



Steve Gravelle photos/The Gazette

ABOVE: Carolyn Pospisil (third from left), stepmother of Erin Pospisil, says a few words Sunday afternoon at Van Vechten Park in southeast Cedar Rapids in recognition of the eighth anniversary of the girl's disappearance. Family and friends, including Erin's father, Jim (left), gathered to release balloons in her honor. BELOW: The balloons bore tags listing information about Erin Pospisil, who was 15 when she disappeared in 2001.

## Family remembers missing girl

Cedar Rapids girl last seen in 2001 when she was 15

By Steve Gravelle  
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — As they have every year for the past eight around the first week of June, Carolyn and Jim Pospisil gathered Sunday afternoon with friends and family.

They met at the Van Vechten Park pavilion with chips, summer salads and meat for a



Erin Pospisil  
Missing

cookout, but first they paused to remember the one who wasn't there.

Jim Pospisil, 43, said of his daughter Erin Pospisil. "This gets easier after the long time."

Erin, then 15, was last seen June 3, 2001, getting into a black Chevrolet Cavalier in the 100 block of 12th Street SE. Friends said they didn't recognize the car, but said Erin seemed to know the people inside and went with them willingly.



Erin remains missing despite the efforts of her father and stepmother Carolyn Pospisil. They've distributed fliers and posted billboards with Erin's photo and description, to no effect beyond a few tips that prove unfounded.

The family founded Help Find a Child, a non-profit that helps keep unsolved missing-persons cases before the public.

The Pospisils have moved to Omaha, where Jim manages an auto repair shop and Carolyn, 39, manages the municipal housing authority.

Carolyn Pospisil fields tips, passing leads on to police, and often consults the state's missing person's Web site, [www.iowaonline.state.ia.us/mpic/](http://www.iowaonline.state.ia.us/mpic/).

"When I looked in

April, there were 57 kids" listed, she said.

Tips continue to come in. After a company that mails supermarket coupons to consumers included a leaflet in its envelopes with Erin's photo and information about the case, the family received more than 50 tips. One woman thought she saw Erin in a truck stop along Interstate 80 in the Eastern U.S.

"The police went and checked the video, and it wasn't her," said Jim Pospisil. Still, the family takes comfort that people are still looking.

"There's always hope, because there's people found after 20 years," said Jim Pospisil. "Even longer than that. So there's always hope."

"A hopeful outcome would be that she shows

### On the Net



Help Find a Child:  
[www.helpfindachild.com](http://www.helpfindachild.com)

up tomorrow," said Carolyn Pospisil. "At this point, I'd take any outcome, so we'd know something."

Shortly after 1 p.m., the Pospisils gathered up the several dozen balloons Jim had filled with helium and attached a ribbon with a small card bearing Erin's description, photo, and a toll-free phone number. Each holding a cluster of balloons, the group moved to a clearing near the playground.

"We love you, Erin," Carolyn said, and everyone released their balloons. The group stood along time watching the balloons rise above the trees into the clear sky, pushed north by the prevailing breeze. The youngest children, like Erin's cousin Rachel Minney, 20 months, watched the longest, waving as the balloons drifted away.

"Bye-bye," said Rachel.

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