



Volunteer and Horse Engagement Activity Ideas

Full Grooming Sessions: Volunteers can brush horses using a variety of brushes (curry combs, dandy brushes, soft brushes) to clean their coats and stimulate circulation. This helps the horses relax, improves coat condition, and provides a bonding moment between the horse and the volunteer.

Cleaning Hooves: Volunteers will use hoof picks to clean hooves, removing dirt and debris to prevent infections like thrush. It's also an opportunity to check for any issues with the hooves and legs.

Hand-Grazing: Volunteers can take horses on hand walks to graze around designated areas (e.g., grassy areas in front or on the side of the barn). This allows the horse to stretch, enjoy low-impact movement, and bond with the volunteer while exploring new environments for mental stimulation.

Ground Pole Exercises: Leading horses over ground poles encourages them to lift their legs, improve coordination, and engage mentally. It's a great, stress-free challenge for horses who enjoy a bit more stimulation.

Desensitization Games: Volunteers introduce horses to safe, non-threatening items like tarps, cones, or toys, helping them build confidence and reduce fear of unfamiliar objects or environments.

Interactive Toys: Volunteers can engage the horse's curiosity with horse-safe toys, such as large balls or treat dispensers. This helps stimulate the horse mentally and offers a break from routine activities.

Treat-Filled Puzzles: Horses can be given treat-dispensing toys or enrichment devices, and volunteers assist them in solving these puzzles, promoting problem-solving and mental stimulation.

Leading and Ground Manners: Volunteers practice walking, stopping, and turning with the horse on a lead line to reinforce ground manners and improve behavior during handling.

Groundwork: Volunteers work on basic groundwork training, teaching horses to respond to pressure via the lead line or gentle cues on their body. These exercises reinforce respectful behavior and provide mental stimulation as the horse practices or revisits training.

Backing Up and Turning: Volunteers guide horses to back up or turn on cue, reinforcing discipline and responsiveness during ground handling.

Post-Lesson Cool Downs: After lessons or rides, volunteers help cool down horses by walking them gently on a lead line.



Bathing (Weather Permitting): Volunteers may bathe horses when weather allows. Be cautious of temperatures below 70 degrees and always check with staff to confirm if a bath is appropriate.

Stretching Exercises: Volunteers can learn simple stretching exercises to promote the horse's flexibility and relaxation, such as gentle stretches for the neck or legs.

Quiet Time and Bonding: Spending quiet time around the horse, speaking softly, offering gentle pets, or simply being near the horse can help build trust and strengthen the bond between horse and volunteer.

Treats: Volunteers may use treats. Always check with staff for appropriate treat use and timing.