

## FAQ's: Volunteering at GMHA

***Q: Do I need to be a horse person or have knowledge of horse shows to become a volunteer?***

A: Absolutely not! Although it is a plus, there are many jobs which require no knowledge of horses or competitions. All of our volunteers are briefed by our staff and officials, who are available to answer questions at any time.

***Q: I want to get involved. How do I know which jobs are right for me?***

A: GMHA's volunteer job descriptions are now posted right here on our website! Take a few minutes to read through the job descriptions for the competitions you are interested in, or days you are free. If you have questions, don't hesitate to call or email the event manager- we would love to talk with you about volunteering.

***Q: How do I know what GMHA's volunteer needs are? Who should I contact?***

A: New for 2010, GMHA will be using the volunteer section of our website to communicate our volunteer needs for each event. Review the events, dates, and available jobs and compare them to your interests, abilities, and availability.

To sign up, please contact the volunteer coordinator or event manager for your event. Contact names, email addresses, and phone numbers are all listed on the website with the volunteer needs for each event. Remember, when in doubt you can always contact the GMHA office to discuss your plans; we can always put you in touch with the right person to answer your questions!

We will need to know when you are available, and what jobs you are interested in doing- but we love people who are willing to do anything! Let us know if you have limitations we should know about (ie, have trouble getting around, can't be on my feet for long, messy handwriting, ect.) when assigning you a job.

***Q: I am signed up to volunteer. How should I prepare?***

A: The best way to prepare for your volunteer assignment is to simply **read over your job description in advance**. If you have questions or would like more detailed information than what is found on our website, please contact the volunteer coordinator or manager for your event. **We are always happy to answer questions in advance, it makes the day of the event easier and less hectic for everyone!**

If you have not visited GMHA before, it is a good idea to look over our grounds map so that you know the lay of the land. If you are not familiar with the event you are volunteering for, you can find basic information on our website.

**GMHA staff will be in touch a week or two before the event to confirm your job assignment and schedule. If for some reason you don't hear from us by phone or email, please get in touch- we must have missed you.**

*Q: What should I wear/bring along when volunteering at an event?*

A: Plan for all possible weather conditions! It is a good idea to bring sunglasses, a hat, and raingear- no umbrellas please. We suggest that you dress comfortably, and in layers, as the temperature frequently changes considerably here in Vermont. Please wear boots or sneakers- please no flip-flops or sandals. Formal dress is not required, but please no short shorts or tank tops- **remember, you are representing the show!**

Unless you are a scribe, runner, or hospitality, please plan to **bring a chair that you can carry.**

**GMHA will provide you with meals and snacks during your scheduled volunteer time.** If you are volunteering in the morning, we will serve breakfast- lunch for afternoon volunteers, or both if you are volunteering all day. There will be “volunteer hospitality” passing by your station occasionally with snacks and drinks. If you have special dietary needs, a favorite drink or snack, please bring it with you to GMHA.

*Q: What should I expect when I arrive at GMHA for my volunteer job?*

A: Our volunteers generally meet in the Youth Center, unless instructed to meet in another location. When you arrive, you will be greeted by a member of the GMHA staff and given a nametag. If you are on time or early, you can have a seat in the Youth Center and help yourself to breakfast, lunch, or snacks depending on the time of day. There are “real” bathrooms in the Youth Center building.

**You will be briefed by a member of the GMHA staff or one of the officials for your event.** Depending on your job, you may have a formal briefing with many other volunteers, or an informal one on one briefing. During this time, you will be given the necessary supplies for your job (ie. Clipboard, paperwork, stopwatches, show radios, ect). **Take a moment to look over any materials you are given and do a quick mental inventory- the show can be hectic, it is always helpful to take a moment to make sure you have everything you need before heading off to your assignment.** Also take a moment to be sure that your radio works and you are comfortable using it, if this was not part of your briefing.

If you have any questions, please let a member of the staff know before you leave the Youth Center. If your question is not emergent, we may ask you to head out to your post and have a staff member or official follow up with you later. Remember- you can always ask questions over the radio once you are in place!

**Don't be afraid to ask questions; the staff and officials are there to support you. Staff, officials, and competitors understand that you are a volunteer- and appreciate your help! You are not expected to be an expert on show procedures or the rules of competition- just know who to ask, or where to send a competitor.**

**Q: *What should I do when my volunteer assignment is complete?***

A: All volunteers should report back **to the Youth Center upon completion of their duties.** A GMHA staff member will collect your left over materials, radio, and any other equipment. **Be sure to let us know if you had any problems at your post-** it is important for us to be aware in case a competitor has a question or problem after you have gone home.

After that, please pick up a volunteer gift and fill out a quick evaluation form on your volunteer experience- **we want your feedback!** We hope that you enjoyed your experience and will help us again in the future. If you enjoyed your assignment, this is a good time to sign up for our next event!

**Q: *How should I give GMHA feedback on my volunteer experience?***

A: The best way to give us your feedback is to **fill out a volunteer evaluation form** at the end of your assignment when you hand in your supplies. Your experience will be fresh in your mind at this time. Although we would like to discuss your experience with you, the end of your shift may be a busy time for staff. If you would like to be contacted, please indicate that on your evaluation form and we would be happy to get back to you during the week.

If you have comments that come to mind after you leave GMHA, **please don't hesitate to call or email** the volunteer coordinator or manager for your event! We want our volunteers to have a great experience, and we are always striving to improve.

**Q: *I'm not available on weekends. How can I get involved?***

A: There are plenty of jobs that take place during the week at GMHA! We always need help in the office and out on grounds preparing for our events. We also have a number of special projects, such as trail work, historical archiving, writing for our magazine and newsletter, carpentry and painting projects that are ongoing throughout the year.

The best way to get involved is to let us know what you are interested in doing, and/or when you are available. Contact the office today, and we will be happy to put you in touch with the right person to put your talents to work!