

**COLORADO BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

# **MISSING CHILDREN PROJECT**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
TO THE  
COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**• 1991 •**

**CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MISSING CHILDREN PROJECT**

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation expresses sincere appreciation for the generous donations received from the following in support of The Missing Children Project.

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# dps

**COLORADO  
DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC SAFETY**

Carl W. Whiteside, Director  
Colorado Bureau of Investigation

February 11, 1992

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that for a period of one year, a total of 808,700 children were reported missing nationwide: 4,600 were victims of kidnappings, 354,100 were abducted by family members, and another 450,000 were reported as runaways. For those who are personally involved, these numbers are alarming. Yet far too frequently, we forget that each number means the loss of a child, family pain and community frustration.

On July 21, 1991 ten-year-old Jakeob McKnight was reported missing in Lakewood. Less than 24 hours later his parents' worst fear became reality. Two months later Diane Church returned to her home in Black Forest to find that her thirteen-year-old daughter had disappeared. The search for Heather continues today. Each incident not only alarmed parents statewide, but devastated two Colorado families.

This report is to help provide a better understanding of the missing children problem in Colorado. Statistics confirm there is cause for concern, but do not begin to quantify the impact on those who have experienced the preventable loss of a child and the number of people affected by each incident.

Our thanks to the Colorado General Assembly for its support of the Missing Children Project and to the law enforcement leaders who have worked so diligently to find and assist so many young people. The Colorado Bureau of Investigation pledges its continuing support to make Colorado a safer place for its children.

Roy Romer  
GOVERNOR

David J. Thomas  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Colorado State  
Patrol

Colorado Bureau  
of Investigation

Colorado Law  
Enforcement  
Training Academy

Division of  
Criminal Justice

Division of Disaster  
Emergency Services

Division of  
Fire Safety



Carl W. Whiteside  
Director

690 Kipling Street, Suite 3000  
Denver, Colorado 80215-5825  
(303) 239-4300  
Adm. FAX # 235-0588  
Inv. FAX # 238-6714

3416 N. Elizabeth Street  
Pueblo, Colorado 81008  
(719) 542-1133  
FAX # (719) 542-6411

301 South Nevada Avenue  
Montrose, Colorado 81401  
(303) 249-8621  
FAX # 249-6308



# INTRODUCTION

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## History

Each year, thousands of children are reported missing in the United States. Although many of the children are returned safely, those who are not are continually exposed to harmful situations. In response to the growing national concern for missing and exploited children, the Federal Children's Assistance Act was passed in 1982. It directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to become actively involved in missing children cases. Federal efforts were further strengthened by the creation of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in 1984.

During this time, child abduction cases were becoming more highly publicized in Colorado and public concern was mounting. In June of 1985, the legislature created The Colorado Missing Children Project. The Project serves as a central repository for information on missing children in order to better define the problem. It is designed to collect, compile, exchange, and disseminate information to assist in finding missing children. Towards this end, the Project is responsible for obtaining dental records of children who have been missing thirty or more days, comparing new student records with reports of missing children, and reviewing each missing child report submitted by every law enforcement agency in the state.

The NCMEC and the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention instituted a program establishing state level clearinghouses for missing children. Seven state projects, including Colorado's, were selected to participate in this pilot program. Because of its great success, there are now forty States with legislation authorizing the establishment of missing children clearinghouses and four other states with clearinghouses established by executive order.

## RESPONSIBILITIES:

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### Lists

The Project compiles and distributes lists of missing children from reports submitted by local law enforcement agencies. The reports are released to school districts and to any other entity or person the Project determines may be instrumental in the identification and recovery of missing children.

### Monitoring

The Project monitors each missing child report into the Colorado Crime Information Center (CCIC) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for validity, completeness and accuracy and insures the originating agency makes any necessary corrections or additions.

When a child has been missing for thirty days, the Project must attempt to obtain the child's dental records and attach them to the NCIC missing person report.

The Project sends lists of children missing from Colorado to each Colorado school district for comparison with their enrollment records to identify missing children in their schools. If a district chooses, it may submit enrollment lists to the Project to be compared with NCIC to locate children missing from all states. When a match is verified, the Project notifies the appropriate authorities to facilitate the return of the missing child.

## Statistics

Consistent with statute, the Project maintains and distributes statistics on missing children which include:

- The number of missing children reported.
- The number of missing children cases resolved.
- The approximate physical location at which each child was last seen.
- The time of day each child was last seen.
- The age, gender, and physical description of each child reported missing.
- The activity the child was engaged in at the time last seen.
- The number of reported sightings of missing children.

## Recovery

The Project now captures the circumstances of recovery of missing children. These include a breakdown by age, race, and sex in cases resolved by: recovery by a law enforcement agency, recovery by an agency other than law enforcement, voluntarily returned, deceased, and circumstances unknown. These are summarized for the first time in the 1991 annual report and will give a clearer picture of what is being done to resolve missing children cases in Colorado.

## VICAP

In 1985, the FBI began operation of a special program that is used to collect, collate and analyze specific crimes of violence nationwide. The Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) accepts cases on solved and unsolved homicides or attempts, especially where abduction is involved; missing persons where circumstances indicate a possibility of foul play; and unidentified persons if it is believed to be a homicide. The information is then analyzed to determine if similar pattern characteristics exist among the individual cases in the system. Where a pattern is determined, the VICAP staff provide the information to the involved law enforcement agencies to facilitate a coordinated multi-agency investigation.

This year the Missing Children Project began coordinating the collection of this extremely valuable information to submit to the VICAP staff at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. We will continue to ensure the submission of information as incidents occur.

## **CLEARINGHOUSE ACTIVITIES:**

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**D**evelop and deliver specialized training programs to criminal justice and youth services professionals.

**P**rovide information regarding cases originating in Colorado for the national directory of missing and abducted children at the National Center.

**P**rovide informational follow-up on missing children cases originating in other states.

**P**rovide information to out-of-state agencies concerning applicable Colorado state laws, relevant agency interrelationships, and recovery procedures.

**E**stablish cooperative mechanisms with other state clearinghouses to aid in the reuniting of missing children with their lawful parent or guardian.

**A**ct as a clearinghouse for photographs of missing children and cooperate with businesses that wish to publicize these photographs.

**A**ssist in the preparation of missing children bulletins and their distribution to law enforcement agencies and school districts.

**C**ounsel citizens and business groups on how they may respond to the plight of missing children.

**A**ttempt to locate abductors by completing nationwide record and file searches and interacting with other organizations, agencies, or groups that may be instrumental in locating missing children.

## **NCMEC SERVICES TO THE COLORADO PROJECT:**

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**P**rovide training and technical assistance to criminal justice and youth service system professionals.

**S**ponsor special programs for victim children and their parents or guardians. Such programs include the ADVO Public Service Campaign which distributes photographs of missing children to thousands of households each week. This program provides a much broader distribution of missing

children bulletins than any single state Clearinghouse and has had many positive results.

**L**aw enforcement has made several technological advancements in the past year. The most instrumental in the search for missing children is that of computerized age enhancement. Through a donation the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has been able to set up a Video Imaging Laboratory. With this equipment, NCMEC is able to get time or age enhanced pictures of the missing children in front of law enforcement agencies and the general public faster, generating a quicker response, and improving the odds of finding the child.

**P**reviously, artists have been able to create aged likenesses by hand using the pictures on file. However, it could take up to 80 hours to create a picture manually and is very expensive. With the electronic photography equipment, age-enhanced pictures can be produced in less than 5 hours.

**P**rovide transportation and lodging for custodial parents who cannot afford such expenses while they are recovering their missing children.

**I**nitiate nationwide studies used to identify specific areas of concern and to establish protocols to respond to these problems.

**P**rovide updates on pending legislation relating to missing and exploited children issues.

**P**ublish handbooks for use by parents, law enforcement officers, attorneys, and federal, state, and local officials who deal with the missing and exploited children issues.

**S**ponsor a twentyfour hour hotline for information concerning missing and exploited children to help ensure case follow up by the State and local authorities.

## **RESOURCES:**

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### **Vale Grant**

**T**he General Assembly enacted House Bill 1264 in 1985 to establish the Assistance to Victims and Witnesses to Crime and Aid to Law Enforcement Act. The Act mandates a surcharge on fines imposed for felonies, misdemeanors and class 1 and 2 traffic offenses. A percentage of the monies collected are dispersed to the local Victim Assistance and Law Enforcement boards to be awarded to agencies for projects and services.

**T**he Project was fortunate to be selected to receive funding which enabled the staff to be increased by one part-time employee. The additional assistance in 1991 made it possible

for the Project Coordinator to provide training to 507 law enforcement personnel from 71 agencies.

## Seniors' Resource Center of Jefferson County

Organized in 1978, the Senior Resource Center is a private, non-profit organization providing coordinated, centralized services to older persons in Jefferson County. One of the services provided for seniors is assistance in re-entering the work force. This is accomplished through on the job development training and job placement. Senior aides are placed in host agencies to which they become a vital part of the organization for a specified amount of time with the goal of permanent employment. This enables the aide to strengthen skills and acquire new ones, while providing the host agency with additional staff.

On January 11, 1990, the Project agreed to act as a host agency for the Senior Resource Center and since that date has been provided with a senior aide. This additional assistance in 1991, resulted in the Project checking the names of 106,008 newly enrolled students in Colorado to ensure they had not been reported missing anywhere in the nation.

## Cooperative Internship Program

The Missing Children Project participates as a training sponsor with the Arapahoe Community College Internship Program to enable a student the opportunity to obtain not only experience, but credit towards a certificate or degree.

This year, the Project provided one student with 120 hours of on-the-job training, including participation in an eight hour Basic CCIC class.

## STATISTICAL SUMMARY:

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Information in this report was provided to the CBI by local law enforcement agencies using the CCIC automated information system. Each report filed with the local agency is entered into the CCIC computer as a separate case. The numbers reflect cases as opposed to actual missing children; i.e., some children may have been reported missing, recovered and subsequently missing once more. Also, because this data is based only on reports, the Project has no way of identifying those children who have not been reported to local authorities by parents/guardians, or by authorities to the CBI.

The following definitions explain terms used in this report.

- **CCIC** - Colorado Crime Information Center.
- **NCIC** - National Crime Information Center.
- **Missing child** - A child whose whereabouts are unknown, whose domicile at the time he was first reported missing

was Colorado, and whose age at the time he was reported missing was seventeen years of age or younger.

- **Runaway** - An unemancipated juvenile who has left his/her home environment without parent's or legal guardian's permission.
- **Lost** - A subject who is presumed to have wandered away and has become lost and unable to return to a known location.
- **Non-custodial abduction** - The taking of a child with the intent to deprive the legal parent or guardian of possession of that child by the non-custodial parent or family member.
- **Kidnapped** - A subject who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance is not voluntary and has been abducted by a stranger or non-family member.
- **Suspicious** - A subject who is missing with insufficient information to enable placing the record in any other probable category.

## 1991 FACTS OF INTEREST:

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- An average of 43 children are reported missing every 24 hours in Colorado.
- 95.7% of the total number of missing children are classified as runaways.
- 13.1% of the total number of missing children were females under the age of 13.
- 10.8% of the total number of missing children were males under the age of 13.
- 44.5% of the total number of missing children were females 13 years of age and over.
- 31.6% of the total number of missing children were males 13 years of age and over.
- More children (3007) were reported missing on Friday than any other day.
- More children were reported missing during the month of May than any other month.
- At the end of 1991, there were 27 active cases over 6 years old.
- There were 409 less missing children reports than in 1990.
- Project personnel contacted reporting parties on 2,051 occasions in an attempt to obtain dental records. Of these, 602 cases were closed as a result.
- The Project received and reviewed 283 sighting reports from the NCMEC, private citizens, and other concerned groups.
- The Project assisted law enforcement agencies, private citizens and non-profit organizations on 680 occasions.
- A total of 37 missing children cases were resolved through submission of school records to the Project.

## POSITIVE RESULTS

### Adam Adger

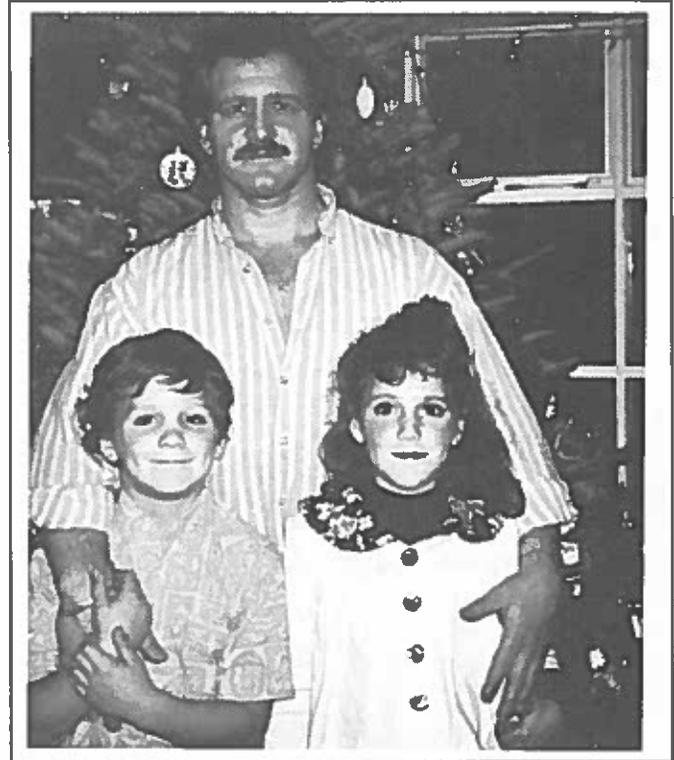


Shortly before his 4th birthday, Adam Adger became a victim of a parental kidnapping. Adam was reported missing on September 21, 1988, to a local law enforcement agency.

During the next 3 years various leads were pursued, however, they all ended the same way: Adam was still missing. Then in November of 1991, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received a call on their hotline with information about a child possibly missing from Colorado. The NCMEC forwarded the information to the Colorado Missing Children Project, where it was determined that the youth was Adam. With the cooperation of another state's clearinghouse and the local law enforcement agency, Adam's whereabouts were confirmed.

On Adam's 7th birthday he talked to his father for the first time in over three years. Adam is back in Colorado and adjusting to life with his father, and new family. He attends Aspen Elementary school, is a member of the Aspen Winter Club, which enables him to go skiing every weekend, and spends every minute he is allowed to talking on the phone getting to know his grandparents, aunts and uncles once more.

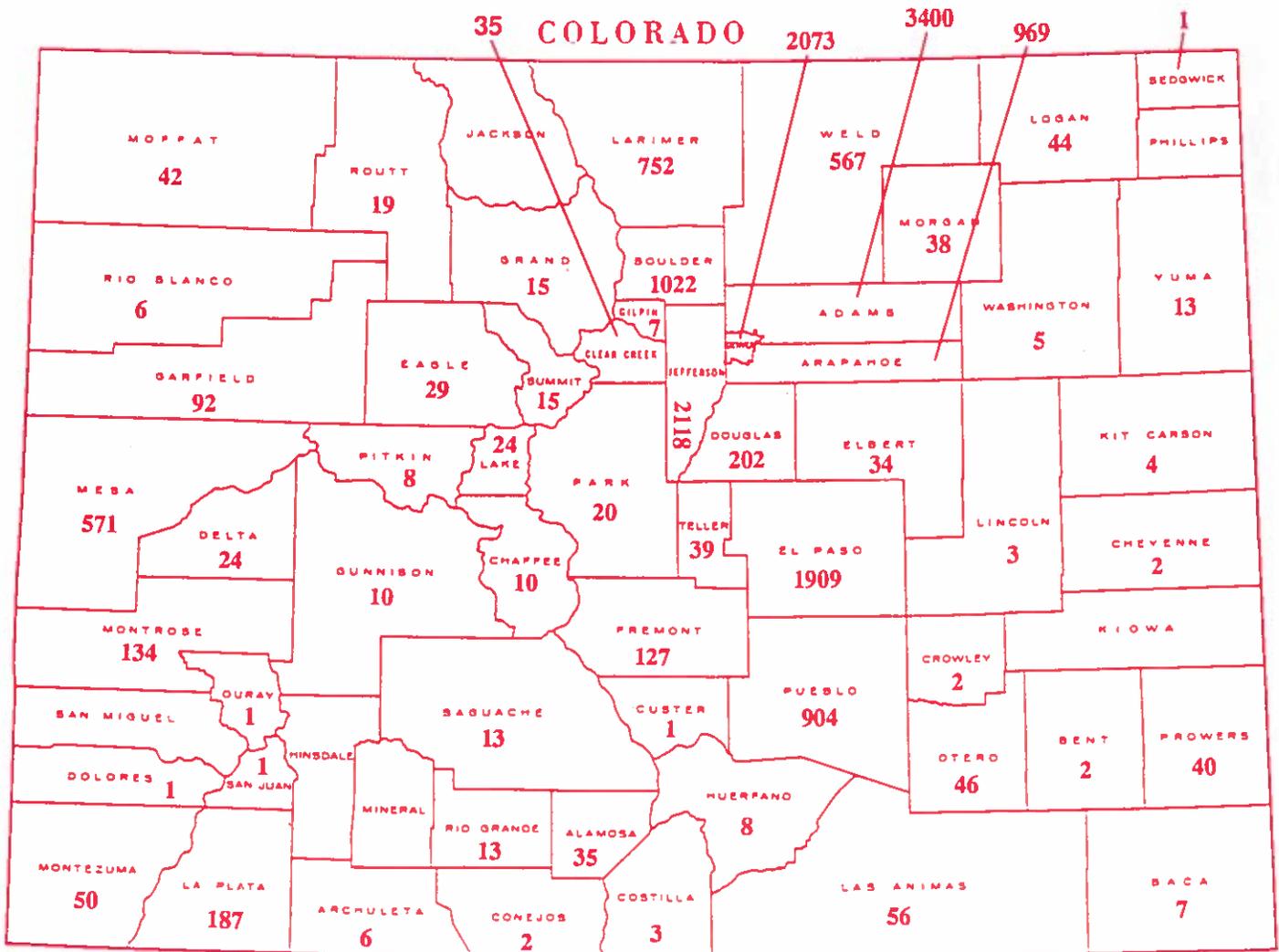
### Paula and Joseph Palancia



In mid-November, Mr. Palancia's six year search for his children finally came to an end in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. A viewer recognized the children's pictures which had been aired on the nationally syndicated television program "Missing/Reward". The National Center For Missing and Exploited Children received a tip implying that the non-custodial mother and two children were possibly in Colorado. The information was forwarded to the proper authorities in New York who contacted the Colorado Missing Children Project. The mother and children's identities and location were verified and local law enforcement apprised of the situation. A week before the Thanksgiving holiday, Mr. Palancia was reunited with his children, Paula who is now ten and Joseph who is eight. The family returned to New York to get reacquainted.

# GEOGRAPHIC REPORTING

The following map shows 1991 reports by county. Of missing children reports filed, 63.74% were filed in the Denver metro area. That includes: 21.8% in Adams County; 6.52%, Arapahoe County; 5.4%, Boulder County; 14.35%, Denver County; 1.33%, Douglas County; 14.32%, Jefferson County. There were 6 counties that did not report any children as missing.



## MISSING CHILDREN REPORTS RECEIVED AND REVIEWED

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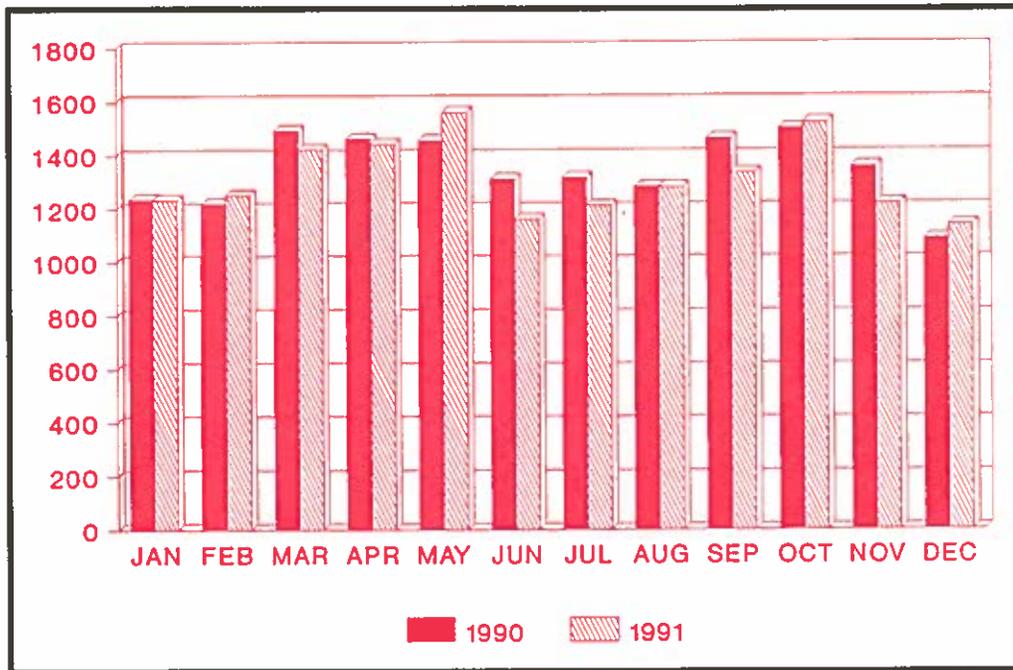
There were a total of 15,755 children reported missing in 1991.

JANUARY	1235
FEBRUARY	1252
MARCH	1423
APRIL	1446
MAY	1548
JUNE	1152
JULY	1210
AUGUST	1280
SEPTEMBER	1333
OCTOBER	1522
NOVEMBER	1217
DECEMBER	1137
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,755</b>

## MISSING CHILDREN ENTRIES

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There was a difference between the number of children reported missing in 1990 and in 1991. The following graph depicts the 2.48% decrease.



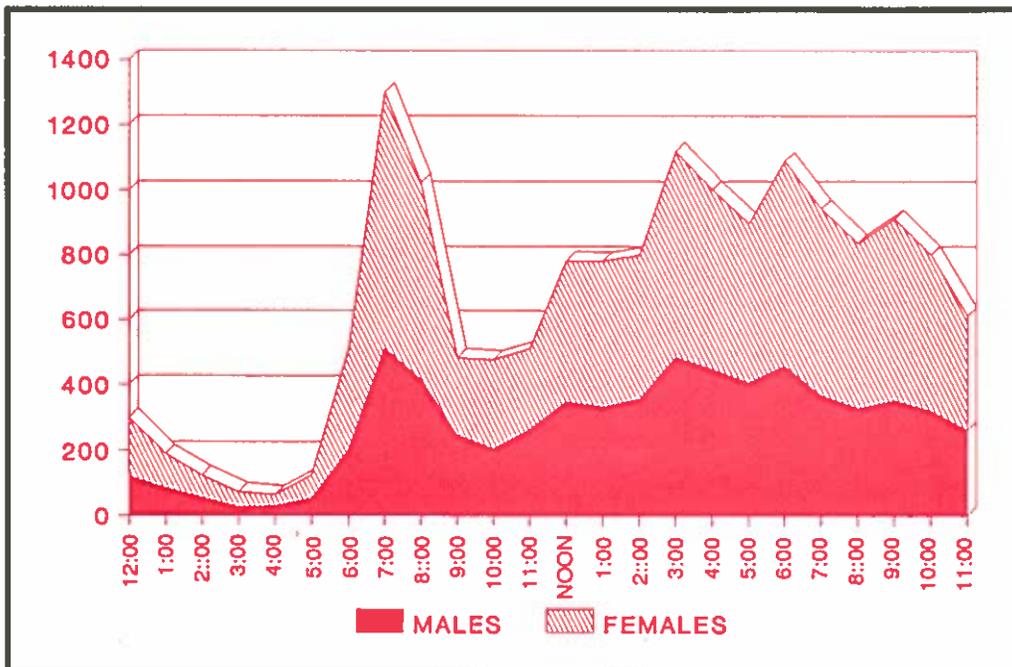
## CIRCUMSTANCES OF MISSING CHILDREN

The following chart shows a breakdown of the circumstances of missing children reports. Findings show that 57.58% of all reports were runaway females and 42.42% runaway males.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>RUNAWAYS</b>												
Females	648	679	782	817	902	634	659	671	706	853	679	636
Males	546	527	584	568	587	470	483	512	569	606	495	465
<b>LOST</b>												
Females	2	1	5	0	3	1	1	0	1	3	1	2
Males	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
<b>KIDNAPPED</b>												
Females	2	1	2	4	4	2	4	1	3	0	1	0
Males	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	3	0	3	1	2
<b>NON-CUSTODIAL</b>												
Females	0	1	0	3	9	3	3	22	4	5	1	0
Males	0	2	5	4	3	4	7	11	1	3	0	2
<b>SUSPICIOUS</b>												
Females	15	20	28	23	30	26	29	19	36	34	21	22
Males	18	17	12	18	19	18	21	40	12	13	16	6

## TIME LAST SEEN COUNT

This chart depicts the time of day the children were last seen who were reported missing. Of the total, 8.25% or 1301 were last seen at approximately 7:00 A.M., followed by 7.1% or 1,120 who were last seen at 3:00 P.M.

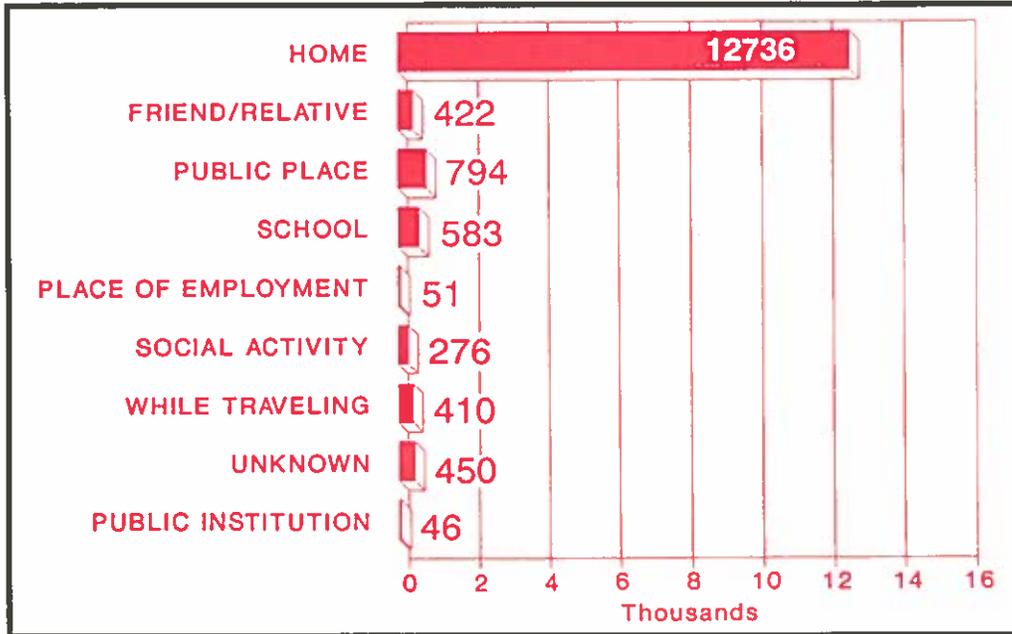


# ACTIVITY REPORT

This chart depicts the activities children were involved in at the time they were last seen. The majority, 80.77%, were missing from home. The next largest group, 5.03%, were missing from a public place.

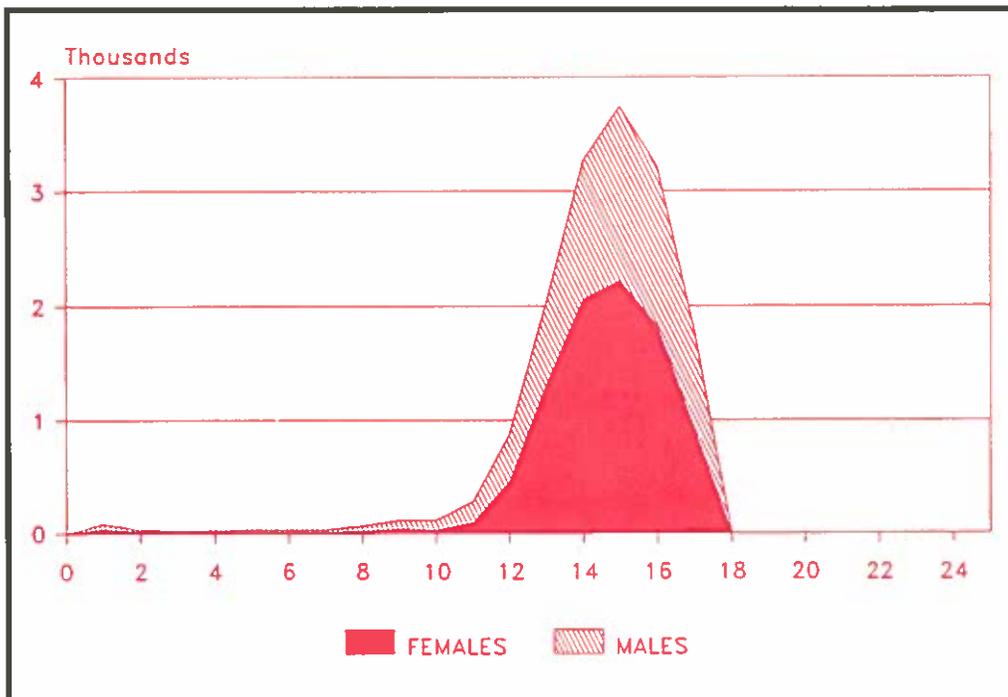
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>PLAYING OR VISITING</b>												
<b>At home</b>												
Females	535	571	632	669	756	539	587	587	604	636	571	540
Males	450	446	501	471	490	411	416	458	481	505	419	401
<b>At friend/relative</b>												
Females	15	20	22	32	21	24	21	25	11	37	29	20
Males	8	12	10	6	18	9	16	16	14	14	11	11
<b>Public place</b>												
Females	37	38	44	44	50	39	31	45	39	40	24	31
Males	31	24	30	47	19	20	28	26	30	40	20	17
<b>ATTENDING SCHOOL</b>												
Females	44	31	41	28	41	7	12	7	32	59	32	33
Males	25	14	21	24	28	7	2	5	23	26	20	21
<b>PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT</b>												
Females	5	0	1	1	3	0	1	4	4	1	2	2
Males	4	4	0	3	2	7	2	2	1	1	1	0
<b>Private residence</b>												
Females	3	5	9	11	17	8	6	8	5	6	9	7
Males	3	6	8	3	11	3	4	6	7	13	11	8
<b>Public place</b>												
Females	1	4	14	6	10	3	4	3	4	7	1	4
Males	6	6	1	6	5	3	3	2	2	3	1	0
<b>School</b>												
Females	2	11	8	12	5	2	2	5	17	12	7	7
Males	2	11	7	6	10	2	1	2	6	8	4	2
<b>Work</b>												
Females	0	0	4	2	3	0	3	0	0	0	2	0
Males	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
<b>Friends/Relatives</b>												
Females	5	1	6	3	11	4	1	1	8	3	2	
Males	7	3	4	5	1	2	2	8	1	2	2	5
<b>Public place</b>												
Females	7	1	7	7	4	5	6	4	6	4	6	0
Males	6	3	8	9	6	8	8	5	5	2	7	3
<b>Vacation</b>												
Females	0	0	6	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Males	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
<b>UNKNOWN</b>												
Females	14	21	20	29	21	31	21	30	19	26	16	14
Males	16	17	11	13	21	17	29	20	12	12	14	6
<b>IN CUSTODY PUBLIC INSTITUTION</b>												
Females	0	0	3	3	4	4	0	1	2	4	2	3
Males	3	2	3	0	0	2	3	3	0	0	2	2

## MISSING FROM



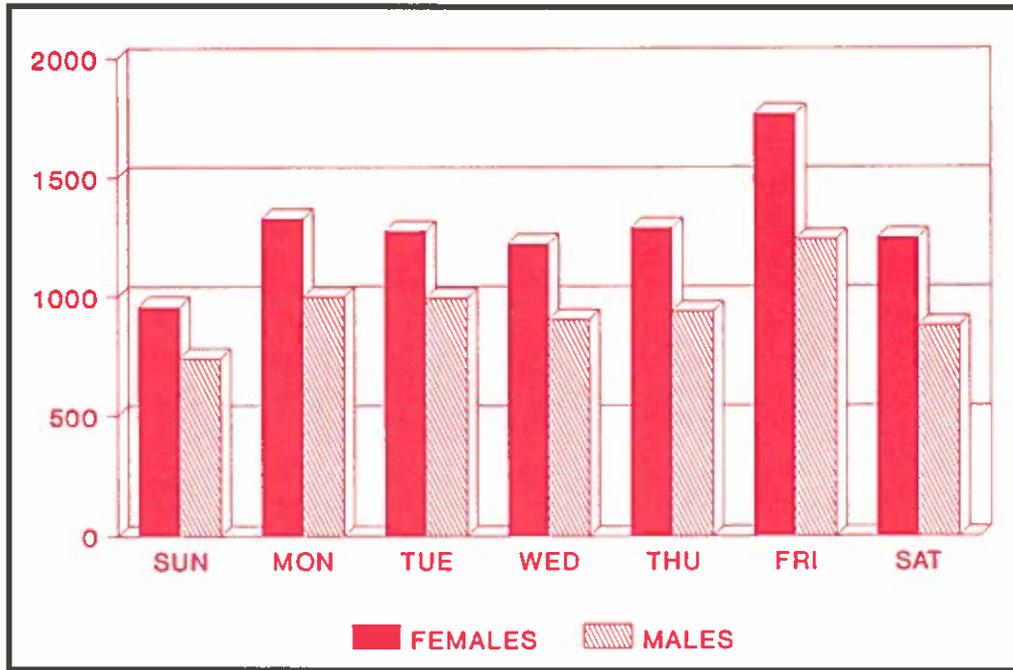
## MISSING CHILDREN COUNT BY AGE AND GENDER

For those juveniles reported missing, 47% were females between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, with fifteen year olds being the largest group totaling 2,215 records. Over thirty percent of reported missing were males in the same age range with fifteen year olds being the largest group totaling 1,522 records.



## DAY COUNT OF MISSING CHILDREN

The highest volume of missing children were reported on Fridays, 19.1% of the total number with 11.2% being females and 7.9% being males.



## BREAKDOWN OF MISSING CHILDREN BY RACE AND SEX

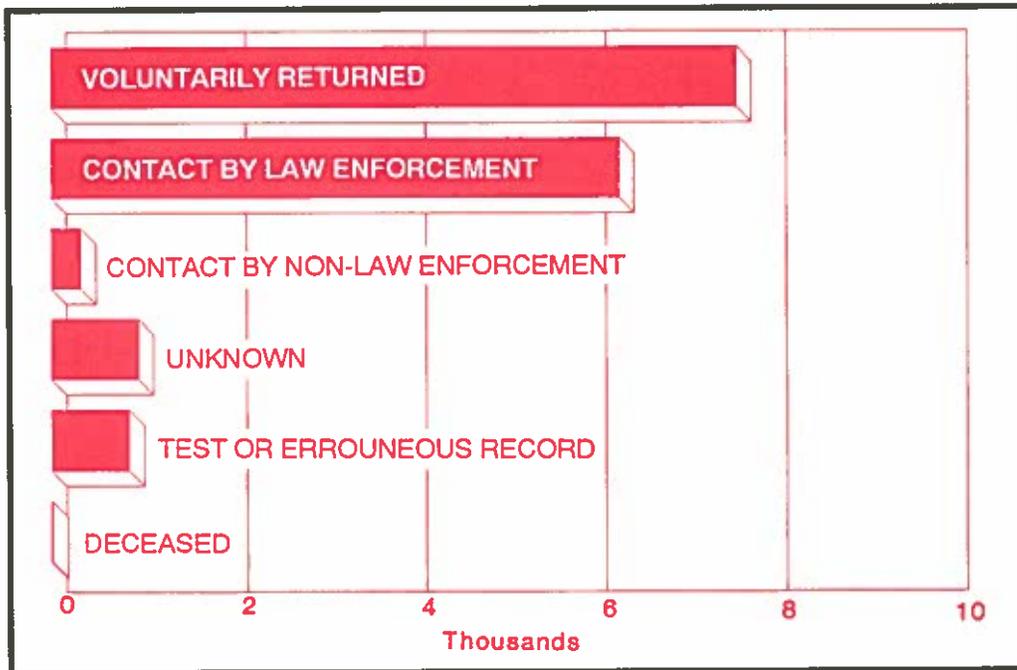
The highest percentage of children reported missing were white females totaling 8,075 records at a percentage of 51.21, followed by white males with a total of 5,914 records at a percentage of 37.5 of the total records reported.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>White</b>												
Females	600	630	748	741	842	582	617	643	677	793	621	581
Males	505	503	526	529	540	433	441	492	520	565	439	421
<b>Black</b>												
Females	60	55	52	78	81	69	64	65	57	82	63	63
Males	54	36	66	60	64	54	61	48	56	55	59	47
<b>Native American</b>												
Females	5	7	7	9	12	5	8	12	8	9	11	3
Males	5	4	7	2	4	2	5	11	4	3	9	2
<b>Asian</b>												
Females	2	8	4	9	7	8	4	2	5	9	7	12
Males	1	6	3	1	2	2	4	2	1	2	6	5
<b>Unknown</b>												
Females	1	3	6	10	6	2	3	3	4	2	1	2
Males	0	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	2

## CIRCUMSTANCE OF RECOVERY

These statistics indicate the reasons records were canceled. The records are those entered for all years and not just 1991. The majority of children 48.24% returned on their own. The next category 40%, includes those returned through contact by a law enforcement agency. In 1991, 8 children reported missing were located deceased.

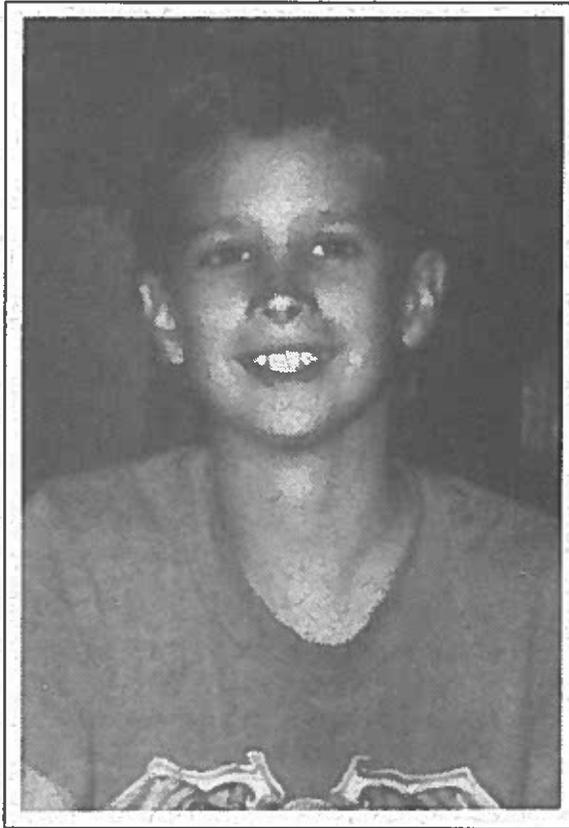
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>RETURNED VOLUNTARILY</b>												
Females	329	354	359	410	356	328	316	378	373	435	415	377
Males	267	252	243	277	248	242	237	259	321	294	264	273
<b>CONTACT WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>												
Females	282	283	297	334	353	267	289	300	302	345	277	251
Males	227	239	229	254	219	202	211	223	238	288	214	184
<b>CONTACTED BY OTHER THAN LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>												
Females	17	13	19	20	14	15	14	24	14	28	17	12
Males	13	5	7	13	8	8	9	14	9	13	14	9
<b>UNKNOWN</b>												
Females	71	58	32	57	64	36	43	44	32	50	37	38
Males	76	49	26	37	33	25	19	26	30	43	18	20
<b>RECORD WAS TEST OR HAD ERRONEOUS DATA</b>												
Females	0	26	42	55	52	32	38	54	56	73	59	41
Males	1	10	28	39	37	28	35	31	34	34	36	23
<b>DECEASED</b>												
Females	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Males	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0



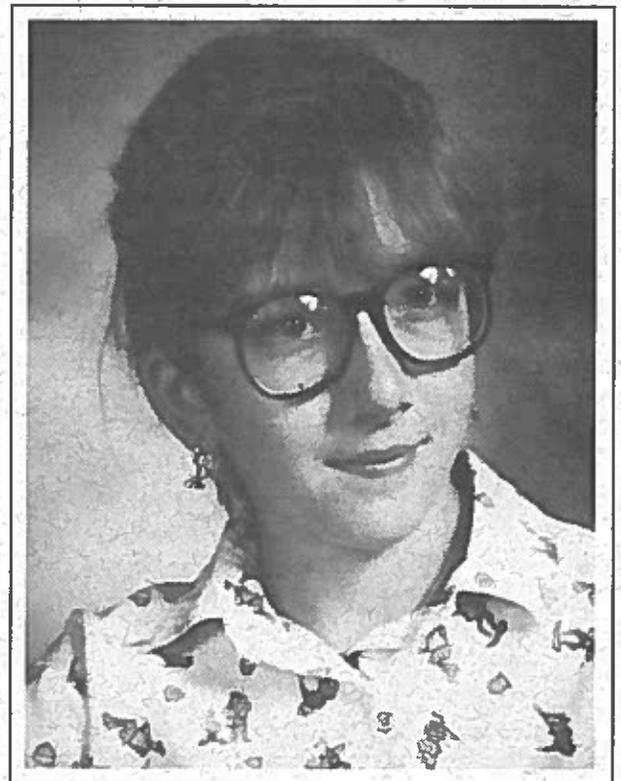
# ***DEDICATION***

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We would like to dedicate this annual report to Jakeob McKnight, Heather Church, and their families.



***Jakeob McKnight***



***Heather Church***



If you have information on these or any other missing child, please notify your local law enforcement agency or the Colorado Bureau of Investigation at (303) 239-4222

