

KLAAS KiDS
f o u n d a t i o n



The Search and Rescue Community
RESOURCE MANUAL

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FORWARD

If you are reading this you are desperately looking for your missing child, or you know someone who is. If you don't know where to turn or what to do, remember that **you must move quickly and decisively** because time really is your enemy. I know this to be true from my own personal experience. I survived the nightmare of predatory abduction, and have used that knowledge to learn, grow, evolve, and now teach!

My twelve-year-old daughter Polly was kidnapped from a slumber party on Oct. 1, 1993, in the home she shared with her mother in Petaluma, California. We searched for Polly for sixty-five days only to learn that she had been kidnapped, raped, and murdered within a two-hour timeframe. It was a brutal and unimaginable experience that nobody should have to endure. Her killer now resides on California's death row.

I founded the KlaasKids Foundation to give meaning to Polly's death and vowed that I would help other families desperate to find their missing children. Since 1994, KlaasKids has assisted more than 1,500 families to search for and recover their missing children, and while each case is different, the desperation of family members remains constant.

To assist you in your recovery effort we have written the KlaasKids Community Search Resource Guide. It outlines and explains critical elements of a kidnap recovery effort and strategies that promote inter-agency cooperation and encourage community involvement. We believe that a collaboration between the family, community, media, and the jurisdictional law enforcement agency provides the best opportunity for success. Because you have so little time to assimilate this critical information, we are presenting best-case scenarios.

Trust the counsel of your close circle and beware of strangers proposing easy solutions. Psychic detectives, mediums, private investigators, and others will inevitably descend like flies on feces. They are fully aware that frantic parents will do anything, and they offer something, which, on the surface, is better than nothing. Psychic contributions to a missing child case are provocative and counterproductive. There are zero cases of a psychic truly assisting in or solving a missing child case. They misdirect resources, their references do not support their claims and law enforcement cannot acknowledge their success. If you are considering a private investigator, think about a retired law enforcement officer with experience investigating missing persons. They are much more likely to have established relationships within the law enforcement community and are much

more likely to have informed opinions. Whoever you look to for assistance, remember without backing data, it's all just smoke and mirrors.

There is nothing fair about the task that faces you: your child has been kidnapped and needs you more now than ever before. You have entered a frightening emotional and logistical minefield for which no one is prepared. As tempting as it might seem, escaping from reality is not an option. You must stay sharp and focused so that you don't make critical mistakes as you work to recover your missing child. Engage the battle as if it were a matter of life and death because it may be.

Our goal is to help you recover your missing child. Our objectives include bringing order to the chaos and providing collaborative relationships between the stakeholders: family; community; media; and law enforcement. Participate as much as you can and remember that this guide is flexible and can be modified as is necessary.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS and ABBREVIATIONS

BOLO/BOL	Law enforcement bulletin meaning Be-on-the-Lookout
CalTopo	An online Search and Rescue mapping tool that integrates several layers of mapping information with tools searchers need to use
CTA	Call to Action
FB	Facebook
Google Workbook	Google Sheets is a spreadsheet application included as part of web-based Google Docs
GPSR	Greedy Perimeter Stateless Routing, GPSR, is a responsive and efficient routing protocol for mobile, wireless networks
LE	Law Enforcement
MP	Missing Person
NCMEC	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
PIO	Public Information Officer
PLS	Place Last Seen
PR	Press Release
SAR	Search and Rescue
SarTopo	A widely used, collaborative online and offline mapping tool for use in Search and Rescue
SC	Search Center
SM	Social Media
Zello	Push to talk walkie talkie app.

INTRODUCTION

The KlaasKids Community Search Resource Guide is designed to help bring together the missing person's (MP) family, community, media, and law enforcement in a holistic response to a predatory abduction. This is a source of reference to help guide a community in coordinating a plan of action.

This reference guide describes how to help the family and law enforcement in the first 24 hours, how to notify and keep the community informed and how to effectively guide community volunteers in searching for the missing person (MP) for a potentially extended period.

Cooperation is the key:

- Always respect law enforcement's efforts.
- Do not impede their investigation or searches.
- Respect all local, state, and federal laws.
- Every case is different and all the material in this reference guide will not be applicable in every case.
- Establish relationships with the family and law enforcement.
- Ensure that local media outlets (TV, Radio, Newspapers, Social Networks) are aware of the case.
- Evaluate the situation and determine how the community can best help.
- Educate the family and community on what can and should be happening.
- Empower the family and community to actively participate for the best possible outcome.

STRUCTURE

A community volunteer search becomes necessary if the missing child has not been recovered quickly and disappeared under suspicious circumstances. It is not meant to be an operating business but does share a similar structure, requiring the following components:

- Administration
- Search and Rescue
- Media Relations
- Donations

The various divisions require a viable chain of command, and all positions are voluntary, meaning they are without pay or tangible benefits. **The singular goal of the community volunteer search center is to aid in the recovery of the missing person (MP).**



PLAN

Several of these roles may have access to and process sensitive information. The **core leadership group** must be discrete and reliable as they may quickly find themselves in a full-time commitment. Ideally many roles can be shared to help prevent exhaustion.

At the start of the community search you will need to identify:

THE CORE LEADERSHIP GROUP

1. Lead Coordinator
2. Family Advocate
3. Search Coordinator
4. Media Coordinator (PIO)
5. Social Media/Community Awareness Coordinator
6. Donations Coordinator



LEAD COORDINATOR

Department: Administration

Position Summary: The Lead Coordinator is at the top of the chain of command, and as such must lead the team through the most stressful event that many will ever experience. He/She will be working with people who are in a highly charged and emotional state, and who are dealing with internal, highly emotive issues.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Oversee and aid with all efforts related to the community search.
- Main point of contact for local law enforcement
- Main point of contact for core group members
- Ability to establish relationships with key groups/individuals.
- Able to work with people in a highly charged and emotional state - fear, anger, anxiety, and depression.

Experience/Qualifications:

- Full time availability
- Leadership skills: Communication, delegating, adaptability, integrity, conflict resolution, problem solving, identifying skill sets.

Key Competencies: Perform effectively without emotional response/reaction.

Notes:

FAMILY ADVOCATE

Department: Administration

Position Summary: A Family Advocate assists families by promoting and protecting their best interests. He/She ensures that a trusting and collaborative process is implemented that focuses on recovery of the missing person (MP).

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Supporting the family
- Law enforcement liaison
- Ensuring that the [10-Day Battle Plan](#) is completed.
- Liaison with community resources that can benefit the family during the current crisis.

Experience/Qualifications:

- Sociology background
- Calm, compassionate, interpersonal and communication skills
- Conflict resolution and organizational skills

Key Competencies: Comprehend, devise, and implement a workable strategy for the family.

Notes:

Preferably not a family member. Possibly a friend, but it is better if this person is not personally connected. He/She is the family's shoulder to lean on and ensure that nothing falls through the cracks.

SEARCH COORDINATOR

Department: Search and Rescue (SAR)

Position Summary: Overall management responsibilities for community searches.

Duties and Responsibilities: The Search Coordinator is responsible for all things connected to the physical searches that are being conducted by the community including:

- Establish a map in CalTopo/SarTopo with grids for easier tracking.
- Collect, document and map tips on CalTopo/SarTopo map.
- Map and prioritize areas critical for searching.
- Willingness and ability to communicate with law enforcement agencies when consent is necessary for involvement in ongoing SAR.
- Determine if community members with special equipment (boats, kayaks, horses, etc.) can be helpful and communicate with Social Media Coordinator to post “call to action” (CTA) to mobilize all available resources.
- Constantly emphasizing the importance of safety. The buddy system is highly recommended.
- Track sanctioned and non-sanctioned searches.

Experience/Qualifications:

- SAR/Military background
- Analytical, organized, and good at documentation
- Knows how to read maps and use GPSR/CalTopo
- Tech savvy enough to use CalTopo/Zello/GPS Camera Apps/Google Drive

Key Competencies: Experience and training, composure, communication skills, decision making and ability to delegate.

Notes:

MEDIA COORDINATOR/PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)

Department: Media Relations

Position Summary: Develops and implements targeted communication to TV, Radio (AM and FM), and newspapers. The Media Coordinator will research, write, proofread, and edit all content, and plan and execute the missing person (MP) campaign. He/She coordinates with the Social Media Coordinator to ensure message cohesion and public saturation. **The Media Coordinator is a designated family spokesperson.**

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Planning all media events/press conferences
- Coordinating media events/press conferences with the Social Media Coordinator
- Create/acquire media distribution list(s) - Television, Radio, Newspapers
- Preparing community effort [press releases](#).
- Clear all [press releases](#) with local law enforcement in advance.
- Keeping the story alive and in the news while understanding what information is appropriate/necessary to share.
- Utilize Press the Release Template.

Experience/Qualifications:

- Work under pressure and meet deadlines.
- Work independently and as part of a team.

Key Competencies: Excellent writing skills, well-spoken and comfortable on camera and in interviews.

Notes:

The MEDIA COORDINATOR must be personable and comfortable giving concise information and updates to the press and public.

SOCIAL MEDIA/COMMUNITY AWARENESS COORDINATOR

Department: Media Relations

Position Summary: Develop and curate engaging content for social media (SM) platforms. Assist in the creation and editing of written, video, and photo content. Attend events and produce live social media (SM) content. Maintain unified brand voice across different social media (SM) platforms.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Creating and maintaining a Facebook (FB) Group; X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok accounts, etc.
- Flyer template creation and updates
- Post daily updates.
- Daily engagements (3-5 times/day works best for Facebook (FB) algorithms)
- Event creation and updates for search dates
- Call to Action (CTA) as needed.

Experience/Qualifications:

- Social media (SM) experience – Facebook (FB), X (Twitter), Instagram, etc.
- Able to create/build simple graphics.
- Organized

Key Competencies:

- Creative, innovative, attention to detail, analytical and organized.

Notes:

DONATIONS COORDINATOR

Department: Donations

Position Summary: Oversees the full implementation of fundraising activities. He/She manages all the transactions of the family, donors, and volunteers related to the recovery of the missing person (MP). **The Donations Coordinator is responsible for all in-kind non-monetary donations and all cash related donations.**

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Account for overhead and cash flow by providing financial accountability, integrity, and transparency.
- Creating a list of potential donors, soliciting donations, collecting donations, tracking donations, and sending thank you notes to those who donated. **A simple thank you can make the difference if future donations are ever needed.**

Experience/Qualifications:

- Good people skills
- Well-spoken
- Organized
- Familiarity with Excel/Sheets

Key Competencies: Integrity, discretion, and the ability to maintain a strict level of confidentiality.

Notes:

Best practice accounting principle is that any and all missing person (MP) search/cause related bank accounts require two (2) signatures.

CORE TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES BREAKDOWN



LEAD COORDINATOR - RESPONSIBILITIES

The first 48 hours:

- Locate community space with working utilities to be used as a Community Search Center (SC).
- Seek volunteers with the skills needed to help bring the community together effectively.
- Establish who will fill the core leadership group.
- Establish a database or [system for recording and tracking tips](#) search results, and volunteer efforts.
- Create a [Google Gmail](#) address (example: search4Jane@gmail.com) to be used for all search email communications (all core members should have access).
- Create a [Google Voice Number](#) (this will be connected to the newly created Gmail) that will be the Search Center (SC) phone number and can be transferred to different people as needed.
- Decide on date, time, and staging area for inaugural and subsequent searches.
 - Consider the size of community outpouring.
 - Choose staging area accordingly (if different from Search Center (CS) location).
- Create a Google Form for “Pre-Registering” for search(es).

Ask Media Coordinator/Public Information Officer (PIO) to:

- Solicit food/water donations.
- “Call to Action” (CTA) on social media (SM) and mainstream media.
- Use the Facebook (FB) “event” function so that people can RSVP and you can get a rough headcount of how many volunteers will be participating.
- Post a checklist that searchers will need to do/bring (and what not to do/bring):
 - No Children under 18 years old
 - No pets
 - Wear closed-toed shoes good for walking.
 - Wear long pants/shirt.
 - Bring a flashlight.
 - Bring Gloves
 - Bring walking stick/hiking poles.
 - Bring tape or survey flags to mark possible evidence.
 - Bring water and snacks in a pack they can hike with.
 - Know your own limits and tell team leaders ahead of time.
 - Install and Sign Up for [CalTopo](#) App.
 - Install GPS Camera App.
 - Install and sign up for [Zello](#) Two Way Radio App
 - Don't become another missing person!

Notes:

FAMILY ADVOCATE – RESPONSIBILITIES

The first six-hours and beyond:

- VERIFY THAT 911 HAS BEEN CALLED**
- Print the [Ten Day Battle Plan](#) and read carefully with the family.**
- Do NOT touch ANYTHING.** Wait for law enforcement.
- Ask investigators to enter the missing person (MP) into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Persons File. There is no waiting period for entry into NCIC for children under the age of 18.**
- Call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 800-THE-LOST (800-843-5678) to ask for help with photo/flyer distribution. Also, ask for the telephone numbers of other nonprofit organizations that might be able to help.**
- Request that law enforcement put out a Be-on-the-Lookout (BOLO/BOL) bulletin. Ask that law enforcement in surrounding cities and counties be included.**
- Send Be on the Lookout (BOLO/BOL) to all agencies and INCLUDE all agencies in your area.**
 - State/National Parks
 - Coast Guard
 - Harbor Patrol
 - Lake Patrol
 - School/College Police Departments
- Ask law enforcement about involving the FBI in the search.** (Primarily for children)
 - If law enforcement has failed to invite the FBI to join the investigation encourage one of the missing person's parents to do so.** Not all cases qualify for FBI involvement, so make sure to ask law enforcement for an explanation if you are turned down by the FBI.
 - Give law enforcement all the facts and circumstances related to the disappearance of the missing person (MP),** including what

efforts have already been made in searching for the missing person (MP). Tell them about fights or problems, changes in behavior, anything, and everything. Now is not the time for secrets.

- Help the family write a detailed description of the last clothing worn and any personal items he or she may have had at the time. Including birthmarks, scars, tattoos, piercings.
- Help family make a list of friends, acquaintances, and anyone else who might have information or clues about the missing person (MP) whereabouts. Include telephone numbers and addresses, if possible. Social Media (SM) can be helpful as well.
- Find several CURRENT pictures and videos of the missing person (MP).** Have pictures ready. Call friends of the missing person if need be and get pictures from them. **An accurate and current missing person (MP) picture is crucial.**
- Help the family make a list of favorite places, habits, and routines. (Ex: loves water, hates crowds, always walks the same route to x spot, etc.) Help to eliminate areas and mark areas for focus.
- Ask the family how the missing person (MP) should be approached. Will they likely hide from strangers?
- Will the missing person (MP) talk? Will they be violent? Will they come to a stranger's voice or only a family member? Is there a password they use so they know a stranger is "safe"?
- Keep a notebook with you, jot down all thoughts, questions and record all information that is told to you in person or on the phone. You will not remember it without it.
- Make sure someone is at the location where the person would likely return to. It does not have to be a family member, but someone needs to be at the house, the car, the campsite, etc.

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Shield the family as much as possible. Searching for a missing loved one is emotionally exhausting. The family will be overwhelmed with volunteers, psychics, well-wishers, reporters, and those who are just curious.

- Make sure the family is eating and resting.

- Solicit help from friends and neighbors to bring meals, transport other children, take care of pets for the family, etc.
- The family is in a very fragile condition. Try to just listen and avoid giving advice.**
- Be as informative as possible. Tell them what the community is doing to help.
- Protect the family from false rumors. Advise them to always assume a rumor is false until proven otherwise.
- If needed, coordinate with law enforcement for security around the residence.

Notes:



SEARCH COORDINATOR – RESPONSIBILITIES

Organizing, conducting and resources for the search:

- Make sure law enforcement is calling in trained SAR dogs.**
- With very few exceptions dogs should be utilized as soon as the official search is activated.
- Trailing dogs should be the initial responders. If they are not, ask why.
 - Trailing dogs take the scent from an item of the missing person (MP), start at the place last seen (PLS) and follow the trail.
- To ensure integrity of the scent demand that only the dog handler collects the scent article, even if it means a little extra time.
- Area search dogs should also be called in rural areas or where there will not be a lot of people. This can include abandoned buildings, open fields, woods, etc.
- If there is a body of water in the area, water search dogs should also be called in.
- The right dogs can be used well into a search, even days later.

Obtain search maps and zone searches:

- Web, local gov't, [USGS](#), chamber of commerce, sporting goods stores, software (CalTopo)
- [Create CalTopo/SarTopo Map for Community](#)
- Organize search map by search zones.
- Print flyers for teams to hand out while searching.
- PRINT a [Search Team Status Roster](#) and ensure that you have enough pages.
- If it does not interfere with law enforcement, start the search at the place last seen (PLS), and work outwards from there.
- Consider all secondary thoroughfares including railroad tracks, trails, waterways (rivers, flood control ditches, etc.)
- Consider vacant buildings and lots.

- If the missing person (MP) is in an urban area, ask law enforcement if they are doing a door-to-door search and/or if you can help.
- [Take notes on each home or business](#)
- Note if there are security cameras (ask tenant/homeowner to review during specified time range).
- Note what the person said and if they were home.
- Staying as organized as possible will make things easier as time goes on.

Notes:

- ATV use should be on a case-by-case basis. They destroy evidence and are too loud to hear a voice calling for help, however they are useful in clearing a trail or road quickly.
- Pets should NOT come to search. There are many hazards during searches, do not put animals at undue risk.
- Do not trespass. Under no circumstances should you enter private property without permission.




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MEDIA COORDINATOR/PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO) – RESPONSIBILITIES

Media exposure is key:

Media outlets reach the greatest number of people in the fastest way. **The Media Coordinator must be personable and comfortable giving concise information and updates to the press and public.** The Public Information Officer (PIO) will:

- Establish relationships with the media. Avoid favoritism as all media outlets can help.
- Create a media contact list with names, phone numbers, emails – KEEP contact information IN GOOGLE WORKBOOK.
- The media is aware that not all information can be disclosed. Some information is sensitive and must be held back. It is best to state simply that certain issues can't be discussed.
-  Coordinate with local law enforcement on the release of information and always avoid any criticism of the investigation. To be effective, the community and law enforcement need to work together.
- [Press releases](#) should be prepared and emailed to all stations by 3 pm for evening news programs and after 10 pm for use in morning news programs.
- Keep a record of all [press releases](#) and announcements – Store in Group Email Google Drive.
- Ask law enforcement if they have a media spokesperson (PIO) who can give tips on how to effectively use the media.
- The missing person's (MP) picture(s) needs to be in front of the public at every possible opportunity.
- Personalize the missing person's (MP) life in every way possible.**
 - Home videos
 - School activities
 - Sports and special interests they have
 - Different pictures
 - Testimonials

- Don't forget radio stations.
 - The car remains the most popular location for listening to radio, cited by an average 90% of respondents, followed by 67% who listen at home and 43% who listen at work.
- Plan "Media Events". Notify the media well in advance (at least 24 hours).
 - Prayer vigils
 - Ribbon making
 - "Search X (a particular spot/area) day"
- **Create a daily fact sheet for those reporters who may come into the story late. Include:**
 - Timeline
 - All relevant facts
 - All discounted rumors and info.
 - Accurate descriptions of missing person (MP)
 - Accurate spelling of name(s)

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Notes:

F O U N D A T I O N



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SOCIAL MEDIA/COMMUNITY AWARENESS COORDINATOR – RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible for flyer creation and distribution of flyers through Facebook (FB), X (Twitter), other social media (SM) as well as creation of missing person (MP) website and upkeep of the site.

- ❖ Use the create Gmail Account for creating all new social media (SM) Accounts/Pages
- ❖ Use the create Gmail Account for all correspondence with missing person's (MP) groups. (In Title add "SM Awareness" at the end)

Create Missing Person (MP) Flyer and Banners

- Collect information about the missing person (MP) including name, age, physical description, clothing worn, personal item, known medical conditions and last known location.



How to create a missing person (MP) flyer using a [template](#).

- Proofread flyers and information several times by several people.**
- *Make sure flyer is in ALL languages applicable for the community**
- Upload or scan photos (minimum of 3-1 headshot/1 full body/1 with other identifying features).
- Make sure you have clear and current details from family and from law enforcement.
- Prepare and post on all social media (SM) platforms (sizing is different depending on platform and will need adjusting ideally).
- Send to MEDIA COORDINATOR so it can be sent to media outlets.**
- Banner layout should be at least 4 feet tall as many locations will not allow banners to be displayed if they are smaller.

- Use color copies whenever possible (2 per page can be done for handing out to save money).
- Attach flyers to large bright neon poster board, the bigger and brighter the better. (An 8.5 x 11 flyer is too small to be seen alone from a moving vehicle).
- EMAIL FLYER TO MISSING CHILDREN AGENCIES:**
 - [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#)
800-THE-LOST (800-843-5678)
 - [Missing Persons Clearinghouses](#)
 - [Missing Persons Center](#)

Create FB Group



1. Tap in the top right of Facebook (FB), then tap Groups.
2. Tap Create Group.
3. Enter your group name.
4. Select the privacy option. If you select private, select whether to make your group visible or hidden.
5. Tap Create.
6. Add people to your group.
7. Make sure the Lead Coordinator and Media Coordinator are admins on page/group.

Flyer format on Facebook (FB) is VERY important. Use the following format for the heading/title for Facebook Group: Missing [First Name, Last Name] Special circumstances, City, State

Examples of flyer title on Facebook (FB):

Missing Jane Smith Autistic Child Santa Fe, New Mexico

Help Find Jane Smith Santa Fe, New Mexico

Facebook (FB) flyer tips:

- Use as many photos as possible.
- Use the “events” section to guide bigger search efforts.
- Use “discussions” for posting critical information.
- Keep this area secure to admins only so it stays neat and clean.
- Post [press releases](#) here.
- Post any additional *approved* material given to you by the Lead Coordinator.**
- Allow Facebook (FB) wall to be open and encourage people to post what they have done and where they have searched.
- Track this information on both CalTopo and in workbook/spreadsheet.

Promote Facebook Page

- Encourage all members on Facebook (FB) to invite their “friends” to join the group/page, do this at least twice a day.
- Go to other community boards and local business pages, send a private message (PM) and ask if it’s ok to post information on their page as well.
- Find local band/sports teams pages and ask if you can post on their Facebook (FB) page and if they will send a message out to their fans/friends.
- Find other Facebook (FB) missing person/victim of crime pages and ask to share information.

Create an Instagram Page

- Go to Instagram and create a new page. Use the same login as Facebook (FB) for ease.
- Use the same name/title as the Facebook (FB) page.
- In bio, put a brief overview of missing person (MP) (name, age, missing date, missing from, height, hair color) and a link to the Facebook (FB) Group as well.

- Make sure the page is set to public (settings-privacy-private account set to OFF)
- Post pictures of missing person (MP), flyers, informational updates, pictures of search center (SC), etc. to keep engagement up but also for images to be easily shared by followers.

Create X (Twitter) Page

- Select “sign up with email” and sign up with the same email used for other accounts created.
- Use the same name/title as the Facebook (FB)/Instagram page.
- In bio, put a brief overview of the missing person (MP) (name, age, missing date, missing from, height, hair color) and a link to other social media (SM) as well.
- Make sure the page is set to public (account-settings-privacy-audience and tagging – “protect your tweets” set to OFF).
- Post pictures of the missing person (MP), flyers, updates, pictures of search center (SC), etc. to keep engagement up but also for images to be easily shared by followers. Use images/pictures best for X (Twitter).

Additional Activities

- Updates on Facebook (FB)
- Updates on X (Twitter)
- Updates on Instagram - This is especially important on Instagram as users will spread and disseminate the flyer/information very quickly through stories, posts, and sharing.
- Process all email coming in from social media (SM) platforms.
- Forward any relevant material to the Lead Coordinator.**
- Verify or discount rumors as quickly as possible on social media (SM).

Distribution of Flyer

Print and distribute flyers within a 5-mile radius of Place Last Seen (PLS).

- Solicit help from others to distribute flyers.
- Post flyers and ask if businesses will put flyers the behind counter or in the break room for employees.

Location ideas for posting flyers:

- Fast food restaurants
- Service stations (every store if possible)
- Truck stops
- Restaurants
- Post offices
- Schools and School districts
- Grocery stores
- Banks
- Drive up ATM's
- UPS and FedEx
- Utility companies
- Morgues
- Stores
- Chamber of Commerce
- Shopping centers
- Hotels
- Child related businesses
- Hospitals
- Doctor's offices
- Apartment complexes
- Airports
- Rental car agencies
- Sporting events



- Parks
- Homeless shelters and community kitchens
- Suicide prevention lines (call for email)
- Public transportation
- Libraries, public and schools
- Churches
- City Govt buildings
- Bike couriers
- Meter readers
- Phone companies/trucks
- Cab companies
- Universities

- Dining Halls
- Mail area
- Common areas
- Outside dormitories



Send web version of flyer to groups who are out often:

- Joggers/runners
- Cyclists
- Mom's groups
- Riding (horse and motorcycle) Groups
- Team in training
- Girl/Boy Scouts
- Big Brother/Big Sister
- PTA

Other means of distributing flyers:

- See if local papers will insert flyers in the paper.

- ❑ Ask churches to hand out at their services.
- ❑ Ask pizza companies to place flyers on each box.
- ❑ Ask larger businesses if they will forward flyers to all branch locations.
- ❑ Ask delivery truck drivers to drop off flyers at every stop they make.
- ❑ People know people. Try to find out who knows high profile people including athletes, celebrities, anyone with connections that can help spread the word and help with the media.

Note: A good way to acquire email lists is to use Google categories – Hospitals near me; Truck Stops near me – then create a contact emailing list in Sheets/Excel.

- ❑ **ALWAYS speak of the missing person (MP) in the PRESENT tense.**
- ❑ Use the created Gmail Account for creating all new social media (SM) Accounts/Pages.
- ❑ Use the created Gmail Account for all correspondence with missing person's (MP) groups. (In Title add "Media" at the end).
- ❑ Try to verify or discount rumors as quickly as possible.



DONATIONS COORDINATOR – RESPONSIBILITIES

The community can be a great resource to get a great many things that will be needed. It is better to have only a few people doing this and have a well-documented account of who is soliciting donations.

Soliciting Donations

- Always set a timeframe for accepting in-kind donations to help control the amount of donations received. (Example: Friday from 12-4pm)
- Volunteers will need food and water - Make sure to give a date/time window for these donations so you can control how much and when donations come in.
- 100's if not 1,000's of flyers will need to be printed so contact local printers for donations
- Banners can be made.
- All these things can be acquired by gracious donations from the community.
- Make sure to thank these people/businesses on social media (SM)!
- [Track all donations](#)

A quick and effective way to get donations started:

- Food/Water - Ask local church groups for help.
- Food – Ask local restaurants as they may be willing to bring in food.
- Contact the Salvation Army and Red Cross as they may help.
- Post donation requests to Facebook (FB)/X (Twitter).
- Donate or return any extra food and beverages to a charity organization.
- Request non-perishable items (Jerky packs, granola bars, etc.).

Flyer and Banner Donations

- Print shops
- Office stores (often corporate offices can give permission to specific store)

- Local businesses
- Colleges
- Local Banner shops

Additional Actions:

- It is vitally important that volunteers receive a meal at the conclusion of their assignment. If you do not or cannot fulfill this obligation to volunteers, you will be hard pressed to retain their services over the long run.
- Always make sure to publicly thank the businesses and individuals who donate in the media and on Facebook (FB)/X (Twitter) for their generosity (no matter how small or large).** Make sure to send them thank you letters/cards after the search is complete. It can make the difference between them donating or not again if the need should ever arise.



SEARCH CENTER (SC) SET UP

ORGANIZING YOUR COMMUNITY SEARCH CENTER (SC)

Set up a central communications center where all teams, volunteers and family members can gather and where all information can be received, logged, and distributed. *While a private residence can be used as a search center (SC), it is not ideal. A more public area that can handle traffic, parking, and is accessible to the community is best.*

Considerations for the facility/Community Search Center:

- Easy access
- Ample parking
- Available for at least a week
- Available 24/7
- Ideally with a separate, private room for conducting sensitive meetings and posting private information.**
 - There are some basic things you will want in the private space.
 - Confidential information can be either posted in the private room or kept in a folder or binder in the private space.
 - Privacy should always be respected.** Do not post contact information for the family, teams, law enforcement, etc. anywhere the public can see. Keep all information up to date.

SET UP A PRIVATE AREA OR CONFIDENTIAL BINDER

Information gathered which is considered confidential, **MUST** stay at the Community Search Center (SC). **The information SHOULD ALSO BE MAINTAINED IN GOOGLE SHEETS TO ALLOW REMOTE ACCESS 24/7.**

Information collected:

- Family contact information (cell, home phone, email)
- Core Leadership Group contact information (cell, home phone, email)
- Law Enforcement contact information
- Media contact information

- Display a current and detailed map of the area of the missing person's Place Last Seen (PLS)**
- Generate detailed maps in **CalTopo** and display them on large monitors and/or can be printed on paper and posted.
- Map out grid areas to establish clear boundaries for each search zone.**
 - Number gridded map areas
 - Highlight sections that have been searched.
 - Use a different color highlighter for each day (keep a key on side of map)
 - Mark type of searching on map
 - Mark any evidence found on the map.
- Divide the search area and assign teams to specified zones.
- Clearly identify communication protocol and set up a central communication/message area for Core Leadership Group**
- Use [Telegram App](#). Telegram Messenger is a globally accessible freemium, cross-platform, encrypted, cloud-based and centralized instant messaging service.



SET UP PUBLIC AREA

- Multiple photos of the *missing person (MP)*, a collage if possible-the larger the better. (This is why we are here!)
- Large dry erase board or paper
- Show highlights of what the community has been doing.
- Number of community members out searching (daily and total)
- Number of flyers distributed (daily and total)
- Number of members of Facebook (FB)
- List of areas needing to be searched.
- Copy of *current* flyer
- [Press releases](#)

- Information for online sources to follow. Utilization of [QR Codes](#) technology is extremely efficient in re-directing to social media (SM) sites.
 - Facebook (FB)
 - X (Twitter)
 - Instagram
 - Other social media
 - Website
- A map showing locations that have already been searched. Display map(s) using computer/monitor and/or paper. Use a service such as CalTopo Map.
- ***BEFORE DISPLAYING MAP(S) REMOVE ALL SENSITIVE INFORMATION SUCH AS POTENTIAL EVIDENCE FOUND.***



THE SEARCH

CONDUCTING THE SEARCH

It is essential that local law enforcement is contacted as soon as you are aware someone is missing. Your job is to assist the official Search and Rescue (SAR) operation by checking any areas that Search and Rescue (SAR) has not searched.

Search And Rescue

SEARCH BASICS

Do not impede official SAR operations.

- Always abide by the law and respect private property during searches.
- You have every right to be out there looking for the missing person (MP) as long as you obey all laws.

Searches are NOT a place for children.

- No child should be out on a search.
- There are many dangers out in the field (cliffs, holes, snakes, sharp objects) not to mention the potential of finding the missing person (MP) deceased.

Searches are NOT a place for the family.

- The family should NOT be out actively searching.
- If they have pertinent information, they can have someone relay that to the search coordinator.

Searches are NOT a place for pets.

- There are many hazards during searches, do not put animals at undue risk.
- Dogs who are not trained and nationally certified by a reputable organization are a safety liability as well as a potential case liability.
- Search dogs should be called upon by law enforcement.
- Upstanding and ethical Search and Rescue (SAR) teams do not charge law enforcement for services.

SEARCH CENTER FLOW

REGISTRATION TABLE

Make sure every person, including family and Core Leadership Group, sign In/Out.

- [Sign In/Out Sheet](#) for ALL volunteers.
- Make photocopies or at minimum write down FULL NAME and Driver's License #'s for EACH and EVERYONE involved in the community search. Law enforcement may need this information later. KEEP THIS INFORMATION IN A PRIVATE and SECURE PLACE.
- Use of wristbands or hand stamps to visually verify that all volunteers have registered and signed in.

STAGING/PRE-BRIEFING AREA

- Printed QR Codes and instructions for installing QR Codes. Have QR Codes for both Android and Apple for the following:
 - CalTopo App
 - CalTopo Search Specific Map
 - Zello (Radio communications) App
 - GPS Camera App - GPS Camera 55/Dioptra/GeoCamera/GPS Map Camera
- Pre-Briefing Slide Deck on a projector (continuous loop or it can also be posted/emailed before the search)
- [Pre-briefing Presentation](#)



BRIEFING/DEBRIEFING AREA

- The purpose of a briefing is to go over search methods, identify and assign areas to be searched. (Use the [Briefing Checklist](#))
- The purpose of a debriefing is to review all aspects of the search once complete and then identify the next steps. (Use the [Team Debriefing Checklist](#))
 - Solicit and select Team Leaders

- If possible, find people with Search and Rescue (SAR), law enforcement or military experience who would like to take on this role. **ASK AT SIGN UP.**
- Team leaders will help their group and be a point person to:
 - Briefing and Debriefing ([Briefing Checklist](#) and [Team Debriefing Checklist](#))
 - Communicate with the Search Coordinator
 - Aid in training volunteers
 - Use local volunteers to aid in search but be sure they are led by experienced team leaders.

THE SEARCH

- **Team leaders (arrive 30 minutes early)**
 - Get cell #'s and radio check on Zello.
 - Brief on search objectives for the day.
 - Hand out team assignments to team leaders.
 - Include [Task Assignment Form](#) (TAF) Roster sheet for their team (see [Task Assignment Form](#) (TAF) template).
 - Give a stack of flyers for passing out.
 - Give **Search Briefing** sheet that will be used for briefing each team (see template).

STATUS BOARD

- The [status board](#) helps to keep a quick visual reference on all the searching going on (how many teams, time departed, zones searched, etc).
- For small efforts a printed Google Doc is sufficient, for larger needs, a poster board with lines drawn is better (See [Team Status Board](#) template).

BEFORE YOU GO

1. Stay organized. Know where people are searching.
2. Only search in groups/teams (minimum of 3 people per group/team), **NEVER search alone.**
3. Know your limits. Do not create another search/rescue (SAR) situation.
4. Stay off private/restricted property. Always abide by the law and respect private property during searches.
5. Obey all laws.
6. **Do not interfere/impede any official searches.**
7. Make sure you are prepared with necessary supplies.
 - Food
 - Water
 - Clothing Layers
 - Appropriate shoes
 - CalTopo - Map, compass, GPSR
 - Flagging Tape
 - Flashlight
 - Whistle
 - Camera GPSR App
 - Zello App

SEARCHING BASICS

- DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING**
- Use CalTopo to document where the team is starting, what time it is, and how many people are in your group.
- Use tracks feature in CalTopo (this will show exactly where has been searched and how thoroughly)
- Report start of searching to Lead Coordinator at the Community Search Center (SC) via Zello

- Search systematically in a grid (divide areas on a map into small “grid” sections and then mark off as you complete), **thoroughly covering one area looking HIGH and LOW before moving on.** Remember, if the person is down or injured, they can be right next to you on a trail or behind a dumpster and you won’t see them unless you are almost on top of them.
- The more thoroughly you can search an area the higher the percentage will be.
- Slower and more thorough is better than more mileage covered!**
- Call out the missing person’s (MP) name continually (assuming that they will not run)
- Look for signs that someone has been in the area:
 - Crushed vegetation
 - Food/water wrappers and containers
 - Footprints
- Mark anything with tape that looks like it could be connected to the missing person (MP), mark it on CalTopo and report it via phone/web.

POTENTIAL EVIDENCE

Potential evidence includes anything that matches the description(s) of clothing, personal items *AND* anything that appears “out of the ordinary”, shoe prints, blood, bodily fluids, hair, etc. **Photos are necessary.** Take photos from several different angles using the installed camera app. **WITHOUT** touching anything. **Place something in the photo for size reference such as a quarter, a dollar bill, a pen, etc.**

- Do NOT touch, lift, or move anything that could be evidence.**
- Call the Search Center (SC) immediately if any clues or items related to the missing person (MP) are found. **ONLY** contact local law enforcement if protocol requires you to do so.
- Secure the site and keep people out of the area.**
- Document any findings and their exact location on map/on CalTopo and write detailed description, date, time, and photograph.

FINISHING THE SEARCH DAY

- Ensure that all teams/searchers have returned and are accounted for.
- Scan and file all hard copy paperwork.
- Scan all paperwork and upload to the group Google Drive.** Use Genius Scan or a like app, computer, or tablet to scan.
 - [Sign In/Out sheets.](#)
 - [Status Boards](#)
 - [Task Assignment Forms](#) (TAFs)
 - [Debrief Logs](#)
- Reconcile all paperwork to appropriate workbooks/folders.
 - [Search Registration and Teams Workbook](#)
 - [Community Search Registration Form](#)
 - [Community Search Tips and Info Workbook](#)



CONCLUSION

The information discussed in this workbook is not theoretical: every idea, concept and strategy has been field tested under the most stressful and extreme circumstances. As long as the focus remains on finding the missing child, multi-disciplinary alliances will enhance, not hinder the recovery effort.

Although every case is different, certain universal truths apply. There is a family, panicked and desperate to recover their missing child. With proper leadership and guidance, the community is eager and willing to participate in that recovery effort. A responsible media will coordinate with the other stakeholders to maintain a high-profile story and distribute timely and accurate case information over the long term if necessary. And finally, if law enforcement shares responsibilities not directly related to the investigation, progress can be achieved with greater efficiency.

Although success is enhanced by cooperation, not every recovery effort is successful. Despite the best efforts, some kidnapped children are not recovered alive and the whereabouts of others remains a mystery to this day. However, since every kidnapped/missing child/person deserves equal attention, hindsight should not dictate strategy, because every well-organized recovery effort will teach us something new: something that we can pass down to the next desperate family and community seeking answers through action. Organizing to help those in need demonstrates the best of humanity and sets an example for today's children that they can pass down to their children. By linking arms and working for a common cause, together we can change the world!

Remember, never give up hope!

