

# PIPTIONARY

PARTNERS IN PERFORMANCE

Supporting the Hall  
Through Volunteering



Juanita K. Hammons Hall  
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

**Missouri State**<sup>™</sup>  
U N I V E R S I T Y

# Introduction

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Welcome to Partners in Performance, the volunteer organization of the Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts. By volunteering your time to Partners in Performance you become part of the performing arts family. You have the opportunity to be part of the fun, excitement, and magic of the theatrical event. Partners in Performance volunteers offer time and effort to the community and can take pride in being a great asset to the Hall.

Being a volunteer at the Hall should be taken seriously because the staff members and the other volunteers depend on you to honor your commitment. Our commitment to you is to make sure you are well trained and comfortable with the different tasks you will be assigned. In return we need to know we can count on you. To remain on the active list, you must be active volunteer. If your working status changes, let us know so we can schedule training for those on the waiting list.

We want to establish and maintain a pleasant and enjoyable environment for our patrons. Always make your best effort to do so; the first impression must be a good one. Always wear a smile, have an enthusiastic attitude, and be attentive to our patrons' needs. You are representing the Hall, and patrons will remember how you treat them. Remember: It takes eight good experiences to override one bad one.

There are various benefits you will receive from volunteering at the Hall:

- You will have the satisfaction of being an active part of the community.
- You can make new friends.
- You can see many performances for free.
- You are invited to volunteer appreciation parties.

Thank you for taking time to read through this Partners in Performance handbook, the *Piptionary*. Learning the information that follows is a critical part of your partnership to the Hall.

## **Entrances**

Volunteers should use the Cherry Street entrance, the door nearest the box office, when reporting for duty.

### **Floor Levels:**

- **Level 1:** Interlude Lobby
- **Level 2:** Grand Foyer
- **Level 3:** Orchestra and Loge Box Left

- **Level 4:** Mezzanine Rows A-J and Loge Box Right
- **Level 5:** Mezzanine Rows K-Q and Petite Box Right
- **Level 5:** Petite Balcony Seats 1-30 and Petite Box Right
- **Level 6:** Petite Balcony Seats 31 & up and Petite Box Left

## **Parking**

When there is a performance, free parking is available in the multilevel parking garage immediately west of Hammons Hall. You will need to show your badges to security. They will notice the black and white and you should have no problem.

## **Time Commitment for the Season**

When you receive a message adding new shows you will be able to go into WhenToWork and signup. You are responsible for knowing when to report for duty. If you have questions about your commitment, please send a message to the Volunteer Coordinator or you can call 417-836-6005. Requirement is to work **a minimum of two events each month**. You may work the events as close together or as far apart as you wish during that time. Of course, we encourage you to work more than two events. **During Broadway Performances you may be called on to work several of the shows.**

## **Time Commitment for a Performance**

Volunteers should arrive an hour and a half before curtain time (example: 6:30 P.M. for an 8:00 P.M. show) and sign in at the counter in the Interlude Lobby (level 1) with the house managers. **You must have your assignment PRIOR to the starting of Buzz.**

We ask you to arrive early for a good reason. The first thirty minutes of this time is used by the house managers to review your assignment and give instructions and information you need for that performance such as seating holds and length of the intermission, etc. You need to be at your assigned area an hour before curtain because the outer doors to the Hall open to the public at that time. If you are late more than three times without verifying, you will be put on the inactive list.

Go to your assigned area as soon as the house manager instructs you to do so. Don't stay in the Interlude Lobby to visit. You need to be at your assigned area when the outer doors to the building are opened.

## **Cancellation Policy**

When you make a commitment to work a performance, we are counting on you to be there. It is very difficult to cover all assignments when even one volunteer is absent.

If you must cancel, please let us know as soon as possible. Preferably by email or leave message on WhenToWork. You can leave a message at 417-836-6005. Messages are also checked the day the performance. If at all possible, try to get another volunteer to take

your place and leave their name on the phone 417-836-0005 or send message on WhentoWork.

Not showing twice for a performance without letting the Volunteer Coordinator know, your name will be taken off the active list.

## **Physical Requirements**

You must be able to confidently negotiate and climb stairs, work comfortably at heights including Petite and Mezzanine Balconies, and stand for up to two hours when necessary.

## **Dress Code**

The dress code is very important. It provides a uniform look throughout the group so that you are very identifiable to patrons, especially during an emergency. It also helps ensure that we project a professional image.

### **Men**

- Black pants, white shirt
- Black shoes, no tennis shoes, dark socks
- Optional: tie must be conservative if worn
- Optional: In cooler weather a black or white cardigan, or black suit jacket

### **Women**

- Black skirt or slacks, white shirt with no trims, patterns, or piping of other colors
- Black shoes, no tennis shoes
- Optional: Black or white suit jacket or cardigan sweater

## **Seeing the Shows**

Volunteers often ask if they can see the shows that they work. The answer is both yes and no. Depending on your assignment you may see almost all or only parts of the show you are working. For example, the ticket takers stay out in the lobby until released by house managers. Seating ushers are inside the theater for the entire performance but are on duty and are ready to assist patrons entering or leaving the theater. There will be chairs provided for seating on all levels. **The only way to enjoy the performance uninterrupted from start to finish is to purchase a ticket and be a patron.** We appreciate our ticket buyers as much as our volunteers.

## **House Managers**

House managers are Missouri State University student employees. They are responsible for all front-of-house operations before, during, and after performances. They are your supervisors when you are working.

House managers are assigned to a specific level. They are available to answer questions about performances, Hall policies, your job duties, etc. They are also available to help you handle any problems that may arise during a performance, such as questions about ticketing, seating conflicts, special patron needs, seating holds, and emergencies.

**Locating a house manager:** During the pre-performance briefing, the lead house manager will introduce the other house managers and tell you which levels they are assigned to supervise.

**Prior to the performance and intermission:** A house manager will be located on each level to assist the volunteers with any problems.

**During the Performance:** Each of the house managers will be located at pre-assigned stations on level 3 and level 5 to respond to any problem or emergency.

## **Volunteer Positions**

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There are several positions you may fill as a Partner in Performance. We encourage you to read over and become familiar with the procedures of each position.

### **TICKET TAKERS**

#### **Ticket-Taking Positions**

- **South doors:** Cherry Street side of building by the ticket windows
- **East doors:** Facing John Q. Hammons Parkway
- **Northeast doors:** Facing Elm
- **Northwest doors:** Facing Elm, nearest the parking garage

Unless patrons go to the ticket window first, you are the first contact they have with our Hall. Put a smile on your face and in your voice, be relaxed, have fun, visit with patrons if time allows.

You will be using Scanners for checking tickets. Should you have trouble or if patrons are lined up to enter, tear the ticket stubs and retain to be scanned later. Keep the stubs do not throw the stubs away until scanned.

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with your assigned area. Locate the splitter who is nearest to you. **Remember:** it is the splitter's responsibility to direct patrons to the proper level and side of the Hall. They are also responsible for giving directions to water fountains, restrooms, and the pre-concert lecture. If there are no splitters near your area (this generally applies to the northeast and northwest doors) then use your best judgment about giving specific directions.

Keep an eye out for items not allowed in the theater.

During buzz you will be informed as to what is allowed.

Each patron must present a ticket for an event unless it is a free admission event. The only patrons who do not need a ticket are children two years old and younger.

If patrons arrive early enough, there are several things you can inform them about:

- The pre-performance lecture (don't give directions)
- The artwork on display on various levels

Make eye contact and say hello while you take a patron's ticket. If a child is handing you the ticket, you might lean or squat down a little to greet them.

You may leave your position after a house manager has released you. If allowed, you may move to seeing shows. Always set behind the last row of patrons.

### **When to Give Directions**

Early in the evening when a patron asks where to go and there is no one waiting behind the patron, it may seem rude not to answer. Use good judgment so that you don't hold up the ticket line. Giving directions is the responsibility of the splitters. With a smile, simply say something like, "The usher in the red vest at the top of the stairs will help you." This phrase works if you are at the south or east doors.

If you are on the northeast or northwest doors, go ahead and steer them in the right direction—quickly and simply by saying something like, "Go through the double doors and to the other side of the Hall. There are ushers in red vests there to help you." Remember that the term "splitter" won't mean anything to a patron. Instead use the term "usher."

Direct box seat ticket holders to the nearest splitter for directions.

## **Types of Tickets**

There are three types of tickets you should be familiar with:

- Regular tickets issued by the Hall (including Symphony performances)
- Seat Location Passes issued by the Hall (may be handwritten tickets)
- Springfield Symphony tickets (issued by the Symphony)

You may also see VIP passes, special student ticket slips, or passes issued by the event sponsors. Any patron showing you anything other than an approved ticket should go to the box office to exchange the voucher for a normal ticket.

## **Checking Tickets**

Sometimes patrons mistakenly come to the Hall for events being held in other locations such as Craig Hall, Landers Theater, and Hammons Student Center. When possible, the house manager will try to inform you of other events in the area so you may direct patrons to the correct location.

Check each ticket for the correct date and time, even if they are handed to you in a batch. This is especially important when a show has several performances—sometimes more than one on the same day. If patrons arrive for the wrong event or on the wrong day or at the wrong time, politely call it to their attention. If they want to change their tickets, direct them to the box office. Hall staff will do what they can to accommodate patrons. If a patron is upset, find a house manager.

## **Elevator Attendant**

**No Splitters work as elevator attendant.** Your primary position is on level 2, the Grand Foyer, by the box office. However, you should be flexible; it would be rare that you would need to leave that position, but if you should need to, ask one of the ticket takers at the south stairs to watch the elevator until you return.

Check patrons' tickets before they enter the elevator. You should use scanner if necessary to check in. Tell patrons what level they need to go to for their seats and assist them into the elevator. Tell them specifically which number to push in the elevator and instruct them to turn to their right when they exit the elevator. An usher in a red vest will help them get to the proper side of the Hall.

## **Lost Tickets**

If patrons say they lost their tickets or left them at home, send them to the box office. The box office staff can verify the ticket purchase on the computer and issue a handwritten seat location pass. Be sure to look carefully at any seat numbers written on the pass to know how many patrons can enter on the pass.

If you are working at the northeast or northwest door and a patron needs to go to the box office, direct them to the nearest splitter who will take them. Only take the patron to the box office yourself if in your best judgment the situation warrants it or if there is no splitter available.

## **Miscellaneous Information**

Sometimes a patron wants to enter the theater but has tickets for their whole party. Do not offer to hold the remaining tickets for them. Send the patron to the box office where they can leave tickets with a person's name. If a patron says their spouse or friend has their ticket and they don't want to wait to be seated, send them to the box office. The box office will issue them a seat location pass.

Sometimes patrons will give you a string of tickets that have not been torn apart. Be sure to separate them and face them all the same way so you can easily scan and tear off the small stubs easily if necessary. If a large group arrives and one person hands you the tickets for the entire group, be sure to explain, as you're separating and tearing the tickets, that every person must have a ticket in hand before entering the theater for seating. The seating ushers appreciate this.

In an emergency evacuation, lead patrons out of the building to assigned parking lots and wait for instructions from emergency personnel.

Follow the instructions according to your area:

- **South doors:** Lead patrons to the lot located next to the Professional Building, past the parking garage on Cherry Street.
- **East doors:** Lead patrons to the lot on the corner of John Q. Hammons Parkway and Cherry Street.
- **Northeast and northwest doors:** Lead patrons to the lot on Elm Street across from the parking garage.
- **Day lobby:** Lead patrons to the lot located next to the Professional Building, past the parking garage on Cherry Street.

## **Wheelchair Lift Operator**

Stand on the upper side of the lift, nearest the northeast doors, and operate it for any patron who wants to use it. Be sure to tell nearby seating ushers and ticket takers that you are on duty so they can let patrons know that the service is available.

### **Operating Tips**

The lift will not operate under certain conditions:

- The key is not turned to the “ON” position in one of the three panels.
- One of the doors is not fully closed.
- If the emergency stop buttons is pushed.
- The arrow button is not held down.

The doors will not open if the lift car is not at floor level. Use arrow button to return the car to a floor level.

All three panels are the same, and any one of them allows you to operate the lift. Keep the key with you until you need to run the lift, then insert the key and turn it to the “ON” position. It must remain in that position for the lift to operate.

Be sure both you and the patrons use the handrails inside the car while riding. To assist in opening the door, you may choose to ride along if only one or two patrons are inside the car. If you choose to ride along, use the operating panel inside the car. Remind patrons to set wheelchair brakes when inside the car.

Tell patrons where the restrooms are and ask the usher in their area for assistance.

You may go into the theater on house right to watch the performance when released by a house manager. Be sure to turn the key to the “OFF” position and take it with you into the theater. You need to be back at your position just prior to intermission.

Tell the usher at the door where you plan to sit during the performance so you can easily be found if a patron needs your assistance during the performance. You should sit as close to the end of a row as possible, so you won’t disturb patrons if you have to leave.

When the intermission is over, you may go back into the theater. Just before the end of the performance, go back to your position until all patrons who need the lift have been helped.

In an emergency evacuation wheelchair operators should not operate the lift. A house manager will assist patrons needing help. Assist in leading patrons out of the building to assigned parking lots. The operators at the northeast and northwest doors should lead patrons to the lot on Elm Street across from the parking garage.

## **SPLITTERS**

You must be familiar with all levels of the Hall and be able to direct patrons to the box seats, therefore we require one year of service before you are eligible for splitter training.

Take a few minutes to review the box seats on your level before patrons arrive. Laminated cards are available at the counter that list all the entrances to the box seats. Please replace after performance.

## **Giving Directions**

Provide **detailed** instructions for patrons to find their seats by directing them to the correct side of the hall and the correct level. Give directions from the patrons' perspective. For example, say "to your left," or "to the other side of the Hall." Remember that patrons won't understand some of our terms, like house right or North doors. It is helpful to tell them where they are before you tell them where to go. For example, you can say, "You're now on Level 3. You need to go to Level 4 in the first balcony."

Generally, seat number thirty is the center of a row, but be flexible (for example, center is 23 on front row of Orchestra). Lower seat numbers will be on house right; higher seat numbers will be on house left.

## **Other Information**

Be sure to stand in the correct location and **be assertive**: ask patrons if they need help—don't wait for them to come to you.

Answer questions about location of concession stands, restrooms, water fountains, telephones, etc.

After the performance begins, you may leave your position, but you will need to return before intermission. After intermission is over and you are released by a house manager, you may go into the theater to watch the performance or go home.

In an emergency evacuation return to your original station to direct the flow of traffic to the nearest exit.

- **Petite, Mezzanine, and Loge North:** Direct patrons to north staircase.
- **Orchestra North:** Direct patrons to the north doors.
- **Petite South:** Direct patrons to stairway exit next to the elevator.
- **Mezzanine and Loge South:** Direct patrons to the Grand Staircase.
- **Orchestra South:** Direct patrons to the east and south doors.

## **SEATING USHERS**

This is a very important assignment. Your primary responsibility is to help patrons find their seats, so be assertive and ask if they need help. Don't wait for them to ask you.

It is extremely important to keep patrons out of the theater until you have received permission from a house manager and the doors have been unlocked. Generally, the house opens thirty minutes before curtain. In almost all cases the artists have control of when the doors can be opened. That explanation can be used if patrons get restless.

Once the doors are unlocked, prop open all inner and outer doors with the doors stops provided.

As patrons enter the theater, greet them with a smile, hand out programs and ask if they need help finding their seats. If they do, show them the proper row, and explain that seat numbers are on the front edge of the seats. Use good judgment. Ask to see as many tickets as you can and check to see if patrons are in the right place.

**If there is only one usher assigned to a door you should stand in the theater just inside the inner doors.** Most often the house manager can assign two ushers to a door. If so, one should stand outside and hand out programs and the other stands inside and helps with seating (take turns if you wish).

If you have a seating conflict, follow a few basic tips:

- Be courteous and calm.
- Solve the problem if you can.
- Check their ticket to make sure they're at the right performance.
- Make sure they're on the right level.

- Check if it's a duplicate ticket. If so, leave the patrons already sitting in their seats, and ask the other patrons to stand in the aisle. Then find a house manager on your level to handle the problem.

Remember that the more tickets you check and the more patrons you seat, the fewer seating problems you'll have.

In an emergency evacuation, do not take the time to prop open the inner or outer doors. Direct patrons to the nearest exit. After the last patron leaves, make sure inner and outer doors are closed.

- **Petite, Mezzanine, and Orchestra North:** Direct patrons to south lobby.
- **Petite and Mezzanine South:** Direct patrons to south lobby.
- **Orchestra South Rows A-L:** Direct patrons to day lobby exit.
- **Orchestra South Rows M-Y:** Direct patrons to south corridor.

### **Restricted Items**

Certain items are not permitted inside the theater:

The House Manager will tell you at buzz what that performance will allow.

If cameras are not allowed during a performance, try to spot where the patron is sitting and either collect the camera yourself or find one of the house managers to collect it for you. They should be placed on the House Manager table. They can be picked up after the show by the patron.

### **Patrons with Special Needs**

If you need to review where the wheelchair access seats are, ask one of the house managers. If they know ahead of time, house managers will have already prepared the seating area for wheelchair access.

If a patron asks for your help with a hearing device that isn't working properly, you or the house manager in your area should take the device for an exchange. The patron should not have to do that.

### **Once the Show Begins**

When the house lights dim for a performance to begin, close the inner doors. You must remain standing inside by the inner doors for the first twenty minutes of the performance to assist latecomers. If the outer doors must be shut for a particular performance and

there are two ushers at the door, one should remain by the outer doors, so they won't make noise while shutting; the inner doors are quiet, but the outer doors do slam shut sometimes.

**The exception to standing inside the theater at the beginning of a performance if there is a specified seating hold. Then, you would stand outside the outer doors to make sure no patrons enter the theater until a house manager tells you the seating hold is over.** You should assist patrons to their seats at that point, using good judgment about when to let them sit. If they have seats toward the end of a row, seat them right away. If they have seats toward the middle of a row, you might ask them to wait until a song or dance is completed before seating them.

**You are on duty for the entire show, including intermission.** If you must leave briefly, be sure to let another usher know to cover your position.

After the house manager releases you from the outside door, you may take a seat in the folding chairs provided. Orchestra ushers have a chair at their door to sit in. Place yourself so you can see most patrons in your area in case they need help leaving or reentering the theater. Mezzanine and Petite balcony ushers will be provided folding chairs, no seat or aisle sitting.

If other volunteers are blocking access to exits, whether sitting or standing, you have every right to ask them to move.

During a performance your main responsibility is to be aware if a patron is leaving or reentering the theater, not to watch the performance. Do not assume a patron will be okay without your help. If someone rises to leave, immediately get up and go to that row to assist them. If someone leaves the theater, you should wait by the inner doors for them to return to avoid disturbing the other patrons.

### **Flashlight Tips**

The flashlight beam is extremely bright and will shine nearly all the way across an aisle. Obviously, this will be very distracting to patrons unless done properly. Always keep the beam pointed toward the floor so the person leaving, or reentering can see other patrons' feet.

If you use your flashlight to check tickets for latecomers, turn away from the audience and point the beam down on the ticket, shielding the beam as much as possible with your hand.

## **Cell Phone Guidelines**

When working a performance, cell phones are not to be used or visible at any time except for an emergency. (i.e. 911 for emergency)

## **Intermission**

When and only when the lights go up for intermission, prop open all doors. Opening them too soon can ruin the mood of the performance and can also distract patrons seated near the door.

During intermission, remain by the outer doors. Patrons may also ask where the restrooms or concessions are located.

When the performance resumes, close all inner doors and remain by them for a few minutes to assist patrons coming back late from the restroom. Then you may be seated again until the end of the performance.

## **After the Performance**

When the house lights come up at the end of the performance, prop open all doors. Be sure not to open them too soon. Sometimes there are curtain calls and/or additional songs, etc. Don't anticipate; wait until the lights go up. If patrons begin leaving before then, be ready to assist them.

After patrons are gone, collect any programs left in your area and take them to the counter. You do not have to pick up trash. If you find personal belongings of patrons, take them to the lost and found located behind the counter. After walking your area, you may leave.

## **House Manager Table**

Seating ushers may turn in items they find after patrons have left the theater to the house manager table, or any item to be returned to patron after show.

## **HEARING DEVICES**

The hearing devices are handled by house manager and located by House Manager table.

## **SAFETY AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Safety of our patrons is our first priority. Please report any accident or injury involving a patron, to the house managers as soon as possible.

If you notice something that may be a potential safety hazard, please attempt to fix the problem yourself or report it to a house manager immediately.

Should we need to evacuate the theater, please follow the guidelines listed for each job description.

In the event of severe weather, a house manager or a Hall staff member will make an announcement over the intercom or from the theater stage.

If the warning occurs before a performance or at intermission when patrons are in lobby areas, volunteers will direct patrons to the interior areas of the orchestra level only, to duck and cover behind any seat or along walls, taking care not to block entrances.

If the warning occurs during a performance, volunteers should direct patrons to remain at their seat location and duck and cover. During a tornado warning there will not be sufficient time to evacuate the Mezzanine or Petite balconies. Volunteers should not permit balcony patrons to leave their sections. Explain to patrons that the interior of the theater is the safest area, and they would be in much greater danger if they went out into the glass-walled lobbies or drove in their automobiles.

One of the house managers will assist patrons with disabilities.

## Contact Information

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### **When to work program**

[www.whentowork.com](http://www.whentowork.com)

Leave message

### **Volunteer Coordinator**

(417) 836-6005

### **Box Office**

(417) 836-7678

#### **Hours**

- 10-5 P.M. Monday thru Friday
- 10-3 P.M. Saturday

On performance days, the box office opens 1 hour and 15 minutes prior to curtain.

### **Administrative Office**

(417) 836-6776

#### **Hours**

8-5 P.M. Monday thru Friday

### **Mailing Address**

Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts

901 S. National Ave.

Springfield, MO 65897