



**FREEWILL  
SHAKESPEARE  
FESTIVAL**  
PLAYS FOR A MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

**The Free Will Players Theatre Guild**

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# **Freewill Shakespeare Festival Sponsorship Package**

## **Mission Statement**

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The Free Will Players Theatre Guild endeavor to create professional, contemporary, innovative productions of the works of William Shakespeare that are accessible to all audiences, regardless of age, ability, education, or income levels, while also developing new audiences and mentoring theatre professionals of the future.

## **About the Festival**

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The Free Will Players Theatre Guild was formed in 1989 by a group of actors in a truly co-operative, pass-the-hat spirit with the mandate to produce the works of William Shakespeare in the form of the Freewill Shakespeare Festival. The high quality of production and very affordable ticket prices, which range from pay-what-you-will performances to free admission for children ten and under, has attracted over 360,000 people to 51 main stage productions at the Freewill Shakespeare Festival. The plays are performed at Hawrelak Park in the 1100 seat, canopy covered, Heritage Amphitheatre over four weeks from late June to July. The Festival employs over 50 people at the height of the Festival, including actors, designers, stage manager, production manager, administrative assistant, publicist and site/volunteer coordinator. Thirty percent of the Players yearly budget goes towards artist fees.

## **Community Need**

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The Freewill Shakespeare Festival has become a mainstay in the cultural life of Edmonton, our PWYW performances on Saturday matinees and Tuesday evenings has helped to make the Festival accessible to all income levels.

By allowing patrons to pay what they can afford for nine of the Freewill Shakespeare Festival performances, we connect them to a larger community increasing their quality of life. In the Alberta Culture Annual Survey of Albertans on Culture (2014-2015), 88.7% of Albertans feel arts activities are important in contributing to the overall quality of life in their community. We believe that if an audience member wants to see a production at the Festival there is no financial reason why they shouldn't be able to attend.

## **STATS**

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- Average Festival Attendance: 11,500+ people
- Average Student/ Child/ Senior attendance: 2,700+ people
- Online views of Festival website in June/July 90,000 views

### **Festival Demographics: (from Onsite survey)**

- Average age of an audience member between 25-40
- 31% of audience where first time attendees of the Festival
- 35% of audience members have an annual household income of \$75,000 or more
- 93% of audience members have a post-secondary education.

## How Can Your Company Help?

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The Freewill Shakespeare Festival strives to inspire, young artists to learn from those currently pursuing theatre and creating a space for all to learn and explore the works of Shakespeare. Our Festival begins and ends with our volunteers, they are the heart and soul behind this Festival, and with the continued support of our amazing volunteers we have cultivated a community within our Festival. As a Festival our challenge is to stay financially accessible to all and we know that with your support that we will continue to do so. Please find below a more detailed description of the areas we searching for sponsorships in.

### Youth Programming:

Over the years we have cultivated an environment that allows all ages to embrace the stories of Shakespeare. The past two years we've had the pleasure of partnering with an Edmonton based Shakespeare Company; Thou Art Here who performed puppet shows as part of our youth programming. During our 28<sup>th</sup> season we were able to expand the puppet shows to showcase both plays and have them performed at every matinee and pay-what-you-will performance. This year we are looking for a sponsor to help support these amazing young actors in hope to have them perform every night of the Festival. We believe that by expanding the puppet shows it will allow Thou Art Here to engage with a larger audience, encourage more families at the Festival and helps create a deeper understanding of our shows.

### Emerging Artists:

An important part of Freewill's mandate is to inspire young artists giving them opportunities to engage with current artist professionals and acquire valuable experience. Over the years we have had many students from the University of Alberta and MacEwan University working in various roles such as; stage apprentice, site coordinator, production assistant and actors. Supporting our emerging artist provides the next generation of artist and opportunity to learn and grow. We are always looking for companies that want to engage with our Young Company by sponsoring an emerging artists or assisting financially with our Young Company program.

### Volunteer Opportunities:

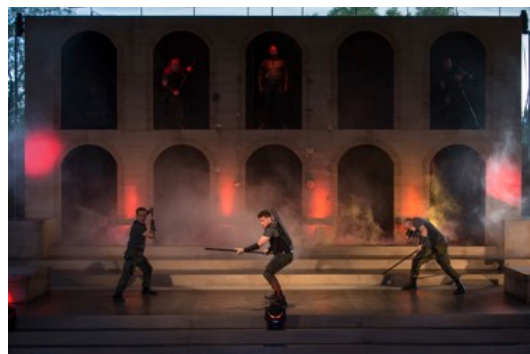
Each summer the Festival sees approximately 175 volunteers donate 3500 volunteer hours to the Festival. Over the years we continue to see the value of the volunteers, truly understanding that the heart of this festival is our amazing volunteer's. There are various positions our volunteers cover during the festival; box office, concession, beer tent, raffle ticket, merchandise sales and front of house. If you are looking for an opportunity for your company or organization to work together in a great team building environment, we would love to talk to you about a sponsorship program that includes volunteering.

### In-Kind Giving:

An additional way to participate in the overall success of the Freewill Shakespeare Festival is by a donation of your company's good or services. In Kind donations are welcomed for our volunteers, special events, concession and production. We are interested in speaking with your company about any support you might be able to offer to the Festival in exchange for recognition in our marketing and tickets.

***How far that little candle throws its beams;  
So shines a good deed in a weary world.***

***The Merchant of Venice Act V, sc. i***





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### Sponsorship Levels

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The following below represents several of our sponsorship levels, sponsorship can be monetary or in-kind. We are happy to negotiate with you alternative benefits if needed. Charitable tax receipts are available for a portion of each level.

#### **Opening Night Sponsor – Investment \$750:**

Both performances have Opening Night receptions, allowing for us to have two sponsors host these receptions, to kick off the Festival. This sponsorship can be given through In-Kind sponsorship, providing us the resources to support the Opening Night. Here are the benefits provided:

- Opening Night name sponsor.
- Option to speak to the audience.
- Social media posting promoting the sponsorship.
- Ten tickets to the Opening Night reception and performance.
- Logo displayed in the program and on the Freewill Players Website.

#### **Bronze Sponsor – Investment \$1,000:**

- Four tickets to either Opening Night of the Festival and our pre-show reception.
- Quarter Page, full colour ad in our Festival Program. (2.25 x 3.75)
- Logo displayed in the program and on the Freewill Players Website.
- Social media posting promoting the sponsorship.

#### **Silver Sponsor – Investment \$2,500:**

- Six tickets to either Opening Night of the Festival and our pre-show reception.
- Twelve tickets good for any show of the Festival.
- Half-page, full colour ad in our Festival Program (4.75 x 3.75 or 2.25 x 7.5)
- Logo displayed in the program and on the Free Will Players Website.
- Social media postings promoting of the sponsorship.
- On-site banner prominently displayed throughout the Festival.
- Option: 'Opening Night Sponsor', this will provide your company name to be mentioned in our opening night performance announcements acknowledging your sponsorship (limited to one sponsor)

#### **Gold Sponsor – Investment \$5,000:**

- Fifteen tickets to either Opening Night of the Festival and our pre-show reception.
- Twenty-five tickets good for any show of the Festival.
- Full-page, full colour ad in our Festival Program. (4.75 x 7.75)
- On-site banner prominently displayed throughout the Festival.
- Opportunity to host a pre-show company reception in the Special Events Tent.
- Two tickets to our annual Brunch of Love Fundraiser.
- Logo displayed in the program and the Free Will Players Website.
- Social media postings promoting the sponsorship.
- Opportunity to host one Sponsor Day during the Festival (ie: 'ABC Company' Day) including booth and direct interaction with audience members.

**Community Program Sponsor (Student Sunday or Pay-What-You-Will) – Investment \$7,500:**

- Twenty tickets to either Opening Night of the Festival and our pre-show reception.
- Forty Tickets good for any show of the Festival.
- Full-page, full colour ad in our Festival Program. (4.75 x 7.75)
- Opportunity to host a pre-show reception in the Special Events Tent.
- Opportunity to host Sponsor Days at two of the PWYW performances including booth and direct interaction with audience members.
- Two tickets to our annual Brunch of Love Fundraiser.
- On-site banner prominently displayed throughout the Festival.
- Logo displayed in the program and the Free Will Players Website.
- Social media postings promoting the Sponsorship.
- Logo placement on all Student Sunday or Pay-What-You-Will marketing materials.
- Announcement made at every performance acknowledging sponsorship (Total 32)

Being a Community Program Sponsor with Free Will Players allows for our patrons from all income brackets and students to enjoy the festival.

**Platinum Sponsor – Investment \$10,000:**

- Thirty tickets to either Opening Night of the Festival and our pre-show reception.
- Fifty Tickets good for any show of the Festival.
- Full-page, full colour ad in our Festival Program. (4.75 x 7.75)
- Two tickets to our annual Brunch of Love Fundraiser.
- On-site banner prominently displayed throughout the Festival.
- Logo displayed in the program and the Free Will Players Website.
- Social media postings promoting the Sponsorship.
- Opportunity to host two Sponsor Days during the Festival (ie: 'ABC Company' Day) including booth and direct interaction with audience members.
- Announcement made at every performance of company sponsorship (Total 32).
- Opportunity to host two pre-show company receptions in our Special Events Tent, including 25 complimentary tickets to the evening's performance

Thank you for your time and consideration, the Freewill Shakespeare Festival hopes you will join with us as a sponsor for our 27th Season, continuing to bring professional cultural entertainment to the City of Edmonton.

I look forward to speaking with you further about how your company can be a part of the growth of the Freewill Shakespeare Festival, for more detailed information on the festival please visit our website:  
[www.freewillshakespeare.com](http://www.freewillshakespeare.com).

**Contact:**

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