



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Maureen Cahill
952-447-8933
612-385-9164 cell
Lifetouch

NCMEC
Communications
Department
703-837-6111

**LIFETOUCH AND THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED
CHILDREN PARTNER WITH SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY
TO LAUNCH SMILES SAFE KIDS™**

***Program Will Provide Free Tools to Families to Assist
in the Recovery of a Missing Child***

MINNEAPOLIS, MN - October 4, 2004 – Lifetouch National School Studios Inc. (Lifetouch) and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) announced today they are partnering with schools around the country to unveil a new rapid-response system and child safety program called SmileSafe Kids™. The program, one of America's largest child safety initiatives, will be available free of charge to kindergarten through eighth grade children in Lifetouch partnering schools.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice nearly 800,000 children are reported missing in a one year period of time resulting in an average of more than 2,000 children each day.

The SmileSafe Kids program contains a rapid-response system that allows Lifetouch to provide a child's image to NCMEC, in the event of a missing child, if requested by the family, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Lifetouch will provide an image to NCMEC only if it is requested and verified by the child's parent or guardian. Parents and guardians can provide NCMEC with the Safety ID number located on their child's identification card. The Safety ID number is used by Lifetouch to accurately locate and retrieve a child's image. This number is unique to Lifetouch and does not contain any personal information about the child.

In addition, the SmileSafe Kids program will provide free photo identification cards to parents and guardians including the most current school portrait of their

child, vital information from NCMEC on what to do if a child is reported missing, and NCMEC's toll free number 1-800-THE-LOST. The cards will also provide a space for parents and guardians to include information about their child's physical characteristics.

"Time is the enemy in missing child cases so it's critical that law enforcement be provided with a quality, current photograph immediately," said Ernie Allen, President and CEO of NCMEC. "We're grateful to Lifetouch for creating a program that partners with 30,000 schools offering nearly 20 million free Safety IDs to families for use in emergencies. This program combines prevention with preparedness while offering peace of mind to families."

According to NCMEC, one in six children featured in their photo distribution program has been recovered as a direct result of someone recognizing the child's photo and notifying authorities.

"Our business is based on creating lasting memories for children and their families," said Wayne Horntvedt, President and COO of Lifetouch National School Studios. "We can't think of a more positive way to use our resources than to assist families, law enforcement, and NCMEC 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help in the recovery of a missing child."

According to Lifetouch, school administrators, parents, and guardians are continually looking for ways to build awareness and keep kids safer. NCMEC also advocates that schools should have some type of prevention education program on personal safety. This program should be one that children take part in, enjoy, and most importantly, understand.

"Schools are a valued resource in this partnership and a critical element to help to educate and build awareness with families," said Horntvedt. "It is our hope that this type of public and private partnership can truly make a difference in keeping our kids safer."

For more information about this program, please visit www.smilesafekids.com.

About the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which serves as a national clearinghouse for information and a resource for child protection. It works in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. NCMEC's congressionally mandated CyberTipline, a reporting mechanism for child sexual exploitation, has handled more than 270,000 leads. Since its establishment in 1984, NCMEC has assisted law enforcement with more than 100,000 missing child cases, resulting in the recovery of more than 85,000 children. For more information about NCMEC, please visit www.missingkids.com or call 1-800-THE-LOST.

About Lifetouch

Lifetouch has been providing high quality portraits to schools and parents for nearly 70 years and is the largest school photographer in North America. Lifetouch provides photography services for preschool, elementary and high school students.

###