



Dignity Memorial(R) Escape School(R) Commemorates 25th Anniversary of National Missing Children's Day With 25 Tips to Keep Kids Safe

May 23, 2007

HOUSTON, May 23 /PRNewswire/ -- In honor of the thousands of children who are abducted from their families every year, Dignity Memorial Escape School commemorates the 25th anniversary of National Missing Children's Day on May 25 by offering 25 effective abduction-prevention tips to keep children safe and families together.

Each year, more than 58,000 U.S. children are abducted by non-family members.

Dignity Memorial Escape School is a highly recognized national program that teaches children escape techniques, while also exposing many of the common tricks and ploys used by abductors.

"We commend and join the efforts of every agency and organization like ours, who over the last 25 years, has developed strong programs and networks that help prevent, locate, and reunite children with their families, but also educate the public on child abductions in the U.S.," said Diana Vazquez, Community Outreach Director for Dignity Memorial providers, the sponsors of Dignity Memorial Escape School. "We can never do enough to keep our children safe from those who'd want to hurt or end their lives."

It was 28 years ago, on May 25, 1979, that Etan Patz mobilized the nation and became the symbol of missing children in America. The then six-year-old boy vanished from the streets of New York City on his way to school. His disappearance garnered national media attention and shed light on the lack of cohesive information and resources available to recover missing children.

The Missing Children's Act of 1982 first tackled the issue of child abductions, and the following year President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25 to be National Missing Children's Day.

In support of National Missing Children's Day, Dignity Memorial offers the following tips for parents, teens and children:

Teach young children to:

1. Never say they are home alone when answering the phone. Teach your child to take a message and say their parents will phone back.
2. Never answer the door. Whether home alone or with another adult, a young child is no match for someone trying to gain entry into the home or abduct the child from the entryway.
3. Never invite anyone into the house without the permission of a parent or another responsible party within the home, like a babysitter.
4. Never go into other people's houses without asking their parents' permission.
5. Never get into anyone's car without a parent's permission. If a car driven by a stranger pulls up beside them, they should move away from the car. If threatened, teach them to run in the opposite direction the car is driving.
6. Never take gifts or food from strangers or anyone else without asking a parent first.
7. Never play in deserted buildings or isolated areas.
8. Never keep secrets from you. Teach them to tell you if someone has asked them to keep a secret from you.
9. Never hide from parents in a store. If lost or separated from you in a store or mall, teach children to go to the nearest cashier.
10. Say 'no' to anyone who wants them to do something you've taught them is wrong. Give your children permission to break the rules if they feel their safety is at risk.
11. Tell you, school authorities or a police officer about anyone who threatens them.
12. Know how to dial 911 and explain their emergency. If using a pay phone under pursuit or if detained in a strangers home ... DO NOT HANG UP THE PHONE. Police can use the phone to track the child.
13. Scream and kick if someone grabs them and tries to take them forcefully. Teach them to yell, "Help, this is not my Dad/Mom!"

Parents should:

14. Avoid giving your child clothing or toys that have your child's name on it. A child is less likely to fear someone who knows his/her name.
15. Check the background and/or references of all potential babysitters and older friends of your child.
16. Never leave a child alone in a public place, stroller or car, not even for a minute.
17. Always accompany young children to public bathrooms.
18. Always accompany your child on door-to-door activities, such as school fundraisers.
19. Point out people or places that may offer assistance if children feel threatened, such as cashiers in stores, store security officers, fire stations, and mothers with children.
20. Maintain annual, high-quality photos of children and adolescents.
21. Take fingerprints of children and note unique physical characteristics, such as birth marks or scars, and store them in a safe, dry place.

Teens should:

22. Tell parents where they are at all times or leave a written or recorded message at home.
23. Never hitchhike.
24. Avoid shortcuts through empty parks, fields, lanes or alleys.
25. Learn to recognize suspicious behavior and remember a description of the person or vehicle to give the police. Write the plate number in the dirt or snow if nothing else is available.

Additional information about Dignity Memorial Escape School is available through the Dignity Memorial website at <http://www.DignityMemorial.com>. The Dignity Memorial network includes affiliates of Service Corporation International, the world's largest deathcare company, as well as many other independent funeral establishments. Service Corporation International is North America's leading provider of deathcare products and services. At March 31, 2007, SCI affiliates operated more than 1,500 funeral homes and 400 cemeteries.

CONTACT:

Robyn Sadowsky
713-525-7795
Robyn.Sadowsky@sci-us.com

SOURCE Service Corporation International