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## New Missing Children Organization Off to Exciting Start

Child Protection Education of America (CPEA) officially opened its doors Monday after a successful fingerprinting event at the Taste of New Tampa April 7. The new Tampa-based missing children organization has three goals: find missing children through photograph exposure; educate the public -- both young and old -- about child safety; and provide fingerprint services to parents in hopes they never need them.

CPEA was started last month by three individuals with about 30 years of experience in the missing children field. With employees working from home, the organization has registered over 200 missing person cases. "Statistics say that one in six missing children are found because someone saw their picture," said Vince DiNova, CPEA's executive director. The organization's day-to-day efforts focus on assisting parents and law enforcement by offering free photograph distribution in those cases.

"Teaching Children about Safety" and "Programs and Safety Tips for Parents" are two of the informational brochures offered by CPEA. These items teach parents techniques on how to talk to their child about safety, including using role-playing of dangerous or suspicious situations as a tool. The brochures also outline programs parents can get involved with or support in their communities to better child safety in their area.

CPEA will also use fingerprinting events as fund-raisers and public awareness campaigns. The organization uses state-of-the-art fingerprinting technology that offers better fingerprints than can be obtained with the traditional ink-rolled technique. CPEA held its inaugural fingerprinting event at the Taste of New Tampa this past weekend. The organization, with an event sponsorship from Accord Human Resources of Tampa, was able to print over 50 children at the event while passing out safety literature to parents.

"This is really an exciting time for us," said Cherie Dugan, Director of Casework. "Nationally, we are helping parents find their children through our photograph distribution efforts and locally we are raising awareness with our safety brochures and fingerprint events."

CPEA is at 410 Ware Blvd., Suite 712, Tampa FL 33619, just west of Brandon off S.R. 60. Its toll-free number is 1-866-USA-CHILD. For more information, see CPEA's Web site at [www.find-missing-children.org](http://www.find-missing-children.org) or call the offices at 813-626-3001.

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