



Volunteer Guild Training Guide



1 Mission Statement

The Plaza Theatre Company Volunteer Guild

"The Dream Team Behind the Scenes"

MISSION STATEMENT

To ENRICH the opportunity for theatre art patrons to become actively contributing volunteers of The Plaza Theatre Company's Volunteer Guild.

To STRUCTURE Guild leadership and committees to adapt and grow with The Plaza Theatre's increasing need for committed, dedicated, and enthusiastic volunteers, who want to be a part of the exciting adventure ahead. This includes not just genuine pleasure in greeting our guests, but also seating, feeding the cast on days with more than one performance, and selling concessions, PLUS, sharing skills with new volunteers, collaborating with ideas and help to solve problems, increase efficiency, and coverage, forming committees as organized by the leadership to meet specific needs, and fulfilling your creativity, as it coordinates with The Plaza Theatre's ongoing presentations.

To RESPECT, VALUE and EMBRACE each volunteer, and patron, as a unique treasure, whose desire is to further theatre art and it's gifts to each other, the community, and to the world, one great performance at a time!



2 Plaza Theatre Company History

Plaza Theatre Company began as an idea between former college friends Aaron Siler and JaceSon Barrus. The two had attended college in Rexburg, Idaho in 1988-1989 and had lost touch before reconnecting in the Dallas / Fort Worth area in 2005. Now married with young families, they conceived of an idea to create a theatrical company that would produce year-round family-friendly musicals and comedies. But with Aaron and his wife Milette based in the Dallas area and JaceSon and his wife Tina based in the Fort Worth area, where would this new theatre group be located?

Enter Jackie Vinson and the Downtown Cleburne Association. Mr. Vinson had long harbored the idea of an entertainment center in historic downtown Cleburne that would promote foot traffic to other downtown Cleburne merchants. At Jackie's suggestion, the Downtown Cleburne Association recognized the potential benefit that this business model could provide for the improvement of foot traffic in downtown Cleburne. Mr. Vinson's persistence and vision brought the two groups together and a new theatrical company was born.

Founded as a non-profit 501 c3 corporation in 2006, Plaza Theatre Company began with several prominent local citizens as board members and with Aaron and Milette Siler and JaceSon and Tina Barrus as founders. Collectively known as the Producers, the Silers and Barrusses have managed most aspects of the Company at the direction of the Board since the beginning.

As a sort of "test run" of the concept, Plaza producers initiated a Preview Weekend from November 2nd thru 4th of 2006. This weekend consisted of three performances of the comedy THE MAN WITH THE POINTED TOES which was enjoyed by all who attended. Producers and board members had their "proof of concept" and plans were put into action to launch the Company full time.

Plaza Theatre Company began operations as a year-round, every weekend, family-friendly community theatre on April 26th, 2007. The Company opened in a "temporary" location at 221 S. Main Street in a 130 seat theatre-in-the-round type venue. The first ever production was YOU'RE A GOOD MAN CHARLIE BROWN which played from April 26th thru May 19th, 2007. The original location at 221 S. Main housed 14 productions between April of 2007 and August of 2008 ending with a production of FOOTLOOSE on August 9th of 2008.

During residency in the "temporary" location, a permanent home was being constructed nearly across the street at 111 S. Main. Howard and Sherry Dudley provided this space by renovating the existing historic building which many Cleburne residents remember as the old Western Auto. In fact, during the late 1800's the building was a blacksmith shop and livery. This new space was soon available and the new 158 seat theatre-in-the-round was launched on August 15th of 2008 with a Grand Opening performance of SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN. This has been PlazaCo's home since that time.

Over the years the Company has benefitted from the contributions of many individuals who have helped Plaza Theatre Company grow and expand. Community members, board members, performers, musicians, technicians, employees and Siler and Barrus family members have been instrumental in helping to make PlazaCo a success. The Plaza Guild, an organization made up of volunteers who support the Company in many different areas of production, is also an integral part of PlazaCo's progress with nearly 150 members currently serving.

Additionally, during its nearly nine year lifetime the Company has received multiple recognitions and awards. Plaza Theatre Company was named "Best Theatre Group" by readers of the Fort Worth Weekly in 2010 and the WFAA A-List named the Company "Best Theatre Group" in 2011. Further, the Company has been the proud recipient of over 70 Column Awards during the past nine years including "Best Musical of the Year" for AIDA in 2010 (non-Equity), INTO THE WOODS in 2011 (non-Equity) and RAGTIME in 2013 (Equity) as well as "Best Play of the Year" for ENCHANTED APRIL in 2015 (non-Equity).

As of this writing in February of 2016, the Company has produced 96 mainstage productions playing to nearly 40,000 patrons annually while nearly 1,200 Season Ticket holders form the backbone of Plaza Theatre Company's patronage. Plans are being made to expand in the near future to accommodate the near constant demand. This collage of photographs of live action Plaza productions is intended to illustrate in a small way some of the history that Plaza has created during 10 years and 96 shows.

We hope you enjoy sharing our history with us.

3 Conduct Agreement

As part of the Plaza Theatre Company Volunteer Guild, volunteers may be interacting with other volunteers (either behind the scenes or on stage) of all different ages. It is important to remember that behavior should be appropriate for all ages. As a volunteer we request that you agree to and sign the following Conduct Agreement.

The following policies are to be observed by all Plaza Theatre Company personnel and volunteers at all times while on company property (at the Theatre, the Studio, or any of the theatre storage facilities). These policies will be enforced to insure the safety of all Plaza performers and volunteers.

1. Whenever possible, those leaving after rehearsal or a performance should do so in groups of no less than two. Plaza policy is that no one walks to their vehicle unattended. All personnel are asked to pay special attention to cast members who are under the age of 18. No minors should ever leave the theatre unattended.
2. When a cast includes those under the age of 18, no adult should ever be alone with a child performer while on company property. Plaza policy is that 2 or more adults be present at all times.
3. No adult should engage in private text conversations or social media messages with cast members under the age of 18. No child performer should give their private cell number to an adult cast member without the consent of their parent or guardian. No adult cast member should ask a minor for their private cell number, personal email address or social media contact information.
4. Any cast member or volunteer observed to be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or prescription drugs while at rehearsal or performance will be sent home and may face removal from the production.
5. The Guild President is the direct authority for volunteers. Any inappropriate behavior should be reported to the Guild President who will then address the situation with Plaza producers after which appropriate action will be taken.

Signed _____

Date _____

4 Concession

A Volunteer Team of Cashier and Popcorn Person, who return to work at Intermission.

- Arrive AT LEAST an hour early and sign into the Volunteer Book in the Concession cabinet.
- The Cashier will get the money from the Box Office. Count the beginning balance and record it on the paperwork contained within the Cash Box.
- Set out and stock the candy, soft drinks, and prepare the money so change is made quickly. Refer to the cheat sheet on the side of the popcorn machine to add up purchase totals
- Patrons can purchase with their charge cards at the Box Office and present the Cashier with a total stub.
- Keep bigger bills e.g. \$20, etc. in the drawer and keep a Patron's payment separate until they receive the correct change.
- Another volunteer or a member of the Staff will usually step in to help the Cashier, if the Patron's line backs up.
- Return the Cash Box to the Box Office for safe storage during Intermission.
- Total the cash after Intermission, recording the totals in the paperwork in the Cash Box.
- Keep the area clean, washing dishes, sweeping the floor with a broom by the cooler, and wiping surfaces with a cleanser. Supplies under the cabinet.
- Assist with stocking after Intermission or after end of show. Assist with cleaning the popcorn machine, as per separate instructions. Empty trash.

You will receive a free ticket to the performance. Enjoy!

5 Concession

A Volunteer Team who supports Patron services before the show

Arrive AT LEAST an hour before the performance.

Check the restrooms. Clean and stock as necessary. Supplies are in the Men's Restroom closet. The Box Office has the key. This includes stocking toilet paper, cleaning the porcelain, counters, mirror and mopping.

Stuff the playbills with Enter to Win slips. A box of playbills, sufficient for the performance, will be sitting on the ledge by the curtain on the left.

An Usher stands on either side of the curtain door greeting Patrons with a smile, offering a playbill and assistance with seating.

Sections are lettered and rows and seats are numbered. Look at the back of a Season Playbill for a visual aid.

Trouble Shooting Tips

Sometimes people have seating mix-ups. Check the tickets and help them work it out, politely and calmly, with a smile.

Two seats can be removed to accommodate wheelchairs in the front row of Section D. Someone on staff will help, or they will assign someone who knows how to remove the seat.

Assist the elderly and those with walkers or canes. Ask if you can help and see them safely to their seats.

It is unlikely, but double booking may occur. Only the box office can straighten this out.

Collect the Enter to Win slips into the Fish Bowl for a drawing at Intermission.

You will be given a Complimentary Ticket to the show. Enjoy!

6 Cast Feed

The Cast Feed occurs every Saturday when The Plaza Theatre Co. performs multiple shows. The cast is served a meal in between the Matinee and Evening performance at 5:30 pm. The location is flexible, but is currently being served in The Plaza Dance Academy across the street from the theatre on Mill St.

The Chair of this committee has historically defined the Cast Feed process by making a significant donation of time to prepare meals, coordinate with staff and other volunteers, choose committee members, and budget the expense in collaboration with the staff. Volunteers prepare food, e.g. entrees', drinks and desserts, set up the tables, and clean-up. volunteers can be refunded their expense for a donated item/s by attaching their receipt/s to an 8 ½ X 10 sheet of paper with their name, date and the purpose of the donation e.g. "Dessert for Cast Feed" to the Box Office, Attention: Aaron Siler.

The Cast Feed partners with community members who also provide meals as a donation to feed the performers, and crew. The Community Partners receive Complimentary Advertising in the show's playbill for which they provide a meal.

The Cast Feed is a stand-out feature of the Volunteer Guild's work! It has gained a reputation as it is a rare and much appreciated piece of The Plaza Theatre Co.'s Volunteer Guild service.

7 First Weekend Social

As the name implies, the First Weekend Social occurs the first weekend on Friday and Saturday nights of every new production. The Committee Chair sets up a table with a cake and decorations, serves cake and beverages, along with her volunteers, to Patrons and Performers, immediately following the evening show at approximately 9:30, depending on the length of the show.

The theme and content of the social is at the digression of the box office staff. The intent is to celebrate the opening of each new show, with the Patrons, and to provide photo opportunities. Because of The Plaza's commitment to excellence, and an extremely rigorous schedule, each show's opening is indeed a celebration, inclusive of those to whom the hard work is dedicated.

8 Third Tuesday Luncheon

The Third Tuesday Luncheon is held monthly at various restaurants about town, typically 10:30 a.m. to Noon, with a social and a program. The intention is to gather and grow a cohesive and committed core of volunteers, to share the inner workings of the Guild and Theatre. The purpose is excellent communication, growth and flexibility into the future of The Plaza Theatre Company's Volunteer Guild.

9 The Preview Evening

A Preview night is held during the last dress rehearsal on Thursday before the First Weekend Social Friday and Saturday nights of a show's opening. The President typically organizes this function which includes finger foods provided by the volunteers during intermission.

10 The Plaza Theatre Company Volunteer Guild Structure

Officers

President – Linda Hampton

Vice President – R'Lene Mulkey

Secretary – Open for Nomination

Committee Chairs

Cast Feed- a meal on Saturdays, which have multiple shows for cast and crew

First Weekend Social-a celebration with cake two nights, Friday and Saturday, when a show opens

Third Tuesday Luncheon-communication, socialization, education with a shared meal once a month

Marketing -Open for nomination. Call all new volunteers and partner with business members for Cast Feed and various functions

Other Volunteer Guild events include:

Training new volunteers on a schedule of the second Friday of each new show. 5:30 p.m.

Preview night is the last dress rehearsal of each new show, attended by all volunteers and not open to the public, with finger foods at intermission provided by the volunteers

Scheduling of all open spots for volunteers to work, includes Cashier, Popcorn, and Ushers for the show. At this time E-Mail, texting, and phone communication is used with a paper calendar to track.

Volunteer Spot which is a computer based site, will be implemented to assist with scheduling and may be organized by two or more volunteers