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Task force aids search for missing teens

03/13/2003

By Kerri Richardson

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A local group is working with police to help find two Kentucky girls reported missing this week. They are members of a task force that patrols the Internet. The task force is nationwide, but it got its start in Hardin County.

Thousands of teenagers meet in Internet chat rooms every day, looking for friends, advice—even love.



The Internet Crime Task Force started in Dave Evangelista's Radcliff, Ky. office.

Dave Evangelista isn't looking for teens. He's looking for the people looking for teens.

The Internet Crime Task Force is only about three years old, but has grown from Evangelista's small office in Radcliff, Ky. to include police officers

across the country. The task force has successfully shut down more than 20,000 chat rooms devoted to child pornography and other threats to children.

As long as someone is chatting with kids, the task force is listening.

"We don't actually engage in chat with them. We just watch. They don't even know we're there,"

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Evangelista said.



Jeanne Rohrig, 14, (left) and Whitney Irvin, 15 (right)

The task force is helping law enforcement in northern Kentucky to find 14-year-old Jeanne Rohrig and

15-year-old Whitney Irvin, believed to be on their way to meet a 28-year-old man in California they met online.

“If we see someone saying, ‘Send me a picture. Hey I’ll send you a bus ticket.’ And we know just by looking at the profile’s name and we will flag that name and we’ll keep watching it,” Evangelista said.

If task force investigators think children are in danger, they can close most chat rooms within minutes.

“When someone steps across that line, we’re going to know,” Evangelista said. It’s a silent guardian for children he’ll never even know.

Related Story: [Two Kentucky girls missing.](#)

Web story produced by Lisa Durham

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