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# Buskirk-Chumley Theater **Volunteer Usher Handbook**

Updated 2022



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## General Theater Information

**Bloom Box Office** (connected to theater)  
114 E Kirkwood Ave  
Bloomington, IN 47408  
812-323-3020

**Jordan Ferguson**  
Events Director & Volunteer Coordinator  
events@buskirkchumley.org  
812-323-3020

**Hours**

Tuesday - Friday 11pm - 5pm

Saturday – Sunday 12pm – 5pm

\*On event nights, the box office stays open 30 minutes into the event

## Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering to usher at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater (BCT)! We value all of our volunteers and know that you are critical to the success of the theater. This document has been developed to explain, in as specific a manner as possible, what the BCT offers to and expects from our volunteers. This year, we have 89 ushers, including 38 VIP ushers!

Because the audience, performers, staff, and volunteers change for each event, it is important that BCT volunteers are prepared to handle themselves in a professional, courteous, and poised manner, no matter the situation. Please read this handbook carefully and prepare yourself to be a representative of this historical performing arts venue. We are happy to have you as a member of the Buskirk-Chumley Theater team!

## Requirements

### Requirements to Usher

- Be 16 years of age or older (anyone under the age of 18 must sign a parent/guardian consent form)
- Be able to stand for the length of the performance and move within the theater quickly and easily
- Be able to read the small print on tickets and work in low light conditions
- Be friendly and willing to interact with patrons, staff, and other volunteers in a courteous manner
- Feel comfortable managing large crowds in normal and emergency situations
- Attend usher training

### Usher Training/Orientation

All new ushers must attend a volunteer orientation session before ushering. These sessions are held once every other month at the theater, usually on a weekday evening. The training sessions cover a brief history of the theater, the roles of ushers, theater seating, emergency procedures, and a tour of the theater.

### Yearly Emergency Training

As an usher, it is important to stay up to date on emergency procedures. The BCT offers an emergency procedure training session at the BCT two times a year. VIP ushers are required to attend one of these each year, but all of our ushers are encouraged to attend.

### BCT Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the BCT that there will be no discrimination or harassment in its programs, activities or employment based on race, color, sex, sexual preference, marital or parental status, religion, national origin, age or mental or physical disability. Questions or concerns related to affirmative action, nondiscrimination or equal opportunity should be directed to the Executive Director by email at [director@buskirkchumley.org](mailto:director@buskirkchumley.org) or phone at 812-323-3022.

# Expectations

## All Ushers

- Volunteer on a regular basis throughout the year. Though we do not have a minimum number of times you must usher, it is most beneficial to the theater if volunteers usher for at least **6 events per year**
- Only sign up for events that you are seriously committed to ushering
- Arrive on time (Call time is **30 MIN BEFORE DOORS OPEN**) and look professional in the appropriate usher attire
- Seek to improve your skills and knowledge as an usher
- Follow the instructions of the House Manager throughout the entire event
- Avoid cancellations as much as possible, but if you must cancel, do so at least 24 hours in advance by calling the Box Office at **812-323-3020** during business hours.

## VIP Ushers

All of the above, plus...

- Volunteer 36 hours or more in a year
- Attend one emergency training session at the theater every year
- Be a positive example and resource for people who are new to ushering at the BCT
- Be knowledgeable about the various roles of ushers
- Be willing to step in and help, when possible, for events that need more ushers

# Grounds for Dismissal

## Cancelling Without Notice

Cancelling for an event less than 24 hours in advance is only acceptable in the case of emergencies. If this happens on a recurring basis, the volunteer is subject to dismissal. If a volunteer repeatedly does not show up for a scheduled shift and does not cancel the shift ahead of time, then the volunteer is subject to dismissal.

## Drugs and Alcohol

Volunteers are subject to immediate dismissal if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their volunteer duties.

## General Grounds for Dismissal

Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, failure to perform assigned duties, inability to perform assigned duties, failure to follow the BCT's policies and procedures, failure to meet minimum standards of performance, abuse of patrons or staff, alcohol or illegal drug use while volunteering, theft of BCT property, misconduct or insubordination.

## Benefits

- Free popcorn at every event you volunteer. We ask that you wait until intermission to claim it.
- If you usher for two or more events within a 30-day period, you can request a complimentary ticket to an event within the next 90 days.
- If you usher 36 hours or more times in a calendar year and attend an emergency training, then you will become a VIP usher. Perks include your own BCT name tag and the having the first opportunity to sign up for BCT Presents concerts.
- You will be involved in the downtown arts community and stay in-the-know about events happening at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater.

## Signing Up to Usher Events

In order to sign up to usher, you will need to have a personal email account and access to a computer with internet. Each volunteer must individually sign up to usher by creating and logging into their [TimeCounts](#) account. You will not be able to sign up for friends or family members on your own account. **There are instructions for using TimeCounts later on in this handbook.**

## Cancellation Policy

### **Cancelling A Shift That is More Than One Week Away**

You can cancel an usher shift through your TimeCounts account. It is not necessary to directly contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Cancelling Less Than 24 Hours Before an Event**

In this case, please cancel the shift in Timecounts and follow up by contacting the box office at **812-323-3020**. Give the staff your full name, which event you were scheduled to usher, and briefly explain why you cannot usher the event. We understand that sometimes things come up, however, it is important that volunteers consistently follow-through with ushering the events for which they sign up.

## What to Wear

Please look professional and clean; wear nice solid pressed black pants or skirt, with dark comfortable shoes and a white semi-formal top (sweaters are fine). If the shirt is a button up, please tuck it in. Once you are at the theater, you will pick up your usher name tag or lanyard to wear as well.



Please avoid strong perfume or cologne, as some people are sensitive to them. Also, please refrain from wearing jewelry that may make noise as you walk.

# Primary Usher Assignments

## Greeter

Greeters stand at the front doors to welcome patrons and direct those picking up will call to the Box Office. At intermission, greeters need to watch to see that patrons do not take alcohol outside of the theater. It is also a good idea to watch for patrons with accessibility issues and ask if they need any assistance.



## Ticket Taker / Clicker

Ticket takers tear tickets and direct patrons using these terms for direction: “**Main Floor right/left**” and “**Balcony right/left.**” Ticket takers will need to remain at their post for at least 10 minutes into the event, in order to assist in seating latecomers. At intermission, ticket takers can help direct patrons to the restrooms or concessions. Currently, we are just asking patrons to see their tickets and we check them in using the clicker to help in the transfer of germs.



## Program Passer

Program passers hand out programs and help to direct patrons, particularly those with wheelchairs or other accessibility needs. It’s important to keep your hand gestures small in this role, as the area will be crowded. At intermission, program pushers may need to direct the flow of the concessions line and direct patrons to the bathrooms.



## Seater

Seaters stand in the theater near the doors to assist patrons who need help finding their seats. At intermission, seaters will be available for patrons who have questions. When assisting patrons with late seating, use your flashlight discreetly, keeping it at no more than a 30-degree angle to your body.



## Security

Security stand or sit at the doors that lead backstage, restricting access to only performers and BCT staff. Security must stay at their station until a House Manager releases them - no exceptions. During intermission, Security will stay at their assigned door. However, if a bathroom break is needed at this time, ushers working security can flag down an usher or House Manager to take their place during their break.



## Will Call Assistance

Will Call ushers assist the Box Office staff by taking charge of Will Call tickets. This allows the Box Office Associates to focus on selling tickets. Will Call ushers should call out for anyone picking up Will Call or pre-purchased tickets. Ask for the patron’s last name and a photo ID, locate the tickets in the Will Call box, and give them to the patron. This role is only occasionally needed.



## All Assignments

Once the show begins and you are released into the theater, stay in the seats assigned to you and keep an eye out for patrons who need assistance and also for disruptions that need addressed. After the Show, if you are the first one to reach the doors, please prop open the doors and return to your assigned stations. Wish patrons a good night on their way out and collect returned programs. Assist the House Manager with light clean up once the patrons have left the theater.

## Theater Tickets

Depending on the event, there might be general admission (sit anywhere) or reserved seating (everyone has an assigned seat) tickets. Both types of tickets have the name of the show, date, time, and ticket holder name on them. Only the reserved tickets have a specific seat listed. You'll want to note what section, row, and seat number that the patron is in in order to direct them where they need to go.

### General Seating Ticket:



### Assigned Seating Ticket:



# Seating

All directions are from the perspective of the audience looking toward the stage.

## Orchestra Level

The Orchestra Level (main floor) is where you will find **100-300** numbered seats. 100 on the left, 200 in center, and 300 on the right. Rows are lettered **U-W** in the orchestra pit (when these extra seats are added). The fixed seat rows are lettered **A-K** from front of theater to back in the center, and **A-R** from front to back on the left and right.

## Box Seats

The Box Seats are numbered **001-005**. The rows are lettered **YL & ZL** on the left and **YR & ZR** on the right.

## Lower Balcony

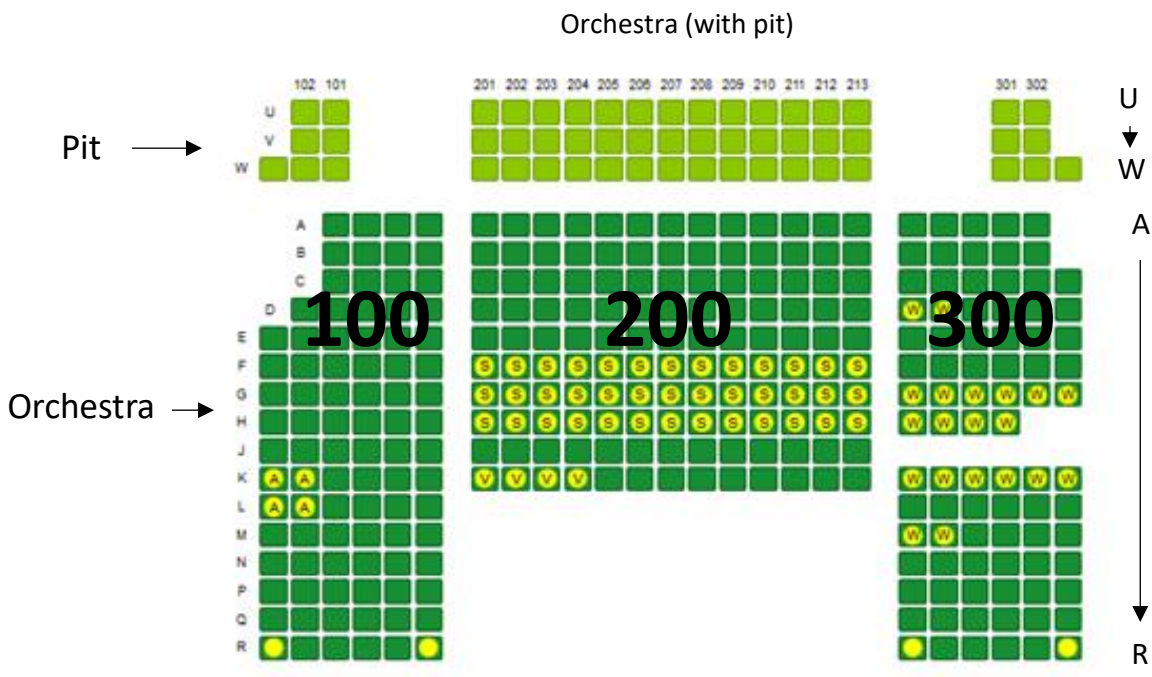
In the Lower Balcony, seats are numbered **400-500**. 400 on the left, 500 on the right. The rows are lettered **AA-CC** from front to back.

## Bench Seat

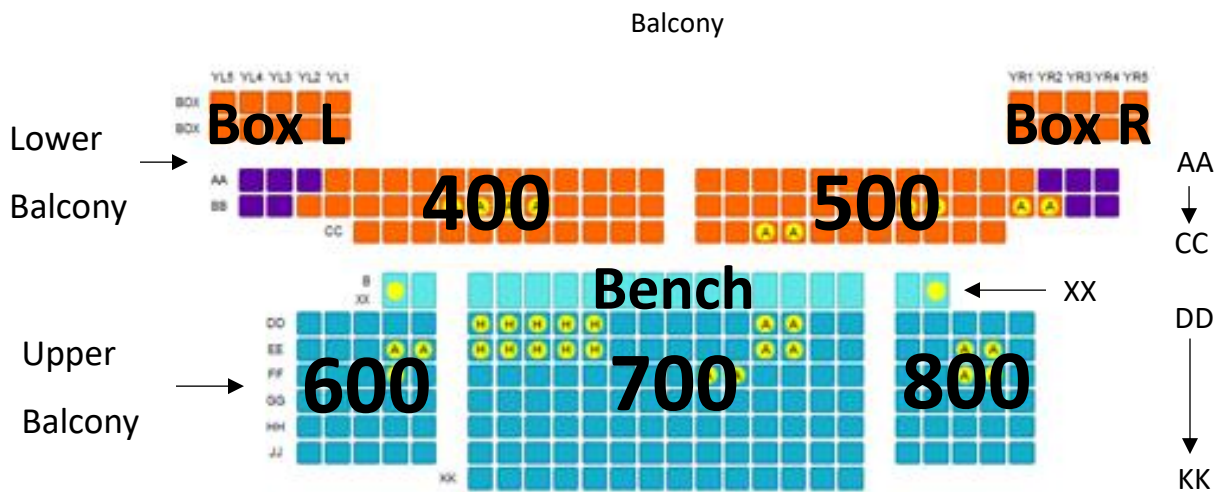
The Bench Seats are numbered in line with the upper balcony (**600-800**). The Bench Seat row is lettered **XX**.

## Upper Balcony

In the Upper Balcony seats are numbered **600-800**. 600 on the left, 700 in the center, 800 on the right. The rows are lettered **DD-KK** from front to back in the center and **DD-JJ** from front to back on the sides.







## Accessibility

### Wheelchair

Ushers will escort patrons in wheelchairs to the far-right aisle of the orchestra level in order to access the wheelchair seating area easily. The Buskirk-Chumley Theater does not have elevators, so all accessible seating is on the orchestra level.

### Things to Remember About Wheelchair Accessible Seating

- **Ask permission** - Always ask wheelchair users if they would like assistance before you help.
- **Be respectful** - Individual's wheelchairs are part of their body space. Don't hold onto or lean on them unless given permission.
- **Speak directly** - Be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, you may sit or kneel to get yourself on the same level as the individual in the wheelchair.
- **Further Assistance?** - Ask if there is any other way that we can assist them.

### Hearing Assistance Devices

Hearing Assistance Devices are available in the tech booth. They can connect to hearing aids as well as be used with headphones/earbuds. The devices work best in the orchestra level seating above row L. If the patron needs to move seats to use the device during a reserved seating show, please ask a House Manager for assistance.

## BCT Policies & Restrictions

**Food/Drink** - Only BCT concessions and Blu Boy Cafe food and drinks are allowed in the theater.



**Bathrooms** - Accessible bathrooms are on the main floor, mens/womens bathrooms are upstairs.



**Drinking Fountains** - There are two drinking fountains on the main floor and one upstairs.



**Recycling/Trash** - There are trash and recycling cans throughout the theater available for cans, plastic, and paper.

**Cell Phones/Photo/Videos** - Using phones to call or text people is not allowed in the auditorium during an event. The policy for photos and videos changes according to the performance. The House Manager will brief ushers on this before the event.



**Smoking** - The BCT is a “smoke-free” facility. Patrons who want to smoke should be directed to do so outside on the sidewalk along Kirkwood away from the theater doors.



**Alcohol** - Alcohol may be available for sale in concessions, depending on the event. No outside alcohol is allowed into the theater and alcohol purchased inside the theater *cannot* be taken outside.



## Emergency Procedures

### Patron and Volunteer Emergencies

If a patron or volunteer has an accident, is injured, unconscious, or vomiting, *immediately* report this to a House Manager. Volunteers should never attempt to clean up any human blood or other body fluids. If there are body fluids, keep patrons away from the area.



### First Aid Kits

We have first aid kits in the usher closet, in the tech booth, and in the concessions area.



### Tornado

In the event of a tornado warning (meaning a tornado has been sighted in the area), everyone in the theater will be asked to take shelter until the warning is clear. If patrons choose to leave the theater and go elsewhere, they can do so.

The House Manager and Technical Director will assist you with sheltering patrons in these areas, in this order:

- **Basement** - Dressing Rooms, Storage Rooms, Machine Room
- **Auditorium Hallways** - Audience Left, Audience Right
- **Auditorium** - Tech Booth, On Stage Dressing Room
- **Main Floor** - Bathrooms, Closets
- **Inner Lobby** - Away from glass doors



The House Manager or Tech Director will announce when the threat is clear.

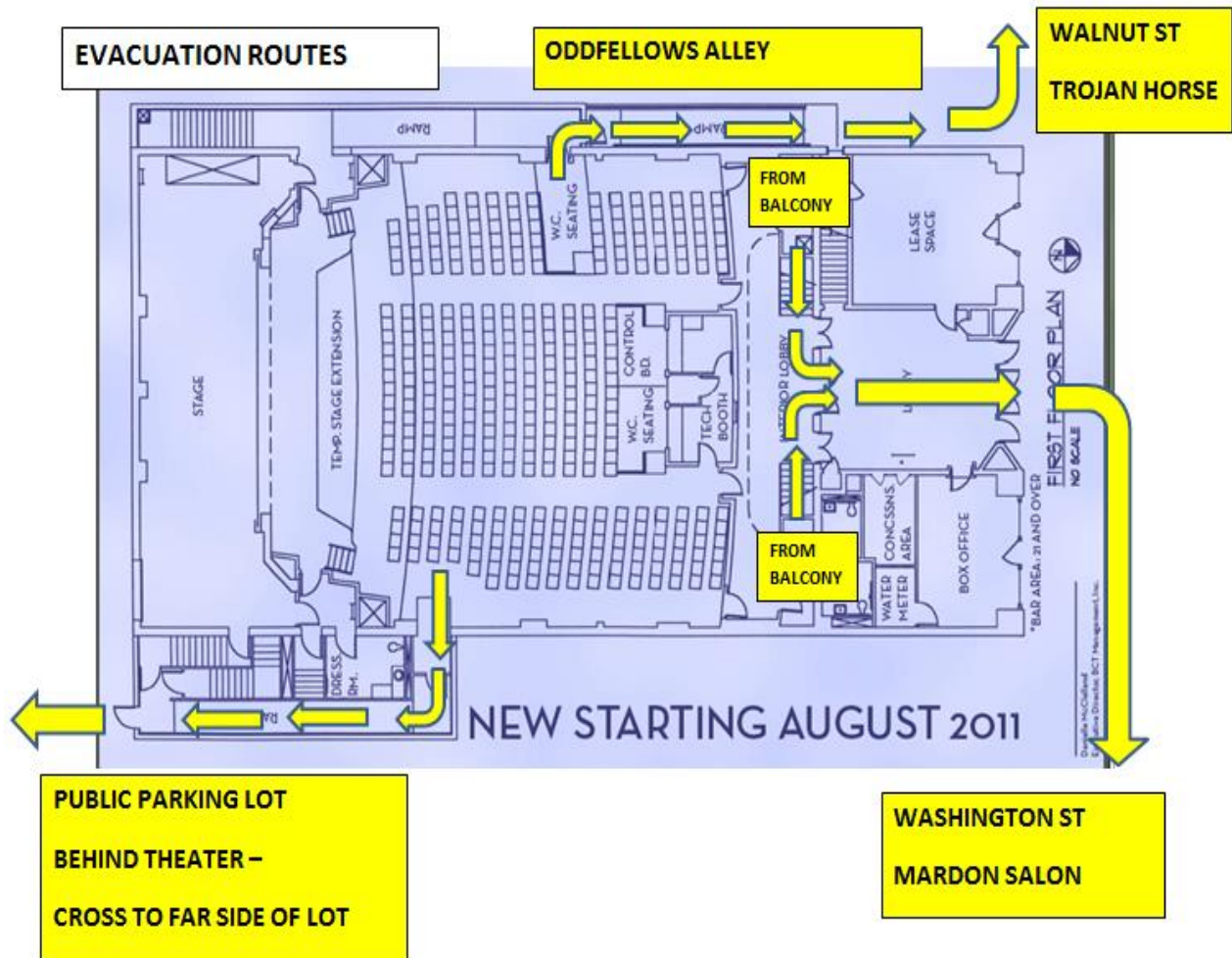
## Fire

Always evacuate if the alarm goes off. **Greeters, Ticket Takers, and Program Passers** should return to the lobby and ensure that any patrons there are evacuating, and directing patrons evacuating from the balcony. **Seaters and Security ushers** take the lead in directing the crowd as follows:



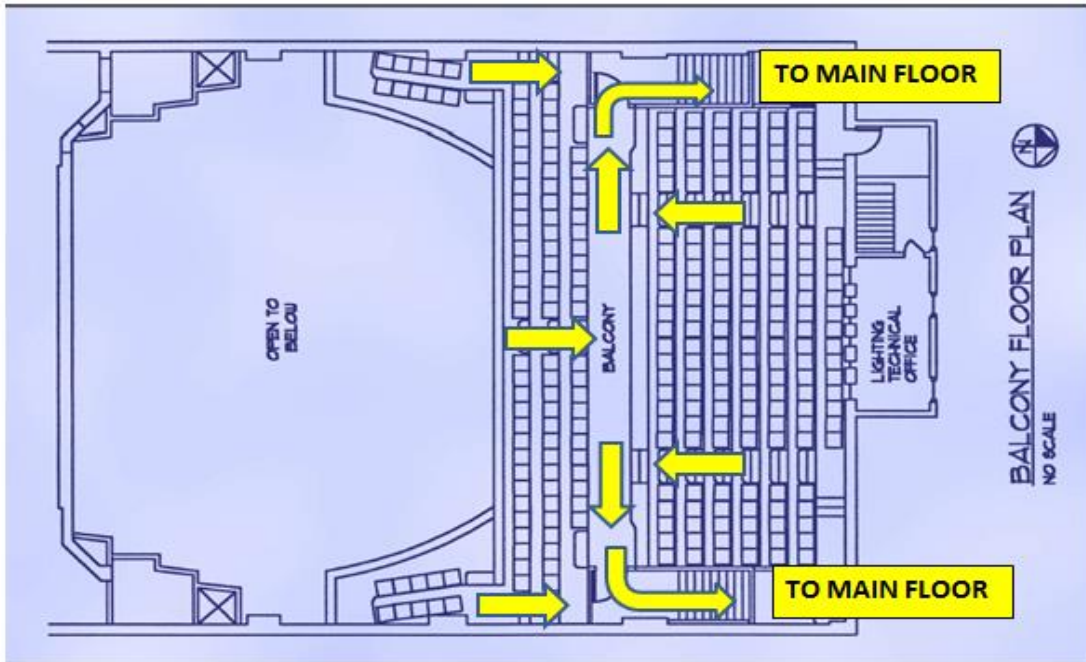
- **Orchestra Right and Left Exits:** Move to the Exit Door, raise your hand, calmly, but loudly say, ***“We are evacuating the theater. Please exit here.”*** You may need to say this multiple times. If there are two ushers, it is ideal that one holds the first door and the other directs the patrons outside at the sidewalk. Direct the crowd to the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Washington behind the theater according to the following evacuation route.

**Caution:** Open the door leading to the parking lot very slowly, as it opens onto an alley road.



- **Balcony Left & Right Exits:** Move to the Exit Door, raise your hand, calmly, but loudly say, ***“We are evacuating the theater. Please exit here.”*** You may need to say this multiple times. Patrons on the left side of the balcony will exit out of the left Exit Door. Patrons on the right side will exit out of the right Exit Door. When patrons get to the main floor, they will exit out the front theater doors and go

east on Kirkwood and then south on Washington. Everyone will meet on the far side of the parking lot behind the theater.



## FAQ

### **Where can I park?**

There is metered parking all around downtown. Parking is free at the meters only on Sundays and federal holidays, otherwise they meter until 9pm. There is the Poplars parking garage as well as City Hall's parking lot that has free parking after 5pm. The surface lot located across from the Convention Center, on the East side of College Ave, is open and free to the public in the evenings as well. More information about parking is available at [www.bloomington.in.gov/parking](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/parking).

### **Where can I put my personal belongings during my usher shift?**

There is a limited space for jackets and purses in the ushers' closet located in the front lobby. This closet is not locked, so you may request that the House Manager lock valuable belongings in the office upstairs if necessary. Volunteers are cautioned not to leave valuables in the building. The BCT is not responsible for any loss of personal property.

### **May I bring a family member or friend to usher with me?**

While the BCT requires that all prospective volunteers complete orientation before working their first shift, we do allow current volunteers to bring a friend on occasion. This person should be seriously considering becoming an official volunteer, not there just to hang out. They will be expected to follow all rules that official volunteers are subject to and will be expected to perform usher tasks. If you would like to bring a

friend who is interested in becoming a volunteer with you to a shift, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator at least a week in advance.

### Is there a Lost and Found?

There is a permanent lost and found box that is kept in the box office; all lost and found items should be turned into the box office. If the box office is locked, please give the item to the House Manager. If a patron is missing an item, please notify the House Manager, who can check for the item in the lost and found. Patrons can also call or return to the box office during business hours if the lost object has not been found during or immediately after the event.

### What do I do if I've lost my VIP name tag?

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator. In the meantime, please take an usher lanyard from the usher closet.

## Using TimeCounts

### Getting Started

TimeCounts is the online application that you will use to sign up to usher events. In order to use TimeCounts, you will need to create an account. Once you have completed usher training, you'll receive an email invitation from the Volunteer Coordinator to "Get started with Timecounts" and join the Buskirk-Chumley Volunteer Hub. The "Get started" link will take you directly to the Buskirk-Chumley Theater community hub in TimeCounts. Click either the **Join-Us** button on the right or Join **Buskirk Chumley Today**, both will take you to the sign-up form.



You can sign up using your preferred email or through your Facebook account. You will then be prompted to fill out the **Join Our Volunteer Community** form and click **Submit**. Next you will need to verify your email address. You will find an email from TimeCounts in your inbox asking you to verify your email address and click "Activate Account."



You are now all set! At any time, you can Log in at [TimeCounts.org](https://TimeCounts.org) to view a complete list of ushering opportunities. Click **Log in** at the top of the screen.

### How to sign up for an event

Once logged in, you will see Buskirk-Chumley listed as one of your organizations. Click “Go to Hub.” You will be under the “Home” tab which lists all upcoming volunteer shifts that you have already applied and been approved for. Click the “About” tab and you’ll see some information on signing up for shifts and a reiteration of how to earn comp tickets. Click the “Opportunities” tab to view all the upcoming volunteer opportunities you can sign up for.

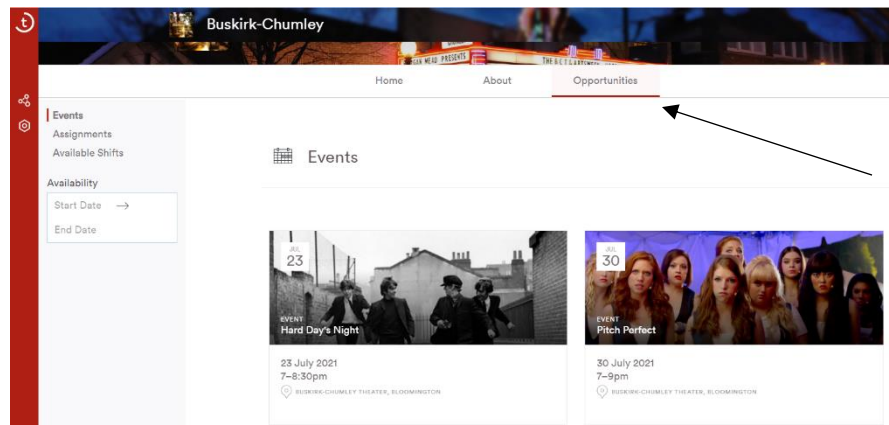
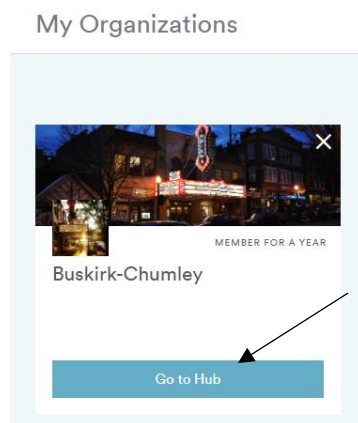
\* Email  
 Please confirm we have permission to email you.

\* Age  
 18+ ▼

Preferred Pronouns  
 She/Her ▼

Primary Phone  
 +1 (US/CA) ▼   
DIAL CODE PHONE NUMBER

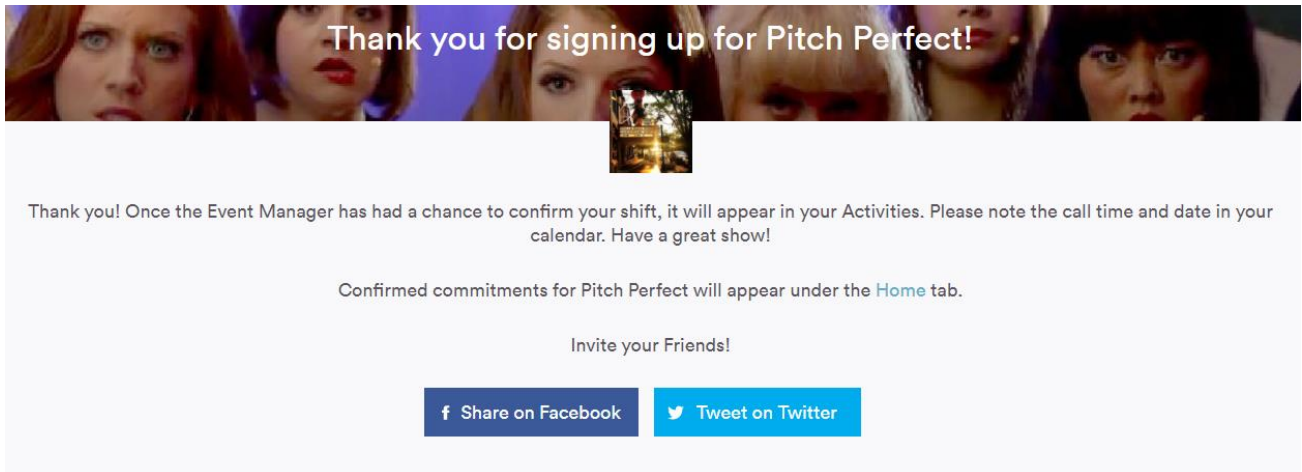
We need you to check here so we have your permission to call you.  
 I am happy to receive text (SMS) messages on this number.



Click on the opportunity you would like to usher. Here, you can view more information about the event and see your “Call Time” for arrival. To sign up, click the orange “Volunteer” button. If the event is full, the button will state, “Join Waitlist” you can sign up and be immediately added to the waitlist to usher the event. If an event is not available for sign up, it will say “Applications Closed.”

If there are multiple shifts available, after you click to “Volunteer” or “Join Waitlist,” you will be directed to a page where you can select your preferred shift.

Once you click Submit, you will receive an immediate confirmation message that states Thank you for signing up. This message will show up on the screen in TimeCounts. It will not be sent to your email address.

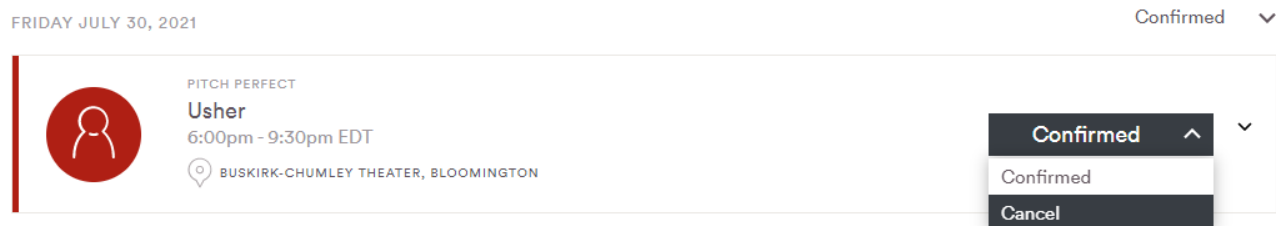


The Volunteer Coordinator (aka, Events Director) has now been notified that you’ve signed up. Despite what the notification says, your shift has been automatically confirmed and should immediately appear under your “home” tab, unless you are on a waitlist. If at any point you are moved from a waitlist to the shift, you will receive a notification.

### How to cancel an event

Log in and go to the “Home” tab and find your event. Click on the arrow next to the gray box saying “Confirmed” and select “cancel.” The effect is instant, so be very careful about doing this.

If you do cancel accidentally, please email me to let me know and I can make sure you are added again and that I don’t fill the spot from the waitlist.



## Thank You!

Thank you for volunteering at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater. We hope you enjoy your experience as a volunteer. As you learn your volunteer duties, feel free to ask questions or share suggestions. Our staff are happy to help you and also value your input. It is your commitment and that of volunteers like you that allows the BCT to serve this wonderful community. Thank you!