



The Parade Company's 2026 America's Thanksgiving Parade ® presented by Gardner White VOLUNTEER DESCRIPTIONS

Please read each job description carefully **before** selecting an activity which fits your interests and schedule.

PARADE PERFORMER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Report Time: Check-in time for Volunteers can be as early as 5:00 AM on Parade morning, with most volunteers checking in around 6:00 AM. Most Volunteers are finished around 11:30 a.m., with some positions requiring volunteers to be onsite until around 2:00 p.m. Please be aware that the Parade is a rain, shine, or snow event, so please dress for the weather and come prepared to have a great time!

Each of the following Parade Day jobs will require:

- Attendance at the Volunteer Orientation Meeting on November 16 or 17
 - Q&A Meeting will be offered on the following dates (You only need to attend one)
 - Nov. 16 at 6 PM (in-person)
 - Nov. 17 at NOON (ZOOM)
 - The Zoom Meeting link will be sent to you, along with an Orientation video in mid- November
- A Costume Fitting (Costume, Jumpsuit or Jacket)
- Participates must have the ability to walk at least 3 miles
- Ability to be outside, standing, walking, in the elements (cold, rain, snow, sunshine) for an extended period of time.

Parade Day Support – OUTDOOR

Assembly Crew

Get the Parade off on the right foot. You will help Parade Day participants find their units, line them up and send them off! This position reports to the Assembly Crew Captain. **Limited Positions. Prior Parade experience required.**

Balloon Handler

Learn the ropes and fly your assigned balloon safely down the Parade route! You will be assigned a balloon and help get the giant, helium filled balloon down the Parade route by holding on to a rope and following detailed instructions from your Balloon Captain. You will assist with inflation and deflation of balloon. This position will report to assigned Balloon Captain. **Balloon school is required on October 10 at 9:00 AM & 12 PM (if you have not attended in 2024 or 2025). This position is physically demanding.**

Band Marshal

Boom shuck-a-luck-ah! You will be assigned to a marching band and assist band directors and Super Marshals by keeping the place and pace of your band in the Parade. You will walk along side of your band as the designated host from Parade start to finish and monitor that only *designated* Parade participants march alongside the band. This position reports to the Band Marshal Captain.

Banner Carrier

Carry on and be the first to introduce your assigned unit to the Parade route! You will lead the way for your unit with sponsor provided signage. Smile and wave as you carry your banner down the route. You will also work with the Super Marshals and help with pacing of the Parade. This position reports to the Banner Carrier Captain.

Big Head Corps Crew Handler

Be a head above the rest as you help the Big Head Corps with their Parade day needs. You will assist the Big Head Corps members with getting into their papier-mâché heads, costumes, and prepared for photos. Position reports to the Captain of Big Head Corps. **This position does not walk down Parade route in a papier-mâché head but wears a clown costume down the route.**

Costumed Marcher

Broadway Bound! Bring sparkles and magic to Woodward Avenue as a themed character in The Parade. You will be assigned a unit in the Parade with a matching costume to go along with it. You need to be someone who is happy, smiley and likes to wave a lot! You will be *required* to learn simple choreography. ***This position walks in the Parade and does not ride on any floats.***

Dispersal Crew

Help the Parade find its way home. March the bands to their buses, send the floats back home, direct the balloons back, and send marchers on their way. You are responsible for directing units of the Parade to designated areas for departure from Parade. This position reports to the Dispersal Captain. Must have a take charge attitude.

Equestrian Escort

Wanted: Super-Pooper-Scoopers! Keep the Parade route sparkling as you accompany majestic equestrian units down Woodward. You must be willing to wave, smile and have a good time! This position reports to the Equestrian Escort Captain. You will be assigned a costume to wear.

Grandstand Usher

The best place to view the Parade on Parade morning! Assist with coordinating and locating seats in the Parade's grandstand seating for spectators, sponsors and special guests and ensure that only ticketed guests are in the grandstands. You will also assist with ticket taking as necessary.

This position reports to Grandstand Usher Captain. Must be able to stand in one location for long period of time.

Sitting in Grandstands is not permitted.

Parade Captain

The Parade Captains are the all-star volunteers who help with training and directing their fellow volunteers on Parade day. These positions are pre-assigned. Please select if you have been pre-assigned as Captain for Banner Carrier, Balloons, Dispersal, Pit Crew, Equestrian Escort, Band, Grandstands, Unit Marshal, VIP Logistics, Shuttle, Super Marshal, Breakfasts or Assembly. If you are not a Captain, but interested in a volunteer leadership role in the Parade, then let us know at volunteers@theparade.org!

Float Team (Float Spotter/Driver)

Join the Parade Float Team! You will be assigned as a Spotter, Driver or Roll Back Tow depending on your experience, ability and successful completion of a Float Driving School session in October or November. You will be responsible for moving a float and/or support vehicle from The Parade Company studio to Woodward Avenue during roll-out, down the Parade route and safely return the float back to the Parade studio after the Parade is over.

- **Spotter:** Be in charge of a float as you walk the Parade route and help guide your assigned float back to the Parade Studio on Parade Day. You must be good with directions, comfortable on a hand-held radio and able to walk the Parade route. You must also be available for roll-out.
- **Driver:** Drive a tow vehicle that pulls a float down the Parade route. You must be available for roll-out and able to drive your float back to the Parade studio after the Parade is over. You may also have the opportunity to drive a support vehicle or sound mule in the Parade.

This position reports to the Float Team Captains. A valid driver's license and good driving record is required. All driver's must complete a Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check to verify their driving record. This position is physically demanding. You MUST be able to walk the Parade route. Attendance at Float Driving School is mandatory on October 10, 17, 24 or Nov. 14. Float School lasts about an hour.

At Float Driving School, you will learn the in's & out's of navigating our floats. You will fill out a form requesting your position of Driver, Spotter or Roll Back Tow. Most requests are honored but positions are filled as needed. Anyone who can help out with moving the floats from the Parade studio to Woodward during Roll Out on Wednesday at 8 AM, November 25 would be most appreciated.

Parade Technical Support

You are Mr./Ms. Fix it! Help fix any problems that might arise Parade morning and on the Parade route. You must be available to help with Parade roll-out and pre and post Parade production. You must have knowledge of auto mechanics, sound systems, etc. This position reports to Director of Parade Operations. **Must be willing to meet with Director of Operations for special training in September.**

Shuttle Driver

Calling all Drivers! Drive the volunteer float drivers & spotters to the Parade route from The Parade Company studio. You will drive one of The Parade Company shuttle vans. This position reports to Float Driver Captain. **Must have valid driver's license and good driving record. Help is also needed on Wednesday, November 25 as well.**

Super Marshal

Help keep the pace of the Parade! You will monitor the Parade route to make sure it is safe and in order. You will also help keep the order of units and pace of the Parade. This position reports to Super Marshal Captain. **Prior Parade experience required.**

Unit Marshal

Help keep the Parade on track! You are fully responsible for Pre-Parade and Parade operations of a complete unit (float, drill team, dancers, etc.) You will be assigned a unit and keep track of and walk with it from Parade start to finish. You will also assist Super Marshals with pacing of the Parade. This position may also serve as Parade Ambassador in the morning prior to start of Parade. This position reports to the Unit Marshal Captain.

Parade Concierge (Limited)

Help escort Parade VIPs to the VIP area in assembly and help them get on/off their unit in the Parade. You will lead them through pre-Parade activities until they step off onto the route. This position reports to the Parade Concierge Captains. Some volunteers will be required to walk behind the float of VIP and stay with VIP until they reach their final destination. Must be able to take initiative and solve problems quickly. You must be a positive ambassador for Detroit and The Parade Company. **Taking of photos and asking for autographs is not permitted.**

Parade Day Support – INDOOR

Clown Breakfast

This is your chance to clown around!! An early morning of beads and smiles assisting with the Distinguished Clown Corps breakfast at the Boll Family YMCA downtown!! Help register our distinguished clowns & guests, keep our morning running on time during the hustle and bustle of makeup & photos, and spread holiday cheer to all!! Friendly, outgoing people are needed for this position. This position reports to the Clown Breakfast Captain.

LIMITED POSITIONS. Must be available for pre-parade breakfast preparation.

Sponsor Breakfast

Be the hostess with the mostess! Greet our special sponsors and their families Parade morning at the Sponsor Breakfast. You will assist guests with directions and answer any questions they may have on Parade morning. Assist with set up and break down of breakfast area. Friendly, outgoing people are needed for this position. This position reports to Sponsor Breakfast Captain. **LIMITED POSITIONS.**

Volunteer Services

Wanted: Early morning risers, happy and smiley people!! You will assist with volunteer check-in and directing volunteers to their float as they show up to volunteer on Parade morning. This position reports to the VP of Volunteer Services. You may also be asked to help with costume collection.