The Columbus Dispatch



Abducted son, dad reunited

Search group uses pizza and prayer to recover toddler

By Mark D. Somerson Deputch Staff Reporter

Armed with only a pepperoni pizza and a prayer, Mark Miller walked into the Lawn Manor apartment building last night and worked

his magic.

Less than two hours later, Tim

Haines was holding his 2-year-old

son, Erick, Haines had not seen Erick
since June when the boy's mother

"It's me, Erick," Haines said,

holding his son in the front seat of a police cruiser. "It's daddy." For Miller, who runs the Ameri-can Association for Lost Children, a Houston organization that seeks missing children, this is happy ending No. 55.

"Our job here is done," said the "Our job here is done," said the former stockbroker who started the non-profit group in 1987, "It got a little hectic in there, but Tim's got his son. That's what's important."

Miller, Haines, Ann Odom and Buddy Hall flew to Columbus from Houston Sunday night and began the search for Erick early yesterday.

After weeks of tracking by phone

After weeks of tracking by phone and computer, Miller and his volun-teers learned Haines' former girl-friend, who lost custody of the child

friend, who not custody or the cloud in a Dallas court earlier this year, had taken the baby to Columbus. "Usually, it takes a few months to find out where they are," Miller said, sitting in the back of a rental car worked across the street from the parked across the street from the church where Olivia Rudd, 24, the baby's mother, has worked for the

last few months. Rumor had it she went up north



Columbus police lead Olivia Rudd away from her apartment building.

said. "This rumor turned out to be true. God has opened up a lot of

Earlier, Odom and Hall, posing as a married couple, walked into the Centenary United Methodist Church, 930 E. Long St., and talked with Rudd.

"When we were in there, we noticed she had some pictures of

and was working in a church," he Erick on her computer terminal," of two. Odom began volunteering her time after hearing about the group on

We asked her for a church bulletin, and when she went to get one, we grabbed one of the photo-graphs."

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Haines recognized his son.

Haines recognized his son.

His see horrible, "Haines said.
His see was abducted while he was recovering from surgery. "It's been totally depressing, and I just wanted any lead to lift me up. This (the photo) is doing it."

Miler said more parents need that feeline.

that feeling.

"We're the only organization that will actually look for the kids." he said. "The others put out those have you seen me?" fliers, but they don't look for the kids. I got tired of chief they found that they don't look for the kids. I got tired of chief them fliers."

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flies them free, donate services.

And people such as Hall donate

their time.

"Mark found my two daughters for me," said the Houston resident.
"They were missing for three

The group works only on cases where felony warrants have been is-sued and usually sticks to cases in

volving custody battles. Rudd was charged with interfering with cus-

charged with tody.

"A lot of people in society say they want to help, but it's mostly just a bunch of talk," Miller said. "To say it is one thing, to do something is

another.

So after more than nine bours of waiting and following Erick's mother, Miller walked into Rudd's apartment building on E. Long Street, offered her a free pizza and smiled.

"She fell for it," he said when he

came out, picking up a cellular phone to call police. "She took the pizza, and I knew she had Erick with her." Soon after, Police Officer David

Ralls carried Erick out of the apart-ment building and handed him to his

"I was praying for this," Haines said, hugging his son and watching two officers lead his former girlfriend away in handcuffs. "I just didn't think it would happen this soon."

For more information concerning the American Association for Less Children, call 800 375-5683.