

# Bath Grandma Is Founder of Grandparents Against Sex Predators (GASP)

by Nancy Hudec

Fran Doll is a Bath grandma on a mission. Her mission is Grandparents Against Sex Predators (GASP) and it's taken Summit County grandparents by storm. Since its April inception, Fran Doll's Grandparents Against Sex Predators has attracted almost 100 grandparents and formed a partnership with the Summit County Sheriffs Department. America's Most Wanted television show is interested and plans for a nationwide network are in the works. It is a tribute to Doll who's taken her feeling of helplessness over missing children and transformed it into a call for action.

Grandparents Against Sex Predators is a gathering of Summit County grandparents whose intent is to act on Amber Alerts. Amber Alerts are a volunteer partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters and transportation agencies to activate urgent bulletins in child abduction cases. They are issued by law enforcement agencies for abducted children under 17 who are in danger of serious bodily injury or death. They use the same emergency alert system used in weather emergencies. Amber (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) was established in 1996. Amber Alerts were named for 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was abducted and murdered while riding her bike in her Texas neighborhood. Since 1996 over 200 children have been saved through the Amber Alert system. It was a 2005 Amber Alert issued for nine-year-old Jessica Lunford of Florida that propelled Fran Doll to action.

"When I saw a magazine cover with Jessica Lunford's picture, I was heartsick. I knew I had to do something," said Doll. "Jessica was abducted from her grandparents' bedroom and having 10 grandchildren myself, I could relate to the horror of having a grandchild taken from your home." The Jessica Lunford tragedy triggered Grandparents Against Sex Predators, but Doll's inner strength and determination is what's leading it to the national scene.

Fran Doll is a self-starter whose passion has always been children. She and her husband Jack have six children and 10 grandchildren. When the couple married, the 27-year-old Fran took on four stepchildren. With two more of their own they lived happily by the half dozen. Always looking for new challenges, Fran opened Superior Staffing in 1980. The temporary and full-time employment agency had 21 employees and placed 1500 people in jobs each year. That successful career was cut short in 1997 when cancer came calling. Fran retired from the business to treat her disease and almost died from the treatments.

Cancer had nothing on this strong woman. Fran Doll survived and began looking for something else to do with her life. She saw the Jessica Lunford story and the rest is Grandparents Against Sex Predator history.

The organization is still in its infancy but is maturing daily. What began as a broad concept for action has grown into a working organization with offices in Quaker Square. An advisory board and board of directors guide the group and the Summit County Sheriffs office is coordinating training. All volunteers, be they grandparents or not, will be fingerprinted and trained. A specific plan will be implemented every time a local Amber Alert is issued. Flyers with the child's picture will be distributed by volunteers, while others comb malls, parking lots and city streets searching for the missing child.

Cheetah Communications, provided by a generous donor, can make thousands of calls aiding in a search. The Brennan Foundation has also given the group support but much more needs to be done. Volunteers of any age are needed and contributions are welcome. Grandparents Against Sex Predators is non-profit and relies on private funding.

Doll is branching out from her Bath roots and recruiting volunteers from New York to Texas. She is appealing to local churches and community groups for additional help. A web site is in the works. Her overall plan is for a nationwide network of GASP to help in Amber Alert searches.

"If one pair of eyes is good, one hundred will be better, one thousand better than that and so on," Doll says.

Grandparents Against Sex Predators wants to mobilize grandparents the moment an Amber Alert comes out. Mobilizing people early could make all the difference, Fran Doll is hot on the mobilization trail. With any luck that trail will lead out of Summit County into Cuyahoga and eventually out of the state and into the nation.

To learn more about GASP contact [GrandparentsAgainstSexPredators@adelphia.net](mailto:GrandparentsAgainstSexPredators@adelphia.net) or call Fran Doll at 330-247-1402. You don't have to be a grandparent or even a parent to join this grandma's mission. Everyone is welcome.

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