



Volunteer Handbook 2016 Season

Preston H. Thomas Theatre in the Merry-Go-Round Playhouse

<i>Oklahoma!</i>	June 1 – June 22
<i>From Here to Eternity</i>	June 29 – July 20
<i>Crazy For You</i>	July 27 – Aug.17
<i>Treasure Island</i>	Aug. 24 – Sept. 10
<i>Million Dollar Quartet</i>	Sept. 15- Oct.1
<i>Tenderly: The Rosemary Clooney Musical</i>	Oct. 5- Oct. 19
<i>Smokey Joe's Cafe</i>	Nov. 2- Nov. 19

Callahan Theater at Nazareth College Arts Center

Austen's Pride: A New Musical of Pride and Prejudice July 13 – July 24

Theater Mack

The PiTCH June 16 – July 30

Audience Services Staff

Director of Audience Services & Patron Relations

Maria Barredo

Audience Services Associate

Lisa Robillard

Group Sales Manager

Bonnie Richards

Audience Services Assistants

Cheryl Barredo

John Connors

Tish Flummerfelt

Michaela Groth

Josh Korte

Karen Smith

Betty Walowsky

Front of House Manager

Kristie Gutierrez

Front of House Assistants

Alyese Crist

Demitri Payne

Starting May 16, please contact the FOH: volunteers@merry-go-round.com or 315-784-1FOH (364)

Welcome!

On behalf of the Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival’s Front of House team, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to you for volunteering your time. Without your commitment and service, we would not be able to offer our patrons a seamless and enjoyable experience. This handbook will provide an overview of our Front of House (FOH) operation and familiarize you with policies and procedures.

We value your time and dedication to help make each season a great experience for our patrons. Whether a veteran or rookie Usher – you’re part of the Festival family and your hard work is greatly appreciated!

Best,
Maria L. Barredo
Director of Audience Services & Patron Relations

Volunteer Handbook

Eligibility - You must be at least **16 years of age** to usher. There are no pre-training requirements for becoming an usher for the Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival.

Parking – You will receive a parking pass for when you are working at the Playhouse.

Etiquette/Dress Code – Please refrain from chewing gum or wearing strongly scented perfume. For safety purposes all ushers should wear closed-toe shoes and please nothing too short, too tight, too wrinkly or too low cut. In order to bring a professional look, please adhere to the following dress codes:

- Merry-Go-Round Playhouse at Emerson Park: white blouse/shirt and black slacks/skirts.
- The PiTCH at Theater Mack: business-casual, jeans are acceptable, but they should be “nice jeans” that look clean and professional.

Sign Up - The prime time to sign-up for the season is during the Usher Tea. There will also be a calendar located at the Playhouse showing any/all available usher time slots.

Attendance - We rely on you to attend on the days that you selected to usher. You will receive a phone call or email from a member of the FOH team two days prior to the day you have committed to ushering. If you need to cancel please let us know ASAP! In order to maintain operations it is imperative that all positions are filled. The sooner we can find your replacement the better. Please note that if you fail to notify the FOH team of an upcoming absence and are subsequently a no-show that this will affect your eligibility to usher in the future.

Arrival and Signing In - Please arrive ONE HOUR prior to show time.

Show Time	House Opens	Usher Arrival Time
2:00 pm	1:30 pm	1:00 pm
7:30 pm	7:00 pm	6:30 pm
8:00 pm	7:30 pm	7:00 pm

Preshow - A sign in sheet will be posted in the FOH office. Once you sign in, please collect your usher tag and bag. Your usher bag should include a few stuffed programs, a glove for clean-up and a working flashlight. If anything is missing please inform FOH staff. You are now ready to help stuff show inserts into the season playbill. These will be set up for you upon your arrival. A member of the FOH team will be there for any questions you have. Every show insert(s) is slightly different and often the procedure changes- never be afraid to ask questions. Fifteen minutes before the house opens we will go over specifics for the show, seat numbers, what to do if a problem occurs and assign positions.

Opening the House - Once the house is opened we ask that you remain in your assigned positions for the duration of preshow. You will be responsible for checking tickets and assisting patrons with locating their seats. If any problem arises alert a member of the FOH team.

Beginning the Show – Most shows will have latecomers. We ask that if you see a patron entering the theatre when it is dark, that you turn your flashlight on and guide them to their seat(s). You may need to use your flashlight if a patron needs to leave during the performance. Once the show has begun, you are welcome to take a seat on one of the provided stools. Occasionally there will be seats available in the rear of the house that you may sit in. Please sit in an aisle seat so that you are able to provide assistance quickly. **You are not guaranteed a seat.**

Intermission- During the applause of the last number in Act I we ask you to go to your previously assigned positions. Throughout intermission please ensure that no one takes any pictures. We also ask that during this time you observe that operations run smoothly. Once FOH closes the house you may return to your seat and enjoy the rest of the show.

Audience Talk Back Discussions - After selected performances patrons can enjoy a Q&A with the cast, creative team - hosted by Brett Smock.

End of Show – After the last patron has exited the theatre we ask that you remain in the theatre to help quickly clean the house. There will be a glove in your bag to pick up trash, programs, or personal belongings. FOH will provide you with waste bins. Once they have given the all clear sign, you may return to the FOH office. At this time you may add items to the lost and found. Before leaving make sure that you have returned your bag and your usher name tag.

Restrooms – Merry-Go-Round Playhouse: **RESTROOMS ARE LOCATED OUTSIDE.** Restroom 1: is the closest/smallest, opens about two hours before show time and is located outside House Right. Restroom 2: is bigger and located past the parking lot off of House Left. Theater Mack: Restrooms are located downstairs with a handicap restroom on the 1st floor.

Patron Courtesies – We will provide hearing assist devices to those who need it at the Playhouse. An ID from the patron will be required. For children or petite adults, there are a limited number of soft booster cushions available in the FOH office. For patrons who communicate with American Sign Language, we are offering an interpreted performance at selected productions.

Rules of the House

- ~ NEW! Food/beverages are allowed at the Playhouse and Theater Mack.
- ~ **NO** videotaping or photography allowed in the theatre, before, during or after the performance.
- ~ Cellphones, pagers and any noise makers must be silenced. Anyone using one will be asked to momentarily leave the performance.
- ~ No smoking in the theatre or restrooms, this includes electronic cigarettes.
- ~ For safety purposes anyone using a walker is asked to place it along the side of the house behind the beam closest to the patron for the duration of the performance.

New this year - Usher Evaluations

“Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve.... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

In order to ensure that we are providing the best possible patron experience we will be implementing Usher evaluations. Ushers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Promptness – Arriving on time and ready to work

Professionalism – Adhering to the dress code and maintaining a calm/friendly demeanor

Reliability – Minimal absences and providing adequate notice of cancellation

Attitude – Conversing with patrons and staff in a polite, friendly manner

Accuracy – Ability to balance the concessions drawer and accurately seat patrons

2016 Evaluation Criteria				
<u>Promptness</u>	Outstanding	Great	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Professionalism</u>	Outstanding	Great	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Reliability</u>	Outstanding	Great	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Attitude</u>	Outstanding	Great	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Accuracy</u>	Outstanding	Great	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory

Achieving an outstanding rating in all five categories will result in the presentation of a personalized name tag. The presentation will occur at the Usher Tea the following year.

Evaluations with two or more ratings of “needs improvement” will be reviewed and eligibility could be affected. FOH will address the areas where improvement is needed and during a probation period these specific areas will be monitored. The probation period will provide the opportunity to improve the rating. If the rating improves the probationary period will cease.

Any evaluation with one “unsatisfactory” rating may be disqualified from ushering for future seasons. In extreme disciplinary cases the FOH Manager and the Director of Audience Services reserve the right to immediately dismiss an usher and permanently revoke their right to usher.

This evaluation log will be attached to each individual volunteer contact sheet. An evaluation will be completed at each ushering session and will be kept confidential. Requests to review the evaluation criteria standings should be submitted to the FOH Manager or the Director of Audience Services. Requests can be made at any time and the FOH Manager or Director of Audience Services will be available to review the standings and address any follow up questions or concerns.

Each contact sheet will have a section for a date, time-in, time-out and signature. This information will assist in calculating the total number of hours volunteered. When signing out for the evening the evaluation for that ushering session will be available for immediate review.

At the end of the season each usher will be given the opportunity to submit an anonymous survey that will provide feedback to the FOH Manager and the Director of Audience Services.