

Support the Arts by Volunteering

By Maureen McGarry



Shown here is a volunteer at the Morris Graves Museum of Art.

"Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere." – Albert Einstein

Known for unlocking the mysteries of the universe, Einstein couldn't have done what he did without using his imagination. His curiosity to "discover" and look at things in new ways complimented his use of logic and scientific theories.

Expressing our imagination through art has been a form of expression and communication since before written language. The arts enrich our lives and are a fundamental part of our community. They bring us together, express our passions, values, and points of view, and inspire creativity and innovation.

One of the many gifts of retirement is having time for more art in our lives. Attending performances and visiting galleries on evenings and weekends may have been the only time we could support and enjoy the arts as a working person. With retirement, we can participate even more and be further inspired through volunteerism.

Most art organizations would not survive without the support of volunteers. This summer, there are many opportunities to volunteer in support of the arts. In Eureka, the Morris Graves Museum is seeking volunteers for shifts on Saturdays and Sundays, and for special events including Arts Alive! on the first Saturday of every month. Volunteers meet, greet and provide security during open hours.

If you enjoy working with kids, there is a special youth program taking place at the Arcata Playhouse. From June 30 to July 14, Playhouse Arts will be offering the summer youth workshop, "Pageant on the Plaza," a workshop that evolves into an outdoor spectacle performed on the Arcata Plaza. Kids ages 9 to 16 will be learning skills and

developing an original play. Education Director Amy Tetzlaff said that help is needed to prepare snacks and lunch for the young performers.

"In between food prep, volunteers are needed as spotters for stilt walkers, sewing costumes, assisting in construction of giant puppets and putting up posters in the community," said Tetzlaff.

In Blue Lake, Dell'Arte's Mad River Festival opens on June 19 with the return of the popular Korbel series along with music festivals, dance and clown performances. The entire festival continues into mid-August. Many volunteers are needed throughout the summer. Volunteer Coordinator Lezley Troxell said it's going to be grander than ever this year.

"Volunteering for the festival is a lot of fun and simple work. Tasks include everything from setting up a circus tent, to ushering, taking tickets, selling concessions and helping with security," said Troxell. The Humboldt Folklife Festival (part of the Mad River Festival) happens in the middle of July. "We always need volunteers to help out at this free event."

Tap into your creative self and support the arts. Be inspired by those who create and help them continue to express their imagination (and stretch yours) by volunteering. You never know; it could be you up there on the stage next summer! For more information, call Volunteer Center of the Redwoods at 442-3763 or email vcor@a1aa.org.

Maureen McGarry is the project director of RSVP and the Volunteer Center of the Redwoods.