

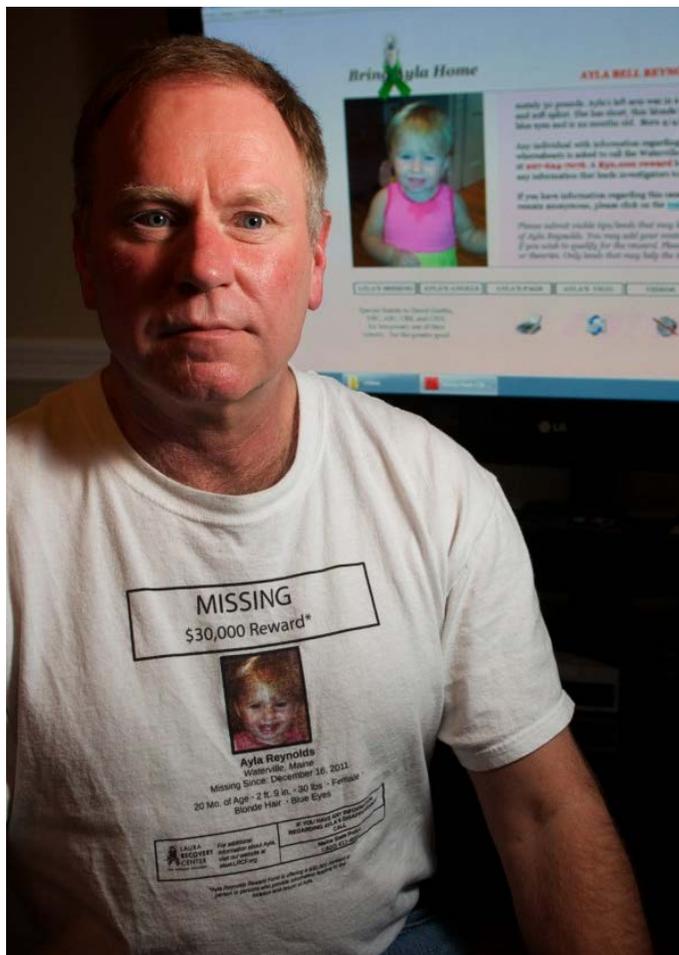
BDN MAINE Mid-Maine



Monday, March 20, 2017 Last update: 5:37 p.m.

Ayla Reynolds website providing information, comfort for family

Next



Troy R. Bennett | BDN

Ayla Reynolds' step-grandfather, Jeff Hanson, sits in front of a television at his apartment in Portland displaying a website he created and maintains, dedicated to the missing toddler on Wednesday, Feb. 29, 2012. *Buy Photo*



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By Christopher Cousins, BDN Staff
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Posted Feb. 29, 2012, at 7:02 p.m.
Last modified Feb. 29, 2012, at 7:27 p.m.

PORTLAND, Maine — Two weeks after Ayla Reynolds disappeared, Jeff Hanson thought he was seeing the little girl everywhere.

Hanson, who is Ayla's step-grandfather, was walking his dog near his home one day when he passed a little blond girl riding in a stroller.

"I was looking for Ayla in her face," said Hanson, whose interview with the Bangor Daily News Tuesday was the first he has granted to the media. "At that moment I put it together that I was looking to see if it was Ayla. I was seeing her everywhere."

That was the moment Hanson knew what he needed to do. He went home and closed himself in a room with a computer for three days and created www.aylareynolds.com, which went live at midnight on Jan. 1. Since then the website has logged nearly 1 million visitors, according to data provided by Hanson.

In addition, Hanson and Trista Reynolds, who is Ayla's mother, have each received several hundred emails sent through the site. Reynolds said she still receives an average 50 emails a day, most of them from people encouraging her to "stay strong."

Some days, the traffic to the site is heavier than others, such as when Reynolds has appeared on the Today Show. The heaviest traffic to date — more than 250,000 hits in one day — came when investigators revealed that [Ayla's blood had been found](#) in the basement of her father, Justin DiPietro's, home.

In addition to posting photos of Ayla and providing information about where people can pass on any tips about her disappearance, Hanson has also used the site to release information, such as a timeline around Ayla's disappearance and certain information that Reynolds [says has come from investigators](#). The Maine State Police have refused to confirm or deny some of the information that has been posted on the site, but Hanson said they also have not objected to his postings.

"Everything we do, we do it to bring Ayla home," he said.

Working on the site has also been therapeutic. Though there have been times Hanson has cried while putting together some of the pages, he said overall it allows him to contribute something to the search for Ayla on a daily basis.

"The tears turn to anger very quickly," he said. "There's a lot of frustration that they haven't found her yet."

But there's still hope. Reynolds said she dreams of the day when someone somewhere sends her a current photo of Ayla through the site.

"I wonder what she looks like," Trista Reynolds said. "I'm sure her hair is longer and she has teeth coming in all over the place. Her eyes are probably even bluer than they were."

Hanson said he intends to maintain the site even in the event Ayla is found alive. He dreams of posting photos of her first day at school, her high school prom and someday, perhaps her wedding.

"All the photos and videos that are on the site now will change," he said. "I'll keep it up until she's old enough to tell me to take it down."



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CORRECTION:

An earlier version of this story said the website has logged nearly 2 million visitors. Jeff Hanson said the site has received nearly 1 million visitors.

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