



## Two Missing Children

**January 1, 1976**  
**Pine Cove Area**  
**1976-001**

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The call came in at 4 p.m.; a five year-old and a seven year-old missing at Pine Cove. I stopped by to pick up Jim Garvey, another member of RMRU, and we were on our way. Arriving an hour later we were filled in on the details.

The children were last seen at approximately 12:30 when their parents had let them go down to look at the ice, not realizing it was an iced over pond they were referring to. The five year-old's hat was discovered beside a hole in the ice. Many of the visitors to Wilderness Pines were standing around the pond while rescue officials from the Pine Cove Fire Department and Riverside County Sheriff's Deputies were breaking the ice up preparing to drag the pool.

Although the children were most likely in the pond from the evidence we had, we didn't know that for sure. In mountain rescue we try never to make assumptions, consequently, our job was to search the land. An early team consisting of Pete Carlson, John Dew and Bernie McIlvoy had responded to a report that someone had heard calls for help below the entrance to the recreation area. After investigating that without discovering anyone they returned to base just as the rest of the teams departed.

There were 10 of us, in four teams, sent to cut perimeters around the entire area. We first stopped by the family's campsite to inspect the children's footprints and then set off up the various roads to our assignments. Five minutes later we heard 10-19 on the radio; return to base.

Back in base we saw the mother hopefully standing by the outdoor heater and learned that one of the children had been pulled from the pond. Moments later the camp was cut by the mother's cries of anguish; she had been informed.

Having had some counseling experience in a crisis intervention clinic, my assignment was to stay with the mother and do whatever I could. She was taken inside a home where two friends of hers and myself tried to comfort her. Gradually she began to talk and calm down. Later Doctor Ray from Idyllwild arrived and evaluated her condition.

All in all it was a very unhappy beginning to a new year for the family and very solemn experience for those of us involved in the search operation.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.