



Pasco Sheriff's Office

Public Information Office
8700 Citizen Drive
New Port Richey, Florida 34654
Phone (727) 844-7732
Fax: (727) 844-7738

For More Information, Contact:

Kevin Doll
Public Information Director
kdoll@pascosheriff.org

August 5, 2008

Release #08-06

New program to assist in the recovery of missing and abducted children

NEW PORT RICHEY -- The Pasco Sheriff's Office is unveiling a new program aimed at reducing a terrible statistic in our society.

When a child is abducted and murdered, 75 percent are killed in the first three hours after they are taken. That leaves law enforcement with a very small timeframe to begin the search to successfully locate and safely return an abducted child. That is why it is vital for pictures and even video of a missing child to be available and quickly disseminated to other law enforcement agencies and the news media so that the public can be on the lookout for the child and his or her abductor.

The new program entitled Operation Find Me can facilitate the quick release of photos, video and a physical description of a missing or abducted child. The Pasco Sheriff's Office is giving away free "thumb drives," which is a portable computer memory storage device. Parents and guardians can put digital photos and video of their children on the thumb drive, and it will also feature a description of the child. If their child becomes lost or abducted, they merely have to give the thumb drive to a Pasco deputy or other law enforcement officer who can then download all the information about their child to a computer. It can then be sent instantly to the news media, which can broadcast the photos and description to viewers who may have seen their missing child.

OPERATION FIND ME

2-2-2

The first chance for parents and guardians to receive a free thumb drive will be at the Pasco Police Athletic League Football Jamboree, scheduled for 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, August 9, at the Arthur F. Engle Memorial Park, 11611 Denton Avenue in Hudson. Members of the PSO Juvenile & Sex Offender Investigations Unit and school resource officers will be there to take a photo of children and enter their basic physical description, address, and phone number onto the thumb drive.

Juvenile Investigations Unit members are also part of the Pasco Sheriff's Office's rapid-response Missing and Abducted Child Team (MAC). This group of specially-trained deputies uses a state-of-the-art vehicle to quickly get to the scene of abduction or where a missing child was last seen. Using the MAC vehicle as a mobile office, the team can use the Operation Find Me thumb drive to forward the photos and video of the child to the Pasco Sheriff's Office website, where the news media and the public can instantly view the information.

Pasco Sheriff's Office elementary school resource officers will also be trained in the management of the operation and will be offering the service to children in those Pasco schools.

Due to the limited number of thumb drives available, only Pasco residents are eligible for the program.