

**Contacts**

- Danny Napolitano, Director of Events: [dnapolitano@cvsr.com](mailto:dnapolitano@cvsr.com)
  - Kenzie Conner
  - Anna Hanigosky
  - Polar Hotline: 1- 800-468-4070 x 236
  - Head Elf (Akron)
  - Head Elf (Rockside)
- Sign up: crew.CVSR.com

**General Responsibilities**

- Head Elf
  - Oversee operation, Addresses issues/problems, Works out of Café Car, Will need to Inventory boxes
- Leader
  - Leader in their train car – pacing activities, Passenger Experience, Entertainment
- Assistants
  - Help with props and serving hot cocoa & cookies, Passenger Experience, Entertainment
- Trainmen
  - Conductor Character, Safety, Logistics, Addresses issues/problems
- Santa
  - a plump, white-bearded, red-suited, and jolly old man in modern folklore who delivers presents to children at Christmastime — called also *Santa*
- Platform Manager
  - General passenger flow at boarding depots

**Train Car Setup**

- 18-80 passengers per train car
  - Ask Head Elf how many to expect
- Get Santa Entrance Details
  - Ask Trainman when Santa will come to your train car and which side he will enter from
  - Code word for Santa: “Reindeer” (Don’t say the “S” word in front of the kids – it’s a surprise!)
  - 5, 4, 3, Santa Plans
- Bathroom
  - Know where the nearest one is (if not in own car)
    - Make sure it is operating properly, has toilet paper, etc.
    - Encourage kids to go before the trip to North Pole to avoid the double Santa experience as they pass between cars
- Supply Box
  - Contains:
    - Scripts, Story props, Aprons, Musical instruments, The Silver Bell in box, Box of small silver bells, Name tags
    - Let Head Elf know if anything is missing
  - Put everything back at the end of the evening
    - Refill box with small silver bells
    - Let Head Elf know if anything is missing
- Props
  - Story props should be set out accordingly. Books are oversized and face outward
  - Sanitize whistle before and after in front of passengers if an older child uses it
  - Squeegees and sing-a-long books should be easily accessible
    - Squeegees out for the North Pole and *song books out for after the North Pole*
- Hot Cocoa & Cookies
  - Count out cookies, put them in napkins, Arrange in basket
  - Count out hot cocoa cups
  - Stir hot cocoa & test temperature
  - If in deluxe car, count mugs and ensure that you have whipped cream
- **\*Standardization\***
  - ***Each guest should have a similar experience – across different cars, days, times***

- **Please do not bring any of your own activities or gifts, such as: glitter, stickers, candy, trinkets, stamps, etc.**
- **No alcohol is sold on the Polar Express**

### Getting Into Character

- Wear Conductor, **steward, chef, waiter, etc.** clothes-bring creativity to new roles
- Have a backstory for yourself
  - When asked where you are really from...I'm from the North Pole! My job is to {fill in the blank}!
- Elves don't have cell phones. From Arrival into the station at the beginning of the night, to the departure at the end of the night, you should not touch your cell phone.
- Elves don't sit down and eat cookies, check their phone, or talk to grownups about non-elf things.
- Be kind and courteous to trainman and other volunteers. You need their help.
- Remember that this may be a family's one shot at riding the Polar Express, so treat it as such.
- **You can embellish the story with extra sound effects but please do not change it.**
- Parents' Name Tags
  - Can use their first name, or ask kids "Who did you bring with you today?"
    - Write **the child's** response on the name tag. ("Nana," "Daddy,")
- When asked if we're going to get to see Santa...
  - "We will get to see Santa, but he is really busy this time of year!" (etc)
- Do the cookies have nuts?
  - If you have a food allergy, please note that there are no nuts in the cookies. However, the elves can get a little wild while baking, so nuts may have been present.
  - Also-cookies do have gluten

### Schedule of Events

- **Volunteers Board Train – 5:00pm**
  - Akron Train – Board at Botzum Trailhead
    - Please be aware of the long-term construction on Riverview Road Bridge and W Bath
  - Independence Train – Board at Fitzwater Train Yard (7600 Canal Rd)
- **Leave Elf Parking Lot – 5:15pm**
- **On Train 5:00-6:00pm**
  - Check In
  - Car Assignments
  - Eat Dinner (provided free)
  - Meet assistants, servers, trainman in your car
    - Check Prop Box
      - Make sure you have everything you need
      - Set up story/props/etc.
    - Let the trainmen know when to punch the tickets---it's as Santa leaves
  - Dress up and get into character
    - Do a microphone check-batteries are in the café
    - Make sure all volunteers in the car know their roles
- **Arrive in Akron/Independence – 6:00pm**
  - Wave to families/children upon arrival from inside train cars
- **Guests Board Train – 6:00-7:00pm**
  - Smile and greet everyone who boards
  - Seat passengers- trainman is outside boarding
  - Name Tags- SO IMPORTANT
  - Prep Hot Cocoa
    - Stir again
    - Check temperature again
  - Encourage guests to go to concessions car now (souvenirs, snacks, bottled water), it will close once we leave the stations and to the bathroom.
  - **Akron-off** train gift shop will be open at 5:30 and will still be open when train returns.
  - Interact with the families: "What do you want for Christmas?" "What do you like most about Christmas?"
  - Get a feel for who your helper adults might be (5 Golden Rings Grandpa)
- **Train Departs for North Pole AKRON VERSION– 7:00pm**

- Introduction of Lead, Assistants, Trainman (ie, "Conductor")
  - Safety Info-
    - Overview: stay seated, no going between cars, bathroom (do not use during story or at North Pole), floorboard heaters are hot, etc.
  - **7:04-7:12 pm** Story Plays (8:34)
    - Leader/Conductor shows pictures, do sound effects, etc.
    - Assistant can prep hot cocoa & cookies
  - **7:15 pm-7:21 pm** Hot Chocolate Song plays (1:48)x3
  - **7:22 pm-7:30** **Serve Hot Chocolate and Cookies**
    - All four folks serve hot chocolate and cookies.
  - Clean up hot cocoa and cookie trash
- **North Pole Viewing – 7:40-8:00pm**
    - Give kids squeegees to wipe down windows
    - We do not narrate the North Pole! Let music play! *Rockin' On Top of the World (2:35)*, *Believe (4:18)*, *Suite for Polar Express (6:05)*
    - Santa will be stationary in front of the house instead of on the sleigh.
  - **8:00pm-Leave North Pole –**
  - Sing-along will begin
  - **8:05 First Arrival Cars:** Trainman turns lights on
  - Prior to Santa arriving: lead in *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* (acapella)
  - **8:10** Santa Arrives in Car!
    - Prompt Santa with names of kids, hand Santa silver bells (every passenger gets a bell), offer to take photos for family, etc.
    - Collect any remaining trash from passengers
  - Immediately after Santa leaves you sing *Jingle Bells*
  - Continue singing carols in the song book
  - Pajama Parade
    - Encourage participation but please do not force it!
  - **8:05 Second Arrival Cars:** Trainman turns lights on
  - Pajama Parade
  - **8:30** Lead *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* (acapella)
  - **8:35** Santa arrives in Car!
    - Prompt Santa with names of kids, hand Santa silver bells (every passenger gets a bell), offer to take photos for family,
  - **8:55** Santa leaves you sing *Jingle Bells*
  - **Dead time is okay time past Big Bend.**
    - Can fill with Christmas jokes and Christmas fun facts that will be found in the supply bin.
  - **Arrive Back at Akron – 9:00pm**
    - Say goodbye and thank guests again
    - Ask Families what their favorite part of the night was, what did they learn, etc
  - **Depart Akron/Independence – 9:15pm** (appx)
    - Clean up
      - Sweep, Refill box with silver bells, Put everything back in Box
  - **Volunteers Off Train at Parking Lot – 10:00pm**
- **Train Departs for North Pole ROCKSIDE VERSION– 7:10pm**
    - Introduction of Lead, Assistants, Trainman (ie, "Conductor")
    - Safety Info-
      - Overview: stay seated, no going between cars, bathroom (do not use during story or at North Pole), floorboard heaters are hot, etc.

- **7:14-7:22 pm** Story Plays (8:34)
  - Leader/Conductor shows pictures, additional sound effects, etc.
  - Assistant can prep hot cocoa & cookies
- **7:23 pm-7:29 pm** Hot Chocolate Song plays (1:48)x3
- **7:30 pm-7:40** **Serve Hot Chocolate and Cookies**
  - All four folks serve hot chocolate and cookies.
- Clean up hot cocoa and cookie trash
- **7:40 pm-8:00 pm Pajama Parade**
  - Encourage participation but please do not force it!
- **North Pole Viewing – 8:00-8:20** (Rockside)
  - Give kids squeegees to wipe down windows
  - We do not narrate the North Pole! Let music play! *Rockin' On Top of the World (2:35)*, *Believe (4:18)*, *Suite from Polar Express(6:05)*
  - Santa will be stationary in front of the house instead of on the sleigh
- **8:20pm-Leave North Pole –**
- Sing-along will begin
- **8:25 First Arrival Cars:** Trainman turns lights on
- Prior to Santa arriving: lead in *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* (acapella)
- **8:30** Santa Arrives in Car!
  - Prompt Santa with names of kids, hand Santa silver bells (every passenger gets a bell), offer to take photos for family, etc.
  - Collect any remaining trash from passengers
- **8:45** Immediately after Santa leaves you sing *Jingle Bells*
- Continue singing the rest of the carols that are in the songbook
- **8:25 Second Arrival Cars:** Trainman turns lights on
- Begin singing the carols from the songbook
- **8:40** Lead *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* (acapella)
- **8:45** Santa arrives in Car!
  - Prompt Santa with names of kids, hand Santa silver bells (every passenger gets a bell), offer to take photos for family,
- **8:58** Santa leaves you sing *Jingle Bells*
- **Dead time is okay time past Fitzwater.**
- Can fill the time with Christmas jokes and Christmas fun facts that will be found in the supply box.
- **Arrive Back at Rockside – 9:00pm**
  - Say goodbye and thank guests again
  - Ask families what their favorite part of the night was, what did they learn, etc.
- **Depart Rockside – 9:20pm** (appx)
  - Clean up
    - Sweep, Refill box with silver bells, Put everything back in Box
- **Volunteers Off Train at Fitzwater – 9:45pm**