

New Technologies Used to Help Identify Missing Senior Citizens


The NSA's National Association of Triads, Inc. (Triad), as part of its ongoing efforts to improve and expand the quality of services to seniors in our communities, has endorsed an innovative iris biometric-based identification system – Senior Safety Net™ – to identify and locate missing senior citizens.

Senior Safety Net™ uses a specialized video camera to capture a detailed close-up of both irises. The biometric system makes a template or 'map' of each person's iris pattern for storage in the system. To verify identity later, an individual simply looks at the camera, and the system compares the patterns in the individual's irises against the templates stored in the system. If there's a match, the identity is verified and the person is located.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, an estimated 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, and the number of Americans with Alzheimer's has more than doubled since 1980. It is estimated that 2.7 million of those afflicted with the disease will wander at some point – and 1.88 million of those will wander repeatedly. Unfortunately, only 72,000 of those who wander will be able to safely find their way home without help.

When Sheriff David A. Clarke, Jr. of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin recently implemented Senior Safety Net™ and The Child Project™ he invited key community organizations to join him in this effort. For example, Veronica

Helping You Home™ With Iris Recognition Technology




Helping Them Home in the Blink of an Eye™

4.5 Million	The number of Americans afflicted with Alzheimer's disease
2.7 Million	The number of those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease that will wander at some point
1.88 Million	The number of those who wander who will do so repeatedly
72,000	The number who wander away from home that are able to return unassisted
1.8 Million	The number who will need help to find their way home


Alzheimer's is a heartbreaking disease for the victim and those who love and care for them. There are no simple solutions for this difficult disease.

But, there is a new and effective technology that families, law enforcement and care givers can use to help protect the more than 1.8 million Alzheimer's victims who will wander and need help to find their way home – Senior Safety Net™.



Senior Safety Net™ is a secure, web-based national network and registry hosted by the National Center for Missing Adults – that enables Sheriff's Offices and social service agencies across the nation to enroll, locate and positively identify missing persons using iris biometric recognition technology. The system is fast and easy use. A person is enrolled by simply taking a digital photo of their eyes. The system stores a unique 688-byte code of each eye to the national database. Once enrolled, the identity of the person and vital contact information can be verified in seconds.

Endorsed by the National Association of Triads, Inc. and hosted by the National Center for Missing Adults, Senior Safety Net™ positively identifies enrolled individuals in seconds, using the most mathematically unique biometric – the iris.



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Naumann Bugel, Regional Services Coordinator for the Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association said that senior citizens have been interested in this new technology. Her agency has partnered with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office to enroll seniors in the Senior Safety Net™ system. "Our partnership with the Sheriff's office on this project has been going very well and we are looking for new venues to utilize this innovative device to protect our most vulnerable citizens," she said.

These types of partnerships are encouraging to the idea's originator, Sheriff Garvey of Hampshire county Massachusetts. "We are well on our way to establishing this as a national system,"

said Sheriff Garvey. "The enthusiasm with which this has been received and the partnerships that have developed to enroll children and seniors prove to me that we are on the right track."

Senior Safety Net™ was installed (along with The Child Project™) in St. John's County Florida in August 2005. "Our population is growing significantly and the biggest growth is in two categories: juveniles and seniors, two of the most vulnerable groups found anywhere," said St. John's County Sheriff David Shoar. "I see it as wonderful tool to help us find missing persons of all ages. In the last five years the number of the people suffering from Alzheimer's has increased locally, and this is another way we help find people that have walked away and can't identify themselves. I see this as a win-win situation for us. It didn't cost the taxpayers a penny. We paid

the cost for the equipment -- \$25,000 -- from drug money we confiscated."

The National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA), a non-profit agency providing nationwide assistance to law enforcement and families of missing persons, hosts the database at its headquarters in Phoenix, Arizona. Unlike fingerprint, voice, facial or photo ID card programs, data obtained using the Iris Recognition System will never become obsolete because peoples' iris patterns remain the same for life after one year from birth. ☺

For more information on Senior Safety Net™ please contact Susan Carpenter at 508-224-1600 ext. 315 or via e-mail at scarpenter@thechildproject.org.