



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Washington, D.C. 20531

Dear 5th Grader:

When many of your parents were just kids, a young boy named Etan Patz said goodbye to his Mom, walked to the bus stop, but never made it to school. Sadly, Etan still hasn't come home. His disappearance has become a symbol for remembering lost children in our country.

Three years after Etan disappeared, President Ronald Reagan named May 25th National Missing Children's Day. Since 1983, a ceremony has been held in Washington, DC to remember missing children and to honor those people that work to make kids safe. As part of this event, every year the Department of Justice sponsors a poster contest for 5th graders as an opportunity for you to learn ways to stay safe.

I am writing today to invite you to participate in this year's poster contest. If you win the national contest, you, your parents, and your teacher will receive a free trip to Washington, DC. At the National Missing Children's Day Ceremony, the winner of the poster contest receives an award and the winning poster is used to show safety tips for children to the rest of the country. Last year's winner said:

... Winning the National Missing Children's Poster Contest has been amazing. My State honored me in a ceremony at my school. Lots of important people in our government showed up, along with my family and friends. I also met our Governor in Columbus. Then we traveled to Washington...Being there really made me think about how big of a difference this contest can make. I entered because I wanted to help bring missing children home to see their parents."

Rules for the poster contest were sent to your teacher, who will go over them with you and your classmates. Along with drawing the poster, you will need to fill out a form that tells us a little bit about you and about what your poster means.

As you work on this project remember that there are many people who are doing everything they can to keep children safe. If you have questions about things that you can do to stay safe, talk to your teacher, your parents or other trusted adults – they want you to be safe, too, and will help you.

Thank you for making a poster for our contest. Good Luck! I hope to see you next May during our award ceremony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ron Laney".

Ron Laney
Associate Administrator, Child Protection Division
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
U.S. Department of Justice