, schools and community organizations. Press releases, articles and interviews with local and national media bring attention to the issues. In-service training of allied professionals increases understanding and develops safety skill sets, further strengthening Child Find’s mission.

Child Find has developed a comprehensive information and referral network and resources serving parents, educators, human service workers, and law enforcement - to educate about missing children issues, the co-occurrence of abuse and abduction, crisis management and keeping kids safe.

Many of Child Find’s free materials are available on our website at: www.childfindofamerica.org. Information and Referral specialists are available by calling our toll-free numbers M-F, 9am-5pm EST.
CHILD FIND AT 35 – THROUGH FRESH EYES

When our college intern, Julia, mentioned during her first week here that her boyfriend kept asking, “Did you find any kids today?” - it was an inspiration. We asked her to compare her expectations of what a missing children’s agency does, to what she actually learned after helping out at Child Find for 6 months. We also asked her to share. We think it’s quite enlightening – and hope you do too!

Dear Friends of Child Find,

When I first started at Child Find of America as an intern in July of last year, I imagined myself helping out with cases, digging up dirt on abductors, and going out into the community to rescue missing kids. Of course I knew that these duties probably would not be given to me, but I was eager to help. Within the first few days I learned that the actual work done was not what you would ordinarily think a missing children’s organization does. In fact, it was much more. The first few times I would get home from work, my boyfriend would ask me, “Find any kids today?” The first thing that was wrong with that question is that I’m a college intern, locating missing children would not be a task assigned to me. Secondly, while location services are indeed the foundation of this national missing children’s organization, Child Find has evolved into much more.

I began my work here with a blue binder of stories, stats, protocol, press releases, and telephone logs. The documents were old, stapled in the left hand corner and compiled sometime in September 1987, four years before I was born. My goal - learning everything I can about Child Find’s identity simply by listening to everyone work. Their caring voices are the key. Phone calls and discussions, meetings, and recollections of past cases have illuminated the true purpose of Child Find and its Parent Help program as an organization that seeks not only to prevent abduction and offer location and education services, but to help everyday people who have nowhere else to turn.

Although these documents were insightful, I continued to learn most about Child Find’s identity simply by listening to everyone work. Their caring voices are the key. Phone calls and discussions, meetings, and recollections of past cases have illuminated the true purpose of Child Find and its Parent Help program as an organization that seeks not only to prevent abduction and offer location and education services, but to help everyday people who have nowhere else to turn.

There are a lot of myths surrounding child abduction and abuse, because of this, trying to get help can become an increasingly sticky situation. In the case of parental abduction, you can tell someone that the statement, “As long as kids are with one of their parents; they’ll be OK and lead normal lives” is false, but it is much harder getting that person to understand and believe it until they’ve witnessed the effects first hand.

The reality is dark, and the alley ways and street corners that Child Find’s caseworkers navigate are more psychological than physical, though both physical and mental abuses are issues in almost all of the cases. Not only does the staff work at preventing child abduction, but also domestic violence, sexual assault and much more. It’s estimated that over 200,000 kids are abducted by parents each year. Over 500,000 kids run away - or are thrown away (when a caretaker tells a child to leave) often because of abusive situations in the home. But it is recognized that these numbers are from a decades old study, and don’t account for all the cases that aren’t reported to the FBI.

As for abductions - it’s only natural to assume it’s always a predatory dark stranger in a black van crawling along the street seeking unsupervised children playing in the yard. Those are the horrific stories that make the headlines. But few people consider a Red-Riding-Hood-in-reverse scenario, wherein a child’s own
grandmother is a wolf in disguise. It’s literally a whole different story. The rescuing wood cutters in this case are Child Find’s case managers - armed with skills, rather than weapons – uncovering ugly truths that are so difficult to face as a society that fables are easier to swallow.

Prevention is the key to reducing child abductions. Child Find still works to find missing children. In fact, children are located almost every day, but because of confidentiality and safety reasons, these cases are not publicized. Child Find case managers are on the phones with people struggling to take care of their children, having marital or custody issues, are victims of abuse, and generally feel trapped in their seemingly hopeless situations. They need protection, and support by people who are willing to work with them discussing their all their options and letting them know their situations are not hopeless. That’s what Child Find’s free programs and services are all about. By providing these families the tools and options they need, Child Find’s case managers stop disasters before they happen and help them through the heartbreaking situations they have already become victims to.

I look forward to continuing my internship here and helping to spread the word about Child Find, and what this A+ charity has been doing for the past 35 years by using Social Media. I’ve learned a lot about the responsibility of helping families and children through the experiences of the case managers, and the history of Child Find from the staff, and I want to share the importance of their work with the rest of the community.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

WHAT WE DO – PARENT HELP, LOCATION AND PREVENTION
Continued from page 4

JOHN AND ANDY – COLLABORATING FOR A SAFE RECOVERY

10 year old “John” and 6 year old “Andy” were recovered and safely returned through coordinated efforts of Child Find. Domestic Violence Service Providers and Child Protective Services. John and Andy were found to be living at the abductor’s girlfriend’s house. In this case, the abduction occurred in the context of an active family court order and the caller knew the possible location of her children. The abductor had been violent in the past with the left behind parent, at certain points causing injury which required hospitalization. Though the caller had been able to secure full custody with a pick-up order since the abduction, the children were in another state and the abductor had called Child Protective Services to allege substance abuse concerns. Child Protective Services informed the left behind parent that they had instructed the abductor to hold onto the children, despite the court order for full custody. The caller was connected to domestic violence services locally as well as in the abductor’s state. Comprehensive information was provided to the left behind parent about how the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA)* functions. This information was relayed to this parent’s local domestic violence service provider, and was used in a plan of action to enforce the order. The caller also used information from Child Find about how Child Protective Services functions to coordinate a meeting with a supervisor. These efforts helped shift the focus of the CPS assessment back to the abducting parent, and with input from CPS to local law enforcement, the order was enforced and the parent safely returned home with the children. Child Find was happy to hear the words “thank you all the good information and support-- you guys were really, really helpful and I can't say enough.”

* UCCJEA is a Uniform Act drafted by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. It has been adopted by 49 states and the and the District of Columbia, excepting Massachusetts where a bill to enact is pending. It has also been adopted in the US territories of Guam and US Virgin Islands, but not Puerto Rico. The UCCJEA vests “exclusive jurisdiction” for child custody litigation in the courts of the child’s “home state” as well as providing definitions in determining the child’s home state.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniform_Child_Custody_Jurisdiction_And_Enforcement_Act

(Continued on page 9)
RYAN & AMANDA - GUIDANCE FOR GRANDMA

10 year old “Ryan” and 12 year old “Amanda” were recovered and safely returned to their paternal grandmother, who had been caring for the children for years due to both parent’s criminal histories and substance abuse issues. Ryan and Amanda were abducted from Grandma’s care by their mom – who had crossed state lines in the company of an individual who had a warrant out for his arrest for theft and heroin possession. Grandma was only able to get emergency sole custody of Ryan, because Amanda wasn’t her son’s biological child. Additionally, Grandma was being told by local Child Protective Services that since the children were no longer in her state of residence, they were not responsible for an investigation. When Grandma finally called Child Find, she was provided with comprehensive information on how family court operates in regards to Kincare* situations, and was referred to her local Kincare program for ongoing support. Additionally, she was educated about interstate CPS compacts on the placement of children and the process of returning them when found and kept in state care in another state. Lastly, she was given guidance on filing a missing person’s report. Armed with this information, Grandma was able to enter into a consultation with the local legal agency she was referred to, who helped her modify her custody order to include Amanda. Shortly thereafter, the mother was pulled over for a DUI and police saw that there had been a missing persons report filed for the children with an NCIC number in connection with her name. The children were located and taken into emergency custody by the police. Through the coordinated efforts of CPS in two states Ryan and Amanda were brought safely back to their home state. Though they are currently in foster care, Grandma is now in frequent contact and actively seeking full guardianship with the assistance of her local Kincare program.

*Kincare short for Kinship Care is the raising of children by relatives or family friends because the biological parents are unwilling or unable to do so. Legal custody is not necessarily involved. Grandparents make up the largest group of kinship providers. According to a 2003 U.S. Census Bureau report, 2.4 million grandparents had primary responsibility for their co-resident grandchildren younger than 18. Many communities have public systems or private agencies to provide support. For more information about kinship care, check out The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 16 page report at: http://www.aecf.org/resources/stepping-up-for-kids/

KATY - TEENS PARENTING APART

6 month old “Katy” was located and discovered safe in the care of her mother and great aunt about 1,500 miles away from her home state. Both parents in this case were young – in their late teens - and were in conflict over each of them being in a new relationship, each claiming the other had cheated. They had been involved in court proceedings over Katy. The aunt had little knowledge of the legal impact brought about by her niece’s decision to relocate in the middle of custody court proceedings. Though the father did not request it, the judge issued full custody to the left behind father. Through Child Find’s efforts in locating and reaching out to the aunt, a discussion was initiated. The aunt was given contact information for the left behind father and his family, which ultimately led to a series of in-person and on the phone meetings over how to move forward. Through these discussions that involve both parents and supporting family members everybody learned of options that may remain available in the future, including the possibility for an interstate custody order which would be enforceable in either state. Though emotions still run high in this situation, all family members involved are speaking with each other openly now, are in connection with appropriate local parenting support, and remain committed to finding a safe and legal resolution for the sake of Katy.
# Financial Report

## Statement of Audited Revenues & Expenses

**Fiscal Year June 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013**

**Fiscal Year June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014**

**EIN: 22 232 3336**

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<th>REVENUE</th>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue, Gains &amp; Other Support</strong></td>
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<td>Supporting Services</td>
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## Expenses Distribution

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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$401,685</td>
</tr>
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92% of revenue was allocated to programming.

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Child Find of America, Inc. is exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is not a private foundation as defined in section 509(a). Contributions made to help sustain the programs and services of Child Find are fully tax deductible by donors, as defined by law.

Child Find of America’s annual fiscal report, IRS Form 990 and Audit may be viewed online at: [www.childfindofamerica.org](http://www.childfindofamerica.org)

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**Charity Watch Top Rated**

A+ Charity Watch Rating
American Institute of Philanthropy
STILL MISSING
If you have any information or think you have seen any of these children, please call Child Find, toll-free: 1-800-I-AM-LOST

Kimberly Arrington*
Montgomery, AL

LOCATED since publication
Bisbee, AZ

LOCATED since publication
Lennox, CA

Brittany Williams*
Richmond, VA

LOCATED since publication
Cincinnati, OH

Diego Flores*
Victorville, CA

Tammy Flores*
Victorville, CA

Brooklinn Miller*
South Sioux City, NE

Brandon Mema*
Brooklyn, NY

Natasha Corley*
Scottsville, AZ

Vivian Trout*
Miami Beach, FL

Samantha Kibalo*
Suffern, NY

*Age progression/composites courtesy of NDCPC

CHILD FIND of AMERICA
BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

35 years

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