

# Online Continuing Learning Webinar Series

## “A Time to Explore EDIAD and Volunteerism”

From Seed to Season: How to Grow as a New Young Audience Presenter

### Land Acknowledgement

We honour the past, present and future stewards of the land, and we recognize that we have a shared responsibility for reconciliation and decolonization, as well as stewardship of the natural environment.

Ontario Presents also specifically recognizes the legacy of colonization embedded in many aspects of the performing arts sector, including the technologies, structures, and ways of thinking we use every day.

Until recently, many Indigenous communities were legally prevented from practicing their own cultural and artistic traditions, and to this day Indigenous people still have less access to the performing arts both as audiences and artists. Other barriers such as cost and physical accessibility also disproportionately impact Indigenous people. Actively dismantling the colonial approaches embedded in our work and our tools is critical to reconciliation and Indigenous resurgence.

### What's This Webinar About?

This session is the second webinar in Ontario Presents' **Continuing Learning Series** in support of the digital document “**From Seed to Season: How to Grow as a New Young Audience Presenter.**”

The document was written to support **new** and **emerging presenters** in rural, remote, and underserved communities to achieve their vision of connecting artists with children and youth in their community.

The first webinar in January was a quick overview of the document and how its resources could be applied to a new young audience presenter. But today, this

session is all about exploring 2 key elements of the presenting journey and offering an opportunity for viewers to ask questions and share experiences. Today, I'm thrilled to be joined by Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan and Sandy Irvin to lead our discussion.

## Your Host

Good afternoon, I'm your host for today's webinar. My name is Joanne Churchill and I currently work as the Special Projects Consultant for Ontario Presents.

I am also the author of "From Seed to Season" and the Project Lead for the New Young Audience Presenter Project which aims to support new and emerging presenters. This project has been funded by the Canada Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF).

My background is in developing opportunities for children to access the performing arts in communities and schools.

## Today's Topic and Format

Today we will be discussing 2 key elements from the e-document "**From Seed to Season**" that are foundational components to every new and emerging presenting series or organization.

- 1) How to implement **EDIAD considerations** into a new YA series.
- 2) How to **identify and recruit new volunteers** in a post-pandemic world.

We will start the webinar with a conversation with each of our guests followed by an opportunity for the viewers to ask questions. So please hold your questions till our guests have finished their component.

For the purposes of this discussion EDIAD refers to:

**E - Equity D - Diversity I - Inclusion A - Accessibility D - Decolonization**

## Welcome Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan

Welcome Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan! Dr. Brennan is the Administrative Director of Ontario Presents and the CEO of Inclusive Voices Incorporated. Today she will be sharing her knowledge about implementing equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and decolonization awareness into a new presenting series.

Welcome to the webinar series Terri, before we start this session would you be able to share with our participants a little about yourself?

### Answer: Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan

I just identified in my ancestral language of Mohawk. I said my name and that I live on Wolf Island off the coast of Kingston in Eastern Ontario. I identified that I'm of mixed heritage - Mohawk and British - and that my family does come from Six Nations at the Grand River, Brantford, Ontario, which is at the other end of Lake Ontario than where I currently reside.

I am occupying, living, and working on the lands of my ancestors. I was born and raised at this end of Lake Ontario as opposed to the other end where everybody else in my family was born and raised. And I'm very happy to still be part of this land - every day - and enjoying its splendor and its bounty.

At the very beginning of my introduction in Mohawk, I've always

been advised to ask you to come fully to this meeting with an open mind and an open heart and with the respect of everyone in the circle, acknowledging that everyone has walked a different path than yourself, and so experiences and thoughts and feelings are going to be their own.

And every one of those criteria of an individual should be valued equally and weighed in a respectful way, without judgment. And so that creates a space where we're all welcome to share in conversation, hopefully in an open and transparent and brave way.

And I look forward to discussing further any questions that you might have after my brief conversation with Joanne.

## Question #1:

In preparation of this webinar, you and I discussed previously, if you could provide any overarching advice about implementing EDIAD considerations for our new presenters, it would be emphasizing prioritization. **So, can you give us some everyday examples of how a new or emerging young audience presenter can prioritize EDIAD as they're starting out on their presenting journey?**

## Answer: Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan

Absolutely. I just realized I didn't finish my introduction appropriately and my pronouns are she and her and I'm in a kind of a forest green sweater. I've got very long sunset color earrings under my headset, which is white, and my background is an image of a longhouse. One of the longhouses at Six Nations of the Grand River, my homeland and no I'm not actually there right now I'm in my office, but I'd love to have that as my background and just reclaimed it because it was lost in my computer for so long. And I have glasses on as well.

**The biggest challenge for any of us working within equity right now is reconciliation.** As much as I'm not a fan of the word, reconciliation actions - which is the most common-known kind of phrase out there amongst settlers - have fallen along the wayside because since the

recovery from the pandemic **reconciliation has become now more of a transactional and a monetary need for folks.** So things like reconciliation and prioritizing EDIAD work are on the side, if not off the desk, and that really is a frustrating factor.

Yes, everybody needs to eat and sleep with a roof over their head, I appreciate that, but it's also the responsibility of people to recognize that - especially if they are a settler – the benefit of being able to eat healthy food, breathe fresh air, and have the access to housing in a safe way is at the cost of the Indigenous peoples whose land you now occupy.

So, it's still a bit of a disrespectful thing to not prioritize EDIAD at the end of the day. And it's the thing I hear all the time, *"I want to, but I can't, or I don't have the time"*. And I

just shrug it off because **reconciliation should always be a priority because that's the right thing to do.** It's the responsibility of all settlers, in the context of the fact of the damage that's been done for hundreds of years now.

And so, people can **dedicate time** (if not every day, every week) **to doing something towards expanding their knowledge of EDIAD is extremely important.** And much like any conversation I have with settlers right now, **it's not up to Indigenous peoples, or even any person of color, to educate settlers or non-Indigenous or non-people of color, of the differences in experiences.** We're burnt out or overloaded. There is definitely a ratio of way too many settlers compared to the rest of us.

And so it's really quite simple: **educate yourselves, start to read information.** There's lots of excellent books out there and they're not all textbooks. There's a lot of good reading material to start to understand a little bit more about the lens of diversity and looking through a different perspective of life and life experiences when you've been racialized from day one.

**And then talk to other settlers about how to support your continuing education,** but also then how can you actively support in your communities? **Can you platform more Indigenous or people of color, or for that matter, LGBT or those who are disabled.** You know there's a range of folks in our communities who are truly not being served appropriately. I refer to them as equity seeking. And so, it really is a matter of **understanding the space as a settler who has privilege that you take up** and recognizing that every space you take up is a space that is not available to someone who is equity seeking. And now it becomes a recognition of *'okay, well, how can I get out of the way?'* *How can I step back and support those other voices, who quite frankly, have never been decision makers.* They've been excluded at decision making tables, boardroom tables, CEOs, higher management, across the board of all sectors.

So, we need to start to **give more consideration to once we educate ourselves, to moving folks into positions of opportunity.** And this can be done through inviting people, but not as volunteers. We all

volunteer too much, but I think we've gotten to the point now where there needs to be compensation for folks who are bringing a specific lens and knowledge to your table. Otherwise, it's tokenism. And so, it kind of is this trickle effect of not only understanding your place in the spectrum and for Indigenous knowledge.

I always direct people to Thomas King's **The Inconvenient Indian** as the first place to start. Because it's an

easy read. It's hilarious. It's sad, and it's truth. And once you get through that, then you'll open yourselves up. I mean, anything by Thomas King is worth the adventure and **Richard Wagamese** is an amazing fiction writer. There's just so much out there. There are so many films now. There are so many TV shows available. There are lots of ways to educate yourself on the Indigenous perspective, but also on other equity seeking perspectives. And so, we'll start there.

## **Question #2:**

In our previous conversation, you had mentioned that “There needs to be a movement to change the current landscape and a shift in power dynamics in order for EDIAD considerations to become effective.” **How can a Young Audience Presenter be part of this CHANGE?**

## **Answer: Dr.Terri-Lynn Brennan**

So, becoming a young presenter is an extremely honouring, and honourable position to be in towards changing the landscape of power dynamics. Certainly, youth today are being educated a lot more on equity deserving identities. Our school system is changing - not fast enough necessarily - but at least it's heading

in the right direction. **We need to start to create more role modeling of those opportunities for youth and bringing in diverse, equity seeking opportunities on stages.**

But even so, I've had this conversation with Joanne and others and when you look at an audience and you look and see who's in your

audience, and perhaps in smaller areas, you might have audiences that really represent only one dynamic of demographic of your community. And the rationale is that I often hear is... 'oh well because that's who our community is'. But I always ask, 'You mean to say that there's no other equity deserving person in your community?' And I've had folks tell me, that there isn't. And then I walk into the local grocery store and every person behind a cash register is a person of color. I walk into a convenience store I walk down the street to a fast-food shop. The people that are equity deserving are overlooked because they're often in these positions of menial labor, if you will, because again, that totally represents the systemic nature of how equity deserving people are just forgotten, not seen in communities.

So we need to really start to recognize how do we change our own eyes? **How do we change our eyes to see the visibility of others and then let those other equity deserving folks begin to dictate change.** Let others begin to become the decision makers, at our organizations and in our audiences, in all our facets of how we coordinate what we do, and certainly with young

audiences. Think about reaching out to your school, or the food bank, or to the Early Years Center. If there is an opportunity to expose and role model different ways of thinking and doing, it is huge.

There are so many opportunities for young people's works that cover the gamut and in different languages these days. I certainly know from the Indigenous side, there's always an opportunity for Anishinaabemowin work to be shown in the north of Ontario. There's even enough Inuktitut work that's out there to be shown in in many northern places, but also Ottawa has the second highest Inuit population outside of the North.

We must just start to say, '**Who's not coming to my shows? Who am I not engaging?**' And then seek out an opportunity to listen, learn, ask a lot of questions. There's no stupid question ever. And be sincere and authentic and wanting to understand the space you take up towards having someone else maybe step into at least one of the spaces you take up in your daily life. Obviously, I'm not asking you to disappear at all, because we have to have our allies. We have to have our support network. And we all still have to live

together and get along. **So, it's about learning how to share in an equitable towards equal way.** And right now, equity sits in the hands of equity deserving folks. **And then the need for others, especially settlers, to sit back, listen, be directed and be given guidance on how things could evolve for the better of everybody in our community.** And I guarantee, audiences are changing. We know that the demographic is changing, and the sense of the population is getting older. And we need to

continue to keep performing arts relevant in our communities and alive in our communities. **And we have to therefore mold what is happening in our community demographic,** and not just serve those older folks as they as they are aging, but bringing in the new life blood that will confirm that performing art stays on the landscape for at least another half century, obviously forever. But we need to start to work within those opportunities of exploration within and across our neighborhoods and communities.

### **Question # 3: Joanne Churchill**

Is there some advice you could give our viewers about how to engage with parts of their community that they don't already know? How would they go about doing that? Is it inviting people to informal focus groups? Is it listening sessions? Kitchen table conversations. **How would you go about having those conversations with new groups?**

### **Answer: Terri-Lynn Brennan**

Not having a specific example of your community always makes it very hard to answer because there isn't a pan approach. You know, every community is different, and I would say that, **once you begin to identify equity deserving folks in your community, then figure out how they are connecting amongst**

**themselves for groups.** For example, there's a huge Filipino population in many of the small communities across Alberta, and they're very vibrant and active communities, even though they're not recognized within the mainstream performing arts sector. And so, my advice is for you **to identify a**



**particular community group**, and determine if there is a particular place, such as a place of worship that they gather, and then it does become Kitchen Table conversations.

I mean, obviously, you're not going to walk into a church or a mosque or a temple and just say, *'Hey, I'm here, come to my venue!'* or *'Hey, I'm here. I want to entertain your kids!'* It's a matter of really being humble and humble in how you learn and how you approach things and putting yourself out there. It comes back to the very well-regarded statement that says, "**get comfortable being uncomfortable.**" That's where we're at when it comes to approaching scary situations. Nobody wants to be embarrassed. Nobody wants to insult, but if you don't put yourself out there and start to make these conversations happen, then you are insulting. You're insulting by your inaction.

**And so, it really does come down to finding opportunities to meet new people.** I've been a type of person my whole life, where if I see someone, I want to talk to and they are a cashier or a cab driver or they are picking up garbage on the street, I am going to just go and say ... *'Hey,*

*how are you doing?'* *Out of curiosity, do you know, or do you do anything performance wise? Or do you know where I could find out more information?'* It's really humbling. And it's really lovely because 99% of the time that person is going to take the time to talk to you. And we live in a lovely country that way, where everyone is pretty approachable. There is something to be said about the Canadian standard of always apologizing even when, you know, we were not in the wrong. I certainly go around the country and the moment I say 'I'm sorry' people recognize that I'm Canadian right away - not Mohawk necessarily - but definitely Canadian.

And so, it's one of those things of putting yourself out there. **To learn and to listen, and to spread the news of what you'd like to do in collaboration with others.**

I was discussing with a funder recently about engaging with some Indigenous folks and there was an assumption about creating a product or creating an opportunity to give to Indigenous peoples, or to give to equity deserving peoples, without their input to say that they want it or that they need it. If you're not Indigenous yourself, how do you

know what someone who is Indigenous wants or what they need, or how they want it, or where they want it until you ask those questions. **There really needs to be a shift in**

**moving out of assumptions and moving out of the Savior attitude of just being here to give because that's not actually effective or authentic.**

## **Time to Ask Questions of Terri**

### **Question #1: From Sandy Irvin**

As a recovering young persons' presenter, can you talk about the responsibility we have as presenters to introduce equity seeking members as performers as well as audience members?

### **Answer: Terri-Lynn Brennan**

Absolutely, I love that you're a recovering children's presenter. And I would say in many ways, that **it's kind of the easiest thing a presenter can do is to seek out equity deserving role models for folks in their community.** And that certainly can be a first step for presenters if they're looking for opportunities to make those connections with different members of your community by putting representative artists on the stages or in the backyard or under the gazebo however, you want to create these opportunities of connection and engagement.

But again, it becomes one of these scenarios where having flexibility of the spaces that you occupy is needed. With a lot of different equity seeking folks, there might be different needs and special needs. From the Indigenous community, there might be a request for smudging and that should be an option. There might be a request from different folks such as those who are disabled to have different apparatus, tech or changes that should be addressed and supported.

Again, **bringing equity deserving folks to your stages, doesn't mean putting them into the settler model of performance,** and understanding

that there is a difference to that and teaching and learning within yourself how to work with different folks. It is different. And it is a learning experience that one should not be afraid to try. Change is our lifeblood and will keep us alive. If you don't change you will die.

I'm very supportive and nurturing of making these changes to our repertoire in place, in physicality, in infrastructure, but also in our approach and our understanding. **Again, not making assumptions, but asking questions. What do you need? What do you know? What will make this opportunity of artistry better for you or special for you?** As an artist, there's just so much potential for them.

Sandy is also here from SPARC and SPARC and Ontario Presents right now are partnering in what's called the Slow Touring Project, to allow artists an opportunity to spend longer periods of time in one space so that that artists get an opportunity to work with the community outside of that one show on that one night and that one stage. These types of opportunities and experiences, especially with equity deserving folks can be really impactful to the

community as a whole not just that one night of audience goes. I hope that answered your question, Sandy.

I don't know if this is the perfect opportunity or not, but for those who are familiar with the Ontario Presents network, I've created an ongoing program. It's in its second year now called **Cedar Tea Breaks**, and every two weeks I'm now making myself available through a registration link at our on our website, that if you have any EDIAD questions or ideas that you want to have a conversation about, I'm just going to be hanging out online through that link, and available to chat and available to have those conversations. It's one of those things that I might also have an opportunity to show you some good webinars about EDIAD work that I know is going on from colleagues of mine. I'm also continuing with my pairs, also. So, either way, check it out, Cedar Tea Breaks, Ontario Presents. **Please go to our website to learn more if you want to continue to have EDIAD conversations after this as well.**

There's an enormous amount of information on this conversation on the Ontario Presents resources section of their webpage.

# Welcome Sandy Irvin

**Sandy Irvin** is the Chair of **SPARC Reseau** and the Manager of Marketing & Communications for Ottawa's **Chamberfest**. Previously she has been the Artistic Director and Chair for On Stage for Kids Children's Concert Series and on the Board for the Puppets Up! Festival.

Sandy is here to discuss some best practices and success stories about the challenging topic of engaging volunteers in a post-Covid environment.

Welcome Sandy, before we continue can you please share with our participants a little about yourself and your background in presenting for young audiences.

## Introduction: Sandy Irvin

Thank you for having me. First, I'd like to say that I am coming to you from the heart of unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin Anishinaabemowin territory. I am in the Ottawa Valley, a place that has been cherished for time immemorial and is a watershed that feeds and nourishes us. The place where I present most of my concerts is right on the shores of the Great Mississippi, which is not just a trade route, it's a travel route. It's the highway. But I like to think that it is also the place where people gathered by the side of the river at night to tell stories and that we're just part of that long tradition. And then we're

honoring that tradition when we do that.

I'm a middle-aged white lady. I have some gray coming in to my brown hair. I am wearing glasses today and a red shirt and I am proudly wearing a fishing lure that belonged to my grandfather.

As a children's presenter, I'm going to talk about my recruitment path and it's going to affect how I advise you to go on with your recruitment paths. **I was recruited by a friend and in my opinion, that is how most of the recruitment happens in small towns is through word of mouth.** I think it's the most powerful thing. And I was recruited by a friend at the

entrance to nursery school, because that's the age my children were at. They're grown now they're out in the world. But at the time, I was doing a lot of drop offs and pickups and volunteering my shifts at the time at the nursery school because that's the model we worked under. I could have been recruited at kindergarten I could have been recruited in the grocery store. **I could have been recruited anywhere in the community by someone who knew me who was already involved with that group.**

Now you folks are apparently starting new and budding children's presenting groups, but you have those same networks existing already. A small town or a reserve or any other **community is, by definition, a connection of webs, and your volunteers are out there waiting for you.** What you need to do is think about your connections. **Think about who you're already connected to. Think about who can help you connect with other people.** For me, as a young children's presenter, I came as someone who was already interested in the arts, who was happy to help. So, I have been to a lot of concerts, and I have helped put on other kinds of shows. Oddly, in my student years

I put on a lot of punk shows. And that experience was still valuable because there's not much difference between a mosh pit and a children's show. Honestly. There's a lot of energy going around, and you have to channel it.

Our model for presentation was using existing school buildings, the gym and the school gym mats, so that our smallest people could sit at the front. And they all learned to tuck themselves in quietly and sit at the front and they could laugh and cheer and wiggle. They weren't constrained by chairs and then as people got bigger, we had chairs behind, and those chairs helped hold adults and bigger kids.

**That making of space for people at the front is the core of children's presenting** and by honouring that space is what Terri Lynn was also talking about. It's that same humility that is going to go into your volunteer recruitment as much as it goes into inclusion of equity seeking groups. So, there's humility. There's putting yourself out. And then there's making the space.

**So, in volunteer recruitment, to me, what you're looking about is building some capacity through**

**your networks.** You can put out the word through formal channels if they exist in your community. If you have a newspaper or a radio station, or even a church bulletin board or church newsletter, those tools will work. But if people don't hear from you, they're not going to come to you. So, they need to know who you are and that involves humility and putting yourself out there.

In an urban environment, there's a lot of formal volunteer recruitment channels there. My day job is without it with Chamberfest and we work with volunteer Ottawa. Therefore, we have software that manages volunteers, we have software that says we have these opportunities open. That doesn't happen in a small town the same way. But if people know that something's coming up and that you need help, whether it's a church supper, whether it's sandwiches for a funeral, the word will get out. **Some of that is tapping into what I like to call big anti energy and it's using existing networks of people who found each other and will spread the word that way.** But a lot of this is the informal networking that happens in small towns.

So, for 10 years, I presented children's books, and then I moved

on to presenting for grownups because my kid grew. As my kids grew up, so did my audience. And that will be the challenge you're always going to face. **Your audience will stay with you for a time and then they're going to move on, and so too will your parents and volunteers.**

The one there's one other thing I would add to this. When I came to my small town, I was a former city person. I've always had rural connections, but I chose a small town to settle in. And that meant I was a newcomer in the community and a new face. So, I didn't have existing networks like you would in a church community or an existing community where you'd go to high school with everyone and everybody knew everybody, everything about everybody. Many small towns and other communities across the province are navigating these changes. **And volunteerism is a great way to knit community together. And it's a great way to make friends quickly and offering those opportunities to people who aren't from here.** Whether they're just moved into a new development, just bought the old Simpson house,

just moved in down the street - volunteering is a great way to help them connect with their new community. While being involved with On Stage for Kids and PuppetsUp, we **recruited people of all ages and newcomers from all communities who became a very important part**

**of that mix, and it helped them become a part of that community.** You may meet resistance from people who have always been here and always done things a certain way. But I think that inclusion is a really important piece of the puzzle.

## **Question #2:**

We have talked a little bit about how after the pandemic, things have really changed quite significantly. Everybody is working at maximum capacity, everybody's overloaded. The same volunteers have three other volunteer jobs that they're doing. And so, an organization's mindset needs to shift accordingly to look at nontraditional methods of volunteer identification. Can you explain how to implement some strategies to help presenters find little outside of the box nontraditional volunteers in this new environment? ***Can you explain how to implement some strategies to help new presenters find non-traditional volunteers in this new environment?***

## **Answer: Sandy Irvin**

Sure. So there's a couple of channels, especially in a rural community that you really need to tap into. **You need to work with your schools.** And as a youth presenter, you've kind of got a built-in market there anyway. Working with schools will become a part of your marketing strategy as well as your volunteer recruitment strategy. But also, at least in Ontario, every high school student needs a certain number of volunteer hours to graduate. But people tend to

say, "oh, yeah, we'll just get some students" like they just show up in a box and they're ready to go and that's not how it works at all. So, **the sooner you reach out to the person at the high school who is in charge of those students, the better equipped you'll be to find the kids who actually want to work with you.** I always treat those volunteers as more than just semi-willing workers. Instead, we must treat them with care because they will

**become the next generation of volunteers.** Similarly, we have a responsibility to bring our audiences on, so they become the next generation of adult arts audiences. So, by giving students an opportunity to engage with an organization in a manner that is more than just moving chairs, to thinking about your process and how things work in the arts may mean that 10 years down the road, you're looking at a new director, or a new performer, not just a kid you worked with one day.

So, school is one channel, **friends is another channel**, our post pandemic communication is different than it was before. **We make extensive use of social media in a way that we did not before.** And I know that particularly northern communities, social media came with free infrastructure for communications

### **Question #3:**

Going back to the "From Seed to Season" e-document, there's a part of it that talks about understanding your why and being able to communicate the story behind your organization, even if it's fledgling. And if an organization can think about those concepts and articulate such things as why you're doing this, what's your incentive, and what's your origin story, then you can put those big feely concepts into your way of communicating to folks. And when you can communicate in an emotive compelling way, more people are more likely to connect with you and want to be part of that kind of organization. **Can you talk a little bit about how you can communicate in that emotive way?**

that was very quickly adopted so that a **Facebook group is a powerful tool for reaching people.** Whether there's a community Facebook group already set up or whether you set one up for your organization, either way, you have something with quick channels that people can use their phones to get onto. Of course, that's if they have Wi Fi or a signal and can quickly and easily tap into that communications network. So that's a that's a strategy I would not want to leave behind in recruitment.

But I think at the core is understanding the value of speaking directly to people and letting them know what you're doing, and that you need help. Regardless of your communication tools, whether it's verbal at the grocery store or online on social media, your message should be consistent.



## Answer: Sandy Irvin

It's definitely not something to take for granted. I was just thinking that in my day job we talk about marketing and sales funnels a lot and there are volunteer funnels too, which is a bit different from communicating the big feelings.

I think that's consistent across the board. **But often the volunteer funnel starts by asking someone to help with a simple and concrete task to get involved.** And for me that starts with taking tickets, because it has a beginning, a middle and an end. And it's a relatively compact task. **And then someone can see how your organization works and assess if they have the energy and commitment for a bigger role.** Because every organization that does children's presenting is almost exclusively volunteer run there are a range of day-of-show jobs year-round jobs. I wouldn't treat recruiting the same for those two different aspects as the same lumpy thing.

So, you want to create the emotion and excitement of why you're presenting for children and how

you're introducing kids to the very idea of culture. And if you're lucky, you're introducing them to more than one art form. And isn't that a privilege to take a kid who's only ever seen television to seeing something live in front of them. That's a beautiful thing.

But it's a very different ask to say *"Hey, can you come help with tickets?"* or *"Hey, can you come help setup mats?"* to *"Hey, can you come be my treasurer?"* So, you should be consistent throughout but it's sometimes that **funnel of starting with a small role and then graduating to a bigger role that becomes so important.** And that's one of the reasons we have **recruitment of young people so they can grow up into volunteerism.**

Yes, we must understand the why and yes, we communicate the why in everything we do and how that affects a particular method or strategy of communication? It's just about consistency and clarity. And I'm very much an advocate of transparency. So, whatever you're doing, be honest and transparent.

# Questions for Sandy Irvin

Actually, we've gone through all my questions. So, I would really like to hear if there's any questions from the group for Sandy.

## Question #1:

Fran from Iroquois falls said here in her community they try to involve the real estate agents. They hand out some of our promotional materials on behalf of the Iroquois Arts Council, which is great. And of course, word of mouth is the best as you have just mentioned, Sandy.

## Answer: Sandy Irvin

I think that is super smart. I'm just going to say one other thing.

**Recognizing that often your volunteer base will be parents and or guardians and their grandparents, your meeting times might look different than another volunteer groups.** You might be

meeting during the day, and you might be at someone's house where the kids are literally running around whilst the grownups are in a kitchen sitting around a table putting together lunch and talking at the same time.

And what are the nicknames for our groups, which were invented by the kids. I was called On Stage For Meetings, because as far as the kids were concerned going to the meetings that their parents attended was at least as much fun as the show. And I have some really fond

memories of that time of stuffing hot dogs into buns and handing them out to 10 or 12 kids so they could run back around the kitchen again. As we sorted things out – as part-time employed parents or stay-at-home parents or parents who had a day off - we would find ways to get together.

**We're connecting with each other as real people in a way that you don't get to in your work lives** and I am still friends with so many of those people. **That time of connection and community is one of the things that attracts people to volunteer. So make sure you're making space in your volunteer model for people to be themselves** and if that includes bringing your kids because there is no childcare, then that's part of your model.

## Reading Recommendations: “From Seed to Season”

I'd encourage you all to look at a few of the chapters in the e-document that relate to our conversation today. Firstly, the section called **Understanding Your Community**, on page 12, provides some great little tips and tricks of how to start that conversation. And it's not up to one person. I think that's something that you, your leadership team or the foundational members of your presenting series or group or team need to remember. It's not just a job for one person. It's really a job for the group to engage in and it's not going to take a day, it's not going to take a week, it's an ongoing process of learning and listening and understanding and your community that is going to evolve over time.

So, I'd also like to direct you to page 17 of the e-document which is the chapter on using **Empathy at the Core of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**. It is not the end all be all but it's a good start for some great information on how to deal with the concepts that Terry was talking about initially at the beginning of the conversation.

And then I'd like to direct you to page 29 of the document which is all about **Volunteering**. It can help you devise role descriptions for your volunteers, how to manage your volunteers once you have them, some recruiting practices, and some best practices from other organizations.

So, I encourage you to look at those parts at your leisure. Share them with your team as well because knowledge is only good if we share it amongst others.

## **Appreciation and Thank Yous**

I'd like to thank everybody for taking their time out of their busy day to come to today's webinar, and a sincere thank you to Terri Lynn and Sandy for sharing their wealth of knowledge and of course their real-world insight.

I'd also like to thank the Department of Canadian Heritage for their financial support.

And if anybody has any additional questions, just feel free to reach out to me, my email is there. And additionally, if you know of any other volunteer groups or teams or organizations in your community or even beyond who might be interested in becoming a young audience presenter, please share this information or have them contact me and I'd love to talk to them.

And as I said earlier, I really do encourage everyone to go to the Ontario presents website to access not only the e-document "From Seed

to Season" but all the other essential presenting resources that are on the site. Just go to the top of the dashboard, it'll say resources, and there's information available for you: there's webinars, there's e documents, there's slide decks, there are reports. It is just a wealth of information.

## **Mark Your Calendars**

So, before we go, I just also like to say that our next webinar session will be in March, it will be called "A Time to Reflect". It will be on March the 20th at 1pm. And it will be an opportunity to have a discussion with some of the participants that I've been working with in the New Young Audience Presenter Project.

I'd like to say goodbye to everybody and thank you very much for your time today and I will be sending some resources after early next week: the transcript of this presentation plus the actual video recording.

Thank you very much Terri and Sandy. Goodbye to all.