

SPOTLIGHT ON FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Bucket Brigade—Successful

Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra Volunteers

Who We Are: Since the creation of the Louisiana Philharmonic (LPO) from the financial collapse of the previous New Orleans Symphony Orchestra, LPO Volunteers has been an independent support organization, dedicated primarily to fundraising and community awareness. LPO Volunteers operates diverse fundraising efforts including an annual city-wide used book collection and sale, a recycled formal dress shop, and several music-related activities. Bucket Brigade is just another of our long-standing (30+ years) activities.

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What We Did: Every year the LPO has had 5 outdoor “park” concerts throughout our area. concerts take the form of a family-style picnic lawn chairs or blankets. At three concerts, we have been able to ‘pass the bucket’ for a good-offering.

How It is Operated: Volunteer ‘runners’ with identifying t-shirt uniforms provided by the Orchestra, wander through the crowd collecting donations in small plastic buckets. Other volunteers stay at our home base to count and the money. Activity usually starts about one hour before the concert and lasts until intermission or whenever it is too dark to safely walk through the crowd. In addition to wearing LPO-branded t-shirts, we fly our LPO

Volunteer flag, and offer membership applications at our home base. Our “runners” leave stickers with the LPO ID for every donation. Stickers identify contributors to avoid approaching them again and the stickers are a delight for kids of all ages. There is also a spirited competition among runners for the largest collections.

How It is Organized: Each year our membership renewal form includes an opportunity to express interest in the Bucket Brigade. Beginning in February, the Bucket Captain meets with Orchestra operations staff to schedule the cooperative part of the event. The orchestra provides t-shirts left over from other events, a 10 x 10-foot pop up tent, and



folding tables and chairs for money counters. The Captain reviews last year's participants and recruits new people from membership forms and personal referrals. Teams for each of the three dates, are contacted by email and phone. At one concert, Brigade volunteers enjoy a buffet provided by a commercial sponsor. At the other two events, we have iced bottled water (provided by the Captain). Our financial secretary provides bank deposit slips. Donations are totaled on tally sheets by bucket number. The Captain totals the final money counts overnight, makes a bank deposit the next day and announces the total bucket-by-bucket counts.

Except for 20 plastic buckets, all the unused tally forms, left over rosters, stickers and t-shirts easily store in two file boxes.



What It Takes: The Bucket Captain usually works very casually for about two months before the event. He cleans the buckets, arranges for the tent, flag, table, chairs and stickers. During a brief meeting with Orchestra Staff, times and locations are confirmed and necessary tally forms and stickers are printed on the Orchestra office equipment. Sometimes parking passes are required. Total start to finish of about 20 hours over two months. Crews vary from 6 to 20 depending on the size of the concert. Volunteers invest 100 total hours during the season raising approximately \$12,000: an

average of \$100 net per volunteer hour.

Effective But Tacet: Bucket Brigade is an easy-to-organize, community-supported activity enjoyed by the public and a dedicated cadre of volunteers. Revenue helps LPO Volunteers meet its annual financial pledge to the orchestra. Unfortunately, this event is subject to three factors out of our control: sponsors, weather, and unforeseen catastrophes.

Last year we lost one date to weather.

This year a sponsor cancelled one concert before the season began, and COVID-19 terminated our orchestra season and remaining park concerts.

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