

Keeping children safe

The SafeAssured ID solution

John Kozlowski
Staff Writer

The Department of Justice estimates that nearly 800,000 children are reported missing each year. Although run-away and abandoned children constitute almost half of those children reported missing, the average victim of abduction and murder is described as a low risk, normal child from a middle class neighborhood with a stable family relationship. Initial contact with an abductor is usually within a quarter mile of the home.

Many of these cases are resolved quickly and law enforcement officials agree that it is important for parents to maintain and update high quality pictures of their children in case of an emergency. According to www.missingkids.com, a high quality, current photograph is vital to the search for a missing child.

Working as partners with police departments, businesses, Native governments

and service organizations, **SafeAssured** offers a system that can be used immediately to alert the public when a child is missing. Law enforcement officials agree that the faster the word gets out the more likely the child will be found safely. **SafeAssured** has developed a ready to use digital ID kit that provides law enforcement officials instant access to a child's identifiable characteristics. Included on the mini-CD, which the family maintains, are a digital photo of the child, a streaming video showing mannerisms and gait, a digital audio file showing voice inflection and accent, general personal information, protected private information, digital fingerprints and a secret family code word. The data is secure and stored only on the mini-CD possessed by the family. There is no other database. Some of the information; such as the child's fingerprints and secret pass-

word, is available only to law enforcement agencies. That information is encrypted for privacy protection in case the CD is lost. In the event of a missing child emergency, the CD should be immediately delivered to law enforcement so that they may access and



distribute the data. The public information on the disk can be used to create missing posters and media alerts.

Leanne Gallagher, Special Markets Coordinator with **SafeAssured**, explained that providers in the community typically raise funds to pay for the system. "It generally takes about six to seven minutes to register a child," she said. She added that while a kit costs about \$10 to pro-

duce, in most cases the parents pay nothing.

SafeAssured Business Development Coordinator Zack Alford stated that, currently, there are about 40 systems in Wisconsin. Most systems are owned by law enforcement agencies that purchase them using grant money or by raising funds in the community. Alford stated that sponsors often place their company name or logo on the kits. Noting that along with allowing organizations to make a difference in the community, he added that it's a good public relations tool for a business or organization.

Among those using the system is the Menominee Nation. Penny Escalante, Director of the Menominee Tribal Day Care, explained the benefits of the program. "When we had the opportunity to get our Children Initiative Grant, I thought it would be a great idea to bring **SafeAssured** in. Our day care partnered with Head

Start and we were able to obtain the grant. We've received many positive comments from parents who brought their children to the events. They thanked me for offering **SafeAssured** IDs to their kids."

Included in each **SafeAssured** ID kit is a parent's handbook which provides preventive safety tips to educate the entire family. Alford explained that though the kit is most often associated with protecting children, it is designed to protect people of all ages. The Alzheimer's Association reports that six in ten people with Alzheimer's disease will wander. If not found within 24 hours, half who wander face serious injury or death.

Parties interested in the kit can buy or lease the system, sponsor a number of children and/or sponsor an event package. For more information contact Alford at (888) 894-5263 Ext. 306

Ho-Chunk Elders presentation

Submitted by
Steven Solberg

The group of Ho-Chunk Elders calling themselves He Ska ga (The Elders) were recently invited to share their grass-roots philanthropic fundraising activities and projects to students enrolled in the Minneapolis, Minnesota Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College Urban Outreach Program. The course at which they spoke was entitled: "Native Philanthropy (NAP): The Art of Giving"

Developed by NAP, is being taught by NAP's Executive Director, Joy Persall (Ontario An-

ishinnabe) and NAP Director of Resources and Development, Kristopher Miner (Ho-Chunk). The curriculum is geared toward students who currently work or plan to work in non-profit organizations, philanthropy or educational institutions. The course examines both traditional and contemporary examples of giving. It is designed to provide Native people with knowledge and skills to cultivate relationships and interface more effectively with donors and foundations.

The Ho-Chunk Elder's presentation

was a huge success and their humor, generosity and wisdom was greatly appreciated by students and faculty alike.

Native Americans in Philanthropy is the only national organization with the sole purpose of increasing the scope and effectiveness of philanthropic activity in Indian Country. Their 3rd Annual National Gathering is being held in Washington, D.C. Friday, May 2-4. Find out more at: www.nativephilanthropy.org



Marian Miner presents an overview of the He Ska ga group grass-roots fundraising and philanthropic charitable giving activities.



(l-r) Back Row: Helen Hardin, Kristopher Miner, Helen Lonetree, Connie Lonetree, Joy Persall
Front Row: Marian Miner, Betty Funmaker, Lillian Thundercloud, Roxanne Gould (Odawa/Ojibway)



Helen Lone Tree shares how traditional basket making, beadwork, and other arts and crafts serve to raise funds for the He Skaga group charitable giving activities.