

# WindReach Farm

*A Centre for Inclusion and Personal Achievement  
For People of All Abilities*



**Learning-4-Life Program**  
Participant Handbook

# Welcome to *WindReach Farm*

For over 30 years, WindReach Farm has offered unique and innovative nature and farming-related opportunities to individuals of all ages and abilities including those with physical, psychological, and intellectual challenges. As a charitable, not-for-profit organization, WindReach Farm is a fully accessible, barrier-free facility which offers specialized features and services developed specifically to meet the needs of the special needs community. Included within such services are the Equine, Adult Day, Education and Recreation, Accommodation and Facility Rentals, and Volunteer Services.

With a long standing history of exceptional program delivery, the WindReach Farm team – Board of Directors, Staff, and Volunteers – has worked diligently to provide meaningful opportunities to enhance the lives of thousands of individuals including those with exceptionalities. Highly qualified and multifaceted, WindReach Farm’s staff members are personally committed to supporting the Farm’s overall mission and receive ongoing professional development opportunities to ensure that they continue to effectively meet the needs of the special needs community based on ever-evolving best practices. Working alongside staff, WindReach Farm’s dedicated volunteers donate their precious time, talents, and skills to enrich the environment and make a positive difference in the lives of all visitors.

A true trailblazer and leader in its field, WindReach Farm moves forward with a progressive mandate to provide inclusive, safe, and welcoming opportunities and services to individuals of all ages and abilities.



(WindReach Farm founder Sandy Mitchell, 2013)

## *Our Mission*

WindReach Farm strives to enrich the lives of persons of all ages with disabilities and/or special needs by providing opportunities to enjoy experiences in farming, nature, outdoor recreation, and other activities and to share those experiences with family and friends.

# Learning-4-Life Program

WindReach Farm's Learning-4-Life Program is a therapeutic and structured day program dedicated to enhancing the lives of adults with exceptionalities through strengthening their skills, independence, and physical wellbeing in a safe and nurturing natural setting. The Program provides an inclusive, barrier-free environment which supports continued education, increased autonomy, and improved fitness and overall quality of life.

Program participants experience all that the Farm has to offer through engaging in a variety of social, cognitive, and recreational activities designed to promote the development of increased confidence and self-esteem in addition to social, intellectual, and daily living skills.

The Learning-4-Life Program offers a low staff-to-client ratio of no more than one staff to four participants, allowing individuals to develop their unique abilities

at their own pace, while interaction with fellow Program participants supports social skill development and engagement.

The Learning-4-Life Program runs **Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm** with the exception of statutory holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year. **All individuals 18 years of age or older with a disability** are invited to book an intake appointment. To ensure that all participants actively engage in and enjoy the Program, individuals who require a lower than 1:4 staff-to-client ratio and/or with the following exceptionalities must be accompanied by a support person or caregiver provided and paid for by the individual, family or outside organization:

- **Medically Fragile** – g tubes, trachea tubes, requiring suction, etc.
- **Physically Unable to feed, transfer, perform personal hygiene**
- **Behavioural/Aggressive** – Physically or verbally

## Learning-4-Life Program Objectives

1. Participants will experience personal growth and improved self-esteem through an increased awareness of personal strengths and abilities and improved problem-solving, concentration, communication, and self-advocacy skills.
2. Participants will develop and enhance their independence through coaching in activities of daily living, including but not limited to self-care, cooking, cleaning, decision making, etc.
3. Participants will experience increased empathy, self-regulation, companionship, and communication skills through daily interaction with staff, fellow Program participants, and farm animals.
4. Participants will improve their physical health and well-being through participating in a variety of physically active tasks and activities.
5. Participants will develop and improve their fine and gross motor skills through engaging in a variety of hands-on activities including wool processing, arts and crafts, gardening, adaptive archery, etc.

# Learning-4-Life Program Policies and Guidelines

The following Learning-4-Life Program Policies and Guidelines have been developed to ensure the safety and well-being of all Program participants. Should you have any questions regarding any information contained within this handbook, please contact the Learning-4-Life Program Coordinator, Jennifer Crothers, at 905-655-5827 ext. 236 or via email at [jennifer.crothers@windreachfarm.org](mailto:jennifer.crothers@windreachfarm.org).

## Participant Arrival and Departure

The Learning-4-Life Program begins promptly at 9:00 am and concludes at 3:00 pm Monday to Friday. All Learning-4-Life Program participants are responsible for organizing their own transportation to and from WindReach Farm each scheduled program day. We ask that that all Program participants be dropped off and picked up in the Learning-4-Life building parking lot which is first parking lot on the left as you drive in the Farm driveway.

## Learning-4-Life Program Information Board

A Learning-4-Life Program information board has been set up inside the Program building to keep participants, parents, guardians, next of kin, etc. up-to-date regarding Program announcements, policy changes, and general WindReach Farm news and events. We ask that you consult the information board on a regular basis to ensure that you are aware of any changes to the Learning-4-Life Program or overall WindReach Farm operations.

## Program Attire

Many of the Learning-4-Life Program daily activities take place outdoors within the farm setting. We ask that all participants wear casual clothing that they are comfortable getting dirty. To help ensure the comfort and safety of all Program participants, please note the following guidelines:

- ✚ All participants and outside support workers **MUST** wear closed-toe and closed-heel footwear (no sandals) while on WindReach Farm property;
- ✚ Please dress according to the weather (i.e., rain, snow, warm temperatures, etc.) as many Program activities are outdoors;
- ✚ Please keep a change of clothes/hygiene products and indoor shoes in your personal cubicle at the farm;
- ✚ In the summer months, a hat, sunscreen, and water are strongly recommended;
- ✚ For safety reasons, long hair should be tied back and secured off the shoulders; and
- ✚ Jewelry such as necklaces and long earrings are not permitted when working with or around animals and farm equipment.

## Valuables

It is highly recommended that Learning-4-Life Program participants DO NOT bring valuables (i.e., purses, handbags, money, treasured items, etc.) to the Program with them as there are no lockers or secure areas to ensure their safety. **WindReach Farm does not take responsibility for lost or stolen valuables and/or personal belongings on Farm property.**

## Lunch and Snacks

**The Learning-4-Life building is a nut free facility.** All Learning-4-Life Program participants must bring their own lunch, snacks, and beverages to the Program. Although food and beverages may be offered on occasion for special events and/or cooking/baking activities, participants are responsible for supplying their own food and beverages over the course of a regular programming day.

Depending on the weather, Program participants will have the opportunity to eat their lunch and/or snacks in a variety of locations throughout the Farm property including the Program lounge and/or outdoor picnic areas.

Please note that there is a fridge and microwave located in the Program lounge for participants to use should they wish. **Please ensure that any food allergy(ies) that a participant may have is recorded on his/her Learning-4-Life Program Application Form.**

### Medication Administration

Please note that Learning-4-Life Program staff cannot administer medication to Program participants, with the exception of medications that are required in life threatening situations (i.e., EpiPen, medication required to stop a seizure, etc.). Although Program staff may provide reminders to participants to take required medication(s), all Learning-4-Life Program participants must be able to independently administer their own medication during program hours or their own support worker must be responsible for all medications and administration. These medications must be kept on your person or arrangements can be made for them to be locked away safely.

### Program Schedule and Components

The Learning-4-Life Program provides a variety of unique nature and farming-related activities designed to develop and maintain participants' independence, functional skills, physical health, daily living skills, and overall well-being. The following sample schedule highlights typical activities that will be offered within a given week:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
9:00-9:30	Arrival Bathroom Morning Chat	Arrival Bathroom Morning Chat	Arrival Bathroom Morning Chat	Arrival Bathroom Morning Chat
9:30-10:30	Morning Exercise	Morning Exercise Animal Visit	Morning Exercise Animal Visit	Morning Exercise Animal Visit
	Animal Visit			
10:30-11:00	Bathroom/Snack	Bathroom/Snack	Bathroom/Snack	Bathroom/Snack
11:00-12:00	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills
12:00-12:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30-1:30	Cognitive Skills + Vocational Training	Cognitive Skills + Vocational Training	Cognitive Skills + Vocational Training	Cognitive Skills + Vocational Training
1:30-2:30	Recreation/Leisure <i>(Parachute games, nature walks, archery)</i>	Arts	Musical Expression <i>(Exercise ball drumming, musical instruments)</i>	Recreation/Leisure <i>(Parachute games, nature walks, archery)</i>
2:30-3:00	Bathroom/Snack/Library	Bathroom/Snack/Library	Bathroom/Snack/Library	Bathroom/Snack/Library
3:00	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure

The following is a description of the above mentioned Program components:

- \* **Arrival and Check In** – Upon arriving at WindReach Farm each morning, participants will have a brief period of free time followed by a Check In discussion in which participants can share what they did the previous night/week and how they are feeling that day. The daily schedule will be reviewed and participants will have an opportunity to use the bathroom before transitioning to their first activity of the day.
- \* **Animal Care Activities** – Each morning, participants will become involved in the daily routine of the Farm. They will help with egg collection, grooming and exercising animals, feeding routines, processing wool, etc. Such tasks are vital components to the sustainability of the Farm and provide an opportunity for participants to engage with farm staff, volunteers, and daily visitors.
- \* **Life Skills** – Participants will engage in a variety of daily living skills to help develop adaptive and positive behaviour which enables them to cope effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

Among such activities participants will be involved in cooking, cleaning, socialization, coping, problem solving, and safety-related experiences.

- \* **Cognitive Skills + Vocational Training** – Learning-4-Life Program participants will partake in an array of cognitive and vocational skill training activities to help build their mental capacity to learn and retain knowledge. Through engaging in language, memory, reasoning, visual perception, and concentration tasks, participants will strengthen their ability to build knowledge and acquire new skills in a variety of contexts.
- \* **Recreation/Leisure** – Over the course of a regular programming day, Learning-4-Life Program participants will engage in recreation and leisure-based activities which promote physical health and overall well-being. From adaptive archery to nature walks, participants will increase their general health, physical fitness, and endurance.
- \* **Arts + Crafts** – Within the Learning-4-Life Program, participants will partake in a variety of nature-related art and craft activities such as building bird houses, leaf printing, nature collages, etc.
- \* **Musical Expression** – Learning-4-Life Program participants will participate in a diversity of musical activities such as musical instrument construction, hand drumming with authentic equipment/exercise ball drumming, playing musical instruments, etc. Such experiences will promote self-expression through music and help participants develop an appreciation and understanding of a variety of forms of music.
- \* **Yoga/Dance/Drama/Art Lessons** – During each seasonal programming session, Learning-4-Life Program participants will participate in yoga, dance, drama, or art lessons.

#### **Program Attendance**

In the event that a participant is unable to attend a scheduled Learning-4-Life Program day due to illness or any other matter, please contact the Learning-4-Life Program Coordinator, Jennifer Crothers, as soon as possible at 905-655-5827 ext. 236 or via email at [jennifer.crothers@windreachfarm.org](mailto:jennifer.crothers@windreachfarm.org). Please note that WindReach Farm is unable to refund prepaid programming days that a participant misses due to illness or any other matter.

#### **Program Cancellation/Inclement Weather**

The Learning-4-Life Program will be cancelled on the following statutory holidays: New Year's Day, Provincial Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

On the very rare occasion that WindReach Farm must cancel the Learning-4-Life Program due to unforeseen circumstances, the Learning-4-Life Program Coordinator will contact each Program participant and/or his/her parent/guardian/next of kin, etc. as soon as possible to inform him/her of the cancellation.

During the winter months when the weather can be unpredictable, the Learning-4-Life Program will be cancelled on days that Durham District School Board (DDSB) school buses are cancelled. Please consult the following website for an update on the status of DDSB's school bus service: [www.dsts.on.ca](http://www.dsts.on.ca).

#### **Outside Support Worker Responsibilities**

Please note that all outside support workers who accompany a participant to the Learning-4-Life Program are responsible for the health, safety, and well-being of the individual(s) that they support. This includes ensuring that the behaviour and/or actions of both themselves and that of their client(s) abide by the guidelines set forward within this booklet. In the event that there is a concern regarding a Learning-4-Life Program participant's or outside support worker's behaviour and/or actions, the Learning-4-Life Program Coordinator will consult the participant, his/her support worker, and his/her parent/guardian/next of kin, etc. to discuss the matter.

#### **Criminal Background Check**

**All WindReach Farm staff, volunteers, and outside Learning-4-Life Program support personnel who have direct contact with children, adolescents, and/or vulnerable adults while on WindReach Farm property, must provide a current (within the last year) Criminal Background Check complete with Vulnerable Sector screening. Please note that Learning-4-Life Program participants are not permitted to begin the Learning-4-Life Program until the Learning-4-Life Program Coordinator has received a copy of their support worker's clear Criminal Background Check with Vulnerable Sector screening.**

#### **Photo/Media Permission**

WindReach Farm staff and/or designees often take pictures or video at Farm programs and events for marketing materials: newsletters, brochures, slide shows, displays, posters or billboards, newspaper releases, WindReach Farm's website, DVD production, WindReach Farm's Facebook page, and television stations. If a participant and/or his/her parent/guardian/next of kin, etc. would prefer that a participant's picture not be taken please ensure that this is indicated on the Photo/Media Release Form contained within the Learning-4-Life Program Service Agreement.

#### **Payment for Programming Services**

Upon registering for the Learning-4-Life Program, participants are required to pay for the first month of service in advance. Following this initial payment, participants and/or their parent/guardian/next of kin, etc. will be invoiced on the first business day of each month for services to be rendered the following month (i.e., participants will receive an invoice on September 2, 2014, for October 2014 Program services). Invoices must be paid in full upon receipt. Payments can be made by e-transfer to [accounting@windreachfarm.org](mailto:accounting@windreachfarm.org) (no password required). *A fee will be applied to your current or next invoice for NSF (non-sufficient funds) cheques.*

#### **Program Discharge Policy**

While the Learning-4-Life Program strives to accommodate individuals of all abilities, WindReach Farm is a public facility; therefore, must ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff, volunteers, program participants, and visitors on its premises. If it is determined that the Learning-4-Life Program no longer meets the needs of a participant and or a participant's condition and or behavior pose a potential risk to him/herself, staff, volunteers, visitors, or fellow program participants, WindReach Farm reserves the right to discharge the participant from the Program.

It may be determined that the Learning-4-Life Program is no longer meeting the needs of a participant when a participant:

- \* Cannot be adequately supported in the current staff-to-client ratio; Requires a level of staff support such that it denies other participants their right to Program services;
- \* Has shown that continued participation in the Program would jeopardize his/her health and safety;
- \* Is a threat to the health and safety of others; and/or
- \* Refuses to cooperate with the policies outlined in the Learning-4-Life Program Participant Handbook.

#### **Program Withdrawal**

Upon registering for the Learning-4-Life Program, participants will be invoiced on the first business day of each month for services to be rendered the following month. In the event that a participant wishes to withdraw from the Program, he/she and/or his/her parent/guardian/next of kin, etc. must inform the Learning-4-Life Program Coordinator as soon as possible after receiving an invoice to allow other participants to register for the Program.

#### **Refund Policy**

**Full Refund** – In the event that a participant has not begun to receive programming services for which he/she has paid for in advance, WindReach Farm shall fully refund such fees to the participant in the following circumstances:

- The participant can no longer attend the Program due to unanticipated changes in residence or transportation;
- It is determined that the participant cannot be adequately supported in the current staff-to-client ratio; Requires a level of staff support such that it denies other participants their right to Program services;
- The participant has a prohibitive medical condition that no longer allows him/her to attend the Program;
- It has been determined that the participant's continued participation in the Program would jeopardize his/her health and safety;
- It has been determined that the participant's actions and/or behaviour pose a potential risk to the health and safety of WindReach Farm staff, volunteers, visitors, and/or other Program participants; and/or
- The participant withdraws from the Program ten (10) days in advance of receiving programming services for which he/she has paid for the previous month.

**Partial Refund** – In the event that a participant has already begun to receive programming services for which he/she has paid for in advance, WindReach Farm shall refund the remaining unused prepaid daily fees in the following circumstances:

- The participant can no longer attend the Program due to unanticipated changes in residence or transportation;
- It is determined that the participant cannot be adequately supported in the current staff-to-client ratio; Requires a level of staff support such that it denies other participants their right to Program services;
- The participant has a prohibitive medical condition that no longer allows him/her to attend the Program;
- It has been determined that the participant's continued participation in the Program would jeopardize his/her health and safety;
- It has been determined that the participant's actions and/or behaviour pose a potential risk to the health and safety of WindReach Farm staff, volunteers, visitors, and/or other Program participants; and/or
- The participant withdraws from the Program within the first ten (10) days of receiving programming services for which he/she has paid for the previous month.

**Program Cancellation/Inclement Weather Refund** – In the event that WindReach Farm must cancel the Learning-4-Life Program due to unforeseen circumstances and/or inclement weather, a full refund equal to the number of days that the Program was cancelled will be refunded to each registered participant.

**Please note that WindReach Farm is unable to refund prepaid programming days that a participant misses due to illness or any other matter.**

#### **Additional Farm Visits**

Please note that participant registration within the Learning-4-Life Program includes the participant's scheduled daily participation in the Program. Should a participant and/or support worker wish to visit the Farm on



another occasion, a Farm visit/tour can be arranged by contacting the Day Visitor Program Coordinator at 905-655-5827 or via email at [dayvisits@windreachfarm.org](mailto:dayvisits@windreachfarm.org). Please check our website for the current visitor rates.

### **For Further Information**

For further information regarding any information contained within this handbook or any other Learning-4-Life Program matter, please contact the Learning-4-Life Program Coordinator, Jennifer Crothers, at 905-655-5827 ext. 236 or [jennifer.crothers@windreachfarm.org](mailto:jennifer.crothers@windreachfarm.org).

### **Learning-4-Life Program Participant Handbook**

Each participant registered in the Learning-4-Life Program and/or his/her parent/guardian/next of kin, etc. will receive a copy of this Learning-4-Life Program Participant Handbook which describes the Program and its policies and guidelines. By signing below, the participant and/or his/her parent/ guardian/next of kin/, etc. acknowledges that he/she has read or has had the Handbook read to him/her and agrees to comply with the Program's policies and guidelines.

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Signature of Participant

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Date

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Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian/Next of Kin (if applicable)

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Date

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Signature of Witness

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Date