

NEWS & NOTES *continued*

WITHOUT A TRACE

Coins of Hope

For the first time, a missing child will be depicted on a circulating coin.

➤ ON MAY 25 (International Missing Children's Day), the Royal Mint of Belgium in Brussels struck a €2 coin depicting Liam Vanden Branden, who disappeared in 1996, when he was 2 years old. His image symbolizes all children whose whereabouts are unknown. The Belgian National Bank is circulating 1 million of these legal-tender coins, giving anyone spending or receiving them a chance to reflect on the fate of missing children.

First launched in the United States in 1983, International Missing Children's Day was created

to commemorate the day four years prior when 6-year-old Etan Patz disappeared without a trace in New York City. "Of course, it is a special honour that Liam was chosen," say Daniëlle Huysmans and Dirk Vanden Branden, Liam's parents, "and it might help our

case move forward. However, we should remember that it represents all the missing children in the world, and will hopefully encourage everyone to look for them."

The coins also circulate on social media. The public is invited to post pictures with the hashtag #CoinsofHope whenever the pieces change hands. The campaign site, www.coinsofhope.be, will display the exchange locations, showing how the currency is spreading throughout Belgium and the rest of Europe.

The Coins of Hope initially will be distributed via large supermarket chains in Belgium. They also can be purchased directly from the Royal Mint of Belgium by visiting www.2200600.mijnwinkel.nl/webshop.



PHOTO: COINS OF HOPE

▲ The initial Coin of Hope depicts Liam Vanden Branden, missing since 1996. One million of these €2 specimens will circulate in Belgium.

Not Actual Size