



# Ambassador Handbook

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## **Overview**

Welcome to Orlando Shakes in partnership with UCF (“Orlando Shakes”), and thank you for volunteering with us! Without your participation in our Ambassador program we would not be able to provide the community with quality entertainment for all ages. It is our desire to make each visit to Orlando Shakes special for both you and our patrons. As Ambassadors for the organization, it is important that you help each guest to feel welcome.

Your actions, appearance, and general conduct will influence a patron’s perception of Orlando Shakes. Our general rule is that we treat patrons in the same manner that we would like to be treated ourselves, and always greet patrons with a ready smile and willingness to help them enjoy their visit.

### **Contact Information:**

Devin Barrass, Patron Experience Manager

[volunteer@orlandoshakes.org](mailto:volunteer@orlandoshakes.org)

(407) 447-1700 x 264

### **Address:**

Orlando Shakespeare Theater

812 E Rollins St

Orlando, FL 32803

### **Box Office Information:**

Phone: (407) 447-1700 x 1

Email: [boxoffice@orlandoshakes.org](mailto:boxoffice@orlandoshakes.org)

Hours: **Tuesday through Saturday:** 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

- The Box Office is also open one hour prior to all showtimes
- The Box Office is closed on Mondays

# Ambassador Benefits

## See the Shows!

Front of House **Ambassadors** are invited to attend any Signature, Cabaret or Children's Series performance during their shift if seats are available. **If a seat is not available during your shift, you will be given a voucher to return for the same show.**

## Signature and Children's Series Loyalty Program

Within the run of each production if you...

- **Work two (2) shifts**, you will receive one (1) ticket voucher
- **Work four (4) shifts**, you will receive two (2) ticket vouchers
- **Work six (6) shifts**, you will receive two (2) ticket vouchers and two (2) complimentary drinks vouchers

*\*Please note that shifts are not cumulative and do not roll over to the next production\**

***Ticket vouchers earned during a production are valid for the production worked and the following Signature Series show***

If you work two performances of each Signature Series production, you will earn an official Orlando Shakes name tag, to be awarded at the Ambassador Salute.

**Back of house shifts will be counted as one show per 4 hours**

When you earn a ticket voucher, it will be located in seating price levels B and C on a first come, first served basis. Reservations must be made in advance with the Box Office. Ambassadors in need of special accommodations should let the Box Office know at the time of reservation.

## Invited Dress Rehearsal

We welcome all Ambassadors who volunteered during the prior production to attend the following production's invited dress rehearsal. You will be notified with the details and sign-up portal.

## Complimentary Beverages

All Ambassadors receive free coffee (traditional blend) or tea while they are working. In order to receive your drink, please ask for a cup at the bar and make them aware that you are an Ambassador. Please remember, patrons always take priority in the bar line or the coffee area. If you would like to purchase items from the bar, kindly remember alcoholic beverages are not permitted to be enjoyed while you are working as an ambassador. Note: Cups may not be carried into the theater while working.

## Ambassador Salute & Holiday Party

At the end of each season, Orlando Shakes invites all Ambassadors to attend the Ambassador Salute. We also plan a holiday party to thank you for your service.

# Volunteering Opportunities

## **Front of House**

Ambassadors in positions that interact with patrons, particularly during a performance in the Lobby or Venues, are considered to be Front of House Ambassadors.

## **Back of House**

Ambassadors in positions that do not interact with patrons are considered Back of House Ambassadors. These type of opportunities include scenic work (ie. painting, carpentry etc), costuming (ie. sewing, ironing, etc) and admin work (ie. assisting with marketing and development needs, general data entry, etc.)

# General Policies

## **Enrollment in the Ambassador's Program**

We are grateful to have you as a member of Orlando Shakes Ambassadors. We require that all Ambassadors follow policies and procedures, including our standards of courtesy in dealing with patrons. Orlando Shakes reserves the right to dismiss Ambassadors who do not comply with our policies of customer service, courtesy, respect, and/or safety.

## **Qualifications for Ambassadors**

- Commitment to work an average of one (1) performance per production.
- Are 16 years of age or older. Those under 16 years of age are invited to be an Ambassador with a parent/guardian present.
- Portray excellent customer service skills.
- Are well groomed.
- Are friendly and polite.
- Are a team player who is able to work well with others and communicate effectively and respectfully with people of diverse backgrounds.

## **Customer Service Keys**

### **Be Courteous!**

You are our hosts! Please smile and welcome each guest with warmth and sincerity. If you are having a bad day, please leave it in the parking lot. We require that every Ambassador do his or her best to make our guests feel important and valued in our building.

- Acceptable language:
  - "Welcome In!"
  - "We are glad you're here!"
  - "Enjoy the show!"
  - "It is so good to see you!"
  - "You are going to love the show!"
  - "May I help you find your seats?"

- Please avoid dismissive or overly personal language:
  - “Do you know where you’re going?”
  - “You are not allowed to sit there!”
  - “You need to move. You are in the way.”
  - “Stop there and wait”
  - “Everybody be quiet!”
- Do your best to answer guest questions and if you are unable to answer, direct them appropriately (ex. Box Office, Patron Experience Manager, online survey, etc.) Never end a guest conversation with “**I don’t know,**” instead, try “**Let me find out!**”
- Keep your opinion of the show or the programming in the building to yourself. Do not discuss it with guests or in front of guests.
  - In addition, please avoid conversations with patrons that are political in nature or could be deemed offensive to the other person.

## **Respecting the Artists and Eachother**

The “Golden Rule” applies here. Please make sure to treat everyone in the building with the same kindness and respect that you would like to receive in return. If you encounter an issue during a shift, please notify the Patron Experience Manager.

## **Physical Demands**

While performing duties, Ambassadors are regularly required to use their hands to handle, or feel objects or controls; reach with hands and arms; and talk and hear. Ambassadors are also frequently required to sit, stand, walk and climb stairs or balance. An Ambassador is occasionally required to stoop, kneel or crouch and will occasionally lift and/or move up to 15 pounds. Specific vision abilities required to perform this job include close vision, distance vision, peripheral vision and depth perception. Please consult the Patron Experience Manager to request any reasonable accommodation.

## **Appearance and Conduct**

Orlando Shakes’ approved uniform for an Ambassador working Front of House consists of a white shirt/blouse with black pants (no jeans) or a skirt and black closed-toe shoes along with the Ambassador’s choice of an optional gold scarf or teal tie. Ties and scarves are supplied by the theater and sanitized after each use. Skirts should be no shorter than just above the knee. If you prefer to wear a jacket or sweater over your shirt/blouse, it must also be black. Since Front of House Ambassadors serve as representatives of the theater, we ask that you dress conservatively and in the proper uniform so that you are easily recognizable by guests. Depending on the performance, themed clothing may be allowed as an alternate option. The Patron Experience Manager will notify you of this option prior to your shift.

Simple jewelry is acceptable. Please avoid large or excessive jewelry. Political or religious buttons are not permitted. While in public view, Ambassadors are to refrain from eating, drinking, or chewing gum; smoking; voicing negative opinions concerning any production, performer, or patron; lounging or leaning against a wall; or cell phone use. Ambassadors may not drink alcohol at any point in the complete duration of their shift.

Periodically, a reception may occur in conjunction with a performance. While Orlando Shakes will make its best effort to include Ambassadors, it is not always possible. Unless permitted by the Patron Experience Manager, please do not participate in or eat food at receptions for others.

Ambassadors in positions Back of House do not need to maintain a dress code. Ambassadors should dress comfortably for their position. Typically jeans and a t-shirt are acceptable. If you have any questions regarding dress code, please contact the Patron Experience Manager.

## **Punctuality**

Your reliability as an Ambassador is important to the success of Orlando Shakes. Signing up for an Ambassador shift is a commitment to work. **Please show up and be on time.** When a performance or event is understaffed, it presents safety issues and hinders our ability to properly manage patrons.

**If you cannot make a shift you have committed to, please call or email the Patron Experience Manager at least 24 hours in advance so that arrangements can be made for a replacement. Ambassadors who miss two (2) or more shifts without advance notification may not be permitted to volunteer with the organization.**

Front of House shift start times are generally 60 minutes before the scheduled curtain time, but this can vary from production to production. The start time refers to the time you are inside the Lowndes Shakespeare Center ready to work; not when you are to arrive.

Each performance or event will have a short orientation meeting to discuss items such as length of performance, intermissions, special receptions, and seating of late patrons. These meetings will be led by the Patron Experience Manager.

## **Harassment & Discrimination**

Orlando Shakes welcomes all races and ethnicities, all religions, all countries of origin, all gender identities, all sexual orientations, all abilities and disabilities, all spoken and signed languages. Orlando Shakes strives to keep the workplace free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. Harassment of another Ambassador/patron/staff member on the basis of his or her race, color, mental or physical disability, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, or any reason is not tolerated and will result in dismissal from the Ambassador pool.

# **Policies and Procedures**

## **ADA & Wheelchair Access**

If you encounter a patron with an ADA or wheelchair ticketed seat, please escort him/her to the proper section. If you encounter a patron that has a ticket for an area other than the ADA or wheelchair sections and needs to have access to seating in that area, please notify the Patron Experience Manager.

There is an elevator in the Margeson Theater to provide access to the House Left loge wheelchair seats. Please ask the Patron Experience Manager for assistance with using the elevator if you feel uncomfortable.

## **Aisles, Stairs and Landings**

All aisles, stairs and landings are to be kept clear to comply with Fire Regulations and Code. Patrons are not allowed to stand or sit in these areas.

## **Autographs**

Ambassadors are not allowed under any circumstance to approach a performer, or celebrity guest attending a performance, to ask for an autograph or to pose for a photograph.

## **Backstage**

Ambassadors are not allowed backstage unless instructed by the Patron Experience Manager. If a guest asks you to do something that requires you leaving the venue or lobby, please contact the Patron Experience Manager.

## **Cell Phones**

Ambassadors are not allowed to use cell phones while working. We request that you turn them off. If there is an emergency that you must attend to, tell the Patron Experience Manager so that you may be excused and we can cover your post if you need to make a phone call.

## **Emergency Policies**

In case of a fire, bomb threat, tornado, or hurricane emergency, ALL Ambassadors should assist the Patron Experience Manager.

### **Fire or Bomb Threat**

Be aware of all exits of the venues and lobby. The Patron Experience Manager will make a calm, official announcement to hold the performance and ask audience members to exit the building via the nearest exit.

An example of the announcement: "Actors please hold and exit the stage. Ladies and gentlemen of the audience, in a calm and orderly manner please make your way to the nearest building exit and meet your party in the parking lot. Thank you for your cooperation." All Ambassadors will be trained concerning the evacuation route and assisting audience members to the parking lot.

### **Tornado, Hurricane, or other Weather Related Emergencies**

The Stage Manager will make a calm, official announcement to hold the performance and ask members to remain calm and await further instructions from the Patron Experience Manager.

An example of the announcement is as follows: "Actors please hold and exit the stage to your dressing rooms. Ladies and gentlemen of the audience, the Patron Experience Manager will be with you momentarily. Thank you for your cooperation."

All Ambassadors will be trained to assist the Patron Experience Manager in assessing the situation.

### **Firearms Policy**

As of August 22, 2023, the Lowndes Shakespeare Center has implemented a no firearms policy and declared our venue(s) as gun-free zones. A "NO FIREARMS PERMITTED" sign is posted at all major entrances to the building and at the box office window. Accordingly, all ticket holders are subject to our no firearms policy as part of our terms and conditions for all ticket purchases and attendance at our events. All tickets are purchased in acknowledgement and agreement with OST's terms and conditions, including our NO FIREARMS policy.

Anyone entering our building may be subject to search by personnel or local law enforcement. Anyone violating the NO FIREARMS policy will be escorted from the building by personnel or local law enforcement.

This Policy applies to all patrons, staff, guests and volunteers at our venues. The NO FIREARMS policy does not apply to firearms that are stored in a locked vehicle in the parking lot adjacent to the Lowndes Shakespeare Center in accordance with the requirements of Section 790.25(5), Florida Statutes.

Any firearm used in any production of Orlando Shakes has been modified to not accept live ammunition and is valid for blanks only. Such prop firearms that are under the control of Orlando Shakes are exempt from the NO FIREARMS policy.

### **Electronic Devices**

There is an announcement at the beginning of the performance to turn off cell phones, and similar items. All patrons should have their devices set to vibrate or silent mode. Ambassadors should not be utilizing their cellphone during their shifts. If there is an emergency that requires use of your phone, please inform the Patron Experience Manager so that accommodations can be made. Photographs and recordings of any kind are prohibited during the performance.

### **First Aid**

**If a guest is injured please notify the Patron Experience Manager immediately!**

To decrease the spread of bloodborne pathogens it is necessary that any individual

administering first aid must wear latex gloves. Gloves and all first aid supplies are one-time use only. Do not return contaminated supplies to the kits, please throw them away. DO NOT administer first aid without informing the Patron Experience Manager first. If you feel uncomfortable, please do not attempt to administer first aid. If you or another volunteer becomes injured, notify the House Manager immediately.

## **Food & Drink**

Outside food and drink are **not allowed** in the Lowndes Shakespeare Center. Concessions from Harriet's Bar are permitted in all venues.

## **Parking**

You may park wherever you would like; however, we encourage Ambassadors to park on the north end of the lot near the concession stand entrance. This will allow patrons to park closer to the main entrance. Based on other events taking place in Loch Haven Park, there may be times that parking will take place in an alternate location. It is our goal to provide you this information in advance of your arrival.

## **Personal Belongings**

A location for your personal belongings will be determined by the Patron Experience Manager at the beginning of your shift. Orlando Shakes is not responsible for lost or stolen items, so please leave valuables and large sums of money at home.

## **Photography & Video**

Photography (including pictures taken by a cell phone) and audio or video recording is not allowed during a performance. If you see someone that is violating this policy, please inform the Patron Experience Manager immediately. The same policy is true for our Children's Series productions, we do **NOT** allow photos during the performance and audio and video recording is not allowed.

Prior to the performance, during intermission, and after the performance, patrons are allowed to take photographs and audio or video recordings in the venues of themselves - not the performers or staff members.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in the Lowndes Shakespeare Center or within 25 feet of the main entrance. Guests and Ambassadors may smoke outside the door at Harriet's Bar.

# Front of House Positions

Below is an overview of each volunteer position available during a performance. These descriptions are meant to be general and may not include every detail of the position. Each Ambassador will be given more in-depth direction prior to their shift.

As an Ambassador, your main responsibility is to provide the patron with timely and quality service. Before each performance or event, you are to inspect your assigned work area for cleanliness and any problems and report any problems to the Patron Experience Manager.

## **Gift Shop Attendant**

As an Ambassador in the Gift Shop, your main responsibility is to provide the patron with timely and quality service. Before each performance or event, you are to inspect your assigned work area for cleanliness and any problems and report any problems to the Patron Experience Manager. Both positions **MUST** go through training with Merrill Sinert **BEFORE** you can request a shift.

### **Gift Shop Lead Position**

This individual opens the gift shop, sets up and operates the point of sale terminal. (We do not accept cash anywhere in the theater - only credit and debit cards.) This Ambassador is in charge of the Gift Shop for that shift and **must** be Gift Shop trained and point of sale terminal trained, as well as know the merchandise and locations.

### **Assistant Gift Shop Position**

This individual will be working in the lobby area to greet patrons and welcome them to the Theater and the Gift Shop. This Ambassador must also be Gift Shop trained and know the merchandise. No register training is required - but it is helpful.

## **Usher**

As an Ambassador Usher, your main responsibility is the safety and comfort of patrons. Before each performance or event, you are to inspect your assigned work area for cleanliness and any problems such as loose seats, torn carpet, unstable handrails, or burnt out lights. Please report any problems to the Patron Experience Manager. You must also make certain that you are familiar with your surroundings including the seating area and the location of restrooms, emergency exits, fire extinguishers, and fire alarm pull stations. The seating of patrons usually begins a ½ hour before the scheduled curtain time when the house opens. Please remember that viewing a performance is a side benefit of volunteering and when you are required to do something, or a patron needs assistance, it is imperative that you respond immediately.

Ushers will be assigned responsibilities for seating, intermission, and end of performance. You must be present for all parts of the job as they are key to providing a wonderful experience for our patrons. Positions are detailed below.

In the case of an emergency, the Patron Experience Manager must know where you are at all times. If you are going to watch the performance, please sit in available seats in the venue. Ushers may be assigned specific locations to sit and should be spread throughout the audience. During the performance, Ushers must continue to monitor patrons and watch for unruly or

unsafe behavior, as well as potential medical emergencies. In the case of a medical emergency, contact the Patron Experience Manager IMMEDIATELY. If you witness unruly behavior such as loud talking, running up and down aisles, dancing in aisles, or behavior that is bothering other patrons, please ask the offending party to be quiet or take their seats as politely as possible. If the problem is beyond your control or comfort level, bring it to the attention of the Patron Experience Manager.

While in the auditorium watching a performance, please do not talk with one another as it is disturbing to patrons. If there is a need to speak with another Ambassador, leave the auditorium and go to the lobby area. If there is a need to speak to a patron, please do so quietly. Respond to all patron comments and/or complaints in a prompt and friendly manner. Once the venue is clear of patrons after the performance, all ushers should perform a thorough sweep of the venue for trash and lost items. Once completed, please check in with the Patron Experience Manager for dismissal.

### **Ticket Scanners**

Ticket Scanners are responsible for greeting patrons, reading/tearing/scanning tickets. Ticket Scanners also help to monitor the front entry doors at intermission and at the end of the performance.

### **Program Distribution**

Program Distributors are responsible for distributing programs and will have intermission and end of performance duties. This may also be done by ushers.

### **Ushers**

Ushers stationed in the venues are responsible for reading tickets and seating patrons in the correct seat location for which they hold a ticket. Ushers also answer questions and provide directions to various amenities in the Lowndes Shakespeare Center such as restrooms, water fountain, Harriet's Bar, etc. Ushers will also have intermission and end of performance duties.

# Back of House Positions

Below is a brief overview of other Ambassador positions available leading up to a production. These descriptions are meant to be general and may not include every detail of the volunteer opportunity. Each Ambassador will be given more in-depth direction prior to their shift.

## **Administrative Support**

Volunteering for the administration department involves assisting the staff with mailings, distributing marketing brochures and posters within the local community, and other administrative projects that may arise during the season.

## **Costume Support**

Costume department volunteering requires a knowledge of hand sewing. Machine sewing is also a plus. Ambassadors will assist with the final preparations on costumes such as trim and buttons along with other projects that may arise during the season.

## **Scenic Support**

Scenic department volunteers will be expected to assist in basic set construction, base painting, loading in, and striking of scenic elements. Individuals are expected to be able to lift up to 50lbs and experience in carpentry and painting is a plus, but not required.

## **Development Support**

Volunteering for the development department involves assisting the staff with mailings, researching contacts through the internet, preparing for special events, and other various projects that may arise during the season.

# **THANK YOU!**

Thank you for being an Ambassador!. Without your assistance, Orlando Shakes could not produce the quality and number of productions that we do for our community. We appreciate your support to help make it all happen!

If you ever have any concerns as an Ambassador, please bring them to the attention of the Patron Experience Manager. We always welcome your feedback.