

The world's most comprehensive Child Identification Program is coming to North Shore Mall in Peabody on May 6th

M. Dental Soc.

PEABODY—Massachusetts Freemasons invite children, age 18 and younger, to participate in a comprehensive Child Identification Program at North Shore Mall in Peabody on Saturday, May 6, 2000 from 10:00 AM until 6:00 PM. Children will have a brief videotape interview, will be fingerprinted by police personnel, and will have a Toothprint made by professional dental personnel. All materials are given to the parents for safe-keeping. No copies are kept on file and the program is free to all. The program is part of a statewide CHIP event being held at various locations throughout Massachusetts on May 6th.

It is estimated that over 50,000 children have already participated in Child Identification Programs (CHIP) conducted by Massachusetts Freemasons in cooperation with the Massachusetts Dental Society and the Massachusetts Crime Prevention Officers Association.

The Toothprint impression is a relatively new means of identification where the child bites down on a wafer, making a permanent, archivable record of their teeth. Toothprints were developed by Dr. David Tesini of Framingham, a pediatric dentist who developed Toothprints as another means of identifying a child that fingerprints alone may not guarantee.

According to Peter Banks, Director

of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, when a Toothprint is taken, sufficient proteins remain in the saliva on the wafer from which a DNA test can be successfully performed for yet a second means of identification from the Toothprint. He also stated that, since the Toothprint wafer is sealed in a "zipper"-type plastic bag, enough scent remains for a trained dog to identify and track it.

Masonic Child Identification programs are held periodically throughout Massachusetts and may be sponsored by any group but are generally sponsored by local Masonic Lodges as part of their community service programs. Many school officials have requested that the program be

brought into the school systems in their municipalities.

When you consider the frightening statistics that over 1-million children are reported missing in the United States each year, there are over 100,000 attempted abductions by non-family members for the same period, and over 3,000 Americans remain unidentified, the value of this program is enormous.

Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was established in 1733 and is the third oldest Grand Lodge in the world. Today, there are over 50,000 Freemasons in Massachusetts.

Toothprints solve dilemma of identification

By KENDRA JOHNSON
The Patriot Ledger

MILTON — When TWA flight 800 crashed in July 1996, dentist David Harte thought of his three children.

And he thought about not being able to identify them in a crash because they did not have dental records.

"So many of the children couldn't be identified because they didn't have dental records because they had perfect teeth," Harte said.

On Saturday, parents will be able to get toothprints, fingerprints and a videotape of their children at Cunningham Hall through the Child Identification Program (CHIP).

After the TWA flight crashed, Harte said he encouraged his friend, Natick pediatric dentist

David Tesini, to develop a toothprint procedure he had created.

Harte said Tesini's first toothprint was in wax and had to be frozen. But Tesini has developed a new thermoplastic toothprint. Children bite down on a wafer that preserves the tooth structure as well as salivary protein that can be used for a DNA sample or by FBI-trained dogs to trace a scent while searching for a missing child.

The thermoplastic technique debuted in August 1998 in Milton during a CHIP program.

The CHIP program is coming to Milton again on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Cunningham Hall at 75 Edgehill Road. Two Shrine Masonic clowns will entertain children with balloons and magic.

The Milton Rotary Club and ten Masonic

lodges in Boston and on the South Shore are sponsoring the event. Milton police, local dentists and other volunteers will also participate.

"It's really something that has a lot of merit to it," Police Chief Kevin Mearn said. "It's certainly something I would encourage parents to bring their children up to see how it's done."

Parents will be given the only copies of their children's records. The program is free and for children 18 and younger.

Harte said although toothprints should last a lifetime if taken when the child is at least six years old, updates are recommended every three years. The CHIP program has processed more than 53,000 children in Massachusetts.

The videotaping and fingerprinting was first conducted in Milton in November 1996.