



PH Parents vs Child Abductions

As a parent there is one thought and fear that is so terrifying it can be paralyzing. Finding ourselves in a situation that we could lose our child. We know kids are fast on the move and it can literally take seconds of turning your back and those little creatures take off. I know the feeling all too well and it was an experience I will never forget. I was used to being the officer taking the report, not the parent having to dreadfully start to make one.

Here's an example of "Officers, they're just like us" I took my two young daughters to the "Winter Wonderland" event at Navy Pier when they were 3 and 2 years old. As the girls looked at all the rides and were entranced by all the *Frozen* glory of this magical extravaganza they wanted to get out of their double stroller and assert their independence. My older daughter quickly made a new buddy on a ride and the two of them wanted to go on other festival rides together. As I was talking to our new friends parents and putting my younger daughter into the stroller the two new BFF's sprinted into the crowd to get in line on another ride. I had eyes on the kids just as I turned to put my younger daughter down and made the assumption the other parents had started to walk to the kids. I was wrong. As I looked up I couldn't see my daughter or the little boy she had befriended. I started to walk towards the direction I had seen them last but none of the kids were mine. As I continued to call out her name and search I found the other kid and his parents but not my girl. That's when panic set in. I did a lap around the festival and went to security who immediately put an alert out to their staff. Security also grabbed a Chicago Police Officer and the world felt like it lost color as I entered a Twilight Zone. To be on the other side of the notepad describing my daughter's clothes, her green eyes, and light brown hair with 2 curly piggy tails, was an immobilizing reality. I could feel the anxiety build in my system as tears of panic were falling down my cheeks yet I was able to calm my voice to speak to the officer. The officer was amazing, kind, and reassuring as we talked but my brain kept coming up with the worst case scenarios of never seeing my baby again. I had failed as a mother. My job is to love her and protect her and I failed. It was within minutes but felt like much longer when a security officer found her crying by the food area of the event and brought us over to her. I hugged her super tight as both of us cried and thanked everyone for their help.



As our PH community has recently been made aware of suspicious incidents/attempted child abductions in our surrounding towns recently we found this to be as good of a time as any to give some advice for our PH kids. For those that are not aware; on Thursday, April 12, 2018 at approximately 9:00 A.M. the Mount Prospect Police Department took a report for an attempted child luring in the 1100 block of Boxwood Dr. A male described as Asian, with an Asian accent and spiked hair driving a gray colored sedan asked the child if they wanted a ride to school. The child yelled, "No" and ran to school where they immediately alerted a staff member. The car was last seen leaving the area traveling northbound Wheeling Rd and Euclid Ave.

Arlington Heights Police Department also had a similar incident reported on Tuesday, April 24, 2018 at approximately 8:30 A.M. when an individual described as male black wearing a black sweatshirt driving a black sedan approached a young child as she was walking on Valley Ln and Burke Dr. on her way to school at Ivy Hill Elementary School. She was offered food and told to get into his car. She refused and ran to school.

Being that these incidents have occurred very close to home the Prospect Heights Police Department would like to share some tips for our parents to talk over with your family.

We understand that our parents are trying to slowly give their children more freedom as they become older and children at a certain age believe they are invincible to anything bad that could happen to them. That is why it is important to have open communication and safety rules.



- Stress to our children to be aware of their surroundings. Do not look at their phone as they are walking to a friend's house, to school, or back home. Also keep the earbuds or headphones off!
- Use the buddy system. Always have your wingman! Do not walk alone.
- Have your child check with you first. Get permission before going anywhere. Know your child's friends and parents. Know where they reside.
- Give them the confidence to say "NO" if anyone tries to tell them to get into their car, inappropriately touch them, or hurt them. I understand we all want to teach our children to be polite and have manners but there is a time if our kids feel threatened to make the situation LOUDLY known.
- Run and find a trusted adult and tell them what happened. The more the child can recall and describe the better!
-

What do you do if your child is missing?

If your child is missing, immediately call your local law enforcement agency to make a report. Be prepared to give the law enforcement agency information about your child, including his or her name, date of birth, height, weight, and any other unique identifiers such as eyeglasses and braces. Tell them when you noticed that your child was missing and what clothing he or she was wearing.

We don't put this information out to alarm our families but we want you to have as much information as possible in your hands. Also know there have been calls our officers have been dispatched to, more so for our little ones, of scared parents that were unable to locate their child. We have located young toddler sleeping in a closet, under a bed, or in a cabinet cause they were playing "Hide and Seek."

If you see any suspicious activity don't hesitate to call the police department at 847-398-5511 or 911.



Stay Safe PH,

Community Relations Officer Conboy