



2024 IMPACT NEXTGEN: ALYSSA KITCHEN

Posted by Wendy Pearl | Sep 10, 2024 | IMPACT: NextGen, Awards



Alyssa Kitchen

General Manager, The Capitol Theatre

In July, Alyssa Kitchen was named the first female general manager of The Capitol Theatre in Port Chester, New York.

The theater opened in 1926 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Located 30 miles from New York City, the 2,000-capacity venue is known as the “original rock palace” hosting the Grateful Dead, Black Sabbath, Chuck Berry, David Bowie, Janis Joplin, Pink Floyd and The Rolling Stones. Jerry Garcia called it one of his two favorite venues in the U.S.

“I’d be lying if I said I had a lifelong dream of working in the music industry,” said Kitchen, who didn’t know who Jerry Garcia was when she got her first industry job in 2013. “It was more like the industry found me.”

After graduating with an accounting degree from Fairleigh Dickinson University, Kitchen was working for a real estate company when she received an email from Relix Media Group asking her to interview for a staff accountant position with the music magazine. She learned the business from Dale Hirschman, who led the finance department for Relix’s parent company, Dayglo Ventures.

“She not only taught me everything about the music industry, but she constantly pushed me to do better and work harder,” Kitchen said. “I still call her to this day if I need advice or a different perspective on a situation.”

Kitchen, 36, was born and raised in Paramus, New Jersey. She moved to The Capitol Theater in 2015 and was named assistant general manager and director of finance during the pandemic. Reopening the venue after a two-year hiatus was her greatest career challenge and accomplishment.

"It meant both cleaning up years of financial statements and helping get the venue show ready after being closed," Kitchen said. "It was an exciting, but also extremely challenging, time. We didn't have offices, our IT infrastructure had fallen apart, I was the only person working in the finance department and we needed to roll out a new point-of-sale system. In the end, everything got done and we were ready to go on our reopening night."

A member of the LGBTQ+ community, Kitchen says her ability to adapt is one of her strengths and her background in finance helped prepare her for her current role bridging the gap between corporate and operational sides of the business stewarding a century-old venue that needs constant attention.

"Previously, while focusing exclusively on finance, I didn't fully understand what was happening operationally," explained Kitchen. "Now that I have an understanding of both sides of the equation, I can better identify areas for improvement and have a greater impact on the success of the venue."

Forward leaning, Kitchen is excited to see how technology and AI will enhance the experiences of both fans and artists in the future and she offered this advice for the next generation of venue professionals: "I would say be patient. You aren't going to get to where you want to be overnight. Put in the hard work and everything will happen at the right time."