

Stagedoor's Interviews... The Official Scoop

Welcome to our interview process! Questions? Please be sure ask anything that pops into your mind, we love questions. In fact here are some of the most common and their answers.

WHAT IS THIS STAGEDOOR MANOR? *We are a performing arts training center in a summer camp atmosphere. Our kids are highly motivated about doing theatre, film, dance, actually all types of performance. They come to us from a full spectrum of experience levels...from Little Susie who has always dreamed of being on stage to Johnny who has just finished a run on Broadway or wrapped a feature film (no exaggeration). Their typical day is 2 ½ hours of rehearsal in the morning, 3 ½ hours of theatre related classes in the afternoon, and 2 ½ hours of rehearsal in the evening...with a couple of hours of recreation time scattered throughout the day for them to relax and depressurize. In fact, that's a very rough sketch of the Stagedoor staff members' day as well. Our kids are very focused and dedicated to theatre, it's their passion...that passion and fire for theatre is what we look for in our staff.*

WHAT'S THE FACILITY LIKE? *In middle of the 20th Century the Catskill Mountains were a very popular vacation destination and several large resort facilities sprang up. Over the years these places closed due to a decline in tourism and many of them have now been converted into summer retreats, camps and private schools. Stagedoor is one of those old resort hotel complexes nestled in the heart of New York's Catskill Mountains. Now when visualizing Stagedoor don't focus on the word "resort" as much as you do the word "old" in the previous sentence. While trying to paint a true picture of the facility I don't want you to think it's getting ready to fall to the ground either...Stagedoor has a very rustic charm and part of that character includes the 40 coats of paint on the walls, 1960's architecture and somewhat worn carpets in spots...at the end of the day we are a camp, and by camp standards have a one of the more comfortable camps in America.*

The geographic region where Stagedoor is located is very rural with small lakes, hiking trails and tiny villages...as well as New York City less than a 2 hour drive. The campus is composed of the main building (our office-camper housing-staff housing-3 theatres), a couple of dorm facilities, our outdoor drama spaces, our 2 larger theatres, tennis courts, an indoor & outdoor pool as well as well kept lawns and a large open field.

WHAT ARE THE HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS LIKE? *First of all, staff members do not share rooms with campers at Stagedoor.*

- ⇒ *Counselors typically live 4 to a room with a private bath and these rooms would be on the same hallway as the campers they are assigned to supervise.*
- ⇒ *Technical staff will have one other roommate, while normally most designers have a single room, and both are housed in a wing completely separate from the campers. Artistic staff will live in single rooms with a shared bath down the hall.*
- ⇒ *Artistic staff wing is somewhat secluded from the campers housing but not entirely.*
- ⇒ *Support staff (kitchen-housekeeping-etc) share 2 or 3 to a room in the Tech wing. All staff rooms have locks for which you will be issued a key.*

Our housekeeping staff is very meticulous and keeps the various buildings at Stagedoor quite clean...with the exception of your room, which is your responsibility. International staff will be provided with sheets, towels, pillows and blankets. It's very much like living in a college or boarding school style dormitory.

The dining hall is a large air-conditioned cafeteria style room. There are several hot food items on the line for every meal as well as a full salad bar for lunch & dinner. Fresh fruit and cereal are also offered at every meal. Meals are also offered for those who must work late nights (Tech staff & the On-Duty counselors).

WHAT HOURS WILL I WORK? *Working at a summer camp means that you will be working very irregular hours that make for a long day. However, you will get a 24 hour day-off every week.*

Exact working hours will vary greatly depending on what your job is and nowhere is this more evident than in the Tech Department. The first week of each session you will work mornings, have a couple of hours down time in the afternoon, and then start again early evening and finish around lights out time for the campers. Week 2 sees the tech staff sleeping a little later and working longer into the night. By production week all bets are off and tech staff may work well into the early morning hours and not wake till just before lunch. We've all worked in the world of theatre for a few years and know all about long & irregular work days...it's the same at a theatre camp.

For counselors, the story is different and yet the same. While your day always starts at 8:15AM wake-up, you may work as late as 1:00AM if you are On-Duty that night. Built into your schedule though are blocks of "Free" or "Off Duty" time at various times depending on the day. If you are not On-Duty then your day ends just after camper curfew, once your campers are accounted for and in their rooms for the night. If counselors go off camp during this free time they must be back on camp by 1:30AM. Keep in mind that we are here for the kids and that's what they are, children...they get homesick, eat too much candy and get a tummy-ache, will want to talk to their roommates till all hours of the night, etc. You are their big sister or big brother and will be the person they want to help them in times of need, no matter what the time or what your schedule says.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH GETTING PAID? *You will be contracted for a specific salary for the entire summer. Exact salary amounts will vary based on job position, experience and age. At the end of the 1st & 2nd sessions you will have the option of getting an advance against that salary. Each advance pay period you can draw up to 25% of the total contracted salary. On the last day off camp you will receive the balance of your salary less any deductions (taxes for Americans, if you buy phone cards or canteen cards on credit during the summer, if you sign-up for internet access via the staff computer [\$10 for the entire summer], or anything else of that nature). For example:*

*Total contracted salary = \$100
Session 1 Advance = \$25
Session 2 Advance = \$15
(3) \$5 canteen cards = \$15 total
Internet = \$10*

Your pay balance on the last day of camp would be \$35.

WHY DO YOU HIRE INTERNATIONALLY? *In any given year we will have staff from around 15 different countries and campers from about 10. Since our campers bring to Stagedoor a wide cultural diversity, we want to give them a wide cultural theatrical experience that encourages an exciting exchange of artistic perspectives. On the practical side, summer tends to be a slower time theatrically in Europe while in the United States it's our busiest time and many American theatre artists have already established recurring summer work at other theatre venues.*

While you are at this interview process take a moment to look around you and you will see many of our staff members who came to us through the exact same process that you are in right now. Go meet them and ask them about Stagedoor...Was it what they expected? What was it like? How is the facility? What did they like most about it? What did they like least? Why are they going back for a 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year? Ask them for the real scoop...they know we want them to be 100% honest with you about their experience as a *Stagedoorian*. Then look at the photos and video. Our goal is to paint as true & honest an image of who we are as is possible. We feel that the more informed our applicants are the stronger our staff will be. Our success or failure rests on having a strong, cohesive staff not afraid of working hard and playing hard in order to help us achieve our goal of a positive theatrical experience for each camper.

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions at all...remember we like them. You can reach Chris Armbrister via phone, fax, or email. If phoning remember the time difference & to leave your number *slowly & clearly* if you get the voice mail.

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