



## Small town gets help at child safety festival



By: **Dave Bohman**



Trilby, Florida - This is a small town filled with innocence. But in this crossroads village, signs on the doors, and activities at the church, show a guarded innocence.

### **Renee Converse, Mother of 12-Year-Old Murder Victim**

*"But it's good that people come together."*

Renee Converse came to support Trilby's Safety Festival. So did Carol Bernhardt, Hillary Sessions, and Roy Brown.

You've seen their faces, and you've seen the pictures of their children or grandchildren: murder victims or missing kids.

### **Renee Converse**

*"It could happen to any neighborhood."*

Renee Converse's daughter, Jennifer Odom was murdered at a bus stop in 1993, and in the days after the murder, community awareness was high.

### **Renee Converse**

*"With Jennifer's case, you would see people at the bus stop, every day, every day, every day for the first couple of years, and then you started to see it drift off a little bit."*

**Carol Bernhardt, Grandmother of Missing Boy** *"When its in the newspapers or when its on the television, people pay attention."*

Carol Bernhardt's grandson Zachary disappeared from his mother's Clearwater apartment September 11, 2000. She says parents in Zachary's old neighborhood may be letting their guard down.

### **Carol Bernhardt**

*"They're back to their relaxed lifestyle, and its like, 'the children are safe,' and they're really not."*

Hillary Sessions' daughter Tiffany was a student at the University of Florida in 1989, when she disappeared. Small-town safety festivals have a special place in her heart.

### **Hillary Sessions, Mother of Missing Girl**

*"And by doing things like this, it brings it back to the forefront, so that people will say, 'oh yeah, I haven't checked on that for awhile.'"*

Trees in memory of victims were planted along the well-travelled Withlacoochee Trail. Their

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parents hope its yet another reminder to keep an eye on kids, even when stories of missing kids are not in the news.

**Dave Bohman, Tampa Bay's 10 News**