

More Than Helpers: Honoring Our Volunteers for National Volunteer Week

By Shelina Elyse



(Volunteer usher Diane. Photo by Brennen Russell.)

Volunteers are a vital part of The Phoenix Theatre Company history and experience. In celebration of National Volunteer Week, we recognize the tremendous efforts of our volunteers throughout the years.

Motivated by a community-driven model, the early days of Phoenix Little Theatre relied heavily on volunteers through unpaid talent and helpers. By the 1950s, the company formed the First Nighters Club of dedicated volunteers who provided ongoing essential support from administration to backstage.

Phoenix Little Theatre suffered economic uncertainty after the collapse of the Theatre Center alliance in 1969. The company went bankrupt and laid off all employees except for the business manager. As in past years, devoted volunteers saved the company from collapse through their volunteer work to produce productions and maintain operations.

The Phoenix Theatre Guild (a.k.a. the Musical Theatre Guild) formed in the late 1970s and provided both programming partnership and philanthropic support to The Phoenix Theatre Company and our mission during another period of financial strain.

Volunteers played a crucial role in youth programming and education outreach as the company grew. While the scope of volunteers evolves, the support remains equally necessary.

We offer a wonderful volunteer usher program with amazing benefits to encourage connection with our community. Our volunteer ushers ensure our patrons enjoy their experience from the time they enter the lobby until leaving the show. Volunteer ushers can sign up for the shifts that work for their schedules. Through volunteering, ushers earn merit hours to redeem towards tickets to our performances or receive sign off for volunteer requirements for other clubs, organizations, scholarship applications, etc. Volunteers also receive 15% off at The ArtBar+Bistro for themselves and one guest whenever they visit!

If you're interested in volunteering with us, please visit our website [here](#) for a description of the responsibilities, requirements, and applications. We accept volunteer groups. Ages 14 and up are invited to apply!

In addition to our long-standing Guild and usher programs, we are proud to recognize the invaluable leadership of our Board of Directors and Spielberg Trustees. These dedicated individuals generously volunteer their time and expertise to help drive the strategic growth of The Phoenix Theatre Company. Serving in 2-3 year terms, they provide guidance on organizational direction, support key fundraising initiatives, and strengthen community relationships. Their commitment goes beyond advocacy—they play an essential role in ensuring our continued success and sustainability.

Volunteers are more than helpers. Whenever they commit time or resources, they build up, advocate for, and believe in The Phoenix Theatre Company. We are grateful for these champions and hope to welcome more volunteers of all capacities with the new Dr. Stacie J. and Richard J Stephenson Theatre.

Written by Shelina Elyse with contribution from Luis Terrazas