Volunteer Voice

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

Freeman Arts Update

The gates are officially open for Year 15! Welcome to a season of fun, music, hard work and warm (sometimes hot!) summer nights!

We are grateful you have decided to donate your time and talents to our organization and shared commitment to Creating opportunities to elevate the human spirit. You are part of a volunteer team of more than 300 people this season, one of our largest volunteer corps to date!

We hope that the changes we have made in the volunteer program improve your experience and create moments of joy for each of you. From more social events to special ticket offers for volunteers to more daily raffle prizes than ever, we are committed to recognizing the amazing work you do, thank you.

I hope you meet some new friends, discover a new artist and find a volunteer role you love!

Cheers to 15 Years!

Molly Williams
Patron Experience Director

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Mike and Chris Thompson

Meet volunteer husband-and-wife duo, Mike and Chris Thompson. They are entering their 7th year of volunteering at Freeman Arts Pavilion. After seeing their first show and reading about the philanthropy of helping to bring arts education into the schools they recognized there was a need for help, so they decided to volunteer.

While they enjoy all aspects of volunteering, they most enjoy helping with the Saturday Young Audience Series performances and they are very anxious to get back into the schools to help there as well!

Mike and Chris married in 1986 in Washington, D.C., after meeting at their respective jobs with the Department of Defense. They moved from the D.C. area after they both retired in 2015 and made their beach home near Camp Barnes their full-time residence. Mike and Chris stay active in other areas of the community volunteering at the Roxana CHEER Center where they pack and deliver meals to individuals over 60 years old. When they are not volunteering, you can most likely find them boating, jet skiing or tooling around the island on their scooters. Recently, due to the pandemic, they decided to take up golfing to stay active and to be outdoors. Chris is a member of the local LPGA and can be found golfing with fellow volunteer Edna Tiberi.

Mike and Chris have a daughter Laura and a son Dave. They are excited about Laura’s upcoming wedding. Rounding out the Thompson family is a 135-pound bloodhound, Winston, and chocolate lab, Stella, along with four grand dogs!
Meet the Staff by Marianne Owens

Get to Know Londin Boots, our new Volunteer Manager

The Joshua M. Freeman Foundation welcomed Londin Boots as the new Volunteer Manager as of April 11, 2022. The team is grateful to have her energy, enthusiasm and dedicated-focus on this critical role. We have just begun our 15th season and look forward to having volunteers engage with Londin.

As a lifelong resident of Delaware, Londin has gotten to know the Freeman Arts Pavilion through family and friends. She was intrigued when she heard of the open position from the new Box Office Manager, Lauren Kuzminsky, who highly recommended the organization referencing its mission and impact on the community and culture.

Prior to joining Freeman Arts Pavilion, Londin was a property manager for an HOA and group of townhomes. She loved this job and enjoyed contributing to new processes, resolving issues, and working with a variety of people. However, she was ready for a new opportunity, and taking the volunteer manager position is a fresh start for her. Londin loves that she is now working for the “greater good.” She is enthusiastic about meeting new people with diverse backgrounds and joining together to contribute to the community. This is the most intriguing aspect for her, accepting a challenge to truly make an impact.

Before starting with the foundation she drove cross-country with her sister who was moving out West to start a new job. This trip served to open her eyes to all that is available across America, and they thoroughly enjoyed this journey. Londin also enjoys visiting Delaware State Parks, the beaches and exploring new places.

Londin’s advice to others if they’re interested in volunteering with the foundation is to just do it! There are many opportunities no matter what your background, you can try different things and find what you like. It’s a wonderful opportunity to meet new people.

She encourages volunteers to approach her with ideas or questions but also to follow up with an email to ensure she’s able to track communication. Her wish for her first season at Freeman Arts Pavilion is that she receives feedback that many volunteers were glad to have volunteered and felt it was well worth their time and energy.

A final tidbit to share to better know Londin is that she is a happy-go-lucky person. She recognizes that there is a lot one can’t control in life, so she stays in the moment. Her positive attitude will be infectious and welcomed by all team members.

She participated in the Arts Education program in May where Sonia De Los Santos brought her music to elementary age children.

“Seeing the students interact with Sonia brings it all together and makes everything worth it,” she said.

Londin has lived in Sussex or Kent counties her whole life and Delaware is near and dear to her heart. She is family orientated, spending much of her free time with her parents, older sister, and younger brother.

Volunteer Advisory Committee Update

The excitement of the first show for this 2022 season is in the books and there are more than 300 volunteers signing up for volunteer opportunities. This season offers both free and paid shows from June to mid-September. Thus, each volunteer will have plenty of opportunities to perform various roles and acquire volunteer hours.

Also, this season we have three volunteer roles, crier, pacer, and donor relations, that will be short shift positions. It is, however, especially important that each volunteer be aware of the following four items when signing up for these roles:

1. Volunteers serving a short shift are released at approximately 8 p.m.
2. Volunteers serving a short shift must exit the venue when released. If volunteers have a show ticket, they may stay and enjoy the performance.
3. Releasing volunteers serving a short shift is at the discretion of the captain. For example, if we have a weather delay, the shift end time may be later.
4. Please avoid making irrevocable plans for the evening if the 8 p.m. end time is delayed.

As we continue our advocacy for all volunteers, the Volunteer Advisory Committee always seeks ideas, suggestions or comments that will assist in creating a positive volunteer experience. Every volunteer has something positive to offer to the overall volunteer program and your VAC members look forward to working with you throughout the year.

Mary E. Pineda
VAC Chairperson
Connecting Our Community

As we continue to feature local artists and performances in our area, we thought how better can it be than to highlight the father/son duo, Blind Wind, that not only performs locally but has also performed on our own stage with Blues Travelers in 2017 (but more on that later).

Frankie Moran and his son, Cole, comprise the duo of Blind Wind — with Cole fronting the band with his harmonica and dad accompanying with acoustic guitar and vocals. While a father/son duo is always special, the on and off-stage story of the relationship between Frankie and Cole is inspiring and heartwarming.

Cole is now 19 years old and attends Stephen Decatur High School in Berlin, Md. Cole was born blind with CHARGE-like syndrome and has been challenged with cognitive delays, apraxia of speech, and early onset scoliosis. He has undergone nine corrective surgeries for his scoliosis at Johns Hopkins Children’s Center and has emerged from these hardships as a remarkable young man. Early in Cole’s life, the family had many unknowns and were unsure as to the extent of Cole’s disabilities. Dad (Frankie), who performs as a full-time musician in his own right, had all types of instruments around the house and was thrilled to learn that Cole was captivated by the music from the get-go, and eventually gravitated toward percussion. Frankie would strum the guitar and Cole would respond and crawl over to the guitar and pull himself up and scratch his fingernails on the instrument. Cole’s timing and pitch were perfect from that early age. Frankie introduced Cole to all types of instruments, and he blossomed and became proficient in the harmonica, which was a perfect fit for Cole who could easily manipulate it because of its small size. Plus, he enjoyed the fiddle-like tones. The pair have been performing to audiences for more than seven years.

Blind Wind’s repertoire includes an impressive variety of songs including originals, bluegrass, rock (e.g., Pink Floyd, Eagles, Springsteen), country and folk. They play frequently in the area from Berlin to Ocean City, Fenwick, and Lewes. It is also frequently a family affair with wife and children’s advocate/momager, Jenny, helping with the shows. They are incredibly proud to have just received a prestigious endorsement from Hohner Harmonica.

Blind Wind plays every last Friday of the month at Bear Trap Dunes and most Mondays at Hammerheads Dockside at the Indian River Inlet. They are also preparing to drop a new album sometime in July, “Silver Line.” You can find more information about this duo at BlindWind.com. The highlight of their careers thus far for Cole was in July 2017 when they got a call from Patti Grimes to open for Blues Traveler. After they had warmed up, they were asked if they would like to perform with the Blues Traveler Band. Cole worked with dad to quickly learn the song that he would join in on and Cole made his stage debut with the band while his proud father, Frankie, watched from the wings! After the performance, they hung with the band backstage and musician John Popper gifted Cole with a harmonica set! This is just an example of the magical experiences that the Freeman Arts Pavilion creates not only for patrons but those that perform for us!

Thank you, Frankie, for sharing Blind Wind’s journey!

Maureen Griffith
VAC member
After a 26-month pause, our Arts Education program is back in the schools! The foundation was fortunate to find four local school districts ready to welcome in-school arts events before the end of this school year. After seeing and hearing Sonia De Los Santos perform at the Freeman Arts Pavilion last summer, we invited her for a five-day, 10-show residency from May 16-20. Sonia is a singer/songwriter from New York City who tells her story of coming to this country from Mexico as a child.

The messages in her music are about hope and feeling accepted. Most of our local school districts have dual language or Spanish immersion programs and were eager to have Sonia visit. Sonia and her bass player Sinuhé performed for more than 4,300 elementary school students!! Based on the feedback we are receiving from our educator partners, our Foundation’s vision of transforming lives through the arts is alive and well. Thank you to the 24 Arts Education volunteers who supported our efforts in the schools over the five-day residency.

On May 24, we welcomed 12 arts-related teachers and school district administrators to our inaugural Arts Education Advisory Group meeting. As we emerged from the pandemic, we wanted to hear what educators think about how we might meet the schools where they currently are, and how we can support the curricula work of local educators. Based on this initial meeting, we now have several smaller groups who will meet with us to discuss areas where their expertise can support our work in the schools. We look forward to continuing these conversations with our advisory group in the next school year.

Our Young Audience Series began on Saturday, June 18, and will run through Saturday, Sept. 3. These are free, family-oriented shows beginning at 10 a.m. each Saturday morning on our lower lawn. Thank you to all the Arts Education volunteers who have committed to working with us on these performances.

Paul Tooker
Arts Education Coordinator
We’re out there together — patrons, sponsors, performers, staff, volunteers. We’re all trying to meld together into one family. That’s the vision. Volunteers and staff do the work. Captains are the guides and mentors. We are one team working together to achieve a common goal: creating opportunities to elevate the human spirit.

All the orientation sessions are complete, the venue has been fine-tuned, the plans are finalized, and the shows have begun. Many changes have been implemented at the Pavilion. Short shifts have been created. A viewing area has been created for volunteers while on break to experience the performances. Captains and staff have been CPR certified and participated in numerous training sessions. One-pagers have been updated for volunteer on-the-job training and so much more.

Our common goal is for the volunteers and staff to embrace and promote the concept of belonging, including the volunteers, staff, artists, and the community we serve. There are a few leadership principles derived from General Charles Krulak that are consistent with what our captains use as a guide in this mission.

First, leadership is the ability to inspire people to do extraordinary things. The foundation strives to do the extraordinary every day, and the volunteers are key to our success. We try to make the best and most effective use of resources. Leaders are people of character. That character comprises three elements: selflessness, moral courage, and integrity.

Selflessness tells you to do the right thing no matter what the cost. Our common goal is to achieve the foundation’s vision, not necessarily to take credit for it. It tells you to care about the people on your team, look out for their welfare, and let them know how highly they are valued. At the venue, we will sometimes be asked to be flexible with our assignments when it becomes necessary to achieve that goal.

Moral courage is being unafraid to tell someone when they are doing something wrong. Someone who can see what is wrong and can suggest how to make it right is of great value to the people in his or her life.

When you see something that can be improved, please speak your mind so we can act on your suggestions and improve our operation and your experience.

Integrity means that your word is your bond ... when you say something, you mean it. It also means that when circumstances change and you can no longer keep your word, you tell the people affected how and why things have changed.

No one can take your integrity away from you. You can give it away, but once lost, it is very difficult to regain. Freeman Arts Pavilion embraces the concept of continuous improvement, so things do change, sometimes a lot. Captains and the organization have an open door and encourage communication with and between all stakeholders.

Character is a choice, and only if you choose selflessness, moral courage, and integrity — only if you reach deep down inside yourself for your inner strength — will you win the great victories.

Have a great season. We are delighted that you have decided to join us on this ride. Have fun!

Pat Farina
VAC Newsletter Subcommittee Chair

Volunteer Social Update

The Social Subcommittee held its first event of the season on May 18. This was the Morning Meditation social meet-up at The Point at Bayside. Tom Gairy, Nancy Nimsz and Melanie Hoffman joined Julie Fisher from Gifted Alchemy who let the group through a 30-minute Mindful Mediation routine to help get the day started with serenity and calm.

The second Volunteer Social at Salted Vines winery in Frankford was held on June 12. This was a great day of relaxing and listening to some fine music while sipping some wine. Thank you to all who came out!

Following the event at the winery, the Social Committee will host bingo for volunteers at 6 p.m. on July 26 at the Carl M. Freeman Foundation Office. Save the Date! More information and details will be sent via email to volunteers soon.

The Social Subcommittee’s goal this year is to host events every month during the season. We are off to a great start and have some enjoyable events lined up. This is a terrific way to meet your fellow volunteers and to spend some quality time in a relaxed atmosphere. We hope you can take advantage of the chance to mingle at these events.

Melanie Hoffman
Social Subcommittee Chair
Meet the Staff by Maureen Griffith

Mike Vadella, Food & Beverage Manager

Mike Vadella joined the Freeman Arts Pavilion Staff in January 2022 bringing with him over 25 years of experience in catering, hotel, convention centers, and restaurants. Mike said this opportunity “is like winning the lottery” and he hit the ground running implementing process, technology and operational changes to better improve efficiency and patron experience. Process changes have been implemented for Point of Sale and improving touchless pay for patrons. Technology changes can be seen with digital menu boards that can be edited as inventory changes throughout the season. Operational changes include the addition of refrigerated coolers (think no more hauling bags of ice from the Lower Lawn).

Mike is also clearly dedicated to supporting local businesses and being greener for the environment. Menu items will have some local flavor, including crab options. He is also bringing in new local food trucks along with the Burley Oak Beer Tap Truck on the Lower Lawn. Mike also reports that we are going greener than we were where most food packaging we are using will be 100% compostable and void out of landfills in 30 days.

Mike, we welcome you to the team and the best of luck in your inaugural 2022 season. We will see you on the Green!

Meet the Volunteer by Pat Farina

Get to know Rich Hammond

What town do you currently live in? Ocean View, Delaware

What do you do for a living or what did you do before retirement? I had a career working at television stations as a sales manager in Philadelphia, Richmond Virginia, and Greensboro, N.C.

What year did you begin volunteering with us? I started volunteering in 2021. 2022 will be my second year.

How did you find out about volunteering? Not sure how I heard about volunteering at Freeman Arts, perhaps the Costal Point, but I am glad I did find out about a great organization.

What is your favorite volunteer role and why? My favorite volunteer role is chair checking. I enjoy welcoming the crowd and seeing all our patrons. But there is not any job I mind doing.

Of the concerts you volunteered at, what was your favorite and why? I really enjoyed working the REO Speedwagon concert as a concessions attendant. There’s nothing like sticking your arm into ice cold water to find a beverage for a thirsty patron.

What would you tell community members who might be interested in volunteering at Freeman Arts Pavilion? The Delmarva region should know about the fantastic artists that they will get to experience and the friendly and helpful volunteers. It’s really refreshing at the end of a show to thank the patrons for attending and having them respond “thanks for volunteering.” I find it remarkable that the patrons enjoy the shows and appreciate our efforts. I have also made some nice friends and acquaintances by volunteering and as a newer resident to the area, it’s a nice way to meet people.

Any personal hobbies, talents, or achievements? My personal hobbies include golfing at Bear Trap Dunes and Bayside. I am a vegetable gardener starting plants from seeds, in early spring and sharing the fruits of the garden with friends and neighbors all summer long. Over the years I was the President of the Philadelphia Ad Club. At my first job in Greensboro N.C., I became a Big brother in a Big brother/Little brother program. After 40 years, Sam and I still see each other regularly and I am proud of the experiences I was able to share with him. I hope to have him join me for a show at the venue this year. Thanks for allowing me to work with all the great staff and volunteers at Freeman Arts Pavilion.

Upcoming dates
- June 15: Captains meeting at the Carl M. Freeman Foundation Office, Town Hall
- June 28: Captains call-in meeting
- July 12: VAC Meeting at the Carl M. Freeman Foundation Office, Town Hall
- July 12: Captains call-in meeting
Volunteer Impact: Tips & Tricks

The 2022 season has begun! This is a reminder to keep checking Better Impact frequently throughout the summer to see which shows might still need volunteers!

It is common for volunteers to sign up for a show and then “remove” themselves due to a last-minute obligation. You might see a show available that was full the first time you were signing up. Volunteer for a show where you are not familiar with the performer, try a job that you have never done or sign up for a venue set-up shift. Mix it up and you will be surprised at the fun you will have while meeting a new group of people and learning a new volunteer role.

Please note that you can “remove” yourself from a show up to 48 hours before the shift starts. If it is last minute due to an unforeseen circumstance, then please call or email Londin as soon as possible. As a reminder, her phone number is: 302-231-1216, and her email is volunteer@freemanfoundation.org.

And just a reminder ...

The short shifts are Crier, Pacer, and Donor Relations Attendant. These will be shifts from 5-8 p.m. and a captain will officially release that group at approximately 8 p.m.

Some other pointers for the My Impact page of Better Impact:
- Remember to upload your photo on your Profile Tab.
- Fill in and/or complete your contact info in your profile.
- If you want to change your username, from the main screen after you’ve logged on, select the “My Profile” button, then “Contact Information,” then edit your username and click Save.
- Note that email and contact information are optionally available for volunteers in Better Impact for emergency purposes.

See you all at the venue soon!

Linda Ferguson
VAC Secretary

Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition & Retention Update

Last winter, the foundation assembled a focus group of volunteers to get their suggestions on what could be done to improve the overall volunteer experience. All told, over 160 volunteers were randomly invited and 40 volunteered to participate in the focus group discussions. There were many suggestions and ideas provided that we believe will make volunteering more enjoyable. Based on your input here are some of the changes taking place this season.

Short shifts: Focus group participants recommended that there be more flexibility in scheduling so that some volunteers can more easily adjust the hours they volunteer.

Show viewing: Being able to enjoy some of the shows during breaks is important for many volunteers. This summer, there will be a dedicated area for volunteers to watch the show at the back of the venue during performances. The intent is to provide a dedicated space where volunteers can choose to watch the show during their breaks or purchase food and beverage and rest at the seating surrounding the canteen and food trucks.

Food discounts: A 50-percent discount will be provided on most food and beverage items at the Canteen for volunteers this summer.

Daily huddles and team meetings: We have flipped the sequence for huddles this year. When volunteers arrive, after checking in with the head captain, they will immediately go to their individual mini-huddles to review their roles. There are designated mini-huddle areas on the Lower Lawn that you are directed to when you arrive. After the mini-huddles, the all-team huddle will take place from 5:25-5:35 p.m. The reason for the switch is to avoid conflicting with the performers’ sound check. The large huddle will also be streamlined, to avoid repetition as the season progresses.

Other changes will be coming, particularly in how we recognize volunteers for all the great work that you do. Stay tuned for further developments in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Mark Kronenberg
Recruitment, Recognition and Retention Subcommittee Chair

Good to Know by Pat Farina

- Special thanks to the foundation staff in connection with our local weather service to make the courageous decision, under sunny skies at 5:30 p.m., to cancel the Great Dubois show on June 2. As it turns out, the monsoon arrived right at 7 p.m. and that decision saved a lot of people a lot of grief. The system works!
- Special thanks to John and Edna Tiberi for their generous support of the volunteer raffle last week.
- Finally, let it be known that Rich Hammond’s amazing winning streak with the volunteer raffle has continued into the 2022 season. We still don’t understand his secret, but congratulations are in order.

VAC MEMBERS
Mary Pineda, chair; Lynette Catha, vice chair; Linda Ferguson, secretary
Marianne Owens, Pat Farina, Maureen Griffith, Melanie Hoffmann, Dave Kittell, Mark Kronenberg, Sharon Penhallegon, Frank Ripkin and Susan Senecal