

MORE THAN A MISSION STATEMENT: A SPOTLIGHT ON ACCESSIBILITY

From the very beginning, The Muny has been committed to making theatre accessible to all, regardless of physical or socioeconomic ability. From wheelchair pushers to free seats to interpretive services and more, you hopefully have witnessed this mission in action. These unique, free services give all patrons the opportunity to experience every production from the comfort of their own seat. We are proud of our commitment to accessibility, thrilled to share this through-the-years glimpse at the services The Muny offers and look forward to being back in the theatre soon.

The Muny thanks these organizations for their support of the Muny's Community Access Program: Bayer Fund, Centene Charitable Foundation, Crawford Taylor Foundation and Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation.



A CITY'S THEATRE

Since our first show, The Muny has made 1,500 seats available every single night at no cost. The Muny Endowment forever ensures the civic promise of the “free seats” remains. The Muny's Community Access Program also makes it possible for hundreds of social service organizations to bring their clients to a production free of charge. Thanks to these two programs, The Muny welcomes over 100,000 guests each summer at no charge. Thanks in part to your support, we also were able to offer *The Muny 2020 Summer Variety Hour Live!* for free this past summer.”

BRINGING THE STORY TO ALL: AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE



In 1987, The Muny began offering interpretive services for the deaf and hard of hearing. Two sign language interpreters are seated stage right (your left) for each Monday performance. “Our goal as interpreters is simple: to allow people to enjoy The Muny,” says long-time Muny American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter Daniel Betzler.

AMPLIFYING THE EXPERIENCE

In 1990, The Muny added assistive listening devices that amplify the performance. This unique device is an FM system with headsets, ear buds and neck loops and is available nightly.



GIVING ATTENTION TO THE AMPHITHEATRE

In 2001, the entire Muny amphitheater was renovated with special attention given to accessibility. Some improvements include hundreds of fold-away and companion seats that were added in every terrace, along with updates to our concession and restroom facilities.

THE FUTURE OF ACCESSIBILITY AT THE MUNY

Thanks to Second Century Capital Campaign contributions, all recent and future renovations ensure the entire Muny campus is accessible and offers a parallel experience for all. Partnerships with groups such as Paraquad and MindsEye are vital to helping us understand the needs of all Muny patrons.

“When those we serve are laughing and crying like everybody else in the audience, we know we’ve done our job.”

– Daniel Betzler, Muny ASL Interpreter



GOING THE MUNY MILE: CURBSIDE PICKUP WITH CHAIRSIDE DROPOFF

In 1940, The Muny began offering wheelchair service for our patrons from the curb to their seat and back again. What started as two ushers assisting four to six patrons on a “busy night” has grown to an average of 50 each evening with a specialized team of nearly 30 wheelchair pushers. Available nightly, pickup locations are the lower east accessible parking lot, behind the free seats near Lichtenstein Plaza and in the VIP parking lot.



SPECIAL THANKS TO:



THE MAGIC REIMAGINED: AUDIO DESCRIPTION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

In 2000, The Muny began audio interpretive services for the blind and visually impaired on Monday nights. The Muny partners with MindsEye, a virtual newsstand connecting people with vision loss to the news and entertainment industry, to offer live visual descriptions reflecting the performance. Elaine Laws, long-time Muny audio describer says, “It’s about making these beautiful shows accessible to everyone. That’s why we do it.”



HONORS FROM ACCESSIBILITY INDUSTRY LEADERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| Paraquad
Shine the Light Award | Starkloff Disability Institute
Open Door Award |
| MindsEye
Fr. Boni Wittenbrink
OMI Visionary Award | Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Eastern Missouri
Community Partner of the Year |

FACT:

2,114 patrons were served in 2019 with a season high 75 patrons receiving wheelchair assistance in one evening!

“From the moment you arrive until you are headed home, we want The Muny to be a place you never have to worry about coming to, regardless of limitations,” says Director of Audience Experience Lindsey Grabish. “Now, more than ever, our mission, passion and tradition remain the same: making theatre accessible to all.”

The Muny is proud that Lindsey is serving as a member of the St. Louis-based Arts and Culture Accessibility Cooperative.