



Saturday, March 18, 2017 Last update: 2:05 p.m.

NEWS | THE POINT | BUSINESS | NEXT | SPORTS | OUTDOORS | HOMESTEAD | FOOD | EVENTS | OPINION | OBITUARIES | MAINE FOCUS

News from your community: State | Aroostook | Augusta | Bangor | Down East | Hancock | Lewiston-Auburn | Mid-Maine | Midcoast | Penobscot | Piscataquis | Portland

More volunteers join search for 20-month-old Ayla as hunt enters sixth day

Next



By GLENN ADAMS, The Associated Press
Posted Dec. 21, 2011, at 3:35 p.m.
Last modified Jan. 27, 2012, at 2:01 p.m.

WATERVILLE, Maine — More than 60 people prayed for hope at a candlelight vigil for [a missing 20-month-old girl](#), as tips poured in and the search was expanded Wednesday to include trails and more waterways.

Fifty trained volunteers from the Maine Search and Rescue Association joined 75 to 80 law enforcement officers already participating in the search for Ayla Reynolds, which entered its sixth day.

“I can tell you, they are working just as hard as if it was their own child,” Waterville City Manager Mike Roy told the group at the vigil at the First Congregational Church, where a photo of a smiling Ayla, a few children’s drawings and stuffed toys contributed by local families formed a centerpiece at the front of the pews.

Residents, many of them mothers with young children, prayed, sang hymns and offered one another support and hope during the service, which was moved indoors because of freezing rain and raw temperatures.

“I want to support the family,” Cori Cote said as she held her 16-month-old daughter before the vigil. “I couldn’t imagine losing my little girl. I want Ayla

Related stories

>> [Police follow more than 100 tips in missing toddler case; father speaks](#)

News Blogs Living Sports Opinion

- 1. [Waterfront Concerts founder charged with domestic violence](#) 
- 2. [Police officer fatally shoots Presque Isle man who was wielding knife](#) 
- 3. [Trump cuts threaten passenger flights at 4 rural Maine airports](#) 
- 4. [Wardens identify snowshoer, 57, found dead on Rome hiking trail](#)
- 5. [Lincoln wants feds to help pay for \\$20 million cleanup at former mill](#) 

BDN MAINE Blogs

Be a BDN blogger | Browse BDN blogs



back safe.”

Earlier, the police chief in the central Maine city, Joseph Massey, said more streams and ponds were lowered to aid searchers, and additional woods and open areas were checked as the search area grew outward from the girl’s house. The Maine Marine Patrol searched the Kennebec River, which forms the edge of the city.

Searchers have looked through trash bins and [lowered portions of Messalonskee Stream in the city](#), looking for signs of Ayla. The FBI continued Wednesday to go door-to-door in a “knock and talk” canvassing effort.

Massey said the number of leads offered by citizens grew by more than 60 in a day to 165, and each one was being checked out.

“That is keeping investigators very, very busy, as you can imagine,” the chief said.

The toddler was last seen Friday night when her father, Justin DiPietro, said he put her to bed wearing a green one-piece pajama set with polka dots and the words “Daddy’s Princess.”

DiPietro called police the next morning to say she wasn’t there. Several other adults were in the home at the time, but Massey declined to identify them.

Tuesday night, DiPietro addressed the public for the first time, saying in a statement he had “no idea what happened to Ayla, or who is responsible.”

DiPietro released the statement through the Waterville police, saying his family and friends will do “everything we can to assist in this investigation and get Ayla back home.”

Massey said DiPietro and the Ayla’s mother, Trista Reynolds, continue to cooperate with police.

An Amber Alert, which lets the public know about an abducted child, wasn’t declared, and no manhunt is under way. State police say the case didn’t fit the criteria for an Amber Alert because Ayla was reported missing about 12 hours after being last seen, and there was no vehicle and no suspect.

 [SEE COMMENTS](#) →



A cat leash law and other stray thoughts

PARLEZ-VOUS AMERICAN?



The Man Who United Irish- and Franco-Americans

THE FROZEN CHOSEN



At town meeting, solving conflicts big and small

FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE



What rights do women not have compared to men? *Updated*

JOURNEYS OVER A HOT STOVE



“Obvs.” 60s slang. Salad dressing. Troy Jackson.