



**For Immediate Release:**

August 23, 2010

**Media Contact:**

Kathy Phelps, Dixon Schwabl

585-899-3238

[Kathy\\_Phelps@dixonschwabl.com](mailto:Kathy_Phelps@dixonschwabl.com)

***Ed Smart and Ahmad Rivazfar Make Stop in Salt Lake City as Part of Cross Country Bike Trip to Advocate for Laws to Protect Children from Predators***

**SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH** – On Friday, September 10, 2010, Ed Smart and Ahmad Rivazfar, both parents of child abduction and abuse victims, will travel to Salt Lake City, Utah by bicycle as part of an awareness and fundraising campaign for the Surviving Parents Coalition (SPC) child advocacy initiatives. While in Salt Lake City, Rivazfar and Smart will stop at the State Capitol located at 350 North State Street at 5 p.m., to meet guests and to share information on how to protect children. From Salt Lake City, Smart and Rivazfar will ride to Elko, Nevada.

The Surviving Parents Coalition consists of 43 members, and is made up of parents of children who were abducted, sexually assaulted, murdered, recovered or are still missing. Through legislative efforts SPC aims to significantly improve public awareness about prevention as well as legislative progress, facilitate hands-on safety education in schools for children through young adults and promote best practices for law enforcement and communities in responding to predatory crimes.

During the stop in Salt Lake City, Rivazfar and Smart will be joined by SPC member Elaine Runyan-Simmons, the mother of Rachael Runyan who was a beautiful 3 year-old little girl from Sunset, Utah. On August 26, 1982 Rachael was lured away by a stranger offering ice cream. She was found three weeks later, bound, and murdered. To this day the perpetrator has never been caught.

As devastating as this tragedy was, Simmons channeled her grief into educating children and their parents on the dangers of abduction and crimes against children and youth. She was one of the driving forces for the establishment of Missing Children of Utah, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, and was elected President of MCU in 1993 in which she held for several years. She has been actively involved in legislative issues that involve children, and has spoken statewide and nationally. Her story has appeared on Unsolved Mysteries, Today, Real People, Extra, Crime Solvers, America's Most Wanted, CNN-Freeman Report and Street Smart Video. Simmons has served on countless state commissions to combat child abuse, abduction and predatory crimes against children.

Simmons has been actively involved in the implementation of the AMBER Alert, which was formally the Rachael Runyan Alert since its inception in Utah prior to the federal law. In addition, she has had her own State Farm Insurance Agency for the last 18 1/2 years.

Rivazfar and Smart, who begin their journey on August 21, in Rochester, N.Y., will end on September 22 in Los Angeles, Calif. Other cyclists are welcome to join in on the 3,500-mile journey, which travels through 12 states and 26 cities. The awareness campaign, “*Ride for Their Lives*,” seeks to increase public knowledge and raise \$1,000,000 to help advocate for laws that protect children and fight to eradicate predatory crimes Nation wide.

The purpose of this month-long journey is to focus on four main legislative issues surrounding child abuse and abduction cases:

1. **DNA Collection on Felony Arrest** – to lobby for DNA collection on felony arrest, not just on felony conviction. Currently, 24 states have passed some form of DNA on felony arrest legislation, but there are 26 states that should follow suit. [www.dnasaves.org](http://www.dnasaves.org).
2. **Protect our Children Act of 2008** – a law that gives more resources to the investigation and interdiction of child pornography and exploitation cases.
3. **The Adam Walsh Act** – The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, and the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act set minimum standards for a national sex offender’s registration and notification system.
4. **“Not ONE More Child”** – A Child Safety Education Initiative that educates and empowers children to recognize, avoid, resist, and escape dangerous situations and violence including bullying, assault, abuse and abduction.

In 2010, the Utah State Legislature enacted a law to require DNA collection upon arrest for serious felony crimes. Strengthening Utah’s DNA program will assist law enforcement in quickly and accurately identifying perpetrators of violent crimes. Presently, there are 17,801 known sex offenders in the state of Utah and 14,655 personal computers that have been identified trading child pornography in a 48-hour period.

Sponsors of “*Ride for Their Lives*” include Limited Brands, Full Moon Vista Bike & Sport, Beau Productions, Brabon Justice International, LLC and Dixon Schwabl.

For more information about “*Ride for Their Lives*” and the Surviving Parents Coalition, visit [www.RideforTheirLives.com](http://www.RideforTheirLives.com).

The Surviving Parents Coalition is a parent-driven, 501c4 organization committed to saving lives. The coalition’s founding demonstrates the power of survival and how suffering can motivate people to accomplish extraordinary things. SPC lobbies for funding and legislation because they are essential to effective change. Its goal is to ensure young people mature naturally without abuse and emotional turmoil. The SPC is determined to grow and spread out nationally one family at a time.