



PARKS BUREAU

2101 N. Highland Ave. Hollywood, CA 90068 - Phone: (323) 845-0070

www.lasd.org

News Release

Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff

A press conference was held Thursday morning at the Federal Building walkway at the Samantha Runnion Memorial. On what would have been the sixteenth birthday of Samantha Runnion, members of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, personnel from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Erin Runnion, Samantha's mother, gathered at the site to honor her and to announce their collaboration in the RadKIDS Program.

RadKIDS is a program dedicated to providing children with hands-on, activity-based, physical skills development program empowering children with instinctual options they need to recognize, avoid, and if necessary, respond to potential danger. This 10-hour family centered safety education program emphasizes to kids essential decision-making skills as well as physical resistance options to escape violence.

This unique one week program, two hours per day teaches kids about very important topics such as using 911 (kids get to actually call 911 from a cell phone), escape routes, school safety, drugs and alcohol awareness, anti-bullying, home safety, beach safety, pool safety, vehicle and bike safety, Internet and phone safety, and personal boundaries. The unique aspect of this training program is the physical techniques taught to the children to resist and escape aggression and possible abduction.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Chief James Lopez, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation Director Russ Guiney, Federal Bureau of Investigation Assistant Special Agent in Charge Robert Clark, and Erin Runnion, Founder of The Joyful Child Foundation all spoke today. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department provides policing services for all of Los Angeles County's 177 Parks, Golf Courses, Lakes, Swimming Pools, and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

We work closely with our community to provide safety in all our Parks. This innovative program is a great tool to give children the opportunity to escape being victims of abduction," said Parks Bureau Captain Steve Smith.

The Sheriff's Department has joined the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation to implement this important program in five County Parks as of May of this year.

Belvedere Community Regional Park (East Los Angeles)

Mary M. Bethune Park (Los Angeles)

El Cariso Community Regional Park (Sylmar)

Sorensen Park (Los Angeles)

George Lane Park (Lancaster)

Over 250 children from ages 5-12 have been trained and graduated the program throughout the County thus far.

“What happened to Samantha Runnion is an unbelievably tragic experience, but through her Mother, Erin, she is helping turn a tragedy into something positive for all children said Sheriff’s Chief James Lopez.”

<http://www.thejoyfulchild.org/>

<http://www.radkids.org/>

Deputy Paul Schrader

Parks Bureau

Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

310-499-8531

Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau Newsroom

Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

4700 Ramona Blvd., Monterey Park, CA 91754

323-267-4800

SHBNewsroom@lasd.org

Twitter@LASD_News http://twitter.com/#!/LASD_News

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For Additional Information Contact:

Name	Phone	Email
PAUL SCHRADER	310-499-8531	parkburnewsrn@lasd.org