

6 Reasons to Volunteer

By Sarah E. Rune

I've been volunteering at horse trials for over 3 years. It's been instrumental in helping me learn the ins and outs of this sport, especially coming into it as an adult having grown up doing saddleseat. I'm lucky that Area VI has many events throughout the year, and from volunteering at several venues I offer these top 6 reasons to volunteer:

1. Watch & Learn

In addition to watching great and not-so-great riders, volunteering can teach you the nuances of the rules, the details on scoring systems, and maybe net you some pointers from judges and technical delegates.

2. Be In The Action

Most volunteer posts involve spectating, putting you in prime position do a show report, give live action updates to friends at home, and be the first to post video on Facebook.

3. Make Friends

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people in your area who share your passion.

4. Support the Sport

We all know that it takes a lot of time, energy, and money to put on an event, and volunteering is a way to help out the gracious hosts and organizers, as well as help make sure entry fees are kept down.

5. Cash In

Many venues now offer vouchers or discounts on schooling or entry fees in exchange for volunteering, so you and your horse both benefit from your hard work.

6. Good Karma

Volunteering is a good deed and helping others brings deep personal satisfaction.

I'd also like to offer a few notes to show officials and organizers to help them get the most from their volunteers.

3 Tips to organizers:

1. Clearly articulate if you can accept volunteers for a few hours only, rather than all day or all weekend. Lots of people want to help, but may not be available for the whole show.
2. Offer incentives if you can afford to do so. Schooling and entry vouchers/discounts or merchandise discounts will create loyalty to your venue.
3. Finally, manage expectations properly. If volunteers need to bring water and chairs, say so before they trudge up a hill. Please don't say lunch is provided if it isn't (and no, 2 chewy bars doesn't count as lunch). A good volunteer experience will result in continued volunteer support.

Sarah

Sarah E. Rune, age 27, is an amateur eventer in Southern California. Her horse Bohemian is an OTTB and was used in the filming of HBO's "Luck" TV Series. They have competed at Intro and are moving up to BN in 2014. Their personal blog is EventingInColor.Blogspot.com.