

Program To Receive Statewide Recognition

By Christine Platz

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Project Lifesaver International is proud to announce that our organization has been selected as the Commonwealth Council on Aging 2009 Best Practice Award winner in the Senior Safety category within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

“It has been an incredible year for Project Lifesaver,” said Gene Saunders, Founder and Chief Executive Officer. We are honored to have been selected for this recognition which couldn’t happen at a better time. Project Lifesaver International is not only celebrating the program’s 10th anniversary, we’re excited to have just reached two major milestones, he said. “Earlier in the month of May, the Project Lifesaver program reached more than 1,900 successful search and rescue missions for clients enrolled in the program. This week, the 1,000th public safety agency started this lifesaving program. There is nothing as rewarding than knowing that something you are involved in saves lives and provides peace of mind to families.”

Project Lifesaver International® was founded in April 1999 as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to quickly locating people missing with Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, autism, intellectual disabilities and more, who wander away from the safety of their caregiver. Headquartered in Chesapeake, Va., Project Lifesaver works with public safety agencies in more than 1,000 communities in 45 states, District of Columbia, Canada and Australia to protect some of society’s most vulnerable citizens from our elderly to our children.

Clients on the Project Lifesaver Program wear a LoJack SafetyNet Personal Locater Unit (PLU) that emits a Radio Frequency signal. The PLU is typically placed on a wristband worn by the “at-risk” citizen and can be tracked even into a densely wooded area, marsh, concrete structure or buildings constructed with steel. When caregivers notify the local Project Lifesaver agency that the person is missing, trained search and rescue personnel respond to the wanderer’s area and start searching with a mobile locater tracking system. Search times have been reduced from hours and days to just minutes, the average rescue time if notified is 30minutes.

You may ask why this is important; the answer in itself is simple - one life saved is one less tragedy a family must endure and one less sad story featured on the news leaving citizens wondering what could be done to help prevent such events.

Before Project Lifesaver, searches across the country were averaging 9 hours and costing taxpayers approximately \$1,500 per hour. Many searches actually took days, with hundreds of responders, resulting in much higher costs and many with tragic endings. One search in Chesapeake in 1979 cost the city approximately \$342,000 and was unsuccessful. An agency can start this program for as little as \$3,000, finding someone alive is priceless.

Those interested in starting this lifesaving program in their area are encouraged to contact us. Please visit www.projectlifesaver.org for more details. Our latest video is also posted on our website.

Since Project Lifesaver International is a non-profit (501 (c) (3)) organization, funding is a result of private and corporate donations and grants. Donations are used directly for programs, rescues and educational expenses.

The date and time for this most prestigious recognition has not yet been set and will be announced as soon as possible.

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About Project Lifesaver: Project Lifesaver is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping and protecting "at-risk" missing persons due to wandering, particularly those with Alzheimer's, Autism, Down Syndrome, or other developmental disorders.

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