

# PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE

MILLBURN, NEW JERSEY - ESSEX COUNTY



## **“THEATER FOR EVERYONE” AUTISM-FRIENDLY LIVE THEATER PERFORMANCES**

### **Volunteer Job Description and Responsibilities**

Thank you for volunteering at Paper Mill Playhouse’s Autism-Friendly Performances. Your contribution of time, energy, and skills are greatly appreciated. You are the key to providing a comfortable and supported environment at Paper Mill Playhouse before, during and after the shows.

#### **General Information**

We are here to support our audience members and the Paper Mill Playhouse’s staff. We offer assistance and respond to their requests. We are not decision makers or the ultimate authority. Each audience member with autism and the families and/or professionals who accompany them to the theater will come with their own expectations for a successful experience. We are here to maximize their experience. Our major role is to be ready, willing and able to assist the audience members in any way they want/need us to. Be available, alert, and responsive. All volunteers, but especially Yellow (*special education practitioners*) and Red Shirts (*Board Certified Behavior Analysts*) should ask if they can touch the individual who requires assistance, especially those who appear aggressive or need assistance remaining in his/her seat or a safe area.

#### **Before the Show:**

Training is required for all volunteers. Valuable information will be shared regarding your responsibilities and the responsibilities of others at the show. Be sure to dress in an outfit (not red, green or yellow) that will allow you to move easily and be comfortable throughout the show and accommodate a t-shirt to wear over your outfit. Access [www.papermill.org](http://www.papermill.org) to become familiar with the information and materials which are available to the audience members.

#### **Day of the Show:**

Please arrive to the theater on time. Check in. Be sure the contact information we have for you is accurate. Put on your volunteer t-shirt. Your t-shirt color designates the type of volunteer responsibilities you will have at today’s show. There are three t-shirt colors: green, yellow and red. Be sure to introduce yourself to the Autism Advisory Team (Linda Meyer Kelly May and Jeff Jacobs) if you have not already done so. Take some time to meet the other volunteers, the House Manager Margie Berger and Assistant House Manager Donna Camarda, as well as the Paper Mill Playhouse’s Associate Director of Education, Lisa Cooney and Senior Ticketing & Audience Services Manager, Jack Tomy.

After families or other support persons arrive our responsibility is to be alert for signals for assistance from the families/professionals in the theater and throughout the entire house and promptly respond.

## Volunteer Tasks

### Green T-Shirts

You may be assigned to an activity center, the lobby or in the theater. Be prepared to respond to questions from audience regarding location of facilities. Smile often. Offer to get help. Be familiar with the responsibilities of Yellow and Red T-Shirts, so that you can offer to get any additional help that may be needed.

### Yellow T-Shirts

You will be positioned in the theater, lobby or an activity center. Be prepared to use your skills to ensure the comfort and safety of all audience members. Be ready to respond to requests to address minor occurrences of inappropriate behavior which may be stigmatizing to the individual or interfere with the enjoyment of the show by others. Be ready to quickly assess if the family/professional brought an individualized motivational system or an activity schedule. Encourage them to use it. You may call a "red shirt" volunteer for assistance.

### Red T-Shirts

You are a behavior analyst and/or a teacher who has been trained in the principles of applied behavior analysis. You must be ready, willing and able to use your skills to respond to requests from the audience for assistance with inappropriate behavior and/or "crisis intervention." Following the lead of the audience member, you may implement individualized motivational systems to promote attending, appropriate sitting or to redirect inappropriate behavior. You may be asked by the family to assist with a transition to an activity area. You may reach out to a member of the Autism Advisory team if you feel it would help. The goal would be to fade yourself out (if possible) or ask the parent (once the individual is successful) if they want to transition back in with the individual. The goal of the Red Shirt is to transition out, but still be there for support if needed.

## After the Show

Exit Surveyors – Any color shirt may be asked to help with exit surveys. If you are a very outgoing person, this would be a great position for you. At the end of the show, you will be positioned in the lobby as the guests are exiting the theater. You will ask the guests if they had a good time: YES (thumbs up) or NO (thumbs down). Once all guests have exited the theater, please convey the results of your exit poll to Lisa Cooney or a member of the Autism Advisory Team. Please return your t-shirt.

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