



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING ADULTS MAY CLOSE DOORS

**October 23, 2006** – Federal budget cuts have severely depleted the resources to **the National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA)** and this agency is being forced to close the doors of their office in Phoenix, AZ and relocate if this nationally-respected agency is to remain open. The agency is pleading to Congressional Representatives, the public and the national business community to help with contributions, moving assistance, and new office space so NCMA can remain in operation!

When the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance called on the **National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA)**, the first clearinghouse for missing adults in the country, to provide case management and support services to thousands of families of missing adults left in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath, no one expected the future of the agency was at stake. While the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) filtered calls for those under the age of 18 missing in the hurricane catastrophe, their own funding does not allow for assistance to be provided to those over 18.

**Kristen's Law**, signed by **President Clinton**, established the national clearinghouse for missing adults in 2002 and working in partnership with governmental agencies, the Phoenix-based missing person agency handled over 13,500 missing adult reports closing 99.9% of the cases in the months following the hurricane. The Hurricane Katrina efforts cost the agency over \$200,000 of their own funding, and with only \$50,000 reimbursement from the federal government, has depleted the agency's own reserve. With bills stacking up, a 70% reduction in staff, and no money left to pay the lease the agency must immediately vacate the nearly 8,000 square feet of offices they have been renting since 1998.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) receives over **\$35 million** dollars per year to assist with missing children cases. However, during the last four years, NCMA's federal income was cut to **\$148,000** for 2006 operating costs. With a reduction in staff and now a move to a smaller facility, providing services to thousands of families nationwide is threatened to being taken away. Without NCMA in operation, this means that families of missing adults and law enforcement agencies no longer have a helpful resource to rely on for assistance.

During 2005, NCMA handled 23,421 missing person reports and provided assistance to over 24,741 family members of missing persons. Approximately 2,000 law enforcement agencies received assistance. "Currently **Kristen's Act Reauthorization of 2005, H.R. 2103**, is pending in Congress and would appropriate up to \$4 million per year to the agency but with continued delays in Congress we are just financially unable to continue operating out of our North Phoenix offices," said Erin Bruno, Director of Case Management. "Our founder of the agency has sold her own personal property and declined pay since April 2006 to try to keep this agency running so families throughout the country had a place to go for help."

**The public may contact the agency by calling (602) 749-2000 or (800) 690-3463 or by visiting [www.missingadults.org](http://www.missingadults.org).**

*NMCO is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization working with local, state and federal law enforcement, medical examiners and coroners. NCMA, a division of NMCO is the only national missing adult clearinghouse funded by the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance to provide advocacy and support services to families of missing adults and directly involved in the President's DNA Initiative, "Advancing Justice through DNA Technology."*

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