

PRESS RELEASE:

Celebrities get creative for charity auction

PACT launches celebrity balloon art to mark International Missing Children's Day

From legendary movie icons Sir Roger Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, Robert Pattinson and Ralph Fiennes to TV presenter Lorraine Kelly, writer Ian Rankin and legendary cartoonist Ronald Searle, famous faces from all over the world are supporting missing children's charity PACT (Parents & Abducted Children Together) in their fight against child abduction.

The Government estimates a shocking 140,000* children go missing every year in the UK alone and the real figure may be much higher. International Missing Children's Day on 25 May 2010 is an important opportunity to highlight this growing problem.

The balloon is the official symbol of International Missing Children's Day. PACT has worked with Evan Cheng, head illustrator for Sesame Street, to create a balloon card for celebrities to decorate with their own signed personal designs. Over 100 celebrities have now illustrated the balloon cards with amazing flights of fancy and imagination. On 25 May, International Missing Children's Day, PACT will auction these unique works of art online through Mission Fish, E-Bay's charitable division. All proceeds will go towards PACT and their work to bring missing children safely home. Visit www.pact-online.org for full details.

Former *James Bond* star and now a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador on behalf of children, Sir Roger Moore, says: "The amount of children that go missing every year is shocking. As a parent you constantly worry that your children are safe, I cannot imagine anything worse than having them taken from you. More needs to be done to address this problem which is why I support PACT and the vital work that they do to help bring missing and abducted children home".

PACT is an international charity that has fought child abduction and worked with the police to rescue children who go missing for the past ten years. The charity was founded in 1999 by Lady Catherine Meyer whose sons were abducted from her by their father at a young age.

She says: "Child abduction is a parent's worst nightmare. Nothing can prepare you for the utter horror of the situation. We hope that the celebrity balloon auction will not only highlight the plight of missing children all over the world, but also give real impetus to PACT's efforts to get governments, police forces and the voluntary sector to work together effectively to tackle this scourge of modern society".

ENDS

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*Source: Home Office Missing Persons Taskforce Report, March 2010-04-20

ABOUT PACT:

PACT is Parents & Abducted Children Together. We are a non-profit organization dedicated to the location and retrieval of missing and abducted children. We concentrate our efforts on reforming systems and policies that do not adequately protect children. Unlike most other charities, we do not take government money because we wish to remain an independent voice. No other charity in our field employs the same mix of advocacy, action and research. No other charity of our size has done more to prompt changes in legislation and practice.

We were founded in 1999 by Lady Catherine Meyer and are registered as a charity in both the UK and the US. We are a partner of the US-based International Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Our initial mission - to fight parental child abduction across international borders – has over time expanded to embrace children who go missing for whatever reason.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY:

On 25 May, 1979, six-year-old Etan Patz disappeared on his way to school in New York City. He was never found. Four years later, President Ronald Reagan commemorated the anniversary of Etan's disappearance by declaring it National Missing Children's Day.

Now 25 May is recognised as International Missing Children's Day. It is a day on which to remember the many thousands of children who go missing or are abducted every year; a day to send a message of hope and solidarity to their grieving families; and a day to celebrate those children around the world who have been found and safely returned home.