



## **GOSHEN PLAYERS, INC. VOLUNTEER USHER GUIDE**

As a volunteer usher, you help the Goshen Players ensure that our patrons enjoy their theater experience. Your assistance, positive attitude and customer service affect how patrons view the show they are seeing and their experience at Goshen Players. You play a crucial role in our success. We appreciate your commitment and could not do what we do without you!

The information below will help you answer your own and patrons' questions, helping you to be a more informed representative of our theater. Please take the time to read through it, and if you have questions, please contact the House Manager for the performance at which you are ushering.

A common sense application of the principles contained in this guide will ensure that both you and our patrons have the best possible experience at our theater.

### **Volunteer Basics**

#### **Dress Code**

The purpose of having a dress code is to ensure that our usher staff is both professionally and distinctively dressed. It is important to be easily identifiable as representing Goshen Players. The dress code is black pants or skirt and white shirt. Please wear shoes that are comfortable for walking, climbing stairs and standing. Lanyards/badges must be worn which identify you as an usher. For some performances, we may also ask you to wear our logo aprons.

#### **Arrival (Call) Time**

You are expected to arrive promptly one hour before a scheduled show. If it is a "cabaret-style" show, you are expected to arrive 90 minutes ahead of time, to assist in setting tables and preparing beverages and other hospitality items. Please make every effort to be on time. If you cannot make it or will be unexpectedly late, please call the theater at 860-491-9988. We generally open the theatre to the public 30 minutes prior to showtime, at the discretion of the House Manager.

#### **Expectations**

Please do not eat, drink, sit, socialize, or read after the theatre doors open. Please refrain from using cell phones or other electronic devices. Ushers are expected to be familiar with emergency exits, the location of restrooms, the box office and the information in this guide. Additionally, ushers are expected to be able to answer questions about the length of the show, when (or if) intermissions will occur and how long they will last, and when the theatre doors will open. The House Manager will review most of this information with the ushers before each performance. Ushers are expected to follow the directions of the House Manager. If you have questions about any of these matters, please ask the House Manager.

## **Before The House Opens**

The house (inside area of the theatre) is off-limits to the public until the House Manager tells you that the house is open. Please do not allow patrons to enter the house until the House Manager gives the okay. Patrons are requested to wait in the vestibule or outside of the building.

## **Attitude and Conduct**

Our volunteer ushers are the faces of Goshen Players that most patrons see. Ushers represent the entire company and the theater's family of volunteers who work hard to provide a unique and enjoyable experience for our guests. Ushers are expected to hold themselves to the highest standard of behavior when interacting with each other and patrons. Ushers are always expected to carry out their duties with courtesy at all times. *Never* argue with a patron or fellow volunteer. If a conflict arises, please excuse yourself and ask the House Manager to assist.

## **Patrons Who Need Special Assistance**

Please pay particular attention to the needs of patrons in wheelchairs, with walkers or who otherwise need special assistance. Our wheelchair-designated seating is in the last row, house-right. It is also designated on the seating chart posted at the theater door. Walkers should be stored in the office, so as not to create a potential hazard. Please be sure to return the walkers to patrons who need them. Ask the House Manager if you need assistance.

## **Inability to Keep a Schedule Date**

If for any reason you are not able to keep your scheduled ushering date, please notify the House Manager, or leave a message at our box office: (860) 491-9988. We ask that you arrange for a substitute to take your place. The House Manager can assist you if you are having difficulty with this.

## **Benefits of Ushering**

Ushers are not guaranteed a seat to the performance; however if a seat is available at the performance at which you are ushering, you are welcome to take it. If you would like to be guaranteed a seat at the performance, we kindly ask that you purchase a ticket through our box office. *This only applies to the individual who is ushering. Seating for family or friends must be purchased.* If you would like your family or friends to join you for the show, please purchase a ticket through our box office.

## **Responsibilities**

Ushers greet patrons, check tickets and direct patrons to their seats. Please check the date, time, performance and seat number. Assist patrons in locating their seats. Seating charts are posted on the door to the house, as well as on our website. Please familiarize yourself with the seating layout of the theater. If there is a conflict in seating assignments that you cannot readily resolve, please ask the House Manager or Box Office staff to assist in resolving the issue. Some of our productions are "cabaret-style" and will include light snacks and refreshments. For these productions, ushers will be asked to assist in serving beverages, ensuring that our concessions are stocked, and assisting in preparing our hospitality items.

## **Intermission**

Ushers should be available at intermission to assist patrons as needed. In addition, if concessions are made available, we ask our ushers to assist in staffing this table. Intermissions are usually 15 minutes long. Please be especially mindful of patrons in need of walkers or wheelchairs.

## **Post-Show**

After the show, all ushers are asked to assist patrons while they are exiting and to help the House Manager in picking up the house. Please be sure to return walkers to patrons who need them at the end of the show. If the production is cabaret-style, we also ask you to assist in clearing the tables of all items and preparing the house for the next performance.

## **House Rules and Policies**

### **Food and Drink**

Please clarify with the House Manager what policy is established for your particular production on food or beverages from the outside, including alcoholic beverages.

### **Cameras and Recording Devices**

Cameras or recording devices are not permitted in the theater. Copyright law strictly prohibits the taking of images of copyrighted material, including the performance, sets and props. Additionally, camera flashes are extremely distracting to performers who rely upon lighting cues during the performance and they are disrupting to other patrons. If you see someone using a camera, please politely ask them not to do so. If they persist, request assistance from the House Manager.

### **The Stage, Backstage and Downstairs Areas Are Off-Limits to Patrons**

Patrons are not permitted to go on the stage, touch the sets or props or enter the backstage areas. In addition, please do not allow patrons to go downstairs unless approved by the House Manager.

### **Aisles and Exit Rows**

Occasionally, performances may include cast members walking through the aisles during a performance. Therefore, it is imperative that all aisles and exit rows are kept clear of any obstructions, including seats, feet, legs or standees. In addition, please notify the House Manager of any obstructions to the exit doors. Be sure that patrons do not move their chairs out of position, since this might create a hazard.

### **Late Seating**

Latecomers will be seated once the performance has started strictly at the discretion of the House Manager. If a patron leaves the theater during a performance, generally the patron will not be permitted to return until the next intermission.

## **Handicapped Seating**

Seating designated for handicapped patrons is noted in our seating chart and is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. This should be arranged through our box office or can be reserved through our website. There is no handicap seating in our balcony. Our restrooms are fully ADA-compliant.

## **Parking**

Parking is available for patrons across the street at Ducci Kitchen & Bath showroom (diagonally across the rotary) and the Congregational Church (across Route 4). Please do not park in the driveways, drive-through lanes or in front of any building doors. Please do not advise patrons to park at Union Savings Bank. There is no direct handicap access parking to the theatre and we ask that no one parks on Routes 4 or 63, for safety reasons. Patrons can be dropped off in front of the theatre, at their own risk.

All volunteers (including ushers) are asked to park in the rear lot of Ducci Kitchen & Bath (behind the white building).

## **Young Audience Members**

Because of strict fire code regulations, all patrons must have a seat. In addition, it is always advised to check with the House Manager to ensure that a performance is suitable for all ages. We generally make this information available on our website. We do not have a facility to store strollers or carriages during the performance.

## **Emergencies**

Should there be an emergency, notify the House Manager immediately.

### ***Specific Emergencies***

#### **Minor Accidents and Falls**

An usher should stay with the injured person and send another usher to get the House Manager. If the patron says that he or she does not need assistance but appears to be injured, please note the patron's appearance, where the patron is sitting and report the incident to the House Manager immediately.

#### **First Aid Kit**

A first-aid kit is located in the office. Any request for items should be directed to the House Manager.

#### **Medical Emergency**

In the case of heart attack, stroke, seizure or other medical emergency, notify the House Manager immediately and call 911. If it is during the performance, one usher should remain with the patron and send another usher to find the House Manager immediately. A phone is located in the office. The address is: Goshen Players, Old Town Hall, junction of Routes 4 and 63, at the rotary in Goshen.

## **Fire**

If there is a fire, the House Manager or Stage Manager will make an announcement directing patrons to exit the theater. Ushers should assist patrons in exiting the theater. Ushers should be familiar with all exits out of the theater. There are three exits out of the theater: the main entrance doors, the side door on the first floor and the side door off of the balcony. There are fire extinguishers located in the rear of the theater house. If you are ushering and you do not know the location of exits out of the theater or of the fire extinguishers, please ask the House Manager to show you.

## **Disruptive Patron**

If a patron disturbs the performance in a manner that requires attention, notify the House Manager immediately.

## **FAQ for Volunteer Ushers**

**Q: I am ushering at a performance and would like to bring my spouse/child/friend. Can I bring them? Can a young child/infant sit on my lap during a performance?**

A: If family members or friends would like to see the show (including young children), they must purchase a ticket and be seated only when the theatre "house" doors open. Only those ushering will be allowed to take an *available, un-sold* seat for the performance at which they are ushering. There is no guarantee of seating for ushers unless a ticket has been purchased. Lastly, all patrons regardless of age must have a seat, per our fire code regulations.

**Q: Are discounts available for future performances?**

A: No. On occasion, we may offer discounts for group sales. Check with our box office.

**Q: My group is sponsoring a performance and I have been asked to usher. What do I need to know?**

A: This guide will provide many answers to many questions you have. If you are unsure of something, please see the House Manager or another member of the GP staff.

**Q: Do I need to stay through the entire show?**

A: We ask that our volunteers stay to the end in order to assist in cleanup after the show. If you cannot, please advise the House Manager.

**Q: I don't really want to buy a ticket. Can I just usher and see the show for free?**

A: In the past, many of our productions have sold out. If this is the case, you will be disappointed to know that seating is not guaranteed for our volunteers and due to fire-code regulations we cannot exceed our building capacity. If you would like to ensure that you will have a seat for the show, please purchase a ticket.

**Q: Can I just stand in the back of the theater or sit in the back of the balcony during the performance?**

A: No. Fire code regulations prohibit obstruction of any aisle or passageway or the placing of additional seats.

**Q: I would like to purchase a ticket for a future performance, or a patron asked how to purchase a ticket for a future performance. What do I say or do?**

A: Tickets can be purchased at our website ([www.goshenplayers.org](http://www.goshenplayers.org)) or can be purchased through our box office. Please call 860-491-9988 or speak with the box office staff at the performance. The box office is usually open one hour prior to showtime. Other box office hours are available by calling the box office.

**Q: Where do I park? Is there handicapped parking available? Can I park on the street?**

A: Detailed parking information is listed in this guide. Unfortunately, we do not have handicapped parking available. Parking on Routes 4 and 63 is strictly prohibited.