

Advocacies

1) In 1977, at the age of 14, Maris Sidenstecker sparked an interest that resulted in the founding of the Save the Whales organization whose sole purpose focuses on educating the public, especially children, about marine mammals. Now worldwide and nationwide, this organization continues to disseminate information by snail mail, email, web site, Adopt-A-Whale kits, newsletters, an award winning TV public service announcement, media and radio appearances, and events. One person summing up her reason for involvement in the organization said, "Someone has to speak for those who have no voice."

What do you think prompted this advocacy?

Why was/is it important that someone advocate for this cause?

What has been/continues to be the results of this advocacy?

2) Candice Lightner was the organizer and founding president of this organization that began in 1980 when her 13-year-old daughter, Cari, was killed by a drunken hit-and-run driver as she walked down a suburban street in California. "I promised myself on the day of Cari's death that I would fight to make this needless homicide count for something positive in the years ahead," Cari's mom vowed. The organization MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) was born. Since its inception, thousands of anti-drunk driving laws have been passed.

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What has been/continues to be the results of this advocacy?

3) In January, 1996, Amber Hagerman was abducted, raped, and murdered. It was later that citizens of her community learned that local law enforcement had information that might have helped locate her shortly after she was abducted, but had no means to distribute this information. The Child Alert Foundation helped to create a fully automated Alert Notification System (ANS) known as the **Amber Alert** to notify surrounding communities when a child was reported missing or abducted. Alerts are now being sent to radio stations, television stations, surrounding law enforcement agencies, newspapers and local support organizations all at once via pagers, faxes, emails, and cell phones and an immediate posting on the Internet for the general public to view.

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4) Tim Collings developed and the PTA (Parent Teacher Organization) along with many other family oriented groups and organizations endorsed and continues to promote the installation and use of the **v-chip** device which is intended to give parents some control over what their children watch on TV. One spokesperson for this group puts it this way, "Children are often victims of what they see and hear on TV; a captive audience unable to discern or understand what they are viewing much less able to make appropriate viewing decisions. You wouldn't allow a child to cross a busy street without guidance yet we allow them to enter the adult world of TV without supervision."



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5) The Parent Advocacy Group, a unique nonprofit organization, was created as a response to the dire conditions found in many of America's public schools where politics and special programs run rampant while student failure and dropout rates continue to far exceed the national average. This group lobbies for tougher standards, educational accountability, and prides itself on being the voice of the students who are often victims of teacher apathy, limited funds, and legislative red tape.

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6) Members of organizations like Advocates for the Elder are particularly concerned for those older individuals in our communities. They believe in the value of aging individuals and are committed to protecting them from avoidable pain, loss of dignity and neglect. Hands-on intervention, elder abuse litigation, political lobbying through the legislative process, and working hand-in-hand with like-minded non-profits are all strategies that are used to not only help the elderly maintain their dignity and, to the extent possible, keep their health and independence until the end of their lives, but also to increase public awareness. "Often as we age I think we deny our need for help. Sometimes with senile dementia or Alzheimer's disease we don't even know that we need it. Someone has to be looking out for us. Someone has to speak for us," confessed one elderly care-facility resident.

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