



FREEWILL  
SHAKESPEARE  
FESTIVAL

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# Sponsorship Proposal

FREEWILL SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

EDMONTON, ALBERTA





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# ABOUT THE FESTIVAL



The Free Will Players Theatre Guild (FWP) was formed in 1989 by a group of local actors with the mandate to produce the works of William Shakespeare and explore the relevance of his themes for contemporary audiences. Our high-calibre productions and affordable ticket prices have attracted over 400,000 people to the Freewill Shakespeare Festival since 1989. Annually, our festival averages 10,000 patrons, and we are considered a foundational festival by the City of Edmonton.

We strive to celebrate the cultural relevance of Shakespeare by performing his work in the original text; our fully realized Shakespearean productions run in repertory for four weeks in June and July. Our plays boast contemporary interpretations of setting, theme, and character to best communicate the ideas to a modern audience.



# SHAKESPEARE ON THE MOVE

As our historical performance venue, Heritage Amphitheatre in Hawrelak Park, remains closed this summer, the Free Will Players are taking our festival on the road and performing Shakespeare to Edmontonians in their own neighbourhoods. Partnering with community leagues across the city to produce a travelling festival, we are setting up our stage in hockey rinks and on the greensward, creating an event that brings people together to experience the works of Shakespeare in a unique and fun-filled setting!

Crestwood Community League - June 20 - 23  
Kenilworth Community League - June 25 - 30  
Lessard Community League - July 2 - 7  
Sherbrooke Community League - July 9 - 14

We love to partner with local businesses to provide drinks and a concession tent as part of the festival experience. We bring in local performance groups to offer youth programming as our pre-show entertainment, and host special events like Wine and Cheese tastings and Food Truck Fridays throughout the run of the festival. We are excited about the new opportunities a travelling festival provides.



## ■ ECONOMIC IMPACT

We employ over 50 people at the height of the festival, including actors, designers, a production crew, administrative staff, and a publicist. Over 40% of the Free Will Player's yearly budget goes toward paying those artists and professionals a competitive wage. We are committed to providing employment opportunities to local artists who live and work in Edmonton.



As a festival, our challenge this year is to stay financially accessible to our patrons. We know that, with your support, we will continue to do so. Please find a more detailed description of the areas in which we are seeking sponsorships below.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS**

We need significant infrastructure investment to successfully pivot to a travelling festival model and make our 2024 season a success. In addition to a sturdy and portable platform and backdrop on which to stage our performances, we will need trailers, trucks and/or vans to transport the stage, props, scenery and sound and lighting equipment. Our actors will require a greenroom space and a separate washroom, and we want to purchase tents for concession, merchandise sales, and the box office. At each location, patrons can bring their own seating, but we also want to have chairs available for rental or purchase.

If you are interested in partnering with us and covering any of these necessary costs, please send us an email at [dev@freewillshakespeare.com](mailto:dev@freewillshakespeare.com). We would love to discuss these opportunities in detail.



## **IN-KIND GIVING**

Your organization can also participate in the overall success of the Freewill Shakespeare Festival by donating goods or services. In-kind donations for our volunteers, special events, concession or production are welcomed. 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.

## **PROGRAM ADS**

If you are interested in adding a program ad to your sponsorship package, please review our [Program Ads Rate Sheet and Pricing](#) document for rates and more information. Spots fill up fast, so email us to reserve your spot before May 10, 2024.

# COMMUNITY

## PAY-WHAT-YOU-WILL

We believe that cost should not be a barrier to anyone wishing to see our performances. FWP was founded with a “pass-the-hat” mandate and our Pay-What-You-Will performances carry on that tradition and keep the festival accessible at all income levels. Thus we connect our patrons to the larger community and increase their quality of life. Our current Pay-What-You-Will program runs on Tuesday night and Saturday matinee performances, but a Keystone Sponsorship would enable us to make all our performances this year Pay-What-You-Will and help us bring Shakespeare to as many Edmontonians as we can this summer.

## OUR YOUNG COMPANY

An important part of FWP’s mandate is to inspire young artists through opportunities to engage with established professional artists and acquire valuable experience. Over the years, many students from the University of Alberta and MacEwan University have worked for us as stage apprentices, site coordinators, production assistants, and actors. Supporting emerging artists provides the next generation of artists an opportunity to learn and grow. We are always looking for sponsors to engage with our Young Company by sponsoring emerging artists, or by assisting financially with our Young Company program. Please send us an email if you want to learn more.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Our volunteers cover various positions 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 team to work together in a great team-building environment, we would love to talk to you about a sponsorship program that includes volunteering with us.

# SPONSORSHIPS

## KEYSTONE SPONSOR \$150,000 INVESTMENT



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*Play a pivotal role in ensuring the continuing success of our festival.*

If you choose to become a Keystone Sponsor of the 2024 festival, it will be known as **The 2024 Freewill Shakespeare Festival, presented by Your Company.**

Other sponsor benefits at this level include:

- Pre-show acknowledgment of your sponsorship before every performance
- Host up to two pre-show receptions, or book a private performance
- Social media promotion of your sponsorship before, during and after the festival
- Your logo on all festival wayfinding signage and all festival marketing materials

Becoming a Keystone Sponsor would entitle you to negotiate for other recognition benefits. Please contact Chantelle to discuss how we can customize a Keystone sponsor partnership.

## OPENING NIGHT SPONSOR \$2000 INVESTMENT

We host an Opening Night reception to kick off the festival and are looking for sponsors to host this event. This sponsorship can be monetary or in-kind, providing the resources to support the reception. Sponsor benefits at this level include:

- Pre-show sponsorship announcement including an opportunity to speak to the audience before the performance
- Reserved VIP seating for Opening Night
- Logo displayed on our website and in the program
- Social media promotion of the sponsorship\*

\*See the Sponsor Benefits section for a more detailed description of our social media promotion plan



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

This sponsorship helps cover our operating costs and ensure the continuing success of our festival.

Sponsor benefits at this level include social media promotion of your sponsorship, and your company's logo displayed on our website and in the program.

### **Silver Sponsor – \$2,000 Investment**

*This amount covers the cost of a tent and a table to use as a box office or as a greenroom for the actors.*

Sponsor benefits at this level include on-site banners prominently displayed throughout the festival, social media promotion of your sponsorship, and your company's logo displayed on our website and in the program.

### **Gold Sponsor – \$4,000 Investment**

*This amount covers half of an actor's contract for the duration of the festival.*

In addition to the Silver Sponsor benefits, your company will have the opportunity to host a Sponsor Day during the festival.

If you choose to be our 2024 volunteer sponsor at the **Gold** level, we will include a pre-show announcement of your sponsorship at every performance and your logo on the back of our volunteer t-shirts.

## **PAY-WHAT-YOU-WILL SPONSOR \$10,000 INVESTMENT**

*We know that, with your support, the Freewill Shakespeare Festival will stay financially accessible to all Edmontonians.*

In addition to the Gold Sponsor benefits, an announcement will be made at every Pay-What-You-Will performance acknowledging your sponsorship, and your company will receive a full-page, full colour ad in our program (\$1350 value). Your logo will also appear on all Pay-What-You-Will marketing materials.

## **PLATINUM SPONSOR \$30,000+ INVESTMENT**

Becoming a Platinum Sponsor would entitle you to negotiate for other recognition benefits, including VIP seating at the festival and a private reception.

Please contact Chantelle to discuss how we can customize a sponsor partnership for you.



## SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorship can be monetary or in-kind. We are happy to negotiate alternative benefits if needed. Charitable tax receipts are available for a portion of each level.

## SPONSOR BENEFITS

### Social Media Promotion

Pay-What-You-Will and Opening Night sponsors will be featured and tagged in a social media post acknowledging their sponsorship. We will also acknowledge your sponsorship in our weekly email newsletter during the festival. Sponsors must provide photos for these posts. Sponsor Days (see below) will also be promoted in social media posts and in our newsletter. All other sponsors will be thanked in our Instagram stories during the run of the festival.

### Sponsor Days

Includes the use of our community tent, giving you the opportunity to interact with our audience members before the show and during intermission, and sponsors above \$10,000 will be able to host a catered, private pre-show reception on the festival grounds.

### Corporate Events

We are open to working with you to host your company at a private pre-show reception during our 2024 season. Please get in touch with us for more details and to discuss how we can build a premiere event for your organization.





THANK YOU

# TIMELINE

Please email Chantelle Behrens at [dev@freewillshakespeare.com](mailto:dev@freewillshakespeare.com) or call 852.967.2358 with any questions or to discuss how we can customize a sponsor partnership for you.



Thank you for your time and consideration. The Free Will Players hope you will join us as a sponsor for our 35th season so that we can continue to bring professional cultural entertainment to the City of Edmonton. We look forward to speaking with you further about how your company can be a part of the growth of the Freewill Shakespeare Festival.