



FORGET-ME-NOT CAMPAIGN AT TESCO TO SUPPORT PACT SEARCH FOR MISSING CHILDREN

Every five minutes a child goes missing in the UK, according to child welfare charity PACT's research, and tomorrow [Monday 18th May] the charity will launch a new, awareness-raising campaign to try to reduce this shocking statistic.

PACT has won fresh support from UK supermarket Tesco which will be selling forget-me-not ribbons, badges and wristbands to raise funds and awareness, as well as continuing to display posters of missing children and linking its website to the Missingkids website (www.missingkids.co.uk).

To promote the new campaign, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) is holding an event to commemorate International Missing Children's Day, which will be supported by PACT, Childline founder **Esther Rantzen** and **Gerry and Kate McCann**.

Press and photographers are invited to the event which will take place at The Deck, The National Theatre, South Bank, London SE1 at 2pm on Monday 18th May. Following the launch a question and answer session will begin at 2.55pm and a photocall at 3.10pm.

PACT's founder Catherine Meyer said: *'It is vitally important to increase public awareness of the problem of missing children if effective action is to be taken. Our ability to tackle the dreadful statistics – some 100,000 children missing every year – is hampered by lack of information. From why children go missing in the first place, to what happens to them next – our information is incomplete and coordination between the police, NGOs and private sector could be much, much better.'*

Tesco executive director Lucy Neville-Rolfe said: *'Our aim, in supporting this campaign through sales of forget-me-not symbols and by displaying posters as soon as they are supplied to our stores, is to help the police and organisations such as PACT in the best way we can – raising visibility of this problem with millions of customers every week.'*

"Tesco have been supporting this important cause since 2002 by putting up posters in our stores. This raises visibility of missing children with millions of customers every week. This year we are also helping the campaign by selling forget-me-not badges, wristbands and ribbons in our larger stores, hoping that together we can find more missing children, faster".

PACT has been campaigning long and hard to improve the situation, in particular by pressing for full police support for the Missingkids Website with age progression technology; the Child Rescue Alert, which increases enormously the possibility of finding a child safe and well in the vital first hours after its disappearance.

Since 2002, PACT has been running a poster campaign with partners in the private sector, including the Emcor Group UK and the UK media, that allows thousands of posters of missing children, downloaded from the Missingkids Website, to be displayed in public places. Thanks to these campaigns over 100 children have been found.

ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

- The International Missing Children's Day, which was first commemorated in the USA in 1983, encourages all citizens of the world to think of these children and to spread a message of hope and solidarity.
- PACT was founded in 2000 by Lady Meyer, wife of the former British Ambassador to the United States. Its patrons are Cherie Blair, wife of the former British Prime Minister, and Laura Bush, the former First Lady of the United States. PACT is an international, non-profit organisation, registered in the USA and the UK. It is an associate of ICMEC (the international arm of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children), based in the USA.
- PACT's initial mission was to fight parental child abduction across frontiers by raising awareness of a growing, but little-known, problem and by advocating solutions. While parental child abduction remains at the forefront of PACT's concerns, it has broadened since 2003 its mission to include all missing children. It is influential in advocacy, policy-making and research. All this work is targeted on one goal: to find answers to the tragedy of the thousands of children who go missing or are abducted every year.