

Front of House Report - 2019

I'd like to thank all our wonderful Front of House (FOH) volunteers who have helped so much to provide Shuswap Theatre's performances with a safe environment that promotes our patrons' enjoyment of the productions, and the casts' ability to perform.

This year we have a volunteer pool of 53 people. That's down from last year's 69, but we removed a number of folks who hadn't worked for several years and added several new volunteers, so we have actually increased the number of active volunteers. In the past year, for our 3 Mainstage productions, Santa's Zombie Apocalypse, the week-long Ozone Festival and Theatre on the Edge, we had 35 people who gave us an estimated 788 hours of work. In addition to those, our 6 trained crew heads gave an estimated 300 hours to schedule the crews, manage the concession, and head up the crews at performances. FOH Training preparation and sessions took about 28 hours. The grand total of FOH volunteer hours was over 1,116 hours for last season.

The Christmas production of Santa's Zombie Apocalypse was a co-production with Salmon Arm Secondary School, and we were able to get some students involved in FOH for the show. We trained 8 students, each of whom worked a minimum of 2 shifts during the run. As they had no previous experience in the theatre, their training included a run-down of the normal FOH duties in addition to the regular safety training. Since then, 2 of the students have asked to be on our regular volunteer list and have worked at two of our Mainstage productions. They have been good workers and our "regulars" have enjoyed working with them. We hope to train more students to work during the up-coming "Wizard of Oz".

As of July 1, 2019, we no longer offer bottled water for sale in our concession, in accordance with the Board's new policy. Since our only production since then has been Theatre on the Edge, it is a bit soon to gauge our patrons' reactions. However, comments heard prior to July 1 about the new policy were positive, especially when patrons were told they could fill their own water bottles from our cooler.

The safety training mandated by the Board two years ago for FOH volunteers continues to be well received. At least 2 sessions were offered prior to each of our Mainstage productions. Attendance is recorded so we can make sure all volunteers who work on productions are current in their training. The seminars will continue to be offered prior to each production in the coming season. Members of the other crews and all board members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Front of House is a valuable, in fact essential, part of any theatre production. It is much more than selling cookies and handing out programs. Unfortunately, it is too often brushed off as being just that. Come to one of our safety seminars and see what FOH is REALLY about. We hope we never have an occasion when we have to show you!

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Kingdon

Front of House Co-ordinator

September 17, 2019