

JUNE 24 - 26 WESTERN GATEWAY PARK



DES MOINES

Arts

FESTIVAL

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#44 / BEST VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

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A. Introduction and background of main event.

The Des Moines Arts Festival®, Iowa's only free, three-day celebration of the arts, celebrated its 19th-annual Festival June 24-26, 2016 with an exciting line-up of visual art, live entertainment, film, community outreach, interactive activities, eclectic foods, craft beer, and fine wines in Downtown Des Moines' Western Gateway Park, attracting more than 235,000 guests.

At the heart of the Festival is the juried art fair featuring 180 professional artists selected from a competitive process of nearly 1,000 applicants. The commitment to visual art extends to all ages through the Festival's Emerging Iowa Artist program and the Des Moines Art Center's Nurturing a Student's Vision Student Art Exhibition program. Over 450 students in grades Kindergarten through 12th Grade were featured during the Festival.

Adults and children of all ages engaged in a variety of hands-on, arts-related activities that included everything from salsa dancing lessons to marble painting to creating their own t-shirt. MidAmerican Energy's BOOM ART! Mural and Pinot's Palette self-guided painting lessons provided large-scale opportunities for guests to share their art with the community. If guests didn't want to get their hands dirty, exhibiting artists demonstrated their craft with over 25 Artist Demonstrations.

The Interrobang Film Festival celebrated the art of film throughout the three-day weekend. Twenty-six films from thirteen countries were selected to be screened throughout the weekend. Guests also enjoyed talk-backs and workshops with film producers.

The local community engaged with the Festival through several community outreach programs including the Volunteer Program, Patron Program, and the Non-Profit Partner Program. The Non-Profit Partner Program allows local organizations to raise much-needed funds to support arts-related activities year-round. 1,252 volunteers supported the Festival through a variety of opportunities.

The Festival's green program provided guests the opportunity to reduce, reuse, and recycle throughout the event at seventeen custom-designed Zero Waste Stations. The Sustainability Program is in its third year of a strategic plan to achieve zero waste by 2017.

Live entertainment took the stage at three locations. The Community Choice Credit Union Performing Arts Stage showcased a variety of local dance institutions including Des Moines Ballet, Iowa Dance Theatre, and Yaro Dance Company. Headliners Gin Blossoms and Grand Funk Railroad were watched by thousands of guests on the Hy-Vee Main Stage. And the all-new Acoustic Stage featured Midwest singer-songwriters in a relaxed, coffee shop-style setting.

The Des Moines Arts Festival has truly put Des Moines, Iowa on the map, drawing more than 3.2 million guests to the three-day event during the past 19 years. The Festival has something for everyone to enjoy and it's all *free* to attend.

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B. Description and purpose/objective of Volunteer Program

Each year since the Des Moines Arts Festival® began in 1998, the Festival's success has been due in large part to hundreds of volunteers who devote their time and energy during the three-day weekend and throughout the rest of the year. The program is identified through three (3) distinct groups of volunteers: General Volunteers, Event Management Team (EMT), and Non-Profit Partners.

In 2007, the Festival started a program to recruit and provide managerial ownership to key volunteers. The Event Management Team (EMT), today comprised of 39 members, is in charge of the general volunteers on-site throughout the Festival weekend. Each member of the team is in charge of a specific area, including Artist Relations, Food Operations, Sponsor Relations, Volunteer Relations, Stage Management, Beverage Management, and more. This structural change was essential to allow these key individuals to obtain as much from their participation as possible, having the Festival's full support. The inclusion of Non-Profit Partners began in 2009 as another method of giving back to local, non-profit organizations while supporting Festival infrastructure needs. Non-Profit Partners are selected through an application process to manage the Festival's beverage stations. In exchange for the volunteer support provided by the organization, they each receive 15% of the net profit from the beverage station they manage. Profits earned by these organizations have supported a variety of initiatives in the community from dance performances to a new soccer field.

As a small, 501(c)3 non-profit organization, the Festival employs a very small staff. Reliance on a strong volunteer base is critical, and therefore the Festival goes to great lengths to build and maintain a strong volunteer force.

C. Target audience/attendance/number of participants

General volunteer opportunities are available for people ages 16 years and older, in twelve core areas, assisting with guests, artists, and vendors. In 2016, **1,252 volunteers filled 1,461 shifts working 6,428 volunteer hours serving over 235,000 guests.**

D. Duration of program (start to finish) and years program has been part of event

A volunteer program has been an important part of the event since its inception. 2016 marks the volunteer program's 19th year.

E. Volunteer demographics (age, gender, individuals, charities, schools etc.)

69% of volunteers were female and 31% were male. Eight high schools, eight colleges/universities, twelve corporations and six non-profit organizations represented some of the volunteers. In many cases, the corporations' employees volunteered to fulfill their companies' required annual volunteer hours. High school students who volunteered participated in their schools' community service/volunteer program ("Silver Cord Program") to assist with achieving their annually required service hours. 55% of volunteers were new. 183 were between ages 16-21.

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F. Volunteer job descriptions

Artist Relations — Artist Relations volunteers are the first line of support for the artists. They served as booth-sitters, as well as distributed refreshments, newsletters and newspapers during the Festival.

Des Moines Arts Festival® Sculpture Garden — Volunteers help to keep the Sculpture Garden safe and secure and make sure that guests do not handle or play on the sculptures. Those volunteering in this area also help keep the Sculpture Garden area clean and free of trash.

Environmental Impact Team — Volunteers monitored seventeen (17) Zero Waste Stations located throughout the Festival site that allowed guests to dispose of their waste into three (3) categories - Compostables, Recyclables, and Landfill items. Volunteers assisted guests with disposing of their waste appropriately, and showed them the best practices for disposal.

Hospitality Suites — Volunteers helped monitor the Festival's hospitality suites, assisting guests and ensuring the space was neat and tidy.

Information Booth — The Information Booth volunteers assisted guests by answering questions, directing guests to appropriate locations, and tending to their needs when applicable.

Interrobang Film Festival — Volunteers monitored guests and equipment at the Interrobang Film Festival. Volunteers were also responsible for greeting guests and keeping the auditoriums clean and ready for the next films.

Merchandise Sales — Volunteers assisted in the sale of official Festival merchandise at two Arts Festival Shops. They assisted guests with finding merchandise in correct sizes and selection. Select volunteers handled sales on cash registers and credit card machines.

Student Art Exhibition — The Student Art Exhibition (SAE) exhibit showcases artwork from local students in grades K–12. Volunteers in this area helped by greeting patrons and assisting them in finding specific pieces of artwork.

Set Up — Set-up volunteers assisted staff with the set-up of the Festival site, including hanging banners/signage, assembling sandwich boards, and other general site needs.

Tear-Down — Tear-down volunteers assisted staff with the tear-down of the Festival site, including removal of banners/signage, sandwich board disassembly, organizing and boxing up remaining merchandise, and other general site needs.

T-shirt Design Tent — Volunteers assisted guests in designing their own souvenir t-shirt with markers, stocking markers, as well as ensuring the area within the tent was kept neat and tidy.

Volunteer Relations — EMT volunteers were the initial contact for incoming volunteers in Volunteer Headquarters. They helped greet and check-in volunteers, distributed t-shirts, directed volunteers to assigned areas, and kept Volunteer Headquarters organized. They were also asked to be “floaters” and were assigned to other volunteer areas when necessary.

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G. Recruitment methods/materials/applications

With such a massive volunteer need, the Festival constantly works to recruit new volunteers. Although the primary source of recruitment comes from the Festival EMTs and through the official Festival website and social media channels, other forms of recruitment are also implemented. A hands-on approach was taken by handing out promotional materials at local community events and volunteer fairs. Press releases and postings detailing the Festival's many volunteer opportunities were distributed to local media in the months preceding the event. This year, the focus was targeting groups that could tackle specific areas of the Festival. Volunteer Coordinator, Morgan Dowdall, matched a group's interests, business models, or classwork with a volunteer shift at the Festival. All sponsor organizations were asked to distribute information on volunteering through their internal channels including newsletters and the internet. Many of these organizations were instrumental in recruitment. Opportunities were also posted on other online volunteer databases and communicated through mass emails.

H. Communication methods/materials

Volunteer signup is handled through an online volunteer registration and check-in system called VolunteerLocal, making the signup process and scheduling of volunteers incredibly streamlined and easy to facilitate (desmoinesartsfestival.org/volunteer). The system was specifically designed for the Festival by Brian Hemesath, who in 2003 answered the call from Festival leadership to create a fast, inexpensive, and electronic way to recruit and manage volunteers. As a result, VolunteerLocal was created, and today serves not only the Festival but also many major events including the AAU Junior Olympics and USA Triathlon. VolunteerLocal is proudly based in Des Moines, IA.

I. Training guides/programs/handbooks/materials

In keeping with the Festival's sustainability efforts, all training materials are stored and distributed electronically. The Festival's Volunteer website provides detailed descriptions of each volunteer area and what the volunteer's responsibilities will be in that area. Job descriptions, expectations and details about volunteering are posted on VolunteerLocal. Once the volunteer indicates an interest in volunteering by signing up, an automated email is sent with detailed information about the specific job they signed up for. In addition, emails are sent as follow-ups as we get closer the event and more details become available. For example, all volunteers are sent check-in information, parking, the Festival site map, and general volunteering instructions in the weeks and days leading up to the Festival.

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J. Organization & schedule information/materials

Each year, the Festival launches volunteer opportunities in early March on the Festival's website through VolunteerLocal. An initial communication is sent out to past volunteers, giving them a chance to sign up for their preferred shifts before the Festival begins marketing these volunteer opportunities to the general public. Around mid-March, the Festival volunteer opportunities are posted on many volunteer sites targeting central Iowa as well as announced on social media sites. Throughout the spring, Festival staff makes posts to social media, attends volunteer fairs, and runs advertisements focused on volunteer recruitment. Additionally, the network on internal corporate communications contacts is notified with a standardized message. These messages are sent via internal communications to major companies throughout the Des Moines metro area.

After a volunteer has signed up for one or more shifts, they receive a confirmation email listing the details of their shift(s) as well as a "Thank you" message for signing up. In the weeks leading up to the Festival, each registered volunteer receives reminders and updates detailing where they should check-in, what they need to bring with them, and where to park. After the Festival, volunteers receive a follow-up email thanking them for their help at the Festival and asking for feedback. Festival staff considers this feedback and makes changes as appropriate to the following year to ensure the volunteer experience at the Festival continues to be an enjoyable one.

K. Volunteer perks/benefits

The Festival provides complimentary t-shirts, snacks, and beverages for all volunteers throughout the three-day event. In addition, the Festival hosts a welcome party for all volunteers to discuss their roles and responsibilities, provides them with volunteer information, and sponsors a kick-off event including a free, catered breakfast. After the Festival, volunteers were thanked via email and/or personal phone calls.

Each volunteer received a free Festival volunteer T-shirt. Dark blue T-shirts were used to distinguish Artist Relations volunteers from the "General" volunteers wearing light blue T-shirts. This helped artists locate these volunteers more quickly. Environmental Impact volunteers wore green T-shirts. Additionally, EMTs and staff could be easily identified in gray Event Management Team shirts. Water was provided to all volunteers in water coolers as opposed to disposable one-time use bottles.

The volunteer program is a self-sustaining program as our EMTs lead the program with minimal staff supervision. Each EMT oversees a specific area of the Festival and is expected to be on-site throughout the weekend. Additionally, they are encouraged to recruit volunteers throughout May and June, and to attend monthly meetings with Festival staff. The EMTs are asked for input in the planning of the event, and are provided hospitality on-site.

L. Appreciation/recognition methods/materials

Each volunteer receives a "Thank You" email (or phone call if email is not applicable) in the weeks and days leading up to the Festival to recognize our appreciation for their interest in volunteering. A post-Festival "Thank You" email (or phone call) is sent to each volunteer to again share our appreciation for their help and time commitment.

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M. Retention methods/materials

The Festival keeps a database of volunteers from each year and those volunteers are contacted via email (or phone) when volunteer recruitment begins. The message is specifically tailored to them, recognizing that they are a past volunteer and we appreciate their help in the past while encouraging them to volunteer again.

N. Description of sponsor/charity/volunteer/school/other group involvement with program and benefits to each

Non-Profit Partners are non-profit organizations recruited to sell beverages in each of the Festival's food courts and independent stands. The organizations are selected through an application process and must show an ability to recruit the needed number of volunteers. In exchange for the volunteer support provided by the organization, they each receive 15% of the net profit from the beverage station they manage. Profits earned by these organizations are used to underwrite arts and community building programs that align with the Festivals core values.

Eight high schools and twelve corporations represented some of the volunteers. In many cases, the corporations' employees volunteered to fulfill their companies' required annual volunteer hours. High school students who volunteered participated in their schools' community service/volunteer program ("Silver Cord Program") to assist with achieving their annually required service hours. 183 volunteers were between ages 16-21.

ARAG served as presenting sponsor the volunteer program. ARAG received the following rights and benefits:

- ARAG was identified as an Official Sponsor of the 2016 Des Moines Arts Festival®.
- ARAG was identified as the sponsor of the Volunteer Program.
- Name listed on website and all promotional/marketing materials.
- ARAG logo appeared on Des Moines Arts Festival entry and exit signage.
- ARAG logo appeared in sponsor recognition in the Official Festival Preview distributed state-wide by *The Des Moines Register*.
- ARAG logo appeared in sponsor recognition feature in the Official Festival Program distributed on-site.
- ARAG logo was rotated in Des Moines Arts Festival advertisements in *The Des Moines Register*.
- ARAG logo appeared in association with the Des Moines Arts Festival Volunteer Program.
- ARAG logo appeared on volunteer t-shirts and all signage relating to volunteers throughout the site.

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O. Overall revenue/expense budget of program

Overall Revenue/Expense Budget: Revenue \$970,700 / Expenses \$963,665

Program Revenue/Expense Budget: Revenue NA / Expenses \$16,250

P. Overall effectiveness/success of program

This year's volunteer program met its targeted goals to fill available spots. We experienced a 17% increase in unique volunteers.

Q. Measurable results: ratio of volunteers to guests; # of volunteers; # of volunteer hours; # of volunteers in database; estimate of the financial value of your volunteers

1,252 volunteers filled 1,461 shifts totaling 6,428 volunteer hours serving over 235,000 guests. 69% female and 31% male. The Festival's volunteer database currently contains 2,321 names. And based on the Dollar Value of a Volunteer Hour for the state of Iowa being \$23.56*, the financial value of the Festival volunteers is \$151,443.68.

*reference: http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time

Supporting Question

What did you do to update/change this program from the year before? Were your updates/changes successful?

Cleaning up our volunteer database of duplicate entries with multiple e-mail addresses, those who have moved away, or inactive e-mail addresses has helped us to focus on past volunteers who are still interested in volunteering with us and minimizing time lost reaching out to past volunteers who no longer live in the area or are unreachable. This has led to an increased retention of our volunteer base from year to year, less frustration from past volunteers who could not volunteer this year receiving multiple emails, and a better idea of the percentage of volunteers returning and in particular volunteer areas. This aided in this and next year's goal to have a better data-driven representation of volunteer shifts that could use improvement based on volunteer retention.

More consistent e-mail communication with volunteers that sign up early. As our volunteer recruitment starts in March and the event is in June we wanted to mitigate the amount of drop-off we had from volunteers either forgetting they signed up, or from lack of communication. More consistent communication, prompt follow-up to volunteer questions, and personal phone calls has led to higher volunteer retention with 45% of our volunteers this year have volunteered with us before.

Monthly targeted emails to past volunteers in the months leading up to the event helped secure more returning volunteers as well as requests for past volunteers to share our volunteer opportunities through their own networks and social media channels allowed for better word of mouth volunteer recruitment. For example: In May's targeted e-mail for Artist Relations volunteers, we saw a 30% spike in volunteers and had complete volunteer fulfillment in that area by early June.

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Keeping the volunteers time in mind. We want every volunteer's shift to be fulfilling and enjoyable so when we heard that volunteers felt bored at a few of our areas we decided to shift things around this year by getting rid of a few lower-need areas while adding to a few areas that were a little higher need and more engaging. We primarily focused on having more volunteers helping with the Interrobang Film Festival. Our theater teams assisted with tasks in the theater and our street teams promoted the films being shown at Interrobang throughout the festival site.

Having a higher number of staff at Volunteer Headquarters as well as staggering volunteer shift times allowed for a smoother operations at our Volunteer Headquarters. This year we had five Volunteer Relations Event Management Team members on board with three on at any given time in addition to our Volunteer Relations volunteers to allow for more flexibility in answering volunteer questions, escorting volunteers to their assigned areas, and allowing for our Event Management Team to check on and assist volunteers more easily. We had many compliments in person and email on how much more smoothly our Volunteer Headquarters ran as well as seeing a direct impact on being able to more easily greet volunteers individually and have the time to answer questions due to the more evenly distributed volunteer-check in times and higher staffing.

Artist Relations Volunteer Distribution – Our Artist Relations volunteers are an essential part of what makes our festival so great, the artists! We wanted to streamline how our Artist Relations Volunteers were distributed throughout the festival site to more readily take care of the 180 artists we had on site. We assigned the volunteers into one of four zones with an assigned Event Management Team member as their contact to eliminate volunteer clumping in certain sections of the festival, leaving others unattended. We had great success with this method with many of the artists complimenting on the availability of having volunteers when they needed. While it was a success we did find that at times there were too many volunteers in areas and that artists were sometimes asked several times in a row if they needed help. This is something we now are working on streamlining for this year, but it was a great step forward in how the Artist Relations volunteers were better organized.

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DO YOU WANT TO BE A PART OF ONE OF THE BEST FESTIVALS THIS SIDE OF ANYWHERE? GREAT, BECAUSE VOLUNTEERS ARE A VITAL PART OF THE DES MOINES ARTS FESTIVAL. **WE COULDN'T PUT ON AN AWARD-WINNING FESTIVAL OF THIS MAGNITUDE WITHOUT YOUR HELP!** WE HAVE A VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO CHOOSE FROM WHETHER YOU ARE LOOKING FOR YOURSELF OR FOR A GROUP.

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The image shows two screenshots of the Des Moines Arts Festival volunteer website. The top screenshot displays the 'VOLUNTEER WITH DES MOINES ARTS FESTIVAL' page with a list of shifts for 'Artist Assistant' and 'Artist Relations' roles. The bottom screenshot shows a similar page but with a different set of shifts for the 'Artist Relations' role.

Top Screenshot: Artist Assistant Shifts

Date	Shift	Spots Left
Thursday, July 16th	11:00am to 2:00pm	2
	2:00pm to 5:00pm	2
Sunday, July 19th	4:30pm to 8:00pm	12

Top Screenshot: Artist Relations Shifts

Date	Shift	Spots Left
Friday, July 17th	8:00am to 12:00pm	
	12:00pm to 3:00pm	
	1:30pm to 4:00pm	
	3:00pm to 6:00pm	
	4:30pm to 7:30pm	
	7:00pm to 10:00pm	

Bottom Screenshot: Artist Relations Shifts

Date	Shift	Spots Left
Friday, July 17th	8:00am to 12:00pm	6
	12:00pm to 3:00pm	8

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