



Department of Justice

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

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS LOUISIANA MARSHAL WITH MISSING CHILDREN’S LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARD

WASHINGTON – The Department of Justice today awarded Deputy U.S. Marshal Gerald Dysart with the Missing Children’s Law Enforcement Award. Mr. Dysart, who is based in New Orleans, led an operation to recover 16 at-risk children over a period of two weeks.

Announcement of the honor is part of the 37th annual commemoration of National Missing Children’s Day. The Missing Children’s Law Enforcement Award recognizes the extraordinary efforts of officers who have made a significant investigative or program contribution to the safety of children.

“Senior Inspector Dysart exemplifies persistence and commitment in law enforcement,” said Katharine T. Sullivan, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs. “The Department of Justice congratulates him on his tireless efforts to bring these children home, and we stand with our nation’s federal officers in their work to protect America’s youth.”

Mr. Dysart provided the expertise and guidance that, over several months, forged Operation Empty Nest in April 2019. The Atlanta, Georgia, operation recovered missing children who were victims of sex trafficking, exploitation, and sexual and physical abuse. It involved the U.S. Marshals Service Missing Child Unit, Southeast Regional Fugitive Task Forces, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC).

Mr. Dysart’s involvement began in 2016, when he started the U.S. Marshals Service Missing Child Unit, following passage of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Without additional staff or funding, he built the unit using existing resources and developed a training curriculum used nationwide. In collaboration with NCMEC, Dysart helped recover 500 critically missing children in just the past two years.

“Senior Inspector Dysart used his extensive experience to prepare and direct the highly successful Operation Empty Nest,” says Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Administrator Caren Harp. “The Department of Justice praises his expertise and collaborative abilities, which made possible the rescue of 16 children — among our society’s most vulnerable — from evil people who would do them harm.”

The department also recognized eight other law enforcement officers from Wisconsin and Florida, as well as a school bus driver from 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 this year's National Missing Children's Day poster contest.

Due to restrictions resulting from COVID-19, the in-person award ceremony has been canceled. Instead, this [website](#) features information about the awardees and statements from Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan and OJJDP Administrator Harp.

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan, provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other 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 is located 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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