

The Road Home

Spring 2010



A Beacon of Hope for 25 Years for Families of Missing Children

As you may well perceive from our logo, this year the Missing Children's Network marks its 25th year of operation in Quebec. This is truly an incredible feat for an organization that literally began from the trunk of a car belonging to one of our co-founders and to date, continues to operate without any government grants.

Throughout these past 25 years, we have made tremendous strides in recovering missing children and protecting them from harm ... yet too many children still do not make it home and thousands more are victims in other ways. One child missing is already one too many!

Since 1985, we have been supporting families who are living every parent's worst nightmare ... a missing child. We are proud of our many initiatives that include the following:

- the successful resolution of over 650 cases of missing children;
- the teaching of personal safety strategies to over 150,000 school-age children;
- the implementation of the Amber Alert program in Quebec;

Bringing Community Attention to Missing Children

Once the ground search concludes and the spotlight begins to fade, it becomes a constant challenge to keep the community as well as the media's focus on that of the missing child. An ongoing goal of the Missing Children's Network is to identify different ways and means in order to ensure that these cases remain in the public eye by continuing to stimulate media attention, generate new leads and ultimately bring the child back home. The Missing Children's Network recently supported the following two families who are desperately awaiting news about their children:

David Fortin - The pain never ends and neither does the search



On the morning of February 10, 2009, David Fortin donned his favourite pair of jeans, sat down to have breakfast and then around 7:50 a.m. kissed his mom good-bye and left his home to wait for the school bus. However, David never stepped onto the bus and never reported to school. An unsuspecting family had no idea that their worst nightmare was about to begin.

A year later, the family is left with so many troubling and unanswered questions. Where did their son go on that fateful morning? Did he run away from home? Did someone help him? Did their son encounter foul play? Is he still alive today?

In this past year, Sûreté du Québec officers conducted a vast operation that included both a land and helicopter search of the area, thoroughly combing every empty lot, laneway, park and thicket in Alma. Concerned Quebecers also actively contributed to the search efforts by reporting hundreds of sightings of the young teen. Then in December, the family was offered a glimmer of hope when an eyewitness was convinced that she had spotted David at the Bell Centre. However, after verification by police, it was confirmed that the youngster on the video was *not* David Fortin and this family's hopes of finding their loved one were once again dashed. It has been a roller coaster of emotions for this young man's family who is now so desperate to have any news of David.

Recently, David Fortin's family commemorated his first year of disappearance by holding a special Mass in the afternoon. In a show of solidarity, hundreds of family members, friends and concerned citizens crowded into the small local church to offer their support to the afflicted family.

- the establishment of an identification program that has provided over 175,000 families with an up-to-date record of their children;
- the creation of a complete and comprehensive prevention and education program for children from birth to adolescence;
- the publication of several resource booklets for parents and professionals in collaboration with law enforcement partners.

Yet despite our progress, the victimization of children continues. We must do more. We must do better. Our children merit no less. They truly deserve to live in a world where they can be children: safe, loved and protected!

On behalf of all the families who turn to us for help, we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to all of our corporate and community partners, law enforcement agencies, the media, as well as all our loyal donors and dedicated volunteers for their generous contributions throughout the past 25 years. Your support is our stronghold and our beacon ... guiding and empowering us to continue our quest of bringing missing children back home to their families.

Where is Marilyn Bergeron?



On February 17, 2008, 24-year-old Marilyn Bergeron left her parents' home in Quebec City, mentioning to her mother that she was going to run some errands and would be back later. Marilyn has not been seen nor heard from since that day.

Video surveillance cameras captured Marilyn trying to withdraw funds from a local ATM machine and later in the afternoon, around 4:30 p.m. she used her credit card at the Café Dépôt located in St. Romuald. The cashier at the coffee shop recalls serving the young lady on that day noticing her depressed attitude and how quickly Marilyn left the shop.

Marilyn had been living in Montreal since 2005 and suddenly one day contacted her parents, asking if she could move back to Quebec City. She confided to her mother that she was afraid but never confirmed the exact nature of her fears. Marilyn returned home on February 15, 2008 and mysteriously disappeared two days later.

In the past two years, Marilyn's family has worked tirelessly in the hopes of finding their daughter. They have organized several major blitzes in the region and recently traveled to Hawkesbury following tips that their daughter was seen in that area. Despite the vast mediatization of Marilyn's disappearance, very few solid leads have been generated to date. The wait has been long and agonizing for this family.

These occasions reaffirm that children are missing but never forgotten and reiterate our unwavering commitment to never stop searching until they are back home.

If you have any information regarding David's or Marilyn's disappearances, please contact our offices at 514.843.4333. All calls are confidential.

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ENFANT-RETOUR
THE MISSING CHILDREN'S NETWORK
Québec

Thank You for 25 Years of Hope ... A Parent's Testimonial

"November 1, 1984 ... a day I remember as clearly as if it was yesterday. I was listening to the radio when suddenly news bulletins were being broadcast regarding three little boys, by the names of Maurice Vien, Sébastien Métivier and Wilton Lubin that had gone missing in our beautiful city. My heart literally froze ... just thinking of these young children out there ... alone ... somewhere. It was more than I could bear.

Little did I know, that just two short years later, I would be facing the same nightmare when our daughter Melanie, who was 20 at the time, went missing! The pain was unbearable.

During this agonizing time, I had the privilege of meeting two of the most courageous women I have ever known, Marcèle Lamarche and Susan Armstrong. These two ladies, after hearing horrific stories about the circumstances surrounding one of the missing children, made the decision to join forces with one common goal in mind: the formation of an organization that would focus exclusively on the search for missing children and the prevention of their abductions. Without any financial backing, Susan and Marcèle, who began their collective mission by using the trunk of a car as a temporary office, formed The Missing Children's Network and over the years, it has grown and flourished into the notable organization that we are so proud of today. Although our beloved Susan passed away in 2006, she fought to the end for missing children and even though Marcèle has since moved on to new endeavours, this cause remains dear to her heart.

To this very day, the good people at the Network are the angels on my shoulders - they give me the strength, courage and hope to carry on the search for our daughter Melanie. I remember offering my services as a volunteer two years after she went missing ... I was actually hoping to tap into their knowledge regarding missing children as well as attempting to find ways to help with our search for Melanie. Little did I know that the amazing staff at the Network would take the heaviness from our hearts and guide us through our never-ending journey. We knew we were no longer alone. They gave us, and continue to give us, the strength that allows us and so many other families of missing children to never give up hope.

With your help, this organization will continue to grow, will continue to support families living this nightmare and will continue to bring our missing children safely home where they belong.

On behalf of all the families of missing children and the many children they have helped to return home, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts and wish the Network a very Happy 25th Anniversary!"

Gwen Vatcher-Temperton

(Melanie's Mom and a proud volunteer for the past 20 years)

Bringing Oumaima and Ouifak Home

Malika El Galta and Abdessamad El Warrari, parents of Oumaima and Ouifak, were separated in 2003 and since that time, the children lived with their mother but saw their father regularly. In 2006, Mr. El Warrari convinced Mrs. El Galta to travel to Morocco on a family vacation ... subsequently she and the children were to return to Montreal on August 11th, in time for the new school year.

A month into their vacation, Mr. El Warrari arrived in Morocco. One day, while their mother was out running errands and the children were under the care of their aunt, their father arrived at the home and told the aunt that he would like to take the children to the local Internet Café and would return later in the afternoon. In the meantime, an unsuspecting mother had no idea that her worst nightmare was about to begin when the father failed to return home with their children.

Thus began Mrs. El Galta's long and painful journey to recover her children. Broken-hearted, a distressed mom returned to Montreal where she filed a complaint with Montreal Police and then contacted our offices for assistance. We immediately offered her emotional support and provided her with pertinent information as to the necessary steps she needed to take. At the onset, Mrs. El Galta obtained legal custody of her children in Quebec and then secured the services of a lawyer in Morocco. After four excruciating years of wondering if she would ever see her children again, Mrs. El Galta's prayers were answered. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Missing Children's Network, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian Embassy in Morocco, as well as the RCMP, she was finally reunited with her children on February 10, 2010. A few days later, the family returned home just in time to celebrate Valentine's Day together! A grateful mother visited our offices to introduce us to her little darlings. The smiles in the photo are worth a thousand words. Welcome home Oumaima and Ouifak!



From left to right: Pina Arcamone, Malika El Galta, Ouifak, Oumaima & Nancy Duncan

Lend Your Eyes ... Be the Vision for Missing Children



Sébastien Métivier
Missing: November 1, 1984



Cédrika Provencher
Missing: July 31, 2007



Maisy Odjick
Missing: September 6, 2008



Shannon Mary Mathewsie-Alexander
Missing: September 6, 2008



Lastredor René
Missing: August 16, 2009



Emily Moug
Missing: October 8, 2009

If you have any information about any of these missing children, please contact our offices at 514.843.4333.

All calls are confidential.

Little Girl Lost

I am crying for the little girl lost
How could you just disappear one day
No one gives it a second thought
No one loses sleep at night
Except us, your loved ones

I am crying for the little girl lost
Are you still breathing and thinking at all
Or are you in heaven above looking down on us
Will we ever know what happened to you
Or will we take this pain to our graves

I am crying for the little girl lost
Wishing that I could hold you in my arms
Praying for your safe return as a woman or child
Hoping that the world would wake up
To help the little girl lost find her way home

- written by a mother of a missing girl -

Words of Gratitude

"When Susan Armstrong and Marcèle Lamarche founded the Missing Children's Network in 1985, it was the first glimmer of hope I had of seeing my children again. Within a few months they succeeded where the police, lawyers and private investigators had failed: They found my children and gave me the support I needed to bring them home."

- Linda Menard (Greg and Joel's mother) on September 17, 1993

"I don't know where I would be today without your help and the urge to thank you for your support is stronger than I can describe."

You have been of such tremendous assistance throughout this entire ordeal and from the first contact, I had the feeling of understanding and true willingness to help me in any way, shape or form to find my daughter and ensure that I had taken all the necessary steps to find her safe and sound.

I wish you the best of success with all your future parents who will turn to you for help in their desperate moments.

Your organization should have the word "Angel" inserted somewhere in its title because that is what you epitomize to us as distraught parents."

- Sara Sark

The TELUS Community Board Joins the Missing Children's Network Family of Supporters

It is with tremendous pride that the Missing Children's Network warmly welcomes the TELUS Community Board as a major partner of our popular Child Identification Program. Thanks to a very generous donation of \$10,000, we can continue to provide this invaluable service. As a result, this year, over 25,000 families in Quebec will receive an up-to-date identification record of their children.

A missing child is every parent's worst nightmare. Most parents would like to believe that such an occurrence could never happen to them. While proper precautions and learning safety skills go a long way towards protecting children, cases of lost or runaway children and abductions do occur. Last year alone, there were over 8,000 reports of missing children signaled to law enforcement agencies in Quebec.

Police authorities believe that an updated identification booklet is the most useful tool in the event a child is lost or goes missing, because it speeds up the search process considerably. A distraught parent may have difficulty describing his child's appearance and since "a picture is worth a thousand words" a recent photograph of their child, included with the identification booklet, can save precious time and truly make a difference. It is strongly recommended to have this information properly documented rather than rely on one's memory in situations where time is of the essence.



Donate Today!

For twenty-five years, we have been giving missing children a resounding voice in our community. Reuniting families remains our core mission. Preventing children from becoming victims of abduction and exploitation remains an ongoing challenge. Working together we can accomplish miracles! With your help and generous contributions, this beacon of hope will continue to shine brightly for another 25 years!

To make your donation, please call 514.843.4333 or donate on-line at www.enfant-retourquebec.ca

Reunited with their families!



Inshirah Baggag
September 2009



Noor Al-Hoda Baggag
September 2009



Mecaela Harrison
November 2009



Mason Harrison
November 2009



Catherine Boivin
March 2010



Francis Raymond
March 2010

Thank you for supporting the *only* non-profit organization in Quebec dedicated to recovering missing children and to the prevention of their disappearances.

Community Calendar

Child Identification Clinics

Saturday, May 8 th	Boucherville Family Day 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Location: De la Mairie Park - 500 Rivière-aux-Pins Street (behind City Hall)
Saturday, May 8 th	Loblaws Cowansville 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Location: 1122 Du Sud Street (Cowansville)
Sunday, May 16 th	Défi Pegasus de Terrebonne 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Location: Trois Saisons School - 1658 Des Seigneurs Boulevard
Saturday, May 29 th	4 Fashion Centres 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Le Carrefour Laval 3003 Le Carrefour Boulevard LavalLe Centre Fairview Pointe Claire 6801 Trans Canada Highway Pointe-ClaireLes Galeries d'Anjou 7999 Galeries d'Anjou Boulevard AnjouLes Promenades Saint-Bruno 1 Promenades Boulevard St-Bruno-de-Montarville
August 13 th to August 15 th	Fête des enfants de Montréal Location: Parc Jean Drapeau

National Missing Children's Day

Tuesday, May 25th marks National Missing Children's Day. The Missing Children's Network will commemorate this important day by hosting a very special Evening of Hope at the Hilton Montreal Bonaventure Hotel. Once again, the partners of the "Our Missing Children" program, as well as local government officials, dignitaries and the media will join families of missing children in a poignant ceremony. Ten-year-old singing sensation, Kwahara:ni Jacobs of Kahnawake will give missing children a voice by interpreting some inspirational songs, including **Hero** by Mariah Carey.

On this day, we honour missing children by renewing our commitment to help locate and recover these children until all are safely back home with their families. Thank you for keeping missing children in your hearts and prayers.

Special Fundraisers

Saturday, May 8 th	Barbie's Resto-Bar Annual Breakfast of Hope Cost: \$9.99 per ticket Locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">580 St-Martin Boulevard West (Laval)7325 Langelier Boulevard (Saint-Leonard)7850 Taschereau Boulevard West (Brossard)
June 4 th and June 5 th	Barbecue 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Location: Scotia Bank (Vaudreuil) - 3070 De la Gare Boulevard in Vaudreuil-Dorion
Sunday, June 13 th	"Row, Row, Row Them Home" Dragon Boat Challenge 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Location: Saint Paul Locks along the Lachine Canal
July 29 th to August 6 th	Protecting the Magic of Childhood, Montreal Police Cycling Tour Location: Departing from Edmundston, NB and concluding in Rivière-du-Loup, QC
Monday, August 9 th	Annual Golf Classic Cost: \$1,200 per foursome Location: Club de golf Val-des-Lacs