

Laura Recovery Center Volunteer Newsletter

Laura Recovery Center
603 West Edgewood
Friendswood, Texas 775456
281-482-5723; 866-898-5723
www.LRCF.org
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Search for Jessica Lunsford

by Bob Walcutt

A little girl went to bed and woke up in a nightmare.

Jessica Lunsford was abducted from her bed in Homosassa, Florida on February 24, 2005. After the local authorities, volunteers and search and rescue teams searched for two weeks the authorities called off the search. We were asked by Jessica's family to help them continue to look for their little girl. Bob Walcutt was dispatched to Florida to establish a community based search. On March 11th he met with Jessica's grandparents Archie and Ruthie Lunsford and her dad, Mark. Bob met with them in their home, the home where Jessica lived with her father. The search started on Friday and ran through Sunday. Over that weekend the core volunteers were trained to coordinate, brief, debrief and dispatch search teams and to map out areas to be searched. Though this search only lasted a few days the volunteers were prepared to start up again the following weekend. However, before the next weekend the police caught Jessica's abductor and recovered her body. Jessica was abducted by a man living directly across the street from her home.

No one knows the pain the Lunsford family feels or the depth of sorrow in their hearts. Our hearts go out to them for they have endured so much at the hands of a killer. He committed a heinous crime against an innocent child and left a trail of pain and sorrow behind him.

Co-Founder, Gay Smither - National Speaker at the United States Department of Justice Commemoration of National Missing Children's Day

Each year the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) hosts the United States Department of Justice's ceremony commemorating National Missing Children's Day. This year it was held on Friday, May 20th, 2005 at 11:00 A.M. in the Great Hall at the United States Department of Justice in Washington, D. C.

Remarks were made by:

- Alberto R. Gonzales - Attorney General
- Tracy A. Henke - Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs
- J. Robert Flores - OJJDP Administrator
- Gay Smither - National Speaker representing parents with missing children.

In her address, Gay told Laura's story and outlined what she sees as improvements in the handling of missing children cases, giving a message of hope to all searching families.

Information about the Commemoration ceremony is available on-line at:
http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/news_at_glance/209734/topstory.html

Pictures taken at the ceremony are also on-line at:
http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/news_at_glance/209734/photogallery.html

The Story Behind the Flyer

by Suzanne Slavin

A mother called us because her 18 year old son had run away two weeks before. Before we could do much of anything, she called to say he was home. He had been staying on the streets, and she asked for names of counseling places. I gave her a few resources and she thanked us.

I called her a few days later with more numbers. Mom said she had gotten some more information from her son. He had been staying with a man who picked him up, bought him some clothes, and let him do some work for him. Mom said that all of that didn't sound right, and I agreed. She was going to try to get more information, and I suggested that she go on line to the DPS Sex Offender Registry.

She called back the next day to get that website address. Her son had given her the name of the man: Marvin Clark. While talking with her, I went on the website and found Mr. Clark listed as an offender, and his victims were male. I faxed her the pictures that were on the website, along with a map of his address. She called back to say that her son couldn't tell by the fax, so she was able to get on line, and he positively identified him. She told me that Marvin had told her son that he was from Florida. While still talking to her, I was able to find that he was also registered there, and gave her the phone number to call for more information.

Mom called back two days later. The Florida authorities had told her that Marvin had ten offenses before he was finally put in prison for kidnapping a 14 year old boy. He served 7 years of a 15 year sentence and was then released for good behavior. He had no probation or parole.

Her son finally confessed to his mom that Marvin had raped him. However, he continued to stay and was forced to have sex 5 nights in a row. He said he was too embarrassed and ashamed to come home. She had taken him to the hospital where they did a rape kit. Unfortunately, it was too late to get DNA, but they were able to get pictures of evidence of abuse.

Mom contacted law enforcement. They told her they had received several complaints against her sons tormentor but weren't able to do anything as no one would press charges. Her son has agreed to do just that. During the few days he stayed, he helped Marvin move. He did not report this address change in the allotted time period. He also had not given law enforcement his correct work address.

Mom thanked us over and over for all our help. She said she'd learned so much from us and that it never would have gotten as far as it had if not for our support.

Even if the sexual assault charges don't stick, we are hoping that he will face charges dealing with his failure to properly report and that we had a small part in getting a predator off the streets.

PLEASE SHARE THIS STORY WITH SOMEONE YOU LOVE

The Search for Elaine Sepulveda

by Bob Walcutt

It was 2 ½ months after Elaine Sepulveda went missing when we flew out to Washington State to do a search for her. Elaine was a 15 year old missing since November 5, 2004 and her mother knew she needed help. She knew her daughter wouldn't run away and was desperately searching for her. Elaine had slipped out of the house to meet her boyfriend on the night she disappeared. The next day the police, family and local search and rescue teams joined forces to try and find Elaine. But 2 ½ months went by without a trace. Bob Walcutt, our Director, was asked by Elaine's family to go to Washington State and coordinate a community search for Elaine. Before leaving, Bob called Brad Dennis of Klaas Kids Foundation and arranged for Brad to join him in Washington.

After arriving in Oak Harbor, Washington and spending the first day driving the area with Elaine's father, Bob went to visit the grandfather of Elaine's boyfriend. Elaine's family had asked early on that the grandfather's property be searched, but that had not happened. The family told us of a large compost pile on the property that they thought might be related to Elaine's disappearance. At first Bob was denied access to the backyard and the compost pile but later, after Brad had arrived, they received a call and were told the grandfather was willing to meet with them and show them his back yard. Bob and Brad drove over to the grandfather's house and met with him. The compost heap that they had been told was a small little thing was in fact huge - about 30 feet across, 60 feet long and 2 ½ feet deep - and it was more of a trash heap covered with grass and clippings. It was too big to properly search that night so Bob and Brad asked if they could bring in dogs the next morning just

to eliminate the compost heap. The grandfather agreed to let our searchers investigate the compost pile the next day.

About two hours after Bob and Brad left the grandfather, he called his grandson and told him the next day they were bringing in dogs and was there anything he needed to know. There was a brief pause then the young man confessed to killing Elaine and burying her in his grandfather's back yard under the compost heap. Authorities were notified, and the next morning before the first search teams were sent out, we got the word that Elaine's remains had been found.

Elaine's family did everything they could to find their daughter. No words can describe the pain they feel or the sorrow they have at the murder of Elaine. Love and a family's commitment to finding their daughter brought her home.

Elaine's killer was convicted of her murder and was sentenced to 8 years in prison.

A Donation From The Heart

Recently a little 11 year old girl had a birthday. Now, there's nothing unusual about that is there? Except, this little girl did something very special. She asked all of her friends to make a donation to the Laura Recovery Center instead of buying her a gift. A gift from the heart, the heart of a child. Ashton Crues, thank you for thinking of us. You are a very special young lady. Your donation says a a lot about you, your family and the kind of person you are becoming. Happy Birthday Ashton!

National Missing Children's Day

May 25, 2005

In observance of National Missing Children's Day the LRC sent out a Media Alert each day during the month of May to 14 local television stations. Each day a different missing child was highlighted.

On National Missing Children's Day, May 25th, we FAXed these television stations a list of all the children still missing in the Houston area. We also sent 197 faxes and 7 emails to 36 television stations across the nation and in Canada reminding them of the children and young adults from their viewing areas that are still missing.

FAXes and emails sent during the month totaled 639.

Predator Check

On May 17, 2005 Bob Walcutt and Suzanne Slavin took part in the Fox 26 Predator Check. For four hours they helped man the phones giving callers the number of predators residing within their zip code or living withing walking distance of a certain park.

If you would like to check for registered sex offenders living in your area, go to:
<https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/soSearch/default.cfm>

We Have Moved!

Our new address is 603 West Edgewood, Friendswood, Texas 77546. A special THANKS to all who helped us move, especially:

- Scout Peter Bourgeois - who made Eagle-Scout by helping the Center move as his Eagle Scout project.
- Joe's Painting (281-388-0028) - who generously donated the crew to completely re-paint our new offices.
- Sherwin Williams in Friendswood - who generously donated all the paint and supplies for the painting of our new offices.
- Calvin Arnold, David Dannemiller, Bob Smither and David Smither for helping with the network and phone wiring.

Now that we are in our new offices we are looking for a donation of land to move the offices to. Our new landlord, Mr. Mike Wagner will generously donate the house to us if we can find a piece of property to move it to. If anyone has a piece of land in the Friendswood area to donate to the Laura Recovery Center please contact us as soon as possible at 281-482-5723 or toll free at 1-866-898-5723.

AMECO Brochure Created by LRC

by Bonnie Alcancia

Bob Smither attended the AMECO (Association for Missing & Exploited Children Organizations) conference in Florida in June. At the conference, he presented a draft brochure created by LRC volunteer Bonnie Alcancia.

The brochure includes a directory of the 45 members of AMECO, their contact information, and details of the services each member provides. Members were asked for comments and corrections. The idea was warmly received and welcomed by the members. The brochure will provide information for AMECO organizations to make referrals to other AMECO members, coordinate their services, and expand support for families. AMECO members are non-profit organizations throughout the United States and Canada. Each AMECO member provides unique resources, experiences, and skills needed to help find missing children. This brochure gives families information they need to select organizations to ask for help since each family knows best what services will benefit their unique situation. LRC has been distributing these brochures to law enforcement and families. LRC is proud to be able to provide and share this additional tool to help locate missing children.

3rd Annual Laura's Legacy Golf Tournament

by Gay Smither

The 3rd annual Laura's Legacy Golf Tournament and fund raiser was held April 1, 2005 at the Magnolia Creek Golf Club. This year we had close to a full field with 33 teams playing. The course was especially challenging this year, with strong northerly winds to contend with. In spite of the winds, the players had a great time and turned in some excellent scores. A silent and live auction and raffle accompanied the wonderful dinner that was generously donated by Joe's B-B-Q, Highway 6 in Alvin. The event raised \$30,500 for the Laura Recovery Center.

We have begun preparing for the 2006 tournament so any silent or live auction items (or goodie bag items for the tournament players) will be gratefully accepted at the Center's office at 603 W. Edgewood in Friendswood, Texas 77546 (across from Westwood Elementary School).

Opportunity for the Center!

We have taken the first step. We are now in our new offices at 603 W. Edgewood in Friendswood.

Our new landlord is willing to donate the house to the center - if we move the house off the current lot. We need to raise around \$40,000 to move the house and reassemble it, as well as get a donation of land to move to. The owner is leasing the house to us for the next year while we try to raise these donations.

If you have any ideas about how LRC can take advantage of this tremendous offer, please contact Bob Walcutt at 281-482-5723.

LRC Activity, January - July 2005

Missing Children

- Cases: 87 (Resolved: 73; Unresolved: 14)
- Searches Conducted: 4 (Two victims returned safely home, 2 victims had been murdered)

Education

- Skate Programs: 44
- Safety Fairs: 5
- Law Enforcement Training Classes: 15
- Teen Choices Programs: 2

Special Programs

- Emergency Nurses Assoc.
- Friendswood Holiday Hustle Fun Run
- Citizens Police Academy - Preparation for Missing Child Incident
- Greater Houston Search Dog Team Fun Run - Display Booth
- Law Enforcement Expo
- Shell Houston Open - Birdies for Charity

Brochures Distributed

- Fingerprint Kits: 6197
- LRC Brochures: 675
- Beware Lures Work: 2849
- Know the Rules Brochures: 4037
- Polly Klass Material: 267

Volunteers Make All The Difference

by Bob Walcutt

I want to thank Suzanne Slavin, Bonnie Alcancia, Janice Liggett and my wife Evelyn for all the work they did this summer. They made this summer a pure pleasure. They put so much into everything we do.

Suzanne has been fantastic on cases. She has helped numerous families searching for missing children. She's also come up with some of the best ideas for improving our daily operations and as the Queen of Google she can find anything we need.

Bonnie took on the development and completion of a pamphlet for the Association of Missing and Exploited Children Organizations (AMECO) which lists the names, phone numbers and web sites of 45 other child search organizations in the United States and Canada. The pamphlet is now on our web site and is being used by other AMECO members. Bonnie is also working on the drafting of grant proposals. Her work on the grants is vital to the continued operation of the Laura Recovery Center.

Janice took on the role of watch dog for the quarterly news letter. With her help, we will have a regular news letter. She's also helped us with tracking our cases and searches and took on the task of preparing over 70 LRC search vests.

Evelyn has kept us on our toes by tracking the many thank you letters we send out each month. She's also maintained accurate inventory of all the outgoing educational materials we've used so far this year.

Thanks to these volunteers, The Laura Recovery Center is able to help more families with missing children.

NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS

We are updating our files. We will be contacting all those on the volunteer list. If you would like, you may email your information to Suzanne Slavin at SuzanneSlavin@lrcf.net. Please include your name, address, phone numbers, e-mail, etc.

Thank You to Our Volunteers and Donors!

Please submit any articles you would like to see in the next issue of our newsletter to Janice Liggett at JaniceLiggett@lrcf.net or fax the information to 281-482-5727.

On Line Calendar

Please check our on line calendar for opportunities to volunteer with us. The calendar is linked from our home page (<http://www.lrcf.org>) under News and Events.

Donations

Your donations are gratefully accepted by the Laura Recovery Center which is supported solely by voluntary contributions. You can donate on line at <http://www.lrcf.org>.