

Volunteer Information Sheet

Stephen DiMenna, Artistic Director

Process and criteria for selection of Volunteer Teaching Artists

Because the ITLP programs serve the needs of children and adults in developing countries who face challenging life circumstances it is important that the team of volunteer teaching artists strive to develop a healthy artistic community amongst themselves and as ambassadors in their host country in order to serve these needs effectively. In addition we look for volunteers who have the appropriate sensibilities and perspectives to understand the challenges and limitations of working in less than ideal teaching situations and understand and appreciate the rewards of creating a meaningful experience for the students in spite of those limitations and the sacrifices involved in doing such work. To these ends we have established the following agreement which outlines ITLP's expectations, policies and general information to make the experience as rich and rewarding for the teaching artists.

Criteria for consideration

We ask that applicants meet as many of the following criteria as possible:

1. Extensive experience in professional or educational theatre.
2. Extensive experience as a teaching artist in either classroom or workshop settings.
3. Experience working with youth in challenging settings outside mainstream classroom or community settings.
4. Some experience with international travel preferably but not limited to developing countries or in modest or basic travel and housing conditions.
5. An opportunity to observe your work or collaborate before consideration.
6. Ability to work as a collaborative member of a teaching team.

Process for selection

1. The first step is for interested volunteers to submit a short letter of interest to the Executive Director, Marianna Houston expressing your personal and professional goals and how this project will contribute to your professional development as an artist and educator.
2. Submit a resume that highlights your professional theatre work as well as your educational experience.
3. Provide two references who can speak directly about your work with youth.
4. An initial phone or in-person meeting may be requested.
5. Should candidates meet enough of the above criteria for consideration you would be invited to have an interview with the Executive Director, Marianna Houston, and an ITLP Board member.
6. Following the interview you will be asked to attend a pre-selection information workshop.
7. If selected to be an ITLP volunteer you would be invited to an orientation weekend in New York in the spring to plan the summer workshop.

Frequently Asked Questions about the volunteer program

1. What exactly does it mean to be a *volunteer* for the ITLP Workshops?

Being a member of the teaching artist team means that you volunteer your time and effort to teach and lead a theatre workshop for around two weeks in a developing country with students at Government subsidized schools or community centers. While travel and housing and meals are paid for by the ITLP there is no pay for your work or re-imbusement for personal expenses before, during or after the workshop. Volunteers agree to plan and execute their workshop with their teaching partner(s) and to pitch in to do any additional

work that contributes to the team as a whole both in the U.S. and abroad.

2. What expenses can I expect to incur personally?

- Pre-travel medical expenses for vaccines and medications
- Ground transportation to and from airports in the U.S.
- Airfare or transportation to and from New York City for the Spring Orientation Workshop and Airfare/transportation to and from New York City for the connection with the international flight to Africa leaving from New York.

3. What expenses can I expect to incur personally?

- Meals taken outside the lodge and school (A typical meal is \$5.00-\$10.00)
- Personal expenses at the lodge including:
 - Laundry
 - Internet use
 - Tipping of lodging staff
 - Wine or alcohol at meals
 - Internet use feesApproximate costs for these expenses for two weeks: \$200.00-\$300.00
- Souvenirs and personal items you purchase.
- If you choose to experience any of the tourist options (Safari, tours etc. A 36-hour safari is approximately \$350.00 in Tanzania)
- Flight and/or travel medical insurance (which we highly recommend)

4. What does the ITLP pay for?

- **Round trip airfare from New York City to the country in which the ITLP workshop takes place (Economy class; usually with one connecting flight)**
Should a volunteer make additional travel plans either before or after the workshop dates that affects the price of the initial airfare the difference is incurred by the volunteer.
- **Housing at a dorm facility for the duration of the workshop**
(Shared double rooms – with a possibility of single rooms – with full working toilets & showers – although the hot water and water pressure are not always reliable!)
Should volunteers choose to arrive early or stay beyond the workshop dates for a personal vacation all expenses are incurred by the volunteer.
- **Meals at the dorm and school**
Meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) during the workshop are provided by the dorm, school and/or ITLP.
Lunch on weekends or days not at school or at restaurants are paid for by volunteers. Any meals taken outside the dorm at restaurants are paid for by the volunteers.
- **Ground transportation to and from our schools and any project activity and to and from the airport in the country of operation.**
Any ground transportation for personal tourist activities outside the group is paid for by the individual volunteer(s).
- **Supplies for the workshop**
- **Fee for travel visa** (where applicable)

5. What is the nature of the work as a volunteer teaching artist and what are volunteers expected to do while working for ITLP?

The general nature of the work on the ITLP Workshops aligns with the kind of in-school and community theatre workshops/residencies we do in the U.S which includes:

- Pre-workshop planning with your teaching artist co-facilitator to design an eleven-day playwriting workshop that aligns with the goals and curriculum of the ITLP as well as the specific conditions and needs of the school and students in Tanzania.
- Teach the planned playwriting curriculum to a group of 20 students in the assigned school in partnership with the classroom teacher each day. Workshops are generally for 5 or 6 hours with a mid-morning ½-hour tea break. A hot lunch is served mid-day – and constitutes a 1-hour break.
- The creation of a short (15 minutes ONLY) original play written by the students and directed and rehearsed for public performance.

There are specific circumstances and goals for workshops that make this work unique and challenging. It requires additional effort and attention to details such as:

- Punctual attendance each day at the school which means punctual attendance for departure from the accommodations each morning.
- Setting up the physical space at each school for the workshops and performances including creating a “playing space” for performances with limited resources at the school.
- On-going planning and adjusting throughout the workshop.
- Photo and video documentation of the workshops and performances. ITLP provides a video camera and tapes for each teaching team.
- Pitching in to support each teaching team for their performances at the all-schools Saturday play festival of performances.
- Participating in additional workshops at locations other than the schools such as orphanages and vocational schools should opportunities arise.
- In some cases sacrificing personal time to do extra work that contributes to the project as a whole.

6. What are the housing conditions and meals like?

In Tanzania, the dorm facility is akin to a “summer camp” situation – simple but attractive and pleasant – but “no frills.” Wine is allowed at the meals – however, you supply the wine. The dorm is very close to Tengeru Village where there are simple stores and tourist shops and an internet café.

Teaching Artists are paired up in double rooms (or it is possible to have a single room). Each room has a private bathroom with a flush toilet, shower and hot water – the hot water is available most mornings – but not every morning.

Laundry service is available at the dorm.

Breakfast is a full African breakfast with toast, fruits, eggs and pastries – and coffee and chai tea. Dinner is a family style meal – with a full meal cooked and served at the dorm.

7. What are the physical conditions at the schools like?

The schools are often one-story basic buildings usually in a U-shaped compound. Classrooms have a concrete floor. Most do not have electricity allowing light in only through the windows. There are no phones, copiers, computers or most of the amenities we would see in U. S. schools.

However the students and staff take great pride in their schools and you will often see beautiful gardens on the school grounds and everything arranged neatly. Students often arrive early to wash the floors before class and set up the chairs.

The classrooms are very workable environments and large enough to make a big circle for warm-ups and activities. The weather at this time of year also allows for work to be done outdoors.

Bathrooms: This is indeed an issue at most schools. At the three schools we work in the bathrooms are little more than a primitive outhouse with no toilet or toilet paper. In some cases it is a simple hole dug in the ground.

8. What are some of the challenges and frustrations about working in developing countries?

Though there are tremendous personal and professional rewards to this work there are some challenging and frustration aspects.

TIME

The most apparent is the intersection of American tastes and sensibilities with those of a country with deep cultural roots that don't always align with an American way of working.

This is most evident when it comes to the issue of time. Flexibility and patience are valuable assets for visitors especially when dealing with the infra-structure (or lack of it) in government schools and community organizations.

MONEY

As a tourist in a developing country and particularly an American tourist one is susceptible to children and adults asking for money on the street and/or selling a variety of souvenirs. This can be overwhelming and often deeply saddening. There is a temptation to want to help all the street children, but **most countries firmly believe that this is a problem for the country to solve and they ask that people NOT give hand-outs in any way**. The feeling is that it will encourage more people to seek money from tourists and not take advantage of the community resources to help them.

CHARITY

As artists working with loving and generous children it is easy to have emotional attachments to some of our students. It is easy to give into an impulse to do something for a particular student or adult. This is a tricky issue as any "gift," monetary or otherwise, is a significant gesture and will create an impulse for further dependence and requests. **The best gift that we give the children and people is our WORK**. We offer them a rich and rewarding experience that is more useful than money or material items.

For more information go to www.itlp.org The Where We Are section includes videos, photos and reports from our summer programs in different countries.

Send your application materials to:

By regular mail:

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