

# Driving Volunteer Manual



**HIGH & MIGHTY™**

THERAPEUTIC RIDING AND DRIVING CENTER INC.  
501 (c)(3)



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## Volunteering in a Driving Lesson

At High & Mighty, safety is our number one priority. Driving volunteers help us to ensure the safety of our participants so that they can work toward being as independent as possible. All of our driving activities are directly supervised by a PATH Intl. Certified Driving Instructor.

Our driving volunteers are required to attend a one hour training that will include harnessing, put-to, heading up the horse, working in a driving lesson (therapeutic carriage, ramp), removing the carriage, unharnessing, and emergency procedures.

Our driving volunteer positions require a volunteer to be able to walk for about an hour, and may require the volunteer to help lift or move equipment or a participant. If you have any reasons why this might be physically uncomfortable or not possible, or you have an injury that could prevent you from performing your volunteer duties, let the instructor know as soon as possible.

## Working with Our Participants

It is a part of our mission at High & Mighty to foster the physical, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive growth of our participants through equine-assisted activities. Each of our participants has different needs, and it is important to remember that regardless of where each participant is at in their journey, we provide them with support in the most respectful manner possible. So here are a few things that may be helpful:

- Ask first before trying to help, even if the participant may not be able to respond verbally.
- Focus on the person, not the “disability.”
- Use person-first language (ex: “Sally has an emotional disability” instead of “Sally is emotionally disturbed.” Or “They have a learning disability,” instead of “They are learning disabled.”)
- Assistive devices, such as a wheelchair or a walker, help the participant to live their life. Please ask before you touch them.
- If someone has a service animal, only approach or touch them with explicit permission.
- We will not disclose any participant’s diagnosis or medical information, but we will always talk to our volunteers about what kind of support will be most helpful to the participant.
- If you’re not sure, just ask.

## Attendance and Punctuality

We ask that you arrive at least **15 minutes** prior to the lesson. We also ask that you give us at least 24 hours’ notice if you will not be able to volunteer for a regularly scheduled lesson (including if you are sick). If you know you will be out-of-town or unable to volunteer for any reason, let us know as soon as possible. Many of our lessons require volunteer support for safety reasons, and if we cannot do a lesson

due to a volunteer's inconsistent attendance or lateness, we may find a replacement for your volunteering slot for the remainder of the session.

## **Risk Management**

High & Mighty requires that all volunteer read and understand the safety risks, regulations and rules that are detailed in this manual. There is an inherent risk in working with horses because they have a mind of their own. Because of the potential risks, your complete cooperation in all safety protocols are of utmost importance to keep you, our participants, our staff and our horses safe.

*Please see the orientation manual for our barn and horse safety rules.*

### **Emergency Driving Lesson Procedures**

**If an emergency occurs, follow the instructions of the riding instructor:**

- Stay with your team.
- Volunteer will halt and head up the horse.
- Side walker will remain with participant.
- Stay calm and listen to your instructor. Follow their directions.
- The instructor may ask for additional assistance from the volunteers.
- Participant will hand reins to able-bodied whip.
- If a participant needs to exit the vehicle, the volunteer will follow the exiting protocol learned in the volunteer training. Volunteer will direct participant away from vehicle and outside of arena.
- If participant uses a wheelchair, the ramp will come down and the volunteer(s) will wheel the participant out of the vehicle and out of the arena.
- Instructor will determine whether or not to unhitch and will provide volunteer(s) with directions.

**If emergency personnel must be called:**

- Instructor-Ask one volunteer to go to the phone and call emergency personnel.
- Dial 911:
  - location of emergency
  - 71 County Route 21C, Ghent NY
  - telephone number of the phone being used
  - caller's name
  - what happened
  - number of victims
  - condition of victims
  - help being given
  - NO SIRENS close to barn
  - stay on the line for further instructions
- Contact the barn owner/manager

## **Fire & Emergency Drill Procedures**

Emergency drills are designed for the safety of all of those involved. It is important to be prepared in the event of emergency and know the appropriate steps required to get everyone to safety in the calmest and most efficient way possible.

### **When Practicing Drills:**

- Instructor discusses the purpose of emergency drills.
- The instructor indicates the designated area to go after the dismount.
- Following the explanation of the drill, the instructor announces the practice drill.
- Upon completion of the drill, the instructor resumes class.

### **Emergency Meet-up Locations:**

- In the event of a fire or other emergency in the barn or the indoor arena, evacuate immediately and meet in the OUTDOOR ARENA.
- If an emergency occurs at a different location of the property, please follow the direction of the instructor on where to meet.
- Under no circumstances is any staff member, volunteer, participant, or visitor to return to a burning building for any reason. This includes:
  - Retrieving personal belongings
  - Assisting those still in the building
  - Assisting animals still in the building

### Driving Volunteer Skills Checklist

Driving Skills		Yes	No	In Progress
Be able to walk for 30-60 minutes, sometimes on uneven or hilly terrain.				
Be able to jog next to a horse for at least one long-side; if unable to do so, make instructor aware of any potential accommodations necessary.				
Groom horse independently	Halter			
	Quick-release knot			
	Cross-tie			
	Use correct grooming tools for intended purpose			
	Have an understanding of harnessing			
	Bridle (if pre-approved)			
	Put on two sets of lines			
	Be able to take down ramp and put ramp back up			
	Able to secure wheelchair in carriage			
Lead horse independently	Know the "Your Horse/My Horse" Protocol			
	Recognize basics of horse behavior (ear signals, body signals)			
	Able to verbally communicate and physically demonstrate their role as driving volunteer during an emergency			
Unharnessing	Return all equipment to its correct place			
	Assist with unharnessing			
	Remove bridle (if pre-approved)			
	Return horse to cross-ties, stall, or paddock without assistance			
Completed a driving lesson training.				