

*Meet an employee  
who helps make  
residents' dreams  
come true.*

**BRIAN RUSSO**  
DIRECTOR OF THE VILLAGES ENTERTAINMENT

# Q&A

## WITH BRIAN

PHOTOS BY ROB WILKERSON



### **What attracted you to work in The Villages?**

Everyone I knew who worked here talked about how great the people here are and how much they enjoy it here. That plus the fact that there was an entertainment industry job available made it the perfect fit.

### **Tell us about your career and educational background.**

I was born and raised in Natick, Massachusetts, and after graduating high school, I decided I was sick of the cold weather and snow and came down to Florida for college. After a little over two years at the University of Central Florida studying business management, I transferred to Full Sail University, where I earned an associate degree in recording arts and a Bachelor of Science in music business. Not long after graduating, I got my job here at Entertainment.

### **How did you get involved with The Villages Entertainment?**

At the time, my wife, Cassie, was working as an audio engineer for The Villages, and she connected me to The Villages Entertainment. I had gone to school for music business and was looking for any way to get my foot in the door in the entertainment industry. Fortunately, there was an opening and I got the job. I've been with the company six years.

### **What's it like to be the director?**

I wear a lot of hats here at Entertainment. I oversee the operation of the entertainment on the squares, the bar huts on the squares, the box office, the concerts at Savannah Center and other recreation centers, and the audio and lighting for all of our events and special events, such as festivals and celebrations. I have a great team of people here who all contribute greatly to these various areas with everything from advertising and administrative coordination to the production itself.

### **How do you like working for Entertainment?**

I absolutely love it. Every day brings something new and best of all, I get to work in music and the arts all day. Not many people get to do something they love for a job, but I get to.

### **What's your favorite part of your job?**

To be honest it's hard to pick just one, but it would have to be finding and booking acts for Savannah Center. It's so exciting going from finding an act all the way to them actually hitting the stage and having hundreds of people come out and enjoy it. It's incredibly rewarding knowing I played a large role in so many people having a memorable experience at a show.

### **What are your other hobbies or activities?**

In my spare time, I like woodworking and playing guitar. However, I spend most of my time that I'm not at work with my wife and 2-year-old son, Elliot. Every weekend, we try to give him a new experience or take him out to do something he'll enjoy.

### **Anything to add?**

I'm so glad to be a part of The Villages family and to be able to bring entertainment and enjoyment to Villages residents every single day. I'm very lucky and grateful to be here and to get to do something that I love every day. ■

— COMPILED BY KATHRYN DEEN

To learn more about The Villages Entertainment and upcoming events, visit [thevillagesentertainment.com](http://thevillagesentertainment.com).