

Frequently Asked Questions about the ACL Performers' Showcase



When will the 2014 Showcase take place? Saturday, February 1, 2014, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Where will the 2014 Showcase take place?

Fremont Main Library, 2400 Stevenson Blvd., Fremont, CA

The Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California (ACL) *Performers' Showcase* is designed to introduce the work of children's performers to the library staff who book outside performers for library events throughout the year. The annual Showcase provides an opportunity for selected performers who are developing library programs and are able to present public library programs at a rate of \$500 and under. The information below has been presented in 3 sections, covering the **application process**, **logistics**, and **brochure** information.

PLEASE NOTE: New rates are in effect for the 2014 Performers' Showcase -- \$25 non-refundable fee for each performer accepted into final lineup. More information is available in our FAQ below.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

How do I apply to be in the 2014 Showcase?

Complete and return the form, which is posted at <http://bayviews.org/showcase/2014application.doc>.

Who will be selected to appear in the 2014 Showcase?

Performers will be selected from new performers and from those who have not appeared in the last 3 years. To be considered, performers must submit an application by the deadline date of **September 30, 2013**. While the Showcase is particularly looking for performers starting their careers, this is not an amateur show. All applicants are expected to have some previous experience performing for young audiences in schools, libraries or other similar locations. All applications received before the September 30th 2013 application date will be considered, with preference as explained below. Each performer selected to appear in the 2014 Performers' Showcase will pay a \$25.00 non-refundable fee. This fee covers equipment and other costs.

If more people apply than there is room for, how are decisions made? Send your completed application form to arrive by **September 30, 2012**; all qualified applicants whose forms are received by then will be considered. Priorities will be set in this order:

- Performers who have never appeared at an ACL Performers' Showcase
- Returning performers who have not appeared in the last three years
- In case of a noticeable imbalance in types of performances (e.g. 24 storytellers), effort may also be made to present a more varied roster of types of performers.

What does the price guideline mean? Can't I charge whatever I want to charge?

This year's application indicates that the Performers Showcase is for those who charge \$500 and under. The event is designed to introduce children's performers to the library staff who book outside performers for library events throughout the year. Public libraries have no standard budget for performers; money for such events is cobbled together from a variety of sources, including Friends of the Library groups and, occasionally, local and state grants. Programming budgets vary tremendously among library systems, but all public libraries offer their programs to the public for free and with the fervent hope that such events will provide a springboard to draw their audience into the greater resources of the library. The ACL Showcase provides a meeting place for performers who would like to present programs to public library audiences at a modest rate, and for some libraries, anything over \$300 is very hard to offer.

Because there are so many children's performers in the Bay Area, the focus of this Showcase is on those who are starting out in the field and those who are willing to give libraries a financial break. While many factors go into setting a rate, including size of performing group, distance traveled, cost of materials used, length of experience, etc. we expect that Showcase performers will honor the spirit of this understanding. Established performers do not need the exposure offered by the Showcase auditions, and libraries build relationships over the years that make the Showcase only one of many options for locating performers.

Why do performers selected to appear in the final Showcase lineup pay a \$25 non-refundable fee?

In the 25 years of the Performers' Showcase, 2013 marks the first time performers are paying a fee to appear in the Showcase; admission fees for the audience has also been increased for the first time. Because of increasing costs, it has become necessary for the Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California, an all-volunteer organization, to institute this modest fee. The non-refundable fee, which covers equipment and other costs related to the Showcase, is due soon after the final line-up is announced in November.

What if I am applying after the September registration date?

If there is any room and you meet the qualifications, performers will be added until the roster is full.

What is the selection timeline?

Starting in July, we will e-mail monthly acknowledgements to those whose 2014 applications have been received. The first such emails will go out in August. At that time, the co-chairs will also begin regular monitoring of the Showcase email account showcase@bayviews.org. In November, selection will be finalized and those who are accepted as well as those for whom there is no room will be notified at the same time. A waiting list will be established for use in case of withdrawals. As part of your commitment to the Showcase, the \$25 non-refundable payment will be due soon after the final lineup is announced in November. If there is no room for you in this year's Showcase, you may send brochures for distribution at the current

Showcase. Brochures for this purpose should arrive 2 weeks before the February event, at a location to be determined by the end of this year.

I am not eligible to be in the Showcase this year because I appeared too recently. Can I still attend the Showcase event and network with the audience and other performers?

The Showcase provides 32 demos in one day for our primary audience of children's librarians. Within the financial and personnel limitations of our all-volunteer organization, we cannot take on the additional challenge of providing space and opportunity for networking performers who are not in this year's line-up. Performers who are not in this year's demos may wish to pay for admission as an audience member (registration forms will be available in mid-November at the ACL website: www.bayviews.org). In this capacity, they may place their brochures on a table in the performance space and greet members of the audience, but they may not use this time or space to perform, leaflet audience seats or in any way divert attention from the official performers. Those who do not wish to pay for audience admission may send brochures to be made available at the Showcase. Brochures for this purpose should arrive 2 weeks before the February event, at a location to be determined by the end of this year.

LOGISTICS:

What is the Showcase schedule? On the day of the Showcase, the performances will be scheduled in 4 sessions, 2 sessions in the morning (9:15 am - noon) and 2 sessions in the afternoon (1:30 pm - 4:30 pm)

How many performers are assigned to each of the 4 sessions? There are 32 spaces available (8 in each of the 4 sessions).

What is the showcase process like? What do I actually do on Showcase day?

Each performer is allotted **8 minutes** only! The 8-minute limit is strictly and fairly enforced according to the best efforts of the MC. It is the performer's duty to time themselves. We will use an audible timer to indicate when the 8 minutes is up. You may choose to simply perform an 8-minute segment of your routine or you may also provide some kind of introduction that describes it, the audience you are aiming for, and variations of presentation. (Do you give workshops as well as performances? Do you allow opportunities for volunteers to join you? Do you encourage audience interaction? Do you have different approaches for different ages?) What can you do that most effectively represents your show? Like most libraries, Fremont Main has no stage, so please prepare accordingly.

Who will be in the audience?

While most of the audience will be children's librarians from public libraries throughout the nine Bay Area counties, you will also see people from schools and recreation departments who need performers for their children's programs. While those attending will be looking particularly for summer programming, many libraries schedule special events all year round and a successful appearance at the Performers' Showcase may result in contacts over the next few years. Children 13 years and under are allowed free admission into the Performers' Showcase.

Audio Equipment:

For the 2014 Showcase, we will have the following equipment available for all performers to use:

- A sound system with one wireless clip-on mike and one wireless hand held mike (which can be used with a stand as well);
- One basic CD player that plugs into a speaker;
- A couple of chairs, a table and a stool.

You may use your own sound equipment if you wish: however, mixing the two sound systems, yours and ours is not permitted for reasons of time. Once you are formally accepted into the Showcase, all questions specifically on audio equipment should be addressed to the co-chairs at showcase@bayviews.org

My show is very interactive. Can I count on any audience participation at the Showcase?

The Showcase audience should provide willing audience volunteers, and children are allowed free admission, so that there will be some kids in the mostly-adult audience. Audience members will be interested in whatever you can do to bring your program to life and help them envision it through the eyes of a young audience. Library audiences are usually well-behaved and enthusiastic; one of the challenges in working with a library audience is that the crowd is often mixed in age, with parents, grandparents and other caretakers attending along with kids from 3 to 14, or older. Performers who have worked with a specific age group, e.g. middle school, teens, or the very young are urged to share that experience, either in person or in the brochures.

I have special needs (separate dressing room/help unloading my car/ parking place/performance assistant). Come with as much preparation accomplished as possible, because we are unable to provide any support. The Showcase replicates the situation at most public libraries, which are minimally staffed and squeeze special events into tight spaces in which most staff will be focused on basic library operation.

Can I expect librarians to book me that very day?

There will be a break in both the morning and afternoon sessions, and a longer lunch break, when you can meet with the audience members. Bring your calendar so that you may confirm a schedule on the spot. While some folks may come prepared to line you up for a specific date, others will take more time to decide and call you later. Remember that while the immediate focus of the Performers' Showcase is on the selection of performers for summer, librarians are often interested in performers throughout the year. You may not be scheduled for that summer, but be contacted for a fall program, or later.

California Summer Reading Game Theme information is available on the website of the California Library Association at <http://www.cla-net.org/summer-reading/>. The 2014 iREAD program is "*Paws to Read*". This is provided for your information only; libraries are interested in performers for events other than the reading game, and are generally looking for an excellent program, not necessarily one tied to a particular summer theme.

BROCHURES:

LAST BUT NOT LEAST! – The brochure challenge!

A month prior to the actual Showcase, accepted performers must also send in advance: 150 brochures that provide the following information:

- Your name
- Phone number
- Contact address
- Email
- Description of your program, including suggested age range of audience
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You do not have to list prices, which can vary greatly depending on distance traveled, etc. In general the audience will be looking for programs at rates below \$500 per show. You **must** send these flyers in advance, so they can be collated into the audience packets. Your follow-up letter will include additional information about sending these brochures and the exact deadline, as well as the address to which the brochures should be sent.

And what if I am late in sending the brochures? YOU MAY NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE AND YOUR SLOT MAY BE GIVEN TO SOMEONE ELSE.

For further information please email us at showcase@bayviews.org