

VOLUNTEER POLICY



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Introduction

1.1 Volunteers are essential to the success of our non-profit organization. Reigning Hope Ranch (RHR) values each volunteer. We are committed to providing a healthy work environment in which volunteers can experience the joy that comes from serving selflessly among our equine partners. Every participant inherently supports our mission to provide equine therapy for those with emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual challenges while maintaining safety standards. Because volunteers and interns comprise the majority of the staff, their presence and efforts are vital. Volunteers champion routine facility upkeep. They assist with client lessons as horse leaders and sidewalkers. Pursuant to skill level, a volunteer may aid with horse care: feeding, watering, grooming, and walking for exercise. For all their efforts, RHR treasures volunteers for their roles served. We welcome you to take part.

1.2 The general purpose of this policy is to detail the expectations and rights that both RHR and its volunteers possess. This policy will also specify the terms and conditions of volunteering. Participation is contingent upon acknowledgment and a working understanding of the policy. Changes or exceptions to this policy may be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator. Any approvals to such requests must be documented and kept in the volunteer's file.

1.3 By definition, a volunteer performs a service willingly without monetary compensation. At RHR, the service promotes equine-based activities and therapies that foster hope and healing. The volunteer gains experience and assists as a team member in our community. A symbiotic relationship develops for the good of the community, the organization, and the volunteers.

Volunteer Job Description

2.1 Volunteers perform a variety of tasks. These may include lesson-assisting as horse leaders and sidewalkers, performing basic cleaning, organizing, and maintaining the facility and implements, mucking stalls and run-ins, cleaning paddocks and pastures, and assisting with hay, bedding, and feed deliveries. Horse care assistance may include watering, feeding, grooming, tacking, bathing, and walking horses for exercise. Sweeping, dusting, and cleaning tack and grooming tools are less rigorous chores, but most tasks are arduous. For this reason, volunteers should be able to lift and carry forty pounds repetitively.

2.2 The Volunteer Coordinator facilitates volunteer hours and scheduling. The volunteer hours are determined with respect for the ranch as personal property and in consideration for therapeutic appointments that require confidentiality. Once orientation is completed, volunteers sign up for time slots in one-hour increments on an online scheduling platform. Alternatively, a volunteer may schedule by communicating with the Volunteer Coordinator. Special arrangements outside of regular volunteer hours may be possible. Please consult the Volunteer Coordinator to request such hours. No volunteer may arrive at the ranch without prior arrangement. If any scheduling conflicts or emergencies arise for a shift, volunteers must contact the Volunteer Coordinator as far in advance as possible so that replacements may ensure operational requirements. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to sign up a week (or even a month) in advance and commit to a regular weekly schedule to efficiently meet the needs of the ranch, the programs, and the volunteer team. Although much independence is granted and expected for our volunteers, reliable attendance as agreed, timeliness, thoroughness of tasks undertaken, and communication are crucial elements within volunteer teamwork.

2.3 As a reflection of the mission of Reigning Hope Ranch, RHR emphasizes professional conduct while on the property and while representing the ranch off the property, such as at events. Such awareness includes utilizing language that honors our core values and our commitment to the community we serve. Volunteers must refer to the appropriate administrator when applicable and refrain from making any public statement counterproductive to the ranch and its mission. Whether privately or in front of others, sexual harassment, including the following types, is strictly prohibited: inappropriate comments about a person's body, name-calling, sexual jokes, using sexual orientation as an insult, sexual suggestions, or spreading rumors of a sexual nature about a person. Volunteers must dress appropriately for farmwork functionality and weather conditions. T-shirts or tank tops and modest shorts are appropriate in summer. Bare midriffs are not permitted. Close-toed footwear must be worn when in contact with horses, waterproof work shoes or boots are recommended. Work gloves are advisable for many chores in any season. Hats may be desirable for warmth or sun protection. In winter, layers are advised to provide adequate protection from varying Maine temperatures and precipitation. Boot grippers are recommended for icy conditions but should be removed to enter the barn since they are slippery on concrete and may damage the rubber floor mats. Volunteers must bring sufficient drinking water to stay hydrated while working. We welcome a short break for hydration, rest, snacking, and horse visiting.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

3.1 RHR welcomes volunteers from all stations of life who have the heart, desire, and ability to serve the community. The organization appreciates and honors the knowledge and aptitudes individuals bring to the volunteer program. RHR seeks to match volunteers to tasks that best utilize their interests and skills. Opportunities are available to develop new skills and competencies for more involvement within the volunteer scope. Staff will endeavor to provide

clear and concise communication for each volunteer. Volunteers accept responsibilities within their commitment to the organization and agree to be held accountable.

3.2 At RHR, we protect our clients' private and privileged health information. Volunteers are strictly prohibited from sharing any protected information that they may have been exposed to while serving at RHR, including the identity of any equine-assisted psychotherapy client. While normally not scheduled simultaneously, if an overlap occurs, volunteers must stay outside of the hearing range of therapists with their clients. The client's legal right to confidentiality is a sacred trust at RHR, and no breach will be tolerated.

3.3 RHR will consider applicants without regard for race, color, national origin, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, social status, political beliefs, or any other defining factor.

3.4 When RHR receives a volunteer application, the Volunteer Coordinator and the Executive Director will review it. If the application is rejected, the applicant will receive an email that may detail the reason(s). The state of Maine does not require that reasons be provided for the rejection of an application or the separation of a volunteer. If provided, it will be at the staff's discretion.

3.5 If an application is accepted, the Volunteer Coordinator will schedule an orientation with the new volunteer. Generally, this will include four orientation sessions to provide the new volunteer with thorough acclimation and understanding of volunteer tasks. Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions of the Volunteer Coordinator at any stage. Changes occur often. RHR continuously adjusts practices, changes tools and implements, and develops the facility to meet the ongoing commitment to the organization and programs, including supporting the horses'

health developments. The Volunteer Coordinator will make every effort to keep volunteers apprised and welcomes communication to promote consistent practices and a cohesive team.

3.6 If a volunteer has been inactive for three weeks, an inquiry will be made regarding their inactivity. If the volunteer does not respond and the inactivity period reaches thirty days, they will be considered suspended and ineligible for volunteer opportunities until they re-establish with RHR. Beyond sixty days, a volunteer must re-orient with the Volunteer Coordinator to re-establish.

3.7 In the event a volunteer needs medical leave, whether for injury, accident, surgery, or prolonged illness, a blank form titled Physician's Authorization to Return to Volunteer Work will be provided to the volunteer by the Volunteer Coordinator. The completed and signed form must be submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator prior to the volunteer resuming scheduling and tasks at the ranch. If the physician recommends restrictions, the restrictions must be honored and adhered to by the volunteer for the entire period stated. If a lapse in attendance corresponds to the inactivity described above, re-orientation must also apply.

3.8 At any time, if RHR determines that the relationship no longer serves either party as initially agreed upon, the volunteer will be required to discontinue volunteering. RHR reserves the right to reject applications or separate from volunteers who do not meet the policy's standards or who display behaviors that do not adhere to the mission statement and values. For transgressions to this policy, at the management's discretion, the Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Executive Director will discuss the transgression and provide an opportunity for the volunteer to correct their behavior. The chance may be waived depending on the severity of the situation and its impact on the volunteer's safety and the overall operation mission. The organization will

not allow for multiple offenses or deviations from the expectations set within the policy. Grounds for dismissal may include the following and may result in immediate discontinuation of volunteer service.

- Unprofessional or unethical behavior
- Breach of client confidentiality
- Unauthorized public statements
- Substance abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Theft
- Unsafe behavior (i.e., not closing gates, not securing horses, not supporting clients)
- Failure to abide by policies and instructions
- Misuse or abuse of materials
- Lack of respect or abuse of staff, clients, or horses
- Failure to meet physical or mental standards for volunteering
- Failure to perform as required

Acknowledgment of Policy

Reading this policy is a requirement of application and each volunteer must review the policy annually. Signature below constitutes agreement to the terms and conditions of volunteering with RHR.

Volunteer Printed Name _____

Volunteer Signature _____ Date _____