

## **A Family's Agony – Where Are You, Ariel? 12 Months ... 365 Days ... 8,760 Hours Without Any News Of Their Son**

Montreal, March 11, 2019. On the morning of March 12, 2018, Ariel Jeffrey Kouakou donned his brand new yellow sneakers and left his home to visit his friend who lived nearby. Unfortunately, there was no one home. Surveillance cameras in the area captured 10 year-old Ariel entering Parc des Bateliers but he is never seen leaving the park. A year later, his family is left with so many troubling and unanswered questions. However, they have faith that their son will soon be found.

To mark this somber anniversary, the Missing Children's Network partnered with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and Société de transport de Montréal (STM) in two important initiatives that will put Ariel's face back in the spotlight. The STM will honour Ariel by displaying Ariel's photo on all of their electronic screens located throughout their 68 metro stations on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. As well, Ariel's photo will be printed on of the CIBC's VISA monthly billing envelopes for the month of May. This wonderful initiative will sensitize over 480,000 Canadians to be on the lookout for this young boy.

"Our home is empty without you. We ache to hold you in our arms once again," said an emotional Fred Kouakou. To mark this solemn occasion, and in a show of solidarity, the public is invited to join the young boy's family and friends on March 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. at Église Saint-Joseph-de-Bordeaux, located at 1650, rue Viel in Ahunatic-Cartierville. A Mass will be celebrated in honour of Ariel.

At this time, Fred and Noella Kouakou wish to sincerely thank Montreal Police and the public for all the support and outpouring of love that they have received in this past year. It has been a source of immense comfort for the family to know that Quebecers adopted Ariel as one of their own. The media is welcome to attend the Mass, however the family will not be granting any interviews until further notice and are asking for their privacy be respected during this very painful time.

"A missing child is every parent's worst nightmare," stated Pina Arcamone, Director General of the Missing Children's Network. "For the past year, we have been supporting Ariel's family and truly understand the depth of their anguish. It is time to put an end to this unbearable sorrow – these parents need to know where their son is."

The organization urges all those who have pertinent information concerning Ariel's whereabouts to please contact **Info-Crime Montréal at 514-393-1133** or the **Missing Children's Network at 1 888 692-4673**. All calls are confidential and all tips are important.

### **About the Missing Children's Network**

Founded in 1985, the Missing Children's Network is the only non-profit organization in Quebec dedicated to the search for missing children and the prevention of their disappearance. Regardless of the reason for the disappearance, from runaways to parental or criminal abductions, the Missing Children's Network's team supports, assists and advises the families of missing children.

In addition, the team works closely with law enforcement, government and child welfare agencies, as well as the media to recover these children and bring them home safely. Since its inception, the Missing Children's Network has helped law enforcement to recover 1,480 children, and has educated more than 225,000 students how to stay safe in today's wireless world.

The Missing Children's Network is a front-line partner of the **AMBER Alert Program** in Quebec and a recognized partner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) **National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains** (NCMPUR).

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Information:

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