

In 2003, Pensacola Police Sergeant Jimmy Donohoe was invited to a meeting of the Autism Society of the Panhandle (Fla.). During the meeting, he was asked by parents of non-verbal children what they could do to improve potential encounters between their children and law enforcement personnel. After making several suggestions that were not acceptable to all the parents, Sergeant Donohoe left the meeting knowing he had to do something. The "Take Me Home" program evolved from that meeting so that children on the autism spectrum who may wander will be returned home safely and treated with understanding.



Sergeant Donohoe



Pensacola Chief  
Chip W. Simmons

The Take Me Home program was developed in cooperation with Consolidated Technology Solutions, a law enforcement software company and with the support of Pensacola Police Chief John W. Mathis. In conjunction with the Autism Society's Safe and Sound™

Initiative, the Take Me Home program is distributed at no charge to law enforcement agencies nationwide. Pensacola Police Chief Chip W. Simmons continues his support of the program so that it can be used by law enforcement agencies to help those who may not be able to communicate or who have forgotten their way home.



The Pensacola Police Department is committed to providing professional, efficient and courteous service to the public. Officers shall strive to improve the quality of life by enforcing laws in a fair and impartial manner while encouraging a spirit of cooperation and mutual trust with the public. Officers and support staff shall have respect for the dignity and rights of all people.

The Autism Society began the Safe and Sound initiative in 2005 to provide much-needed resources to the autism community on topics such as general safety, emergency preparedness and prevention, and risk management. Safe and



Sound works to develop information and strategies that are beneficial to individuals on the spectrum, their families and the professionals who work with them, as well as to provide information and training on autism to first responders.

**For more information or  
to receive a copy of the  
Take Me Home program, e-mail  
[takemehome@autism-society.org](mailto:takemehome@autism-society.org)**



**Greenwood County Sheriff's Office**  
528 Edgefield Street  
Greenwood, SC 29646  
864-942-8600  
[www.greenwoodsc.gov](http://www.greenwoodsc.gov)

Autism Society  
4340 East West Hwy Suite 350  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-657-0881  
[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)



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**AUTISM SOCIETY**

Take Me Home allows for the safe return home of those who may not be able to communicate vital information to law enforcement officers or first responders

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*"I hope this program will assist in reuniting loved ones quickly, so that none are traumatized and it will provide 'peace of mind' to the families who enroll a loved one."*

---Sergeant Jimmy Donohoe

## Testimonial

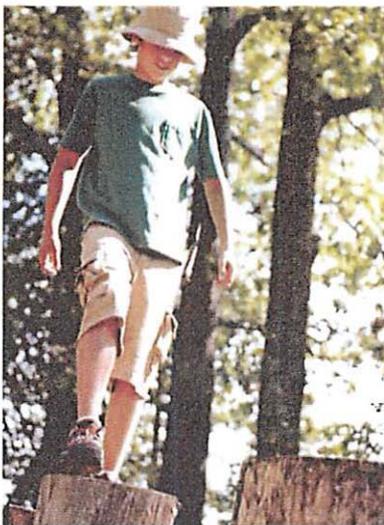
Devyn is known as a "runner" and despite his parents' best efforts, he sometimes escapes from home. Once, Devyn was playing in the fenced-in yard; in seconds he climbed the fence and took off. When his father, John, realized he was missing shortly after, he called 911. When he gave Devyn's name to the operator, she reported that the police had already picked Devyn up and he was on his way back home. Even though Devyn is non-verbal, with the "Take Me Home" program, the first responders knew exactly who he was and where he lived. Because Devyn's parents enrolled him in the "Take Me Home" program, if he goes missing, his information and photograph are immediately available to police.

*"I continue to keep a close watch on him but feel comfortable in the fact that if he does manage to escape, the city and county police will know who he is along with a description of where he lives. This is a program that all parents of special needs children should take advantage of."*

---Devyn's dad, John

## What is Take Me Home?

Take Me Home is a database developed by the Pensacola Police Department for people who may need special assistance if they are alone or in times of emergency. This kind of assistance may be required if the person is unable to speak or properly identify themselves, or if they become disoriented or act in a manner that could be misinterpreted by first responders. The system in-



cludes a current digital picture, demographic information and caregiver contacts. If a person in the Take Me Home system is encountered by a police officer, the officer can query the Take Me Home system, searching by name or by the person's physical description. Once the individual's

Take Me Home record has been located, the officer has the information at hand to appropriately assist the person.

## Commitment from Law Enforcement

Police departments make the commitment to use the program and gather and maintain the individual enrollment records. Once the program is in place in a community, families or individuals contact the police department and submit a recent digital photo, description of height, weight, and other demographic information as well as emergency contact information.

## How does it work?



This information is placed in a database that can be accessed in cruisers or back at the station. If officers find someone who can't communicate where he or she lives, they can search the database by description and return the person to their loved ones. The system also works in reverse - if a loved one goes missing, their picture and description is immediately available.

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*There is **no charge** to police departments for the program and there is no enrollment fee. However, there is a responsibility and commitment to keep the system updated and current. Autism Society chapters are a perfect way to bring caregivers of individuals on the autism spectrum and police together.*

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**Take Me Home is voluntary for citizens who participate, and all information is kept confidential.**