



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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Office of Justice Programs
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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS WISCONSIN DETECTIVE FOR RESCUING ENDANGERED GIRL

WASHINGTON—Deputy Attorney General James M. Cole today presented Detective Randall Abbott of the Hartford, Wis., Police Department with the Missing Children’s Law Enforcement Award for his successful investigation of a child neglect case. Deputy Attorney General Cole recognized Abbott at the annual National Missing Children’s Day commemoration honoring missing children, their families, child advocates and others who protect children, held in the Justice Department’s Great Hall.

“Protecting children is one of the important jobs we have,” said Deputy Attorney General Cole. “There is no rest for a parent who has lost a child, and there should be no rest for any of us who are in a position to help. There may not be any words we could offer that would ease their pain, but we can and will offer our support – and all the tools at our disposal to help families of missing and exploited children. I am honored to recognize those who work on the front lines to rescue children and bring them home safely.”

In 2004, staff at the Aurora Medical Center in Hartford, Wis., reported to Abbott that Angela and David Schmidt, parents of a newborn daughter, had possibly sold their previous children at birth. Before Abbott could intervene, the Schmidts gave the infant to Denise Novotny, who took her to Missouri. Abbott investigated the case for the next five years, working with numerous agencies in both Wisconsin and Missouri, and learned the girl lived in impoverished conditions and suffered from malnutrition and inadequate medical care. Abbott coordinated with Missouri agencies to remove the girl from the home and to arrest and prosecute Novotny and the Schmidts. A foster family adopted the girl following the arrests.

In May 2011, David Schmidt was convicted of one count of failure to support a child, a felony offense, and one count of refusal to provide a birth certificate, a misdemeanor. Angela Schmidt and Novotny were both convicted of two misdemeanor offenses: neglecting a child and refusal to provide a birth certificate.

President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25, 1983, the first National Missing Children’s Day to remember Etan Patz, a six-year-old boy who disappeared from a New York City street corner on May 25, 1979. Missing Children’s Day honors his memory and the memories of children still missing.

More information about the event and other honorees can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation’s capacity to prevent and

control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.