

Frequently Asked Questions about Volunteering at Laughing Pony Rescue

General Questions

Q: Where is Laughing Pony Rescue?

A: We are located near [The Bridges at Rancho Santa Fe](#). The residence is private, so we do not share the address publicly.

Q: Do I need to have experience with horses to volunteer?

A: Nope! You do not need to have experience with horses to volunteer. Quite often, the most compatible volunteers are those with no experience or preconceived ideas about how to work with horses.

Q: What kind of volunteer is a good fit for Laughing Pony Rescue?

A: Two of the most important things we look for are reliability and responsibility. Keeping rescue horses safe and healthy requires volunteers who are committed to showing up and following through on their commitments.

Other crucial characteristics are ability to follow directions, willingness to learn and adapt to change. The ranch is a dynamic place; we are continuously adapting to changes in the ponies' health, the weather, availability of help and funds, and unexpected events.

Q: What kind of volunteer positions are available?

A: Most volunteers do what we call the "Ranch Hand" job, which involves mucking stalls, watering and feeding the ponies, ranch maintenance, grooming and helping with pony playtime. Volunteers also help with fundraising, events, marketing, data entry, training, and other important tasks that keep the rescue running smoothly.

Other positions that may be available, include fundraising, marketing, technical help, maintenance, etc.

Q: How do you train volunteers?

A: Ranch Hand volunteers start by shadowing more senior volunteers under the direction of Celia, the president of Laughing Pony Rescue.

Q: What is the volunteer shift schedule?

A: Every day there are two shifts: A morning shift, which starts about 7 a.m. and ends about 1 p.m. and an afternoon shift, which starts about 2 p.m. during standard time, and 3 p.m. during daylight savings time, and ends about 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. Celia will keep you posted on shift times if there are changes.

Q: Will I get to ride the horses if I volunteer?

A: Unfortunately, not all volunteers will be able to participate in exercising the horses, which only occurs during the morning shift. For the safety of the volunteers and the ponies, the decision to permit volunteers to exercise the horses rests with Celia. Priority goes to reliable volunteers with seniority.

Q: What do I need to do if I'm thinking about volunteering?

A: To get started, just email "volunteers@laughingponyrescue.com" with a few words about your interest in volunteering.

A volunteer coordinator will reply with information about volunteering and a link to an application, which we need to receive before you can visit the rescue. Feel free to email or call the volunteer coordinator with any questions or concerns, because this is a friendly, two-way conversation!

Q: What happens after you receive my application?

A: If it looks like you will be a good fit for the rescue, we will schedule a 1-hour visit. At the ranch, you will meet Celia some volunteers, and of course, The Laughing Ponies! After you've had a chance to check us out, you and Celia can decide if you would like to sign up for one or more Ranch Hand shifts, or discuss any other ways you'd like to contribute.

Please note that no drugs or alcohol are allowed on the property, and tobacco smoking is only allowed in designated areas. Please ask Celia where smoking is permitted.

After Signing Up to Volunteer

Q: What happens after I sign up to volunteer?

A: When you become a volunteer, you will be assigned one or more regular days and times (shifts) to volunteer.

You will also be added to our volunteer mailing list, "Workerbees," so you can receive information from the rescue and communicate with the other volunteers.

Then you will learn the ropes and polish your horse sense! You will also enjoy fresh air and exercise, bask in the energy and perfume of the ponies, and make friends with our truly exceptional, dedicated volunteers.

Q: What should I do if I have an emergency or I have a vacation planned and won't be able to cover my shift?

A: It is important to get another volunteer to cover any shifts you can't work.

If you know ahead of time that you will be gone, place a sticker on the whiteboard at the ranch noting the dates you need coverage, and email the Workerbees list to find someone to take your shifts.

If you cannot make your shift because of an emergency, text Celia at (619) 920-2313 and email the Workerbees list to get your shifts covered.

If you can't find someone to cover your shift, let Celia know as early as possible. If you are absent frequently, your shift will be assigned to another volunteer and you will be removed from the volunteer role.

Q: What should I do if I need to stop volunteering?

A: Please give Celia or the volunteer coordinator two weeks notice if you plan to stop volunteering. That will give us time to find another volunteer to cover your shift.

Do you have a question we didn't answer here? Just email "volunteers@laughingponyrescue.com" and a volunteer coordinator will get right back to you!