



The Friends of Sweetland  
*Volunteer Program*

## BUILT ON HISTORY

What was formerly the city park and pool, Sweetland Amphitheatre was built on its history as a spot for friends and families to gather and is the home of LaGrange's cherished Sweet Land of Liberty Parade. Established in 1935 as City Park or Municipal Park, it became the anticipated summer "hangout" back in the day, with the addition of a swimming pool. Years later, a baseball field was incorporated into the park with assistance from the Callaway Foundation.

On July 4, 2004, the park was renamed for Jim and Annette Boyd. The Boyds started the "Sweet Land of Liberty" parade more than 30 years ago, which is held on the Fourth of July each year, and today still begins at the park – and is the namesake for our amphitheatre. In recent years, the park had become unused and slightly deteriorated. Upon completion, Sweetland Amphitheatre will bring a new beginning to Boyd Park and the community.

## PRESERVING MEMORIES

Designed by The Smith Design Group, the amphitheatre is carved into the existing hillside, creating a tiered bowl. To preserve the memories and image of historic Boyd Park, the original pavilion is rehabilitated and expanded. The pool has been removed to allow for the expansion, accommodating a covered entry to the park as well as new restrooms and concessions to serve the large open green space and amphitheatre. The 40,000 square foot green space, approximately the size of the downtown Square, has decorative lighting and convenient power and water connections for community outdoor affairs including festivals, fairs and fundraising events.

With stadium, table, terrace box and lawn seating, the amphitheatre seats a little over 2,000 spectators. Lush landscaping including the bicentennial tree at the front entrance of the park helps set the backdrop for an intimate venue steeped in beauty and history.

## WHEN PARTNERSHIPS BLOOM

Merging the history and progress of this community, the amphitheatre project has been made possible by the public-private partnership between the City of LaGrange, Troup County and The Callaway Foundation, Inc.

## Friends of Sweetland

Friends of Sweetland are Sweetland's dynamic and dedicated volunteer force whose mission is to assist in creating the ultimate patron experience by anticipating the needs of our guests and providing them with friendly and attentive service enabling us to live up to the claim of "the South's Sweetest Stage".

## What events require volunteers?

Sweetland Amphitheatre will play host to a variety of events ranging from concerts to community events to children and family events. The staff of the Sweetland Amphitheatre makes every effort to find events that fit a wide range of demographics and audience preferences, in a range of locales. In order to host these events, we rely on our volunteers to be open to helping out at any type of event that we may need help at whether it's the music series or a festival that we are hosting. Your help is much needed at any of these events to make sure that we please our patrons as best as we can.

## Requirements to be a Friend of Sweetland:

- You must be 18 or older
- Must possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills and enjoy working with the public
- Be a creative problem solver
- Volunteers will receive ample breaks and in most cases be provided a chair to sit in however, you must understand and meet the physical requirements that may include climbing stairs, assisting patrons in wheelchairs and standing for long periods of time. Keeping our volunteers safe is one of our highest priorities. Some aspects of the work we do require a high level of physical activity. These physical requirements exist specifically for your safety

## Job Opportunities and Commitments:

Our volunteer team will consist of fifty to sixty volunteers and we estimate we will utilize twenty to thirty for most large-scale concerts held at Sweetland. If you have signed up for a show that is full, we will notify you and place you on a waitlist. The number of volunteers change based on the type of events.

Flexibility and fairness will ensure all volunteers have an enjoyable experience during their shifts. We will do our best to rotate our team of volunteers so everyone has the opportunity to be cross-trained in all the positions and responsibilities.

### **Box Office (3-4 per event)**

Volunteer Box Office staff will be required to arrive 2 ½ hours prior to the gate open time. The Box Office opens 2 hours prior to the gate open time so this allows volunteers to be briefed on the status of tickets sales for that event, answer any questions and log in to the online ticketing program. The Box Office will close 30 minutes after the opening act begins and volunteers will be asked to do a drawer count and quick reconcile of their ticket sales before they can be dismissed to enjoy the show should they choose.

### **Ushers- VIP (3-4 per event)**

Volunteer ushers will be looking at tickets and walking patrons to the correct table. This area is accessible only to VIP table ticket holders and patrons with VIP passes.

### **Usher- Premium Reserved & Reserved (5-6 per event)**

Volunteer ushers will be looking at tickets and directing patrons to the correct seating area. Please be aware of the seating chart and send patrons down the pathway closest to their actual seats. Assist in keeping aisles and walkways clear of standers.

### **Greeters- (2 per event)**

Greeters will be assigned a location to greet and direct incoming guests to their desired locations (i.e. restrooms, concessions, seating area, box office, etc...) and answer any questions.

### **Floater- (2-3 per event)**

Floater remain outside of the box office at gates opening to assist in directing the flow of incoming patrons to the ticketing area. After the majority of the line subsides they are to go in to the venue and give breaks to the volunteers in their assigned areas.

### **Certified lead- (3 per event)**

Leads are assigned a specific area and number of volunteers. They are responsible for training new volunteers in their area, dealing with seating and/or guest issues, and relaying necessary information to the Front of House Manager/ Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Volunteer coordinator- (1 per event)**

The VC is responsible for checking in incoming volunteers and directing new volunteers to the appropriate areas. The VC also sets up schedules, sends reminders and other important volunteer information; they are responsible for the general upkeep of volunteers.

### **Security- (3 per event)**

While we will primarily be using off-duty officers as security, there may be opportunities to use volunteers as well. Security is responsible for keeping people out and away from stage area, especially entrances to back stage and on stage. They need to monitor the area they are assigned to, making sure people are having a good time but still making sure it doesn't get out of hand.

### **Merchandise Sales- (2 per event)**

Volunteers will be assigned to booths to sell t-shirts, coozies, hats, etc.... also there to answer any questions and give any upcoming news about events that are coming.

### **Ticket takers- (7 per event)**

Ticket takers will be stationed at the entrances of the Amphitheatre. You will be the first people our guests will see so it is important to always have a smile on your face as you scan their tickets.

### **Guest Services- (1 per event)**

There to provide excellent customer service and to answer any questions patrons may have. Volunteer will be based out of our Guest Services window located inside the pavilion entrance. Guest Services will also serve as lost and found and home to our volunteer hospitality area.

## **Training:**

**Volunteer Coordinator:** You will be trained in the wide range of responsibilities that come with this role including online scheduling, managing the volunteer contact database, recruiting new volunteers, preparing the volunteer hospitality area prior to each show and assist in planning the volunteer appreciation dinner at the end of the season.

**Certified Leads-** you will be required to have a training day. You will learn how to train the ushers, floaters, greeters and security.

**Ticket Takers, Ushers, Floaters, Greeters, and Security-** you will be trained before the shows by your Certified Lead and Volunteer Coordinator. This requires you to be at the Amphitheatre one hour before the gates open on the night of your first volunteer shift.

## **Opportunities that come with the job:**

When you volunteer for Sweetland you have the opportunity to:

- Learn a new skill. For example, management, leadership, organization. There are many opportunities where no prior skill is required.
- Have a sense of accomplishment. There's nothing better than to see a show open that you know you had a hand in getting off the ground.
- Make new friends. There are plenty of friendly people who will always greet you with a smile and are happy to see you.

- Community service. Perhaps you just want to “give back” to the community you have grown up in (or are new to) or maybe you need it for school.
- Watch the show. Since many of your positions are located in the seating bowl, you have a great view of the concert. Of course we do ask that the volunteers remain attentive to the needs of the paying customers, but of course, you are allowed to take a few peaks.
- Join us for our annual volunteer appreciation dinner.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### **What are you looking for in a volunteer?**

We are looking for people who enjoy music, have great energy, friendly, creative, patient, and are committed to serving their community. And it doesn't hurt if you like to have fun!

### **Do I need prior volunteer experience to volunteer with Sweetland?**

No. We are glad that you will be starting your volunteer journey with us.

### **How do I know which volunteering opportunity is right for me?**

In this handbook, there is a listing of all volunteering opportunities. We recommend reading each one thoroughly to see if it is right for you as there are specific requirements for each opportunity.

### **How do I sign up to be considered for a Sweetland volunteer?**

Please fill out the online Volunteer Application form found under the Volunteer section of our website ([www.sweetland.events](http://www.sweetland.events)). Please be sure to indicate your availability to volunteer at our summer concert series events (6 shows) as that will be a key consideration for volunteer we select. While we will always be accepting new applicants, the deadline to be considered as a volunteer for our Summer Concert Series is March 18<sup>th</sup>. Those applicants that qualify based on their application will be contacted shortly thereafter to attend a volunteer training session.

### **How do you communicate with your volunteers?**

Our primary means of communication is via email and we will use an online scheduling program that we will ask each volunteer to sign up for to view their schedules, request dates off or find a replacement for their shift among the other volunteers. With approximately 50-60 volunteers, it can be a challenge to communicate individually with each person and these means will help us streamline communication.

### **Can I bring my friends with me to volunteer?**

All volunteers that receive credentials are required to submit an application and go through the orientation session before beginning. Volunteers are not permitted to escort guests through the gates of the show. You can guide your friends to the Amphitheatre website for an application and they can go through the above process or purchase tickets for an event.

### **Can I stay and watch the show if my shift ends early?**

Yes. One of the perks of being a volunteer at Sweetland is at the end of your shift, you are allowed to stay and watch the show. Please be sure to take off your volunteer shirt so patrons don't think you are still on your volunteer shift. If the Box Office Manager has available seating after the Box Office closes, those tickets may be distributed to the volunteer staff via the Volunteer Coordinator. Please do not ask for these tickets as their availability will be limited- let it be a surprise. Otherwise you may find a location on the General Admission Lawn pending availability. Never drink alcohol in your Volunteer uniform, even after your shift is over.

### **What happens if I can no longer volunteer?**

If you find that you are no longer able to volunteer, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. Make sure to indicate whether you wish to take a year off or will not be able to volunteer for the foreseeable future.

## **Program Rules, Expectations, and Information:**

### **Dress Code:**

- Khaki or white skirts, shorts or pants. (NO short shorts or jeans).
- You will be given a shirt at orientation; 1 shirt per volunteer that you will reuse at any other events that you volunteer at as well. If you lose your shirt or wish to purchase an extra shirt, they are \$25 per shirt.
- Closed toed shoes / no backless shoes.
- A credentials badge or nametag that you will be given, and must wear at every show you volunteer for. Please do not forget it.

### **Parking:**

All volunteer parking will be at LGTV (LaGrange Government Television) located at 201 Smith St. across the street from The Sweetland Amphitheatre. Please have your credentials/paperwork available to access this lot.

## Doors/Gate Times:

Doors/gates open time may vary depending on the show. They usually open between 60 minutes before the show. It is important that you arrive at the requested time.

## Mandatory Pre-Show Meeting:

A pre-show volunteer meeting will be held 30 minutes before doors open. During the pre-show meeting, we will go over specifics of the event such as: regulations for the VIP tables, artists' preferences, security issues, and other specifics. **DO NOT BE LATE.** The Volunteer Coordinator will not have time to repeat the important information covered at this meeting.

If this is your first-time volunteering, you are required to arrive 60 minutes prior to the doors open so the Volunteer Coordinator can train you properly.

## Professionalism & Customer Service

All volunteers are expected to act in a professional manner while working/volunteering for Sweetland. Sweetland patrons are our guests and should be treated as such. The friendliness and helpfulness of our volunteer staff is a direct reflection on Sweetland and our mission should be to go the extra mile for our patrons in order to create the ultimate concert going experience for them, this means:

- Keep your face to the incoming patrons (don't chat with other volunteers or stare at the stage while ignoring patrons).
- Abide by the dress code.
- Remain polite and respectful of staff, patrons, and other volunteers at ALL TIMES.
- Please do not speak about concerts in a negative way. The patrons hear this and it is unprofessional to criticize. You have every right to your opinion but there is a time and a place to verbalize it.
- Be proactive. If a guest looks frustrated or confused, ask how you can help.

## Volunteer Commitment:

Volunteers signed up to work a show are required to be present for the show. A schedule will be created at the beginning of the concert season based on your availability. You may receive additional opportunities and requests to volunteer as events are added to the calendar.

An e-mail reminder will be sent out 5-7 days prior to a show or event that you are scheduled to work. If a volunteer needs to cancel his or her shift, please go to our online scheduling program- [signupgenius.com](http://signupgenius.com) to find a replacement for your shift.



Once you have found a replacement, please email the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@sweetland.com](mailto:volunteer@sweetland.com) to notify them of the change.

Not notifying us at all or at the last minute not only makes it impossible to find a replacement, but is unfair to those volunteers on the wait list who could have volunteered had they received more notice.

The demand to become a Sweetland Amphitheatre volunteer is tremendous and our volunteers are critical to the success of our shows as well as the experience of our patrons. For those reasons, if you are not present for your volunteer shift or have to reschedule your shift more than **twice**, you are at risk for losing your volunteer credentials.

### **Event minimums**

- A)** An active volunteer is considered one who volunteers a minimum of four events or more in a calendar year. Volunteers, who work zero shows in a calendar year are no longer considered active and must resubmit their application.
- B)** A volunteer is required to work a total of six (6) events or more within a single calendar year in order to attend the annual volunteer appreciation dinner.
- C)** A Certified Lead and Volunteer Coordinator will be required to work a minimum of ten (10) events in a calendar year in order to attend the annual volunteer appreciation dinner.

### **Seating Issues:**

Volunteers, as the “staff presence” on the floor, you are the first point of contact for patrons with seating issues. In the case of a seating issue:

- Try to remedy the situation.
- Contact the section lead.
- If they cannot remedy the issue, they will contact the VC or FOH manager.
- In all cases, please alert management to both the problem and the solution.
- Notify the nearest security or uniformed personnel if the situation escalates to a dangerous point. DO NOT attempt to handle unruly patrons.

### **Timeliness:**

ALL VOLUNTEERS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ON TIME FOR EACH AND EVERY EVENT. Please ensure you can arrive on time before volunteering yourself for the event. While you will be arriving 30 minutes before gate open time and have a dedicated parking lot, traffic in and around the venue may be congested so please plan accordingly and budget for extra time. Front gate/door security WILL NOT allow volunteers arriving after the gates/doors are open to enter the venue without a staff escort. If persistent tardiness becomes an issue, it may be grounds for dismissal from your volunteer position.

## Length of Shifts:

### *Start*

All shifts start 30 minutes prior to the gates/doors opening. First-time volunteers may be asked to arrive 1-hour prior to gate opening to receive training.

### *End*

- Ushers- Approximately 15 minutes before the end of the show.
- Guest Services & Greeters- 30 minutes after the headliner starts.
- Security and Section Leads- When all the guests have cleared your areas.
- Merchandise Sales- Until 15 minutes after the end of a show

## Equipment

All volunteers will be provided with a volunteer shirt and credentials for each event. We will issue you a small flashlight in order to read tickets when seating guests and lighting walkways. Please return these flashlights to your lead prior to leaving.

## Alcohol/Drug Use

Any volunteer found to be consuming alcohol, intoxicated, or under the influence of any illegal substance while volunteering at one of our venues will immediately be asked to leave the premises and will not be allowed to return to the volunteer staff. Dipping and other tobacco use is also prohibited during the show.

## Emergencies/Crowd Management

In the event of an emergency, encourage guests to make their way calmly and quietly to the nearest exit. The off-duty officers at the venue are trained in crowd and emergency management and will immediately give direction on how to handle any emergency.

Please take a moment to review the attached Exit Map for the venue and familiarize yourself with the emergency exits.

\*Your safety is of the utmost importance to us, so please never put yourself in the middle of a hostile customer situation or confrontation. We are fully staffed for each event with security, police and medical professionals to assure everyone's safety is assured.

Our success as a venue is heavily reliant on our volunteers

The entire staff would like to welcome you and thank you for volunteering your time at The Sweetland Amphitheatre at Boyd Park.

Feel free to check us out!

[www.sweetland.events](http://www.sweetland.events)

# Sweetland Emergency Exits

