



## 2009 Annual Report

A cairn (carn in Irish, carnedd in Welsh, càrn in Scots-Gaelic) is a manmade pile of stones, often in a conical form. They may mark the summit of a mountain or a memorial. Placed at regular intervals, they indicate a path across barren terrain or climbing routes.

Dear Friends;

Like a cairn, The Jon Francis Foundation acts as a guide to others who find themselves unwilling travelers on a barren and unfamiliar path. Here is one example:

Nineteen-year-old Brandon Swanson disappeared in the early morning of May 14, 2008. His mother, Annette, called the county sheriff. The sheriff's dispatcher told Annette that her son "had a right to go missing." The Swansons persisted and the sheriff began an investigation and found Brandon's abandoned car that afternoon. After only thirty-six hours of investigation, the official search was discontinued. Brian and Annette Swanson were overwhelmed with grief and confusion. This is not unusual. Unfortunately, law enforcement frequently stops their search without finding the lost person.

At the urging of one of the searchers, Annette Swanson called the Jon Francis Foundation. We met with the Swansons in late May 2008, and brought them hope, knowledge and resources.

- Hope that empowers them in their despair.
- Knowledge so they can continue the search for Brandon.
- Resources to help them search longer.

*This is what we do.*



*Two fathers search*

*David Francis and Brian Swanson have a shared mission: finding Swanson's missing teenage son. Francis is at Swanson's side, having lost his own son and now aiding families in searches.*

*--St. Paul Pioneer Press*

JFF has been engaged with the Swansons for over a year. Working with our partner, Search, Rescue, and Recovery Resources of Minnesota, ([www.SRRR/MN.org](http://www.SRRR/MN.org)), and law enforcement, we have conducted several search missions, since May 2008. We meet frequently with the family to help them cope with their unresolved loss. No other organization in the U.S. is providing this kind of human service. JFF focuses on four related mission areas: Lost Person Search, Crisis Support, Education, and Advocacy.

**Lost Person Search:** JFF has provided direct assistance to the Swansons and two other families in their search for a lost loved one:

- An Ontario family whose twenty-year-old daughter, Christina, has been missing since August 6, 2007. Visit ([www.findchristinacalayca.com](http://www.findchristinacalayca.com).)
- A Virginia, Minnesota family, Dale and Sally Zamlen, whose nineteen-year-old son, Daniel, went missing near the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, on April 5, 2009.

**Crisis Support:** We know that when law enforcement stops their search without finding the lost person, the family is plunged into deep despair and *unresolved loss* with feelings of abandonment, helplessness, and hopelessness. The Jon Francis Foundation has provided crisis support and advice to families and individuals with missing loved ones in Alaska, California, Idaho, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario, Canada, Oregon, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

**Education:** Every year hundreds of children and adults go into the wilderness inadequately prepared and informed. Many will be lost or injured. JFF is committed to reducing incidents of loss and injury through effective safety training and information.

- JFF provided wilderness safety training, presentations, and information to hundreds of people in scout troops, church, and civic organizations.
- JFF serves youth and an at-risk population of backcountry enthusiasts (hikers, climbers, campers and hunters) who continue to go out into the wilderness poorly informed and prepared.
- JFF has distributed over 3,500 safety kits. The lightweight kit contains ten key safety tips, a Mylar mirror and an emergency whistle that can be used as signaling devices. The free kits are made available at tourism centers, outfitters, and trailheads, and provided to scout troops, police safety training, search and rescue groups, and backcountry organizations.

**Report to the Minnesota Legislature in 2008: Missing Persons:**

A recent NCIC (National Crime Information Center) audit by the FBI found that Minnesota was severely out of compliance on Missing Persons cases. There are currently over 800 active missing persons cases in Minnesota. Of these 800 cases, only 5 had DNA collected and only 27 had dental records in NCIC.



**Catalyst for Change:**

Under statutes current in many states, law enforcement is not required to take a missing person's report or investigate the disappearance of a person over 18 years old. Annette and Brian Swanson set out to change this situation. Working alongside the Swansons, JFF led a successful legislative initiative to improve Minnesota's Missing Persons' Law. Together we engaged legislative leaders, advocacy groups, and law enforcement to revise our state's outdated missing person's law.

Brandon's Law was passed unanimously in the Minnesota Legislature and became law on July 1, 2009. Brandon's Law, named in honor of Brandon Swanson, replaces Minnesota's outdated and inadequate "Missing Children's Act," and expands the definition of a missing person to those over 18 years of age and 'endangered persons'—adults missing under dangerous or precarious circumstances.

Annette Swanson was told by the sheriff's dispatcher that her nineteen-year-old son "had a right to go missing." The police responded slowly to Daniel Zamlen's disappearance, despite his medical condition, because Dan was a college student over 18 years old. If Brandon's Law had been in force both law enforcement agencies would have been required to file a missing persons' report "without delay" and to begin an immediate investigation.

In addition, under Brandon's Law JFF is a member of a Working Group with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) and other state law enforcement leaders tasked with creating and implementing model missing persons' forms and policies. This is an important opportunity for JFF to continue to be a catalyst for change.

Your support of the Jon Francis Foundation helped make this possible. Thank you.