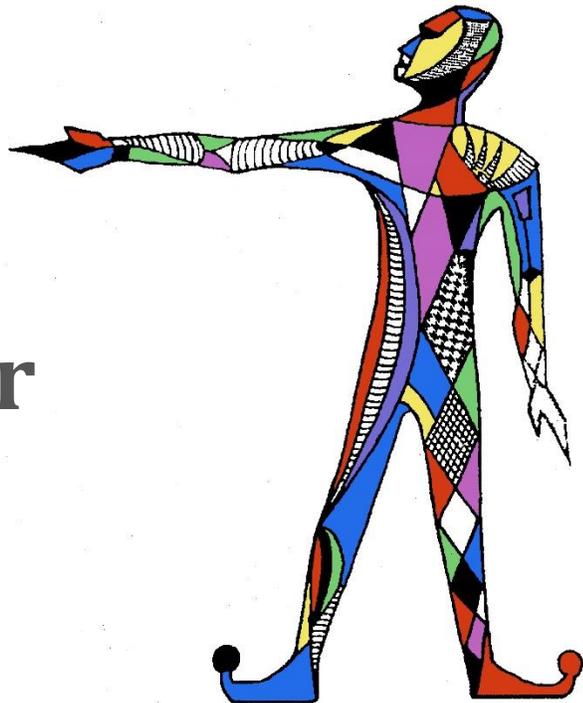




FORT SMITH LITTLE THEATRE

Your Volunteer Manual



Welcome:

Thank you for your interest in the Fort Smith Little Theatre. It is because of volunteers like you that this organization has enjoyed 70 plus years as a beloved part of the Fort Smith community. Our organization has many areas where your talents and skills can be utilized to the fullest, from front of house to backstage and everything in between. We are happy to have you with us!

Organization History:

In 1947, the Young Ladies Guild of Sparks Memorial Hospital decided to sponsor an amateur production of the play “Mr. and Mrs. North” as a fund-raiser. That was the beginning of our community theatre.

Productions were staged in local school auditoriums, hotel ballrooms, and lecture halls for the next five years. In 1952, the group purchased an old grocery store and renovated it into a theatre-in-the-round with a seating capacity of 150. This building on North “O” Street was home to FSLT until 1986 when the present 200-seat theatre was completed at 401 North Sixth Street in downtown Fort Smith.

Season of Performances:

A season at FSLT (January-December) consists of six full-run productions. Each is assigned approximately four rehearsal weeks before providing a minimum of eight performances over two weeks. To obtain proper theatrical licensing, each season is set by the Board of Directors one year in advance. In addition, several short-run off-season shows are offered each year.

Season Patrons:

More than 900 persons annually choose to be a Season Patron. They purchase either a Season Flex Pass or a Gala Opening Night Season Subscription. Both types of season packages, which are sold November-January, offer discounted admission and plenty of perks. Purchasing a season package is not required of show attendees or our volunteers, but you are encouraged to check out the many benefits at fslt.org. Remember too that season packages make great Christmas gifts!

Administration:

The Fort Smith Little Theatre, Inc. is a community-owned corporation, ownership being held by those persons who purchase a season flex pass or Gala Opening Night subscription. As “stockholders” those Season Patrons receive no dividends or other benefits, other than admission to productions and the opportunity to attend the annual stockholders meeting held in November. Each stockholder is entitled to one vote at said meeting. During the meeting, Committee reports are presented and Board of Directors members are elected.

The FSLT Board of Directors is led by an executive committee consisting of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Board Members serve as chairpersons of administrative committees that conduct the business of the organization. Committee members include board members as well as many other volunteers.

All Volunteer:

The Fort Smith Little Theatre is an all-volunteer organization and has been since it was founded in 1947. All casts and crews are staffed through open public audition. Operating solely through the efforts of volunteers, without any paid employees, FSLT is indeed a theatre by and for the community.

Volunteers are always welcome onstage, backstage and in administrative roles. From ushering and making coffee to painting sets, there's a job for anyone interested in meeting new friends through community theatre.

One easy way to volunteer is to come to auditions. All audition dates are posted at fslt.org and on Facebook. Even if you do not wish to audition for an on-stage role, you can meet the show's Director and offer to help backstage. Alternately, you can contact FSLT through Facebook or email to info@fslt.org to express your interest in volunteering.

All volunteers are trained by the appropriate committee chairman or that person's designee.

Committees:

Hospitality

Responsible for pre-show and intermission food and drinks on Gala Opening Nights and intermission beverages at all other performances. This committee's volunteers also check tickets and usher patrons to their seats. Volunteers sign up for these shifts before each of the six productions during the season.

Box Office

Responsible for online ticketing system, assisting patrons with ticket purchases on the phone and at the door. Volunteers sign up for these shifts before each of the six productions during the season. Training includes instruction on our very user-friendly ticketing system.

Wardrobe

Responsible for maintaining and organizing wardrobe storage, including inventory as necessary, and overseeing the loaning of any and all items per written policy.

Props

Responsible for the prop room, including organization of items, inventory as necessary, accepting donations.

Season Tickets

Responsible for overseeing the sale of Season Tickets between November 1 and January 31 and troubleshooting any sale issues.

Production

Responsible for recruitment of potential directors and productions, organizing and leading a committee toward the selection of each year's production calendar. This committee is generally active from March through July when the proposed season is presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

House and Grounds

Responsible for our building's exterior and interior (off-stage) maintenance This includes duties such as changing light bulbs, managing the HVAC thermostat programming and landscape sprinklers, maintaining adequate inventory of cleaning equipment and supplies, and contracting with professional services as needed.

Dark Night (non-public) Performances

Each of the six full-run productions during a season is committed to providing an exclusive Tuesday night performance which is sold to a business or non-profit. This committee is responsible for selling/scheduling those six performances, invoicing/collecting their payments, serving as FSLT liaison to those groups prior to and on that Dark Night evening.

Publicity

This committee is the 'public face' of FSLT. Responsible for the promotion of FSLT activities. Works closely in conjunction with the Publication and Website committees. Publicity duties include sending media press releases, maintaining our FSLT Facebook page, and responding promptly to social media inquiries. Social media posts include but are not limited to auditions, productions, cast list announcements, and public Thank Yous to businesses for services discounted/donated. Also creates "slide show" for lobby TV for all 8 productions during the year and sends invitations to select "senior and at-risk" groups for each dress rehearsal.

Publications

Responsible for creating, printing and sending annual season brochure; creating, printing and sending seven issues annually of our Spotlight newsletter; publishing show programs for six full

run productions; and creating and printing a four-page program insert of show-specific information for all productions.

Annual Fund Donor Recognition

Responsible for sending a thank you (by mail or through online ticketing system) to all patrons who make an Annual Fund donation during the year. Maintain an up-to-date list by donation category to be sent to the printer for insertion in show programs six times annually, and post on the website as donations are received.

Funding

Responsible for soliciting show sponsors, applying for grants, soliciting donations from businesses for services needed, selling program ads, sending memorial thank you notes, managing list of tickets donated to non-profit groups (for auction items), representing FSLT with insurance carrier, assisting treasurer and financial secretary as needed with financial management decisions, providing all information as requested to accounting firm for annual audit.

Lights and Sound

Responsible for the on-stage lighting equipment, including replacement of bulbs, maintaining an inventory of light gels, and general system maintenance. Responsible for maintenance of sound board equipment including corded and wireless mics. Responsible for seeing that anyone using sound and light boards is adequately trained and qualified to use our equipment.

Set and Shop

Responsible for the maintenance of the shop, including tools, equipment, and set material. Assists with striking of sets after each production.

Website and Email Communication

Responsible for maintaining the FSLT.org site. This includes updates before and after each production, before and after the sale period for season passes, updating Annual Fund donor list, and making other edits as needed. Also responsible for managing patron email addresses through icontact, an online contact management service, and coordinating with the publication committee the sending of all patron emails (Spotlight newsletters, new season announcement, etc.).

Our Stage:

Thrust Stage

In the TDF Theatre Dictionary, Carla Steen gives a wonderful description of a thrust stage:

“A thrust stage is a performance space in which the stage breaks through and extends well past the proscenium arch. It reaches out into the auditorium, so that is surrounded on three sides by the audience. This makes a dynamic performance space that creates exciting visual opportunities.”

She even describes the patron’s experience and directorial challenges:

Audience members are never far from the action on a thrust stage...which creates a special intimacy between the actors and audience.

Depending on where they are sitting, audience members get their own unique perspective of a show. Because the stage is surrounded by the audience on three sides, audience members can see each other while watching the action on stage...Because of these different perspectives, the points on stage where there is most focus may change, and there could be alternate interpretations of certain actions. Since there are many different sight lines, the production director and designers want to make sure the audience will see and understand everything that is happening on stage.

This brings us to discussing Production Roles.

Production Roles:

Director

Overall manager of entire production. Interprets and executes their vision of the production. Selects actors and crew members. All production decisions are made final through the director. Directors lead the morale of the production and clarifies all duties of each production participant. The Board of Directors would become involved in or intervene with a show Director’s decision only if the reputation of FSLT or safety of our audience or volunteers was in question. Detailed responsibilities are provided in writing by the Production committee.

Assistant Director

Takes on role of Director in his/her absence. May have specified duties according to the needs of the Director. Oftentimes, the Assistant Director is in a training position to assume the role of directing a future production.

Producer

Manages financial aspects of the production, maintains condition of theatre, and performs other duties as agreed to with the Director. Detailed responsibilities are provided in writing by the Production committee.

Stage Manager

Works directly with director, cast, and crew (props, lights and sound, wardrobe, etc.) to move the production through all technical aspects. Supervises sets moving on/off the stage, actors being ready for stage entry, giving the “ready” signal to the light/sound booth crew to start the show at curtain time and after intermission.

Props Manager

Responsible for obtaining and maintaining the property of the production. This includes preset of props, cleanliness of items used, and proper return of all property. Purchase of any property is under the guidance of the director.

Wardrobe Manager

Responsible for obtaining and maintaining all wardrobe for the production. This role meets the vision of the director in creating the character. Responsibilities also include cleaning and return of wardrobe. Purchase of any wardrobe items is under the guidance of the director.

Hair and Make-up

Responsible for meeting the vision of the director as to the look of each character. Assists actors with creating the appearance of the character.

Lights and Sound Manager

Responsible for the lighting and sound needs for each production, including setting all light and sound cues and ensuring execution of the cues. Anyone working on lights and/or sound equipment must be deemed adequately trained on the equipment by the lights/sound committee chairman.

Actors and Actresses

Responsible for bringing the director’s vision of each character to life and overall representation of the production. Required to be present and prepared at all scheduled rehearsals and performances.

SEE! WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU!

Theatre Policies:

While we are a volunteer organization, there are a few things that we must address to ensure the comfort and enjoyment of everyone involved.

Just as in any organization or workplace, we recognize that relationships between our volunteers may at any time become strained. Issues less than harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination, such as annoyances, disagreements, and irritations, should be addressed directly with the person creating the disturbance. This should be done in a mature, non-threatening, but direct manner and should include a brief description of the offense and recommendation for resolution. Both parties should hear each other out with the goal of compromise and resolution. Only when issues cannot be resolved between one another should the show Director or Executive Board of Directors become involved.

It is the responsibility of all FSLT volunteers to maintain each other's integrity and ensure an enjoyable experience by all.

Harassment and Discrimination:

FSLT prohibits harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, and discrimination.

Harassment

Verbal harassment includes comments that are offensive or unwelcome regarding a person's nationality, origin, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, body, disability or appearance, including slurs and negative stereotyping.

Nonverbal harassment is the distribution, display or discussion of any written or graphic material that ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles, or shows hostility, aversion or disrespect toward an individual or group because of national origin, race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, appearance, disability, sexual identity, marital or other protected status.

Sexual Harassment

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines sexual harassment as "unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." This includes when such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment" and occurs when unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advance, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of volunteering or casting, is used as a basis for volunteer or casting decisions, or unreasonably interferes with a member's work performance or creates an intimidating , hostile, or otherwise offensive environment.

Discrimination

FSLT privileges and standards, shall be void of any discriminatory treatment, in whole or in part, that addresses a person's race, color, national origin, age religion, disability status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or marital status.

Violation of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policies may result in termination from FSLT's casts, productions, committees, board, and organization.

Complaint Process

Violation of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, or Discrimination policy shall be made to the Director of the production or to an Executive Board member. The complainant shall provide a description of the violation and recommend a remedy. If the complainant approaches the Director with the violation and a remedy, the Director may address the issue or defer any investigation and decision to the Executive Board. Nonetheless, the Executive Board shall be made aware of any complaint and remedy, even after execution.

Groundless or malicious complaints are deemed a violation of this policy and will be treated as a violation.

Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of the Director and Executive Board to maintain confidentiality of the complaint and complainant, except as may be legally required to be disclosed. Extraneous discussions, commentary, or gossip will not be tolerated.

Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs

Alcoholic beverages will not be consumed or be permitted on the premises of FSLT unless at a Board sanctioned activity. Alcohol may not be offered to or made available to any person under 21 year of age on FSLT premises. Drugs will not be consumed or permitted on the premises of FSLT at any time. All volunteers are expected to be sober whenever on FSLT premises.

Smoking

In accordance with state regulations, smoking is not permitted inside FSLT. Vaping (e-cigarettes) is also prohibited in our facility. Smoking in FSLT-provided wardrobe is not permitted. An exception may be made when smoking on-stage is part of the performance, but this should be made known to the production committee at the time the show is proposed and must be posted in the lobby for audience awareness. All cigarettes/cigars are to be extinguished outside into designated urns—not trashcans, grass or pavement.

Conclusion:

Fort Smith Little Theatre is excited to have you join us, and we look forward to all that you have to offer! We believe in the positive effects the Performing Arts have on our community and within each other.