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# AMBER Alert Awareness Day

JANUARY 23RD 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

## AMBER Alert Awareness Day

Last Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, was National AMBER Alert Awareness Day. Although we see AMBER Alerts on the news from time to time, it is important to be kept up to date so that children can be located immediately. After all, there is strength in numbers.

AMBER Alert stands for America's Missing: Broadcasting Emergency Response. It was first founded seventeen years ago on January 13<sup>th</sup> after Amber Hagerman was abducted in Arlington, Texas. After Hagerman's abduction, her father soon figured out that media could play an incredibly large part in finding missing children. The Dallas police agreed with this idea and it sparked a revolution across the nation, officially creating the AMBER Alert System in 1996.

Back then, alerts were only sent through radio stations and local television stations, along with some local newspapers. Technology has quickly advanced and now AMBER Alerts are able to be sent to cell phones, televisions, faxes, emails, and are often shown on the national news channels.

Nearly 800,000 children under the age of eighteen go missing every year in the United States (that's 2,185 children nearly every day). With a network of more than twenty AMBER Alert Plans across the nation, almost six hundred children have been safely recovered through the AMBER Alert Program.

The state of Missouri started using the AMBER Alert system in 2002 and has had nearly fifty children recovered by the use of it. Missouri's highway patrolmen along with MoDot play an incredibly large part in locating victims that are originally from Missouri or that

are passing through.

Broadcasters, wireless cell phone companies, transportation agencies, and law-enforcement officials willingly work together to locate missing children. The whole idea of AMBER Alerts is to spread the word and have people working together as a community. With hundreds or thousands of people working together for one ultimate cause, the missing child’s chances of being found increase phenomenally. Law enforcement officials that have worked with AMBER Alerts before often say, “The more eyes, the better.”

With today’s technology at our very own fingertips, we can play a large part in finding abducted children. Due to the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) Program, you are able to register to receive text messages or emails about local kidnappings or disappearances of small children. If you are not in an area that allows you to use the WEA Program, AMBER Alerts are used often on Facebook, AOL, Yahoo, and Google.

Although the AMBER Alert System resulted from a terrible tragedy many years ago, it has created a nationwide network of people, media, and law enforcers so that future abductions can be prevented or quickly put to a stop. For more information on victims, reports, history, or national or local alerts, you can visit [www.amberalert.gov](http://www.amberalert.gov) or [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).

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