

Child ID program completed in schools

On Friday, Feb. 8, the Grand Lodge of Masons completed the Child Identification Program (CHIP) in the Holbrook public school system by processing students at Holbrook Junior/Senior High School.

This makes Holbrook the second community in the nation to have achieved that goal.

Several other local communities, including Avon, Randolph, Stoughton, Braintree, and East Bridgewater, are currently in the program. In order to complete coverage of the town, plans are underway to process students at St. Joseph's parochial school this spring.

The program, in which participation is strictly voluntary, only with written approval of parents, is designed to give the parents a means of helping authorities to locate missing children. It consists

of fingerprinting, toothprinting, and a short videotaped interview.

The toothprints are capable of providing DNA samples and scents for tracking dogs. The videotapes, which contain a series of questions about the child's lifestyle and habits, give a good example of voice and physical characteristics, a great improvement over a simple, flat photo.

Toothprints are as unique as fingerprints to each person and are more valuable now because modern day children, with the benefit of improved dental health and fluoride, do not have dental records suitable for this purpose.

The program is conducted by volunteers from the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts and has processed more than 107,000 children across the state. This is done at no cost to either the parents or the school system, being com-

pletely underwritten by the Masonic fraternity as a public service.

This event, which was coordinated by Morton Brown, a local Mason, was done by volunteers like members of the PTA, local dentists and their technicians, Norfolk County Sheriff Michael Bellotti and his deputies, and local Masons.

There are several public events scheduled, such as one at the Silver City Galleria in Taunton and also at Westgate Mall in Brockton. Parents are urged to take advantage of this opportunity to provide some peace of mind, as current events suggest that it is most important. There are presently more than 17,000 known sex offenders and pedophiles in Massachusetts alone.

Times and dates may be found at MYCHIP.org.