



## Essential Capabilities of Volunteers

There are several volunteer opportunities within Duchess Sanctuary (Duchess), some of which are fulfilled by volunteers who work with equines. To safely and effectively serve as a volunteer at Duchess, volunteers need to possess the following physical, mental, and emotional capacities. Your signature on this form indicates you believe you possess these basic capabilities, with your written acknowledgement of any limitations. Please note: some accommodations can be made and will be taken into consideration relative to role placement.

### Essential Physical Capabilities

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously (example: open gate while handling animal).
- High level of manual dexterity to halter horses, handle small tools and to properly groom animals.
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery terrain.
- Ability to stand and/or walk for extended periods of time.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to pick up small tools for grooming, groom lower body parts directly, pull weeds, or maintain equipment.
- Average vision (with or without correction) to move safely around the sanctuary and to be able to observe animal body language without difficulty.
- Average sense of smell and touch in order to assess body condition of animals, and to note signs of illness or injury.
- Ability to hear if animal is making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to speak and effectively communicate in English verbally as well as in written form.
- Ability to deal with unpleasant odors, fleas, ticks, lice, feces and possible wounds or injuries to animals in our care.
- Ability to judge an animal's reaction and to change voice to a soft or strong, authoritative tone and adjust body language in order to calm an animal's response or to give commands.
- Ability to push carts and wheelbarrows of manure or hay.
- No known concerns about tolerating exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm.
- Must not have strong allergies to chemicals used in grooming or cleaning, or to animals in our care that can't be managed by medication.

### Essential Mental Capabilities

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.
- High level reading, writing, spelling and communication skills (example: understand words such as quarantine, euthanize and other common industry-related terms), and a mastery of the English language.
- Possess problem-solving capability.
- Ability to be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals; ability to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed.
- Ability to work independently for long periods of time, as well as work within a team atmosphere with other volunteers or staff.

### Essential Emotional Capabilities

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.

- Ability to cope with the presence of injured or abused animals in need.
- Ability to understand The Humane Society of the United States' (HSUS) policies and positions regarding wildlife, animal control, and other key animal welfare issues and an ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing The HSUS.

Please indicate any reasonable accommodation(s) you may need in order to meet the essential capabilities of your volunteer position at Dutchess:

---



---



---



---



---

**Volunteer:** Printed Name

Handwritten Signature

Date

---

**Parent** or  **Guardian** (if under 18): Printed Name

Handwritten Signature

Date