

# PROJECT NOELLE



LOVE.  
HOPE.  
AWARENESS.  
ACTION.

Honoring Noelle  
by supporting  
mental health  
and preventing  
substance  
poisoning.



Volunteer  
Handbook  
2026 EDITION

# PROJECT NOELLE



4TH ANNUAL  
POKER RUN



KEEPING  
NOELLE'S  
MEMORY ALIVE



RAISING  
AWARENESS



BUILDING A  
STRONGER,  
SAFER COMMUNITY

LEARN MORE & GET INVOLVED

[projectnoelle.com](https://projectnoelle.com)

 WELCOME TO THE TEAM

# We are so glad you are here

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*"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart."*

— ELIZABETH ANDREW

It is our hope that this handbook will introduce you to Project Noelle and how we work to improve the lives of our youngest victims of the opioid epidemic. Inside, you'll find our guidelines and practical guidance for running a chapter in your own community.

We are a team and a family, and we look forward to having you join us as we continue to grow and expand. Helping the children is our top priority.

Volunteers are the heart of our organization. Whether you want to help at Easter, at Christmas, or throughout the year, anything you are able to do is deeply appreciated.

Again, thank you for being here. We simply could not function without the help of wonderful volunteers like you.

*With gratitude,*

*The Project Noelle Team*

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A companion **Christmas Handbook** covers our largest season in detail and is distributed separately to holiday volunteers.

## ✦ INTRODUCTION

# About Us

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Project Noelle was founded in December 2017 in Sandusky, Ohio. It was named in memory of Noelle Maschari, who passed away from an accidental overdose. She left behind three beautiful boys.

The founder recognized the need for an organization to help the families left to care for children affected by the opioid epidemic — through overdose death, incarceration, or active use.

Since its inception, Project Noelle has established chapters in multiple counties throughout Ohio and Florida, and recently expanded into North Carolina. Our goal is to establish chapters in counties across the country in the very near future.

Our mission is to provide assistance with Christmas presents, Easter baskets, clothing, and diapers to the children in our communities. Each chapter can also add programs such as kids' support groups, summer picnics and luaus, Christmas parties, back-to-school supplies, and back-to-school haircuts.

Each community is encouraged to adapt to meet the needs of the children they serve.

## At a Glance

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<p>FOUNDED</p> <hr/> <p>December 2017</p> <hr/>	<p>HOME</p> <hr/> <p>Sandusky, Ohio</p> <hr/>
<p>IN MEMORY OF</p> <hr/> <p>Noelle Maschari</p> <hr/>	<p>WHERE WE SERVE</p> <hr/> <p>Ohio · Florida · N. Carolina</p> <hr/>
<p>WHO WE HELP</p> <hr/> <p>Children of the opioid epidemic</p> <hr/>	<p>OUR PROMISE</p> <hr/> <p>Hope, dignity, fellowship</p> <hr/>

*Helping the children is our top priority.*

THE PROJECT NOELLE MISSION

 POLICIES & PROCEDURES

# Volunteer Code of Conduct

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As a volunteer, I am also an ambassador for Project Noelle. I am committed to:

- Performing my role to the best of my ability.
- Acting honestly, responsibly, and with integrity.
- Meeting my time and task commitments, and giving notice when I am unable to fulfill my role.
- Treating all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Keeping confidential information confidential.
- Seeking authorization before communicating to the public on Project Noelle's behalf.
- Complying with Project Noelle's policy of mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or harassment.
- Refraining from the use of video, audio, or photographic recording equipment unless given explicit permission to do so.
- Avoiding conflict-of-interest situations and actions that may be perceived as such.
- Reporting potential or actual conflicts of interest as they arise.
- Refusing tips, gifts, or any other form of payment for my volunteer work.
- Avoiding profane or abusive language and behavior.
- Abstaining from the use, possession, or influence of illegal drugs while performing volunteer services.
- Not engaging in illegal activity.

**Please note:** If a volunteer is found to be in breach of this Code of Conduct, their position with Project Noelle will be terminated.

✦ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Volunteer Roles



## County Director

**MOST NEEDED**

Organizes events and manages all volunteers within the county.

## Holiday Directors

Manage wish lists, Christmas Boards, and Easter baskets, and organize distribution to families.

## Fundraising

Plan and organize creative ways to raise money for the chapter's programs.

## Other Opportunities

Help with fundraising, holidays, parties, picnics, kids' groups, crafts, baking, marketing, bookkeeping, thank-you and birthday cards, phone calls, and more.

## ✦ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Volunteer Recruitment

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The most important thing your county needs to succeed is volunteers — and it can also be the most challenging part of the work.

In most cases, it takes time. Don't get discouraged if people aren't pounding down your door to help. Once you do recruit volunteers, be sure to keep them engaged and informed.

## A few tips

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- Ask your family and friends first — they are your strongest starting point.
- Advertise on Facebook and other community pages.
- Reach out to sober-living homes and other groups for holiday help.
- Schedule volunteer meetings, in person or over Zoom, to stay connected.

**Our tool:** Project Noelle coordinates volunteers through InitLive ([initlive.com](https://initlive.com)), which helps directors schedule, message, and track their teams.

 THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Volunteer Opportunities

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## Seeking Donations

Gather food, snacks, and craft supplies for Kids Night, luaus, Christmas parties, and other events.

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## Fundraising

Raise money for emergency family resources, Kids Night, Easter, Christmas, luaus, and more.

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## Awareness

Represent Project Noelle at area festivals and fairs to explain our mission and the supportive services available to families.

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## Appreciation

Mail thank-you letters to the individuals, organizations, and businesses who donate.

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## Easter

Seek out donors for Easter baskets, then help collect and distribute them to families.

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## Summer Luau

Set up and monitor the food table, grill hot dogs, bake desserts, coordinate games and crafts, and join the setup or clean-up crew.

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## Christmas

Recruit organizations to host Toy Donation Boxes and Adopt-a-Child Boards; deliver and collect them; organize donations; and deliver to a designated pickup location for families.

## Holiday & Seasonal Events



### Christmas Concert

Solicit basket-auction donations, sell tickets, serve dinner, bake desserts, run 50/50 tickets, help with the auction, and collect tickets at the door.

### Family Christmas Party

Set up and serve dinner, bake cookies, and coordinate crafts and games.

### Kids Night

AGES 5-12

Coordinate crafts and games, set up dinner, and help clean up.

### Back to School

Recruit local salons for free haircuts and share community resources like school supplies and backpacks.

**On the horizon:** Future goals include Teen Nights (ages 13–18) and Caregiver Support Groups.

**🦋 WHY IT MATTERS**

Project Noelle depends on volunteers to carry out our mission: to provide support and resources to children and families affected by the drug epidemic.

These children deserve opportunities to have fun, to be understood, and to find fellowship with peers who share similar life experiences. We hold our volunteers to high expectations, ensuring they represent our organization appropriately and respectfully.

**Required:** Any volunteer working directly with children must complete a background check.



## ✦ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Fundraising

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Fundraising is a vital part of running your chapter. You'll need funds for clothing, diapers, Christmas, Easter, and other events.

Be creative and have fun — the only thing we ask is that nothing be sexual or vulgar. Restaurant fundraisers are a favorite: they raise money while advertising for Project Noelle at the same time.

Bingo, rummage sales, bake sales, concerts, and poker runs have all been reliable earners. And people love raffles — whether a basket raffle or a 50/50 — which pair beautifully with other events.

You can always reach out to other counties for ideas or advice. Do what works for your community, but don't be afraid to try something new.

*Do what works – but don't be afraid to try something new.*

## ✿ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Emergency Clothing & Diapers



Project Noelle provides clothing and diapers to children on an emergency basis.

An "emergency" means a child has recently — within the last six months — been placed in another home, or has lost a parent to an overdose. This program is not meant to provide a new wardrobe each season; we provide a few outfits, pajamas, coats or jackets, underwear, socks, and/or shoes.

Applicants can apply on our website or reach out directly to their county director. The director will then message all volunteers with the applicant's needed items. Volunteers can either collect articles from storage or purchase what's needed.

**Our standard:** Delivery to the family is usually completed within 48 hours of the request.

## ✿ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Easter

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Easter is a busy — but joyful — time for us, and not nearly as hectic as Christmas.

Each year, Project Noelle enlists the community to donate candy, toys, coloring books, crayons, and other treats to fill Easter baskets. We group them by infant and toddler, youth, pre-teen, and teen. With the help of volunteers, we set a distribution day for the kids.

Reach out to friends, family, organizations, and businesses for donations. You can also hold fundraisers to purchase basket materials if donations don't meet the need.

Easter baskets may not be a necessity — but we love putting smiles on our kids' faces on Easter morning.

## ✿ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Summer Luaus & Picnics

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Your county may decide to host a summer luau or picnic — a free event for the families we've assisted and other children in your community affected by the opioid epidemic.

A simple lunch is provided: hot dogs, chips, cookies, and a drink. Your event may include entertainment like costumed characters or face painters, and we encourage crafts and games for added fun.

You'll use the funds you've collected to pay for these events, so plan ahead — and reach out to local businesses to sponsor in exchange for advertising. Make sure you have enough volunteers to run the event.

These are a lot of fun, and the children truly love them.

✦ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Kids Groups



Kids' groups bring children together with peers, so they know they are not alone.

There are a few keys to running them successfully:

- **Volunteers first.** The most important step is making sure you have enough volunteers.
- **Secure a location** — a church, park, community center, or other public space.
- **Plan your budget.** Make sure you have enough money in your account; each community funds its own kids' groups, as the general fund does not cover these expenses.
- **Use the curriculum.** Include at least one activity from the Celebrating Families workbook.
- **Keep it warm.** Kids' groups should include dinner, games, and crafts.

## ✂ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# School Supplies & Haircuts

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Some counties host school-supply drives and arrange free back-to-school haircuts.

Other local organizations may already provide this, so research your area before planning. If your county can use it, you'll usually find it easy to place a donation box with a willing business or organization.

Reach out to salons, too — many stylists will donate their time to cut the kids' hair at no charge. It can be a great tax write-off for them as well.

✦ THE VOLUNTEER ZONE

# Fairs, Festivals & Speaking



## Fairs & Festivals

Fairs, festivals, and craft shows are a great way to gain public exposure and recruit volunteers. Set up a table to share Project Noelle and its mission — you can usually sell t-shirts and fans there as well. Most events offer a special non-profit rate, and some will even donate the space.

## Speaking Engagements

You may be asked to speak to a group, or for news or radio. Please inform Project Noelle before speaking on the organization's behalf. Advertising helps us grow, so we genuinely want you to share what you love about us with others.



✿ REMEMBRANCE

# Overdose Awareness Day

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Each year we host or join an Overdose Awareness Day event to remember the loved ones lost to overdose. If there isn't an event in your area, let us know — and consider helping with one in an adjoining county. If you know of a planned event, consider requesting a table to share information.

*Opioid use disorder can happen to any one of us.  
Help us reduce its effect on the children. Help us  
end the stigma.*

 OUR ORGANIZATION

# Leadership & Board

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Project Noelle is guided by a volunteer board of directors who give their time, talent, and heart to the children we serve.



Nate Kehlmeier  
PRESIDENT



Julie Ruiz  
SECRETARY



Misty Underwood  
TREASURER



Colleen Barry  
BOARD MEMBER



Lori Fiandra  
BOARD MEMBER

*We are a team and a family.*

PROJECT NOELLE



*We are here to show them that they are  
loved.*

WHERE HOPE TAKES FLIGHT.

GET IN TOUCH

Questions about volunteering or a program? Reach out to your county director  
— or contact us directly.

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