

# Column: IDs could save a child's life

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Have you ever bought something hoping that you wouldn't ever use it?

There are some things like that -- insurance, or something that is guaranteed to become a collector's item -- but I don't think there are too many things we buy that we don't intend to use.

In the near future, the Everest Area Optimist Club is going to give the parents of all first-grade students in the DC Everest School District something just like that. Something that will help them keep those first-graders safe and secure but something we hope they will never have to use.

The Wausau Noon Optimist Club has obtained a grant from Peoples State Bank that will offer all Marathon County first-graders and their parents a SafeAssured ID mini-CD identification kit. The Everest Area Optimist Club has worked with the Wausau Noon Optimist Club doing Safe Assured ID enrollments for the past few years, and we will be doing the enrollments in the D.C. Everest School District.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, an average of 2,000 children are reported missing each day in the United States; thankfully the vast majority of these children are recovered quickly.

Ernie Allen, president and CEO of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children says that "NCMEC urges parents or guardians to maintain easily accessible, good-quality photographs of their children. SafeAssured helps them accomplish this."

The Optimist Club, as well as all local law enforcement officials, think that SafeAssured ID is the most comprehensive, technologically advanced youth identification solution available today. In the event that a child goes missing, SafeAssured ID provides families with the power to immediately deliver to the media and law enforcement ready-to-broadcast information unique to the missing child.

With the SafeAssured ID Kit, you receive a driver's license-quality ID card and a mini-CD that contains all 10 electronically imaged fingerprints of your child, a digital photograph, streaming video showing mannerisms and gait, and a linked audio file that provides the child's voice inflection and accent.

It also provides the child's general personal description, private information (street address, date of birth, life-threatening medical conditions, identifying scars or marks, and tattoos), family code word, and the ability to create a missing person poster in minutes from the mini-CD using your home computer.

You would think that a mini CD containing all that information could be harmful if the CD fell into the wrong hands; however the mini-CD secures this highly sensitive and private personal data with electronic encryption. The data can only be accessed when the parent or guardian presents the mini-CD to law enforcement. Another comforting thing is that all information is stored on the CD -- in other words, there is no database stored anywhere.

When we begin the enrollments we will be assisted at each school by members of the school's PTO. The Safe Assured ID enrollment process takes six to 10 minutes per child, and we appreciate the schools allowing the first-graders time away from class to become enrolled so that we can give the parents something we hope they will never use.

Until next time, as part of the Optimist Creed says, remember "to talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet."

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