



Department of Justice

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OPA
(202) 514-2007
TTY (866) 544-5309

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS FLORIDA BUS DRIVER FOR RETURN OF MISSING CHILD

WASHINGTON – The Department of Justice today presented Ms. JoAnn Donovan with the Missing Children’s Citizen Award. Ms. Donovan, a school bus driver from Punta Gorda, Florida, helped locate a 15-year-old girl with special needs who was reported missing when she did not board the bus at her foster home. This award honors the extraordinary efforts of private citizens for their unselfish acts to recover missing or abducted children safely, and comes during the 37th annual commemoration of National Missing Children’s Day.

In an interview with the officers investigating the case of the missing child, Ms. Donovan reported that the girl had recently been talking on her cell phone with her biological mother, from whose custody she had been removed. A tip yielded a video camera picture taken of the child and her mother in a car passing through a tollbooth in another state. Police returned the girl to her foster family unharmed just one day after she went missing. Her mother will spend two years in jail.

“The compassion and loyalty that Ms. Donovan encompasses demonstrate the positive impact that ordinary citizens can have on the lives of those around them,” said Katharine T. Sullivan, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs. “The Department of Justice applauds her efforts, along with those of the law enforcement officials who searched for the girl and brought her home safely.”

“Ms. Donovan’s dedication to and awareness of the children she transports made all the difference in this case,” said Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Administrator Caren Harp. “We would like to congratulate her and the officers involved for quickly finding and returning this child to her foster family.”

The department also recognized nine law enforcement officers from Wisconsin, Louisiana, and Florida for their efforts to find missing children and bring child sexual predators and child pornographers to justice. The department declared Elliana Conrad, a fifth-grader at the Antonia Crater Elementary School in Newberg, Oregon, winner of the 2020 National Missing Children’s Day poster contest.

Due to restrictions resulting from COVID-19, the in-person ceremony to honor the recipients has been canceled. Instead, this [website](#) features information about the awardees and statements from Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Attorney General

Katharine T. Sullivan and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Administrator
Caren Harp.

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan, provides federal leadership, grants and resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.

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