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**Alpharetta launches new child ID system**

by Jason Wright

write the author

September 10, 2008  
www.northfulton.com

ALPHARETTA - Hot on the heels of the announcement that its last gift helped nab a suspected car thief, Alpharetta's Police Department was thrilled Aug. 28 to accept the latest gift from the city's Public Safety Foundation aimed at helping parents rest just a bit easier.

It's called SafeAssured ID, and it's a whole new way of sharing a missing or abducted child's information with law enforcement, the media and the community within minutes.

"It's a wonderful tool," said Public Safety Director Gary George. "Anytime we can do this for the parents of these kids, we will. We chose this because it was the best of the best"

Put simply, the SafeAssured ID system contains virtually everything police could want when searching for a missing child: 10 digital fingerprints, a digital photograph, streaming video showing mannerisms and gait, voice tracking for help with accents, a general physical description and vital personal information like addresses, date of birth, medical conditions, identifying marks and a family code word.

After a child is put into the system, parents are given a photo ID card and guidebook written in conjunction with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Should the child go missing, the contents of the child's mini-cd can be beamed to any officer's laptop instantly, said George. Only police and the family have access to the information.

"I think every parent would like to have something like this," said John Albers, chairman and president of the Alpharetta Public Safety Fund, which donated the \$6,000 system.

Alpharetta police officer Terry Joyner brought the idea of the system to the department after seeing it demonstrated at the National Conference on Preventing Crime in Atlanta.

"I came back and did some research," he said. "We were looking to replace our old-style, ink fingerprint kits."

Albers said his non-profit group was more than happy to help out. His two boys were two of the first children whose information was included in the system.

"You have it so you hope you never use it," he said.

Alpharetta's Police Explorers will input information at community events to try and get as many children logged in as possible.

"We could have 15,000 to 20,000 kids at the Fun Fest Sept. 20," said George.



(JASON WRIGHT/www.northfulton.com) Young Will Albers and Alpharetta Police Explorer Zack Kowalske input Albers' personal information in the SafeAssured system Aug. 28 at the Alpharetta Public Safety Annex. (click for larger version)

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And it's giving local businesses an opportunity to pitch in, as well.

Chuck Jones is director of external affairs for Alpharetta-based ChoicePoint. At the company's Windward Challenge 5K run to benefit Camp Twin Lakes Sept. 18, police will be on hand with the system. ChoicePoint has paid for up to 250 kids to be added in.

Jones said it's just another step in the company's already successful mission to help find missing children. ChoicePoint recently celebrated its 100th child found as a result of blast-faxing pertinent information to areas where the child might be found.

"We do it because we have the technology, and we're proud to help reunite a child with his family," he said.

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