



ANNUAL 2 REPORT

Finding Kids

2
2
2

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your ongoing belief and trust in Special Operations

Special Operations Finding Kids began operations in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2018. Our purpose is to fill critical gaps within the system that make kids easy targets for predators. Our vision is to **live in a society where children are free to be children – free from the threat of predators. It is a bold vision that is worth fighting for.**



The most important gap that we fill is to deploy trained boots-on-the-ground private investigators to find missing and exploited children whose cases do not fall under an 'Amber Alert'. These alerts, which result in immediate police action, are initiated when a child is forcibly kidnapped and represents only two percent of the 60,000 children reported as missing each year in California. In 2022, Special Operations was involved in 76 cases at an average cost of \$9k per case. Just over half of those were related to missing kids, most of whom had been victims of exploitation. The remainder involved children being actively exploited without having been reported missing. In California, a minor is identified as a victim of trafficking if he or she has exchanged sexual favors for anything of economic value. With social media and the enormous rise in popularity of apps like OnlyFans, Fanvue, and Fansly, we are seeing more and more children become victims of exploitation right under their parents' noses. Being able to find and identify victims and provide evidence to law enforcement to hold the perpetrators accountable is a critical gap Special Operations fills on behalf of the community.

The second gap we fill is providing options for aftercare for both the victim and their family. In 2023, we will be hiring our first Director of Aftercare Policy, Michelle Guymon. Michelle will be applying her thirty-plus years of experience in aftercare, social work and leading LA County Probation's child sex trafficking unit to expand our aftercare capabilities. We have hired John Hallman as NoCal Director of Investigations to replace Vic Lacey who will become an Advisor, and investing more time in proactive investigations, particularly in the challenging area of finding boys in the Bay Area.

None of this would be possible without your financial support that catalyzes our operations. In 2022 we increased funding by 50% from the previous year. Five generous Bay Area families hosted home-based events allowing us to raise over one million dollars to fund our operations. In 2023 we will continue to increase funding and awareness through these types of events, notably by hosting our first Gala in San Francisco this fall. This will continue to fund our Bay Area work, and allow us to expand operations to Las Vegas and Los Angeles. This geographic triangle is a regular route that predators use to transport and exploit their victims.

Having a business background means that I am constantly pondering our impact as an organization. At what point will we be able to say with confidence that child exploitation has been decimated in the Bay Area and beyond? There are certainly precedents indicating that, with focus and dedication, our society can reduce, if not eliminate, heinous crimes. Street cameras and forensic DNA technology have made serial killings virtually a thing of the past. The work MADD has done to strengthen laws has reduced drunk driving deaths in half since the 1980s. It has been proven repeatedly that when there are strong deterrents, criminals are forced to make a calculated decision: is the risk of being caught greater or lesser than the potential reward?

Your support allows us to be relentless in our pursuit of justice on behalf of the most vulnerable in our society. Thank you for deciding to make it a priority to support our work.

Gratefully,

Isabelle

Isabelle Finney
CEO

VISION
That **every child is free** to be a child.

MISSION
To **keep kids safe** from sex traffickers in the Bay Area and beyond.

PURPOSE
To **recover young victims**, to get them the help they need, and to **send traffickers to prison**.

THE PROBLEM

FBI studies indicate that the San Francisco Bay Area is one of the largest hubs for child sex trafficking in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of children go missing each year in our country — many presumed to be victims of sex trafficking. In 2022, there were 62,200 reports of missing children in California, of which 8,367 were from the San Francisco Bay Area. Studies reveal that two-thirds of runaways are **never even reported missing**.

Here, in our community, children are being used as commodities in the fastest growing, most profitable business of organized crime in the world. Unlike drugs, a child can be sold multiple times per day, over and over again. All youth are vulnerable to sex traffickers, but those who have already endured some form of trauma become especially easy prey. Unless there is clear evidence of nefarious circumstances, a child who runs away (to a groomer or from an unhappy home situation) is typically not something law enforcement has the resources to proactively investigate. And on those occasions where perpetrators are caught, few victims will agree to testify for fear of retribution. Without the victim's testimony, the perpetrator often remains free to traumatize and ruin the lives of other innocent boys and girls.

THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS SOLUTION

Our organization was born from an unmet need in our community — the need for boots-on-the-ground investigators to join the fight to prevent children from being exploited. Our team of private investigators and retired law enforcement officers knows how to find both victims and perpetrators. Because we are a victim-centered charitable organization — and not law enforcement — it is often easier for community members working with trauma victims to reach out to us for help. It takes a public-private partnership between law enforcement and the community to solve this hidden crime. Once a child is recovered, we work with partners to provide direct assistance to the victims — emergency housing, financial assistance, legal help — any support they need to begin healing. When victims feel safe and are empowered to testify, traffickers go to prison.

The result is a safer community for us all.





CUMULATIVE EMERGENCY SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS



132 missing and/or
exploited children found
or helped



71 children and families
offered counseling or
aftercare



36 predators identified
and/or prosecuted

FINDING MISSING KIDS



KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE ONE CHILD AT A TIME

Special Operations received an email from a distraught father about his 14-year-old daughter who had been missing for three days. His fear was almost palpable in the email. **Her name is Terry**, he wrote, **we've notified the police, but we still know nothing.**

Special Operations assigned a team of well-trained private investigators to begin searching for Terry*. The team carefully interviewed her friends and family, while checking cell phone records and conducting social media searches.

Terry's phone had been turned off. She had gone to a sleepover at a friend's house and had not returned. We discovered that another young girl who had gone to the sleepover, Angela, was also missing and had not even been reported as such. We contacted Angela's family and helped them navigate through the missing child process by calling the police department and reporting the case to NCMEC.

Through our investigative work, we had a hunch as to Terry's location. We set up continuous surveillance of a house in the East Bay. The house was in a dangerous area with heavy violence and gang activity. We surveilled the house for several days, identifying people who entered and departed the house. During our surveillance, we saw indicators that Terry was inside. As more information came in and was relayed to police, the police were able to enter the house and recover Terry.

We soon learned that Terry and Angela had gone to a girlfriend's house for a sleepover. She had introduced them to her new 24-year old "boyfriend" who convinced the girls to hang out with his friends. The three older men drugged the girls, had sex with them, and tried to convince them that they could make lots of money by having sex with other men. Angela was able to escape and ran away before the police found Terry.

Terry and Angela are in a healthy environment now and continuing to heal from their experience. After Terry was recovered, our Investigators and Mentors brought her from Police Protective custody to a facility where she is safe and lovingly cared for.

Terry's father recently expressed his overwhelming gratitude for all that Special Operations did to save his daughter. In his words, "Investigators spent so much time literally in the trenches and dangerous gang areas that led to finding Terry."

To view more of our solved cases, please visit our website at findingkids.org.

* Name changed to protect identity.

COUNTY CHAMPIONS

SAVING LIVES THROUGH COUNTY CHAMPIONS



EXPANDING OUR REACH

To expand our reach across the Bay Area, we successfully implemented the County Champion Program. This program taps highly qualified and motivated volunteers to represent Finding Kids in different Bay Area counties. The volunteers meet local law enforcement, school officials and anti-sex trafficking organizations within their communities. Our County Champions are often the first to know

when a child in their area has gone missing or may be sexually exploited. When a case arises, the County Champion works with our private investigative team and child mentors to find and recover the child and bring the predator to justice. In 2022, we established 8 County Champions in 9 counties, helping to recover 45 kids.

PUBLIC OUTREACH



INFORMING STUDENTS ABOUT SEXTORTION

Sextortion, which is the act of threatening to share nude or explicit images, is common in middle and high schools. The hardest part about sextortion cases is that the victim often feels guilty or ashamed and does not report the crime.

Predators are powerful because they inflict fear into these kids and the longer the crime goes on, the more traumatized the child becomes. Many teen suicides have been linked to sextortion.

Information sharing and open communication is the best way to prevent and defend against sextortion. Our volunteers speak at local schools to explain that this is a serious crime and what to do if you or someone you know needs help. We let them know they can always reach out to us for help if they are not comfortable speaking with their parents or school counselors.



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

In the Bay Area, approximately 75% of homeless youth were previously from foster care or the juvenile justice system. In these cases, our team of mentors work tirelessly to ensure they are treated well within the system. We check in with their social workers, offer mental health services, provide emergency clothing and necessities, and often stay in their life, providing a source of stability. In some cases, we are able to offer children safe home alternatives to foster care.

For children with families, we offered family counseling.

NEW DIRECTOR WELCOMING OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF AFTERCARE, MICHELLE GUYMON OF AFTERCARE



As sex trafficking continues to escalate with advances in technology, there is now a much greater need for safe homes and counseling. Unfortunately, there are very few places to house missing and exploited children who do not have good families to go home to.

Finding and recovering a child is not enough. We have hired Michelle Guymon to ensure these children are given a chance to begin a new life. Michelle works with Child Protective Services and our partner organizations to offer counseling, legal support and housing.

Ms. Guymon is the former Director of the Child Trafficking Unit with the Los Angeles County Probation Department. She served as project manager for Los Angeles County's Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children. Ms. Guymon is a frequent presenter and trainer regarding child abuse issues, and child sex trafficking. Ms. Guymon is the Chair of the Los Angeles County CSEC Integrated Leadership Team working with various county/community agencies to create a multi-system response model for CSEC in Los Angeles County. Ms. Guymon graduated from California State University, San Bernardino, where she received her master's degree in social work.

“

Law Enforcement cannot do this alone.
We need Special Operations.

”

SAN MATEO COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY, STEVE WAGSTAFFE

TOGETHER WE CAN BRING CHILDHOOD BACK TO CHILDREN

Thank you to our Special Operations Family:

- Our donors, sponsors, partners, community supporters, and law enforcement
- Our committed Board of Directors
- The volunteers who give so much of their time to help further our mission
- Our survivors, who inspire us with their resilience, strength, and determination

To make a gift please visit our website at findingkids.org.

When applicable, please ask if your employer will match your gift.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FINDING KIDS

Founded in 2017, Special Operations is a non-profit dedicated to keeping kids safe from sex traffickers in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. The result is a safer community for us all.

Learn more: findingkids.org or email us directly at info@findingkids.org.

To receive timely case updates, please sign up for our newsletter at findingkids.org/newsletter.

“

I would like to say thank you to you and your team. You staked out the house where my daughter was being held. Your team worked with Oakland PD and Pleasant Hill PD to recover my daughter before it was too late!

Thank you for all your efforts in recovering Jessica* safely. And we appreciate all of the continued support through her recovery as well. We want this to stop. I can't let other families deal with what we experienced. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts! Keep up the awesome work!!!!

”

VICTIM'S FATHER

* Name changed to protect a minor.

2022 BY THE

FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022

REVENUE

Private Donations	\$660,385
Foundations and Grants	\$440,254

Total Revenue	\$1,100,639
----------------------------	--------------------

PROGRAM EXPENSES

Search & Recover	\$197,406
Predator Targeting.....	\$117,573
Victim & Partner Support.....	\$101,230
Other Program Expenses.....	\$118,852

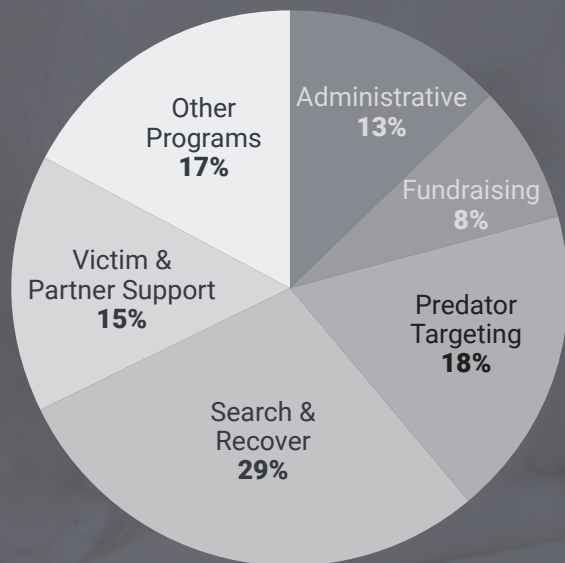
OTHER EXPENSES

Fundraising	\$56,133
Administrative.....	\$89,976

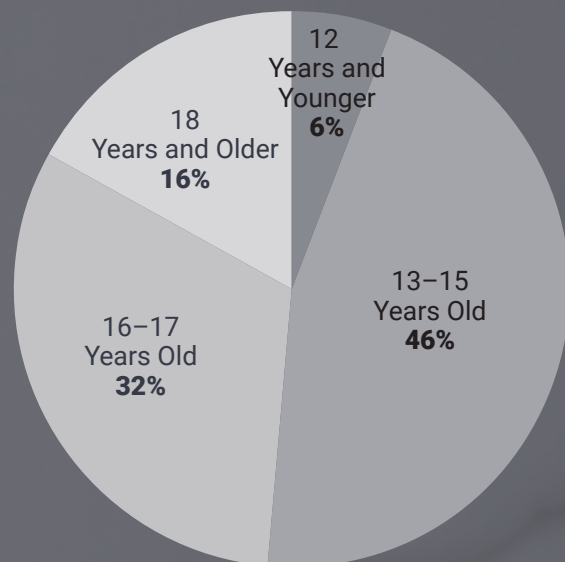
Total Expenses	\$681,170
-----------------------------	------------------

Net Reserve	\$419,469
--------------------------	------------------

SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXPENSES BY CATEGORY

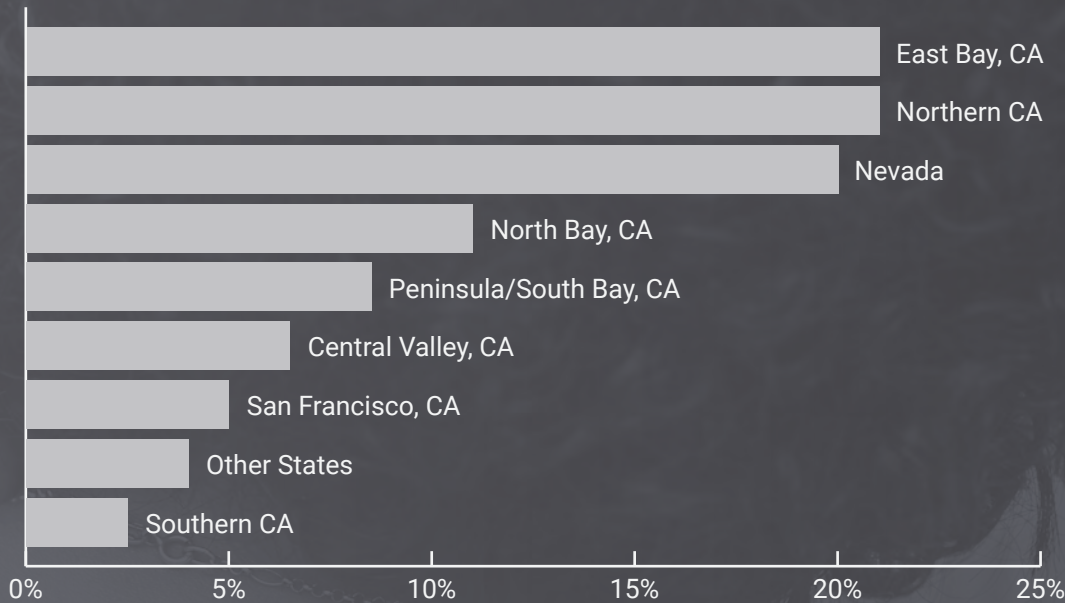


AGES OF CHILDREN SERVED



NUMBERS

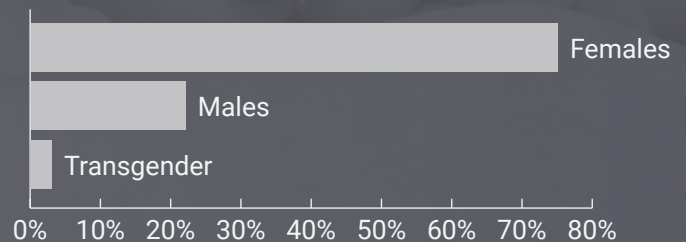
CASES BY REGION



45 CHILDREN RECOVERED



CASES BY GENDER



6 PREDATORS IDENTIFIED



AVERAGE TOTAL COST PER CASE

\$9,000



P.O. Box 1395
Los Altos, CA 94023

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Jose, CA
Permit No. 10

FOUNDERS

Katie Beers

Scott Vermeer

CEO

Isabelle Finney

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Katie Beers

CFO

Susan Lundberg

Sharmin Bock

Runa Magowan

Blair Maus

Lyn Miller

Scott Vermeer

Steve Wagstaffe

ABOUT US

Founded in 2017, Special Operations is a non-profit dedicated to keeping kids safe from sex traffickers in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. The result is a safer community for us all.

Learn More: findingkids.org or email us directly at info@findingkids.org.

To receive timely case updates, please sign up for our newsletter at findingkids.org/newsletter.

Special Operations Finding Kids is a 501(c)(3) Organization. EIN: 81-2874951

