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

Freeman Arts Update

Happy Fall Volunteers! The leaves are changing, the days are getting shorter and at the Joshua M. Freeman Foundation, we are changing seasons from operating to reimagining and planning. In 2021, we successfully hosted more than 81,000 patrons during our inaugural season at the Freeman Arts Pavilion. Our success is largely due to volunteers like you who donated your time and talents to ensure patrons, artists and team members had a safe and enjoyable experience in our new venue. We completed construction the day before we opened and hosted four performances in a row, including two National Recording Artists!

We learned each day and adjusted our operation to meet the ever-changing needs of this new space. We recognize this was not easy and we appreciate each of you bringing flexibility and a good attitude with you through the gate. You also brought great ideas and innovation to the table. We were changemakers in 2021.

For next year, we are making venue site improvements like an additional patron exit from the Grand Green, an additional concession location on the Grand Green, relocating the lower lawn restroom trailer to the Grand Green, replacing the stone dust walk paths with asphalt and adding cold and operational storage backstage.

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Bob Katz

With so many great volunteers, I am truly honored to be highlighted in this newsletter. This is my 10th season as a volunteer. During this time, I have cleaned thousands of paint brushes, greeted thousands of patrons and have assisted an untold number of patrons in and out of the venue.

As you know as a Freeman volunteer it’s not just about the music. Allow me to share some memorable moments. The season generally starts with shows for students from the local schools. A young girl getting off the bus said: “I love this place.” During “Operation SEAs the Day” a soldier thanked me for hosting him at the stage. Of course, I replied: “No, we thank you for your service.” That day was the first day he had been out of the hospital for an entire year. There is also the joy of the students learning the basics of hip-hop. The excitement is palpable. Lastly, there are the smiles we share when we dance with each other during a show.

Of course, there is the music. As a patron, volunteer or a Bayside resident sitting on my porch just 2 blocks from the venue, I rarely miss a show. In fact, vacations and other activities are planned around the Freeman Arts Pavilion season. For me, the best shows included: Diana Ross and her numerous dress changes, Gladys Knight and her singers and Chicago who added another 20 minutes to their set because they loved the venue.

When we think of the Freeman Arts Pavilion season, we remember the tribute bands who rarely disappoint.

Currently, I am serving the last year of my three-year term on the Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC). I am the chair of the Recognition, Recruitment and Retention Sub-Committee. We are so proud of the performance of our volunteers, especially those of you who are in your first year of service. It did not take long for you to “learn the ropes” and make a significant contribution. The VAC is more than an announcement during the huddle. Many hours are spent in planning social events including the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, mini-golf, yoga, etc. Significant hours are spent in preparing the newsletter and recognition, recruitment, and retention activities. We work diligently to improve the venue experience for our volunteers and that of our patrons. We seek your suggestions to assist us in these endeavors.
We are also investing in an extensive program to regrade and resod the lawn, including the installation of a comprehensive drainage solution.

Arts Education programs are alive and well! While we miss bringing live arts programs to students, we are grateful that schools continue to partner with us to bring contactless arts programs like Creative Nourishment Art Kits and our Hip-Hop Dance Instructional Video series to students. We will serve more than 80,000 Sussex County students in 2021 and we could not have done it without you! Shifts are still available for art kit assembly this fall, and we hope you can join us!

Change is inevitable and we will certainly miss Paul as the Volunteer Coordinator. We are so glad that Paul is returning to our organization in his new role as Arts Education Coordinator at the end of November. His experience as an arts administrator and musician will be extremely valuable as we continue to re-build relationships with schools.

We are thrilled to welcome Terriann Thommes as your new Volunteer Coordinator! Terriann most recently served as the Director of Advocacy and Volunteer Resources for Hammer Residences in Minnesota, where she led a volunteer base of 550 individuals and groups who serve at 48 different locations. Terriann is passionate about volunteers and their impact to our community. We can’t wait for you to meet her soon!

This time of year brings gratitude to the forefront for me. I am grateful for each of you and your commitment to our mission and impact on the community. As I look back at the season, I marvel at what we have been able to accomplish together. It is truly remarkable, thank you.

Wishing each of you a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Molly Williams
Operations Director

**Student Volunteer Corner by Lizbeth Cortez-Galindo**

**Student volunteer name:**
Alexander John DiPirro

**What school do you attend?**
Salisbury University

**What year in school are you?**
Senior Year

**What year did you begin volunteering?**
I began volunteering this past summer.

**What is your favorite volunteer role and why?**
Usher was my favorite volunteer role. I really did enjoy being able to help incoming guests for the show whether it be directing them to their pod section when needed and answering questions they have regarding something about the Pavilion. It’s a role that has helped me with communicating to people I’ve never met or talked to before, and you understand the importance of responsibility, especially when you have to keep an eye on crowds of people in case any issues arise. Plus, you are up on the lawn in front of the stage. It’s technically like seeing a free show in a way, though that isn’t what you are there for when volunteering, but it’s a nice little plus.

**Of the concerts, you volunteered at, what was your favorite and why?** "United States Coast Guard Band" - I could say it was simply because the music was really good, but my own words alone would not explain how well the band performed. It was extraordinary with how the band performed every piece, but there was quite the variation of music that was official Guard music from the navy, air force, coast guard, etc., and there were some movie scores thrown in that I did not expect at all. Plus, the crowd for that night was well behaved, very patriotic and enthusiastic, and they kept the site very clean when all the guests left. There was hardly any need for all the ushers to clean up that night.

**Alexander DiPirro**

Like so many of our volunteers, my wife, Susan, is also a volunteer. This is also her 10th season, and she has served on the VAC. Her suggestions have improved the experience of patrons who require special assistance. Sue and I are both retired hospital pharmacists. We moved to West Fenwick six years ago from the Annapolis area, but I was born in Brooklyn, New York. We love to play pickleball and visit our eight grandchildren. We are avid readers who love to watch sports on television.

At 76, I may be the oldest male volunteer. During 10 seasons, I have probably performed every role there is, but parking is my favorite. It saddened me this year when I couldn’t complete the season due to the effects of Parkinson’s Disease. I am hopeful that I can reverse this situation next season. If not, I know there are other ways I can support the mission of the Joshua M. Freeman Foundation.

Bob Katz
VAC Recruitment, Recognition and Retention Subcommittee Chair
The inaugural season of the revamped Freeman Arts Pavilion performances came to a dramatic close with the Earth, Wind and Fire show on Sept. 25. This long-anticipated show brought the entire 2021 season to a roaring crescendo with the entire cast of Captains participating in the excitement with the rest of the volunteers. The just-concluded season presented many changes and challenges to the team of Captains and volunteers due to the new venue configuration, COVID-19 permutations, and with nearly half of the volunteers being first-year contributors. The season was a resounding success, regaining our mojo from last year's pandemic-impacted season and returning to a full slate of performances presented in the enhanced venue.

Prior to the EW&F show, the Captains held their traditional “after-action” lunch meeting to discuss the season, including what went right and what we need to focus on for next year. Topics reviewed for the 2021 season included safety, communication, venue policies, team building and leadership, scheduling and recognition. Topics for next year included captains roles, facilities, the patron experience, sponsors, community access, end of night review and scheduling. One of the highlights of the meeting was a unanimous consensus that this was the best year ever for captains working together as a team, supporting and covering for each other, and enthusiastically filling in holes in our schedules as needed. We also got a preview of some proposed changes in the venue being considered for next year. The proposed changes were well received, and the entire returning team expressed deep anticipation for the coming 2022 season. 2022 is certainly shaping up to once again be the best year ever.

Following the end of the season on Oct. 5, JMFF gathered the captains together for an appreciation dinner and a wonderful evening at the Bluecoast restaurant in Bethany Beach. It was a well-deserved time to relax and celebrate, and everyone expressed thanks for the recognition by the JMFF staff.

Two of this year’s captains, Mary Pineda and Trudy Albrecht, have completed four years of service as captains this year, each having opted in for an extra season after serving as captains during last year’s optional COVID year. Trudy and Mary have been wonderful leaders, mentors and friends, and their efforts have been recognized and cherished. We look forward to their consideration to morph into Leads for next season. We asked Mary and Trudy to provide some parting thoughts from their tenure as JMFF Volunteer Captains.

Trudy summed up her thoughts as follows: Like so many volunteers, my first memories at the Freeman Stage were made as a happy patron. By the summer of 2016, it became clear that I needed to become more involved with this magical, happy little venue. I became a volunteer for the 2017 season — and my only regret was waiting as long as I did! I was encouraged to try out every volunteer role, so I did — and while I enjoyed all of them, my favorite role was in the fast-paced world of concessions. By the time the 2018 season rolled around, I had somehow been convinced to serve on the VAC and as a Captain. Speaking now to those of you who are considering one or both positions — don’t let that “I’m not knowledgeable enough” attitude stand in your way. I questioned myself after only being there one year, yet the training, support, encouragement & gratitude I received was exceptional - and I am certain it would be for you too!

The 2018 and 2019 seasons both flew right on by, and I loved every minute of them. After COVID-19 shut down the world in early 2020, all volunteers were asked if they’d consider helping out with Freeman’s modified season. My first question was “Would it count as my 3rd (and final) year as a captain?” When I learned the season would be considered ‘optional’ — thus not counting as my last year — I came back to enjoy the amazing “as close as we can get to feeling normal” experiences. COVID-19 also managed to halt my very short-lived fun as an Arts In Education volunteer, which I began in the Fall of 2019.

I do look forward to getting back into the schools with the JMFF as soon as possible. The 2021 season certainly was a lot different, too, with lots of venue growth (with a few unavoidable growing pains), lots of changes, and lots of working together to strive for yet another awesome season. While I have finished up my term as a Captain, I do look forward to returning to Freeman Arts Pavilion in 2022, as I know there are countless wonderful memories awaiting us all right there - at that magical, happy BIG venue!

Mary also added her thoughts on becoming a Captain 4 years ago: When I became a Captain 4 years ago I had the pleasure of working side by side with the experienced Captains including Margaret Jacobs, Patty Wiedermann, Carla Bricotto and Mimi Rottiers. I am so grateful for their mentorship and support given me while I learned all the tasks required of a Captain. I totally enjoyed my 4 years as Captain and working with all volunteers and staff at the Freeman Stage and Freeman Arts Pavilion.

The entire organization expresses gratitude and thanks for all the positive energy Mary and Trudy have provided to promote the JMFF mission. You really made a difference!

Patrick Farina  
VAC Newsletter Subcommittee Chair
Volunteer Social Update

Seems like it was yesterday that we all were meeting up and enjoying our first Volunteer Social, and now we have come to the end of the season. Congratulations goes out to five of our volunteers for their lifetime contribution of more than 1,000 hours of service: Chuck Bologna, Phil Facciolo, Trudy Albrecht, Maureen Griffith, and John Tiberi.

To stay in the spirit celebrating a summer of great entertainment, for one of the final concerts of the year, team members wore a Hawaiian shirt for A1A, the Jimmy Buffet Tribute Band. Flower leis were the chosen attire for the Beach Boys performance.

The Captains Appreciation Dinner took place at the Bluecoast Seafood Grill to cap off the season and more wonderful memories were made.

At the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, gifts were given out to Patti and her great workforce as we kept the concept of still building the plane. We had a wonderful turnout of more than 165 volunteers. Good food, great DJ and fun times were enjoyed in a well-deserved celebration of a remarkable year. A couple of folks mentioned that they could not recognize people, as everyone looked so beautiful in their street clothes, as opposed to our tan and white JMFF uniforms.

Thank you to everyone for a terrific year and we are looking forward to volunteering with everyone in 2022. Stay safe.

Lynette Catha, VAC Social Subcommittee Chair
Of the concerts you volunteered at, what was your favorite and why? My favorite music genre is rock and roll from the late-'60s, and, with the exception of a few shows, I enjoyed them all. My two favorites were bands I was not familiar with, Trombone Shorty and Orleans Avenue and Gov’t Mule. I love listening to bands that jam and that was something they both did well.

What would you tell community members who might be interested in volunteering at Freeman Arts Pavilion? This was the best summer I've had in many years! Not only did I get to donate my time for a good cause, but I was surrounded by great music and atmosphere. The volunteers and employees were extremely kind and friendly. It allowed me to meet and make some nice friendships. I also found the patrons to be very appreciative and friendly. It was a very positive experience for me.

What is your favorite volunteer role and why? My strongest asset is engaging in customer relations. This drew me to the concessions and ushering positions and they by far are my favorites. Concessions is a teamwork activity because it’s extremely busy at times. Everyone always got along very well to make it all work. It was also a terrific opportunity to get to know the patrons and to get their feedback. Ushering is a great fit for me because it was the best opportunity to engage with patrons. My love of talking and offering assistance really comes out when I have the opportunity.

Any personal hobbies, talents or achievements? Being a single parent to my 31-year-old son is what I consider to be my greatest achievement. I grew up in NYC, going to concerts from an early age with my friends. That was all we ever wanted to do. Madison Square Garden became our home away from home. New York offers many venue options, and we took advantage of all of them. Listening to live music is my number one pleasure so I consider it to be my hobby. My love for live music has followed me throughout my life. It is something I have always looked forward to and I grab whatever opportunity comes my way.

Jeff Pierce
Volunteer: Jeff Pierce

What town do you currently live in? After living in Parkville, Baltimore County, Md., for over 60 years. My wife Kim (also a Freeman volunteer) and I and our two Golden Retrievers, Molly and Lizzie, retired to the Delaware Shore settling in just down the road from Freeman Arts Pavilion.

What did you do for a living or what you did before retirement? Prior to retirement seven years ago I had a diverse and varied career including retail for Montgomery Ward (anyone remember Montgomery Ward?) and Macy’s, sales and marketing, and as a professional recruiter in the early years. Most recently I spent 10-plus years as a Vendor Manager for CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield of Maryland. Prior to CareFirst I was in Development and Fundraising for both Gettysburg College and my alma mater Towson University. For both academic institutions, I was a Major Gift Officer covering the New England region.

What year did you begin volunteering for us? The 2021 Season was my first year volunteering.
How did you find out about volunteering? Prior to moving to the Delaware Shore in May 2021, I lived in Baltimore County very near several County-owned parks (Cromwell Valley Park and Marshy Point Nature Center). For several years I had volunteered as a trail guide assisting the Park Rangers with nature education programs for area schools. I also volunteered in several birding programs at Cromwell designed to monitor and track local bird populations. Upon moving to Delaware, I was eager to continue volunteer activities and sought out opportunities of interest to me. With a lifelong interest in music, especially live music, Freeman Arts sparked my interest and looked to be a great fit.

What is your favorite volunteer role and why? I would have to say I most enjoyed working as part of the Parking/Traffic crew. I enjoyed the camaraderie that developed amongst the “Parkers” as the season ran on. As well, as a first contact with the patrons, I enjoyed greeting and interacting with guests as they began their evening of music.

Of the concerts, you volunteered at, what was your favorite and why? Of the many concerts that I worked (and attended as a patron) I most enjoyed the Straight No Chaser a cappella group. The performance was much different and unique as compared to the hundreds of rock concerts that I had attended over the years.

What would you tell community members who might be interested in volunteering at the Freeman Arts Pavilion? Volunteering may not be for everyone, but I would strongly suggest, at the very least, giving it a try … nothing ventured, nothing gained. In particular, I would suggest to anyone retired that it is a great experience and a real escape from a day-to-day routine. Volunteering at Freeman Arts Pavilion is very satisfying and is a great way to stay active and relevant. Volunteering is also a wonderful way to meet people and make new acquaintances and friends. It is always interesting to talk and interact with other volunteers and to discover just how often people’s lives and experiences tend to overlap.

Any personal hobbies, talents or achievements? I enjoy various activities including kayaking, music, astronomy and stargazing, cooking, birding, and photography just to name a few. I consider myself a pretty good “fix-it guy” and always look forward to the challenge of keeping the house and autos “up and running” well. In 2009, I ran my first (and last!) marathon as part of the Baltimore Running Festival. My goal was to simply finish … and that I did!
Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition & Retention Update

What’s in a name? Our name is the Recruitment, Recognition & Retention Subcommittee of the VAC. This being the final issue of 2021 for our newsletter, it’s a pleasure to reflect back over the past year, a year full of challenges and accomplishments. The VAC Recruitment, Recognition and Retention Subcommittee has a close partnership with the other VAC subcommittees. We would like to express our gratitude for the support we receive from each of the subcommittees, from the JMFF staff and from other volunteers.

The COVID pandemic left us with a need to recruit 50% of our volunteer corp, or more than 120 new volunteers, for the 2021 season. Paul Tooker started off with a list of potential candidates who expressed interest in volunteering for Freeman Arts Pavilion, and was instrumental in creating a cohesive group of energetic and devoted coworkers. We all certainly worked as one team this year.

We couldn’t be prouder of your performance and we look forward to many fruitful years serving together. The committee members, Linda Ferguson, Frank Ripkin, Lynette Catha, Mark Kronenberg, Lizbeth Cortez-Galindo, Dave Kittell and myself, will be rolling up our sleeves to solicit your opinions to help improve your volunteer experience as the 2022 season gets underway.

We would particularly like to show our appreciation for the contributions of the Social Activites subcommittee. This year’s Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was our best ever. Activities delivered in 2021 by the Social Committee including the dinner, yoga, and miniature golf, continue to bring smiles while saying thank you.

Our committee hopes we have been successful in recognizing your outstanding contributions. We are absolutely thrilled that our 1,000-hour volunteers have been recognized with a special celebration and an excellent article in the Coastal Point Newspaper. What an incredible milestone for the five individuals who put in the effort to achieve such an amazing contribution! And for that matter, what an amazing contribution everyone made whether completing 40, 100, 200 or 1,000 hours. Your energy, good cheer and teamwork are impressive and very, very much appreciated by the entire JMFF community.

Finally, the committee would like to say: “We are here for you. How can we help?”

Bob Katz
VAC Recruitment, Recognition and Retention Subcommittee Chair

What would you tell other students who might be interested in volunteering at the Freeman Arts Pavilion? If you have the time/availability to do so and you want to get to know a unique venue that offers quite a variety of music performances, I recommend it big time. It is a volunteering opportunity that involves quite a bit of work, coordination, and communication, but it’s worth it to help prepare and manage shows. I mean when you have big names such as: The Beach Boys, Earth Wind and Fire, Fitz and the Tantrums, The United States Coast Guard Band, and lots more, you’ll be in for a treat, and don’t worry about making mistakes. It’s a breeze once you get to know the staff and learn the ropes for the roles you volunteer for.
Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

The committee meets six times per year and works with staff through the Volunteer Coordinator on issues affecting the volunteers and Freeman Arts Pavilion. If you are interested in serving on VAC and can commit to a three-year term, please contact Molly Williams or Terriann Thommes prior to Nov. 22. In addition to vacancies on VAC we also have openings for Volunteer Captains. Volunteer Captains also serve a three-year term. If you are interested in serving as a captain and would like to be considered for this position, please contact Terriann or Molly prior to Nov. 22.

Finally, I want to say thank you to all the volunteers for your cooperation and patience during our first season at the new venue. Your spontaneous and frank comments and suggestions helped the VAC to be a more representative and responsible entity. To my fellow members on the VAC, it has been a pleasure working with you over the past three years.

I’ll see you on the Green.

Phil Facciolo, VAC Chair