

Colts Drum & Bugle Corps Volunteer Handbook

Volunteer email: volunteers@colts.org | Volunteer website: coltscooktruck.blogspot.com

Welcome Colts Volunteer! Welcome to the hardest volunteer job you'll ever love.

First, the Colts and your fellow volunteers send you a big "Thank You!" for volunteering your time and talents to help the Colts provide members the ultimate drum corps experience. Volunteers spend their time cooking, sewing, lugging boxes of food, handling trash, hammering, stuffing envelopes, painting, etc. Just about any chore you can imagine, we do it. With all the things we do to prepare for tour, nothing is more important than our food program and this guide is primarily devoted to the summer food program volunteer. While many volunteers are parents, we have former parents, alumni, band directors, and other friends who volunteer on tour as well! Anyone beyond marching age can be a Colts volunteer. All drivers, volunteers, and staff are subject to the Seasonal Staff and Volunteer policies of the Colts Youth Organization. A copy of this policy is available on our website at www.colts.org.

Fuel for the Body

Marching in a corps is demanding. Corps members face a rigorous summer that is physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging. Volunteers don't put ourselves on the field, but we all do what we can to keep members' bodies and minds



healthy throughout the summer. The members have one set of challenges, but as volunteers, you'll find there are plenty of adventures to go around. First, there is the schedule. You'll be up before anyone else and in bed after everyone else. What makes it special? You become mother, father, nurse, counselor, nutritionist, disciplinarian, cheerleader, and supporter of 154 outstanding young adults. You will work hard, sleep little, and laugh a lot. You will get closer to other volunteers than you'll ever expect. And, at the end of the summer, you will find you have participated in an activity unlike any other and experienced an event you will not soon forget.

Red Team Thread Team

Besides cooking, volunteers help with sewing on our "Red Team Thread Team" and with van driving. It takes a great deal of effort and endless uniform fittings that start early at camp and continue through the final performance to keep the Colts and Colt Cadets looking great. Along with uniform work, the team sews small flags sold in our souvie booth. If you volunteer during camp, spring training, or tour, you will share many of the same logistical arrangements as the cooks, as well as many of the same experiences.

Drivers

The schedule for the drivers is "opposite" of cooks and the thread team, but you get to experience the care taken by our team of drivers to safely transport the corps. Used primarily during tour, having volunteer drivers allows the staff some much needed rest and, in turn, you will sleep while the corps and other volunteer support is busy during the day.

Four meals a day, 154 members, 50 staff and volunteers...

...means 800 meals a day, For 80 days, which equals 64,000+ meals on tour

We want the cook truck to be the most welcoming place on tour. Not just for the Colts and Colt Cadets, but for all corps. If they're hungry - Feed them.

GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

This volunteer handbook is presented as a large FAQ, as it's the easiest way to explain everything we do. If you have a question you don't see answered in this guide, please don't hesitate to ask! Trust us - we have heard just about everything! The information here gives a general overview of what life is like as a volunteer with the Colts.



Important contact information

- Colts website www.colts.org
- Colts office phone 563-582-4872
- Colts office fax 844-347-5323
- Vicki (Director) cell 563-564-9016
- Vicki email colts@colts.org
- Jeff (Exec. Director) cell 563-599-8553
- Jeff email jeff@colts.org
- Rich (Cadets/Money) 515-306-8641
- Rich email rich@colts.org
- Bill Symoniak cell 651-470-3553
- Bill email volunteers@colts.org
- Drum Corps International www.dci.org

How Do I Get Involved?

You contact the volunteer schedule coordinator by emailing volunteers@colts.org. We appreciate any time you can spend working on tour, but it's important to contact the volunteer coordinator so we know when and where you'll be with us. A great way to stay connected with the large network of Colts volunteers is through our Facebook group. There are typically posts during every meal, as well as various funny moments that happen throughout the summer. To find the group, search Facebook for "Colts Cooks, Parents, and Volunteers" and request to join. Another great location to find details of what will be happening each day is the cook truck blog: www.coltscooks.blogspot.com. The virtual cook truck helps you be "on tour" when you physically can't be there and has daily schedules, menus, weather, etc.

When Do I Volunteer?

Volunteers join up whenever and wherever they can. At times, it's because the travel schedule brings the Colts to a nearby town. Other times, it's because the calendar works best. For some of us, it's when or where the Colts need help. You decide what's best for you in consultation with the volunteer coordinator.

How Do I Get On And Off Tour?

You will need to meet up with the corps on the date you are scheduled to begin your volunteer time and then jump off when you've worked your portion of the tour. Spring Training is one time you can generally drive your car because the corps stays in the same location longer than one night and generally does not travel very far. During the tour you generally cannot drive your vehicle. This might mean having someone drop you off, or finding the best way to get to the general vicinity of the corps. Typically you arrange your own transportation (a flight, a bus ride, getting dropped off) to the city where the corps is staying. If you need assistance with a flight or bus pick up, please make sure to work with the volunteer coordinator so the tour director has time to handle your pick up or drop off. The Colts are creative at figuring out how to best connect you with tour, but please let us know well in advance. Very rarely is it possible to get on and off tour in the same city, but in that case, we may be able to help you with securing vehicle parking. Regardless, it is important to work with the corps on travel timelines so we can make the full master tour schedule work. Corps housing arrangements in distant cities can change at the last minute. Check colts.org for updated info.

Why Can't I Take My Car?

Volunteers travel with the corps, and during tour the corps travels at night. It is not possible for you to drive and work (unless you are volunteering as a driver, in which case you will be driving a corps van).

What do I Do When I Actually Meet Up With The Corps?

Find the kitchen trailer and DON'T BE SHY! Sometimes you'll arrive during a flurry of activity, or there may be no one around. Either way, stow your gear near the cook truck and find the head cook or tour director. Your first responsibility is to let them know you made it! Don't be upset if your welcome is less than spectacular - lots of things can happen in a day on tour that may take up a lot of time and attention. Everyone is very glad you're there, and you'll know it before your tour of duty is over.

Where Will I Travel While On Tour?

You will travel in one of the corps vehicles. We travel overnight, so your van seat becomes your bed. You get a whole full-size bench to yourself, so you don't have to sleep sitting up. Use your pillow and sleeping bag or bring a sheet and blanket to be as comfy as possible. Most volunteers bring a small bag on the van with necessities for stops or to use first thing upon arrival at a school.

Do I Sleep Just When We Travel?

Pending travel timelines, you'll also have a chance to sleep on a classroom floor at the school. Bring warm bedding, as classrooms can be frigid or overheated, sometimes on the same night.

Volunteers may bring an air mattress, a foam mat, or a cot to make the floor more comfortable. There is not always time to set up or tear down beds, so take that into consideration when selecting your bedding. Pro-tour tip: If you know you're not staying the next night in the same place, roll up your bed as soon as you roll out of it. You won't need it during the day. Bring your own alarm.



Background Checks...?

We do a background check before tour with any volunteers staying overnight with the corps. Volunteers will be emailed a link to enter personal information. All data is kept confidential and secure. This is a policy of both Drum Corps International and the Colts Youth Organization to ensure the safety of both our students and the activity as a whole.

Besides Sleeping Gear, What Else Should I Bring??

See the Packing List later in this handbook.

What's The Most Important Thing Prior To Arriving On Tour?

Be kind to yourself before you arrive and arrive on tour well rested. Take your volunteer role seriously – we depend on you to give the Colts your best.

Will I Be Able To Spend Time With My Corps Member?

Not much. The schedule is hectic, and there is little free time for corps members and volunteers; they have jobs to do, as do we. There may be times when parents will be able to watch rehearsals or catch members after a meal. It's a good idea to tell your corps member to say "Hi Mom!" or "Hi Dad!" when passing through the serving line.

Will I Be Able To Watch The Show?

Yes, volunteers should ALWAYS be able to see the Colts. You will not generally be able to see the entire competition. Depending upon the timing and number of other workers, volunteers may be able to watch some other corps.

Will I Have To Pay For The Show?

No. Drum Corps International (DCI) recognizes the efforts of volunteers and provides passes to all DCI shows for volunteers while on duty.

May I Bring Other Children, Such As Siblings, Along With Me??

Our policy is to have all volunteers be beyond marching age (22 years old). So, if they meet the age requirement, they are certainly welcome. We generally don't have the space or time to attend to younger students. The same rule applies to pets, girlfriends, boyfriends, etc. Sometimes during spring training there may be opportunities or exceptions for unique circumstances (as the travel dynamic is not the same), so please check with the volunteer coordinator or director if you have unique circumstances.



What About Attendance At Church Services?

The schedule makes it difficult, but not impossible. Volunteers wishing to attend worship should keep their eyes open for something close to the housing site that works with the tour schedule.

Who Is The Head Cook?

The head cook on tour is the person with the plan for the day. He or she sets the priorities and makes the decisions about what happens on the food trailer and when. The head cook coordinates with the schedule set by the tour director and fits the menu to the schedule. The head cook keeps track of inventory, especially items like bread and milk or special dietary needs. Generally, the head cook makes sure to attend to the members with special diet needs. Don't be bashful about sharing ideas with the head cook, tour director, or director. We do things for reasons that may not be readily apparent, but are open to hear new ideas or approaches, as well as explain why we do things certain ways. If you have to leave the cook trailer for any reason, make sure the head cook knows when you're coming back (so no one panics).

What If There Is No Head Cook Designated On The Schedule?

We hope this doesn't happen, but if it does, someone may be asked to take the lead to coordinate with the tour director and food coordinator. A menu will be made and food will be ordered, but adjustments may need to be made due to changes in the schedule. You are not in this alone and there are many people to support and guide you, particularly the tour director and corps director who will help ensure your success (and sanity).

How Do I Get Ready For Tour?

Everyone – especially those who have never toured before – should attend at least one rehearsal camp and work an entire weekend in the kitchen or with the Red Team Thread Team. It is valuable if you can work all kitchen shifts for an entire camp weekend to get a taste of what it will be like on tour. You'll experience cooking for 200 (or more) people at one time. You will learn there is no sewing or cooking skill set necessary to help with the "sewing" or "cooking," but lots to do! You'll get to know and work alongside experienced volunteers who can show you the Colts approach. Find an experienced volunteer at a camp and "job shadow" them. We love new interest and energy!



The Definition of Drum Corps -

To those who don't know, no explanation is possible. To those who do know, no explanation is necessary.

The best way for us to explain is for you to experience us first hand!

VOLUNTEER PACKING LIST



You will want to be self-contained for the time you're on tour. Don't plan to shop or do laundry. Pack light. You have to carry your own stuff. Think like a corps member – try to have enough stuff to be comfortable, but your week will be a happier one if you keep it to what you can carry to the van in one trip. Plan to bring: a suitcase or duffel (which can travel in the van with you or under the staff bus or on the cook truck), a bag or backpack to keep with you, sleeping gear, and a purse or wallet.

Packing Essentials

- Suitcase or duffel: One with wheels helps you get from the truck or van to the school and back.
- Sleeping gear: A light blanket/sheet or sleeping bag is easy to pack and carry, along with a good pillow. Classrooms, vans, and buses can be frigid, cold or boiling hot, sometimes in the same night. Many people like to carry air mattresses (or a cot or camping pad), even though you won't always use it.
- Toiletries: Soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc. A bag to keep everything together and to carry to the shower is handy (zip lock bags to keep liquids secure is always a great idea).
- Towel, maybe two. Some people prefer a good quality, fast dry towel.
- Shower shoes: flip flops for wearing to and from and in the shower. Protect your feet!
- Two pairs of comfortable shoes: sandals or tennis shoes. You might want different types or styles so that each hits your foot in a different place. Never go barefoot! Protect your feet.
- Clothing: Do not bring good clothing to work in. T-shirts and shorts are appropriate for most days, but a pair of long pants and sweatshirt can be handy at night. Work clothes will get wet and stained and possibly ripped. If there's a free day on your part of tour, a set of nicer clothes will make you feel human, but one set is enough. Bring enough clothes so that you won't have to do laundry. Most cooks keep a Colts "show shirt" to wear to shows. Also, think layers. The cook truck can be extremely warm. However, it is unheated and there are times when it can be chilly. So, you might start out in long sleeves and then lose the outer layer partway through the day.
- Jacket or hooded sweatshirt.
- Sunglasses and a hat, as we are outside, all day most days.
- Sunscreen!
- Rain jacket just in case.
- Alarm: Bring your own (most phones have one). Don't expect the head cook or anyone else to wake you up.
- Refillable water bottle.
- Money: Not a lot of cash necessarily, as meals are provided. Midnight snacks at stops are a nice treat.
- Electronics, phone and chargers: Bring whatever you want, but remember vans and schools are not locked, and the corps is not responsible for personal possessions.

Handy, But Not Essential

- Nighttime sleeping clothes: Many people just sleep in what they are going to wear the next day. If you're on a non-travel day, sleeping attire can be a nice change of pace.
- Zip-top plastic bags to separate clean clothes from dirty clothes.
- Flashlight (if you don't have one on your phone).
- Small container of bug spray.
- Ear plugs, headphones, sleeping masks.
- Any personal medicines.

Please Note: While you can buy items at rest stops, the members cannot. Please do not make purchases for your member or other members at rest stops. It doesn't feel "fair" when people see this happen. If something must be purchased, use discretion and please be discreet. Examples: cold medicine or allergy pills that might be needed are fine, but McDonalds, Starbucks, Subway, or a hot dog are NOT cool.

The “Typical” Daily Schedule

Schedules will change – weather, rehearsals, etc. Be prepared and be flexible in case the plan changes. It will, and it will probably change again.

Wake is two hours before breakfast (Meal 1). The schedule will be communicated to the head cook the night before and they will let you know when to be up and on the truck ready to go.

Prep breakfast and start the rest of the meals for the day. After Meal 1, eat, clean up and finish lunch (Meal 2). Grocery runs are done during this time - we only go once a day to the store. Depending on the menu, we get a head start on dinner (Meal 3).

After Meal 2 – More clean up, finishing prepping Meal 3 and start Meal 4. Cooks, usually one at a time, may get a shower.

Dinner (Meal 3) is typically spaced evenly between lunch and Meal 4. Some changes may happen to the schedule based on heat or rain. Once everyone has eaten, clean up and you may get a chance to shower if you were not able to shower earlier. You may even be able to watch some rehearsal. This depends on the number of volunteers and how far along prepping is for Meal 4. When there’s no travel, we sleep at the same location where we had rehearsal. The cooks go to bed following final clean up and any pre-breakfast preparations necessary.



On a show day, Meal 3 is also typically EPL (eat, pack, and load). Time allotted is a little longer, but volunteers need to eat, pack up belongings, clean up, and get off the truck in a timely manner so the kitchen load crew can stay on schedule. On a show day, Meal 4 is typically post show at the performance site. On performance nights, we leave the show site and travel to the next housing location overnight while sleeping.

What Is The Kitchen Like? *It's pretty cool, really.*

We have a 53 foot semi-trailer outfitted as a commercial kitchen on wheels. This includes a walk-in freezer and refrigerator (a Thermo-King unit on the front of the trailer powers them). For cooking, we have 4 burners, a griddle, and two convection ovens powered by propane gas. There is also a three hole sink with an on-demand water heater.

Double “moving van” doors on one side of the trailer open to create a serving area. Next to the serving area are spigots where we serve chilled juice, sqwincher, and water. We have three tanks in the refrigerator: one for water, and two where we can mix juice from inside the truck.

We store most supplies in the trailer. The electricity and water supply come from the host school. We use an inline filter system on the water line. We also have a backup generator and small water supply for remote serving at shows.

What Kinds Of Foods Are Served And How Much Preparation Is Required?

We serve very few pre-prepared entrees due to the cost and quality. Our menu is varied to meet the likes of different appetites. Once on tour, you’ll find everything we serve is someone’s favorite.

A lot of meats are frozen and some are pre-cooked to cut our overall preparation time, mostly on tour or during times with limited volunteers. Otherwise, we thaw and cook most meats. We do a lot of baking of prepared “fresh from box” mixes. Fruits and vegetables are a combination of canned items, frozen, and fresh. Desserts and salads are typically made fresh. We have sandwiches on occasion, but they do not dominate our menus.

Breakfast includes cereal every morning along with some type of hot item. Our overall goals – serve fast (200 plates in under 20 minutes), fill everyone up (serve two of everything), and enjoy the meal. We want to make sure we cover basic nutrition, and, every once in awhile – provide a surprise!

Are Menus Prepared In Advance? If Not, Who Decides What Will Be Served?

The goal is to have a head cook on the food truck for each day. When there is no head cook, the director and tour director will assist volunteers with organization and general guidance. If a head cook is scheduled, they prepare a menu in advance or have one prepared for them by the food coordinator. Schedules change and adjustments need to be made and the head cook usually works with the volunteer crew for determining each day's menu and outlining foods for vegetarians, gluten free, and other dietary needs.



Approximately every 7-10 days, we receive a large “food drop” from our bulk food supplier. We supplement these new items (plus whatever we have left on the truck from previous drops) with fresh grocery items such as fresh veggies, fruit, bread, and milk.

Sometimes we get a big delivery of fresh fruit. Sometimes we get donations from parents. Common items donated include cookies, fruit, vegetables and cereal. If you're going to bring cookies, plan to bring at least 400 – two for everyone.

The goal is to serve members 4,500 – 6,000 calories a day. When leftovers get the best of us, we hold a “must go” night where we serve all leftovers in an all-you-can-eat buffet style for Meal 4. Anything the members do not eat is discarded at the end of the night. “Must goes” is a favorite meal for corps members.

What About Dishwashing, Cleaning, And Trash?

There is a lot of clean up. Be prepared to spend a fair amount of time washing and drying dishes. Plates, cups, bowls, napkins, forks, knives, and spoons are disposable. Most everything we cook with is not disposable. We limit the amount of trash we generate as much as possible, but we fill a lot of trash bags and school dumpsters. The food trailer must be kept clean for sanitary reasons.

What Happens If Someone Gets Sick Or Injured?

Find the athletic trainer or tour director. We need all medical decisions to go through the athletic trainer, but we understand that personal may not be instantaneously available. In an emergency situation, use your best judgment or find help as fast as possible. For minor items (an ice bag, Tylenol, Advil, allergy or cold medicines, etc), there is a silver medical cabinet by the entry door with supplies and ice bags are in the freezer. All medicine must be signed out by the member so we have a record of it - there is a clipboard near the medicine cabinet. For major medical decisions, please be patient and wait for the athletic trainer.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE COLTS FOOD PROGRAM

Peanut Butter and Jelly

Peanut butter and jelly are set out every meal. Members use this as an appetizer, a supplement for additional calories, or a fall back when they really don't like or fill up on what we are serving.

Every Morning

A hot entree and protein are key at this meal, along with all other meals. Corps members can also have all the cereal they can eat. An assortment of cereals is set out on a table in front of the food trailer near the serving line. Milk goes out with the cereal. We serve orange juice at most breakfast meals. Remember to set out cups for juice.

Milk, Bread, And Juice

Juice and water should be checked and made before each meal and before leaving a site. It is critical to fill juice and water tanks before serving remotely (or there's no water). We serve milk at meals 1 and 4, and corps members can drink as much as they want. We purchase and use about 8-12 gallons of milk per day. We use typically use about 40 loaves of bread per day (10 loaves per meal).

Paper Products

Corps members should use one plate and one cup only for each meal. Seconds are served on the same plate. If they toss the plate, they lose their chance for more food. Check utensils, cups, and napkins prior to the start of each meal. Don't set out utensils unless they are necessary for what you are serving that meal (example - no knives with soup).

Paper products are not a renewable resource. We do our best to think and plan what is really needed to serve the meal. Try to really fill that plate rather than go to a second plate or bowl, and as opposed to making students wait for seconds.

Quantities

Plates are counted out prior to each meal to monitor serving size and provides a count of who has been through the line. This helps with serving (50 plates for each pan, for example) and monitoring time.

Their plate must be full! With the calories we seek to provide, one plate often has the same amount of food you may serve at home in an entire day. Members must get 4500 calories per day at the start of tour, and 6000 calories per day by the end of tour. While adults don't necessarily need the same quantities, please offer the same portions and options to everyone. And remember, it's totally okay if food touches - the members will not care.

Make sure they are fed – it's more food on one plate at one meal than you may feed someone on an entire normal day at home. ALWAYS SERVE 2 OF EACH MAIN ENTREE. Our member serving size should be no less than double a traditional serving size. Feed them extra to start, as they may not have time for seconds. Seconds are served at the discretion of the head cook and based on knowing how many more need to come through the line (based on the counted plates) and how much food is left.

Salt, pepper, hot sauce and pickles should be set out for every meal. Remember to put out ketchup, mustard, relishes, or ranch dressing when needed so students can use as they'd like.



Serving Timelines

It is very important that meals be served on time; however, be prepared for a late arrival of Colts in the event they are delayed or distant from fields. We have learned to cook and hold. While the staff works to have them at the meal on time, sometimes it's a long walk, and sometimes we don't want to sacrifice a teachable moment. Just know that everyone is sensitive to your time as a volunteer, and a delay is not meant to offend. If students are let out early, you are not expected to serve early unless asked, and students are reminded of this regularly.

The members' time is sensitive, and their routines and routines and schedules are critical. Time out of the sun is also significant, too. The goal is to serve in 200 people in 20 minutes. We don't want members standing in line in the sun, as their meals are an opportunity to get out of the sun and relax.

It is important to keep the serving line moving quickly. We try not to overdo options. Corps members are generally ready for a rest, and speed is more important than customization. Something as simple as “peas or corn” or “oreo or wafer” can feel like a big decision and slow down the line. The general rule is to serve it unless asked not to by the student. Any options for the meal can be placed on tables where members serve themselves and have time to think about their options. For example, lettuce salad, bowls of vegetables or fruits, oatmeal toppings, etc can be set out and served in this way.

45 minutes are set aside for serving members, staff, and volunteers (but remember the goal is to get them through the line in 20 minutes or less). If a member comes after 45 minutes, please ask them to go to the back door of the trailer. While we don’t want them to go hungry, it’s critical to remind them of the timeline, and find out if something else is going on to slow them down. Provide some food and send them on their way. Let the tour director or director know any issues you are having or students having issues.

Serving Order

Staff and students are generally on the same schedule, so we want to get them through the line first. The tour team, drivers, and other volunteers are often on unique or different schedules, or sometimes have flexible timelines. For adults arriving after the allotted serving time, or on their own timeline, while they are welcome to eat, it’s expected for them to be self-serve from the back door. If possible, it’s great to save some extra plates for those we know have not made it to a meal yet. Visitors and friends are welcome to dine with us, quantities and time allowing.

Regardless of what happens and our general “rules,” please remember our initial cook truck mantra - The Colts cook truck must be the most welcoming place in drum corps, and if they’re hungry, feed them.



Specific Cook Things to Remember

- A daily schedule is posted every morning.
- Emptying the trash and doing dishes are everyone’s jobs.
- Everything in drum corps is communal - sleeping, showers, traveling, the cook truck are community settings.
- Clean hands are critical!!! Wash your hands. Often. Hand sanitizer is kept stocked at the front of the serving line and placed on tables with must goes, cereal, pb&j or other self-serves. Remind corps members, staff, and volunteers to use it before they eat - even if they’ve just washed.
- Stock the utensils, napkins, cups, and bowls before/after each meal. Only open bins needed for a meal.
- Label and write the date on leftovers before putting them into the refrigerator or freezer. We use painter’s tape and permanent markers
- Aluminum pans and other cooking pans should be sprayed with cooking oil whenever possible. Be kind to those who will be washing dishes next (because it might be you!). Regular metal pans can often be lined with parchment liner sheets or foil to lessen sticking and aid in faster clean up.
- Cooks need to follow the same rules as corps members when it comes to adequate nutrition and hydration. Don’t skip meals and drink lots of fluids.
- Ice packs (bags filled with ice in the freezer) should be available for corps members at all times. If you use the second to last one, please refill the stock or let the athletic trainer know.
- There is a medicine cabinet on the kitchen trailer to help serve everyone’s needs. Corps members are expected to ask for assistance rather than just serve themselves, and a record should be kept for the athletic trainer if they are not present.
- If time and energy allow, we like to think of fun things to do for the members. Examples are: a food theme to match the locale, a special or silly food item, and decorations for the food trailer or the cooks.
- During the course of your stay, you may be asked for assistance by staff, members, drivers, parents, etc. Sometimes the answer should be yes and sometimes it should be no. It’s usually a good idea to check with the head cook. When we all remember we are there for the “kids,” the answers are generally easy to figure out
- Please don’t ever leave for any length of time without letting the head cook know.

Parents And Visitors

Parents, without you, none of this would be possible. Thank you! We encourage you to be a part of our summer. Please find some time to spend with us by contacting our volunteer coordinator, Bill Simoniak at volunteers@colts.org to see when you might be of service. We do ask volunteers be 22 years of age or older. While you're with us on tour, we're happy to house you, feed you, and give you a pass for the show. We understand it's exciting to see your child in "performance mode," but we ask you not interfere with the staff and their work. Any questions may be addressed to the tour or corps director.

Keep informed through our website or through the virtual cook truck (link at www.colts.org) with information on daily schedules and other happenings. If you're visiting the road, the schedule can be found on the large whiteboard on the kitchen truck. Be aware that schedules are subject to change quickly and sometimes without much warning. If you attend a show or visit a rehearsal site, the cook truck is a great meeting point to find your child. At rehearsal sites, we ask you to please not enter the member buses or sleeping areas. If we have a free day and you want to spend it with your member, we ask you request permission from the tour or corps director, and then have your member back to the predetermined location by the scheduled time. All rehearsals are open to the public, and we invite you to attend. If you're feeling generous, the corps loves treats, especially fresh fruits, vegetables, or cookies.

Don't be afraid to ask questions!



Hearing about your kid's standing ovation is different than being a part of it! You won't regret what you had to do to be here. Get out on tour, even if only for a day or two. You can help for a day, but more importantly, you'll get to share in this amazing experience with your kid!

Parents, whatever it takes, join us on the final days of the season. You'll gain an appreciation of what this experience has meant to your student. You won't regret it, no matter how challenging it may be to be there.

Members are under the direct supervision of Colts staff. Unless you witness a dangerous or bizarre situation, please do not interfere, but talk to us privately if you have questions. Your input is welcome and desired. You are welcome to observe rehearsals, but please don't cause a distraction for your member or the corps. Please use discretion (and bring a zoom lens).

A run through of the full show is generally performed the last 30 minutes of a rehearsal day (or with lights). Get to a full run through whenever you can. It is always amazing to see and hear.

A second reminder - when visiting a housing site, we ask that you not enter the sleeping area or the member buses. This is "home" to the members. Please meet at the kitchen truck or anywhere else.

Bring stuff, or shop online! If you aren't able to make it onto tour but would still like to help support the corps, you can donate online at the Colts Mall through a variety of options - purchase a meal, a pizza party for your member's birthday, or fresh fruits and veggies for a day.

Members appreciate care packages and goodies, but please be sensitive, and sometimes discreet. Pizza or McDonald's is great, but feasting with nothing to share can be awkward with a large group. Bring enough for your member to share, or find a personal space to have a private family feast. Share or disappear is the best rule of thumb.

“Scheduled volunteers” and “Visitors”

We welcome visits from parents at any time, but we make a clear distinction between scheduled volunteers and visitors. If you travel on your own with kids as a visitor, please make sure they are cooperative and stay out of member and adult sleeping areas.

Scheduled volunteers get passes for every show and will be able to see the Colts at every show free of charge. When visiting, plan to pay for show tickets. We have a limited number of passes that we issue only to scheduled volunteers. All visitors can eat with us, but we ask they do so only after all the kids, staff, and scheduled volunteers have eaten.

You may take your member out for a meal during free time as long as you follow our schedule. Members may not leave during an EPL (eat, pack, load) meal. Remember to seek permission from the tour director before leaving the group, and these trips are best during a Meal 4.

If you have a personal vehicle on tour, the Colts assume no risk, including mechanical or liability. Colts insurance covers only vehicles owned, leased, and operated by the corps. Please always follow the last vehicle in our convoy. We do not enjoy small vehicles between the buses and semis in our convoy.

We encourage visitors any time, including during finals week, but we must insist only scheduled volunteers who have completed a background check stay overnight with us at a housing site. Please call with any questions or clarifications about your status, especially for finals week, as it relates to housing.

Summer birthdays

If your member has a summer birthday, let us know if you would like to try to arrange something special. While it is not always possible to celebrate on exactly the right day, we do our best to create a special experience for your member. It is an appreciated treat for everyone. You can visit the Colts Mall to pay online even if not on tour. Arrangements should be handled at least a week in advance.

We can offer a variety of choices assisted by or staff and volunteers:

1. Colts Meal \$300
2. Cadets Meal \$150
3. “Birthday Pizza Party” for Full Corps in your member’s honor \$400
4. Fresh Fruit Treat \$50

THANK YOU!

WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE YOU AS PART OF THE RED TEAM FAMILY!