



**VTRA**  
**VICTORIA THERAPEUTIC  
RIDING ASSOCIATION**

### **Our Vision**

Learning, connection, and joy through the power of horses.

### **Our Mission**

Build individual capacity through human and horse teamwork.

### **Our Commitment**

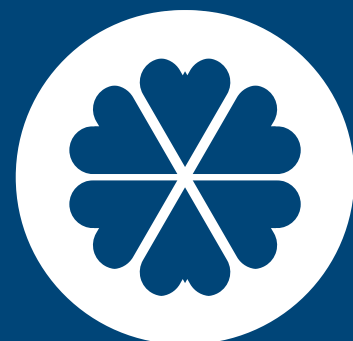
The VTRA is committed to inclusivity, diversity, equity and equine welfare—we value difference and individuality and a proactive and adaptive approach to meeting our members needs. Our mission is to serve others. We provide opportunities for people of all abilities to connect, learn, grow and thrive. This is at the heart of everything we do.

### **Our History**

The Victoria Therapeutic Riding Association (VTRA) was formed in 1982 to provide a therapeutic riding experience to children and adults with diverse abilities throughout the Greater Victoria area. Today, VTRA is a non-profit charitable organization that uses horseback riding as a recognized therapeutic tool and offers a variety of equine-assisted learning programs to more than 200 children, youth and adults throughout the region. VTRA is supported by a volunteer board, a small staff team, 11 horses and 275+ dedicated volunteers who enable participants to benefit each week.

VTRA respectfully acknowledges that we operate on the traditional territories of the Lkwungen (Esquimalt and Songhees) and WSÁNEĆ (Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum) peoples. We are grateful to be able to teach, play and learn on these beautiful

“I am in my 9th  
year of  
volunteering and I  
have seen nothing  
but improvement  
in supporting  
riders, volunteers  
etc. The  
leadership just  
keep getting  
better and better.  
VTRA is also a  
great place to  
learn, try, and  
improve”

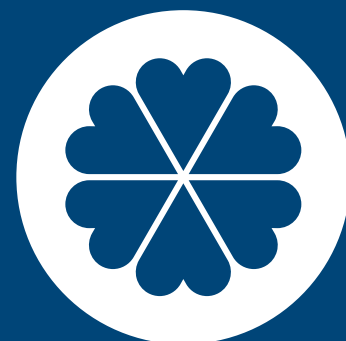


## 1. What are the core programs offered at VTRA?

**Adaptive Riding** is a mounted program emphasizing the development of riding skills, client-centered goals, and social interaction. This program offers participants of virtually all ages (4 and up) and all abilities the chance to ride a horse. Participants register for at least 1 session per year. Each session is between 6 and 10 weeks. Participants are paired with the same volunteers every week wherever possible.

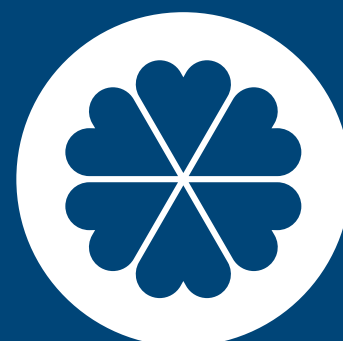
**Adaptive Driving** is designed to teach horse-drawn cart-driving skills. Lessons focus on the development of driving skills and are tailored to individual goals. This program offers participants of virtually all ages and all abilities the chance to learn to drive a cart pulled by a horse. Participants register for at least 1 session per year. Each session is between 6 and 9 weeks. Participants are paired with the same volunteers wherever possible.

**Stable Management** is an unmounted program designed to teach about horse care and safety in a barn setting. This program teaches horse care and horsemanship to participants of virtually all ages and abilities. These lessons are unmounted and may require a volunteer to assist the group.



## 2. How do participants benefit from VTRA programs?

<b>Physical Benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improving muscle control and strength</li><li>• Improving balance</li><li>• Stretching tight or spastic muscles</li><li>• Increasing range of motion</li><li>• Improving fine and gross motor skills</li><li>• Developing sensory integration skills</li></ul>	<b>Social Benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encouraging friendships with fellow horse lovers</li><li>• Including people of all abilities</li><li>• Improving communication skills through group activities</li></ul>
<b>Cognitive Benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing problem solving skills</li><li>• Working on focusing on instructions and activities</li><li>• Vocalizing commands to guide horse</li><li>• Improving motor planning and sequencing to complete activities</li></ul>	<b>Emotional Benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing confidence and improving self-esteem</li><li>• Gaining a sense of purpose</li><li>• Overcoming fear and anxiety</li></ul>





### 3. Who participants in VTRA programs?

The core program at VTRA supports diverse group of individuals, ages 6-75 with a variety of diagnosis, including but not limited to: ASD , ADHD, Cerebral Palsy, Brain Injury, Anxiety, Depression, Down Syndrome. In addition, VTRA runs Spring Break Camps and Summer Camps that support children, youth, and their families. As well, VTRA also runs Special Event Programming which enhances the core program and gives unique opportunities to people with diverse abilities.



### 4. When do VTRA programs operate?

2022/2023 Term Dates are:

Term 1: September 12- October 28, 2022  
Term 2: November 7- December 16, 2022  
Term 3: January 16 – March 17, 2023  
Spring Break Camps: March 20- 31, 2023  
Term 4: April 11- June 16, 2023  
Summer Camps: TBA  
Closed for Horses Vacation : TBA  
Summer Camps: TBA

Hours of Operation

Monday 9am-7:30pm  
Tuesday: 9am-5:30pm  
Wednesday: 9am-5:30pm  
Thursday: 9am- 5:30pm  
Friday: Closed  
Saturday: Closed  
Sunday: Closed  
Closed on Stat Holidays

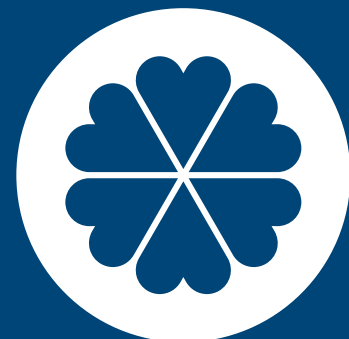


### 5. What is the time commitment for volunteers?

Ideally, VTRA would like volunteers to commit to a 1-3 hour shift once-a-week for an entire term. Committing to a regular shift helps create the best quality program for our participants since this gives everyone more familiarity when working together. However, we also have fill-in shifts available every term due to volunteer absences. If you are unable to attend a shift, please notify the VTRA as soon as possible because if we do not have enough volunteers, the participants cannot ride.



VTRA uses an online portal called VicNet to sign-up for shifts. Shifts on VicNet vary in length. The length of a shift depends on the needs of the participants. Shifts will become available the month before the start of every term. Shifts are dependent on the enrollment of our participants in classes.



## 5. Volunteer Role Descriptions – Core Program Roles

### HORSE HANDLERS

Lead the horse during lessons. Assist participants in navigating and furthering their skills

- Pass a Horse Handler Training
- Have substantial horse experience within the last 5 years
- Able to walk briskly for 45 minutes and jog for short distances
- Clear Criminal Record
- Minimum 16 years of age

### SIDE WALKERS

- Complete a Sidewalker training
- No prior horse experience is needed
- Able to walk briskly for 45 minutes and jog for short distances
- Clear Criminal Record
- Minimum 16 years of age

Walk beside the participants during their lessons and offer support as needed.

### GROOMS

Prepare horses for lessons and assist with barn and facility tasks. Fill-in if there is a absence.

- Pass a Groom Training
- Have substantial horse experience within the last 5 years
- Clear Criminal Record
- Minimum 16 years of age

### ASSISTANT INSTRUCTORS

- Pass a Horse Handler Training, Sidewalker Training and Assistant Instructor Training
- Must have 6 months experience volunteering in the program at VTRA
- Clear Criminal Record
- Minimum 16 years of age

Assist the instructor in delivering a safe, supportive and fun lesson.

### STABLE PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Support the instructor in delivering stable management content in a safe, fun and safe environment

- Encouraged to attend a Groom/Stable Management Training
- Clear Criminal Record
- Minimum 16 years of age

## 5. Volunteer Role Descriptions – Support Roles

Support VTRA in a variety of roles during special events

- Minimum 16 years of age

- Expertise with committee topics on Governance, Human resources, Strategic Planning, Finance, Program/Facilities, or Revenue Generation
- Clear Criminal Record
- Minimum 16 years of age

Serve on one of our committees to help support the program.

VTRA encourages volunteers to get trained in multiple roles. Volunteers may be asked to change roles if there is a participant or volunteer absences. These role changes ensure the VTRA is able to offer a high quality and safe program to the participant.



**SPECIAL  
EVENT  
VOLUNTEERS**

**COMMITTEE  
MEMBERS**





## 7. How to prepare for a volunteer shift?

- Come with a desire to support riders with diverse abilities
- Read the volunteer role descriptions and emergency safety procedures
- Come 15 – 30 minutes prior to the start of the lesson time
- Wear closed toed shoes. Shoes should be sturdy so that they protect the feet from horses' hooves, and provide good stability on uneven surfaces. Waterproof boots are encouraged for wet weather days
- Wear long pants whenever possible, though walking shorts are acceptable in hot weather.
- Dress for the weather since riders go on trail rides all year long
- Gloves are encouraged on cold weather days, mittens are not permitted for safety reasons
- Jewelry such as necklaces and bracelets should not be worn as they can create a hazard
- Be scent-free
- Tie long hair back while in the barn or arena
- Be willing to change roles if we are short staffed or a participant is absent



**IN THE 2021 PROGRAM YEAR,  
200 VOLUNTEERS DONATED  
OVER 7,200 HOURS**

**I am beyond thankful  
to all the volunteers  
that choose to engage  
with the VTRA. The  
VTRA would not be  
possible without the  
support of it's  
volunteers but the real  
gift is the positive  
attitude, adaptability  
and willingness to help  
that so many VTRA  
volunteers have .**

**Their joy and  
willingness to learn  
new skills and how to  
best support their  
riders and the horses  
is amazing. .  
Volunteers are the  
hearts of VTRA . Thank  
you to volunteers for s  
and the joy you bring  
everyday at the VTRA.**

**- Danielle Drew,  
Volunteer Coordinator**

