

May 25th – National Missing Children's Day
Keeping Hope Alive for All Missing Children and Their Searching Families

Montreal, May 25, 2016. Today, all across Canada, hundreds of children will be remembered on **National Missing Children's Day**. This special day serves as an annual reminder to renew its efforts in reuniting missing children with their families, honour those who are still missing and make child safety a top priority.

Sadly children continue to disappear, as we commemorate National Missing Children's Day, the Missing Children's Network is asking the public for its continued help in locating children by visiting our missing children's page on the website for more details.

The Missing Children's Network also hosted an awareness campaign entitled *Together for Safety* at École Barthélemy-Vimont in the Park Extension borough of Montreal. Together with our long-time partner, Groupe Jean Coutu, we created 25,000 activity booklets designed to help foster positive choices both on and offline. The *Together for Safety* booklets are currently distributed to hundreds of schools in the province by law enforcement. Students are encouraged to problem-solve and develop skills that will help ensure their personal safety, such as always walking with a buddy, having a family password in emergency situations, the importance of saying NO! and showing proper netiquette on the web.

"With 6,803 cases of missing children reported to police last year in Quebec, it is important that we talk to children about safety without unduly frightening them. Keeping that dialogue going is even more critical and key to preventing the exploitation and disappearance of youth", said Pina Arcamone, Director General of the Missing Children's Network.

The Missing Children's Network also released an age-progressed photograph of David Fortin, missing since 2009 from Alma, Quebec. The hand-drawn portrait was produced by the RCMP and shows what the now 22 year-old youth would look like. A very grateful and emotional mother, Caroline Lachance travelled from Alma for the occasion and reminded students of the importance of always seeking help from trusted adults.

Seven years later the grief is still very palpable for the Fortin-Lachance family, however, they remain undeterred and continue to keep hope in their hearts. "The last seven years without David have been long and painful for our family. We miss him each and every day of the year. Luckily, we can count on the support of the Missing Children's Network and the media who continue to help us in our on-going efforts to find our son", said Mrs. Lachance.

About National Missing Children's Day

Missing Children's Day was first recognized by former President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, on May 25, 1983. May 25th is the date that six-year-old Etan Patz disappeared from a New York City street corner on his way to school. Etan's case remains one of thousands of unsolved missing children's cases and this day serves as an annual reminder of our responsibilities to ensure the well-being and safety of our children. In 1986, the Solicitor General of Canada declared May 25th to be **National Missing Children's Day** in Canada. Today, this annual awareness day is international in scope with over 50 countries pausing on May 25th to honour its missing children.

About the Missing Children's Network

Founded in 1985, the Missing Children's Network is the only non-profit organization in Quebec that is dedicated to the search for missing children and to the prevention of their disappearance. Regardless of the motive for the disappearance, from running away to a parental abduction or criminal abduction, the Missing Children's Network's team supports, accompanies and counsels families whose child is missing.

In addition, the team works closely with law enforcement agencies, child welfare organizations and the media to recover these children and bring them home safely. Since its creation, the Missing Children's Network has assisted law enforcement in recovering 1,162 children and has educated over 175,000 students on how to stay safe in their day-to-day lives, both on and offline.

The Missing Children's Network is a recognized partner of the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) of the RCMP, and is also a proud member of AMECO (Association of Missing and Exploited Children's Organizations).

-30-

Information:

Cindy Voitus
Communications Officer
The Missing Children's Network
Tel: 514 843-4968 ext. 224
Cell: 514 616-0193

Missing Children's Network, 6830 Park Avenue, suite 420, Montreal (QC) H3N 1W7 • www.missingchildrensnetwork.ngo