

FALL 2022

AMBASSADOR CORPS BRIEF

San Diego Theatres

EVENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATES

As many of you know, Brad Young, the volunteer coordinator who set up and built our entire Ambassador Corps program from the ground up, has moved on to new opportunities. We are sad to see him go, and hope you join us in wishing him luck in his new venture!

In light of Brad's departure, the Event Services department has reorganized, and developed a new role. **Allison Dorantes**, whom you may have met as a House Manager, has been promoted to Event Services Supervisor! She will continue to act as a House Manager for many events, while also serving as the main point of contact for our Ambassador Corps Program. As the program continues to grow, Allison will be working to recruit, train, schedule, and assist the volunteers working at our venues.

Before joining San Diego Theatres, Allison was a House Manager at the Old Globe in Balboa Park, and has worked with Lambs Players Theatre in Coronado. She graduated from UC Davis with a double major in Film Studies and English. Though she originally planned on breaking into the film industry in Los Angeles, Allison found her place in theatre, and is excited to continue her career in arts administration and venue management.

Outside of work, Allison enjoys spending time outdoors, either hiking or camping, watching TV and then writing about it, and traveling with her partner and dog. She's always willing to discuss her opinions on *Star Trek*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Avatar: The Last Airbender* with anyone who will listen.

Allison Dorantes

Event Services Supervisor

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AMBASSADOR OF THE QUARTER

– CARRIE DAVIS


Over the summer season, not only did Carrie achieve her Bronze Level award, but she did outstanding work with us! Carrie is always ready to learn and jump in wherever needed. Thank you for all your hard work and commitment to creating Moments that Matter with us!





UPDATE: PARKING PASSES

We are revamping the parking pass system! Rather than receiving an envelope with a month's worth of passes, you will receive one new pass for your next event at each shift you come to. You'll notice that as you come in, there will be a separate sign in sheet just for our Ambassadors. Signing in and out will be exactly the same, and there is an additional column asking for the venue of your next shift. In this column, please indicate if your next event is at the Civic or Balboa, and during the performance, the House Managers will assess which pass you need, and provide it to you as you leave. If you are not in need of a parking pass, you may indicate "N/A" or other such marker so that we ensure we have everyone's passes ready by the end of the show.

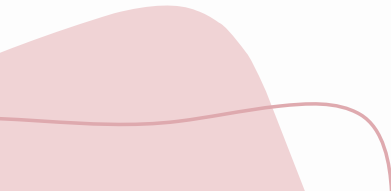



The \$2 passes will allow you in for your shifts at the Civic. There will be attendants at every entrance asking for payment. Once you provide the pass, they will let you into the Parkade. When you are leaving at the end of your shift, the exits will be open, and there will be no need to stop at the ticket kiosks. If your event is at the Balboa, and we also have an event happening at the Civic, you are still welcome to use the \$2 pass as you enter, as the attendant will still be there. The House Managers will be looking at the schedule when assigning passes, and will take this into account.

The \$5 passes will allow you to park at the Parkade for any shifts you have at the Balboa, when there is not also an event at the Civic. As you enter the Parkade, you will have to stop at the ticket kiosk and take a yellow or white parking ticket. Hold on to that ticket! As you leave the Parkade at the end of the show, you will find yourself at another ticket kiosk at the exit. Place the yellow ticket in first, and once it's been read, it will ask for payment. Then you can put in the \$5 parking pass we provide, and you will be allowed to exit. It's important to note that you should not stop at the payment kiosks in front of the elevators as you leave. You will not need to provide payment other than the pass at the exit to the structure.

It is very important that you do not lose these passes! We suggest keeping them somewhere accessible in your car, like a glove compartment or center console, or in your wallet. Please also do not keep it attached to your phone, as that will sometimes demagnetize the pass, and you will need to ask for an attendant at the exit. If you are not sure of your next event, or have not signed up for a future event yet, please let the House Manager know, and they can either find out what you're signed up for or assess what you may need for the future.

Remember that there are other options for parking as well. You may prefer to find street parking, which is free every day after 6pm, and free all day Sunday. If you'd prefer to park at Horton Plaza for a Balboa show, there is the option to validate in the House Manager's office for \$10. Do note that this option may not always be available, as the validator machine occasionally is not available for Front of House.



HIGHLIGHT: BREAK TIMES

Everyone working an event is eligible for a 15 minute break for every 4 hours worked. Most usher shifts will fall between 4-5 hours, which means that your break is available to you. The Chief ushers assign everyone a break time, and Floor Captains will check in before and during the show when it is time for your break. All paid staff are required to take their break, but as Volunteer Ambassadors, the break is optional for you. This break time, however, is the best and only ideal time to take care of any personal needs you may anticipate during your shift. If you brought dinner and would like to take a moment to heat it up and eat, or for whatever reason will need to step from your post for several minutes, please utilize this break time to ensure you are not leaving your floor unattended unexpectedly or will be missing a time of heavy patron traffic, such as intermission or the end of the show.

Your break time will always fall during the show. **You may not use intermission as your break time.** Some shows, such as Broadway performances, will ask that merch is bought only during the second act. If things like this, or using the restroom, do not line up with your break time, please ensure that you communicate with your Floor Captain before leaving your post. Refrain from using the restroom during times when many patrons are around, such as ingress, intermission, and egress. Before lobbies open and during the show are the appropriate times to step away if necessary.

UPDATE: SCHEDULING

Going forward, we will be publishing available schedules one month in advance rather than two months. Many people have reached out to begin signing up for December events. We appreciate your enthusiasm to continue volunteering with us! Please check Get Connected on November 1st, when December will be posted.

LOOKING AHEAD: UPCOMING ORIENTATIONS

We are so grateful that you have taken the time and energy to volunteer with us! If you know of any other people looking for volunteering opportunities, please direct them to Get Connected. They are able to sign up for an upcoming orientation on the tab labelled "Orientation Sign Up" on the left-hand side of the dashboard.

If you have not yet gone through our orientation process, please sign up! We hold orientations monthly. It will include a presentation from San Diego Theatres, and tours of both the Civic and Balboa Theatres. Please wear comfortable walking shoes.



TRAINING: DE-ESCALATION

We are offering a training session on de-escalation practices this month. You have already received an email inviting you to join our staff for this training. Here is a summary of some key points to use when trying to de-escalate a patron situation:

Part of the process of working an event, and general customer service, is coming across a patron who, for any reason, has become upset with their experience. Our job is to help that patron come back down to a level of comfort where they can enjoy the rest of the show. Sometimes these interactions can be stressful, so we have compiled a series of helpful tips and tricks to hopefully alleviate tense situations so that everyone, whether they be staff, volunteers, or patrons, can have a great time at our venues.

First off and most importantly, never, under any circumstances put yourself in a position in which you believe your safety is compromised, or continue an interaction that becomes threatening. Should you become overwhelmed or feel that your safety is in question, excuse yourself from the situation and call for assistance. Whether that be a floor captain or a house manager, you have backup who is willing and able to help.

Stay Confident and Positive: Generally, people will attempt to mirror the traits, idioms, and mindsets of those they interact with as a means of social and psychological preservation. It is a natural human adaptive mechanism. Thus, a confident and positive attitude of helpfulness, even in the face of a stressful situation, can oftentimes throw off an angry person, and calm them down to make them more receptive to your input. The key to this tip is not to let your confidence or positivity slip, even if there is pushback after your first few attempts. Stand tall and keep smiling.

Repeat and Mirror to Demonstrate Active Listening: Get on their eye level and repeat their complaint back to them in a sympathetic way. If they are seated, crouch nearby so that you bring yourself to their level; standing over people while handling their complaint can be seen as domineering and challenging. If they approach you, remain standing tall and maintain an open posture with eye contact, and they will subconsciously understand that you are willing to listen. By restating their complaint, without agreeing to the problem, you are letting the patron know that they have been heard, and hearing their own words restated creates an innate (if false) understanding that you are of the same mindset. This will oftentimes cause the upset person to redirect their ire towards something other than you, preferably something they cannot see, which brings us to the next tip.

Provide Valid Reasons for Regulations: Patrons want to know why they cannot do something. If they are caught in a seating hold, it can seem that there is no reason that they cannot slip into the back if they claim their seats are in the last row. Letting patrons know that seating holds are put in place for the safety of the actors, production cues, or at the artists' request, not only gives them a reason why their actions have consequences, but also redirects their frustration to a person they shouldn't be angry at.



TRAINING: DE-ESCALATION CONT.

Script Your Responses Beforehand: Hope for the best and prepare for the worst. Have responses to common complaints ready so that you project confidence and can alter your delivery to fit the situation. This ensures you don't have to adapt on the fly and assists in maintaining an even tone throughout an interaction.

Remain Cool, Calm, and Collected: Patrons can become upset and more agitated or animated than is necessary; however, our duty is to maintain calm. Becoming emotional or aggravated ourselves only feeds into the negative interaction and will cause the negativity to continue or escalate.

Apologize for the Inconvenience: While not apologizing for your actions, the show, or any standing regulations, a very general *"I'm very sorry for these circumstances/this situation"* creates a sense of personal sympathy. Show understanding of the individual's dissatisfaction without admitting fault.

Offer Sympathy and Options, but be Realistic: People want to believe their emotional standpoints are valid. Offer sympathy to an upset and frustrated patron to help alleviate their heightened emotional state. Providing alternative options is even better to help take the string off of a bad situation. You may provide directions to a nearby monitor during a hold, or let a patron know that there are photo opportunities located in various parts of the building. This can redirect an upset person's mindset away from the focus of their ire and towards finding the best path to a new goal (i.e., they are no longer focused on taking a photo of the stage, they are now planning on how to get to the nearest photo opportunity in the lobby). That said, don't offer them the moon and hand them a croissant; only provide options that you have been cleared to offer.

Narrate Your Resolution Process for Them: Let patrons know that you are doing what you can to help, and what your plan is. This is much better than simply leaving them wondering what is going on. For example, if a patron is held out during a seating hold, let them know *"please, allow me to pull up a few chairs for you and your party, you can sit in front of the monitors over here."* In doing so, they see you actively taking steps to make their night better. Additionally, a simple, *"Thanks for waiting, I've called our House Manager and they are on their way to come speak to you,"* shows that you are taking their situation seriously and are doing your best to help.

