



## **Project Information**

# **Young Volunteers and Horses Make a Change for Children with Disabilities**

**Host organization:** Paint and Quarter Horse Foundation Bulgaria

**Contact person:** Mina Raduncheva /Program manager/,  
email: [pqfbulgaria@gmail.com](mailto:pqfbulgaria@gmail.com) , phone number: +359887332943

### **Project periods:**

1. April 1<sup>st</sup> – May 30<sup>th</sup>
2. June 1<sup>st</sup> – July 30<sup>th</sup>
3. August 1<sup>st</sup> – September 29<sup>th</sup>

**Number of volunteers at the same time:** 3

**Period of volunteering per volunteer:** 60 days, excluding travel days

**Partnering counties:** France, Germany, Portugal and Luxembourg

**Number of volunteers per country:** 3

### **Interviews:**

Interview via skype: Skype name – Paint and Quarter Horse Foundation Bulgaria

Interview via whatsapp: Phone number of Mina Raduncheva, +359 887 33 29 43

Interview via Google Hangouts: email – [pqfbulgaria@gmail.com](mailto:pqfbulgaria@gmail.com)

### **Profile of a volunteer:**

All of the following criteria are obligatory:

- Young people who are tolerant of children and young people with disabilities;
- Young people who are patient with others and with animals;
- Outdoor people who like nature and being outside most of the time;



- Young people who have no problem being around horses and dogs;
- Young people who don't mind doing physical work;
- Young people who care for the environment and can cope with living in an eco-friendly facility\*;
- Young people who want to spend their volunteering time outside the city, in lower mountains, in a family-like atmosphere.

Either of the following criteria is optional:

- Young people who may be interested in learning about horses;
- Young people who know something about horses and may be interested in learning more about them;
- Young people who may be interested in learning about therapeutic riding for disabled people;
- Young people with specific interest in working closely with children and young people with disabilities;
- Young people with interest in construction and building small projects.

\*At the ranch electricity and water come from renewable sources and their use may have to be limited at times, depending on the weather. At the ranch the volunteers' kitchen and WC facilities are outdoors. There is a laundry machine at the nearby home of the team of the organization which can be used by the volunteers.

### **Location of activities**

The project will be executed at 4OUR RANCH, located 50 km from the city of Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria.

### **Accommodation**

Accommodation is in a two bedroom house located 15 min. of a walking distance from the ranch. One bedroom has two beds. The second bedroom has one bed and basic kitchen equipment – sink, small fridge, a microwave, and table with chairs. The house is for all three volunteers. Due to language barrier with the local community we facilitate the renting of the house for the volunteers. More about the living conditions we can provide upon request.

## **Planned activities for the volunteers**

The activities our organization has planned can be divided in two topics– A1: Volunteering with the “Program for free therapeutic riding for children with disabilities”; A2: Volunteering with maintaining the facilities of the ranch where the organization and its horses are based; volunteering with construction of small projects. With this project we introduced our Cultural Seminars.

The “Program for free therapeutic riding for children with disabilities” offers each week seven children with disabilities free therapeutic riding sessions. Volunteers are needed to support the instructor and allow more time for communication with the child and his or her parent. The volunteers are encouraged to engage with the children and share some of their cultural and personal background with them.

Volunteering with the “Program for free therapeutic riding for children with disabilities” is possible only after the volunteer passes successfully the internal training by one certified therapeutic riding instructor. It includes:

### *Assisting with training the horses for therapeutic riding:*

- bringing the horses from the pasture;
- grooming the horses;
- assisting the instructor during the exercises and teaching the horses games;
- bringing the horses back to the pasture.

### *Assisting the instructor in therapeutic riding sessions:*

- bringing the horses from the pasture;
- grooming the horses;
- prepare the gear of the horse and the rider for the therapeutic riding;
- assist the instructor during the therapeutic riding session by leading the horse, bring in and out of the arena tools and games;
- leading the horse back to the pasture after the sessions is over.



Maintaining the therapeutic horses and the farm where they live is the most time consuming and hard work of the team of the organization. The ranch raises the horses as close to their natural environment as possible. There are large pastures to maintain as the horses use them all year long. The horses graze all day long and have access to a creek. The horses are divided in two herds – stallions and mares. Because of the way they are raised and trained they are very calm and suitable to work with children. At the facilities there are also 4 guard dogs, companion for all visitors. Volunteering with maintaining the facilities of the horses where the organization is based is only possible after the volunteer passes successfully the internal training by the manager of the facilities. The activities include:

*Helping with the everyday care for the horses :*

- opening the doors of the horses for their day pastures in the morning;
- bringing the horses back to their night pastures in the evening;
- feeding once a day one or two horses if necessary;
- grooming all the horses once a week;
- bringing horses from and to the pasture when it is time for hoof trimming;
- feeding the dogs in the morning.

*Help maintaining the pastures and the creek:*

- Regularly cut grass and small bushes around the pastures' fence;
- Digging out dandelion and cutting bushes within the pastures;
- Cleaning the creek and forming spaces suitable for the horses to drink water;
- Helping with placing the bales of hay for the winter/only for volunteers in June, July and August/

Construction of new small projects is very important for the development of the “Program for free therapeutic riding for children with disabilities”. It is the goal of the team to offer the children not only rehabilitation but an amazing experience which they look forward to relive again and again. Furthermore, it is our wish to offer a retreat for their parents. In Bulgaria the parent is usually the caretaker of a child or a young person with disability. It is a job 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As a result the parents are so stressed that are in need of a calm surrounding at least for a few hours in their busy week. To offer all that we wish the volunteers to:



- Help planting and maintaining plants;
- Help building a play area for the children with disabilities to be used before and after the therapeutic riding sessions;
- Help building an open space for the parents to relax in;
- Help building a trail for doing therapeutic sessions outside the designated arena where children will challenge themselves and have so much more fun.