

April 15, 2021

Dear Caring Community Partner:

Please accept this request for funding to launch the **2021 Missing in Harris County Day** project. Left-Behind Families of the long-term missing, caring community members, missing persons support service providers, and law enforcement officers are invited to participate in this effort to help families of missing persons make connections.

The 2021 Missing in Harris County Day will be held on Saturday, August 7, 2021, from 10 AM - 3 PM at the Children's Assessment Center, 2500 Bolsover Street, Houston, TX 77005. The day will include: free refreshments, personal guides, semi-private areas to talk with missing persons professionals, forensic professionals performing voluntary identification cheek swabs, data entry into the National Missing & Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), panel discussions addressing missing persons issues, and more.

Texas Center for the Missing is a 501c3 missing persons organization with a mission to bring hope and healing to the missing and their families through crisis intervention, prevention, and community education. TCM **serves the community** through prevention education for all ages; **serves law enforcement** through Amber Alert and missing persons investigation training; and **serves families** through 24/7 casework assistance for those in crisis. Contrary to popular misconception, TCM receives limited government funding in support of the local Amber Alert. This life-saving program is funded by private donations and is solely operated by TCM.

At the request of the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences (HCIFS), TCM is the coordinating agency of the 2021 Missing in Harris County Day (MIHCD). MIHCD is a collaborative effort to resolve long-term missing persons cases. Through partnerships with law enforcement providing investigation expertise and intake services, HCIFS providing DNA sampling, and TCM providing health and human services for left-behind families, it is our goal to reunite families by bringing all resources to bear on these heart-wrenching cases.

The Problem. In 2020, 37,023 Texas children—including 9,522 from the Greater Houston area—were reported missing. In addition, 4,034 adults were reported missing from Greater Houston. In Texas, 6,586 missing persons cases for children and adults remain open as of April 9, 2021.¹

A missing child is every parent's worst nightmare. A long-term missing loved one is quite simply the worst case scenario for every left-behind family. With the immense caseload investigating law enforcement agencies must carry, it is imperative that all community resources converge to resolve cases wherever possible. **For example, the Houston Police Department receives over 6,500 new missing persons reports each year and the Missing Persons Unit only has 11 investigators.**

The Solution/Project Description. The **2021 Missing in Harris County Day** is a unique project targeted to a specific under-served population—families of the missing. Through the application of investigative techniques, scientific forensic principles, and community engagement, **Missing in Harris County Day (MIHCD)** is strategically positioned to provide resolution for families searching for missing loved ones.

**Over the course of its 5-year history,
MIHCD has identified 19 missing persons and provided closure to those families.
You can be part of this continuing success story!**

¹ 2020 Annual Report. Texas Department of Public Safety Missing Persons Clearinghouse.

TCM regional media partners (e.g., Clear Channel Outdoor, iHeartMedia, Inc., ESPN Radio, etc.) will highlight event details and missing persons cases to encourage participation and increase awareness. By creating connections between searching families and all the available resources to solve missing persons cases, Missing in Harris County Day will provide every opportunity to reunite families. TCM's Case Manager will be on-hand to provide follow-up services for the families.

As a whole, these services may reunite families. MIHCD also may, through public awareness, encourage more searching families to engage with existing resources to find their missing loved ones.

Amount Requested: \$500

Total Project Budget: \$17,260

Contributions to Missing in Harris County Day are 100% tax deductible. Your gift may be sent to:

**Texas Center for the Missing
Attn: Missing in Harris County Day
2500 Bolsover Street
Houston, TX 77005**

Your support will directly impact families of the missing in Greater Houston and will allow TCM to provide collaborative solutions to bring missing children and endangered adults home. If you have questions or prefer a full proposal or customized sponsorship package, please contact me at 713.986.3542 or mturnquist@tcftm.org.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Melissa Turnquist, *MIHCD 2021 Coordinator*

Associate Director, Texas Center for the Missing, Houston's Amber Alert Provider