

Volunteers are key to finding lost teens 🗣️

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By REBECCA LOPEZ / WFAA-TV

DALLAS — The story of a 12-year-old stripper is now known internationally.

News 8 first told you about how the child was forced to perform nude at a Dallas nightclub. She is home today because a group of volunteers from United Response Search and Rescue Team found her.

Every night, members of the organization are out searching for girls in trouble. They've already saved hundreds of young people from a life of violence on the streets.

Walk a mile in Dana Ames' shoes and you can understand her determination for finding missing kids.

"There are adults who are preying on our children," she said. "Those adults lure those children away from their families. They offer them all kinds of things."

Ames is the director of the group that spends their nights trying to find teenagers — many of them girls who are now lost on the streets.



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Volunteers approach strangers in an effort to find young people who are missing.

"We will pay \$100 cash, period — no questions asked," Ames explained to young people on the streets of downtown Dallas as she displayed a photo of a missing girl. "If you guys see her, know her, and you let us know, and we get her."

This is how Ames and her group found a 12-year-old Dallas girl whose family reported her missing when she ran away from home.

Police couldn't find her, so they turned to United Response Search and Rescue Team for help.

"If parents just sit back and wait on the police department, it's not going to happen... not going to happen," said the grandmother of the 12-year-old stripper.

The volunteers pay people for information, leading them to the runaways — including the 12-year-old who was found in the West End after a few nights of searching.

"She was dressed real provocatively, with like a bra and shirt, high heel shoes, real short skirt, things like that," said the 12-year-old's grandmother.

Police say that girl was being sold for sex on the streets and dancing nude at Diamonds Cabaret in Northwest Dallas.

"It enrages us that adults are behind this," Ames said.

Her group actually helped preserve evidence the night they found the girl so police could build a case against David Bell and an adult stripper at the club — both of whom have been charged with crimes.

Hundreds of girls owe their future to United Response Search and Rescue Team. Almost weekly, they go in search of several girls. They have found every runaway they've looked for.

The group was founded after six-year-old Opal Jo Jennings was kidnapped from her grandmother's front yard in Saginaw. Her body wasn't found for almost five years.

"We owe it to Opal and other children to do what we can to reach them before — God forbid — they end up dead or shipped off to another city or state where you can't find them," Ames said.

On the night News 8 followed along, it took the volunteers just 30 minutes to find information about a missing Dallas girl. Two different people said they saw her around the same location.

Families say they are grateful for the volunteers who spend their nights searching.

"They are truly a guardian angel," the 12-year-old girl's grandmother said. "They really are; I just can't say enough."

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