



## Halleck Creek Ranch Volunteer Opportunities

### Volunteering at Halleck Creek Ranch

As a nonprofit organization, we depend upon the commitment of volunteers to help staff our equine-assisted services and therapeutic riding programs, upkeep our ranch, and assist in administrative duties. Each year over 14,000 hours of time are required to provide 4,000 hours of programming to children and adults with special needs. The relationship between participants, volunteers, and horses establish connections that benefit our entire community. In addition to giving back to your community, volunteers learn a great deal about horsemanship, leadership, and about the issues facing people with disabilities. All training is provided; no prior experience is necessary.

### All volunteers must:

- Attend a Volunteer Orientation (Program Volunteers must also complete a Level One Training)
- Pay a non-refundable \$40 enrollment fee.
- Complete, sign, and return the required documents provided in the on-boarding packet, including a background check for volunteers over 18.
- Sign in and out of their volunteer shifts
- Be prepared to have fun, get dirty, follow instructions for safe and effective horse handling, and LEARN A LOT!

### PROGRAM VOLUNTEERING

Every volunteer begins as a Level One volunteer, even if they have past experience with horses or at another therapeutic riding center. Program Volunteers at any level may be asked to assist in horse care-taking and general projects around the ranch. Regardless of the amount of time you have been volunteering at HCR, or what level you achieve, we ask that you always be willing to do Level One tasks if they are required. Our success relies on the willingness of our team to pitch in whenever and wherever necessary for the benefit of the entire ranch.

### Level One - Side-walker

Side-walkers are directly responsible for the participant's safety as well as assisting them during their lesson. They help the participant focus on the instructor's cues and aid them when necessary. Side-walkers should always help to promote as much of the participant's independence as possible. Side-walkers may sometimes be asked to help physically hold and balance a participant using a number of different side-walking "holds" (to be taught at the training). Situations may also arise where an emergency dismount is required, upon which the side-walker will perform such duties with the assistance and direction of other volunteers and/or staff.

\*Due to the current health and safety concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers will only be eligible to side-walk on ride if they are fully vaccinated for the coronavirus. If unvaccinated, they are invited to assist with groundwork lessons which maintain greater distance from volunteer-to-participant throughout the lesson.

### Level Two – Horse Handler

Horse handlers are responsible for leading the horses for the participants during their rides. They are directly responsible for both the rider's as well as the horse's safety at all times. To properly and safely lead the horse, a leader must keep their rider's and side-walker's safety in mind by communicating with both the rider and the side-walker when necessary. Volunteers should always help to promote as much of the rider's independence as possible. Leaders must pay attention and always be aware of their surrounding and potential hazards (vehicles, other horses, other people, objects, etc.) and must act safely and accordingly.

### Level Three – Team Leader

Team Leaders are volunteers who have shown an admirable level of commitment to the program, an ability to lead their peers, and a high level of capability with both horses as well as riders with special needs. Team Leaders are individuals who have been specially selected to act as role models by training and leading their fellow volunteers. They are knowledgeable in catching horses, grooming, tacking/untacking, leading, side-walking and have the ability to competently train new volunteers in these areas.

In addition to the regular volunteer time commitment, Team Leaders are required to attend annual trainings given by the HCR staff and participate in one volunteer training day a year. Team Leaders are also asked to volunteer at one of our annual events, such as horse shows and parades.

### Program Volunteer Physical Requirements

- Volunteers must be 14 years or older.
- Able to lift 40 lbs.
- Able to withstand being on one's feet for an extended period of time.
- Able to walk in deep arena sand for a varied amount of time.
- Walk on hilly and uneven terrain during our trail rides (~2 miles round trip.)
- Able to comfortably support our participants while walking next to a horse.

### Program Volunteer Time Requirements

Our Program Volunteers play a critical role in what is needed to make our lessons successful. The essential relationship between participant, horse, and volunteer builds and strengthens over time, providing the greatest fulfillment to all involved. Because of this, we require the following minimum commitments when first volunteering at Halleck Creek Ranch:

- Volunteers must make a 2-session commitment to at least one shift during our weekday rides or 2 Saturday shifts a month with our Saturday trail rides. Our sessions run for

8-weeks at a time, followed by a 2-week session break for training and volunteer enrichment activities.

- Volunteers ages 14-17 must make a 2-session commitment of 2 Saturdays a month with our Saturday trail rides (hours are adjusted during school and can expand during the summer.)
- Shifts are scheduled 5 days a week, Tuesday - Saturday

## **FACILITY VOLUNTEERING**

There is a tremendous amount of work to be done on the ranch outside of assisting with program activities. This creates a range of opportunities for people looking to volunteer in other ways.

### Facility Volunteer Physical Qualifications and Tasks:

It's important to note that many physical tasks are adaptable for volunteers depending on their personal capabilities. Some general qualifications include:

- Able to lift (up to 40 lbs). Ex: carrying feed, heavy tools, pushing full wheel barrows, etc.
- Understands basic use of barn equipment and gardening tools such as pitchforks, shovels, weed whacker, etc. Ex: raking the hay barn, cleaning of paddocks, gardening/pruning, mowing, etc.
- Able to assist with simple equipment fixes. Ex: fixing leaking water pipes
- Able to withstand being on one's feet for an extended period of time.
- Those with a current drivers license may be asked to drive the ATV to complete certain tasks, under proper supervision or training.
- Able to listen to direction, eager to learn, get dirty, have fun, and work well in groups with others!

### Facility Volunteer Time Requirements

Shifts are scheduled 5 days a week Tuesday - Saturday between the hours of 8am - 2pm.

Depending on the current needs and ongoing projects at the ranch, Facility Volunteers may be asked to come outside of these hours on the discretion of our Ranch Caretaker and Volunteer Coordinator. We ask that all Facility Volunteers commit to at least two shifts a month for the first 6 months of their time with us.

## **Serious Commitment**

We always ask potential volunteers to seriously evaluate their schedules, other commitments, and physical well-being before they join our Volunteer Team. Halleck Creek Ranch's programs are 95% volunteer driven and our participants depend on the volunteers to facilitate their program experience. Volunteers are expected to attend their scheduled shift every week/month, or properly communicate when they are unable to make it. Missing a scheduled shift can impact our ability to provide services to the people we serve.

We hope you will continue to volunteer beyond the minimum commitment as our experienced volunteers are our most valuable resource!