

The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

April 2002

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Proposed Sex Offender Database Keeps Kids Safe

Seven-year-old Megan Kanka's parents must have been devastated. How could the criminal justice system, which is designed to protect the innocent, allow a repeat sex offender to move into a residential neighborhood directly across the street from small children?

By the time the Kanka family discovered that their nearby neighbor had a lengthy criminal record, it was too late. The neighbor, with a felonious past that included two sex offenses against children, had kidnapped and brutally murdered little Megan.

To honor their daughter, the Kanka family lobbied for change. Today, almost every state in America has a version of Megan's Law, which requires convicted sexual offenders to register with local law enforcement officials. Police must keep a database with the location of each registered offender and the information must be made available to the public.

While your San Diego County Sheriff's Department is working diligently to maintain and continuously update the names and locations of registered sex offenders in San Diego County, there is much more the County can and must do to make this crucial data more accessible to parents.

Late last month, the County endorsed two new Internet tools which, once in place, will make it much easier for law-abiding San Diegans to view important Megan's Law information and protect our kids from repeat sex offenders.

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved my proposal to create a secure website where San Diego residents can view the names, photos and convictions of registered sex offenders living in the zip code of the viewer.

The Board also voted to create a digital "pin map" which shows the approximate locations of registered sex offenders living within a half mile of schools. The pin map is already in use in four

California cities and lets parents know if there are hidden dangers along their child's seemingly routine walk to school or a friend's house.

When I viewed the City of Fresno's "pin map," I was shocked to see so many sex offenders clustered near schools and playgrounds. I found it a matter of immediate public safety to alert parents in San Diego County.

Gina Holloway, the executive director of Citizens for Community Values of San Diego, said at a recent Board of Supervisors meeting, "If parents don't know who the offenders are, the offenders have the advantage." As a parent and former teacher, I couldn't agree more.

"This is about protecting kids and making parents more aware of potential dangers in their neighborhood."

*- Supervisor Dianne Jacob
San Diego Union-Tribune*



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Database

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Currently, San Diego residents must go to unnecessary lengths to exercise their legal right to know if there are convicted sex offenders living in their neighborhoods. You've got to travel to one of only five sites in the County which offers access to the Megan's Law CD-Rom, and you must visit the location during normal business hours.

Poway residents must make an appointment to view the information and even then, appointments are available only on Tuesdays. You can't take the CD-Rom home and you can't make photos of offenders to warn your children. Only those 18 and older may tap into the database.

The Board of Supervisors wants to put an end to this red tape and we believe we can do so with a secure website. The site would require a user to prove he or she is a law-abiding adult living in San Diego County by entering their driver's license information. The user then could call up the information *already* available under Megan's Law— all from the convenience of home.



Privacy advocates are quick to demand that sex offenders who've served their sentences and have paid their debt to society, should be allowed to live privately without undo scrutiny of their pasts. Privacy advocates are not quick to tell parents how to protect children from a criminal population highly likely to commit additional crimes against children. Once released from prison, sex offenders repeat their illegal activities more often than any other type of violent offender.

When it comes to crimes against children, I believe a community can never be too informed or too protective. I also believe it's my responsibility to take the side of the innocent, law-abiding members of our community rather than criminals and those known to be sex offenders.

Megan's Law information is only valuable if moms and dads know about it and that's the mission of the County's sex offender database. As I said to the San Diego Union-Tribune late last month, "This is about protecting kids and making sure parents are more aware of potential dangers in their neighborhood." We could save a child's life.

Megan's Law information is currently available at San Diego Police Department headquarters, Sheriff's Department headquarters, the Sheriff's station in Poway and at the La Mesa and El Cajon police departments.

Neighborhood Safety is a Hot Topic in Spring Valley

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department and I are anxious to gather neighborhood safety ideas from Spring Valley residents. There will be a public forum for residents to interact with law enforcement and civic officials. Residents will have the opportunity to talk directly with the people who can solve community problems.

When: April 11, 2002 6:30 p.m.

Where: Spring Valley Recreation Center, 8735 Jamacha Blvd.

Participating agencies include: County Animal Control, California Highway Patrol, Cal Trans, County Code Enforcement, the County Departments of Environmental Health and Planning and Land Use, the Humane Society, the County District Attorney's Office and the San Miguel Fire Department.



For more information contact: Deputy David Hale at (619) 463-9993.

Jacob Swings into Little League Season with Better Ballfields

facilities for our young people.

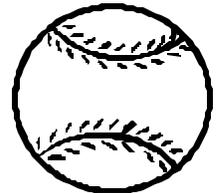
Just \$85,000 goes a long, long way when it's in the hands of the Lakeside American Little League. Just in time for the season opener, the league sodded, fenced and irrigated five ballfields, installed a well and re-routed horse trails at LaChappa Field.

Ramona Pony Baseball used \$57,000 to create first-class fields at Well Field Park. League officials sodded and irrigated one field and graded four

fields. The league also added infield dirt, installed new bases, replaced bleachers and painted dugouts.

The Lakeside Bobby Sox spruced up Cactus Park with \$120,000. Lady sluggers will appreciate the new grass while fans will like the improved bleachers. The park has a brand new well and much improved fences, and with new restrooms and playground equipment, Cactus Park is now more enjoyable for the whole family!

I'll be cheering for all of East County's young athletes this season, but I'm especially cheering for the parents, coaches and league officials who make the games happen. It takes a team to teach young people about the importance of teamwork. Thanks to the moms and dads who make East County a great place to play ball!



Angels in the Outfield: Supervisor Jacob joined Lakeside American Little League Board members (left to right) Kyle Kirby, Ralph Burger and Jim Dominique to celebrate opening day at LaChappa Field.

Join me for Coffee and Conversation...

Friday, April 26, 2002 8:30 a.m.

Mary's Donuts

9031 Mission Gorge Rd., Santee

Friday, May 31, 2002 9:00 a.m.

Guy B. Woodward Museum

645 Main Street, Ramona

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Apr-02

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