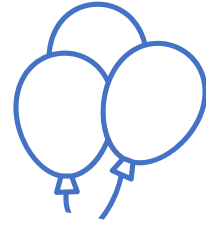




## AECT Volunteer Positions Party Crew Head



The party crew head coordinates a group of youth participants in planning and carrying out the cast and crew party on the last day of the show. This involves brainstorming with the crew, planning food, decorations, and activities, and supervising set-up and clean-up on the day of the party. Following is some information to help you tackle the job of party crew head. Thank you for volunteering!

### Party Crew Head Duties

#### Before Run

1. Sign up to volunteer for the party (AECT will send out a sign-up link to families involved in the current show and will also post on social media).
2. Obtain the list of party crew member names and parent/guardian contact information from Nina.
3. Decide how you want to contact families to set up an initial planning meeting. This should be at least two weeks before opening night. Sample emails are included on the following pages – you are welcome to use these as guides or handle the tasks in your own way.
  - a. The free website Doodle.com (or any other meeting-scheduling site) has proven to be an effective method for this, as it allows people to indicate their availability for several possible times, thus pinpointing the date and time that works best for the most people.
  - b. You could also set a date and just hope that most of the crew members are available.
  - c. Once you have a date, let Nina know and ask her what room you will meet in. If none of the AECT-specific rooms are free, there is usually space in the Hannah Center café area.
4. Hold your first planning meeting. You may only need one meeting, or you might have a second one if the crew decides to make any decorations or do anything else that requires meeting in person.
  - a. Confirm with Nina where the party will be held, so the crew can check out the room. Usually, the party is in the large banquet room down the hall to the left of the front lobby elevator on the first floor.

- b. Explain that the crew plans the party around three main areas: food, decorations, and games/activities. Also explain that there is a budget (Nina can confirm, but typically the budget is \$250) and that you need to stick reasonably close to it.
  - c. See what ideas the crew members might have already in terms of these areas.
    - i. Food – the menu always has some common elements; the fee sheet (which families use to determine if they want to pay for the party) lists: pepperoni and cheese pizza, chips, pop, fruit, and vegetables. The crew has some wiggle room in desserts and other “sides.” It can be fun to have the dessert match a theme related to the show, but this isn’t required. Themed desserts might be something like cupcakes decorated with a target (used for *Robin Hood*), Turkish delight (used for *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*), or cookies frosted to look like oysters with candy pearls (used for *The Little Mermaid*). Don’t stress about food matching the theme – the kids will eat anything!
      - 1. Note: Little Caesar’s typically has the cheapest pizza!
    - ii. Decorations – this is where the crew members can really have some fun. You can look for ideas online (e.g., search “mermaid party ideas,” or “fairy tale parties,” or “wizard party decorations”) and brainstorm with the kids. It’s up to you and the crew (and your budget) how much decorating you want to do – you can do centerpieces for each table, decorations on the food table, something around the door as the cast and crew first enter, posters or signs or other decorations on the walls, the sky’s the limit! (Note that the ceiling is too high to reach, so don’t plan on anything dangling from above).
    - iii. Games/activities – you don’t need to have a ton of activities planned. The cast and crew are just happy to eat, relax, and celebrate the end of the run. That said, if your crew comes up with some fun ideas related to the theme or show, go for it! Past parties have included things like photo booths with themed props, scavenger hunts, trivia about the show, limbo contests, and – memorably – a pet rat who came to visit after *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*!
5. Follow up with families after the first meeting. Explain the ideas the crew decided on and explain what needs to be done.
- a. You might make an Amazon wish list and ask parents to commit to bringing the plates and napkins or a certain color of balloons. You’ll need someone to order and pick up the pizzas, someone to bring veggies, and so on.
  - b. The free website Sign Up Genius has proven to be an effective method for this, as it allows adults to see all open slots in real time, and automatically sends reminders. You can set up each item as a slot, like “12 cans Coke,” “2 rolls green streamers,” “veggie tray to serve 15,” etc.

- c. Make sure families understand that they can be reimbursed for any purchases they make for the party (up to the budget amount). Some families may choose to donate the items they sign up for, which gives you a little more wiggle room in the budget.
6. Hold your second planning meeting. This may not be needed if all the preparation will happen on the day of the party, but you might use a second meeting to make centerpieces, draw posters, or prepare a game of some kind.

### **During Run**

1. Your second planning meeting may happen before opening night, or sometime during the run.

### **After Run (after final performance)**

1. You and the crew will arrive to set up the party during the final performance. Depending on how many decorations you have planned, allow at least an hour and possibly more. The timing of the party depends on the length of the show, so check with Nina on the run time and work backwards from there.
2. Set up the food table(s), prepare games, and put up decorations. Extra adults are helpful, especially if you are tying lots of balloons!
3. During the party, crew members can keep an eye on the food table, cleaning up and spills, removing empty pizza boxes, and so on. They can circulate and pick up trash, clear tables, recycle pop cans, and run games or activities.
4. After the party, the crew should remain until the room is cleaned up.
5. Submit receipts to Nina for reimbursement.

## **Our Thanks to You**

- Party Crew Heads will receive a free ticket for admission to a show (of the current or a future production).

## **Supplemental Information**

On the following pages you will find information from past party crew heads that you may find helpful as you prepare for this position. These include:

1. Sample email to use for initial contact with party crew families
2. Sample email for after planning meeting, explains next steps
3. Sample Sign Up Genius to use as template if desired
4. Photos from past parties for inspiration

## Sample Email for Initial Family Contact

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Subject: Little Mermaid Cast/Crew Party Planning - please respond!

Greetings from under the sea!

I'm excited to work with your child to plan the cast/crew party for the final afternoon of the All-of-us Express production of *The Little Mermaid*. We have a party crew of six kids, and parents are welcome to join in the fun as well. We will meet twice before the party for planning, and then our crew will set up and clean up on the day of the final performance.

- **First planning meeting:** Please respond ASAP to [this Doodle poll](#) so we can find a time that works for as many of our crew members as possible during the week of April 18th.
- **Second planning meeting:** TBA
- **Party:** Sunday, May 8 after the final performance (heads-up, May 8 is Mother's Day)

For families new to the party crew, here's how it works. The kids and I (and any interested adults) will brainstorm ideas for decorations, activities, and food. The main food remains the same for each party, so there will be pizza and pop and a veggie tray or two, but we can have some fun with a dessert and possibly some other sides with a sea/mermaid theme. For games, we can think in terms of script trivia, photo booth, charades (no voice, get it?), kiddie pool magnet "fishing," or anything else the kids dream up that would be related to *The Little Mermaid*. We will talk about decorations for the room and tables and make or purchase them. We have a budget to stick to, and will talk about that as a group so the youth participants learn about being creative with available funds. :)

We will go with the date that works for the most people for our first meeting. If we end up having to choose a date where your child can't come, don't worry! I will send an email recap and I can work with your crew member to come up with an independent task of some kind so they feel included. We're aiming for an hour during one of the already-scheduled rehearsals since I know many families already have siblings coming to the Hannah Center those nights. I know that Ramadan and Passover are ongoing next week; I apologize for the need to schedule our first meeting next week - I only became

the party organizer and got the kids' names today. I will absolutely work with your child if they are not able to make the meeting.

If you have any questions before the meeting, or need help with the Doodle poll, please feel free to email me or call/text me at 517-123-4567. Ask your crew member to start thinking about ideas now - I can't wait to hear them!

Patty Parent  
(Mom of River, currently on costumes crew)

Here's the full URL to the Doodle poll in case for some reason the link about doesn't work: <https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/dJ6NPkod>

# Sample Email for After First Meeting

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Subject: Robin Hood Cast Party - notes and next steps

Hi all -

We had a great time brainstorming on Monday and your kids had tons of creative ideas. Crew members who gave me their emails are also copied here. Please forgive the lengthy email - I'm trying to distill a very lively conversation into one coherent report so you have all the info in one spot.

We focused on food and decorations - we still need to come up with some activity ideas. Here's a rundown of what we decided on and what needs to be procured. There are links to show you what we discussed in some of the cases so you can picture them better. I've also made a [Sign Up Genius](#) for various decoration and food items because it seems like that will be the easiest way that everyone can see what's covered without a million emails. I'll work on getting anything that isn't claimed by January 29 so we have the things we need to work on at our next meeting.

**AECT can provide reimbursements as needed; if your family is willing and able to donate the items without reimbursement to help defray costs for the nonprofit, we can give you a tax receipt.** For reimbursement, please turn receipts in to me. We are running over the budget AECT gave us, so anything you are able to cover would be deeply appreciated if it works for your family.

## DECORATIONS

- [Large trees](#) made from kraft paper roll and balloons, 2 or 3 on walls. The trees will have "Wanted" and "Reward" posters tacked to them (C----- volunteered to make 2 posters). G-----volunteered to draw squirrels or other creatures to add to the trees.
- Centerpieces will include a [burlap sack bag labeled "taxes,"](#) with chocolate gold coins scattered around it. The other centerpiece element will be [green paper Robin Hood hats](#). E----- volunteered to bring feathers to add to the hats.
- Flanking the door out in the hall will be some [royal purple "draperies"](#) to show that the party guests begin in the castle, then leave and enter Sherwood Forest for the party.
- Other ideas we will do as time and materials allow: directions signs (Sherwood Forest, Nottingham), more Wanted posters, targets on walls

## FOOD

- Pizza - always included per AECT sign-up
- [Veggie tray](#) – A----- thought maybe her family could do these (order and get from store)?
- Fruit tray - we'll use the bite sized fruit and skewers to make "[arrow](#)" kabobs
- Water bottles
- Root "beer" and ginger "ale" with a pub-type sign for beverages
- Cupcakes with archery targets on them. H----- was very interested in working on this. I need to talk with Meijer/Kroger bakeries to see if they can do it, or if we can order plain frosted cupcakes and H----- can decorate??

## ACTIVITIES

- The kids were VERY keen on trying to do an archery contest. If any of you have ideas about this, or materials to do it safely indoors, I'd love to hear more!
- Photo frame of Wanted poster (anyone want to attempt this? Cute picture of the idea [here](#) if you scroll down.

**SIGN UP GENIUS LINK:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0a49a4aa2aa7ff2-robin>

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, February 3, 6:30-8:00pm, in Hannah 223 or 233 - I haven't seen the layout so I don't know which room will work best. You'll find us!

**PARTY DATE:** Sunday, February 16 - we don't have an exact timeframe yet because until tech week they won't know how long the show runs. Mark 3:30pm on your calendars as the earliest time we'd need to get there to set up.

Feel free to contact me any time with questions ([pattyparent@gmail.com](mailto:pattyparent@gmail.com) or 517-123-4567). See you on the 3rd for the next fun steps!

Patty

# Sample Sign Up Genius Format for Organizing Purchases



All-of-Us Express Children's Theatre

## "Under the Sea" Made-Up Cast & Crew Party

Thank you for helping us gather the materials for our Under the Sea Cast & Crew party! **Please look over the list below, and sign up if you are able to commit to purchasing one or more items by the date of the party (May 8) and bringing it when we meet to set up.**

Items which include an Amazon link are examples, and are the items I used to build our budget. I'm sorry they're not clickable, but this link should work to [view the Amazon wish list](#) I put together. You do not have to use Amazon, but please stay in the same price ballpark and purchase similar items (e.g., if you get cups at Party City, make sure to still get 9oz size).

**AECT can provide reimbursements as needed; if your family is willing and able to donate the items without reimbursement to help defray costs for the nonprofit, we can give you a tax receipt.** For reimbursement, please turn receipts in to me. Feel free to contact me any time with questions (pattyparent@gmail.com or 517-123-4567).

**Date:** 05/07/2023 (Sun.)

**Time:** 4:00pm - 6:30pm EDT

**Location:** Hannah Center

### Available Slot

#### Blue/white/silver balloons for bubbles

see Amazon link, kit comes with multiple shades and sizes

Sign Up

#### 12-piece Sea Animal Centerpiece

see Amazon link

Sign Up

#### Multiple shades of green crepe paper for seaweed

2-3 shades, one roll each, examples on Amazon link

Sign Up

#### Mermaid stickers for decoration and souvenirs

see Amazon link

Sign Up

#### Ocean stickers for decoration and souvenirs

see Amazon link

Sign Up

#### Mermaid Dinner Plates (36-Count) (2)

see Amazon link, 2 packages of 36 plates

Sign Up

#### Mermaid Lunch Napkins (50-Count) (2)

see Amazon link, 2 packages of 50 shell napkins

Sign Up

#### 9 oz Clear Plastic Cups

see Amazon link for example, 50 in package

Sign Up

#### 100-Pack Cocktail Picks for fruit plate

see Amazon link  
Example: <https://www.meijer.com/snop/en/produce/prepareo-produce/vegetables/meijer-fresh-vegetable-party-tray-with-dip-large/p/71928376412>

Sign Up

#### Large fruit trays/cut fruit bowls (2)

Example:  
<https://www.meijer.com/shopping/departments/fresh/produce/fruit/fruit-trays.html>

Sign Up

#### Seaweed snacks

24-pack, see Amazon list (or get at Costco)

Sign Up

#### 12-pack Coke (2)

Sign Up

#### 12-pack Sprite

Sign Up

#### 12-pack Vernors

Sign Up

#### Water bottles (basing on \$2.59/12-pack of 16.9oz) (4)

48 bottles needed, hence 4 slots for 12-packs

Sign Up

#### Pizzas - Need someone to pick up at 5:00 and bring to Hannah Center

Patty will order from Little Caesar's

Sign Up

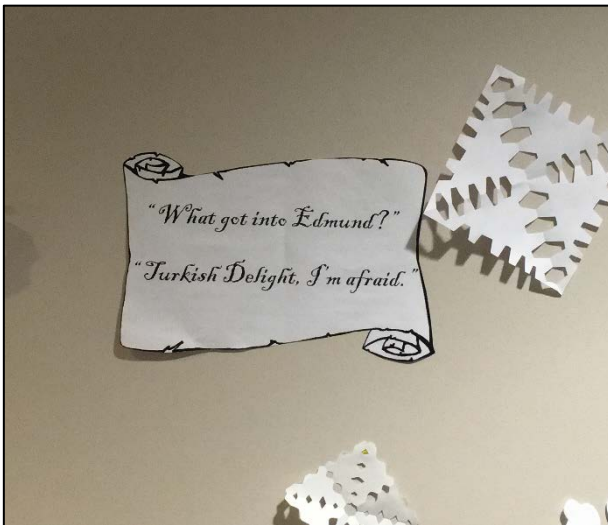


## Photos for Inspiration and Ideas

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**Robin Hood (2020):** target cupcakes with arrows and tree/squirrel cupcakes; forest tree balloon decoration and food table; photo booth “wanted” poster prop



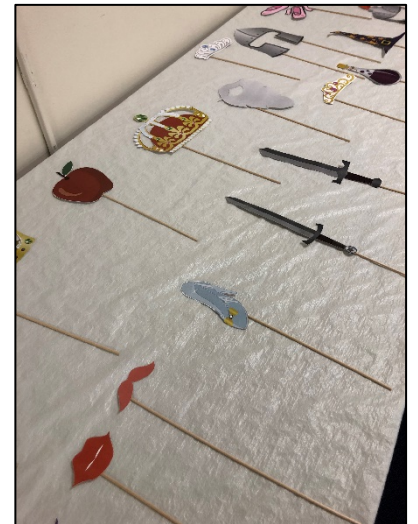
**The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2016):** Turkish Delight and “ice” candy; quotes and snowflake decorations; party crew member dressed as Narnian forest creature to welcome cast and crew

## Photos for Inspiration and Ideas

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***The Little Mermaid (2022):*** oyster shell and pearl cookies; sea creature centerpieces; canoe paddle limbo game with streamer seaweed and balloon bubble decorations



***The Twelve Dancing Princesses/Rumpelstiltskin (2019):*** gold-sprinkled cupcakes from Kroger; “princess-y” centerpiece; “straw” centerpiece to be spun into gold; royal/fairy tale photo props