American Association for the Advancement of Science  
and Duke University

welcome you to

Documentary Film Screening and Discussion Panel  
Tuesday, December 8  
5:30-7:30pm

THE LIVING DISAPPEARED:  
Using DNA to Prevent  
Trafficking of Children on  
the Border

a film by Alexa Barrett

The Film

*The Living Disappeared* is a provocative cinematic investigation into the trafficking of children across borders and the ways in which DNA could help reunite these children with their families. With firsthand accounts from immigrants who crossed as children and who were kidnapped, stripped naked, smuggled in with coyotes and crossed through the desert, we see the human side of the complex problem of identifying the dead and preventing human trafficking.

The documentary is a succinct depiction of the issues that need to be confronted with regard to obtaining DNA samples for migrant children crossing the border and why these issues matter. Policies concerning forensic analysis of DNA in human rights applications are presently being formulated. Uses of DNA databases, the question of who would have access to this data transnationally, how it would be controlled, and how it would be collected, invoke technical, ethical, privacy and security debates. While ethical and political concerns will remain difficult to negotiate, the film serves to further the conversation around minimizing the disappearance of minors who cross the border.

Discussants

- **Thomas Parsons, International Commission on Missing Persons**  
  Thomas J. Parsons is Director of Forensic Sciences for ICMP. Dr. Parsons is an expert in DNA identification of disaster victim identification, through his work at ICMP involving large-scale comparison of profiles from families of the missing to profiles recovered from skeletal remains from mass graves and mass disasters. Prior to joining the ICMP, Dr. Parsons worked at the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory as AFDIL Chief Scientist. His expert work in disaster victim identification is directly translatable to human rights identification needs of live victims of human exploitation and displacement.

- **Óscar Martínez, Salvadoran journalist**  
  Óscar Martínez, a young award-winning investigative journalist for ElFaro.net, the first exclusively digital newspaper in Latin America, spent two years following in the footsteps of more than 250,000 migrants who make the perilous journey across Mexico every year. He has ridden the Beast eight times himself,
interviewing people on their way to the United States. In 2010, his reporting resulted in a book, Los migrantes que no importan, published in English as *The Beast*. He is working on a second journalistic account of the continuing Central American conflicts at the root of the mass migrations of Central Americans north to the U.S.

• Alexa Barrett, filmmaker

Alexa Barrett is a filmmaker who has written, directed, edited and produced ten films that have won awards in international film festivals. Her passion for film began at 15, when she created a documentary that was used at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. and physical rehabilitation centers to inspire the families of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with brain injuries. Alexa graduated Duke University Cum Laude with High Honors in International Comparative Studies with a focus in Latin America. Her experience living and studying abroad in Latin America, Europe and Asia, and working for the U.S. Department of State in the Bureau of Populations, Refugees and Migration, inspired her to delve into the politics of refugees and research ways of reuniting them with their families. Alexa now works in New York and the UK as the Global Project & Client Associate at ROI Training.

• Sara Katsanis, Duke University

Sara Huston Katsanis is an Instructor in Science & Society Initiative at Duke University. Her policy research focuses on genetic testing applications in humanitarian efforts, medicine and law enforcement. She is exploring policy challenges for applying scientific technologies to human identification in human rights contexts, such as human trafficking, migration, and adoption fraud. Katsanis is co-PI of the Science, Ethics, Identity, and Human Rights project funded by Kenan Foundation.