Volunteer Voice

Information for those who donate their time, treasures, and talents to our organization

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Nancy Nimsz

Nancy Nimsz has been volunteering for the Freeman Arts Pavilion/Freeman Stage since 2013. She and her husband Patrick attended a Darius Rucker concert in 2012 and as a result, Nancy immediately knew she wanted to become a member of the Freeman experience.

"Volunteering for a great purpose, and being a part of providing quality entertainment experiences was exactly what I wanted to do," she said.

Nancy grew up near Hagerstown, Md., and attended Loyola University in New Orleans. As you can imagine, that’s where her love for all kinds of music grew. She started as a communications major and was also a disc jockey at the college radio station. Eventually, she changed majors and graduated with a degree in Early Education from SUNY in Cortland. With this rich set of experiences, it’s clear that Nancy’s background is a perfect fit with the JMFF mission.

After college, she and Patrick raised their family in New Jersey for 32 years and moved to Ocean City in 2011. Nancy and Patrick have been married for 45 years and have 2 sons who are both engaged. Taylor lives in Hoboken, NJ and Colin has been living in Berlin, Germany for the last 5 years. In her “spare time” Nancy and Patrick enjoy exercising, skiing, hiking, biking, camping and traveling.

Nancy’s support of the JMFF mission arises out of her love of attending performances where volunteers and patrons enjoy our beautiful setting. Nancy commented “it’s so nice to be a part of making someone’s evening more enjoyable. I like to work the gate or usher to see the excitement patrons bring with them. It’s truly uplifting.”

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Volunteer Social update

"A good time was had by all who attended the social on Sunday, May 23. We had a record number of volunteers and had a wonderful time."

She also enjoys volunteering at the golf tournament in the fall. Nancy added that she "tries" to play golf with her husband, and loves the positivity of the sport. Her favorite performance so far has been volunteering for Trombone Shorty.

To those interested in volunteering at the Freeman Arts Pavilion, Nancy, who also served as a member of the VAC from 2016-2019, says "I would tell you that it’s one of the most rewarding and fun things you can experience! You meet friendly and interesting people while bringing patrons a night of top-quality arts and entertainment."

The Freeman Arts Pavilion is certainly blessed to have Nancy’s dynamic energy and love for the arts.

Pat Farina
VAC Member, Captain, Chair of the Volunteer Newsletter Subcommittee
Volunteer Captain's Update

Being a Volunteer Captain at the Freeman Arts Pavilion is a challenging yet extremely rewarding experience. Volunteer Captains are one part of the volunteer leadership corps (VAC members & Leads being the others). Captains work with the VAC to share feedback and ideas generated from the volunteer corps.

At most shows, there are 5 Captains: Head, Green, Parking and two Gate Captains. They are the day-to-day liaison between the Volunteer Coordinator and the volunteer corps. Each captain will serve as the head captain, as well as the other captain roles during the season. The captains arrive before the other volunteers to preview the evening’s performance. Before the show, each captain meets with their designated volunteers to discuss the logistics of the evening, distribute the tools volunteers need and check the volunteers out during the final huddle. Learn more about the role of captains and check out some of the duties that set the stage for a successful event, below.

Head Captain (Donor Relations, Community Access, Gate Monitors and Sponsor Bar)
Before a show can begin, the head captain prepares an assignment sheet of volunteer roles and they meet with the VC to go over the logistics of the evening. The head captain oversees the other 4 captains and checks in volunteers as they arrive for the performance to ensure they are in proper uniform. Once the show begins the head captain is responsible for communicating with the other three captains to ensure smooth operations, including ensuring all volunteers receive a break and reassigning volunteers where needed. After a performance, the head captain ensures that all captains have returned the tools that were needed for their area, and they prepare the “End of Night Report.” Finally, the head captain checks out with the Volunteer Coordinator before their shift is completed.

Parking Captain (Parkers)
Parkers are responsible for finding space for up to 2,000 patrons. Watching the parkers in action can be like a performance in and of itself. The parking captain is responsible for assigning volunteers to designated parking areas where they manage traffic before and after a performance.

Gate Captain (Criers, Chair Checkers, Pacers and Scanners)
The gate captain assigns volunteers to various jobs needed at the gate and to cover the entrances and exits. They act as a backup to the scanners to troubleshoot tickets that do not scan. The gate and green captains work together to reassign volunteers to other positions during the course of the evening. The gate captain will report to the head captain with the number of scanned and/or clicked-in patrons. They ensure that the exit gates are properly manned at the end of the show to assist with trash and to thank our patrons.

Green Captain (Concessions & Ushers)
The green captain is responsible for preparing volunteer placements for all locations on the Green. During the show, the green captain ensures volunteers receive their breaks while rotating volunteers to maintain ushers on the green. At the end of the evening, they will assign the volunteers to assist with trash and sponsor chairs.

We are always looking for volunteers who wish to step up as a captain. For more information, please ask a captain, VAC member, lead or Volunteer Coordinator.

Diane Gilner
Volunteer Captain

Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition & Retention Update

We are very excited to enter into a new season at the Freeman Arts Pavilion. So much has changed beyond our new name. New construction, locations, policies and procedures, and an expanded pod system that will bring 2,000-plus patrons to a typical show, are just a few of the changes and challenges of the new season. To meet the venue’s needs requires a fully staffed volunteer cadre. We much appreciate the returning 130 returning volunteers from previous seasons.

Our Recruitment, Recognition and Retention Subcommittee recognizes the efforts of the Social Subcommittee whose efforts helped attract interest in our open volunteer positions.

Recruitment – This was a banner year with over 150 new volunteers joining us!

Retention – We are asking experienced volunteers to help us support and educate the new volunteers to make them successful in this new endeavor. We are examining various programs, such as a buddy system to enhance the experience of volunteering at the Freeman Arts Pavilion. We are also working with the VAC Social Subcommittee to add some fun activities during shows and throughout the year to enhance the volunteer experience.

Recognition – A number of recognition programs, such as an enhanced pin recognition for years of service and annual hours, will be instituted this season.

To be a successful program, the Volunteer Advisory Committee welcomes suggestions from you, our volunteer corps. We appreciate your participation and look forward to your ideas.

Bob Katz,
VAC Recruitment, Recognition & Retention Subcommittee Chair
Meet Your Volunteers by PJ Cavanaugh

Volunteer: Bob Suter

What town do you currently live in? Lewes

What do you do for a living or what you did before retirement? Director of Human Resources - Research at Merck.

What year did you begin volunteering at the Freeman Arts Pavilion? 2016

How did you find out about volunteering? From Ellen Dowling.

What is your favorite volunteer role and why? Concessions because you can hear the music and interact with sponsors and patrons.

Of the concerts you volunteered at, what was your favorite and why? Kashmir – saw Led Zeppelin in Philly at the Spectrum in 1969 and Kashmir did a great job duplicating their sound and covering their songs!

What would you tell community members who might be interested in volunteering at the Freeman Arts Pavilion? It’s great! You are treated well and get to choose your area and hear great shows!

Volunteer: Ellen Dowling

What town do you currently live in? Lewes

What do you do for a living or what you did before retirement? I worked at DuPont for 24 years in systems, finance, and safety.

What year did you begin volunteering at the Freeman Arts Pavilion? 2016

How did you find out about volunteering? I used to go see shows and when I moved down I found out about volunteering. I volunteered at DuPont theater for almost 20 years as well and 7 at Longwood Gardens.

What is your favorite volunteer role and why? I like the Crier role as you get to talk to all the patrons and they are usually so excited to be at the show.

Of the concerts you volunteered at, what was your favorite and why? I liked Chris Jansen. He was such a real person, it was raining most of the evening and he thanked everyone for staying and then played an extra 30 minutes!

What would you tell community members who might be interested in volunteering at the Freeman Arts Pavilion? I have already gotten two friends to sign on this season as volunteers! It is a great venue and being outdoors and hearing (if not seeing) shows is great too!

Pictured from left are Bob Suter and Ellen Dowling

Volunteer Impact Software Management System

This Month’s Tip: Subscribe to receive an email reminder which comes every weekend with your upcoming shows! Click on “Edit My Profile” and subscribe!
Meet the JMFF Staff

My name is Paul Shaw and I am the Director of Marketing for the Freeman Arts Pavilion.

I am originally from Chesapeake Beach, Maryland but spent most of my life in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Pa., area. Before coming here, I was Director of Marketing for a concert venue in Bethlehem, Pa., and before that was with Live Nation Entertainment as a Marketing Manager.

I am brand new to the team, having only started in early March and primarily responsible for the marketing and advertising of all performances and events as well as our branding and promoting our overall mission and story. This includes placing ads throughout media like TV, radio and newspaper but also digital marketing and social media management.

From the moment I started here, I have been completely amazed by the efforts and support of our volunteers. I have never worked with such a passionate, devoted team of people. I loved walking into the office every morning to see our team of volunteers putting together creative nourishment kits.

As we start the 2021 Season in our new venue, with a new look, a new website, and a new ticketing system we begin to tell a whole new story. The story of our future. With so much growth on the horizon, volunteers like you remain a pillar of our organization and I look forward to working with each and every one of you.

Paul Shaw

in an effort to further promote our brand and shows.

Volunteer Advisory Committee Update

Staff, Captains and volunteer Leads have been working over the last few months to make this season a successful one.

A big component in this process was dealing with a new and larger venue. This posed new challenges and resulted in a re-evaluation of volunteer roles.

I’d like to take this opportunity to point out some of the highlights with respect to volunteer roles and expectations.

Previously, Criers and Gate Monitors were combined. Volunteers would be assigned to monitor gates once the show started.

- This season, Crier is a separate position. Criers will be responsible for reminding patrons of our prohibited items, advising them to remove chairs from bags, visually inspecting clear bags, and making sure that all members of a pod are present before they attempt entry.

- This season, Gate Monitor is a separate position. Gate Monitors will work in tandem with security staff. They will check credentials to access specific areas and must be comfortable with questioning non-credentialed individuals. Gate Monitors are expected to remain at their gate until 20 minutes post-show, then secure their gate.

Previously, Bag Checkers took on the responsibility of checking patron bags.

- This season, Bag Checker has been modified to Chair Checker. Chair Checkers will be positioned before patrons enter the security checkpoint. Chair Checkers will serve as a backup to the Criers as a second screening of patrons for prohibited items. Chair Checkers will be familiar with the venue policies and able to explain them to the patrons.

Previously (in our 2020 season), Ushers were responsible for approximately 97 pods.

- This season, the ushers will be responsible for 6 times as many pods. It is most important that Ushers become familiar with the physical layout of the venue to enable them to field patron questions regarding restrooms, exits, concessions and sponsor terrace.

Pacer is a new role for assisting patron flow from outside the main gate to the security lines.

Parking Attendant.

This season, changes have been made to the parking plan due to the opening of Arts Alley to motor vehicle traffic. New areas have been designated for accessible and volunteer parking.

We strongly suggest you purchase inexpensive hearing protection in the event you may be working in a loud volume area.

The above are just a few of the highlights of volunteer roles and expectations. Please read the volunteer handbook for a complete description of all volunteer positions.

The complete list of role descriptions and volunteer one pagers is found on your Volunteer Impact Profile Page.

Phil Facciolo

VAC Chair