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**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 Springfield as Part of Cross Country Bike Trip to Advocate for Laws to Protect Children from Predators***

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** – On Monday, August 30, 2010, Ed Smart and Ahmad Rivazfar, both parents of child abduction and abuse victims, will travel to Springfield, Illinois by bicycle as part of an awareness and fundraising campaign for the Surviving Parents Coalition (SPC) child advocacy initiatives. While in Springfield, Rivazfar and Smart will stop at Lincoln Statue, Illinois State Capitol located at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Capitol, Springfield, Ill. at 5 p.m., to meet guests and to share information on how to protect children. From Springfield, Smart and Rivazfar will ride to St. Louis, Mo.

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 Springfield, Rivazfar and Smart will be joined by SPC member, Mika Moulton, the mother of Christopher Meyer who was kidnapped in August 1995 from a popular boat dock a couple of blocks from their home in the small village or Aroma Park, Illinois. After an eight-day search, Christopher's body was found buried in a shallow grave. He had been stabbed over fifty times and his body mutilated. The person responsible for Christopher's murder had recently been released from prison for murdering a 5 year-old girl 15 years earlier. He is currently serving life without parole.

In the years since Christopher's murder, Mika has become a veteran lobbyist, fighting for legislation that will keep violent predators behind bars and protect children. She has a passion for safety education being taught to children and has formed a non-profit organization in memory of her son called Christopher's Clubhouse. The organization is dedicated to providing a safe, structured environment to empower and educate children and their parents on a variety of safety criteria in order for children to develop the skills necessary to avoid exploitation.

Rivazfar and Smart, who began 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.

Currently in Illinois it is not required to collect DNA upon felony arrest. Representative Susana Mendoza (D- Chicago) and Sen. Matt Murphy (R-Palatine) have championed legislation that would expand the DNA database by testing all people arrested for committing a serious felony, but the State Legislature has failed to pass this bill. Strengthening the Illinois DNA program will assist law enforcement in quickly and accurately identifying perpetrators of violent crimes. Presently, there are 108,277 known sex offenders in the state of Illinois and 89,462 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.

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