



**Parent/Guardian and Volunteer
Handbook
2019/2020**

Dear Parent or Volunteer,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and youth members, we want to thank you for your interest and involvement with Superior Arts Youth Theater. Welcome!

Achieving the goal of providing central Upper Peninsula youth with dynamic theater opportunities is a community-wide effort; parent and community volunteers play a critical role in this endeavor. SAYT's volunteer program serves the youth participants in a variety of ways, from building props and costumes to making sure the kids are safe and hydrated. The success of the theater depends on you!

Thank you in advance for helping us to increase the quality of the artistic opportunities available to our youth. We look forward to working closely with you as we unite to serve our children.

Sincerely,
Superior Arts Youth Theater

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Purpose of Handbook and How to Use It

Welcome to Superior Arts Youth Theater! In this document we will share with you a little about the history, philosophy, policies, and expectations of our theater.

This handbook has been organized by topic in order to help you find information easily. We ask that you read this resource carefully, and refer to it whenever questions arise. We also encourage you to talk with our staff if you have additional questions about SAYT or the contents of this document.

Thank you for supporting arts opportunities for local youth. We hope that you find working with SAYT a positive and rewarding experience.

Organization Description and History

Superior Arts Youth Theater (SAYT) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization located in Marquette, MI serving the central Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Formerly known as the Marquette Arts and Culture Center Youth Theatre (2001-2011) and Lake Superior Youth Theatre (2011-2015), we are now an independent theater company. SAYT camps and productions are open to youth ages 3-18. We produce a series of performances each year ranging from variety shows and community event performances to full productions at the historic Kaufman Auditorium, Northern Michigan University's Forest Roberts Theater, and the Lake Superior Theater Boathouse.

You can find a detailed timeline of our organization and production history on our website: <http://saytheater.org/history/>

Mission

SAYT seeks to empower young people ages 3-18 through educational, performance, and technical theater opportunities. These opportunities encourage growth through acting, music, dance and other arts disciplines while entertaining audiences with high-quality productions.

Vision

The strength of our community is measured, in part, by its ability to meet the needs of its young people. We believe that every child in the Upper Peninsula deserves access to education that nurtures theatrical talents and their enthusiasm for the arts. We envision a future where a comprehensive range of theatre arts made for and by children is a vital component in every community. We celebrate the creativity of the youth, volunteers, and staff that bring each production to life and we seek to mentor, support, and empower their voices.

Inclusion

SAYT is working to make sure we are a welcoming space for peoples of all ability, race, ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Our program includes need-based financial aid, ADA compliant rehearsal and performance spaces with all gender restrooms, and a faculty happy to work with families to meet participants' individual physical, learning, and social needs. If there are ways we can be more welcoming to your family, please let us know at saytheater.directors@gmail.com.

Core Values

- Inspire creativity
- Improve social, behavioral, and communication skills
- Foster community and youth leadership
- Promote quality, local arts opportunities
- Nurture theatrical skills and interest in the arts
- Discipline through artistic practice

Rehearsal and Performance Expectations

Putting together a musical or play should be fun and safe for everyone involved. Here are a few basic guidelines for youth participants that we follow during rehearsals and performances.

- Participants must sign in at the beginning of rehearsal.
- Participants who are on the sign out list must sign out at the end of each rehearsal.
- Always check the rehearsal schedule.
- Always check your email.
- Participants should always bring their script and a pencil for writing blocking or acting notes.
- Please arrive ten minutes early so every rehearsal can start and end on time.
- For blocking and choreography rehearsals, participants should dress in layers and wear shoes that allow them to move easily.
- Please practice lines/music/choreography at home. Only part of the work can be done in rehearsal. Each cast member is responsible for learning their role in the show.

SAYT Company Contract

At the start of each SAYT program, parents and youth are required to abide by and agree to respect the SAYT Company Contract. The language of the contract is as follows:

I agree to be a member of the Superior Arts Youth Theater Company and will:

1. Come to all rehearsals prepared and on time.
2. Always be respectful to the artistic staff, volunteers, any my fellow company members.
3. Ask the directors if I have a question.
4. Make sure that the directors and Stage Manager are aware of my conflicts. I will not change my conflicts unless I have prior consent from my director to miss rehearsal.
5. Not miss any assigned rehearsals.
6. Learn my part and perform to the best of my abilities.
7. Pitch in when help is needed.
8. Abide by the SAYT Code of Ethics.
9. Put my cell phone or other electronic devices away when I'm at a rehearsal or performance and to abide by all SAYT electronic policies.
10. Represent SAYT in public and on social media in an appropriate and family-friendly manner.
11. Obtain permission from the Director before recording video in rehearsals or performances. I will not post anything online via Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, email, text messaging, or any other electronic transmission without permission.
12. Voice any issues or complaints to the directors, artistic staff, or board members before or after rehearsals (not during unless it is an emergency).

Code of Ethics

Part of the great tradition of Theatre is a code of ethics which applies to all who work on the stage. SAYT's Code of Ethics reflects principles which govern our work, dedication to the art and craft of Theatre, respect for cast, crew, artistic staff, and volunteers, and the awareness that SAYT serves as the primary regional/community youth theater in Marquette County. This code outlines a self-discipline which increases personal self-esteem and encourages collaboration toward a common purpose.

All those who participate in SAYT activities are required to adhere to this Code of Ethics. Disciplinary action may include removal from the production and/or not being part of future productions. (See "Consequences for Contract Violation" pg. 8-9)

I agree to:

1. Attend every assigned rehearsal and performance unless excused by my supervisor (Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director).
2. Be on time for every assigned rehearsal and performance unless excused by my supervisor.
3. Remain present in the theatre building until I have been dismissed from rehearsal or work assignment.
4. Work to the best of my ability at all times, regardless of how small my responsibilities or large my outside concerns are.
5. Meet each onstage or offstage task/entrance/cue.
6. Forego all social activities which may interfere with rehearsals or performances.
7. Never come to a rehearsal or performance under the influence of any illegal substances.
8. Try, to the best of my ability, to translate the notes of the director, the stage manager, the technical director, or the designers into my production responsibilities, understanding that their advice comes from their view of the production as a whole. I understand that my role is a portion thereof, that I am a part of a collaborative process.
9. Change no phase of my work without proper authorization.
10. Be patient and avoid outbursts.
11. Accept artistic responsibility and never blame other members of the production for my own mistakes or lack of preparation.
12. Engage in no criticism of another colleague's work either in person or via social media.
13. Accept both public praise and constructive criticism graciously.
14. Respect and protect the stage set, properties, costumes, equipment and rehearsal/performance spaces.
15. Maintain my enthusiasm for the theatre, regardless of production disappointment or failure for they are the lessons by which I learn.
16. **Respect all company members, including the personnel in the box office, various shops, designers, technicians, actors on stage, understudies, directors, and stage managerial staff. From first to last, theater is a collaborative art.**

Consequences for Contract Violation

Discipline, combined with due process, shall be administered in a consistent, fair, and reasonable manner to ensure that youth participants conduct themselves in a socially acceptable manner. Although the rules may not address themselves to all situations participants may face, it is expected that everyone will exercise common sense concerning their conduct during rehearsals and performances. Extreme cases of a rule violation may warrant consequences greater than the minimums listed in the Consequences for Contract Violation. Participants with multiple offenses in separate categories are subject to consequences greater than listed as well.

Inappropriate Snacks

1. Item taken away for length of rehearsal/text parent

Unprepared for Rehearsal

1. Verbal warning
2. Talk to parents
3. Meeting with Director/Executive Director
4. Review by Ethics Committee

Unexcused Tardiness

1. Verbal warning
2. Talk to parents
3. Meeting with Director/Executive Director
4. Review by Ethics Committee

Level 1 Disrespectful Behavior - Daily

(examples: talking out of turn, running inside, not keeping hands to yourself, touching items that do not belong to you, cellphone infractions)

1. Verbal warning
2. Separate youth
3. Call parent/send home

Level 2 Disrespectful Behavior - Cumulative

(examples: bullying/cyber bullying, roughhousing, going outside of designated areas, inappropriate language and topics, talking back or intentionally ignoring rules, missing rehearsals for social activities, inappropriate display of affection)

1. Verbal warning/separate youth
2. Call parent/send home
3. Review by Ethics Committee

Consequences for Contract Violation (continued)

Level 3 Disrespectful Behavior - Cumulative

(examples: excessive bullying, inappropriate posting about or representing the youth theater on social media, physical violence or endangering the safety of others, use or possession of illegal substances, destruction of property, theft)

1. Removal from production

Appeals Process for Contract Violation

The following procedure will apply for appeals of violations of the SAYT Company Contract:

1. An informal discussion will be held between the parties involved, the Director, and Executive Director.
2. A written appeal to the Executive Director within five days of the meeting.
3. The Executive Director will submit a written recommendation to the Ethics Committee and production staff within 48 hours of receiving the appeal.
4. The Ethics Committee and staff members, upon request, may hear the case and will render a final judgment.

Snack Safety Information

Any snacks brought to rehearsal or backstage MUST BE 100% NUT FREE, not processed in a factory or on equipment with nuts. THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!!

Food and drink backstage must be absolutely mess free -- in particular, please avoid colored drinks, sauces, pizza, and any other food that might stain or damage costume pieces.

READ LABELS FIRST!!

Here are some suggestions for snacks that are safe and appropriate during rehearsal or backstage:

- Pretzels
- Popcorn (no butter)
- Cheese – string cheese, sliced cheese, cubed cheese
- Crackers
- Nilla Wafers
- Bananas
- Apples
- Grapes
- Raisins
- Water
- Clear Juice
- Carrots
- Peppers
- Broccoli
- Cucumber
- Sugar Snap Peas
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Fruit leathers
- Fruit Snacks
- Nutra-Grain Bars
- Rice Crispy Treats
- Cheese Nips
- Cheese Its
- Teddy Grahams
- Wheat Thins
- Lorna Doones

Types of Rehearsals - Descriptions

Music Rehearsals: Usually the first week or two of rehearsals for our shows are dedicated to learning all the music and most of the time everyone will be seated. Don't worry if you don't know how to read music - these rehearsals are a great time to start learning and we'll make sure everyone ends up on the same page. Always bring your script to music rehearsals! These rehearsals are scheduled and led by the Music Director.

Blocking Rehearsals: During blocking rehearsals, the Director teaches everyone where and when to move in each scene. This is also the time that we work on character and how to interpret lines. It's a great idea to read through each scene before we work on it in rehearsal, take notes with a pencil in your script to remember where you stand and when to move, and review/practice everything when you get home. These rehearsals are scheduled and led by the Director.

Choreography Rehearsals: Usually taking place during the same period as the blocking rehearsals, choreography rehearsals are dedicated to learning all of the dancing in the show. Don't worry if you're new to dancing! The Choreographer will teach everything step by step and we usually make choreography videos to help you review at home. It is especially important to wear clothing and shoes that allow for movement in these rehearsals.

Technical Rehearsals: Generally held in the performance space, Tech Rehearsals are the time we start to add in props and set pieces. These rehearsals are often longer and more strenuous we will stop these rehearsals by 10:30pm on school nights.

Dress Rehearsals: The last few rehearsals before the performances! This is the time we add in costumes, makeup, lights, and work with the orchestra. Dress Rehearsals are treated exactly like a performance - that means no stopping for mistakes and always staying in character onstage. These rehearsals are often longer and more strenuous we will stop these rehearsals by 10:30pm on school nights.

Attendance is mandatory at all Technical and Dress Rehearsals.

Volunteer Opportunity Descriptions

As a nonprofit organization, we rely heavily on our wonderful volunteers (like you)! If you've never volunteered with SAYT before, here's how you can get involved:

Set Crew

- Work under Scenic Designer
- Take drafting home and work on a small project
- Take a cut-list home and cut the lumber for a project to be built at the theater
- Come in on sanctioned build/work days and help with set construction
- Build platforms, flats, staircases, tables, fireplaces, windows

Skills (vary depending on the level of project): *working with power tools, saws, measuring, working with wood, steel, etc.*

Paint Crew

- Set work, work under Scenic Designer
- Base painting (making something one color)
- Intricate/detail painting (for example, making a wall look like stone)
- Texturing (throwing paint at something using rags, sponges, feathers etc.)
- Paint clothes, and closed toed shoes required

Skills (vary depending on level of project): *Okay with getting messy, working with paint brushes, rollers (anyone can do most of the paint work on the sets), we like to involve youth on this as well! We will teach you!*

Prop Crew

- Work under Props Designer
- Work on all small and large pieces of the show from fake food to a giant pumpkin!
- Take a project home to work on
- Come in on sanctioned build & work days and work on prop construction
- Go shopping to find materials

Skills: *Good at finding deals, working with small tools, being imaginative, self-motivated, very creative, digging/organizing in big storage areas, crafting*

Hair Crew

- Work under Hair Designer
- Work with hair
- Curling
- Adding volume
- Updos
- Straightening

Skills: *Working with kids, doing hair, knowing hair products, working with various hair equipment*

Volunteer Opportunity Descriptions (continued)

Makeup Crew

- Work under Makeup Designer
- Work with makeup
- Know various techniques

Skills: *Doing makeup, airbrushing, working with kids, getting messy*

Costume Crew

- Work under Costume Designer
- Work on an assigned project at home – must have sewing machine available for use
- Straight line sewing
- Intricate sewing
- Cutting fabric

Skills: *Sewing, cutting, working with fabric, listening, working with people*

Backstage Supervision

- Come to Tech/Dress/Performance nights and work backstage
- Keep the rule of 2 adults to 1 youth, or 1 adult to many youth. Adults should never put themselves in a situation that they are one-on-one with a youth.
- Sign up for time slots (each night will have time slots for parent help, you can sign up for what works for you)
- Keep kids quiet, no running, help kids get into costumes/do changes, keep kids safe
- Keep backstage area clean
- Clean up food area
- Keep kids on task
- Be our eyes backstage for dangerous situations
- Report to Stage Manager or Director for complete instructions

Skills: *patience, understanding, helpfulness, caring, ability to enforce policies and confront misbehavior*

Front of House Volunteer Positions

These jobs are a great place for responsible kids to get involved.

Usher

- Work under House Manager
- Arrive 30 minutes before house open
- Hand out programs
- Take tickets
- Help direct audience members to seats
- Clean up any trash or programs left in the seats after the show

Skills: *welcoming, helpfulness, attention to detail, working with people*

Will Call

- Work under House Manager
- Arrive 1 hour before performance
- Hand out tickets sold in advance

Skills: *welcoming, helpfulness, attention to detail, working with people*

Concessions

- Work under Executive Director
- Arrive 1 hour before performance
- Sell snacks, beverages, and merchandise before show and during intermission
- Cash, Credit Card, and Check transactions
- Restocking

Skills: *basic math, welcoming, helpfulness, attention to detail, working with people*

Volunteer Expectations for SAYT

- A suitable assignment based upon production needs and your interests, skills, and availability.
- For certain volunteer areas, training to help you perform your job.
- The opportunity to work as part of a team, to support arts opportunities for kids in our community, and recognition for your contribution.
- Reimbursement for supply purchases approved by a design head or producer.
- The opportunity to give feedback about your SAYT volunteer experience.
- Name tags and volunteer lanyards for working backstage.

Reimbursement Policy

SAYT is happy to reimburse expenses incurred from prop, costume, and set items that have been approved by a design head or producer (Jalina McClain). See Jalina McClain for the appropriate form. Please submit the completed form and all receipts within one week of the final performance.

Contact Information

Jalina McClain, Executive Director

Superior Arts Youth Theater

P.O. Box 741

Marquette, MI 49855

saytheater.directors@gmail.com

(888) 785-0512

Youth General Liability Release

As consideration for my child (or children), as a cast member, or myself as a volunteer or cast member, being permitted by **Superior Arts Youth Theater (SAY Theater or SAYT)** to participate in these activities, I hereby agree that I, my spouse, children, assignees, heirs, distributes, guardians, and legal representatives will not make a claim against, sue, or attach the property of, **Superior Arts Youth Theater** or any agent, employee, or member thereof, for injury or damage to my child (or children) or self, whether resulting from any negligent acts, or howsoever otherwise caused, as a result of our participation in Superior Arts Youth Theater activities.

I hereby assume all risks of personal injury and property damage that may result from any **Superior Arts Youth Theater** activity.

As parent/guardian, I do hereby release and agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless **Superior Arts Youth Theater**, AND THEIR DIRECTORS, ASSOCIATES, AND INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS and all participants in the **Superior Arts Youth Theater PROGRAM** from and against all liability, including claims and suits at law or in equity, for damages or injury fatal or otherwise, that I, my spouse, children, assignees, heirs, distributes, guardians, and legal representatives now have or may hereafter have for injury or damage resulting from my child (or children's) participation in Superior Arts Youth Theater activities.

Photo Release Policy

I, (parent/guardian name) hereby authorize my child to participate in the Superior Arts Youth Theater program, including theatre classes, rehearsals and performances. I further authorize making use of any films, photographs or other recordings of these activities for any purpose that SAYT may make or authorize to be made without compensation to my child or me. I also authorize use of my child's name or photograph, video in publicity information pertaining to the performances. This includes radio, television, print, internet (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, website, etc.).

Attendance Policy

All conflicts must be submitted at auditions to be considered excused. Conflicts submitted after the audition date must be approved by the Director. One unexcused absence or three instances of unexcused lateness will result in a meeting with the Director and are grounds for dismissal from the cast. If a participant must be absent or late unexpectedly, please contact the Stage Manager as soon as possible. Attendance at all Technical and Dress Rehearsals is mandatory. *For our winter production SAYT has a tech & dress rehearsal end time of 10:30pm with various roles being released early depending on age. During our fall 8th grade and under production we have a set end time of 9:30pm for all cast members.*

Inclement Weather Policy

Notifications about weather related cancellations will be sent out via email and the text reminder.

Child Pick Up and Drop Off Policy

Please drop your child off 10 minutes early to allow time to change shoes, greet friends, and warm up. Cast members are to be picked up by their parents or designated caregiver promptly at the end of rehearsal. Please pick up your child within 10 minutes of rehearsal ending. If we cannot contact you after 10 minutes we will call your emergency contact. If you are unreachable after 30 minutes we will contact emergency personnel.

Terms and Acronyms

ASM - Assistant Stage Manager

AD - Assistant Director

Director - In control of all aspects of the production. They develop the concept for the production, brief the designers, plot the actors' moves, run rehearsal, etc. etc. etc..

Downstage - The area of the stage closest to the audience.

Dresser - One whose job it is to help an actor (or actors) in quick changes of costume.

FRT - Northern Michigan University's Forest Roberts Theatre

House - The audience or the auditorium where the audience is seated.

House Manager - the person responsible for the smooth operation of the house (typically both the lobby and audience seating area) during the run of the show

LST - Lake Superior Theatre (aka The Boathouse)

Pit - The sunken area in front of the stage in which the orchestra sits.

Properties (Props) - Small items which actors carry or decorate the set. Often abbreviated to Props.

Examples include a sword or a briefcase.

SAYT - Superior Arts Youth Theater

Set - The scenery of a particular scene or show.

Set Dressing - The items on the set that are not used during any of the action, but help make the scenery more compelling. Examples include curtains or a bouquet of flowers on the table.

Stage Manager (SM) - In charge of everything that happens backstage. All other backstage personnel, report to the SM. In the professional theatre, once the show starts its run, the SM takes complete control (including taking any rehearsals for understudies etc.), as the Director's job is finished once they have given notes after the final dress rehearsal.

Stage Left - The left side of the stage when facing the audience.

Stage Right - The right of the stage when facing the audience.

Strike - Strike is the final night of the last performance, when you and everyone will tear down the set, return all your rented materials, and take care of business in general.

Upstage -The area of the stage away from the audience. When used as a verb, upstaging refers to an actor deliberately drawing the attention of the audience.

USL - Upstage Left

USR - Upstage Right

Wings - The sides of the stage where actors stand out of the audience's sight before making an entrance, and where props are kept, ready to be brought onto the stage.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do you cast the shows?

SAYT takes casting very seriously and our priority is to make the best decisions for the kids so they can succeed! It is all a matter of timing, training, part availability, and positive attitude. Every part is important and, regardless of the size of their role, each person is an essential member of the cast.

Why does SAYT have a registration fee?

Although some of SAYT's funding comes from grants and ticket sales, the registration fee helps defray production costs including renting the rehearsal and performance space, buying scripts, securing performance rights, hiring support staff, and all the physical needs of the show (costume pieces, makeup, props, and set materials).

Is financial aid available?

Yes, need-based financial aid is available by application. Applications are available by emailing saytheater.directors@gmail.com.

What is your policy on guardians staying during rehearsal time?

We have a closed rehearsal policy meaning that guardians and siblings are asked NOT to stay in the room while rehearsal is in session. We keep rehearsals closed because frequently there is not enough space to accommodate observers and the increased noise disrupts the rehearsal process.

To make an exception to this rule for special cases, please contact the Director at least one day prior to the rehearsal you would like to attend.

Does SAYT have an email and newsletter list? How can I be added?

Yes. To request to be added to the mailing lists send your name and address to susancandey.sayt@gmail.com or saytheater.directors@gmail.com.

Where can I purchase tickets for the performances?

Tickets for SAYT performances can be purchased in person at all NMU ticket outlets (Berry Events Center, Superior Dome, Forest Roberts Theatre, NMU Bookstore), by phone (906) 227-1032, or online at <https://nmu.universitytickets.com>

Can I buy tickets at the door on the day of the event?

Yes. If there are still tickets available to purchase on the day of the event, you may purchase them in person at the box office. Some shows sell very quickly and tickets are not always available on the day of the show.

How can I find out when tickets will go on sale?

Like our Facebook page to receive updates about ticket availability - www.facebook.com/saytheater/
Information about tickets will also be available on our website - <http://saytheater.org/>

Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

Is photography and/or recording allowed during performances?

Due to a variety of reasons - including show contracts, copyright laws, and performer safety - absolutely no photography or recording devices of any kind are permitted during performances - this policy is strictly enforced.

How long are the performances?

Run time of performances differs depending on the production. Typically, performances of Broadway Junior productions are approximately one hour long. Performances of our all ages productions usually run 70-180 minutes.

How old do you need to be to attend SAYT performances?

All ages are welcome at our performances! We love having kids in the audience.

How do I make a donation?

The support of individuals and local businesses have a huge impact on our organization and the quality of our productions. Here are a few ways to donate to SAYT:

Through Amazon Smile: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-4031410>

Mail to: SAYT, PO Box 741, Marquette, MI 49855

Donate online: saytheater.org/donate