



NEWS RELEASE

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USMS leads operation to find missing Iowa children

OPERATION HOMECOMING results in locating 21 juveniles and recovering 7

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa – Since October 2020, the U.S. Marshals in Iowa have been partnering with federal, state and local agencies in a joint operation dubbed *Operation Homecoming*, focused on recovering vulnerable, critically missing children across the state, and as of March 23, U.S. Marshals have located 21 juveniles and have directly recovered seven children.

Both the northern and southern districts of Iowa worked with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation's Missing Persons Clearinghouse to look for and recover the children, who were all between the ages of 4 and 17, and are some of the most at-risk and challenging recovery cases in the area, based on indications of high-risk factors such as exposure to narcotics, child exploitation, physical or sexual abuse, and medical or mental health conditions.

Operation Homecoming led to Marshals locating missing Iowa children in nine different states across the U.S., including Arizona, Nebraska, Minnesota, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, Illinois, Ohio and Indiana.

The operation also resulted in the arrests of two individuals, the seizure of illegal narcotics, the seizure of two firearms, and four independent human trafficking investigations, which have been referred to the appropriate investigative agencies for further valuation.

U.S. Marshals in Iowa are still looking for Fredrick Workman, 15, last seen in Des Moines in August 2013, and are offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information that leads to his location. Anyone with information about his whereabouts is urged to contact NCMEC at 1-800-843-5678 or visit their Cyber Tipline at

www.missingkids.org.

The U.S. Marshals primary responsibility to protect the federal judiciary is followed closely by a variety of priority missions like apprehending violent fugitives, investigating noncompliant sex offenders, and the sale of forfeited assets. Added to these responsibilities in 2015 was the mission to investigate/locate/recover critically missing juveniles. In 2015, with the signing of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, the USMS was granted discretionary authority to support law enforcement requests to assist in locating and recovering missing children. Since the passage of the JvTA in 2015, the USMS has contributed to the recovery of more than 1,750 missing children.

“The goal of our involvement with missing child cases is not only to safely recover Iowa’s missing children, but also to aid our local and state partners who work these cases daily,” said Deputy U.S. Marshal Scott Cannon, Missing Child Investigations Coordinator for the Southern District of Iowa. “The Marshals Service is uniquely suited to provide assistance based on our expertise as the premier agency in tracking fugitives. We can use some of the same skill sets in recovering missing children as we use during fugitive investigations.”

Central Iowa man charged in harboring runaway

Just before Christmas 2020, a missing central Iowa teen was found by deputy U.S. marshals in the home of an adult male in Ames. The man was arrested for harboring a juvenile runaway and implicated in sex trafficking. A second man was later charged based on the results of the USMS investigation and recovery efforts.

Iowa Missing child recovered in Arizona after family’s relentless legal battle

U.S. Marshals in Iowa and Arizona worked to recover a child who had been missing since he was taken by a noncustodial family member in 2017. Now 4, this child had been relocated and hidden from law enforcement for years. The child’s legal guardian spent significant time and resources attempting to locate this child, to no avail. With the assistance of the U.S. Marshals and their partnership with state and local Authorities, the child was recovered and returned to their legal guardian in Iowa, bringing to close a case that has haunted local investigators and family members for years.

Exploited teens located and returned to Iowa

In January 2021, U.S. Marshals in Illinois recovered a missing 14-year-old from central Iowa after investigators discovered ads featuring the juvenile involved in sex trafficking. The juvenile was recovered at a motel in the act of being trafficked. In 2020, another missing 17-year-old was taken from central Iowa and

subjected to human trafficking in Mississippi and Tennessee. Marshals tracked her location to a home in Mississippi, where she was recovered and brought back to Iowa.

“For these kids on the run, life on the streets can be extremely dangerous and unforgiving” said Deputy Marshal Christopher Siemens, Missing Child Unit Liaison in the Northern District of Iowa. “Often they have no financial resources to sustain themselves, resulting in the selling of sex acts as a means to survive.”

“This operation is the first missing child operation by the U.S. Marshals Service in Iowa,” said U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Iowa Doug Strike. “Our message to missing children and their families remains, and to echo Director Washington’s vision for this mission, the U.S. Marshals here in Iowa will never stop looking for you.”

“The key to success, for these projects, involves a joint effort by public safety, working as ONE-entity with ONE-goal: Keeping our children safe through the apprehension of these critical offenders,” said U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Iowa Ted Kamatchus.

Nationwide, more than 50 local task forces are dedicated to violent crime reduction by locating and apprehending wanted criminals. These task forces also serve as investigation hubs for missing and exploited juveniles throughout the country. During Operation Homecoming, the Southern Iowa Fugitive Task Force and the Northern Iowa Fugitive Task Force fulfilled these roles, investigating missing juvenile cases alongside the following agencies: The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, The Iowa Department of Public Safety, the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, the Iowa Department of Human Services, the Linn County Sheriff’s Office, the Polk County Sheriff’s Office, the Howard County Sheriff’s Office, the Webster County Sheriff’s Office, the Cedar Rapids Police Department, the Ames Police Department, the Waterloo Police Department, the Des Moines Police Department, the Dubuque Police Department, the North Liberty Police Department, the Cresco Police Department, and the Fort Dodge Police Department.

Additional information about the U.S. Marshals Service can be found at <http://www.usmarshals.gov>.

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