

What to do when a loved one goes missing

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Managing Editor
Friday, 12 January 2024 00:00

Beyale said a lot of families often make mistakes when a loved one goes missing. One of the most common mistakes is not filing a missing persons report right away.

“Number one, most important, is to do a missing persons report, no matter what,” Beyale said. “No matter if ‘Hey, he/she does this once in a while, but they’ll be back in a week.’ I get a lot of those, and a majority of the time they don’t make it back so we don’t know where they went.”

One misconception a lot of people have is that someone has to have been missing for over 24 hours before the police can file a missing persons report. That is simply a misconception people have picked up from films and TV shows. In reality, as soon as you know a child or adult is missing, you should call the police.

Beyale also said that families need to make sure they’re documenting when they’ve talked to police.

“Oh my gosh, documentation is so important, and I know everybody hates doing it, but it’s so helpful if families can really document when they called, who they talked to, the date and time, when they talked to an officer, when they called anybody, and that’s one thing a lot of these families lack,” she said.

One thing that Beyale doesn’t want people doing is going out and looking for their loved one on their own. She said she understands that when she or the police can’t get to a location in a timely manner families become tempted to go out, but she highly discourages this.

“I really don’t want families doing that, but I understand. I mean if you’re three hours away from me, yeah, I’m pretty sure you’re going to start looking. But if they do that, they contaminate the area,” Beyale explained. “So when I get there with my dogs, say a family has 12 family members all searching the area, when I get there my dogs have to figure out where is that one specific scent out of these 12 people who were out here.”

What to do when a loved one goes missing

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Managing Editor
Friday, 12 January 2024 00:00

Identifying an individual scent in a maze of others isn't impossible, but Beyale said it does make the dogs' jobs challenging.

The dogs often identify a missing person's scent with the use of what Beyale calls "scent articles." These articles can be any type of clothing the missing person has worn, but it has to be unwashed. A family member has to bring Beyale the clothing item in a plastic bag, and they shouldn't touch it, otherwise that would contaminate the smell.

To learn more about what to do if a loved one goes missing, visit the U.S. Department of Justice's website at <http://www.justice.gov> .

By Molly Ann Howell
Managing Editor