



Volunteer Handbook 2018 Season

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

<i>Mamma Mia!</i>	June 6 – June 27
<i>Anne of Green Gables</i>	July 5 – July 25
<i>Holiday Inn</i>	Aug. 1 – Aug. 22
<i>Murder for Two</i>	Aug. 29 – Sept. 15
<i>Beehive</i>	Sept. 21- Oct. 6

Carriage House Theater

<i>The PiTCH</i>	July 11 – Aug. 10
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Audience Services Staff

Audience Services Manager

Lisa Robillard

Front of House Manager

Alyese Crist

Audience Services Assistants

Tish Flummerfelt
Samantha Hassell
Peg Dienhoffer
Karen Smith
Betty Walowsky

Starting May 31, 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,

Lisa Robillard

Audience Services Manager

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 close-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 Carriage House Theater: 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. The Usher Calendar will be available on our website! Look for your Usher number to see when you are scheduled or check availability at a glance at any time! Go to: FingerLakesMTF.com/employment/#volunteers

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, 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

Pre-show - 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 prepare playbills. A member of the FOH team will be present to answer any questions you may have. Every show insert(s)/playbill can be 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. Position requests can be made during the sign-in process, but do not guarantee a position.

Opening the House - Once the house is open we ask that you remain in your assigned positions for the duration of pre-show. You will be responsible for checking tickets and assisting patrons with locating their seats. If any problems arise 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, 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. Staying for the duration of the Talk Back is not a requirement. End of night duties can be quietly completed as per the usual schedule.

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. When instructed by FOH, 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. Carriage House Theater: 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 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. Handicap accessible seating is available for patrons and must be coordinated with the Box Office. Wheelchairs are available to assist patrons traveling from the parking lot to the theatre. Alert FOH immediately if a patron needs wheelchair transportation.

Rules of the House

- ~ Food/beverages are allowed at the Playhouse and Carriage House Theater.
- ~ **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, all walkers must be placed along the side of the house behind the beam closest to the patron for the duration of the performance.

Evaluations

In a continued effort to ensure that we are providing the best possible patron experience, we will be conducting Usher evaluations as well as FOH evaluations. Usher evaluations will be completed at each ushering session, are confidential, and will be attached to each individual volunteer contact sheet. Requests to review the evaluations 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 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. FOH evaluations will be conducted at the end of the season. Ushers will be given the opportunity to submit an anonymous survey that will provide feedback to the FOH Manager and the Director of Audience Services. Ushers may submit their survey to the Director of Audience services upon completion of their final ushering date.

Usher evaluations will be 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

2018 Usher Evaluation Criteria				
<u>Promptness</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Professionalism</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Reliability</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Attitude</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Accuracy</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory

All ushers who receive an “Outstanding” in all five categories will be entered in a lottery to win one of 3 MGR/FLMTF swag bags. The drawing 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.

FOH evaluations will be based on the following criteria:

Clarity – How well did we explain your duties?

Professionalism – Were we professional? Did we maintain a professional and calm demeanor?

Approachable – Did you find it easy to approach us/were we receptive to your concerns?

Comfortable – Were you comfortable with your responsibilities?

Accessible – Were you able to get a hold of us quickly and easily?

2018 FOH Evaluation Criteria				
<u>Clarity</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Professionalism</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Approachable</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Comfortable</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
<u>Accessible</u>	Outstanding	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory