

# Fairfax County Park Authority Adapted Skating Volunteer Information



The Fairfax County Park Authority is committed to equal access in all programs and services. Accommodations will be provided upon request. Please call the ADA coordinator at least 10 working days in advance of the date services are needed. 703.324.8727 (Phone) • 703.803.3354 (TTY) • [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm)



# Welcome to the Adaptive Skating Program

- Welcome! We are excited you want to help with our exceptional Adaptive Skating Program!
- This package provides program information and a road map of actions to become a registered adaptive skating volunteer.
- We will help you every step of the way.
- The training outlined in this package is to help ensure the safety and success of all.
- Again, welcome!

# A Look at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center Adaptive Skating Program – Holiday Show 2011



If the video does not begin playing automatically please copy and paste this URL into your internet browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXiy5PNhEvM>

# How Do I Become an Adaptive Skating Volunteer?

- **Step 1:** Prospective volunteers must register with Fairfax County's online Volunteer Management System found at <https://volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/vol> or click on the direct link for the opportunity found at <https://volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/recruiter/index.php?recruiterID=1380&class=OppDetails&oppGid=7A67E4FA-BBAA-4204-A061-39987F0CD60F>
- **Step 2:** Volunteer applicants must review and complete online training which includes reviewing this document and the Volunteer Training for All FCPA Volunteers found online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/volunteer/training>. CPR training is provided at no cost by the County periodically.
- **Step 3:** Volunteers 18+ must complete a Fairfax County Criminal Background Check. Background checks are required for volunteers working with vulnerable populations as ensuring program participant safety is of utmost importance. The background checks and finger printing are free. For information on background checks, contact the Mount Vernon Volunteer Coordinator: Ms. Diane Alvin; Email: [Diane.Alvin2@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Diane.Alvin2@fairfaxcounty.gov); Ph.# 703.768.3224.
- **Step 4:** Email or hand carry a copy of the “Sign-off” Sheet verifying completion of training to the Mount Vernon Volunteer Coordinator. The “Sign-off” sheet is at the end of this presentation.
- **Step 5:** Schedule your first day at the rink with the Adaptive Skating Program Director.
- **Step 6:** Confirm your commitment and begin volunteering weekly.

*Note: If a link does not open when you click on the link, copy and paste the web address into your internet web browser.*

# New Adaptive Skating Volunteer FAQ

Question	Answer
<b>Do I need to have experience working with individuals with disabilities?</b>	No, just a desire to help others and have fun. We will provide training for volunteers. If you do have experience, this is a huge bonus for us!
<b>Do I need expert skating skills to volunteer?</b>	Volunteers do not have to be expert skaters, but they need to be sufficiently competent to be safe and comfortable on the ice. Volunteers will need to be able to demonstrate basic skating skills to program participants.
<b>What is the minimum age for volunteering?</b>	Age 14. If you are under the age of 16 a parent is required to stay on site with you while you are volunteering.
<b>What is the commitment?</b>	Volunteers are asked to commit to an entire session as consistency is critical for our participants. A session generally runs for six weeks.
<b>When and where is the program held?</b>	The Adaptive Skating Program is held at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center skating rink. The program is offered during the weekend. The Program Director will provide information on the current schedule.
<b>What if I can't make a session?</b>	Please let the Adaptive Program Director know in advance if you have to miss a session so alternative plans can be made.
<b>How old are the participants?</b>	The Adaptive Skating program is open for participants of all ages.
<b>What types of disabilities?</b>	Individuals with any type of disability are welcome to participate in our program.
<b>What should I wear?</b>	Dress warmly as it can be cold being on the ice for 90 minutes. We also suggest long hair be tied back. No skating team or other logo can be worn.
<b>What do I need to bring to the rink?</b>	Skates and a positive, encouraging attitude.

# What to Expect at the Rink

- Please arrive and have your skates on 10 minutes before your volunteer session begins.
- The program director matches volunteers with the adaptive skaters and provides information on what skills you might work on during the session.
- There will be an on-ice instructor who can help with participant skill learning.
- The program director will supervise the sessions at all times, be available to answer questions, and provide any needed support throughout the class.

# Disability Etiquette and Sensitivity

## Working With Individuals With Disabilities

### General Tips

- Do not refer to a person's disability unless it is relevant.
- Do not assume a person with a disability needs assistance as soon as he/she arrives. They will either tell you ahead of time or ask for your help when needed.
- Avoid asking personal questions about someone's disability. Let them mention their disability first. If you must ask, be sensitive and show respect. Avoid negative or sensational descriptions of a person's disability with anyone.
- Use "people first" language when addressing a person with a disability. It is better to say "person with a disability" rather than "a disabled person."
- Avoid the word handicapped. A handicap is what a person with a disability cannot do. Keep the focus on what the participant can do.
- Make sure everything that is needed for your session can be found and accessed easily.

### People With Cognitive Disabilities

- If the person who you are working with is having trouble understanding you, repeat yourself, using different words, without getting frustrated.
- Patience is a virtue.
- Break up your ideas into small manageable bits that can be easily remembered. "Keep it simple."
- Be considerate without being patronizing. With older teens and adults, keep all conversations at an adult level.
- While skating maintain your conversation with the participant... "Would you like to march with me? Let's skate to the wall."
- Always avoid speaking about the participant to another volunteer as if the participant was not there.
- Always assume, even if the participant is non-verbal, that they can understand what you are saying.

# Disability Etiquette and Sensitivity (Continued)

## People Who Use Aids To Move

- Always ask the person who uses a wheelchair, or other aid, if he or she would like assistance before you jump in to help. Your help may not be needed or wanted.
- Don't hang things from or lean on a person's wheelchair.
- Take steps to insure that all materials that may be needed are within the reach of someone that uses a wheelchair.
- If your conversation lasts more than a few minutes, consider sitting or squatting down, to get yourself on the same eye-level.

## Persons Who Are Hearing Impaired

- Always make eye contact with the person you are speaking to.
- A gentle tap on the shoulder will help you announce your presence.
- Face the person you are speaking to and speak slowly and clearly, do not raise your voice.
- If there is a breakdown in communication put pencil to paper and write down what you are attempting to convey.
- Speak to the person not their interpreter if there is one present.

## People with Vision Impairments

- Always make your presence known. Greet the person who may not know you are there.
- Talk directly to a person who is blind, not through their companion.
- Use the person's name to whom you are speaking so they are aware you are speaking to them.
- Pulling or steering a person is awkward and confusing. Most commonly, an individual who is blind will request for you to guide them if needed.
- If you are a sighted guide for a person with a visual impairment, allow the person to take your arm at or above the elbow so that you guide rather than propel.
- Do not pet guide dogs or other service animals while they are working.
- Ask before interacting with the dog.
- Avoid grabbing a visually-impaired person's arm or their dog's harness unless your assistance is requested.
- Keep all walkways clear of debris/obstacles.

# Disability Etiquette and Sensitivity (Continued)

## General Adaptive Ice Skating Tips

- **Safety first and always.**
- Help ensure participant's skates fit properly and are correctly laced up. Ensure all other equipment is on safely and helmets (if used) are securely fastened.
- With new participants, practice movements off the ice, such as standing with correct posture – back straight, arms at side and at waist level, the upper part of the body still and weight over the skate. Show a new participant how to move, bend, turn and swing legs with correct position off the ice.
- When entering the ice surface, the volunteer should hold onto the participant by placing a strong arm under the participant's arm.
- Use the ice walkers to help participants gain the feel of the ice and confidence on the ice.
- Allow the participant to move on their own as soon as possible.
- Demonstrations should be very short. Break task/skill into short segments.
- Initially teach participants to use very small steps to help keep their body balanced over their skates.
- Ensure participants know how to get up if they fall.
  - When working with children, if they fall you can ask them to get on all fours “like a puppy” and then move one leg to stand on and help them up.
- Conduct simple games on the ice for fun – toy tosses, blast offs, hops....while always watching out for other skaters.
- Be sure the participant knows what they are to do and why.
- Skating involves many new sensory experiences for the participants – do not rush them.

# Disability Etiquette and Sensitivity (Continued)

Watch the below video  
(click on photo below to  
start video)



If video does not play, copy and paste  
this web address into your internet  
browser:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1aDEFIXq8>.

Adaptive Skating Clips  
for Optional Review

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVSGJPSlvvE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5RoF5Mz2FE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUqchdIn4wY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNn69o-XzE4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RNFyGs357g>

Many other adaptive skating video  
clips can be found on the Internet.

*Note: If the above videos do not open  
when you click on the link, copy and  
paste the web address into your  
internet web browser.*

# Tips for Including Participants

- Get down to their eye level to talk to them.
- Praise, Praise, Praise! Celebrate small successes.
- Use positive statements such as, “Good job!” “I’m so proud of you!” “You did awesome!” “Look how good you did!” High fives are great too!
- Use participants name whenever possible.
- Encourage participants to challenge themselves.
- Keep directions simple, and check for understanding (have them repeat instructions back to you).
- Break skills into small segments then repeat the small segment until learned. Link segments once small segments are learned to accomplish a larger task.
- Provide boundaries and communicate rules and expectations.
- Try and communicate as simply as possible.
- Use direct commands: “*I need you to....*” statements.
- Be consistent. Patience is key.
- Be creative!
- Assume ability. Adapt/modify ONLY as needed.
- Remember “non-verbal” only means the participant communicates differently. Talk to participants as you would a verbal person.
- Keep statements positive, e.g., instead of “Don’t Run!” use “Please walk.” Instead of “Don’t lie on the ice” use “Please stand up.”

- If a participant is getting upset, try to redirect the behavior by asking the participant to focus on something else.
- Use “First, Then” language, e.g., “First, we will (name the task such as marching), and then, we will take a break.”
- When communicating, make sure a participant is looking directly at you. A good verbal cue for this is “*Eyes on me.*”
- Anytime you catch the participant doing good, use positive reinforcement. Make sure you include the behavior you liked such as “*I liked that you were listening to directions.*”
- You should make a really big deal when you see even the start of the desired behavior. This is the most important tip – participants need to hear when they are doing a great job!
- Give time warnings when transitioning to a new activity.
- If participant is having difficulty participating in activity, if practical, ask him/her if you can do activity with them.
- Ensure activities have limited down time.
- When appropriate, ignore negative behaviors – they are not directed at you personally. Sometimes individuals are looking for attention – as long as the participant is not hurting himself or others “stay calm and carry on.”

# Additional Behavior Management Techniques

- **Provide specific and positive feedback:** *“Great job marching!” “I like how you used your arms!” “Good gliding,” “It makes me happy when you (name task).”*
- **Using rewards:** *“We will march once across the rink, then you can play with the toy for one minute.”*
- **Use a story:** Working through a sequence of activities may be hard. Use a story to help participants transition from one activity to another. For example, once the individual skills are mastered, you might try something like... *“First we will start out across the rink like we are marching in a parade for 10 steps, then we will put our hands on our knees and glide like we are going under a low bridge, then we will stand up with arms out wide and swoop through some curves like we are an airplane.”* Or break tasks into separate stories.
- **Building Skills:** *“First, we will practice marching holding on to the wall; then we will march going across the rink,” “First we will do one, then two swizzles, (in and out), then we will do swizzles across the rink.”*
- **Use Choices:** *“Good job marching! Do you want to go around the red and blue dots next or play toss?”*
- **Using counting:** *“I understand it is hard to use both feet... but let’s take 10 steps saying right, left, right, left..., and after 10 right/left steps you will be all done.”*
- **Retry Activity:** *“This time, let’s try using both skates. This time use/move both of your feet, just like you were walking/marching.”* Be creative and try to find a new way to describe the same skill or activity. Draw “step” sequence on the ice.
- **Planned Ignoring:** If what seems to be a negative behavior such as repeatedly taking off a hat or gloves, is not harming the participant or others, and there is not an issue you can reasonably fix, try to ignore it. Attention might reinforce the undesired behavior. If negative behaviors are harmful, or might endanger other participants, immediately ask instructor or parent to intercede.

# A Final Note on Etiquette and Sensitivity....

- We welcome any and all disabilities in our adapted skating program.
- We do not require participants to provide us with their medical diagnoses for confidentiality reasons.
- We do ask if there are any precautions we need to be aware of for safety reasons or if there are means of communication or ways to positively reinforce learning that might be unique to the participant.
- Disabilities present themselves in different ways. While conditions may have the same name such as Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, etc., each individual is unique.
- The best way to serve a participant is to focus on their abilities and strengths, and what they can do. Ask the participant or their parent how you can best support them.
- If you are interested in learning more about any certain medical condition or disability category we recommend this resource:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html>

# Techniques to Communicate and Teach Skills

	Verbal Prompts	Modeling	Manual Prompts	Gestural Prompts	Photographs
Explanation	This includes words and instructions, along with questions that might facilitate a desired response.	Physically demonstrate the task for the participant. Often paired with verbal prompts.	Physically assisting a participant in accomplishing a task.	Include: Pointing, Finger sssshh, nodding, shaking head yes or no.	Pictures, line diagrams drawn on the ice or other visual that illustrates a task.
Example	Thank you. Please stand up. Counting. Stating the task by name such as marching, swizzles (in and out).	Volunteer shows participant how to do the task – or part of the task – using a very short demonstration.	Volunteer helps participant do the task – so participant can feel what is being asked of them.	Volunteer points to where participant will go for next task.	Drawing on the ice for participant to use as a pattern for task – for example swizzles.

It is important to keep age appropriateness in mind. Speak to adults as adults and children as children regardless of presumed developmental age. Try to keep in mind what toys, equipment, and activities a skater might use to learn a skill. While songs, games, and soft toys might be great tools to use with young skaters, some of these might not be age-appropriate tools for teens and adults.

# Considerations and Expectations

- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Sign in every time you volunteer in the Volunteer Notebook. Recognition rewards are given based upon consistency and dependability.
- Maintain your commitment - if you have to miss a session, please let the program director know as soon as possible.
- Arrive on time and be prepared to skate when the session starts. Begin and end sessions on time.
- Be patient.
- Follow program director directions at all times.
- Stay in the designated adaptive skating space.
- Communicate any questions or concerns to the program director and/or volunteer coordinator right away.
- Be respectful and courteous to all.
- Both you and the participant should have fun.

- Ensure you have the program director's approval before entering the rink with a participant.
- If a task/skill clearly scares the participant, verbally encourage them and model the task. Wait until they are ready to try the task.
- If the participant's behavior is beyond what you can manage, endangers the participant in any way, or the participant is so upset you can't move forward, immediately inform the program director that you feel your skater needs to take a break.
- The participant's parent (or caregiver) is required to stay on-site. If needed, participants can take a break with their parent or caretaker.
- When participants leave the ice for any reason, ensure they are entrusted to their parent or caregiver.
- While on the ice, participants should always have at least one volunteer very close by.
- Look for smiles!

# Sample Adaptive Skating Skills

## Special Olympics Figure Skating Badge Skills

### **BADGE LEVEL 1**

1. Stand unassisted for 5 seconds
2. Fall and stand up unassisted
3. Knee dip standing still unassisted
4. March forward 10 steps unassisted

### **BADGE LEVEL 2**

1. March forward 10 steps unassisted
2. Swizzles, standing still (3 repetitions)
3. Backward wiggle or march assisted
4. Two foot glide forward for distance of at least length of body

### **BADGE LEVEL 3**

1. Backward wiggle or march
2. Five Forward swizzles covering at least 10 feet
3. Forward skating across the rink
4. Forward gliding dip covering at least length of body

### **BADGE LEVEL 4**

1. Backward 2-foot glide covering length of body
2. Two foot jump in place
3. One foot snowplow stop (left or right)
4. Forward 1-foot glide covering at least length of body (left and right)

## Other Possible Adaptive Skating Skills/Tasks... Be Creative

- Toss and pick up toys
- Go around red/blue plastic bubbles
- “Blast-offs” from the wall – going backwards
- “Erase” scrape-off mark on ice with skate
- At wall, stomp skates – make noise
- Simon says...Touch your nose, touch your toes...
- Practice getting down on the ice and up
- March, march, march ...GLIDE
- Swizzles – “In and Outs” – or have toes “kiss”
- Hops
- One foot glides following pattern drawn on ice
- Draw pattern on ice using numbers or letters

# PARK FOUNDATION DONATIONS

- Thank you for supporting YOUR Fairfax County parks.
- Donations to the Park Foundation are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please go to:
  - <http://fairfaxparkfoundation.org/support-your-parks>. *Once there, select the green “Donate Now” button next to Fairfax County Park Foundation or the specific program you wish to support.*
- If you wish to donate to a Fairfax County park or FCPA approved program not listed, simply enter that information in the field titled ‘Add special instructions to the seller.’
- Name the Fairfax County Park Foundation (Tax ID #54-2019179), Adaptive Recreation as the recipient with an earmark for MVRC Adapted Skate Program.

# Other Admin Information

- Adaptive Skating Class Schedule
  - The Adaptive Skating Program generally follows the same skating calendar as the regular Mount Vernon RECenter skating classes – with six week sessions.
  - To find the most up-to-date Mount Vernon skating class schedule, please visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>
- In case of inclement weather, opening/closing updates are available:
  - Online: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/weatherclosures.htm>
  - Inclement Weather Telephone Line is (703) 324-8661
  - When in doubt, contact the Mount Vernon RECenter front desk directly at (703) 768-3224.

- For further information contact:
  - Mount Vernon Volunteer Coordinator: Ms. Diane Alvin,  
Email: [Diane.Alvin2@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Diane.Alvin2@fairfaxcounty.gov); Phone: 703.768.3224.
  - Adaptive Skating Program Director: Ms. Karen Pool,  
Email: [kfpool930@aol.com](mailto:kfpool930@aol.com)
  - Mount Vernon Skating Director, Mr. Carl Kirtley,  
Email: [carl.kirtley@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:carl.kirtley@fairfaxcounty.gov); Phone: (703) 768-3224.

# Fairfax County Park Authority Adaptive Skating Volunteer Training Documentation

- **ADA Training**

- I have read the policy statements provided and will adhere to the designated policies.

- **Park Authority Introduction 101 Video**

- I have viewed the Park Authority introduction video.

- **STARS Customer Service Training**

- I have read the policy statements provided and will adhere to the designated policies.

- **Bloodborne Pathogen Training**

- I have been familiarized with the general principles of Bloodborne Pathogen training provided and will adhere to the designated policies.

- **CPR Training**

- I am current in my CPR Training. Provide copy of Training Certificate.

- **Adaptive Skating Guidance**

- I have read the information provided and will adhere to the designated policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name

*(Required if the volunteer is under 18 years of age.)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Turn in completed copy to the Mount Vernon RECenter Volunteer Coordinator