

Our Thinking: Press Releases

New Multimedia Resource: ‘When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide’ Released on National Missing Children’s Day

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WASHINGTON, DC – Family members who contributed to the 5th edition of *When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide*, gathered to celebrate the release of the important multimedia resource and witness its announcement at the 40th Annual National Missing Children’s Day ceremony held at the U.S. Department of Justice Great Hall May 24, 2023.

These families began work on the *Guide’s* update with the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP) nearly two years ago, carefully reviewing the 4th edition, developing notes for expanding and enhancing information, meeting virtually to discuss their ideas, and peer-reviewing the *Guide’s* content during the 5th edition’s development.

In January 2023, the families met for a week of in-studio filming that focused on the *Guide’s* main topics. They shared their stories with great courage and honesty, providing key lessons learned from their experiences and offering advice for other parents in the midst of their worst nightmare: having a missing child.

The immense care and effort they brought to this project is encapsulated in the new version of *Family Survival Guide*. It features written and video content covering all aspects of missing child experiences and needed resources. It offers families clear, actionable information on how to work with law enforcement, the media, and volunteers; how to manage donations and rewards; and how to survive to fight another day in the search for their missing child.

“The *Guide* serves as a resource for parents needing to know ‘What to do, and how to do it’ if their child goes missing – how to take each necessary step, contact the right people, and move forward each day,” said AATTAP Administrator Janell Rasmussen at the recent 2023 National AATTAP and AMBER Alert in Indian Country Symposium. There, a preview of the *Guide* was shared with the nearly 200 participants who work to respond to incidents of endangered missing and abducted children.

Family member Patty Wetterling, whose son Jacob was abducted in 1989 – and remained missing nearly 27 years until his remains were found in 2016 – captured both the pain and power of her and the other families’ work on the *Guide*. “It’s hard to put yourself out there. To share all this stuff that none of us ever wanted to have happen. But what this work will do is help continually activate parents of missing children – as well as law enforcement – to do something about it. We’re here to help others navigate through muddy waters that no one knows how to get out of.”

The collaboration, trust, and friendships formed across the *Family Survival Guide* project will endure – for the good of the contributing parents, and AATTAP’s work to develop more resources, and expand training and technical assistance vital to supporting law enforcement and child protection professionals, as well as families.

Endangered missing children have a greater chance of being rescued and brought safely home with more tools to ensure better understanding, a swift and effective response, and resources to support long-term wellbeing. This vision is what fuels the hearts and minds of all involved on projects such as these.

Rasmussen reiterated this message with the families today. "To be with you all, to see this *Guide* and videos representing the project — especially for Missing Children's Day — is amazing. This represents your hope, your anger, your courage, your knowledge. It will have special resonance with law enforcement, who can learn from it and share it with others. And as we use this *Guide*, we will honor your children."