



## **Animal Assisted Happiness**

# Volunteer Handbook

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[animalassistedhappiness.org](http://animalassistedhappiness.org)

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## Special Note From Our Founders



*(From left to right: Peter Higa, Lollipop, Vicki Amon-Higa & Jinglebell)*

*All we can say is THANK YOU! When our family was inspired by that first smile at Lollipop's visit to Riley in the Spring of 2006, we could have never imagined that Animal Assisted Happiness would grow to be a 2 ½ acre Smile Farm in the heart of Silicon Valley creating over 63,000 smiles for youth with needs through our Barnyard Buddies. We certainly could not have grown without you, our AAH Volunteers, so thank you for all you do to help us create smiles for youth with needs, for caring for our Barnyard Buddies, and for helping us take care of our AAH Smile Farm.*

*Creating Smiles,  
Vicki Amon-Higa & Peter Higa, Co-Founders*

## About AAH



Animal Assisted Happiness (AAH) is a local non-profit organization with the mission of enriching the lives of youths with needs through barnyard animal interactions and creating moments of joy and happiness throughout the AAH community.

Founded in 2009 by the Amon-Higa family, it all started in their backyard with a few barnyard animals. Specifically, AAH was born the moment that the family's very special mini-horse, Lollipop, went to visit a terminally ill teenager - in her living room. The instant Lollipop and the teenager met, an immediate smile was created as well as a life-long friendship. Over the past decade, AAH has quickly grown into its current fully-operational 2.5 acre Smile Farm located in the heart of the Silicon Valley, - , CA and is now home to over 90 (mostly rescue), barnyard animals consisting of miniature horses, a miniature donkey, alpacas, goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs, and more.

At AAH, we believe that animals have a unique gift of creating one of a kind smiles and memories for children with special needs, health or family challenges. Children with autism, severe cerebral palsy or who are in partially vegetative states, have various levels of physical, cognitive and verbal challenges. Some are born with these conditions and others have had their lives changed in an instant due to accidents or illnesses. When one witnesses our barnyard animals creating a smile or causing any small gesture from a child facing these types of challenges, there is no question that AAH is making a positive difference!

To date, our barnyard buddies have created over 62,700 smiles and have greatly impacted the lives of many children throughout the Bay Area. With a small wonderful group of staff, AAH relies 100% on the dedication, help, and support of its 4,500 volunteers to assist in our Barnyard Buddies programs, to care for our barnyard animals, and to keep the farm running. Through our private visits at the farm, vocational programs, and mobile visits to schools and hospitals across Silicon Valley, our goal is to create a million smiles 😊

More About Us:

[Website](#)

[Video](#)

[News Article](#)

# What is an “AAH Smile”?

## An AAH Smile is....

“When I see one of our children with special needs waiting for me in the school parking lot because she is extremely excited to see our animals and can’t contain her happiness when she gets to touch our animals.”

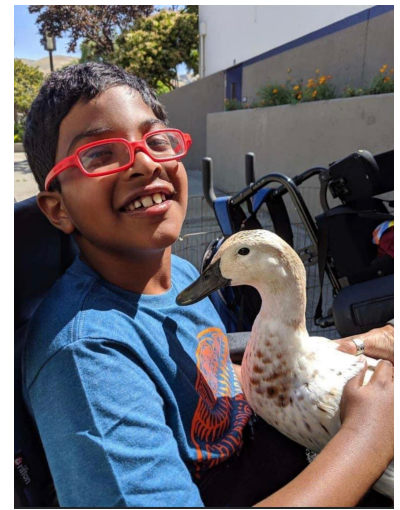
- Simone Haroush (Programs Manager)

“For our clients, a relaxing or fun time at the farm. We use smiles as a metric because while everyone has different experiences at the farm, the one thing in common is the smiles”

- Nick Coleman (Caretaker/Asst. Programs Manager)

“A hand signal, happy dance, or wiggling feet from a non-verbal child with special needs whenever he or she sees or touches one of our barnyard animal buddies. Smiles can come in many forms!”

- Claire Woo (Caretaker/Asst. Programs Manager)



*Photo: Simone Haroush (AAH’s program manager of over 10 years) creating smiles at a local high school with Snowball (bunny)*

# AAH Volunteers

## Adult Volunteers

- We're always in need of adult volunteers! If you love animals, working with children, or doing farm chores, then there is always something for you to do at our farm!

## Youth Volunteers

- Our animals love kids! If you have a passion for animals, enjoy helping, and are eager to meet other youth-, then AAH is the perfect place for you!
- If you are currently in 6th grade or above, you can come volunteer by yourself...woohoo!
- If you are currently in any grade level below 6th grade, we require that a parent or legal guardian accompany you while volunteering at the farm.

## Family Volunteering

- We love it when families volunteer together, and we now consider you an extended part of our AAH family! There's always a task for mom, dad, brother, or sister.

## Group Volunteering

- The more the merrier, right? We truly appreciate it when groups come and volunteer, and there will always be something for everyone that comes!

# Youth Ambassador Program

At Animal Assisted Happiness, we believe in our youth helping other youths, which is why we established our Youth Ambassador (YA) Program! We know that the activities our youth participate in today will plant seeds for all they can do tomorrow.

## Eligibility

High School Students

## Our Mission

- To engage our youth in soliciting ideas, in designing programs, and in voicing their perspectives
- To educate our youth about children who have health and family challenges
- To enable our youth to develop leadership skills and to instill a foundation for lifelong philanthropy
- To encourage our youth in building and fostering animal-human relationships

## Committees

- Animals
  - Work with AAH's farm team to develop our animals into even better Barnyard Buddies (especially great for aspiring veterinarians!).
- Smile Farm and Garden
  - Help design the AAH Smile Farm into an attractive, welcoming space for visitors, volunteers, and animals alike
- Fundraising
  - Plan and lead fundraising events/activities for the farm alongside AAH's development staff
- Social Media
  - Spread awareness of AAH through various social and media outlets
- Youth with Needs
  - Engage with AAH's clients to learn about the challenges they face and the impact AAH has on them (great for aspiring social workers/ teachers!)

## Why become a YA?

- Learn from experts and become more comfortable with animals
- Learn about youth with health and family challenges and how to make them smile
- Become a leader in your community and gain skills in public speaking
- Practice the art of story-telling and narrative creation
- Be a role model to AAH's youth volunteers
- Help AAH grow and create more smiles for years to come

## Commitment

All Youth Ambassadors are required to be active in:

- At least one (1) committee
- Volunteer with AAH a minimum of thirty (30) hours per year
- Attend monthly YA meetings occurring on the second Sunday of the each month, from 12-1pm at the AAH Smile Farm
- Dedicate any additional time commitment as determined per committee activities

**\*\*NOTE:** Youth Ambassadors are role models for all of AAH's volunteers. As a YA, you are expected to fully commit to the program. If you are not able to meet the commitments you will not be able to participate in the program.

## How To Join

AAH's Youth Ambassadors are positive-minded self-starters who are interested in taking their volunteering with AAH to the next level. We'd love for you to join us!

If you've completed 10+ hours of volunteering with AAH prior to joining YA, with at least 2 of those hours being Mobile Barnyard Visits, please complete and submit the [form](#) located on our website. All fields are required.

If you have any questions, contact:  
Erica Higa (Youth Ambassador Program Coordinator)  
[erica@aa smilefarm.org](mailto:erica@aa smilefarm.org) | (650) 576-2388

# Volunteer Duties

We operate 100% with volunteers, who are a core part of AAH and who help AAH continue to deliver its mission of creating smiles for youth with needs. Therefore, we are always in need of both youth and adult volunteers. If you have a passion for working with youth and animals, there's a place for you at AAH!

As a first time AAH Volunteer, please be sure to ask questions of whomever is leading the visit or Farm Chores so that you know how to interact with our Barnyard Buddies. This information is covered in our Orientation, but better to always ask questions. Look for the AAH Team Member in the purple shirt and they'll show you how to interact with the animals and share them with the kids we serve.

## Volunteer Opportunities

1. **Creating Smiles for Youth with Needs:** This is the core of our mission and always where we need the most help. Adult and youth volunteers alike are needed to help share our Barnyard Buddies with the youth AAH serves -both at the farm and out on Mobile Barnyard visits.
  - a. At The Farm
    - Private & Group visits at the AAH Smile Farm always need volunteers to help with animal interactions and to help guide youth as they learn valuable skills like following directions, working with other, and other important vocational skills
    - If you are scheduled to help at a Smile Farm visit, please arrive about 15 minutes prior to the scheduled visit and meet with the AAH Team Member leading the visit. S/he will help you plan your help for the visit.
    - As an AAH Volunteer, your responsibility is to ensure that our Barnyard Buddies are respected and safe. Here are some ideas for each species of our Barnyard Buddy. Our AAH Team Member can help you more and/or partner you with another volunteer who has helped in the past.
      - **Aviaries:** Please do not enter the Finch/Diamond Dove aviary but you can share our ringneck doves with the kids we serve. Be sure to close both gates when you go into the aviary and gently catch one of our doves with both hands. If

they fly away, don't chase them, look for another one. Help the kids hold the dove with both hands and when the dove wants to leave, simply open up your hands.

- **Chicken Village:** Our hens will all be out of their coops during the day. You are welcome to catch one of them by scooping them up in your hands (like a football so they feel secure) and placing them into a bed to share. Do not chase them, they'll squat down near you if they'd like to be caught. Be sure the kids are sitting down to hold a hen.
- **Duck Village:** It is best to enter the Duck Village with an AAH Team Member. We don't want to chase the ducks, but sometimes they will let us catch them to hold them in a bed, when we are sitting down.
- **Rabbit Village:** All our rabbits are friendly but should never be introduced to each other. Most have a scruff so you can pick them up by their scruff (except Frankie & Stevie, please don't try to pick them up). Hold them securely so they aren't afraid, in a bed and ask the youth to sit down before you pass them over to them to hold.
- **Guinea Pig Village:** As a volunteer, you can pick up the guinea pigs from their individual cages and put them in the turn out -- from there the kids we serve can watch them and even hold them in a bed with your assistance. Please don't chase them and ensure no one tries to feed them by hand, we don't want them to associate food with the kids we serve, as that will lead to biting later.
- **Charlie the Sulcata Tortoise:** You should not enter Charlie's enclosure, he is a view with your eyes part of the AAH Smile Farm.
- **Mini Pigs:** This enclosure is off limits to everyone except our AAH Team Members in purple shirts, please don't let anyone go into the pig pens.
- **Large Goats/Sheep:** You are welcome to enter this pen, please be sure you latch both latches at the gates when you enter and exit. Approach the goats/sheep slowly and they'll be happy to be your friend as you share them with kids.
- **Mini Horses, Donkey & Alpaca:** You can share these animals with an AAH Team Member. Be sure you latch both latches and never stand behind the horses. Also be

aware of where the Alpaca are, they like to be watched, not hugged!

- **Mini Goats:** This pen is full of little goats who love to come and say hello. Please don't try to hand feed them and be sure both latches are locked when you enter and exit. They love kids and want to be your friend!

b. Mobile Barnyard Buddies

- We also take our Barnyard Buddies (guinea pigs, rabbits, chickens, ducks, and mini goats) out to different schools, organizations, and care centers. Our Programs Manager brings the animals and leads the hour-long visits, but we need volunteers to help with sharing the animals with the youth we serve as they interact with our animals.
- During the Mobile Barnyard Buddies visits, the AAH Team member leading the visit will bring the animals out and have volunteers assigned to each animal to share with the kids we serve. All small animals are held in beds and the mini goats will be on a leash.
- Any questions during Mobile Visits, our AAH Team member is happy to help.
- Please be sure to be at the Visit location 15 minutes before the visit, so that you can plan the visit with our AAH Team Member.

2. **Farm Chores and Public Open Hours:** Seven mornings a week, and a few afternoon weekdays, volunteers are needed to help care for our animals at the Smile Farm.

a. Farm Chores

- This includes cleaning enclosures, feeding, and taking many of our Barnyard Buddies out for walks to get some exercise.

b. Public Open Hours

- During Open Hours, volunteers are in charge of educating the public about the organization and keeping our Barnyard Buddies safe.

## How to Become a Volunteer

**\*\*NOTE:** Youth currently in 6th grade and above are welcome to volunteer on their own at any of our volunteer opportunities/events. Any youth younger than 6th grade must volunteer with a parent.

To get started, please register [online](#) and attend one of our volunteer orientations which occur on the second Sunday of the month at the AAH Smile Farm. Once you have completely registered as a volunteer and have attended a volunteer orientation, you will automatically be added to our volunteer email list and will receive our volunteer newsletter that lists all our upcoming volunteer opportunities.

To sign-up for a volunteer orientation, volunteer opportunities, or for any general questions/concerns about volunteering, please contact:

Jonathan Amon (Volunteer Coordinator)  
[jonathan@aa smilefarm.org](mailto:jonathan@aa smilefarm.org) | (650) 714-3002

## AAH Team Member Contacts

If you are volunteering at the farm or on a mobile visit and need to contact the AAH Team member you are working with, please contact:

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>CONTACT INFO</b>
Simone Haroush	Programs Manager	(408) 887-6069 simone@animalassistedhappiness.org
Kira Petroff	Farm Manager	(408) 623-5479 kira@aahsmilefarm.org
Nick Coleman	Caretaker/ Assistant Programs Manager	(650) 417-5096 nick@aahsmilefarm.org
Claire Woo	Caretaker/ Assistant Programs Manager	(408) 876-0744 claire@aahsmilefarm.org

# Volunteer Hours Verification

1. Please make sure to **always** sign-in at the beginning of your volunteer shift and to sign-out at the end whenever you come and volunteer with us.  
\*The volunteer sign-in table is located at the front of the farm's Hay Barn
2. If you have any special forms from your school/organization that needs to be signed for the day of volunteering, please find the leading AAH Team member for your volunteer shift to sign-off.
3. If you need to know how many hours you have volunteered for in a given time period, you may submit a request [online](#) or email Jonathan Amon (Volunteer Coordinator).
4. For Mobile Barnyard Buddy Visits, the AAH Team Member (in purple shirt) will be responsible for submitting your name for volunteer hours, you won't be signing in at the location.

# Important Safety Information

*Safety is our highest priority for everyone at AAH including the kids we serve, volunteers, AAH Team, and our Barnyard Buddies!!*

## Questions/Concerns

If you're unfamiliar with a chore/task or need any assistance, please ask an AAH Team member (look for the purple shirt!) for help instead of guessing and doing it yourself. Additionally, if you have any concerns, immediately bring it to the attention of a AAH Team member. At AAH, no question or concern is considered foolish, and we take your safety very seriously!

## When Caring For Our Barnyard Buddies, aka our Animals

Any number of different scenarios from odd weather to how we react around the animals may affect their behavior and stress levels!

As a volunteer, you should always behave in a calm and low-energy manner when you're around the animals. Before entering an enclosure, be conscientious of all the animals in the enclosure and practice good animal husbandry by using gentle hands, slow approaches, and walking feet. Make sure to always completely close and latch the gate after entering and exiting any pen. Additionally, be sure to keep a watchful eye and constantly scan the environment looking for potential hazards.

## Volunteer Safety Checklist

As a volunteer, it is very important that you take responsibility for ensuring the safety of AAH's Smile Farm and all the Barnyard Buddies that live there. Before volunteering, make sure to do a mental check of all of the items below in our Volunteer Safety Checklist:

### 1. Check the weather conditions before

- Are you dressed appropriately based on weather conditions?

- We recommend wearing closed toed shoes, long pants, and long sleeves shirts (or your white AAH volunteer shirt) when coming to the farm
- On windy days, it's not a bad idea to bring a jacket or sweatshirt!
- On sunny days, remember to wear sunscreen and bring a hat! Also, bring a water bottle and snack for whenever you need to take a break.

\*\*We are a farm, so wear clothes that you're okay with getting some dirt/mud on and shoes that you don't mind stepping in animal poop!

## 2. When in the pens/enclosures

- Things to watch for:
  - Are the gates securely closed & locked after I have entered and exited?
  - Are the pens and cages free of any harmful objects, debris, or branches?
  - Are the animal water bottles/buckets full?
  - Are all working/gardening tools removed from the pen after use?

## 3. How are the Barnyard Buddies/animals?

- Does the animal look normal and healthy?
- How is the animal behaving / how am I behaving around and treating the animal
  - Animals begin reading your body language the instant they see you, so please be aware of how you move, your voice level, and how you act around them!
  - How you react will tell an animal whether they should be afraid, attentive, or relaxed.
- Are there any new cuts/wounds, ticks, runny eyes, runny noses, diarrhea, limping, bumps, thrush, etc.?

\*\*As always, if you have any questions/concerns about any of the animals, please notify and ask an AAH Team member!

## 5. General

- Gum, candy, or snacks are not allowed whenever you're interacting with the animals or are inside any of their enclosures
- Please always make sure to wash your hands and use hand sanitizer!
- Always pay close attention to what you're doing and of your surroundings to ensure that the animals and other volunteers around you don't get stepped on, hurt, scratched, fall, etc.

\*\*Always ask the leading AAH Team member during a visit or farm chores for directions or advice on what to do/work on!

## Helpful Animal Tips

Even if this is your first time around farm animals, there's nothing to be nervous about! All of our Barnyard Buddies are very friendly and are used to being around new people all the time!



### Mini-Horses/Donkey

- Never stand directly behind any of the mini-horses or mini-donkey. They can't see you back there and rather have you where they can see your beautiful smiling faces :) Please approach slowly making sure they can see you and let them smell you so they can get to know you.

### Alpacas

- Our alpacas can be very shy, and we want to respect their personal space and not pet them. However, they can be curious and might approach you. But, they really love it when people admire them from a safe distance.

### Sheep

- Our sheep can also be very shy and might walk away. In this case, we never want to chase them. Sometimes they will approach and want to be pet.

### Goats

- All of our goats are super friendly, and some even love a little extra attention. With goats, you never want to push their heads or pull their tails. If you see some goats headbutting, then that is perfectly normal and just their way of playing with each other.

## Pigs

- We ask that an AAH Team member accompany you when you're with our pigs. They are easily startled by sudden movements. They can also be a bit shy around new people but feel very comfortable with our AAH Team, who are with them everyday.

## Rabbits/Guinea Pigs

- Our small animals are the best! They love spending time with our volunteers, but we want them to feel comfortable, which is why we ask that volunteers hold them in small beds while sitting. If you've never held a rabbit or guinea pig before or feel unsure, please do ask an AAH Team member to show you how.

## Chickens

- Our chickens are very friendly and some do like to be held/pet in small beds while volunteers are sitting. Please do not chase the chickens, as it will cause them stress. When you are done holding a chicken, please gently place them back on the ground (especially for our older hens).

## Ducks

- Our ducks like to be watched more than they like to be caught. Sometimes though, especially Daisy and Precious Diana, will let you hold them in a bed on your lap. When they go out on visits with our Mobile Barnyard, they usually wear a harness.

## Finches/Diamond Doves

- Please be aware that no one should go into the Finch/Diamond Dove aviary except to provide food/water and/or clean the aviary. These birds are too small for anyone to try to catch/hold. They are for the eyes only!
- Please do not forcefully grab or chase any of the doves/finches as it stresses them. Birds do not have a diaphragm, which makes their lungs more sensitive.

## Sulcata Tortoise/Charlie

- Charlie is a great Barnyard Buddy to be observed. Please do not enter his pen unless you are asked to feed him by an AAH Team Member or to clean his pen and/or water.

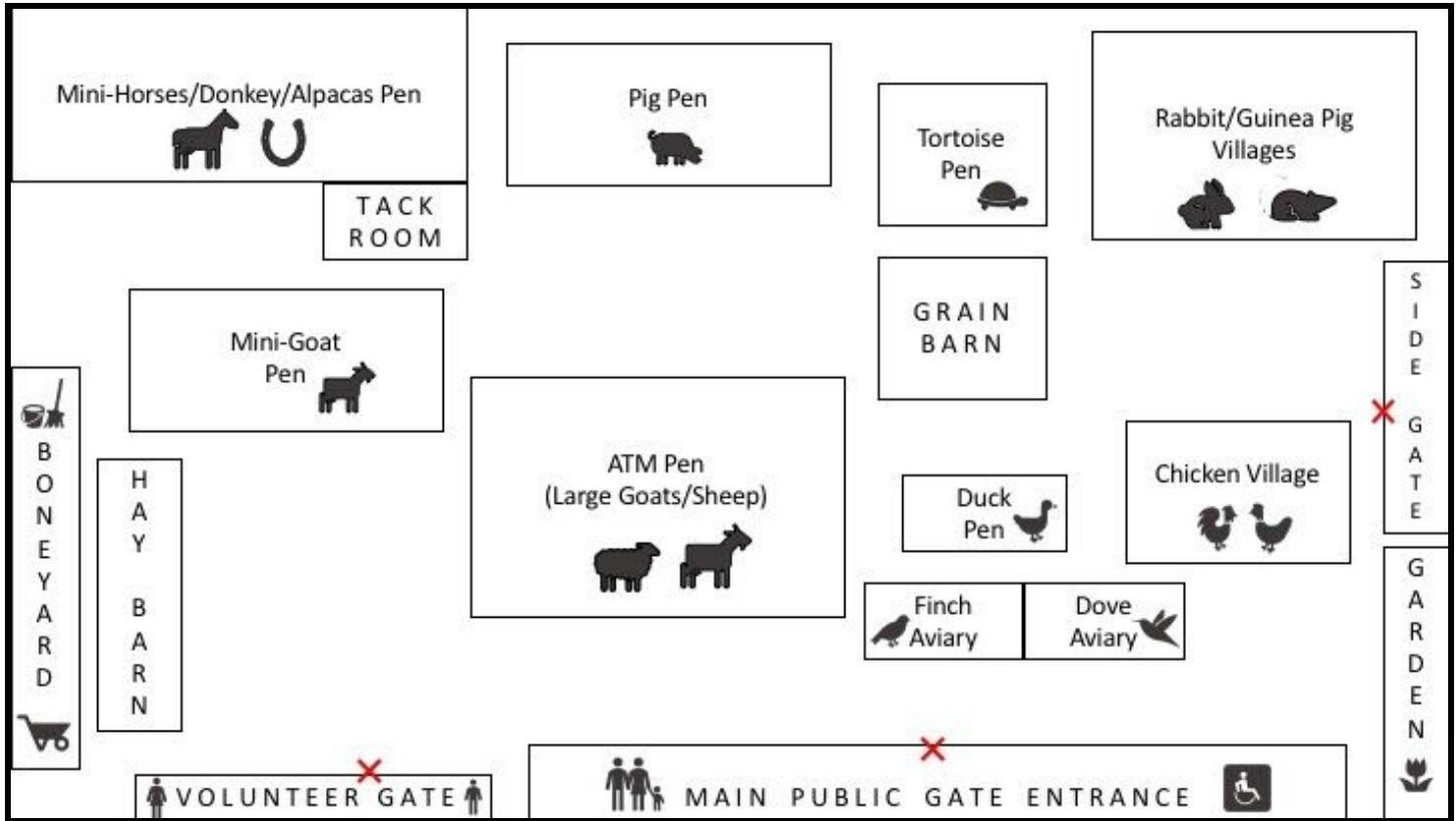
\*\*Our Barnyard Buddies love socializing with our volunteers! But we want to make it a great experience for both you and the animals. And, how you interact with our Barnyard Buddies is important for when they go do their jobs with the kids we serve.

## Emergency Procedures

### Before an Emergency Occurs

1. Immediately report any unsafe conditions to any of the AAH Team members present
2. Identify the location of the following items:
  - a. Entrances/exits
    - i. Main volunteer gate (located at front of farm)
    - ii. Main public gate (located at the front of farm)
    - iii. Side gate (located between rabbit village and garden)
  - b. Emergency Information:
    - i. Sheets posted in every barn throughout the farm
  - c. Fire extinguishers
    - i. Located throughout the farm
      1. At the sink in the front of the farm
      2. On the horse barn stable in the picnic area
      3. In the Grain Barn
  - d. First Aid Kits
    - i. Located in the main Hay Barn, Tack Room, and Grain Barn
3. Know the following emergency protocols:
  - a. Fire Drill
  - b. Earthquake
  - c. Evacuation
  - d. Lockdown

# Know the Smile Farm Map



\*\*In the case of an emergency, please note all entrances/exits (marked in red on the map above) throughout the farm and calmly exit to the meeting point in the main parking lot. Please keep all pathways clear for emergency responders and vehicles.

## Important Emergency Contacts:

Fire/Police/Medical Emergencies	Dial 9-1-1
City of Sunnyvale Non-Emergency Dispatch	408-730-7100

## Specific AAH Emergency Procedures

In the case of an emergency, it is important to stay calm and seek the most appropriate course of action.

1. If you witness an emergency (injury, fallen, fainted, etc.) pertaining to another **volunteer**, immediately check to see if the person needs assistance.
  - a. Do not leave the individual alone if he or she is unfit to be alone!
  - b. Do not try to take matters into your own hands (unless you're a certified medical professional)! Most times, it is hard to evaluate the severity of a person's condition, and it is best to leave it to qualified professionals and to avoid making matters worse.
  - c. Locate the nearest volunteer and have him/her notify an AAH Team member, who will call emergency responders (if necessary) and notify the individual's emergency contacts.
  - d. Try to minimize any stressful surroundings. If the situation occurs in an animal pen, you can have another volunteer take charge in safely moving the animals away.
2. If you witness an emergency pertaining to an **AAH client**, allow the client's accompanied legal guardian or aide to intervene.
  - a. Do not crowd. Please wait quietly within hearing distance to see if the client's guardian or aide requests your assistance.
3. If you see an **animal** that looks unwell or in distress, please alert an AAH Team member. Do not intervene yourself. Our Team members are very knowledgeable and qualified to handle animal-related emergencies.
  - a. An AAH Team member may ask for your assistance. In this case, please wait quietly and listen to the AAH Team member's directions carefully.

\*\*If prior, you know you feel uncomfortable or unable to perform any of the above duties during the case of an emergency, then be prepared to ask another volunteer to assist while you go locate an AAH Team member.

OR

If at any point during an emergency, you feel uneasy, then politely excuse yourself from the situation once an AAH team member has arrived.

In case of an AAH animal/farm related emergency occurring not during farm chores or volunteer events, please contact the following AAH Team Member in the order listed below (given in order of closest proximity to the farm)

Name	Role	Phone Number
Nick Coleman	Caretaker/ Assistant Programs Manager	650-417-5096
Simone Haroush	Program Manager	408-887-6069
Claire Woo	Caretaker/ Assistant Programs Manager	408-876-0744
Kira Petroff	Farm Manager	408-623-5479
Vicki Amon-Higa	Co-Founder/ President	650-714-2388
Peter Higa	Co-Founder/ Vice-President	408-228-2376

\*\*At the farm, there are emergency sheets with our AAH Team contact information located in the main Hay Barn, Tack Room, and Grain Barn.

## Know Before You Go

- Please make sure to check our calendar/website, as well as your email inbox, in case an event or visit gets cancelled due to weather or any other reason
- Wear your white AAH volunteer shirt for all mobile/private visits and public open hours
- When you arrive, make yourself a volunteer name badge (provided at the farm) so that our AAH Team can identify you
- Free parking at the farm! Just let the gate attendant know that you are an Animal Assisted Happiness volunteer
- Do not leave any valuables or personal belongings unattended in your vehicle. We have volunteer cubbies inside the farm where you can store your belongings during your shift
- Make sure to sign in and out of the volunteer binder located in front of the main Hay Barn. This way, we can keep track of your volunteer hours
- Arrive early to check-in with the leading AAH Team member
  - Especially for private/group visits, arrive 10-15 minutes prior so our AAH team member can give a brief overview of the visit details/what to do and answer any questions or concerns you may have
- Don't forget to SMILE! 😊

## Lost & Found

If you think you lost or forgot a personal belonging while volunteering at the farm, please reach out to any of our AAH Team members! We do have a lost and found bin at the farm, and a Team member can check or direct you to the bin the next time you're at the farm. We will try our very best to reunite you with lost belongings :)

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

We expect volunteers to come to every shift with a positive attitude and a desire to work hard! As AAH volunteers, you represent our organization, and the kids/families we serve and the general public look to you as role models. Please be respectful and act responsibly whenever you're at the farm, especially around our animals and the kids we serve. Also, please listen closely to and follow the directions that any of AAH Team members give you. Lastly, AAH welcomes and maintains a respectfully inclusive environment for people of all backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, religions, disabilities, and mental health capabilities.

# Frequently Asked Questions

- **Q: How can I see/get my total volunteer hours from a particular time period?**
  - A: Please submit a request [online](#). Or send an email to [jonathan@aaahsmilefarm.org](mailto:jonathan@aaahsmilefarm.org) with the dates of your volunteer hours, and he will obtain the hours for you. We document all of our volunteers' hours from our volunteer binder at the farm.
- **Q: How do I know what volunteer opportunities are available?**
  - A: Check our [calendar](#) found on our website and check your email inbox for our AAH volunteer newsletter.
- **Q: Is there a limit to the number of volunteer opportunities I can sign-up for?**
  - Nope :) You can sign-up for as many opportunities in advance! However, we ask that you sign-up knowing that you can fully commit to that shift/day.
- **Q: Can I just show-up for a volunteer event or farm chore?**
  - No, you must sign-up before and get a confirmation email from Jonathan (Volunteer Coordinator). Our team will only allow the volunteers that were confirmed for a given shift to participate.
- **Q: Can I bring a friend or another family member to volunteer with me?**
  - Only if they are a registered AAH volunteer that has completed an orientation. They must also sign-up and be confirmed for a shift.
- **Q: Do I have to stay for the full volunteer shift?**
  - For private/mobile visits, yes! For farm chores, we will not force you to stay, but farm chore slots always fill up quickly. So, in fairness to all volunteers, we would prefer if you sign-up knowing that you can fully commit to your shift.
- **Q: Is there a bathroom at the farm?**
  - Yes, we do have a large ADA compliant porta potty located at the front of our farm, which our volunteers are welcome to use.
- **Q: Do I need to wear my white volunteer shirt when I come volunteer?**
  - We ask that you wear your white volunteer shirts whenever you're volunteering during our events with the public and during any private/mobile visits with our clients. For farm chores, it is not required unless it coincides with public open hours, but recommended.
- **Q: I lost my white volunteer shirt and need to buy a new one. Where can I buy?**

- If you're at the farm, any of our AAH Team members can assist you in purchasing a new volunteer shirt for a \$15 donation. If you're paying with cash, exact change is preferable (\$15/shirt).
- You can also purchase a shirt ahead of time at our [online shop](#) located on our website. We are on the honor system, so just let one of our AAH Team members know you made the donation online.
- **Q: Is there a dress code for when I volunteer?**
  - We do not have a dress code, except we ask that you wear closed toed shoes anytime you are at The Smile Farm, and use your best judgement to dress appropriately and respectfully. See our Volunteer Safety Checklist section for our recommendations on what to wear.
- **Q: If I purchased AAH merchandise (T-shirt, water bottle, hat, etc.) online, where can I pick-up?**
  - You can pick up any online orders next time you're at the farm. Bring your online purchase receipt.
- **Q: Can I help feed the animals while I'm volunteering?**
  - Yes, we want our volunteers to help us when we feed our animals! However, you must consult with an AAH Team member (look for the dark purple shirt) first, who will tell you when it's time to feed the animals and how we feed them. Do not feed them anything you find off the ground or any snacks you brought from home
- **Q: Can I take photos of the animals or the farm while volunteering?**
  - Yes, and if you took a really great photo, please do share it with us :) We love seeing photos of our volunteers with our Barnyard Buddies, and we might even feature it on our website or social media.
  - Exception: Please refrain from taking photos during private/mobile visits with the kids we serve. We want to respect the privacy of the kids we serve and their families.
- **Q: What if I signed-up for a farm chore or visit and have to cancel at the last moment?**
  - A: Immediately, email Jonathan ([jonathan@aa smile farm.org](mailto:jonathan@aa smile farm.org)), as soon as you know that you have to cancel or at least 24 hours in advance before the event. This way, our AAH Team is not left short, and we can give your slot to another volunteer.
- **Q: Is there a no-show policy?**
  - Yes, if you did not notify Jonathan prior and did not show-up to an event that you were confirmed for, then you will be ineligible to volunteer for 30 days. Volunteer opportunities fill up quickly, and this is done in fairness to all our registered volunteers, who were interested in but unable to sign-up for an opportunity before it filled.

- **Q: If I wanted to, where can I make a donation?**
  - If you're at the farm, an AAH Team member will accept any donations (cash or check) and put it in our secure donation box.
  - If you want to make an online donation, you can go to our website and click on the [donation link](#).
  - For any non-monetary donations like animal feed, cages, etc., our AAH Team members will intake at the farm. If you're looking for other things to donate, you can also check out our donation [wish list](#) located on our website :)

# Volunteer Acknowledgement and Receipt

## Liability Release

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby acknowledge that I and/or my legal guardian on my behalf have voluntarily registered to participate in animal interaction activities with Animal Assisted Happiness (“AAH”).

I fully understand that animal interaction activities may involve dangers and risks of injury to me. I fully understand that an animal irrespective of its training and usual past behavior and characteristics, may act or react unpredictably based on instinct or fright, and that even the most gentle animal, when provoked or frightened, may rear, buck, bite, scratch, run away or otherwise act in an unpredictable and dangerous manner. In addition, weather such as thunder, hail, lightning, high wind or sudden appearance of another animal, person or machine can cause an animal to act in an unpredictable and dangerous manner.

Having understood these dangers, I fully assume all of the risks involved and completely release AAH officers, board members, affiliated organizations, agents, employees and/or volunteers from liability for any and all injuries or death to me from my participation in animal-assisted activities. I agree not to sue, claim against, attach the property of or prosecute AAH officers, board members, affiliated organizations, agents, employees and/or its volunteers for any injury or death caused by or resulting from my participation in animal interaction activities, whether or not such injury or death was caused by their negligence or from any other cause. I agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless AAH and all of its officers, board members, affiliated organizations, agents, employees and/or volunteers for any injury or death caused by or resulting from my participation in animal interaction activities, whether or not such injury or death was caused by their negligence or from any other cause.

This agreement shall be legally binding upon me, my family, my heirs, my estate, assigns, legal guardians, and my personal representatives. I have carefully read this agreement and fully understand its contents. I am aware that I am releasing certain legal rights that I otherwise may have and I enter into this release of liability and indemnity agreement on behalf of myself and/or my legal ward of my own free will.

THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY. DO NOT SIGN OR INITIAL THE RELEASE IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND AND/OR AGREE WITH ITS TERMS.

## Photo/Multimedia Release

In consideration of Animal Assisted Happiness (AAH) accepting my participant of animal interaction activities, I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree that the photographs and/or video images taken of me may be used in perpetuity by Animal Assisted Happiness for the purposes of publicity, education, fundraising, or otherwise promoting the mission and activities of the organization. I understand that I will receive no name recognition or monetary compensation for the use of said photograph(s) and/or video footage, to be used either in print or on the AAH website and that this agreement will remain binding and have legal effect regardless of whether my association with Animal Assisted Happiness continues.

## Privacy Statement

AAH collects personal information for use within AAH and related activities. The information is used to effectively communicate directly with you and to better match your interest, capabilities and services with AAH's needs which will likely add to a better personal experience. We do not share your information outside of authorized AAH staff and resources.