

# Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center

## Volunteer Handbook



Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center  
Dunmire Stables

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[www.LittleBit.org](http://www.LittleBit.org)

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## WELCOME FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you for your interest in our Volunteer Program!

We realize that there are only 24 hours in each day with many demands for your time and attention, and you must carefully choose how to spend those precious hours. We are honored that you are choosing to spend some of your time at Little Bit!

Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center was founded in 1976 and has evolved from a small, volunteer-run effort with just five riders and one horse to one of the largest and most respected therapeutic riding centers in the country. Each participant in our services –participants, volunteers, horses and staff – is equally integral to our success. New Little Bit volunteers walk into a community that is fully dedicated to the tasks of alleviating obstacles for children and adults with disabilities. We focus on the abilities of our participants, providing each with the customized support and encouragement to reach his or her goals.

Each week, Little Bit serves over 350 participants and has over 300 amazing volunteers working with our riders and patients, and even more working in and around the barn and at special events. Our two flagship programs, Adaptive Riding and Hippotherapy, run year-round -- rain or shine.

Volunteers are a critical element in the successful delivery of our mission. They work side by side with our horses and staff to support participants, they keep our facilities pristine, and they provide fundraising and office support. Indeed, it is because we have so many dedicated volunteers that we are able to keep the cost of our classes affordable while ensuring the highest quality of our services.

As Executive Director, one of my most favorite times is helping out in the tack barn and the arenas when there's an opportunity. I love getting to know our volunteers and watch how they work with our horses and form special bonds with our riders and patients. Volunteers move participants through one goal onto the next, they make special events shine, they take care of our facilities, and they support our barn and administrative offices in a way that makes all of this possible.

Together, we can continue to provide life-changing opportunities to hundreds of children and adults living with disabilities. Thank you for joining our community and helping us achieve our goal – “Changing Lives... *one stride at a time!*”

Best regards,



Paula J. Del Giudice  
Executive Director

## ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to introduce you to Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center and to provide a basic overview of the policies and procedures that provide all of us guidance and direction. As a volunteer, you are provided with a safe work environment, job training, supervision, evaluation and recognition.

In return, we expect you to honor your commitment to Little Bit, respect our participants, horses, staff, and volunteers, and equipment, and perform your assigned duties to the best of your abilities. As our organization grows and changes, there will be a need to modify policies, practices and other information in this handbook. While you will be notified when such changes occur, it is your responsibility to keep your handbook current and to be informed about policies and changes that affect you.

If you have questions or need any clarification of the information contained in this handbook, please contact the Director of Volunteer Involvement.

## OUR MISSION

Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center is a community where horses transform the bodies, minds, and spirits of people with disabilities.

## WHO WE ARE

Little Bit was founded in 1976 by Margaret Dunlap. Realizing that riding slowed the progress of her multiple sclerosis, Margaret teamed up with riding instructor Debra Powell Adams to start a therapeutic horseback riding program. Initially known as Little Bit Special Riders, the program has grown from five students, one instructor and one horse, operating in a rented stable, to the second largest full-time, therapeutic horseback riding center in the United States.

Little Bit has evolved from an organization operated entirely by volunteers to a highly professional program that is increasingly perceived as a model for other programs in its field. Little Bit was the first nationally accredited program of its kind in the Pacific Northwest and is currently one of only seven Premiere Accredited Centers in Washington State. Over 300 riders a week from throughout the Puget Sound area receive Hippotherapy or Adaptive Riding instruction through Little Bit's six-days-a-week program.

**Hippotherapy** is an intensive one-on-one therapy session with a physical, occupational, or speech therapist utilizing the movement of the horse as a treatment strategy.

**Adaptive Riding** is normally conducted in a group setting and focuses on increasing individual riding skills while gaining a therapeutic benefit.



## HISTORY OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING

References to the physical and emotional benefits of horseback riding date back to writings in the fifth century B.C., where hippotherapy was used in Greece to help rehabilitate wounded soldiers. Systematic study, however, did not begin until 1875 when a French neurologist, Chassaign, discovered that patients with neurological disorders showed marked improvement in posture, balance, joint movement and psychological well-being.

When Liz Hartel of Denmark won the silver medal for dressage at the 1952 Olympic Games—despite being paralyzed from polio—medical and equine professionals took active notice. It wasn't long before therapeutic riding programs were established in Western Europe in the early 1950s and in North America in the late 1960s. Doctors, therapists and researchers were so impressed with the physical results of this therapy that many hospitals in Western Europe now have adjoining facilities for hippotherapy. The extraordinary growth in number of therapeutic riding programs in the United States alone gives evidence of the demand for such programs.

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP

Formed in 1969, Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) is a non-profit organization that exists as a global authority, resource and advocate for equines and equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with disabilities. Above all, the organization is concerned with safety and service to members and riders.

Today, PATH Intl. has more than 850 member centers and nearly 7,600 individual members in countries all over the world, who help and support more than 54,000 people with special needs each year through a variety of equine-assisted activities and therapies programs.

### **Accreditation**

Little Bit is proud to be a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center. This accreditation ensures that Little Bit has met and abides by industry standards for running a safe and medically appropriate program.

All Little Bit instructors are PATH Intl. Certified Professionals who have undergone a stringent certification process and possess a strong equine background, as well as an understanding of various disabilities.

For more information about PATH Intl. and any of their programs or certifications, please visit their website: <http://www.pathintl.org>



Professional Association of Therapeutic  
Horsemanship International

— MEMBER —

## OUR PHILOSOPHY OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Volunteers are essential to Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center's success. We appreciate the time, skills, and knowledge volunteers contribute. They infuse our organization with energy and passion. Our mission is accomplished by engaging community members as partners, allowing us to achieve a level of service that would otherwise not be possible.

To this end, we are committed to recruiting, screening, training, supporting, and empowering volunteers from diverse backgrounds in all aspects of our work. Little Bit staff members dedicate themselves to ensuring our volunteer community remains engaged by providing a meaningful and satisfying experience with timely recognition, opportunities for personal growth, and social engagement.

## GENERAL VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

For the safety of all our participants and volunteers, anyone interested in volunteering should meet the following requirements:

- Complete an application, which includes providing emergency medical consent, photo and liability release, and permission to run a background check. Youth under 18 years old must have a parent/guardian signature prior to participating in trainings or volunteering.
- Attend a General Orientation (to be completed again after three years of inactivity)
- Meet age and ability requirements for specific role
- Attend training sessions as required for each role (to be completed again after one year inactive)
- Complete paperwork and background check yearly per PATH Intl. standards
- Let Volunteer Department know of changes in address, phone numbers, or email, as well as changes in health or recent physical injuries

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 AM – 8 PM. Our facility is open on Saturdays from 8 AM – 5 PM. Most volunteer roles are scheduled during these hours.

Little Bit will inform volunteers of Session Breaks and holiday closures as needed.

## UPON ARRIVAL

Please park in the gravel area in front of the Welcome Center, leaving closer spots for participants.

Volunteers must sign in at the beginning of their shift and sign out at the end of their shift. There are iPads located in the Volunteer Check-In Area and Tack Barn. Your login is the last 4 digits of your home phone number on record. If Wi-Fi is down, please write your name and hours on the log sheet.

Pickup your nametag from the drawers located in the Volunteer Check-in Area. If you cannot find your nametag, write your name on the sheet and make a temporary one.

There are lockers for storage in the Volunteer Check-In Area and Tack Barn, with locks provided.

Arena volunteers will proceed to the Rider List/Volunteer Schedule in the Tack Barn. Other volunteers will check in with their supervisor or begin their regular tasks.

## ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEEISM

You are *extremely* important to the successful operation of our program! Little Bit could not function without our volunteers. We depend on you to be punctual, dependable, and to attempt to meet the schedule to which you have agreed whenever possible.

We understand that scheduling conflicts occur. Please write your name on the large wall calendar provided in the Volunteer Check-In area for any scheduled day(s) you plan to be absent as far in advance as possible, so that an appropriate substitute may be found. In the event of an unscheduled absence, such as illness or emergency, please call our main number at (425) 882-1554 to ensure your message is processed immediately. Please make sure you let the receptionist know that you need to cancel a volunteer shift. Arena Volunteers should ask for any available staff in the Volunteer Department, and other volunteers should ask for their point-of-contact. If the office is closed, please leave a voicemail on the cancellation line.

No matter how skilled a volunteer, their contributions to the efficient operation of Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center are diminished if they do not have a good attendance record. Any volunteer who fails to report to work without notification to his or her supervisor for three shifts or more will be considered to have voluntarily terminated their position.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

### **Participants and Arena Volunteers**

The basic assumption of this policy is Little Bit (LB) is open. However, when inclement weather occurs, we follow the [Lake Washington School District](#) and/or [Northshore School District](#).

- **LWSD closed:** Classes and treatments at LB will be cancelled for the day. The office may or may not be open.
- **LWSD late start:** Little Bit will open at the same time as LWSD. For example, if one district is open and one is closed, LB will be closed. If either district is open and the other is two hours late, LB will open at 10am. Classes and treatments will start at 11am to allow an hour for staff to school horses as needed. Classes or treatments that would have taken place between 8-11am will be cancelled.
- **Arena Conditions:** If the school districts are open, there may still be conditions that necessitate offering unmounted lessons. For example, **temperatures below 30.9 degrees** may cause the footing in the arena to freeze making it unsafe for horses and volunteers. Similarly, snow melt from the roof, wind, or other stormy conditions can create unsafe conditions in the arena. In these cases, classes and treatments at LB will be individually evaluated and transitioned to unmounted lessons.
- **Weekend Closures:** In the event of inclement weather on the weekends, the opening Instructor will make the decision as to whether classes or treatments will be held that day. If classes or treatments are cancelled, the Volunteer Department will contact impacted volunteers. Little Bit's main phone number, 425-882-1554 will also have a pre-recorded message indicating whether classes or treatments will be held.
- **Volunteer Notification:** Little Bit will rely on publicized announcements from LWSD and/or NSD. The LB main phone message will also be updated to communicate closures. The Volunteer Department will contact impacted volunteers via email. Facebook is the easiest to update and may be the first method of outreach in severe inclement weather.



### **Non-Arena Volunteers**

For any non-arena volunteer position, contact the team lead regarding your schedule. Barn Team volunteers are still needed for their shift, but we err on the side of safety. If you have concerns, please cancel.

## **STANDARD OF APPEARANCE**

Please dress appropriately for your tasks. Physical work requires clothing that is comfortable and durable.

- **CLOSED TOE SHOES ARE REQUIRED.** Keep in mind that participants go outside during all seasons and grounds are often wet and muddy.
- Long hair should be tied back. If needed, extra hair ties are in the tack barn.
- We care for the herd and ride in the rain, so please bring rain attire when necessary.
- As a safety precaution, hanging jewelry (hoop earrings, necklaces, etc.) should not be worn.
- Please do not wear perfume, cologne, or scented lotions. Many participants and horses are sensitive to certain odors and these items may attract unwanted insects.
- Please do not put your hood up, as it unsettles some of our participants and horses and hinders complete vision in an emergency. Hats are a great alternative to hoods.

### **Hot Weather**

We ask that volunteers dress modestly to ensure our riders and patients are comfortable.

- If you wear shorts, please make sure they reach to the fingertips of the extended arm.
- No spaghetti strap tank tops or clothing that reveal cleavage, midriff, buttock, or undergarments will be allowed.
- Sunglasses, unscented bug spray and sunscreen may be needed for outdoor activities.

### **Cold Weather**

Layers are recommended.

- Please bring a jacket! Jackets should be zipped, and scarves should be tucked in to your jacket to prevent clothing from being grabbed by or caught on a horse and/or participant.
- Do not tie a jacket or sweater around your waist. If you need to remove your jacket, please alert the instructor or therapist before leaving your rider.
- Gloves are advisable for warmth and protection. If you are leading a horse, please make sure to wear gloves that will have a firm grip on the lead rope.

If you need to store extra layers, purses or additional valuables, please utilize the lockers in the Check-In area or Tack Barn. It's best to keep valuables at home when possible. Little Bit is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

We have extra clothes available if proper attire is not achieved. As these are donated items, we can't guarantee a range of sizes or fashions will be available. It is much easier to come prepared for your shift.

## **ENDING YOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

You may resign from your volunteer service with the organization at any time. We request that you notify the Volunteer Coordinator at least two weeks prior to your departure and participate in an Exit Interview.

## **PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCEDURE**

When a group of people work and volunteer together, problems may arise. Little Bit wants to assist you in solving problems and settling grievances quickly and fairly.

Our problem-solving procedure provides you with the opportunity to have a review of any problem, dispute or misunderstanding that arises while volunteering.

- In situations where differences arise between volunteers or volunteers and staff, it is advised to first try to resolve these differences amongst the parties involved.
- If a third party is needed, the Director of Volunteer Involvement is to be informed and involved. Under no circumstances shall differences be made public or involve other members of the organization.
- If the grievance is regarding the Director of Volunteer Involvement, the Executive Director should be contacted.

### **Filing a Formal Grievance**

If the problem is not settled in the discussions described above, you may submit a written grievance to the Director of Volunteer Involvement and/or Executive Director. The grievance must be signed and dated by you and/or someone representing you. Useful information includes: the names of people involved, date(s) of the incident, a description of what happened, and any other facts that describe the problem. If you need assistance in writing your grievance, you may choose to be assisted or represented by an advocate not associated with Little Bit. The Executive Director will investigate and respond within 7 business days.

### **VOLUNTEER AND GUEST DISMISSAL**

Dismissal of a volunteer is a serious consideration. Volunteers are subject to rules and regulations to help provide a safe experience for everyone involved with activities at Little Bit.

Dismissal of a volunteer may take place if a volunteer is unreliable, irresponsible, demonstrates inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior, or fails to adhere to the policies and procedures of Little Bit.

Before a volunteer is dismissed, attempts to reconcile the situation will be made including a meeting between staff and volunteer involved, the Director of Volunteer Involvement and, if appropriate, the Executive Director.

The following disciplinary guidelines will be used whenever possible:

- Step 1: Verbal warning with documentation in the personnel file
- Step 2: Written warning to individual and copy to personnel file
- Step 3: Termination/Dismissal

These guidelines are based on cumulative infractions, regardless of whether the infraction is of the same general nature as a previous warning. The use of these disciplinary practices in no way alters the fact that your volunteering with Little Bit is "at-will."

### **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

All volunteer information is kept confidential. We do not give out names, addresses, email addresses, or phone numbers without permission of the volunteer.

The identity of all participants must remain confidential. In consideration of the right to privacy of riders and their families and in compliance with HIPAA Privacy Standards, you will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. By signing this document, you have agreed to use appropriate discretion in written comments and in related conversations with volunteers, staff, family, or the general public. Any breach of this confidentiality will prove reason for dismissal.

As a volunteer, you will get to work with amazing individuals—each with unique backgrounds and stories. Talking to friends and family about your experience at Little Bit is highly encouraged! We are confident that removing a participant’s name or other identifying characteristics from your story will not change its impact.

## **PHOTOGRAPH POLICY**

Our participants have the option to consent to having their photo taken. If you ever want to take a photo of a participant, check with their instructor/therapist. As a volunteer, you will be asked to sign a photo consent form before volunteering. Please check with the Volunteer Department to ensure a consent record is on file before photographing your fellow volunteers. Please feel free to take photos of our horses, staff, facility, etc. without permission. Please turn off the flash when photographing horses. We encourage you to share your photos with staff, as we may be able to post to our social media sites!



## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In the event of a fire, earthquake, or other emergency, all volunteers are to evacuate the building by following the procedures below.

1. Please do not panic. All volunteers should exit the building by way of the nearest exit.
2. Meeting Points are at the parking lot in front of the Welcome Center and the light post between the paddocks and track. If you are with a participant, please keep them by your side; do not try to find their caretaker or family member. If you are alone with a horse, put them in the closest stall before proceeding to the meeting point.
3. Our Safety Committee will ensure that everyone is out of the building and will provide further instructions. Do not re-enter buildings, barns, or the arena until staff announces all-clear. Do not leave the property until each person is accounted for.

### **Power Failure**

Our generator system will only take a moment to re-power our facility in the case of a power outage. There is emergency lighting in the Training Center.

### **Medical Emergency**

Inform staff immediately if you or someone else is injured in any way. First Aid Kits are located in the Tack Barn, Horse Barn, and Welcome Center. There is an AED outside the arena. All instructors and therapists are trained in CPR/First Aid, as are many other staff members. We often host CPR/First Aid training for a discounted price and encourage volunteers to participate.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES**

### **Prohibition of Unprofessional Conduct**

Little Bit recognizes its responsibility to protect all participants, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and horses from physical and/or emotional harm at Little Bit and at sponsored events.

Little Bit prohibits all staff and volunteers from engaging in any acts of unprofessional conduct, including but not limited to:

1. Crimes against children or vulnerable adults;
2. The physical injury of children or vulnerable adults;
3. Sexual misconduct with children or vulnerable adults;
4. Providing false information to Little Bit (i.e., timesheets, application materials, formal investigations);
5. Possession, use, consumption, or being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana (cannabis), or of an illegal and/or controlled substance on Little Bit premises or at a sponsored activity primarily involving participants, (possession of an unopened container of alcohol in a locked motor vehicle is allowed). At events sponsored by Little Bit where alcohol is customarily served, the Executive Director may approve the moderate consumption of alcohol. If so, volunteers who imbibe are expected to remain professional and abide by the limitations set by the Executive Director;
6. Disregard or abandonment of generally recognized professional standards when (i) assessing; treating, instructing, or supervising participants; (ii) evaluating staff or volunteers; or (iii) managing money or property;
7. Illegal furnishing of alcohol, marijuana (cannabis), or an illegal and/or controlled substance, to any participant including both minors and vulnerable adults; or
8. Discussion of or possession of a weapon on Little Bit property or while on Company business

Any staff member or volunteer can be disciplined, up to and including termination, for any act of unprofessional conduct.

### **Abuse Prevention Policy**

All Little Bit staff, participants, parents/guardians, and volunteers have a role in protecting all participants, including minors and vulnerable adults, from inappropriate conduct by staff or volunteers and to ensure that contact and communications with participants are conducted in an appropriate and professional manner.

Little Bit expects all staff and volunteers to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their interaction with participants. Staff and volunteers are required to maintain an atmosphere conducive to therapy, through consistently applied instruction and therapy, and established and maintained professional boundaries.

The interactions and relationships between staff and participants (and between volunteers and participants) should be based upon mutual respect and trust, an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and participants in and outside of the Little Bit setting, and consistency with the mission of Little Bit. Staff and volunteers will not intrude on a participant's physical and emotional boundaries unless the intrusion is necessary to serve a therapeutic purpose. A therapeutic purpose is one that relates to the staff's or volunteer's duties in his or her role with Little Bit providing hippotherapy, recreational riding, equine-facilitated mental health, competition, horsemanship, stable management, team building, and leadership training.

Staff members and volunteers shall use good judgment in their interactions and relationships with participants beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the Little Bit setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvements with individual participants. Any appearance of impropriety should be avoided.

All volunteers on Little Bit property must be under the supervision of a staff member at all times. Volunteers are strictly prohibited from being alone one-on-one with any participant unless the volunteer is the parent/guardian of the participant.

Intimate relationships between staff, volunteers, and participants are strictly prohibited. In addition to regular instruction and sponsored activities, appropriate occasions when staff and volunteers may interact with participants beyond the regular instruction at Little Bit include: family friendships, ride sharing, pre-existing personal relationships. If a staff member or volunteer has such contact with a participant, the staff member or volunteer should contact Roxanne Corridan, Little Bit Office Manager, and shall obtain specific written approval of the parents and the Little Bit Executive Director.

### **Reporting Suspected Abuse**

All clients must be treated with patience and respect. If you have trouble with a client, please call on the closest staff person to intervene. Many of our participants are children or vulnerable adults. In recognition of their potential vulnerability, Little Bit staff are obligated to report all suspected cases of abuse or neglect to proper authorities.

Volunteers have an important role in protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect. While not mandated by law to do so, please bring suspected abuse or neglect to the attention of a Little Bit staff member immediately so that appropriate action can be taken. The incident does not need to have occurred while the potential victim was at Little Bit, nor do you need proof of harm to suspect abuse. You may choose to keep your identity confidential or give permission for the release of your identity to Adult Protective Services and/or Residential Care Services.

### **Policy Against Harassment**

Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center is committed to maintaining a work environment free of unlawful harassment. Little Bit prohibits harassment based on sex (including sexual harassment, gender harassment and harassment due to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions) and harassment based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or cognitive disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation or any other status protected under federal or state law or local ordinance or regulation. This policy applies to all persons involved in the operation and prohibits unlawful harassment by any volunteer/employee of Little Bit.

Volunteers are prohibited from harassing other volunteers regardless if the incident(s) occur on Little Bit premises and/or during working hours.

#### **Volunteer Responsibility:**

If a volunteer believes he/she has been subject to harassment or any unwanted attention, he or she should:

- Make their unease and/or disapproval directly and immediately known to the harasser
- Make a written record of the date, time, and nature of the incident(s) and the names of any witnesses
- Report the incident to the Director of Volunteer Involvement or Executive Director.
- All incidents of harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct must be reported regardless of their seriousness.

### **DOG POLICY**

To comply with our Professional Liability Insurance policy, dogs are prohibited from being on the property, in our buildings or left in vehicles by volunteers or members of our community. Staff members are allowed one dog in designated areas provided the dog has passed health guidelines, a required behavior training, and the employee provides proof of liability coverage as indicated in the Little Bit employee manual.

### **Service Dogs**

Service dogs accompanied by their owner have public access rights that are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act and therefore are not subject to this rule. We request that while the owner is participating in the program, service dogs remain under the control of the accompanying support person in the welcome area.

## **SMOKING**

In response to state and local laws and building codes, smoking is not permitted on the premises.

## **SOLICITATION**

Solicitation by non-staff or staff members for any reason on company property is not allowed.

## **VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Administrative Team**

Monday through Saturday, 9 AM – 5 PM

Volunteers assist our departments with data entry, filing, and a variety of other projects that may include tasks in:

- Reception: Volunteers assist at our front desk checking in participants, greeting visitors, and answering the phone.
- Volunteer Scheduling: Volunteers assist the Volunteer Department in calling volunteers to schedule substitute roles to ensure there is enough people to support our program.

### **Barn Team**

Monday through Saturday 11 AM – 1:30 PM

Barn Team volunteers feed the horses every day at lunch. They also pick paddocks, fill water buckets, provide turnout, and fulfill a variety of other barn tasks. Volunteers commit to a weekly shift and may also substitute. Barn Team members must be 14 years of age. If you need a more flexible schedule, our Paddock Team cleans out paddocks and stalls for at least one hour per shift dependent on facility availability.

### **Facility Team**

Monday through Saturday; Flexible

Facility volunteers perform landscaping around the property, keep the facility safe, professional, and inviting, and work on special maintenance projects, such as stall repair. Volunteers must be 16 years of age, but general gardening can be an excellent option for younger volunteers with adult supervision.

### **Hospitality Team**

Monday through Saturday; Flexible

Hospitality volunteers keep the facility clean (inside and outside) and ensure that supplies remain stocked.

Hospitality Team is geared toward people with disabilities as a work training program, but is open to everyone. Individuals must be able to work independently or be accompanied by a supervisor.

## **Program Team**

Monday through Friday 8 AM – 8 PM and Saturdays 8 AM – 5 PM. Substitute opportunities available for schedules that require more flexibility.

Program (often referred to as “class” or “arena”) volunteers play a key role in assisting participants to meet their goals in Hippotherapy and/or Adaptive Riding classes. Both the participant and volunteer benefit from establishing a lasting relationship with one another. Tasks may include grooming/tacking the horse, physically or socially supporting the participant during class, leading the horse, and untacking/grooming the horse. In all, we ask for a commitment of at least one 2-hour shift once a week for six months.

All arena volunteers must be 14 years old and attend Program Volunteer Training. Each role has specific tasks including, but not limited to:

- *Sidewalker*: assists in preparing the horse and works with the participant as directed by the instructor or therapist. May include physical, cognitive, sensory, or emotional support.
- *Horse Leader*: responsible for fetching/returning horse from stable or paddock and leading during class. Must successfully complete Horse Leader Training.
- *Header*: additional person needed during Hippotherapy treatments to assume halt position in front of horse, open gates, and play games with patients.
- *Alternate*: weekly volunteer for an adaptive class that is permanently full; can fill in when needed. When not substituting, helps get other classes ready or completes barn chores.
- *Captain*: leadership volunteers that act as an advisory council and are great resources, coaches, and role models for other class volunteers. Captains have participated in extra training to prepare for the role.
- *APV (All Purpose Volunteer)*: steps in where needed depending on their training

## **Special Event Team**

Scheduled as-needed

Event volunteers assist with the set up and take down of events as well as serve in a variety of positions depending on the event. Examples include opening gates at the Horse Shows, running receipts at the Auction, and passing out water at the Stinky Spoke Bicycle Ride.

## **Training Team**

Monday through Saturday; Flexible, but evening availability highly preferred.

Training Team volunteers help new volunteers learn to Groom and Tack, and also serve as leaders or mock riders for a class simulation during training. These volunteers have been at Little Bit at least 6 months, are nominated by staff, and must provide support for at least three volunteer trainings per year.

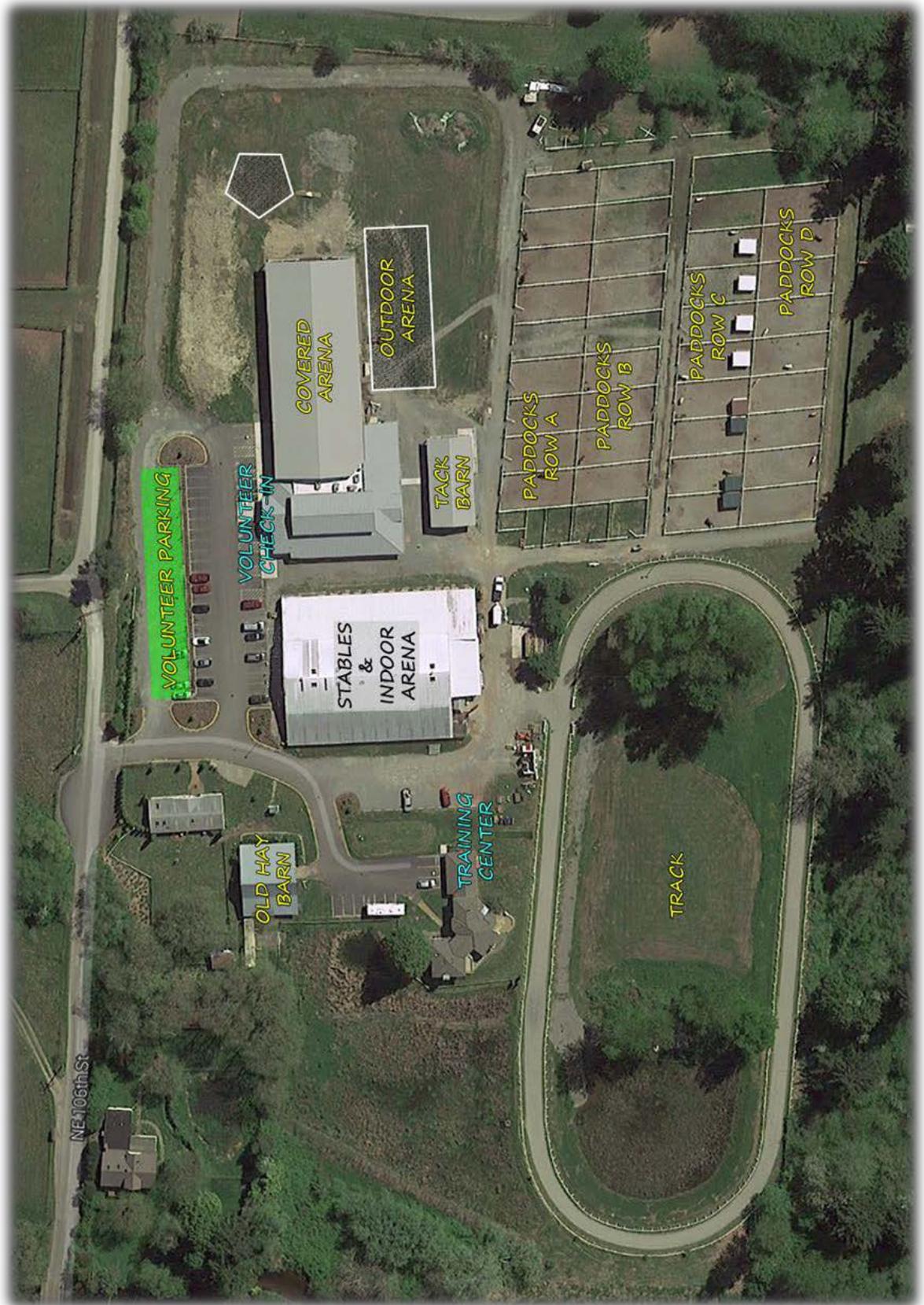
## **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS**

- To know as much about the organization as possible--its policies, people, programs, and educational opportunities.
- To be appropriately assigned to a position with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education and employment background.
- To receive a clear, comprehensive job description.
- To training for the job and continuing education on the job.

- To new opportunities and a variety of experiences--through advancement, special assignment, or transfer. This includes the right to negotiate your volunteer role to discuss ways you might be able to shift your role or take on another project or position that better suits your needs.
- To work in a place that is appropriate for the task and to work in an environment that is orderly, clean, and safe.
- To be heard--to make suggestions and be shown respect for giving an honest opinion.
- To recognition in the form of promotion, awards, and events, through day to day expressions of appreciation and by being treated as a valuable co-worker rather than "free help."
- To sound guidance and direction.
- To feel comfortable about saying "no."
- To have your personal information and any private conversations kept confidential.
- To have access to a grievance procedure and to terminate your volunteerism at any time.

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To be sincere in the offer of service and believe in the value of your position.
- To be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled work, meetings, or trainings. Keep accurate records of hours worked. Notify your supervisor as early as possible if you are unable to work as scheduled.
- To seek assistance in any situation requiring extra support or special guidance.
- To keep Little Bit rider information confidential.
- To carry out your specified job description and perform duties as assigned by staff members.
- To accept the guidance, feedback, and decisions of the staff, and be accountable to them.
- To understand the function and ability of paid staff, maintain an open working relationship with them, and stay within the bounds of volunteer responsibility.
- To participate in training programs, meetings and to continue to learn on the job.
- To stay informed by reading organizational communications.
- To provide feedback and suggestions to staff if these might increase the effectiveness of programs. If you have criticism about another person, please follow Little Bit's Problem-Solving Procedure.
- To avoid over-extending yourself and communicate personal limitations such as time constraints, transportation needs, work that is not acceptable to you, etc.
- To accept the right of the organization to dismiss any volunteer for poor performance or attendance.
- To always first try negotiating your volunteer role if you're unsatisfied. Give written notice if you cannot continue in your volunteer position or if you are requesting a leave of absence.
- To have a non-judgmental approach and the ability to work with a culturally diverse population. Support the dignity, integrity, and respect the rights of people you work with.



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*Changing lives, one stride at a time.*