

Put on the Cape: A Foundation for Hope

Cause Play Handbook



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About Put on the Cape: A Foundation for Hope

www.putonthecape.org

The largest charity of our kind, we introduce superhero mythology to unleash the inner hero of children suffering acute abuse. We fill the closets at children advocacy centers to fill the needs of the children and their families. This takes the burden off the centers so they can focus on healing children from the trauma they have endured. We are proud to serve child advocacy centers throughout the Phoenix metro area in Arizona supporting Scottsdale, Chandler, Gilbert, Salt River Tribal, Glendale, Surprise, Avondale, Buckeye, and Goodyear. and the Northern Michigan Children's Assessment Center and Children Advocacy Network in Michigan. Annually, these centers help more than 15,000 victims of child abuse, sexual violence, and neglect as well as domestic violence and sexual assault. Put on the cape and help us help them. Be a hero.

What is Cause Play?

Cause Play is POTC's term for cosplaying for a cause. We have members who are approved to cosplay (our Cause Players) and members who provide Behind-the-Scenes Support. Both are equally important to achieving our mission. Members may volunteer in either role or both. Approved Cause Players may be requested to serve as Behind-the-Scenes Support when needed. In other words, divas need not apply.

It is not about us. It is about the children.

State Chapters

POTC has started a chapter program to serve our mission around the nation. It is possible that you may meet some of the members from our chapters. We are absolutely thrilled to expand our impact in this way. You will see announcements as we add new chapters.

Board of Directors

- Sean Reavie, Founder, CEO, and Board President Sean@putonthecape.org
- Danielle Gilmore, Secretary Danielle@putonthecape.org
- PJ Hooke, Treasurer PJ@putonthecape.org
- K Royal, Counsel kroyal@putonthecape.org

Cause Play Admins

- Nathaniel LaFond, Commanding Officer rockabillyruckus@gmail.com
- Casey Simmons, Commanding Officer isyesac@gmail.com
- Matt Mantiñan, Compliance Officer mmantinan88@gmail.com
- Jamie Mullins, Compliance Officer Jamie_mllns@yahoo.com

QUALIFICATIONS & APPLICATION PROCESS

Becoming a member of POTC Cause Play is a defined process that includes application, clearance, and trial membership (New Hero Initiative). We have two types of member volunteers: Cause Players and Behind the Scenes managers. A member can apply to and serve as one or both types of volunteers.

Cause Players: Members who dress as characters to interact at events

Behind-the-Scenes Support: Members who support Cause Players at events, assist with set-up and take-down at events, carrying water, taking pictures, directing them to children who are too shy to come up or cannot, running interference with over-zealous fans, etc.

Step One: Application, Review, and Preliminary Approval

1. Application

The candidate will complete and submit an application. Applications can be found on our website or may be obtained from a current admin member of the group.

- Cause Players must include information on their proposed costume / character. Please see page 6 for costume guidelines.
- Read and be prepared to sign the Code of Conduct requirements.

*****Any costumes approved for use with our group may not be used with any other groups*****

2. Review of Applications

Review of applications include:

- Application
- Costuming photos if relevant
- Social media pages (see page 5 for social media)
- Other information as applicable

If further information is required, the Admin team will reach out to the applicant.

3. Preliminary Approval

The Admin team will review the application, vote, and notify the applicant via the email address used to submit the application.

- If not approved, the Admins may provide an explanation of the decision and determine whether there are elements to address and re-submit or just notify the applicant of the denial.
- If approved at this stage, the applicant shall take the next steps:
 - Meet with at least two Admin members to discuss POTC, its goals, and how the applicant and proposed characters fit the mission.
 - The meeting can be online, arranged in-person, or via a public event as a walking interview.
 - If at a public event, the applicant may be in costume, but it should be a costume that has been submitted as part of the application.
 - The Admin members in the meeting will then vote and notify the applicant via the same email address.
 - If approved at this stage, the applicant will proceed to the second and third parts of the application process as detailed below, which may be completed in any order or simultaneously.
 - If not approved at this stage, Admins will notify the applicant.

Step Two: Mission Critical Education

Our organization's mission statement is to help children in need. Because of this, we require all members to complete ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) training to better understand what these children are going through, as well as tour a local Child Advocacy Center to get an in-person view of the centers we are helping.

- ACES training
- Tour Child Advocacy Center

Be aware that members are required to obtain a Level 1 Clearance Fingerprint Card within 90 days of approved membership.

Step Three: New Hero Initiative

Applicants who are preliminarily approved must complete the New Hero Initiative program.

- Event attendance requirements
 - Cause Players: Attend 3 events: 2 in approved costume, 1 as Behind-the-Scenes Support
 - Behind the Scenes: Attend 2 POTC events
- Sign the Code of Conduct and Release

As a volunteer organization, we are subject to events as arranged through other organizations in addition to our own. We may or may not have availability that is convenient for applicant timing or location. We will try to accommodate needs as much as possible.

Once these requirements are complete, the POTC admin team will reevaluate the entire applicant submission for final consideration. If POTC Admin team determines the applicant is a good fit for the group, the applicant will be notified. Please keep in mind that any Admin member has the authority to voice their opinion on the readiness of a new hero, and even upon completion of the above requirements, POTC may have an applicant complete additional steps prior to final approval.

Step Four: Approved Membership

Once notified of acceptance, the new member will be invited to our private Facebook group and have full access to all events and communications. The signed Code of Conduct and Release will continue to apply.

All Approved Members must receive a Level 1 Clearance Fingerprint Card within 90 days. <https://www.azdps.gov/services/public/fingerprint> Inability or unwillingness to obtain one is grounds for dismissal. POTC will reimburse \$20 of the cost for those with financial need. Admins will record the clearance in the volunteer files.

- Signed Code of Conduct and Release
- Join Facebook group
- Level 1 fingerprint clearance

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct outlines the required standards of behavior and practice by volunteers in undertaking their role with Put on the Cape Cause Play. While participating in events where POTC is present in any capacity (e.g., as convention guests, cosplay judges, event auxiliary support, etc.), you represent POTC, its supporters, staff, and other volunteers.

We expect our members to abide by all laws (Federal, State, and local) while attending events with POTC, in addition to any policies set by the host event site, operators, sponsoring organization, and POTC.

SOCIAL MEDIA

POTC uses social media in its work and recognizes that those who are involved in its activities may also use social media either as part of their role or in their private lives. The purpose of this policy is to be very clear on what POTC expects from our volunteers when using social media.

It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for POTC, and that social media is *never* private. Everyone is “friends” with someone even if the account is non-public. If you are associated with POTC, you are representing us. POTC requires members to maintain a “Clean Public Face.” This means on Facebook, Instagram and/or any other social media platform, members must not post any of the following:

- Disparaging and/or defamatory statements about POTC or its affiliates
- Jokes, memes, or any discriminatory language based on sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, political stance, disability, looks, or ethnicity
- Any nude/lewd photography or videos

POTC reserves the right to refuse or remove a member based on their social media platform(s) displaying such images or comments above – or any other similar content that if a child, victim, member of the class being insulted, employee of the centers, funders, or donors would view as insulting. We are an organization based on the love of cosplaying and bringing joy to others to support child trauma centers. We do not want any opinions or disagreements to disturb that goal. This includes making comments on posts that are inflammatory. We may randomly check your social media and we will also respond to complaints. When in doubt, we may decide to err on the side of caution and dismiss the member in question. This does not mean you have to be perfect – none of us are. However, we do expect you to be discrete and professional. If you would not hand it to your HR department at work, do not post it while you are associated with POTC.

Please remember, we are not the government, we are permitted to set the rules that matter to us and public presence and perception is critical to us, our funders, sponsors, and centers we support.

BE IN CHARACTER

It is POTC’s desire to allow a child to meet their hero. Because of this, we require all of our Cause Players to appropriately represent the character they portray. This means if your character has friends they are not with (e.g., Elsa in Frozen without Anna or Olaf), and a child asks you where they are, you must respond with your best answer as the character would answer. Do your best to remain in character at all times unless you are out of sight of children or the attendees of the event. We strive to be heroes, real life character actors, and to convince a child (or other attendees, such as individuals with developmental disorders) that you are the “real deal.”

If you do not think you can play a character or wear a certain costume comfortably, or POTC admin determines that you do not fit the character accurately enough, we will ask you to reconsider and go with a different character.

COSTUME GUIDELINES

All costumes must pass Admin approval for modesty and accuracy before being worn at events. POTC requires all members, regardless of status, length of time within the organization, or other qualifier, to abide by the guidelines as defined below.

- Appropriate undergarments must be worn by all members at any POTC event. Undergarments should not be visible. Where applicable given the member and costume, this includes but is not limited to:
 - Lined bras
 - Seamless undergarments
 - Dance belts
 - Costumes with skirts/kilts higher than knee level must wear shorts/bloomers under the skirt / kilt.
- Spanx/compression garments as needed or desired.
- Ensure costumes are child appropriate. For example, bikinis will not be approved.
- Costumes that expose certain areas of the body should include appropriate cover-ups:
 - Legs require skin-toned opaque tights or leggings that completely cover any body art present. (Nylon pantyhose do not count.)
 - Belly/stomach/abdomen requires a skin-toned leotard.
 - Chest/cleavage requires a cleavage cover-up.
 - Body art or piercings should be character appropriate or covered.
- Exceptions may be made after requested and approved from Admin, based on weather considerations, character appropriateness, etc.. Do NOT assume an exception.

Discountdance.com and Amazon.com are great resources for locating above-mentioned garments.

COSTUME APPROVALS

We welcome all genres. Given the kid-friendly nature of our mission, please select kid-friendly characters to represent.

To submit a costume for approval, please send an email or Facebook message to any or all of the Admin members with clear photos of the front, back and side views of the completed ensemble. You must pass all items listed above when submitting the costume for approval. Costume submissions will be responded to within 48 hours of receipt.

- If your costume is approved, it will be classified as one of two costume types: “convention only” or “all events.”
 - If the costume submission is voted to be a “convention only” you may wear it to POTC convention events only.
 - If your costume has been approved as an “all events” costume, you may wear it to any POTC event you choose.

POTC reserves the right to refuse a costume/cosplay on any grounds or reasons.

In addition, POTC believes strongly in character quality over quantity for any one member. Rather than investing in 10 costumes that are susceptible to easy damage, we would prefer to

have members invest in one or two really excellent costumes. As such, we approve members with primary choices for certain characters and encourage secondary choices. We expect members to cooperate on character selection but will step in as Admin to settle any disagreement on who represents what character at an event.

HYGIENE

Proper hygiene must be practiced when participating in POTC events. Clean and neatly groomed hair, brushed teeth, clean hands and nails, clean costumes/clothes, and the utilization of deodorant/ antiperspirant are requirements for POTC's events. Members should avoid using strong perfumes, colognes, or scented lotions.

DRESS CODE

When arriving or departing from an event out-of-costume, please ensure your attire is clean, neat, and appropriate. For example, no holes in jeans, spaghetti straps, or clothing with inappropriate images or language on them are allowed. If you would like to purchase a POTC polo shirt, please contact Admin.

If attending an event in a Behind-the-Scenes Support capacity, please ensure you are wearing a POTC t-shirt or polo, in addition to the dress code requirements. POTC will provide you with a POTC t-shirt.

COSTUME WEAPONS & ACCESSORIES

If a member's cosplay has realistic weapons and they attend a POTC event, they must be zip-tied or securely fastened to their person/cosplay at all times, or not brought at all. Realistic weapons must also have orange tips or handles that are not easily removable by a child. This includes any type of firearm, swords, or anything that could be mistaken for a real weapon by an eventgoer. If the weapon is very obviously unrealistic in appearance, e.g., wands, blasters, helmet lasers, etc., they are not required to be zip-tied/securely fastened to the cosplayer's person/cosplay. When in doubt, secure it or leave it at home.

Convention requirements overrule POTC requirements, and photographers may use their discretion during photoshoots.

BEHAVIOR ON-SITE

POTC maintains a child-friendly environment and reputation. Profanity at any POTC events is strictly prohibited. No rudeness or disparaging comments toward other members or eventgoers, crude hand gestures, mean or hateful language, discriminatory speech and/or actions, or harassment (sexual or otherwise). This includes jokes that could be insulting.

No touching permitted unless clearly welcome. This includes no touching other POTC members without clear permission, do not assume permission.

Children usually want to hug beloved characters. Hopefully, you are open to this given the nature of our activities, but please alert Admin if you have any concerns or hesitations. Do not pick up children or other people. Occasionally, this may be unavoidable, but we must be able to rely on your good judgment given the information you learn through ACES along with social skills and cues. When there are special considerations to take into account, Admin will alert you in the event notification.

MEDIA

By participating in POTC events, you are explicitly granting all rights and permissions to any and all photography, video, likeness, image, recordings, and any other medium the possibly exists or will exist while you are dressed as a character, operating as Behind-the-Scenes Support, and/or attending and event on behalf of POTC. If you are not there on our behalf, do not appear that you are by what you wear, say, or do.

If you are attending an event as a Behind the Scenes photographer, please remember to capture all members present at any given event. Unless arranged otherwise, send all photos to POTC immediately following the event. POTC owns the rights to those photos.

SAFETY

If at any time, you feel unsafe at an event, alert Admins immediately or any Behind-the-Scenes Support.

If you need to be extracted from a fan engagement that is taking your time and attention, support should watch and be prepared to provide you with a polite exit.

YELLOW/ RED WARNINGS

Any member who experiences an unwanted behavior or remarks from another member, should feel comfortable alerting the member to the unwanted aspect. If a member tells you “Yellow” or “Red” - based on the general understanding:

- **yellow** being “this is undesirable, you are offending me, please watch your behavior” and
- **red** being “you went way too far, this is over the line, leave right now”

Understand that this indicates an unwanted behavior or remark and stop immediately. The offended member may also feel free not to use this process but report this interaction to the Admins or Board (emails provided below) for immediate attention.

This warning system is in place to provide a mechanism to alert offenders who may not know that what they are doing is offensive to another member. The person who is offended may choose to use this system or not.

It is entirely voluntary for one member to warn another, it is not voluntary for the member being warned to stop. Any warning should be reported to Admins, but we understand if there are exceptional circumstances left to member discretion. However, we cannot address it if we do not know about it.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

POTC requires all members to abide by and agree to submit to our three-strike disciplinary action outline, in case of any/all incident reports from within or outside the POTC members.

Violation of any of our requirements or expectations may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal from an event or the group. POTC Admin reserves the right to determine any circumstances not outlined in our Code of Conduct or other documents that may warrant disciplinary action, e.g., social media conduct, uncivil behavior reported by event sponsor, etc. Admins and POTC are not required to assign strikes in any order and you are not guaranteed three opportunities to break the rules.

To be very clear, the penalties listed below and assigned a one, two, or three level are not guaranteed to start at Strike 1. We have an absolute zero-level tolerance.

Anyone who witnesses, experiences, or otherwise learns of a member (or Admin) engaged in any of the behaviors listed below or not following the requirements of this Code of Conduct may report the behavior to any Admin member or to the Board of Directors of POTC. You may reach the board at: sean@putonthecape.org (president and founder) or kroyal@putonthecape.org (counsel).

The disciplinary action to follow a strike are as follows:

STRIKE 1: a meeting with the member will be set by one Admin member; and/or written warning (sent via email, text, or Facebook messenger); restriction from all POTC events for 2 weeks.

STRIKE 2: an in-person or virtual meeting with the member will be set by two Admin members; restriction from all POTC events for 1 month (4 weeks).

STRIKE 3: if it is under the Automatic Strike 3 list, the member will be permanently removed from all POTC-related pages, chats, and otherwise. If it is under the Strike list, but you have 3 or more strikes, penalties may be reduced or modified at the discretion of Admin.

All penalties may be reduced or modified at the discretion of the Admin team.

Please be advised, Admin tracks strikes very carefully. Because we are a 501(c)3, we are held to a different level of scrutiny and requirements for our members by law. The following listed below are all things that count as a strike towards a member. A strike is given when a member violates any of the below as a member of the POTC at any and all POTC events.

The following all count as a **STRIKE**:

- Breaking any requirements listed in this Code of Conduct in any way, at an event or online in a POTC chat, discussion, or page, including social media posts or commentary.
- One no-show for an event with no communications whatsoever. (If you have posted in the event page in the discussion [not a comment], texted or messaged an admin member, this counts as communication to cancel.)
- Spreading secondhand stories or badmouthing other members behind their back.
- Attending a POTC event in a costume that is not pre-approved including any instructions you were provided with (i.e., accessories, undergarments, etc.)
- Not working your assigned booth time at a convention.
- Being 30 minutes or later to an event without 24 hours' notice to an Admin member. Notice counts as: posting in the designated discussion section of an event page or a text/message to an Admin member.
- Showing up for events with unclean clothing/costumes, bad breath, body odor, unkempt hair, or costume smelling like smoke or other unpleasant odors that kids will notice, regardless of if attending as Behind the Scenes or Cause Player.
- Committing to events and canceling repeatedly. Members need to be aware of their own abilities and schedules.
- Overheard and being given a verbal warning 3 or more times about negative discussion regarding fellow members, cosplayers, vendors, conventions or events and their organizers.
- Disrespecting a child's boundaries when visually uncomfortable with the character you are portraying or other characters around you (i.e., following a child around an event, forcing hugs or physical interaction with a child, picking a child up without permission, asking a child to do something a child shouldn't be doing, going somewhere alone with a child, etc.).

- Smoking, drinking, or vaping at an event in costume where kids / attendees can see you.
- Posting defaming or disparaging statements regarding POTC or POTC members on any/all social media platforms including group messages created with any/all POTC members. A private message between 1 on 1 is exempted - unless the comments are directed to the person.
- Verbal or any sexual harassment or unwanted attention (stalking, etc.).

STRIKE 1 is defined as any of the above on their first occurrence.

STRIKE 2 is defined as 2 of the above-listed STRIKES.

STRIKE 3 is defined as 3 or more of the above-listed STRIKES.

Certain scenarios warrant an automatic strike 3 which will lead to expulsion. We have these in place to protect POTC from legal actions and prosecution against itself or any of its members. Members who have been expelled are welcome to reapply after one year. Strikes will be removed from a member after one year without further disciplinary action.

AUTOMATIC STRIKE 3 (expulsion) may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical altercations with children, other adults at events, or other POTC members.
- Breaking of any Federal, State, or City laws while attending an event.
- Showing up for POTC events inebriated, high, or otherwise impaired.
- Attending events with real knives, firearms, or defensive equipment and paraphernalia, etc. including concealed carry weapons.
- Physical Sexual Harassment, after investigations by the proper authorities and substantiated by 3rd party.
- Any other behavior identified as serious enough to warrant expulsion.

Once a member has passed six (6) months with no second strike or a year with no third strike, the member may petition the Admin team to re-level the member to no strikes.

CHANGES/ UPDATES

Admin may update these requirements and will notify the group.

VOLUNTEER / NO LIABILITY

By participating in POTC events, you are a volunteer. You are not an employee and POTC does not owe you compensation or any sort. You agree not to hold us liable for any injury or harm you experience to yourself, another person, belongings, etc. In return, POTC agrees not to hold you financially accountable for any harm you might cause, directly or indirectly - unless you do so intentionally or out of gross negligence.

As a 501(c)3 designated entity under IRS, your expenses for travel and costuming may be tax deductible as charitable expenses. You should consult an accountant to verify.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As a volunteer, you acknowledge receiving this Code of Conduct and Release of Liability, with requirements addressing:

- | | |
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| <u>SOCIAL MEDIA</u> | <u>BEHAVIOR ON-SITE</u> |
| <u>COSTUME GUIDELINES</u> | <u>MEDIA</u> |
| <u>COSTUME APPROVALS</u> | <u>SAFETY</u> |
| <u>HYGIENE</u> | <u>BE IN CHARACTER</u> |
| <u>DRESS CODE</u> | <u>YELLOW / RED WARNINGS</u> |
| <u>COSTUME WEAPONS & ACCESSORIES</u> | <u>DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES</u> |

You agree to abide by these requirements, including updates and changes, or withdraw from POTC activities. You acknowledge the need to obtain a Level 1 Clearance Fingerprint Card within 90 days of signing this document.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____