HOME SAFE
The Kevin and Avonte Program: Reducing Injury and Death of Missing Individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities

The goal of the Kevin and Avonte Program: Reducing Injury and Death of Missing Individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities is to support local jurisdictions’ efforts to reduce the number of deaths and injuries of individuals with forms of dementia such as Alzheimer’s disease or developmental disabilities such as autism who, due to their condition, wander from safe environments.

The two main objectives of the Kevin and Avonte Program are to:

1. Design, establish, or operate a holistic, locally-based, proactive program to locate or prevent wandering by individuals with forms of dementia such as Alzheimer’s disease or developmental disabilities such as autism.
2. Purchase, develop, or implement locally-based tracking technology for individuals with forms of dementia such as Alzheimer’s disease or developmental disabilities such as autism.

The Law Behind the Kevin and Avonte Program: Reducing Injury and Death of Missing Individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities

Kevin and Avonte’s Law (S. 2070) was named in honor of Kevin and Avonte, two young boys with autism who wandered from safe environments and tragically lost their lives. This law authorized The Kevin and Avonte Program: Reducing Injury and Death of Missing Individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities, an initiative of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. This program provides grants to law enforcement, health care, and nonprofit organizations to implement locative technologies to locate missing individuals and develop or operate programs to prevent wandering, increase individuals’ safety, and facilitate rescue. These efforts promote the education and training of caregivers to better understand the causes and prevention of wandering and provide law enforcement officers with an understanding of why people may wander and tools they can use to find missing persons.

Training and Technical Assistance

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), in partnership with The Arc’s National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), provides a broad range of training and technical assistance to support law enforcement and their multidisciplinary partners in their efforts to reduce and prevent injuries and deaths of missing individuals with dementia or developmental disabilities. Through this program, called Home Safe, the IACP, The Arc, and NCMEC, working in partnership with BJA, utilize a variety of methods to deliver training and technical assistance to support Kevin and Avonte grantee sites in planning and implementing local programming.
Project Find Safe, through Minot State University's North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, provides training to law enforcement on how to use tracking technology and provides free tracking bracelets to individuals who are at risk of wandering throughout the state. You can learn more at https://ndcpd.org/findsafe/.

Hope for Three’s partnership with the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office, Texas is credited with the success of reuniting an 11-year-old child with autism with his caregiver after he had wandered from school. Hope for Three promotes the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office’s voluntary registry to assist in the location of individuals who may wander. The registry stores a recent photograph, demographic information, and caregiver contact information. You can learn more at https://www.hopeforthree.org/take-me-home/.

IACP’s Home Safe Resources:

- Customized technical assistance for grantees sites from a dedicated support team and partners
- Site needs assessment to increase understanding of needs and inform training and technical assistance
- Home Safe Connect, an online peer-to-peer community of practice platform
- Peer-to-peer learning opportunities between sites through information exchange and networking
- IACP’s network and experience in advancing safer communities through thoughtful, progressive police leadership
- Online library of publications, tools, and resources for the field
- Ongoing webinar training series and publications on relevant topics for the field
- Orientation meeting for newly funded grantees sites

Contact us: homesafe@theiacp.org

Visit us: https://www.theiacp.org/projects/home-safe
Visit NCMEC’s Autism webpage: https://www.missingkids.org/theissues/autism

This project is supported by Cooperative Agreement No. 2019-NT-BX-K002 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.