

ATIKOKAN (ONT.) PROGRESS TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2009

## Masons to offer free child ID kits at Bass Classic

**M. McKinnon**

What would you do if your child went missing?

Ontario's Masons hope it never happens to you - but want you to get the best available help if it should, by providing a free 'EZ Child' identification kit for each of your children.

And the Atikokan Lodge is on board with the program, called MasoniCh.I.P., and will be bringing it to the Atikokan Bass Classic August 14 and 15, Lodge members Jim Maki and Doug Sampson confirmed last week.

No parent wants to believe that the unimaginable could happen to them, though nearly 55 children are reported missing to police in Ontario every day (164 every day in Canada).

According to Canada's 'Our Missing Children' network and Ontario Child Find, a current, good-quality photo is the single most effective tool in locating a



missing child. Enter MasoniCHIP (Child Identification Program) Ontario - deemed "one of the most comprehensive child recovery and identification programs in the nation" by the National Center for Exploited and Missing Children - and brought exclusively to Ontario families by dedicated Masons free of charge.

Sponsored by the Grand Lodge

A.F.&A.M. of Canada in Ontario, the MasoniCHIP program consists of five major components - digital photographs, digital video, digital fingerprints, vital child information, and a dental bite impression or intra-oral swab for DNA. The photographs, video, fingerprints, and child data are burned onto a CD that is compatible with province's Amber Alert program. The dental impression provides a virtual diagram of the child's biting surface, which, like fingerprints, are unique to each individual, and further supplies saliva to provide a DNA sample. Combined, this five part process provides a dramatic, time-sensitive recovery tool for authorities.

Parents are urged to gather pertinent information about their child prior to the event such as an emergency contact name, address and phone numbers, distinguishing marks and scars, allergies,

medications and the child's height and weight.

Security and privacy are of utmost importance. All information is collected on site, processed, and provided to the parent or guardian in an envelope - along with the sentiment of all the Masonic volunteers: "We hope you never need to use it."

After each child is processed,

the data is deleted and erased from the computer using state-of-the-art software. The only item remaining is the signed permission slip by MasoniCHIP Ontario.

The Masonic brethren in Ontario, and their volunteers, have been offering this program since August, 2007, and have prepared nearly 20,000 EZ ID kits.