

Lost Kid

By Robert Wilson

March 17, 2016

A friend and I were moving some furniture when I looked back and saw a little kid on the sidewalk. He was talking the kind of steps that are a kind of controlled falling. There were no adults around and he kept walking out towards a busy street. He looked tiny, but sure of where he was going. I expected someone to come running out after him. It didn't happen and that made me feel sick inside.

My friend ran to stop him from walking out into traffic. I ran back the way he'd come to look for his parents. The only people I saw were some folks at a yard sale but they hadn't lost a kid. I banged on a few doors and looked around but I didn't find anyone.

There was a busy 12 step meeting going on so I went up and interrupted it—which I've never done—to ask if anyone was missing a kid. I was starting to get mad. The little boy said his name was Gabriel. He didn't know where he lived. He didn't know his mom's name or the names of any other adults. He was just lost and walking around by himself. He pointed in a vague direction when I asked where his mom was and said, "Store." I took off in that direction but nobody I talked to was missing a kid.

Someone called 242-COPS and an officer came right away. He couldn't get any more information out of the kid than we had. The officer made some calls and his supervisor came out. After a while it looked like they were going to have to call CYFD—but then a skinny guy in a wifebeater ran out of the alley looking like he was going to pass out. He was yelling, "Oh my God! Oh my God! Why did you run off? I told you not to go outside the gate!"

The police were mad too. They wanted to know why nobody called them. Then the kid's mother showed up. It turned out Gabriel wasn't his name. He just liked that name. His mother didn't know her son's birthday or how old he was. It was such a mess that if the grandmother hadn't shown up the child would have been taken away.

So thank God for grandmothers for all the things they do and the love they never run out of. For some kids, it's all they have.