

ROTARY PROJECT FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN – REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Rotarian Bob Hannemann (Board member of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – NCMEC) initiated this project in 2009. The purpose was to establish a pilot program that would possibly be emulated by other clubs nationally and internationally.

The club was first informed concerning the problems of childhood exploitation and abduction and the activities of NCMEC. Permission was obtained from the Board of Directors to initiate the project. The initial committee consisted of Bob Hannemann as chair and club members Janet Broyles, Janice Farkas, Cynthia Harding, Fred Kuipers, Tom Moran, Dick Rahdert and Susan Smith serving as specific liaison contacts between NCMEC and local educational institutions, medical facilities, law enforcement agencies, family and youth organizations and retail businesses.

The first project undertaken was informing the club concerning the project and instructing them on becoming involved with the NCMEC's Amber Alert program designed to rapidly alert communities about a missing child through the use of automatic cell phone notification.

The second committee project was the distribution of personal safety information designed and provided by NCMEC to educate teachers, parents, and children concerning the problems of exploitation of children and how to prevent it and react should it occur. Sixteen thousand copies of this material were distributed through the Lafayette School systems.

Plans for this year include expansion of the network contacts utilizing a newly established communication system between NCMEC headquarters and the committee members to allow for quick dissemination of information concerning the personal safety of children. Special programs are also being planned for May 2011 which is National Missing Children's Month with May 25 being a special recognition day (Rotary meeting May 24th). The original committee members will be encouraged to resume or continue their activity in this effort. Dependent on the response, new committee members may be needed to continue the liaisons mentioned above.