



## Buddy Volunteering at Sutton Community Farm

MAKING FOOD FAIR AND CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

### What is Buddy Volunteering?

Our farm is a community-owned social enterprise. Our purpose is to increase access to fresh, healthy, sustainable food and provide a shared space for people to cultivate skills, get exercise and make friends. The aim of our Buddy Volunteering programme is to help us maintain a supportive, welcoming and safe space at the farm. As a buddy, you will play an important role in helping to support fellow volunteers and coordinate tasks.

### Who is it for?

Buddy Volunteering is for volunteers who are interested in taking on extra responsibility, particularly those that are interested in supporting younger volunteers, or volunteers who might have mental health problems and learning disabilities. Under the guidance of our growing team, buddies will help run practical activities and are available to volunteers who need extra guidance or help with settling in and getting to know the farm.

### How do I become a Buddy?

If you have good people skills and you'd like to support people to get involved at our farm, we'd love to hear from you. Prospective Buddies usually begin by attending as regular volunteers, getting to know us and learning how the farm works.

To become a Buddy Volunteer, you need to attend a free one day training programme. This includes an overview of our approach and activities, an introduction to social and therapeutic horticulture, health and safety and guidance on supporting vulnerable adults.

### What's the commitment?

We are looking for our Buddy Volunteers to commit to 1-2 volunteering sessions per month. Mostly, we need Buddies to attend our Community Volunteering sessions on Wednesdays, however there are sometimes other days when we need support. For example, we sometimes have school groups visiting the farm on a Monday or Tuesday.

## Why become a Buddy?

This programme helps volunteers improve their communication skills and gain experience working in community farming and social care settings. We have developed a training programme based on the success of another community food project and have received a grant from Team London to support the training of our first set of buddy volunteers.

## Contact us

If you are interested in becoming a Buddy Volunteer please get in touch:  
[info@suttoncommunityfarm.org.uk](mailto:info@suttoncommunityfarm.org.uk) or 077 2215 6097.

You will need to fill out a Volunteer Application form and attend a one day training session.

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## What people say...

*It's exhilarating to work at Sutton Community Farm, whatever the weather! I've met some awesome people there, and the whole experience is making me much more aware of our connection to the world around us - and the need to strengthen it - in ways I couldn't even have imagined before. I'm sometimes physically knackered at the end of a full day's work, but my heart is full and it's great to be able to contribute to something so positive and so necessary.*

**- June (April 2014), Volunteer**

Time spent volunteering at Sutton Community farm has really helped towards lifting my low mood. A combination of the active outdoor work, being around nature, fresh air, new people and feeling needed as part of a team has been a really important way of managing and improving my depression. I always go home after a day at the farm feeling deeply satisfied, energised and seem to sleep better that night, setting me in better stead for the remainder of my week.

**- Victoria (June 2014), Volunteer**

*Thank you all so much for giving me such a great experience over the three months that I volunteered at the farm. The atmosphere was always fun and friendly and everyone was always happy to take the time to explain the hows and whys - from the wider sustainable farming ideals to the spotting of side shoots on tomatoes! Not only did I learn a lot but I felt privileged to be part of such a fantastic project. I will definitely be keeping up with everyone's blogs and website entries and will visit when I'm back in London.*

**- Robin (June 2013), Volunteer**

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone for making feel so welcome, coming here has gone a long way to helping me restore my sense of humour and make me feel valued at a particularly difficult time in my life.

**- Sarah (April 2013), Volunteer**