

# Appendix One

## **CPMC ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE**

# CONCERNED PARENTS OF MISSING CHILDREN

## CPMC

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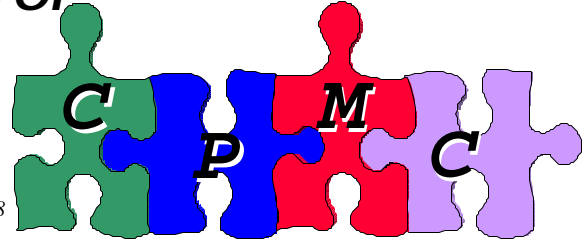
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## ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

### WHO IS "CPMC"?

*Concerned Parents of Missing Children (CPMC)* was established in April of 1999 and registered, as a non-profit organisation with the Department of Social Development. *CPMC* contributes to the development and protection of children's rights and ultimately to the successful tracing and reuniting of missing children with their parents/families. The organisation consists of parents whose children has disappeared and volunteers.

### WHY WAS CPMC ESTABLISHED?

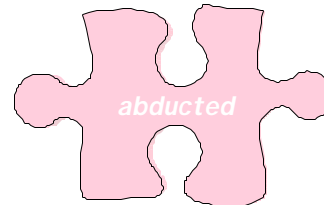
Unfortunately, the organisation's founding members, *Michelle and Michael Ohlsson*, have first hand experience of the extreme trauma a family experiences when a child is abducted. On March 24<sup>th</sup> 1997, their 9-year-old son, *Matthew*, disappeared from their front yard and has never been seen since. Through a vision from *GOD*, and two years of intense praying, *GOD* revealed to Michelle the purpose of *HIS* plans. The vision is for Michelle, who doesn't know where her son is, to go out to comfort and encourage parents, especially mothers, at a time when it is needed most. To tell them who this Great *GOD* is, that has raised and lifted her up out of her circumstances. To be strong for the child who is out there, all alone, waiting to be found.

Everyday children go missing from their homes for any number of reasons – a toddler at play wanders away, a stranger in turmoil runs away, a child is abducted by a non-custodial parent or even by someone unknown to him or her. When a child is missing, your whole world seems to fall apart. You are bombarded by questions from friends, neighbours, the police, and the media and forced to make decisions that you never thought you would have to make. You feel that you have nowhere to go for help or support.

Many parents who have faced similar crises have said that they wished they had a book to tell them where to turn when their child was missing. They felt that they were left on their own to figure out what to do. They longed for someone to give them direction or to tell them where to go for help and direction about what needs to be done. They also wished they had known what to expect and how to respond. The crisis of a missing child calls on every ounce of courage and determination that parents and other family members can muster. The search for a missing child demands a timely and costly coordinated response by parents, organisations, communities and the police alike.

## **WHAT DOES CPMC OFFER?**

- We offer the hope that it may afford parents the critical information, guidance, and tools they need to work with us, the police and the communities to help find their missing child.
- We offer abstract academic research to parents who have experienced the trauma of a missing child.
- We provide firsthand insights into what parents should do and what they should expect, and offer heartfelt words of hope and encouragement at a time when they are needed most.
- We describe the steps that families, the police and the communities take as they forge a constructive partnership in their effort to find the missing child.
- We explain the role that various government departments and other organisations play in the search for a missing child and discusses some of the important issues that parents and family members need to consider.
- We, with the assistance from the police, contain the combined advices concerning what you can expect when your child is missing, what you can do and where you can go for help.
- CPMC provides practical assistance and moral support to all who face this tragic circumstance.
- We construct and copy a poster of the missing child, and assist the family with distributing it at public places such as bus terminuses, taxi ranks, railway stations, computer game arcades, day and night clubs and other places of interests to children.



## **MANAGEMENT PROFILE:**

### **Michelle Ohlsson – Coordinator:**

Michelle was entrusted with the mammoth task to comfort and encourage parents whose children had disappeared. This Women of Excellence, is regularly invited to speak at functions to promote CPMC and to tell the general public about her own experiences and how to deal with the trauma of a missing child. Unable to witness parents' desperation as the police put their cases aside for tomorrow, with God's help, she fights tirelessly to locate missing children and spare their parents' the ordeal she experienced when Matthew disappeared. This fearless woman marches into gang strongholds with the impunity of an angel to rescue children who have been kidnapped by gangsters as part of their initiation rites. She's convinced that this is God's plan for her life - it's His mission. Although her family and had been threatened many times, and the police have warned that they do not have the resources to protect her, she soldiers on relentlessly.

She believes that one day she will find the answers she was looking for and follows up every call she receives.

Every time she helps another parent find their child, she's thinking of Matthew. The reactions are unbelievable - people look up to her and say they admire her strength. Parents say that she is their Superwoman.

She concedes that it's a daily struggle. Although she pulled herself, with God's help, out of a severe depression, which lasted for two years after Matthew's disappearance, she admits that the loss of her son still haunts her. There are days when she thinks, "Today he needs me so much" and she cries the whole day, and the only thing which comforts her, is listening to her Gospel Music. Generally though, she is happy because she has lived to see so many parents reunited with their children. She has seen the hugs and the tears of relief. In a sense, she has found so many Matthews.

Michelle has received numerous awards, viz:

- ***A Woman of Courage Award from SOS Children Villages –***  
For her courage of putting her trauma aside to assist parents whose children have disappeared.
- ***A Certificate of Recognition from Molo Songololo –***

For an extraordinary contribution to the development and protection of children and their rights.

- *A Visible Difference Award from ELLE Magazine & Elizabeth Arden Cosmetics* – To salute women who have made a difference in their communities.
- *A Woman of Worth Award from V & A Waterfront and The Cape Times* – By honouring women who care to make a difference.
- *A Certificate in Management Course from The Volunteer Centre* – For building caring communities.
- *A Certificate in Funding & Money Management from SOS & Edgars Stores* – To assist our organisation and others in funding.
- *A Women's Day Award from the African National Congress (ANC)* – For outstanding voluntary service in pursuit of community building and upliftment.

## **NETWORKING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

Molo Songololo

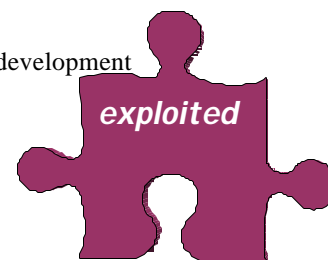
- SOS Children Villages, Cape Town
- ChildLine
- Mitchell's Plain Neighbourhood Watches
- Social Crime Prevention – City of Cape Town
- Metro Rail - Edutrain
- SAPS – Western Cape Police Stations, CPU, CrimeStop, Bureau for Missing Persons
- Western Cape Education Department (M/Plain), Schools Call Centre(Athlone)
- Social Services(M/Plain & Cape Town), Protocol Offices



## **ACTIVITIES ACHIEVED THUS FAR**

Annual Parents & families of Missing Children Outings

- Annual Counselling Group Sessions
- Establishing the Annual Day of Prayer for Children at Risk
- End of year Pre-Christmas Lunch and gifts to the parents and children left behind
- On-going Awareness Programmes at Schools, Edutrain
- Information on Safety Tips
- Initiating the Finger Printing Project at Schools in the Western Cape
- Awareness Safety Campaigns at Shopping Malls over the Western Cape
- Support Group Facilitation/development, Community-based facilitation/development
- Members Development.
- Members Training
- Family Assessment.
- Communication & Search Plan
- Conduct Ongoing Research.
- Established partnerships



## **OUR SUCCESS RATE**

Over the past four years, *Concerned Parents of Missing Children (CPMC)* have investigated **143** cases of missing children. From the **143** cases, **118** children were traced and reunited with their families.

## **OUR NEEDS**

We've been operating for the last four years without a major sponsorship or major financial backing. All the achievements, projects and events CPMC has launched were made possible mainly due to our fundraising drives and determination. Most of our projects were financially assisted, but it's our running of operation costs that we've been struggling with over the years.

Our immediate needs are:

Financial assistance for the running costs.

Office Space.

Stationary & office equipment.

A minibus to take us on searches where possible.

A copier to make copies of posters.

A computer with a big database to store information and photos of missing children.

Internet facilities.

Digital Camera.

A toll-free telephone line.

*It is important to note that there is no right or wrong way to respond to the disappearance of a child, nor is there a right or wrong way to feel. The path you follow must be right for you. What makes sense for you will be based on your needs, your experiences and your circumstances.*



**I pray that you never experience the trauma  
of a missing child**

# Appendix Two

ARTICLE

**CAPE ARGUS 20 AUGUST 2002**

# Appendix Three

## **SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS**

## ***HOLIDAY SAFETY HINTS FOR PARENTS***

1. Remember that you are on holiday, the area is most probably unknown to you, and your children may get lost very easily.
2. Always keep to a schedule with your children and have physical eye contact with them at least every two hours.
3. Never allow children under fourteen to visit beaches, clubs, discos, etc. without the supervision of someone you trust. Never leave your children with strangers, no matter how friendly or harmless they may appear.
4. Your child will make friends during this period, make these friends your friends as well. Get to know them and if possible their parents. Obtain addresses and telephone numbers of these people.
5. Holiday romances are very nice, but be careful and strict, get to know this guy/girl thoroughly before allowing your child to go out on private dates with him/her.
6. Ensure that wherever your children participate in swimming parties, beach parties, etc there is always sufficient adult supervision.
7. If your children don't keep to pre-arranged schedules don't hesitate to report it to the nearest SAPS client service centre immediately. Once again, you don't know the area but they do, and they are there to help and assist you.



# ***RUNAWAY PREVENTION TIPS***

## **1. Pay Attention**

When your children are talking with you, listen.

- Don't just nod your head while you're watching television or reading the paper, or using your computer.
- Don't just pretend to listen to them.
- *Kids know the difference.*

## **2. Give Respect**

Acknowledge and support your children's struggle to grow to maturity.

## **3. Understand**

Try to sympathise with what your kids are going through.

- Look at life – at least occasionally – from their point of view.
- Remember that when you were their age, your ideas seemed to make sense to you.

## **4. Don't Lecture**

All children hate to be lectured to, especially teenagers.

- But all kids respond to clear information and direction, most of all when they know that the question they ask will be answered.

## **5. Don't Label**

The throwing around of useless labels will only confuse the real issues that you wish to address.

## **6. Discuss Feelings**

Talk about what you, as a parent, feel and what you need.

- *Allow your child to talk about his or her feelings too.*

## **7. Create Responsibility**

Give your children choices, not orders.

- Help them to understand the consequences of their actions.

## **8. Positive Praise**

Describe your child's positive and negative behaviour, and how it affects others.

- Be specific, and give praise to reward good behaviour.
  - Do this at least as often, if not more so, than you criticize behaviour that you don't like.

## **9. Stop Hassling**

Asking your child too many questions often shuts off information.

- Give them the opportunity to volunteer their thoughts and feelings, while you show a sincere interest, without probing.

## **10. Don't Always Give The Answers**

You want your children to be able to find their own answers or solutions to problems.

- You can help this not always giving them the answers all the time.

## **11. Use Team Work**

Work together with your child to lay out the problems and find a mutually agreeable solution.

## **12. The Key Issue**

You **MUST** tell each of your children that you will always love that child, **NO MATTER WHAT.**

# ***PREVENTING CHILD ABDUCTION AND EXPLOITATION***

- Know where your children are at all times. Never leave your child unattended. ***Not even for a “minute”.***
  - Be familiar with their friends, friends’ parents/guardians, and daily activities.
  - Remind older children to call home and to come home at dark.
- Be sensitive to changes in your children’s behaviour.
  - They are a signal that you should sit down and talk to your children about what caused the changes.
- Be alert to an older child or adult who is paying an unusual amount of attention to your children or giving them inappropriate or expensive gifts.
- Teach your children to trust their own feelings, and assure them that they have the right to say “NO” to what they sense is wrong.
  - Teach them to get away quickly if a situation seems to be wrong.
- Listen carefully to your children’s fears, and be supportive in all your discussions with them.
- Teach your children that no one should approach them or touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
  - If someone does, they should tell their parents immediately.
- Be careful about babysitters and any other individuals who have custody of your children.
- Babysitters, Day Care Centers and Pre-Schools.
  - If you do not know them well, obtain and thoroughly check references.
  - Tactfully make unannounced visits.
  - Ensure that they understand that your child is not to be released to anyone else, unless release to another individual has been discussed in advance.
- When using a babysitter in your home, ensure that he or she knows
  - Your expectations, including duties and responsibilities.
  - Family rules and daily routines, including eating and sleeping arrangements.
  - How you can be contacted. Write down:
    - Where you will be, including the address and telephone number.
    - Your cellular telephone and/or pager numbers.
- Babysitters should be instructed to:
  - Keep all outside doors locked.

- Never open the door to anyone, unless you have given prior permission.
  - Never volunteer information over the telephone. (They should say that you are home but unable to come to the telephone).
  - Watch the children closely while awake, especially if taken outside.
  - Check children regularly after they have gone to sleep.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that:
    - The children know what rules are to be obeyed when a babysitter is in charge.
    - The babysitter knows who the children may play with or visit.
    - The babysitter knows the names and telephone numbers of neighbours that can be called for help.
    - The babysitter knows your expectations regarding having visitors (friends) at your home.
- Upon returning home, parents should always:
    - Ask the babysitter about occurrences during your absence
      - Child's behaviour and activity
      - Telephone calls
      - Anything out of the ordinary
    - Talk to your children about what happened while you were gone (after the babysitter has left.)
      - Did anything make them feel uncomfortable or afraid?
- Visiting friend's homes
    - Prior to allowing a child to visit an unfamiliar friend's home without you, make it a point to get to know the friend and his or her parents.
    - With younger children, it may be appropriate to accompany your child on the first visit, to become acquainted with the child, his or her parent(s) and their habits/rules.
- Ensure that your child's school administration, as a matter of policy, contacts you immediately if your child does not appear at school (unless you notify them of the absence in advance).
    - If parents to guardians forward a formal written notice to the school district, school administrators are required to notify them whenever their child is deemed to be absent.
- When children are waiting at the bus stop, if not waiting with them, occasionally look out at them.
    - You to observe their conduct, and view anyone who is not normally in the area.
    - A child should never wait alone at a bus stop, especially if the stop cannot be seen from your home.
- Avoid placing your child's name in a visible place:
    - Clothing
    - Backpack

- Lunchbox
- Bicycle
  
- A child may not realize that someone who knows her name may not necessarily be a friend.
  
- Do not allow your child to solicit (door to door) alone, even for school related fundraisers.
  
- Teach your child basic escape techniques if someone holds you to attempts to take you somewhere, immediately:
  - Pull down (versus away) and run.
  - Pull out of your jacket, shirt, backpack, etc. and run.
  - Strike the person, with hands or feet, in a vulnerable place: groin, face or throat and run.
  - Hold onto or wrap your arms and legs around anything (bicycle, fence, tree). Don't let go.
  - Others.
  
- If pulled into a vehicle:
  - Open the door and run from the vehicle as soon as it stops in traffic, at an intersection, toll booth, store, etc.
  - If possible, jump into the back seat.
    - Open the door and run when vehicle stops.
    - The person cannot control you and drive at the same time.
  - If placed in a trunk:
    - Remove or break the taillight bulbs.

**REMEMBER**

**PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!!!**

# ***EDUCATING YOUR CHILD.***

## ***BASIC RULES OF SAFETY***

As soon as children can articulate a sentence, they can begin learning about how to protect themselves from abduction and exploitation. Each child should be taught:

- His or her name and address and how to write them.
- How to use telephones, including pay phones.
- His or her full telephone number, including area code, and how to dial it.
- How to use 911.

Other things to teach your children....

If you are in a public place and you get separated from your parent(s):

- Do not wander around looking for them.
- Quickly go to a trustworthy adult and tell the person that you have lost your parent(s) and need help in finding them.
- If you are in a building or other restricted access area (such as a store, shopping mall, or amusement park) go to a person at a checkout counter or a security officer.
- If in an unrestricted area (such as the street or a recreational park) go to a police officer, the entrance or reception area of a business where people are present, or a group of adults.
- Do not leave the building or area with anyone until your parents are found.

You should not get into a car or go anywhere with any person, unless your parents have told you that it is okay on each occasion.

If someone follows you on foot or in car, stay away/run away to a safe place.

- A safe place is normally not a wooded area, a pile of leaves, an abandoned house, etc.

- A safe place is home, the home of a friend or neighbour, a store, etc. or a place where there are people.

Children should learn to stay away from individuals in cars, vans or trucks.

- You don't need to go near the car to talk to the people inside.
- They should know that it is okay to say "NO" – even to an adult.

Adults who need help should not be asking children for help; they should be asking other adults.

- No one should be asking you for directions or to look for a lost pet.
- Even if a person wearing a uniform or in possession of a badge requests your assistance, you should tell your parents or other adults before helping or going with the person.

You should not go with a stranger who tells you that your mother or father is in trouble and that he will take you to them.

If someone tries to take you somewhere, quickly get away from them and yell or scream, "This man is trying to take me away" or "This person is not my father (or mother)."

- "Say No, Then Go and Tell"
- "Yell, Run and Tell"

Always ask your parent's permission, or the person in charge (e.g., teacher, babysitter) if you want to leave the yard or play area or to go into someone's home.

- For younger children, you should watch them for as far as you can and they should call you when they get to the location.
- Consistency is required; if parents don't follow through on requiring adherence to this rule and others, they will become meaningless.

You should avoid empty lots, wooded areas, fields and parks when travelling from place to place. You should avoid playing in deserted areas.

You should try to use the “buddy system’ and never go places alone. There is strength in numbers.

Do not answer the door when a parent is not home and never say that you are alone to someone on the phone.

Never hitchhike or try to get a ride home with anyone, unless your parents have told you it is okay to ride with the person in advance.

No one should ask you to keep a “special” secret. If he or she does, tell “someone you trust”.

- While a trusted person is normally a parent or teacher, you cannot automatically assume so.
- In all too many cases, parents and teachers are the abusers.

If someone wants to take your picture, tell your parents or teacher before allowing the person to take the picture.

No one should touch you in the parts of your body covered by a bathing suit, nor should you touch anyone else in those areas.

- “Your body is special and private”.
- You can be assertive, and you have the right to say “NO” to someone who tries to take you somewhere, touches you, or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way.



- Promptly tell a trusted adult if someone touches you or does anything else that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Never accept gifts offered by strangers without checking with your parents first.

If someone, even a friend, is in possession of a gun (even if not loaded) or other weapons:

- Immediately leave and tell an adult.

For parents....You and your child need to be careful... but you do not need to live in fear.

- Strike a balance between avoiding the issue and instilling a sense of fear in your children.
- Instil a sense of caution.

Finally...set a good example with your own actions by consistently following established rules.

- For example, lock doors and windows and always see who's there before opening the door.

***REMEMBER***

***PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!!!***

# Appendix Four

**KNOW THE RULES  
SCHOOL SAFETY TIPS**

# **KNOW THE RULES...**

## **SCHOOL SAFETY TIPS**

1. Always TAKE A FRIEND when walking or riding your bike to and from school. It's safer and more fun to be with your friends. Walk and ride in well-lit areas, and never take short cuts. Follow all the bicycle rules, especially the one about riding on the right side of the street.
2. Stay with a group while waiting at the bus stop. If anyone bothers you while going to or from school, get away from that person, and TELL a trusted adult like your parents or teacher. If an adult approaches you for help or directions, remember grownups needing help should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.
3. If someone you don't know or feel comfortable with offers you a ride, say NO. Never hitchhike, and only accept a ride from someone if your parents have told you it is okay.
4. If someone follows you on foot, get away from him or her as quickly as you can. If someone follows you in a car, turn around and go in the other direction. Always be sure to TELL your parents or a trust adult what happened.
5. If someone tries to take you somewhere, quickly get away and yell, "This person is trying to take me away!" or "This person is not my father (mother)!"
6. Never leave school with someone you don't feel comfortable with or know. Always CHECK FIRST with your parents or another trusted adult. If someone you don't know or feel comfortable with tells you that there is an emergency and they want you to go with them, always CHECK FIRST before you do anything. Make sure your TELL a trusted adult if you notice someone you don't know hanging around.
7. Leave items and clothing with your name on them at home. If someone you don't know calls out your name, don't be fooled or confused.
8. If you want to change your plans after school, always CHECK FIRST with your parents. Never play in parks, malls, or video arcades by yourself. Make sure you have your parents' permission, and they know where you are going to be. Never accept money or gifts from anyone until you CHECK FIRST with your parents.
9. If you go home alone after school, check to see that everything is okay before you go in. Once inside, call your parents to let them know that you are okay. Make sure you follow your "Home Alone" rules of keeping the door locked; not opening the door for or talking to anyone who stops by unless the person, and the visit has been pre-approved by your parents; and not telling people who call that you are home alone. Have a neighbour or trust adult that you can call if you're scared or there's an emergency.
10. Trust you feelings. If someone makes you feel scared or uncomfortable, get away as fast as you can and TELL a trusted adult. You deserve to feel safe, and you should keep asking until you get the help you need.

# KNOW THE RULES...

## For Going To and From **School More Safely**

Every day millions of children take to the streets and roadways to get to and from school. They walk, ride their bicycles, take buses, and arrive in automobiles with one purpose – getting to and from school safely. Every year approximately 440 000 public school buses travel approximately 4.3 billion miles to transport 23.5 million children to and from school and school-related activities. For many children this experience is a new one, and they may not understand the safety rules. Young children do not have the same frame of reference for safety as adults do. They may not look before they leap, which is why it is so important for parents to supervise young children and practice safety skills with their older children. The tips noted below will help parents prepare their children for a safer journey.

- 1.** Instruct your child to always TAKE A FRIEND when walking or riding his or her bike to and from school. It's safer and more fun to be with your friends. Walk and ride in well-lit areas, and never take shortcuts. Follow all the walking and biking rules especially the ones about riding on the right-hand side of the street and facing traffic when walking where there is no sidewalk.
- 2.** Even though there is safety in numbers, it is still not safe for young children to walk to and from school especially if they must take isolated routes before or during daylight. Always provide supervision for your young children, whether it's you as a parent or an older sibling, to help ensure their safe arrival to and from school.
- 3.** Your child should stay with a group while waiting at the bus stop. If anyone bothers your child while going to or from school, you should teach him or her to get away from that person, and TELL a trusted adult. If an adult approaches your child for help or directions, remember that grownups needing help should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.

- 4.** You should visit the bus stop with your children and learn the bus number. This will avoid confusion for your child about knowing which bus to ride.
- 5.** Instruct your children that if someone they don't know or feel comfortable with offers a ride, say NO. Children should never hitchhike or accept a ride from someone unless you have told them it is okay.
- 6.** Tell your children that if someone follows them on foot to get away from him or her as quickly as possible. If someone follows them in a car they should turn around, go in the other direction, and try to quickly get to a spot where a trust adult can help them. Advise them to be sure to TELL you or a trusted adult what happened.
- 7.** Teach your children if someone ever tries to take them somewhere, they should quickly get away and yell, "This person is trying to take me away" or "This person is not my father (mother)".
- 8.** Children should be taught to never leave school with someone they don't feel comfortable with or know. They should always CHECK FIRST with you or another trusted adult. If someone they don't know or feel comfortable with tells them that there is an emergency and they want your child to go with them, your child should always CHECK FIRST before doing anything. Make sure your children understand to TELL a trusted adult if they notice someone they don't know hanging around the school.
- 9.** Walk the route to and from school with your children pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they are being followed or need help. Make a map with your children showing acceptable routes to school, using main roads, and avoiding shortcuts and isolated areas. The map will be a good guide if your children ever need help finding their way.
- 10.** Remember to practice these safety rules with your children to make certain that they really know and understand them. Make the walk to and from school a teachable moment and a chance to put their skills to the test.

## **REMEMBER**

### **PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!!!**

#### ***Awareness Tips for Children***

- **Don't** "go" with strangers! Talking to strangers when with someone you *know and trust* is fine *in most cases*.
- **Don't** accept gifts from anyone not specifically OK'd by your *parents*.
- **Don't** accept rides from strangers, or even someone you know. Unless your parents have specially said it's OK to go in a car with that person.
- **Don't** talk to strange people on the other side of the schoolyard fence. Go and tell a teacher that a stranger is talking to you, *especially* if they are asking *any* questions.
- Listen to your parents, because they're teaching you self-defence daily, when they tell you:
  - Where you should be
  - What time to be home
  - And to go directly home
- **Parents do this out of love for you**
- Listen to your teachers when they tell you where to go and what to do around school grounds, because that's self-defence, too.
- If you have to walk on the public streets, walk in the "middle" of the sidewalk, away from doorways and alleyways. Face traffic so someone can't drive up from behind and grab you, and always watch for strangers when they approach.
- **Don't** take "*unsafe shortcuts*" across parks, etc.
- **Get immediate attention of anyone nearby if you feel threatened.**

- Yell “FIRE! FIRE!” and NOT “HELP!” because there are many tragic instances where people have run away from those yelling “Help!” but fire is such a threat to everyone that they generally come to at least see what’s happening.
- Even break a window, if necessary.
  - **Don’t** be afraid to draw attention to yourself!
  - “The window can be replaced, but you cannot be replaced!”

## KNOWING MY 8 RULES FOR SAFETY

1. I always check first with my parents or the person in charge before I get anywhere or get into a car, even with someone I know.
2. I always check first with my parents or a trusted adult before I accept anything from anyone, even from someone I know.
3. I always take a friend with me when I go places or play outside.
4. I know my name, address, telephone number and my parents' names.
5. I say no if someone tries to touch me or treat me in a way that makes me feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.
6. I know that I can tell my parents or a trusted adult if I feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.
7. It's okay to say no, and I know that there will always be someone who can help me.
8. I am strong, smart, and have the right to be safe.

**✗ CHECK FIRST**

**✗ TAKE A FRIEND**

**✗ TELL SOMEONE I TRUST IF SOMETHING IS WRONG**

**✗ STAY STRONG, SMART AND SAFE**



# Appendix Five

**THE EXPLOITER OR ABDUCTOR**

## **THE EXPLOITER OR ABDUCTOR: NOT NECESSARILY A "STRANGER"**

"Stay away from strangers" is a popular warning to children to prevent abduction or exploitation. However, most children are abducted or exploited by people (adults and youths) who have some type of familiarity with the children, but who may or may not be known to the parents.

**The term "stranger" suggests a concept that many children do not understand.**

**Strangers are not necessarily "strange looking".**

**Also, it ignores what we do know about the people who commit crimes against children.**

It misleads children into believing that they should be aware only of individuals who they identify as strangers (e.g. only people who have an unusual or sloppy appearance).

Instead, it is more appropriate to teach our children to:

- Be on the lookout for certain kinds of situations or actions, rather than certain kinds of individuals.
- Follow routine safety procedures that are universally protective.

Children can be raised to be polite and friendly, but it is okay for them to be suspicious of any adult for assistance.

- Children help other children, but there is no need for them to be assisting adults.

Often exploiters or abductors initiate seemingly innocent contact with the victim. They use subtle approaches that both parents and children should be aware of.

- They may try to get to know the children and befriend them.
- They may befriend the parent(s) to get close to the child(ren).

A clear, calm and reasonable message about safety, including situations and actions to look out for, is easier for a child to understand than a particular profile or image of a “stranger”.

Again, all too often a parent is responsible for exploiting or abusing a child.

- Children should be taught that it’s OK to tell the other parent, a grandparent, a teacher, an older sibling or other adults.

***REMEMBER***

***PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!!!***

# Appendix Six

## **HUGO'S LETTER**

## **Beste Michelle**

Ek beskou dit as 'n groot voorreg dat ek gister na die gesprek tussen jou en Margot kon luister en selfs ook in 'n tweede rondte self aan die gesprek kon deelneem. Vir my, wat pa van twee seuns van onderskeidelik 12 en 13 jaar is, het dit diep geraak om te hoor hoe jy oor Matthew se verdwyning praat en oor hoe erg dit vir jou is. "Dis erger as die dood", het jy gesê.

Dit lyk egter wel vir my of hierdie verskriklike ding van Matthew se verdwyning dit nie regkry om jou hoop van jou weg te neem nie. "Dalk is Matthew Kersfees daar", het jy gesê. Dit laat wonder my hoe jy dit regkry om jou hoop so sterk en lewend te hou?

Dit lyk ook vir my of Matthew se verdwyning nie al jou krag en energie van jou kon steel nie, want jy het vertel hoe jy erns maak met die opvoeding van jou kinders – dat jy "tyd maak" dat julle kan praat, en jy het ook vertel hoe jy betrokke is by die werk van "Concerned Parents", waar jy dikwels, selfs in die nag en op moeilike terreine, na vermiste kinders gaan help soek. Is daar dinge wat jy doen om jou krag en energie altyd weer op te bou vir hierdie veeleisende dinge wat jy doen?

Wat my ook getref het tydens die gesprek tussen jou en Margot, is toe jy gepraat het oor die maniere waarop jy vir God wys hoe lief jy Hom het. Een van hierdie maniere, het jy gesê, is om saam met ander ouers te wees wie se kinders vermis word. Ek wonder wat dit alles vir hulle beteken dat jy hulle so bystaan? Hoe baie help jou bystand hulle om hoop en krag en energie te hê? Ek wonder ook hoe dit vir die Here is dat jy Hom so dien deur jou werk met die ouers?

Jy het vertel dat Melanie jou haar "rolmodel" noem en dat sy jou "compassion" vir ander raaksien. Uit die wat ek gister oor jou opvoedingswerk met jou kinders en oor jou werk met die ouers van "Concerned Parents" kon hoor, is jy beslis ook vir my 'n rolmodel van hoe om my liefde vir God op 'n praktiese manier uit te leef.

Ek wens jou graag net die beste toe vir dit wat jy as die missie vir jou lewe ontdek het.

Groete,

Hugo

# Appendix Seven

## MICHELLE

I just want to say that the first time Margot mentioned to me about writing a book about missing children I said in my mind firstly I said oh well we'll see how far this one goes and especially when she said about my life, my family life, the community life all in one. But after a few months or so, when she mentioned she is starting this book and she needed this kind of information I

started to get excited and for me every time I speak to Margot on the phone I feel like I don't even want to put the phone down.

It's like every time we talk I feel we just don't talk enough – there's not enough time and as we started on this book things really changed for me and I was just looking forward to see the outcome of this book because it would not actually benefit me but it would benefit a whole lot of people, a whole lot of parents who are still all these years in this mystery that I am in with these missing children and speak about the laws of missing children and what people think about missing children and what the community think about missing children, what the police think of missing children and all kinds of companies when you mention missing children it's like you mention something of outer space, it cannot be.

It's maybe an easy way out like people say, ran away, but if you really think about missing children, it's a total sad story. It's something that is really worse than death. I would say worse than death because you know you don't know how to act on it, you don't know what to think of it. All you can think is am I going to live with it? How long is it going to take? You fantasise about what if your child comes home tomorrow. You dream, you never stop thinking. The words that Margot shared with me it gave me, if I should round it up in all those words she gave me, it gives me one word and that word is hope. She showed me there is hope - don't give up yet. I had no intention of giving up but I have to mention, I am only human.

And this is something that takes you like a sickness, you know, when you have a sickness like leukaemia or cancer, you don't know when you are going to be up today, you don't know how it is going to take you down tomorrow, you are just not in control of yourself. Not in control of your thoughts, your needs, your wants, especially your wants. Because one thing you want is your child. But with Margot and this book it gave me a whole different version and it gave me the strength to go on. It gave me focus and not to let go. I need to have more hope than ever. And I really hope and I pray that this book will open up eyes of people and surely open up doors for us people in need of

help. Finance – money can't buy your child. I am most of the times in such deep, deep finance problems.

When it comes to Matthew no amount of money will let me let go of my child because you see your child – like I said no amount of money. No one can pay me. I have done advertisements. I have had my name, my story printed in books. I have done all sorts of interviews, not for money, because every chance I can get my child's picture to be in the newspaper, in a magazine or on TV I do it for free. The whole thing is to publish my child's face wherever I can. And that is how I want each and every parent to feel to feel, that no one has the right to take a child away. No one in this life has the right to decide "you have been Matthew's parent long enough – I can do with it, I can say hello child, I can get rid of him, I can get money for your child, maybe I need the parts of him, oh he is such a cute kid". No one has the right to do it and don't say God knows what's best.

God does not take a child away from its parents. God does not put you in this agony but then he is the one who stepped in afterwards. God is the one who came in and healed a broken heart. He is the only one that can give you the security, this sense of happiness. Because I thought when Matthew disappeared I will never be able to love, how can I be happy when I don't even know where my child is. When he first disappeared I didn't even want to eat. Who is feeding him? Here I have a nice plate of food – who knows what my child is eating? I didn't even want a bed. I didn't want to sleep because is he warm? He is a sick child, he had a touch of asthma and when his chest goes tight, who is there to give him medicine? Who is there to look after him? To give him an extra blanket? To give him a second helping of food when he is hungry?

Those all are thoughts that goes through a parents' mind – day by day – night by night – and sometimes all day. And without God I don't think anyone can survive it. I don't think I can survive it because God stepped in and he helped me cope – he made me strong, he put the organisation on me, he guided me through it and each time I help



a parent I feel that inside myself I grew stronger. I never knew what it was I never knew what I was going to go through. But I see myself doing speeches and when I come down from the stage people are so impressed and it seems to me that what is this, how can I, me, this Michelle Ohlsson living in Mitchell's Plain with nothing, except a name, how can I be such a comfort and courage to some people, to a lot of people? Its only God.

I have received so many certificates. I have got so many awards but yet I feel all the glory goes to God. But like I said having a missing child is everybody's worst nightmare and to write this book and need to give it to the world – I am proud to do that because I know it is not going to be forever. I have got my husband too – he is a good person. His heart is also there. We are built on this journey and I have got another good friend. He came into our life when Matthew disappeared. That was six years ago and stood by us until today. And I know his heart is with children – his mind is with children. His whole aim is to help and God has given me such a good team that I worked with. People that I can just pick up the phone with even if it is the middle of the night. They would be ready when I get to their door. They don't ask a lot of questions. They are just eager because their hearts are with children. We are a good team. We stand together because our aim is not to take the world or the work away from the police but it is to improve it and because of our own experience it is much easier to understand what a parent goes through when he or she goes to the police station and to acknowledge that their child is missing.

All the time and for some years now one is not supposed to wait 24 hours anymore but yet some, some of the policemen still say that to me because in all our life, in every department, there are people who just do not care and then there are good ones who have got a heart of gold which will help you do an immediate search. I used to hate the police but after all these years I have learnt how they work, I've learnt how they operate and somehow know their routine that they use when a child goes missing – all the questions that they ask and the time they take to search for a child

and from all these six years that my child is missing I got involved with a lot of organisations.

I learnt to know the media which I as a parent did not know, I did not even read a newspaper. I never even watched the news on TV but today I have become news. I became a public speaker. I know a person who stutters don't like to speak in front of people but you can't do it alone. If you have God with you, you can reach anyone. I used to think so low of myself but working on this book made me realize again that I am the chosen, I am the one that God has put here to do my utmost best to make a change in the way our community and people think of missing children. And with such a lot of people with such a lot of hope that we have we can achieve it and I hope and I know this book is going to bring us joy.

It's going to open up hearts, minds and even moods because out there are a lot of mothers who gave up on their children. Not because they want to, but because they don't have the hope. If you don't have the strength, if you don't have the courage to go on. And I know that if they read this book they will have a different view because all of us have got a purpose in life. God has got a vision and a mission for each and every one of us. I mostly speak to my children. I make them aware of what is going on around us – I tell them everything, everything they need to know – the good, the bad, the evil and the ugly. I talk to them.

Because you as a parent your child must be the first one they come to for help, for guidance, for support, for everything and I simply admire Margot for going into this missing children thing even though she never had one. Like she said the child was missing for two hours and on that she can talk, the two hours you are beside yourself. Now imagine the years, the years that you have to struggle. Birthdays that come on – should I make a cake? What's the use of having a cake – he is not here to blow the candles out. I remember the first year Matthew was missing, Melanie wanted me to buy – she didn't come with it straight out, she said "mummy buy me a jeans and a shirt" and I said "no, you do have a dress for Christmas", she said "no man, I feel I want a jeans and a

shirt” but in her mind she didn’t want to say to me that “mummy I want you to buy Matthew Christmas clothes just in case he is here for Christmas”. And I had to do it. They never want to give his clothing away - if I had to give a nephew or another child a shirt or a pants of him, Melanie and Justin would ask it back. Give it back when you are finished – it belongs to Matthew. Because you can’t let go.

Time can not take it away – you do heal but it can’t go away. You can’t start tonight and say well I have had enough - no more looking, no more praying, no more asking, no more advertising, no more nothing. How can you, you are the parent. I just got this feeling that whatever I do, my child knows and if I decided to give up he is going to feel that he needs to give up because my mother gave up, my parents are not looking. I know that somehow, somewhere he must know that we are really doing everything. He sees his mother and father on TV, he sees his brothers and sisters sometimes in the newspapers. I used to some silly things, keep all the newspaper clippings, make a recording of everything of him that was on the news on the TV, everything, and keep it in a box and I will show Matthew someday when he comes back what we have done for him. I don’t you want him to come home and say “mommy I hate you”. Or she didn’t come look for me. God knows everything and yes I sometimes did think that he will hate us – it’s so long but they don’t come get me.

Do you know what I have been going through. All that stuff goes through the mind and believe me or not, each and every hour, the time that I have spent with Margot, writing, thinking about this book I just get more and more excited and I begin to see things in a more prospective way. It’s all going to work out – the work that Margot does I will never be able to build that book that she got. Study each and every word, knowing which and what to write. Study a thing before she writes it down. I hope she has got a lot of courage but it is a pleasure for me to do this – to write this book – to present it to the world and not to be ashamed of using my real name, my son’s real name, my family’s real names because me, my husband and

my children are one in this because we are together in this.

Although we never knew we loved children, although we never knew that one day we would become foster parents, we have helped so many kids, taking them from the streets, took them in the house, feed them, clothe them without using anyone's help but God's and without asking for a star for it. All we have to do as parents is to dedicate our life to children and I can honestly say God has really given me a good family, beautiful children, an understanding husband, good friends, especially my organisation members. The members worked this year without having a child missing in this year. Another nice thing happened. A lot of the parents whose children are missing joined up with us, that's good because we are now real concerned parents of missing children and they are with us because I can't do everything alone and they realise that because it is not only Matthew, there are so many children missing in this country and if there is one thing the police can do to make me feel happy, I am talking about myself is to reopen these cases of these children, reopen them and really look into it.

What happened to these children? If they need help they can make use of us. We are an organisation with no resources but yet we have got the ability to do more than a job than those who get paid for it. I work from my home for these past four years, my office is in my house and if I would have the resources, the telephone, the transport, the fax machine, the copy machine all these tools that you need for an organisation. If I could have helped, if our organisation could have helped 144 families without these resources just think what we could do with these resources. How much we can achieve, how many places we can go to, how many families, parents I can really give my support the way I want to, the way I need to because people look up to us, because people look up and sometimes when I don't have the money for the airtime on my telephone I feel that I let the parent down especially when they leave a message that I have to get back to them they need to hear from me, I feel I let them down.

If we would have our organisation on our feet, up and about and running with the help of the police I am sure, I am very sure that we can break all ties that these syndicates got. We can change the minds of the policemen how they handle the cases. We just need an office there by them because we are the first people they call when they don't know how to handle a case. We are the first people they call upon for help when they don't know what happened to a child. How do they go about it? Now just think most of the times at weekends they don't work, they don't have people who are in charge who are doing missing children then the parents have to come back the Monday. Now just imagine your child disappears and the child is gone for the whole weekend isn't that enough excuse for the perpetrator to do whatever he or she has got in mind to do with your child?

Their problems sometimes, they seem to make my case yours and your case mine. Our lives are different, just as much as our faces are different. You cannot take my child at the age of 18, the same where you take your child at the age of 18, because everything is different. I know what I have learnt from own experience, there are some cases, yes, there really are some cases where a child didn't tell a parent "I was going with aunty this or aunty that" then they already wrote out the missing docket and yes the child came back after a weekend but not all, it's not all. If they don't have the manpower to work weekends, we can fill in. Give us the resources and we can do it. We don't want to take over, but as a parent you know when a child is in trouble. You know how you feel, you know what they are thinking, and you know the way they imagine. That is why.