



## ***TAKE ME HOME***

The **Take Me Home** program is a countywide initiative to support individuals with communication difficulties and their families. The integral component of the program is a database of individuals with disabilities that impact their ability to communicate. The database is only accessible to law enforcement personnel.

Should an individual become lost or separated from caregivers, law enforcement personnel can search the database by inputting the individual's characteristics in the hopes of learning their identity and thus reuniting them with their family or caregivers.

Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh and Sheriff Drew Alexander announced the initiative in April 2007, at a park where a five-year-old child with autism had gotten lost a year before. The child was unable to communicate his name or address to law enforcement officers.

That troubling incident, however, highlighted the challenge that law enforcement personnel and parents face when individuals with disabilities become lost. The Greater Akron Chapter of the Autism Society of America brought the Take Me Home program to the attention of Prosecutor Walsh. Bob Haren, the grandparent of a child with autism, brought it to the attention of Sheriff Alexander. A partnership was formed.