



River Run Centre Volunteer Program

Introduction

Welcome to River Run Centre's volunteer program. This unique program is the envy of theatres across Canada. We have two hundred active volunteers and River Run Centre would not be the success it is today if not for the volunteers. You need to be at least sixteen years of age to volunteer at the River Run Centre and at least eighteen to volunteer on the bar as a bartender or bar cashier.

Volunteering at the River Run Centre is unlike most other volunteer positions you may have experienced in the past. First, you decide when you want to come in - there are no commitments to show up at a consistent time each week or each month. While we hope you will come often and we want you with us at least twice a month, it is up to you when you want to help. Secondly, you chose each time what position you want to do. The more positions you are trained for, the more choices you have.

Our theatre coverage works well because the River Run is a professional theatre and the volunteers conduct themselves accordingly at all times. In other words, while we want your experience to be enjoyable and rewarding you must take your volunteer efforts seriously. We would like you to have fun and see some great entertainment but the **River Run is our theatre** and we want everyone involved to be committed to doing their best.

Becoming a River Run Centre Volunteer, the Process

Volunteer Application Form

We ask you to complete a **Volunteer Application Form** online using these instructions:

1. Go into the volunteer page of the River Run website <http://riverrun.ca/get-involved/volunteer/> where you will see the "**Fill in an application**" button. When complete, click on the "Continue" button at the bottom of the page of the application.
2. The volunteer coordinator will receive and look over your application form. After your entry interview, the volunteer coordinator will approve you and respond with an email which will have your temporary password - "riverrun"
3. Go into the volunteer page of the River Run website <http://riverrun.ca/get-involved/volunteer/> and click the "**Log into my Account**" within 24 hours of receiving the email from the volunteer coordinator. If you miss the deadline, just email the volunteer coordinator and they will reset your password. But again you need to complete this step within 24 hours of when the email enters your inbox.
4. Fill in your login name (email address) and the password given. You should find a screen that asks for your new password. Fill it in and access your file.

Entry Interview

After you have submitted your application the Volunteer Coordinator will contact you to book an entry interview. You will gain insight into the volunteer program and learn what position might fit best for you. You need to be hospitality and customer oriented to enjoy this work. For the interview, you may come in casual clothing, and enter at the box office. We will also have you sign a Waiver Form.

Volunteer Coordinator Contact Information:

519-837-5662 extension 2206 or **Bonnie.McDougall@riverrun.ca**

New Customer Service Regulations (AODA)

All River Run volunteers are required, under provincial legislation, to complete the customer service training program - the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

This is a simple fifteen minute online training program to help us understand our obligations under the provincial customer service standard. This focuses on ways to include **all** our patrons in our customer service, treating everyone with sensitivity, equality and respect.

Following the training program, there is a short quiz to complete and submit to the Volunteer Coordinator. You answer true or false and verify your answers from back of the page.

Customer Service Training: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Access the AODA website <http://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/index.htm>

We all have an important role in making River Run as accessible and inclusive as possible.

Training Courses

Before you can begin in a volunteer position you will participate in training sessions including an Orientation training session. This session covers a facility tour, how to read a ticket, fire and safety procedures and other general policies.

Around the same time, we offer position specific training. We do suggest that as soon as you feel really comfortable in one position you master another. Over a period of time we hope you will learn most positions, even if you don't take part in all of them. Training sessions are usually offered in January and September.

There is a temptation to suggest that you start out with an "easy" duty or position. While there may be some positions that are easier to learn, perhaps fewer details to master (for example, coat check compared to bartending), there are no positions more or less important than others.

Comments about some of our positions:

- Bartenders and Showcase Sellers have more set-up and clean-up as well as serving patrons but they are finished their commitment shortly after the intermission. Whereas volunteers in the coat check must stay until all the coats have been returned to the patrons.
- Bartender and Bar Cashier require Smart Serve Certification which is available online
- There is no formal training for a Runner for Linamar Shows although usher experience is helpful.
- The positions of Parking Attendant and Bus Attendant are learned through a mentoring process with experienced volunteers. These positions you may sign up for immediately.
- Coat Check training is mandatory and we expect that you will include this position when volunteering.

Volunteer Positions at River Run Centre

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket Taker | <input type="checkbox"/> Usher | <input type="checkbox"/> Coat Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Showcase Seller |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bartender | <input type="checkbox"/> Bar Cashier | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Cream Seller | <input type="checkbox"/> Host |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Assistant/Bus Attendant | <input type="checkbox"/> Merchandise Seller | | |

There are no unimportant positions – all are vital and equally important.

The Spare

When signing up for a shift through the Volgistics program, you will see the Spare position. A spare is someone who is qualified in a number of positions and is prepared to take over when we have a last minute cancellation or no show (we are all human after all). If you sign up for this position, please wear your uniform and come at the usual time. If we know we do not need you in advance, we will contact you. Otherwise come as if you were signed up for any other position. We need at least one spare for each show, particularly during cold and flu season. Assume that you **are** needed and take as much training as possible to be able to sign up as a spare.

Position Descriptions

Position descriptions and details will be distributed to volunteers at the specific training session. It is a good idea to read them after the training and then refer to them as often as necessary. Feel free to bring them along when you first start. You might want to store these together with all your River Run papers, perhaps in a duo-tang or small binder. These descriptions can also be found through the Portal on your Volgistics Home page.

Mentoring

Even though at this point you are well trained, we don't send you out to face the world on your own the first time. You get at least one shift at each position working alongside a qualified volunteer who will give you some coaching. You may choose to be mentored as many times as you want, until you feel comfortable in doing the position on your own. When you have a solid foundation of the position and lots of experience, you may be asked to be a mentor to new volunteers.

Dress Code

Volunteers are asked to wear:

- their own white shirt or blouse which should be long sleeved and collared (no turtlenecks please)
- dress black pants or skirt
- black socks or neutral stockings
- comfortable black dress shoes which must be close toed
- a cross tie for the ladies and a long dark tie for the men (provided bow tie if at the bar)

Vests, cross and bow ties and nametags are provided by River Run but an individual can purchase their own vest and cross tie. The black, buttoned-down vests are worn by all volunteers for all performances. They are available in a variety of sizes and are gender specific. They can be taken from and returned to the rack in the coat check for each performance. If you are working where you might get cold, you can wear a dress black jacket. Please have your name tag visible at all times.

Paper nametags will be available for you in the coat check upon your first shift – first names only. Metal nameplates are given to all volunteers who work a minimum of twenty to thirty shifts.

We are proud of our uniforms; they identify us as who we are and what we are doing. When in our uniforms, everyone knows we are volunteers and approachable. So remember you are a **River Run Ambassador** – SMILE, keep your vest buttoned and shirt tucked in and always wear your name-tag!

For socials, training or entry interview, casual clothing fits the bill.

Sign up and Scheduling

Signup for future performances, in two month intervals, via the Volgistics program. Sign up for events that are convenient for you. Once signed up, you are expected to cover that shift. If you later find that you can't help that day, you may remove your name well in advance of the date. If it is close to or on the date of the event, let the Front of House staff know, so a substitute can be found.

Front of House Staff 519-837-5662 extension 2355

Volunteers without a computer or email address, can phone or email the Volunteer Coordinator to request specific events. There are show and non-show events which need volunteers.

We are always looking for volunteers to work Coat Check, Parking/Bus Attendant, Merchandise Seller, Bartending and Bar Cashier, Dance Competitions and Dance Recitals.

Volunteering

Parking

Evenings and weekends parking is available in the **East Parkade**, accessed from MacDonell Street. Day time parking is available in the **West Parkade**, further west on MacDonell Street. On a weekday (Monday to Friday), the East Parkade is permit parking only.

The parking system is easy to use for River Run Centre volunteers. When you enter either the East or West Parkade take a ticket from the machine and place it on your dash. Pick up a “River Run Centre Volunteer Parking” coupon from the Front of House staff during your shift. When exiting the Parkade, simply insert the coupon first followed by the ticket you received from the machine.

If there is “Event Parking”, show the attendant your Volunteer Pass (no voucher required) for easy departure from the parkades.

River Run will cover the cost of your parking but if you can car pool, walk or park safely on the side streets, we keep our costs down. There is also free evening and weekend parking available at the Neeve Street lot.

Escort to the Parkade

We work to have a safe environment for our staff, patrons and volunteers. If you would like, feel free to ask the Front of House staff to escort you to your car, whether in the parkade or on the street or plan to leave with other volunteers.

When You Arrive

You will be asked to arrive for your shift well in advance of the event. Call times (arrival times) are listed when you sign up for a shift (usually 75 minutes before curtain). Upon arrival, check in on the Touch Screen computer located in the coat check. Your PIN is usually the last 4 digits of your phone number. Don't forget to check out as well.

You will also see posted the event's **Volunteer Designation List** which identifies the location of your position for that shift.

The building is open to the public one hour before curtain. When there is another event in the downtown area which might take up many parking spaces, patrons are usually informed of such by box office staff in advance, so arrive early.

Although your actual position, say ushering or ticket taking, may not start for another forty-five minutes you are often needed to stuff programs or other set-up duties. Also, you are welcome to have a complimentary coffee or soft drink and cookie pre-show with your fellow volunteers in the kitchen.

It is important that you arrive on time as the House Manager needs an accurate count of present volunteers. Also there is a brief Front of House meeting to inform you of any staffing changes, timing and special requirements. Periodically a volunteer fails to show up. Someone else may be asked to fill in that spot rather than do what they had signed up for. The more positions you are trained for the more valuable you are to the River Run. **Flexibility** is the key to enjoying your time with us.

Valuables

Although it is best to leave your valuables at home or in the trunk of your car, there are lockers available for your use while you are here working a shift. These are located at the rear of the coat check. These lockers are for day use only. You must clear out the locker at the end of the shift. Although we do our best to ensure your valuables are safe, River Run Centre will not be held responsible for lost or stolen items.

River Run Staff

When on duty, there will always be at least one River Run staff member, called the House Manager and other Front of House staff (Floor Supervisors) to lead and assist you. Don't hesitate to ask the staff any questions you might have. If you need to cancel or change a commitment on the day of the shift, or if you are running late, please call them. If there is an accident, an incident or disruptions in the theatre when you are here, **contact the House Manager, Floor Supervisor or other staff members immediately**. You are the eyes and ears of the Front of House staff. Don't wait for others to take responsibility.

Front of House Staff 519-837-5662 extension 2355

House Rules

- Always dress appropriately.
- Come fresh and in consideration of those who have allergies, please refrain from using perfume or cologne.
- Please don't chew gum, eat or drink in front of patrons.
- Check in and out using VicTouch (computer in the coat check)
- Pick up your name tag, vest and cross tie (women) or bow tie (men) (if on bar) before you start your shift.
- Pass on all patron comments to the Front of House Manager or staff.
- All volunteers are expected to take part in the training sessions before volunteering.

House Details and Layout

It is important that we all be familiar with the two theatres. While ushers and hosts need the most intimate knowledge, all volunteers get asked questions so we should all know the set up for both theatres.

Main Stage

Location	Quantity
Orchestra lift	60
Main Orchestra	311
Terrace	179
Balcony	170
Boxes	48
Accessible Seats	18
Total	786

Layout:

1. Row "A" is closest to the stage unless the Orchestra Lift is in use as seating.
2. Double ("AA" etc.) letters refer to the Front Orchestra Lift, and are the three rows closest to the stage.
3. Seat 1 is House Right (Riverside), and the seats go in order to the left as you face the stage.
4. Seats 6 (8 in the terrace) and 9, 22 and 23 are aisle seats except in one row.
5. Box A is closest to the stage, and seat 1 within the box is closest to the stage.
6. The House Centre is between seats 15 and 16.
7. Rows are lettered "A" to "W" with no rows "I" or "O".
8. Row "Q" is accessible seating. All four Box Cs are also available for accessible seating.

Co-operators Hall

The Co-operators Hall has many uses for plays, concert performance, banquet hall and meeting room to mention only a few.

Telescopic seats are moved into place for most performances and make up the Theatre Style configuration.

Location	Quantity
Accessible Seats	3
Total	225

Layout:

1. Row "A" is closest to the stage
2. Seat 1 is House Right (the main door side)
3. Seats 5 and 6, 16 and 17 are aisle seats.
4. The House Centre is at seat 11

Customer Service

- We strive for excellent customer service.
- Listen and respond to the customers in a way that shows you care about them and their needs.
- Courtesy, friendliness and professionalism are essential ingredients of successful service operations.
- Take pride in yourselves, in what we do here at the River Run Centre and in where we live.
- Of all the things we wear, our warm and positive expression is the most important.
- All visitors and patrons must be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Staff are always available to assist with patron needs or questions.
- It costs five times more to attract a new customer than it does to keep an existing one.
- People do make a difference.

SMILE - it's a universal language

- G Give fully**
 - R Respect everyone** (patrons, co-workers, performers)
 - E Empathize with others**
 - E Excel at your tasks** (ask for help when you need it)
 - T Team work works** (look for ways to include positive reinforcement)
- It never hurts to arrive early**

Special Events

We are asked to help out with many types of events. These range from receptions to trade shows, from school concerts to dance recitals. Some events are during the day and some go well into the night.

Linamar for the Performing Arts

This unique program, sponsored by the Linamar Corporation for Guelph's elementary school children, brings everything from magicians to musicians, dancers to drama to the River Run. Usually there are two performances of 500-700 students at 9:45 a.m. and then 1:15 p.m. Most arrive by school buses although some walk. The positions for volunteers are somewhat different for these events.

To begin with no coat check, bar or Showcase personnel are needed but we do need Ushers, Hosts, Runners and Bus Attendants.

Here's how it works. The students arrive in their classes with teachers and chaperones, usually in busses who are led by our volunteers to the best location. A Door Host meets the class, checks off their school and their numbers and leads them to a Runner. The Runners then lead the students into the theatre and passes them on to an usher who loads them quickly and efficiently into their seats one child after another. There are no tickets.

These youngsters are the future supporters of the performing arts community and we are privileged to be able to foster their initial exposure.

Dance Competitions

The River Run Centre plays host to quite a few dance competitions in the spring. They often run from early morning to well into the evening for two to four days consecutively. As a result, large numbers of volunteers are needed for three or three and a half hour shifts. Hosts are needed for the Atrium, ticket takers are needed to ensure house policies are followed, ushers are needed in the theatre and bartender/bar cashiers work behind the Dancer's Diner refreshment counter.

Here's how it works. The performers start arriving as early as 7 a.m. and need to be directed to the Stage Door. They go on stage as soloists or in groups, perform their dance and then are followed by another "act". Dance competitions are well organized, with periodic planned short breaks and longer breaks for lunch or dinner. As you can imagine, the families of the dancers all want to see their children dance. Once they have seen their child, however, they often leave the theatre so there is a lot of coming and going for the ushers to monitor, letting people in and out of the theatre at the appropriate times. There is also lots of activity in the Canada Company Hall. Parents who have dropped their youngsters at the stage door may have some hours to fill before their dancer performs. Dancers who are waiting to go on or have already performed may be there as well. They all want food and refreshments, so the Dancer's Diner is a busy spot where we serve drinks and snack foods.

Specific position descriptions for the Dance Competitions and House Rules are available from the Volunteer Coordinator or Front of House team.

Other Events

There are receptions, retirement parties, corporate and association meetings. These are held on the Main Stage, in the Cooperators Hall, on the Bridge, in the Atrium or in the Canada Company Hall. All these events require volunteers with varying duties. Remember that the food for receptions is for the patrons only and not for volunteers (unless invited by the Front of House Manager). And always eat or drink in the kitchen, away from the eyes of the patrons.

We are also sometimes requested to provide patron services to special events outside the River Run, often for City events at Market Square in front of City Hall on Carden Street.

Fire Safety & Evacuation Procedures

River Run Centre is equipped with appropriate heat and smoke alarms, a fire curtain and water systems. There is a two phase alarm system and a general public address system.

The first stage alarm is a slow pitched ring. All staff and volunteers should check their area and standby for further instructions.

The second stage alarm is a faster, louder pitched alarm and indicates that the building should be evacuated. Volunteers should remain calm and follow instructions or requests from Staff.

If the fire alarm sounds, the Front of House staff will be notified of its location and each volunteer will be given directions if evacuation is necessary. Depending on the location of the incident, you will be asked to direct patrons away from any danger to the closest and safest exit. For example, if there is an emergency or fire is in the carpentry shop backstage, patrons will be asked to exit through the Canada Company Hall. When the theatre is emptied, **the ticket taker is the last to leave their area and closes the appropriate doors.**

In emergency situations, Floor Supervisors or the House Manager will provide direction.

- **Program ushers** should lead the patrons out.
- **Floater ushers** should assist with patrons with accessible needs....Row Q and Box C patrons.

- **Ticket takers** should make their way to the Atrium to receive egress information from the staff. Communicate the information to their usher then move to block the non-exit door, directing patrons. Remain until all patrons have exited. Follow everyone out, closing the doors behind you.
- **All other Positions** should provide directional assistance and leave with the ticket taker.

Next time you are doing a show you might wish to look around at the building exits. Sometimes, it might be safer to leave our patrons who have accessible devices in the theatre. Ensure that you tell staff of any patrons remaining in the theatre and stay with them if possible. Always remain calm and assist everyone to the appropriate exits. Scheduled Evacuation Drills, which are mandatory, happen in November and January. **Just remember to keep calm and listen to the staff for specific instructions.**

Volunteer Emergency Response Plan

In an effort to keep everyone as safe as possible, any volunteer who might need assistance or have a special need in case of an evacuation or a medical emergency is asked to complete the **Volunteer Emergency Response Plan** form. This form gives everyone involved information and directions if needed. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator if you feel such a plan is needed for yourself.

Additional Information

Garbage

River Run Centre follows the City of Guelph Wet Dry + Sorting system.

Green Bag - Compost

- tea bags
- paper towel/napkins/plates
- food waste

Blue Bag - Recyclables

- pop cans
- water bottles
- milk & cream cartons- rinsed
- plastic cups
- paper

Clear Bag - Waste

- straws
- plastic wrap
- beer bottle caps
- sweetener packets
- **everything else that does not belong in green or blue bags**

Our Comment on Seeing Shows

Volunteers, depending on the position they have signed up for, **may** get to see varying amounts of the presentations in the theatres. Do not count on seeing the show as there may not be appropriate seating for all volunteers. We will do our best to get everyone who wishes into the theatre to see a performance but this is not always possible. Close circuit TV monitors mounted in the Canada Company Hall, Bridge and Atrium will allow all volunteers and latecomers to see what is happening on stage.

Entrance / Exit Details:

- If you wish to see the show, staff will instruct you where to sit. Sometimes in the Terrace and sometimes in the Balcony. It must always be **behind any patrons** unless instructed by the staff.
- If you are not in your seat by the start of the performance, please wait in the light lock until an appropriate time for example, applause indicating a break in the performance. Late calls will be let in at the same times. The Front of House Staff has been told when these intervals will occur.
- Volunteers should enter and exit rarely and with others to minimize disruptions.
- There is a tendency, both at intermission and the end of the show, for volunteers to jump up and rush out. **Do not move until the lights are fully up and move carefully.** People are applauding, they are relishing what they have just seen and if you jump up in front of them you can ruin the mood and jeopardize your safety.
- **Maximize Safety, Minimize Disruption**

Feedback

Have a good idea? Please don't keep it to yourself. Tell other volunteers and staff and get their reactions. Many, many changes have been made since the River Run Centre opened in 1997 and some of these changes were initiated by volunteers. Add a suggestion in our suggestion box located in the coat check. There is always room for further improvement, so don't be shy. If you have any concerns or comments, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Front of House staff or chat with a member of the Volunteer Liaison Committee. The committee members can be identified by a red star on their nameplate.

Rewards and Recognition

Volunteering at the River Run Centre provides many of its own rewards. We participate in and enhance the theatre experience of our patrons. We get to see many excellent shows and we make new friends. Volunteers are greatly appreciated by staff and patrons alike.

At least once a year, typically around National Volunteer Week, there is a formal volunteer appreciation dinner. Other smaller socials are held throughout the year and all are sponsored by the tips at the bar and coat check that come in over the year.

At these celebrations volunteers are recognized for their service and for reaching specific milestones.

Know that you and your efforts here are always appreciated.

Thank you for your interest in the River Run Volunteer Company. Enjoy!



This document is available in alternate format upon request.