



To Whom it May Concern:

Please consider this letter of recommendation for The Way of the Donkey, a Veneta, Oregon area resource. Nancy Willard has developed a high-quality curriculum of “donkey assisted life coaching” with trauma-informed care practices and positive psychology infused throughout. She has many resources and has authored books on this subject as well.

Nancy and her son Bakul brought some of their donkeys and goats to our adaptive summer camp for transition-age neurodiverse campers. They brought a portable obstacle course with all safety supports in place for our campers to practice leading the donkeys and goats through the course and identify the life lessons through facilitated conversation that are rich for consideration as a result.

Nancy’s visits focus on increasing the following strengths for a variety of ages and abilities:

- Self-regulation. Young people have to remain calm so as not to scare the donkeys.
- Getting past fear. Some young people are fearful of the task of leading a donkey. We have strategies to seek to work around these fears. We also respectfully allow students to decide not to interact.
- Empowerment and self-confidence. To convince a stubborn donkey to walk with you requires that you stand tall and be assertive.

Because The Way of the Donkey is funded by the Oregon Community Foundation and cost us nothing directly, their weekly visits to our camp became an integral part of our campers’ life skill learning in a fun and safe environment. We highly recommend this program.

Sincerely,

**Kellie Nemke, CTRS**

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Pronouns: she/her/hers

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