

Child found in late-night search ID'd

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FARMINGTON—On Friday, officials identified the 19-month-old baby boy who went missing in the woods late Thursday night and confirmed that following his discovery by a New Hampshire Fish and Game officer and his K9 unit, the boy was in good condition and reunited with his mother.

Authorities reported the child was found at 11:39 p.m. after an intensive search lasting about four hours in a deeply wooded area off Ten Rod Road.

The toddler was found approximately a quarter of a mile from a campsite his family had set up. Conflicting reports from different agencies reveal it is unclear whether the family was camping for leisure at the time of the incident, or making a temporary residence there.

Liam A. Davis, of Farmington, had wandered off after being put down to sleep in a tent by his mother Brittany Adjutant, near Mad River by the intersection of Russell Lane and Ten Rod Road. Interim Police Chief Kevin Willey said Adjutant reported she had left the tent unzipped when she went to get firewood, and upon her return, discovered the child was missing.

The search for Liam was conducted with the help of multiple police agencies, the FBI, two helicopters, several bloodhound and K9 units, numerous civilian volunteers and "countless (other) resources" Willey said he could not list late Thursday night. He said after the uninjured boy was returned to his mother, he was transported to Frisbie Memorial Hospital for evaluation "as a precaution."

Willey said the toddler, described as wearing a gray sweat shirt and a diaper, went missing at about 7 p.m. and the incident was reported to police at 8 p.m. Willey estimated 100 people participated in the search, and at its peak had 40 marching through the woods at any given time. Volunteers of all ages conducted line searches at "sight distance" and were paired with local police, fire and rescue officials from surrounding towns, Willey said, over an approximate half-mile by two-mile area. Many residents and neighbors approached road blockades throughout the night, asking state troopers what they could do to help or what flashlights, tractors and dog they could provide. When officers had enough volunteers, they gently thanked individuals and explained, with so many scents, they did not want to confuse acting K9 units.

Willey said the baby was eventually discovered by Fish and Game Conservation Officer Mark Hensel, who trudged through the darkness and thick brush with his dog "Sig," who found the boy.

Hensel reported the K9 found Davis "sleeping on some moss." He told Foster's the boy seemed to have suffered some bad mosquito bites and WMUR reported the boy had a small blister on his foot. Following the discovery of the child, Willey said he was overwhelmed with emotion.

"I'm just happy to have this kind of outcome," he said. "It doesn't matter what you see, no matter how many times. The grief of a mother. The jubilation of a mother. There's nothing like it."

At approximately 11:45 p.m., news traveled from the search party to the road blockade at the intersection of Hornetown Road and Ten Rod Road that the child had been found, many shouting "Found him!" at the



Photo courtesy WMUR 19-month-old Liam Davis was found in the woods off Ten Rod Road in Farmington after a four-hour search that involved several emergency response agencies Thursday night.

top of their lungs, in succession. A small round of applause broke out among those assembled.

Willey added to his remarks in a 12:30 a.m. news conference Friday, "I'm quite relieved, but not nearly as relieved as I'm sure the mother is right now. We were happy to have such a successful outcome so quickly that I really have to attribute to the collective work of all the agencies, and the civilians that showed up to help us."

Henry Wilson Memorial School Principal for grades 4 through 6 Jacquie Capello was placed in a search party with her husband Selectman Arthur Capello. She said they drove out to help when a neighbor called them with the news. She added she and her husband have often walked the trails in the area and knew they could help with their familiarity of the rocky grounds.

"I think what is wonderful about Farmington is that we all pitch in when something goes wrong," Capello said. "We all pitch in for the good, too. We're very glad that Liam was found safe and sound and that we can move on from there."

She noted she was moved by the community's rallying, and said she also saw several Farmington School Board members out helping too, including Chairwoman Penny Morin and member Kathy King.

Board of Selectman Chairman Charlie King said he could not recall anything like this happening locally in recent memory, and said he was grateful to his community and the devoted law enforcement agents who worked so hard.

"I think (this) was a very good indication of the dedication that police and fire have for the community and also, the true underlying sincerity, the candor, that our taxpayers, our residents, have," King said. "A lot of people came out. I know my wife was a part of a search party ... Quite a few people were involved and generally, it's a good sign to see everyone pulling together, looking for a lost child."

Farmington Ambulance, Farmington Fire, New Hampshire State Police, New Hampshire Fish and Game, Strafford County Sheriff's Office, the FBI, Rochester Police and their K-9 unit, Middleton Police, Milton Fire, Middleton Fire, New Durham Fire, Alton Fire, Barnstead Fire, Gilminton Fire, and Lebanon, Maine Fire, responded to the scene. A DHART helicopter was also used in the search. The state police helicopter was called in after the DHART ran out of fuel from flying back and forth over the area for hours.