

Bringing Missing, Runaway and Abducted Children Home for More Than 20 Years

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ANNUAL REPORT | 2004



**CHILD FIND<sup>®</sup>**  
**OF AMERICA INC.**

**A+ Charity Rating**  
American Institute of Philanthropy



## A LOOK AHEAD TO CHILD FIND'S 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

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### **A Message from the Executive Director**

As you read through Child Find's 2004 Annual Report to review our recent activities, success stories and finances, the Child Find staff, Board and I are reviewing Child Find's past 25 years in preparation for Child Find's Silver Anniversary in 2005. I began my look back with a review of past annual reports in which I found so many stories with happy endings made possible by the good work, caring and tenacity of a generation of Child Find staff members...and the generosity of the thousands of people who have donated both time and money to help bring missing children home.

One of the most exciting activities during the past year was Child Find's Board retreat, funded by a grant from the Dyson Foundation and held early in 2004. During the retreat Board members crafted a strategic plan for the future that refocused and rededicated Child Find's mission for future years to the prevention and resolution of family abductions. Twenty-four years after Gloria Yerkovich founded Child Find during her experience with family abduction, family abduction remains the most common form of child abduction.

Board members also worked on plans to improve Child Find's financial outlook with new fund development approaches and a direct mail campaign. Actions under way to strengthen Child Find's infrastructure include securing much needed new equipment and restructuring policies and procedures. In an effort to increase awareness and knowledge about the issue of missing children, a public relations effort will soon be launched. And finally, Board members are looking to bring on new Board members who are ready, willing, able and dedicated to fulfilling the Child Find mission.

Motivating us all – Board members, donors, staff and friends – is the deep desire to eradicate child abduction, a most insidious form of child abuse. Please join us in our efforts!

**Donna Linder**



*During the Board retreat, Child Find rededicated its mission to the prevention and resolution of family abduction.*



## A Letter from Board President Elizabeth Baker

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This past year has been one of change and transition for Child Find of America as we continued to respond to thousands of families, parents and children in crisis. The demand for Child Find of America's services has not lessened. In fact, demand for our unique set of services and skills continues to grow. We've begun to focus our services and skills exclusively on a group of missing children who, very often, are not seen as victims.



There are almost 600 children a day abducted by someone they know, love and trust in this country. That's 203,000 children taken by a family member per year. These are staggering statistics. Can you imagine being taken from your home, your school, your pets, your friends and daily life? Just imagine being told that your mother or father is dead, perhaps even being told that they don't love or want you. Do you realize children abducted by family members live a life on the run? Their names are changed. Their identities are lost. They live a life of hiding, behaving like fugitives, often moving every two or three weeks. Are you able to imagine the anguish, pain and suffering these children endure?

Family abduction is a serious issue not only in terms of magnitude but more importantly, injury to the child, the victim. Abduction of a child by a family member does cause permanent harm and trauma.

### **Family abduction is a crime.**

Child Find of America is the oldest and most respected missing children's not-for-profit organization in the United States. Our mission is to protect against and resolve family abductions. Founded in 1980 by a searching mother, we've steadfastly continued this mission over the last twenty years, bringing home thousands of missing children. Last year alone, over 20,000 calls for help were answered.

Child Find of America is an A+ rated charity. Year after year, more than 90% of all dollars donated go directly to programming. Our expert staff is trained to guide families and parents and children in crisis who are in need of assistance. We have programs exclusive to Child Find of America with respect to education and mediation. These programs are designed to help prevent family abductions. Our mediation, conflict resolution and legal advocacy services, along with our search services, are invaluable tools that provide additional means to resolving family abductions once they've occurred. Most importantly, we provide social support, guidance, expertise and hope to those families in need and crisis.

As you become familiar with the case histories and success stories contained within our annual report this year, you'll begin to appreciate the often-complex dynamics associated with family abduction. We also ask you to see these stories through the eyes of the victims, the children. Stop for a moment and appreciate how frightening, traumatic and painful family abduction is for a child.

We'd like to thank the thousands of individuals who give donations during workplace campaigns and the friends who mail Child Find of America generous gifts directly. Only with continuing contributions from you and people like you, will Child Find of America be able to continue supporting families, parents and children in crisis.

Whether you are an old friend or are meeting Child Find of America for the first time, please take a few minutes to read through this Annual Report. We'd then ask you to take a few minutes more to lend your support by returning the attached envelope with your gift. Please rejoice with us as you see the faces of those children safely recovered. Join us too and help bring the faces of those children still missing home. Together, we can continue to bring missing children home, where they belong.

**Elizabeth Baker**



## FROM CHILD FIND'S CASE FILES: WHEN THE ABDUCTOR IS A FAMILY MEMBER

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Every two to three minutes in America another child is abducted by a parent or family member. Living on the run, these children are often forced to change their names and appearance, are denied education and health care, and are lied to by the very person they should trust the most. This is child abuse – and every year another quarter of a million children will suffer this tragedy.

In less time than it took to ponder the previous paragraph another child was abducted. The overburdened court systems, law enforcement and social service agencies are often unable to devote the time and individual attention required to resolve these situations. This is where Child Find can help. For nearly twenty-five years Child Find has been making a difference – returning thousands of children to their homes and loved ones. Below we share some of their stories with you.

**Michigan, March 2004**, a father abducts his six year old boy and flees to Mississippi. The mother frets for her son's well-being because the father is suspected of abusing and neglecting the child. Five months pass as the distraught mother searches in vain. Then she contacts Child Find. Child Find uses its knowledge and network to contact the father via one of his friends and it works. Child Find then reviews emergency options with the father, including returning the child, but the father does not cooperate. Luckily, Child Find also educates the mother about her legal options and she subsequently hires an attorney to obtain the necessary court orders. As a direct result the little boy is picked up by authorities in Detroit and happily reunited with his mother.

**Massachusetts, June 2004**, a mother abducts her eleven year old son and flees to Hawaii. The father contacts Child Find. There is no paternity or custody order so Child Find advises the father of his legal options. The father files for paternity and custody in Massachusetts while the mother applies for emergency orders in Hawaii. While both parents battle the child suffers. Child Find, focusing on resolving the crisis for the young boy, facilitates the method of two states' courts working together and involves Social Services. This case is now progressing toward resolution.

**Oklahoma, September 2004**, the mother of three children, ages 5, 7, and 11, calls Child Find. The father took the three children to West Virginia during court-ordered visitation in summer 2004 and never returned them. Fears gathered that one of the children with health problems was not receiving necessary medical attention. Child Find reviewed legal options, both civil and criminal, with the mother who already had full custody in Oklahoma. Child Find then contacted the father who refused to mediate a resolution. Child Protective Services was called and the police in West Virginia assisted the mother by picking up the children and reuniting them with her. The ill child was hospitalized and then released to the grateful mother's care.

**Georgia, November 2004**, an aunt abducts her eleven year old nephew from his legal guardian and flees to Colorado. The legal guardian, a family friend of the deceased mother, calls Child Find. Child Find reviews legal options with the guardian and contacts the aunt to convince her to return her nephew and proceed civilly in family court. The aunt agrees and returns the child three weeks later. She intends to follow through with family court.

**Illinois, August 2004**, a distraught mother calls Child Find. The father took her four year old son in May and never returned. She never expected something like this to happen so there was no court order in effect. A history of domestic violence existed and this mother feared the worst. Child Find acted quickly and assisted the mother in obtaining emergency custody and police assistance orders from the court. Once the court issued the orders police joined the effort and helped the mother locate and pick up her son.

**Texas, October 2004**, a mother is missing her 13 year old son, who has been living in Germany with his father for several years. She has joint custody in Texas but she hasn't seen her son for ages. When the boy's father dies in summer 2004, the mother thinks he will finally come home, but, instead, the German Youth Authority places her son temporarily with his stepmother in Germany. The mother contacts Child Find. Now, legal court procedures, US State Department channels, and German authorities are working together with Child Find to bring this child home.

**Florida, 1998**, a troubled couple with two young daughters separates and subsequently divorces. Their custody agreement provides the mother frequent and continuing contact with her daughters, but the angry father refuses and disappears with the girls. After trying in vain for 6 years to find them, the mother calls Child Find. She reveals her deep fears that her girls are being physically and emotionally abused and neglected based on her experience with the father's controlling and manipulating behaviors. She confides that the father has a tendency toward excessively harsh discipline. She also relates that she knows her younger daughter is being raised believing that her stepmother is her real mother and her older daughter is being told that her mother is trying to destroy their family. Child Find gets to work immediately and tracks the father, through the Internet, to a "boot camp" type school in TN where he is serving as a founder and administrator. The father is also busy opening another school branch in KY but the local authorities there are already investigating dad on abuse and neglect suspicions and are concerned about KY standards of education not being met. This sticky situation causes dad to flee the KY property, taking several students and his daughters back to TN thinking he will avoid the law. Thanks to Child Find, he can't avoid the law in TN either. Now mother and father are returning to court to modify their custody agreement.

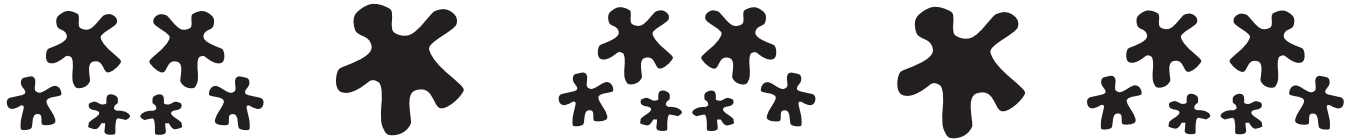




## FROM CHILD FIND'S CASE FILES: WHEN THE ABDUCTOR IS A FAMILY MEMBER

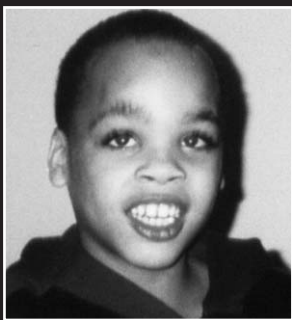
**Tennessee, 2002**, a four year old girl is abducted by her mother. The father opened a case with Child Find in February, 2004 and provided court documentation showing that there was a joint custody agreement. Sadly, the past was problematic for this couple and both parents were ordered to undergo drug testing every six months. The parents were additionally ordered to behave respectfully to one another and encourage their daughter to love the other parent. Child Find researched and found that the mother was residing in a town in TN. Child Find then acted quickly and wrote to the local elementary school. The school contacted the police department and a Captain contacted the father, providing him with the mother's address and phone number. The father was thrilled. Police spoke to the mother and advised her that she was in contempt of a court order. The father spoke briefly with his daughter who was very excited to hear from him and asked him when he was coming to get her. The mother then interrupted and angrily demanded that he stay away. That threat opened the door and the father is now serving the mother for court.

**Texas, 2004**, a mother is searching for the son she hasn't seen in five years. Although she had primary custody she asked the father to care for the son during a brief health emergency. When the time came, the father and his new wife failed to bring the boy back to the mother at a prearranged drop off point. She searched for five years and was about to give up when she called Child Find. Child Find determined that the father was living in CO and verified his address through the Post Office, then sent a letter and poster of the child to the child's school district. The school contacted the local police department and the police called Child Find. The paternal grandmother also contacted Child Find claiming that the mother had abandoned the child in 1999 because she was not capable of handling him. Recognizing the discrepancies among these family members, Child Find's Mediation department took up the case. Together with the family, Child Find devised a plan and the parents are heading back to court where they will resolve the remaining custody and visitation issues.



# \* FOUND \*

Charles



Date Missing: 5/02  
Date Found: 10/24/03

Tyler



Date Missing: 6/26/03  
Date Found: 3/24/04

James



Date Missing: 6/26/03  
Date Found: 3/24/04

Beau



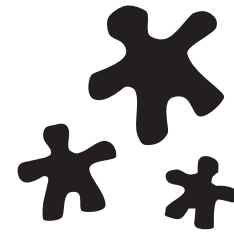
Date Missing: 1999  
Date Found: 4/8/04



# YEAR IN REVIEW 2003-2004

## Child Find of America, Inc., is a national not-for-profit charity that:

- locates missing children through active investigation
- prevents child abduction through education
- resolves incidents of parental abduction through mediation



## Founded in 1980 by the mother of a missing child, Child Find has located and returned home thousands of children.

In the 2003-2004 fiscal year, 90 cents of every dollar Child Find received was spent on its programs: Location, Mediation, and Public Information. *Worth Magazine* named Child Find one of America's 100 Best Charities in December 2001 and Child Find received an "A+ Top Charity" rating by the American Institute of Philanthropy, a nonprofit charity watchdog.

## CHILD FIND PROGRAMS:

IN FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004, CHILD FIND HELPED 16,000 FAMILIES NATIONWIDE

### Location

#### I-800-I-AM-LOST

During the 2003-2004 fiscal year, Child Find registered 442 missing children and located 14 children.

#### Child Find's Location Program includes:

- \* The I-800-I-AM-LOST toll-free phone number receives more than 6,000 calls a year for assistance.
- \* An in-house investigation and location staff.
- \* The national dissemination of photos of missing children through support of the media and more than one hundred companies.
- \* National networking with local law enforcement, the FBI, state missing children clearinghouses, and schools.

### CAPSS

#### I-800-A-WAY-OUT

CAPSS, Child Find's Child Abduction Prevention & Support Services, offer mediation and options for families impacted by child custody crisis. CAPSS services include education, information, assessment, support services and referrals to appropriate agencies.

Child Find's mediation program is designed to prevent parental abduction and return parentally abducted children to a legal environment through free, confidential dispute resolution. Mediation is available to resolve parental access and visitation conflicts and to develop co-parenting plans.

Parents are counseled about the consequences of, and alternatives to, abducting their own child. Child Find received over 5,000 calls for assistance and provided mediation for 235 cases positively affecting 364 children.

#### Child Find's Mediation Program features:

- \* I-800-A-WAY-OUT toll-free number.
- \* A national network of volunteer professional mediators experienced in divorce, custodial, and family mediation.
- \* Staff mediators and caseworkers.
- \* Comprehensive information and referral network.

### Public Education

In addition to handling 5,000 calls for information about missing children, Child Find educates the public about child safety, runaway issues and the problem of child abduction by:

- \* Circulating literature that explains safety programs, parental, stranger and runaway precautions, and Internet safety.
- \* Founding National Missing Children's Day, May 25, to focus attention on the missing children issue.
- \* Using volunteers to promote awareness and prevention information about Child Find's services.
- \* Using the local and national media to disperse information.
- \* Hosting conferences and workshops for worksites, schools and community agencies.

### Contact us:



**CHILD FIND®  
OF AMERICA INC.**

PO Box 277 • New Paltz, NY 12561  
**Business Phone:** (845) 691-4666  
**Fax:** (845)691-7766  
**Email:** [information@childfindofamerica.org](mailto:information@childfindofamerica.org)  
**Web:** [www.childfindofamerica.org](http://www.childfindofamerica.org)

**Bringing missing,  
runaway and  
abducted  
children  
home  
since  
1980**



Child Find of America  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Kenneth Neumann  
 Mediator,  
 Center for Family & Divorce Mediation, NY

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Peter Saretto  
 CEO,  
 Your New Home Development, NY

Child Find of America  
**STAFF**

**Executive Director** – Donna Linder

**Associate Director** – Carol Robins

**CAPSS Coordinator** – Ray Tomaselli

**Location Coordinator** – Tracy Martin

**Program Assistant** – Gabriel St. John

# FINANCIAL REPORT 2003-2004

## Statement of Revenues and Expenses June 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004

### PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE

Contributions .....	\$ 251,175
Depreciation .....	(80)
Interest .....	21
<b>Total Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$ 251,116</b>

### EXPENSES

#### Program Services

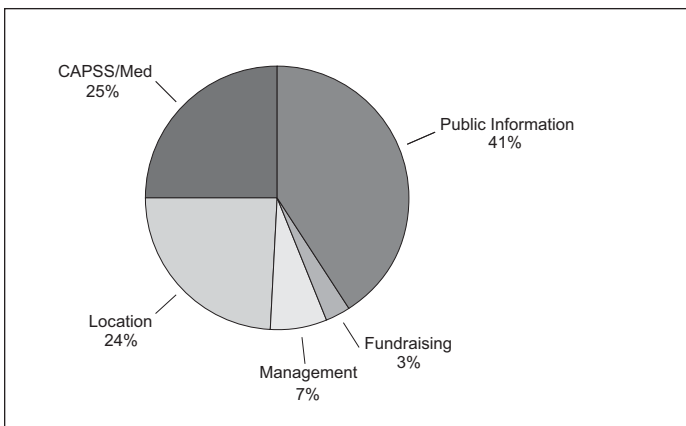
Location .....	\$ 63,850
CAPSS/Mediation .....	\$ 68,067
Public Information .....	\$ 111,141
<b>Total Program Services .....</b>	<b>\$ 243,058</b>

Management .....	\$ 18,693
Fundraising .....	\$ 8,416
<b>Total Supporting Services .....</b>	<b>\$ 27,109</b>

<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$ 270,167</b>
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## EXPENSES DISTRIBUTION 2003-2004

90% of revenue is allocated to programming



Child Find of America, Inc. is exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code and is not a private foundation as defined in section 509(a). Contributions made to help sustain the programs and services of Child Find are fully tax deductible by donors, as defined by law. Copies of Child Find of America's annual fiscal report may be obtained by writing to:

Child Find of America, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 277  
 New Paltz, NY 12561

OR

New York State Secretary of State  
 Office of Charities Registration  
 162 Washington Ave.  
 Albany, NY 12231

# MISSING

*These are just a few of the more than 725,000 children reported missing each year.*

Sky Gilbert



Disappeared from:  
Bainbridge Island, WA  
Date disappeared: 4/3/02

Shiketa Peak



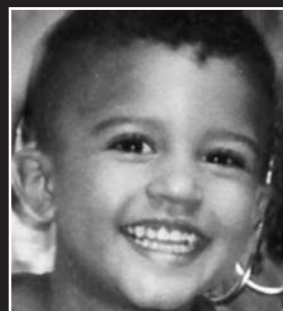
Disappeared from:  
Bainbridge, GA  
Date disappeared: 5/19/04

Kenny Magno



Disappeared from:  
Bloomington, IN  
Date disappeared: 8/27/01

Lloyd Parks III



Disappeared from:  
San Pedro, CA  
Date disappeared: 11/8/03



Samantha Kibalo



Disappeared from:  
Suffern, NY  
Date disappeared: 2/4/01

Samantha Kibalo



Age processed photograph



If you think you have seen any of these children, please call:  
**I-800-I-AM-LOST (1-800-426-5678)**



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