SERENDIPITY
EQUINE HAVEN
OF FORT WORTH

Where dreams are born and hopes are raised

Volunteer Handbook
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Serendipity Equine Haven, a Faith based 501(c) not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults through equine assisted activities.

You have chosen to give some of your time volunteering to help improve the lives of challenged children at Serendipity Equine Haven. We hope that in doing so, you will find that your own life has been enhanced as well. All of us at Serendipity Equine Haven are proud of the fine work we do and the extraordinary results that we see. We are dedicated to enriching the physical, emotions, behavioral, and social well-being of our participants in an environment that is safe, nurturing, challenging and fun. Thank you for becoming a part of our growing organization.

This manual is being provided with some guidelines for working with our challenged riders. Please read it carefully. The information it contains is important, and will improve the quality of your work. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask us. Volunteer training is an ongoing process.

We want you to know that every child you are helping at Serendipity Equine Haven is aware of and grateful for your help. Without your service, your smile, and the contribution of your time, our program could not exist. We hope that this training provides you with a good foundation for your association with Serendipity Equine Haven, and that your time spent with us will be safe, rewarding, and fun.

Warm Regards:

Debra Truman, President & Founder
HISTORY OF SERENDIPITY EQUINE HAVEN OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Our Mission:

To serve the emotionally and physically or mentally challenged persons through our equine friends and through a comprehensive program of equine activities.

Serendipity Equine Haven is organized in 2007 to promote the concept of health within the Body, Mind, and Spirit. Through changing and enriching lives by creating excellence in equine assisted activities. Equine assisted activities inspire and enrich the human spirit. Activities are individually tailored to meet the needs of youth, and adults. Clients may be mentally, physically or emotionally challenged. The ability to reach clients through the bonding process between client and horse facilitates healing, wellness, self-awareness, and self-esteem. Gross and fine neurological motor skills are enhanced through the client/horse interaction. Clients are assisted in this therapeutic experience with experienced trainers. Staff is assisted by trained volunteers to provide a culture of safety and understanding between humans and horses engaged in equine assisted activities. Activities may range from becoming acquainted with a horse through establishing physical contact by petting a horse’s nose, to hands on experience to assist horse rides, including assisted trail rides to the level of proficiency in competition and in equine riding activities.

Debbie Truman, President and Founder of Serendipity Equine Haven, has 10 plus years experience with horses, riding, training, and teaching horseback riding to children and adults. She’s been riding since she was a child when she first helped her grandfather train race horses in Colleyville, Texas.

She has attended educational seminars designed to instruct and give hands on experience on using horses in assisted rehabilitative programs, how to implement these programs and how to manage a horse assisted rehabilitation program.
Debra has attended seminars and has received several years of personal instruction on horseback riding and has competed in a number of equine events.

Serendipity Equine Haven of Ft. Worth is located near downtown Ft. Worth, in the Handley Meadowbrook area, at 2416 Canton Dr, where she and her husband serve as assistant ministers of Christ Truth League, an interdenominational church. Her husband, Michael E Truman, DO also has his medical office located on church property and is certified in Family Medicine. Dr. Truman serves as Medical Director of Serendipity Equine Haven.

Good things will come to those who are willing to lend freely. Psalm 112:5
BENEFITS OF EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES

Intrinsically riding a horse is a beneficial activity for any person challenged with a physical, cognitive and/or emotional disability. The uniqueness of equine assisted activities lies in the gait of the therapy horse. The horse having gaits with a three dimensional swinging motion is a living therapy tool for the rider, enabling the rider to experience up/down, forward/backward, and side-to-side motion – all the while stimulating muscle, brain and social activity. Without doubt equestrian activities, in an out of a therapeutic setting, increase a rider’s posture, balance, strength, focus and coordination while also positively enhancing flexibility, self-awareness, confidence and a sense of independence. Social and emotional growth is too gained from the natural bond created between horse and rider.
The physical benefits of therapeutic riding include:
As the horse moves, the rider is constantly thrown off-balance. In an attempt to rebalance the rider’s muscles are required to contract and relax.

- Improved posture control and balance.
- Increased muscle tone and strength
- Greater range of motion
- Decreased spasticity
- Better hand-eye coordination
- Reduction of abnormal movement patterns

The cognitive benefits aide participants to excel in:
The repetition of patterned movements required in controlling a horse quickens the reflexes and aids in motor planning.

- Development of learned skills
- Tactile awareness and sensory integration
- Improved application of direction
- Greater skill at sequencing, patterning and motor planning

The overall experience contributes to emotional gains by the rider:
Riding provides excitement and the sense of achievement of working independently as well as with a team.

- Independence
- Increased self-control and awareness
- Better emotional control
- Greater self-awareness and self-confidence
**The social benefits reaped by riders:**
Being involved as a rider creates a shared interest and experience on which to build a social foundation.

- Friendship building
- Increased experiences
- Improving social skills and cooperation
- Experience some independence
- Experience a sense of being a part of team.

There is a benefit that is more difficult to measure but is easy to see. On the back of a horse, a rider who may use crutches or a wheelchair is now taller than everyone else and no longer has to look up at everyone. Full of confidence, there is a sense of control and freedom that comes from making that large animal respond to the rider’s direction. The disability can never be forgotten, but on the back of a horse, it quite often becomes “invisible,” allowing the rider to experience a sense of accomplishment and reward.
GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Requirements - Volunteers who work with riders must be at least 14 years old and physically able to walk and occasionally jog for short distances during the 30-45 minute classes. Horse leaders must have experience and show proficiency in horse handling.

Reliability - Regular attendance or the provision of a reliable substitute.

Punctuality – Side walkers should arrive at least 15 minutes before the class starts. Leaders should arrive at least 30 minutes before class to help get the horses ready. Late arrivals can be very frustrating to students who have looked forward to their weekly ride or therapy session.
**Physical Fitness** – Within reason! Most classes are 45 minutes of continuous walking with a little bit of short distance trotting.

**Be relaxed** – An anxious volunteer contributes to a nervous rider and a tense horse.

**Alertness** – Despite your outward relaxation, always anticipate an unexpected emergency.

**Empathy** – Avoid false sentimentality. It is important to have empathy and genuine regard toward the riders.

**Horse Knowledge** – Knowledge of horses is helpful, but many excellent volunteers have little or no previous experience.

**Patience** – Patience is necessary to adjust to the often painfully slow movements and reactions of the severely disabled.

**Sensible and comfortable clothing** – You should wear appropriate clothing for weather conditions and shoes that will protect you from mud or deep footed areas in the arena or getting stepped on by a horse. No dangling jewelry that can get caught or tangled on straps or grabbed by small hands. No strong perfumed or scented lotions; they attract bees and other insects, and riders may have allergic reactions.

**Inclement weather**
Classes will only be cancelled in the event of dangerous or threatening weather. It is the volunteer’s responsibility to call the stable to determine cancellation. (817-680-5474 or 817-457-8680)
Parking
- Please park in the area outside the gate.
- There is additional parking across the street at the clinic

Volunteer Registration Forms
- Volunteers must fill out a volunteer information packet
- Volunteers must consent to a criminal background check and sign the liability release on the back of the volunteer registration form.
- For Volunteers under the age of 18, their guardians must sign.

Do Volunteers get to ride?
- We will have scheduled days for volunteers to ride at no cost to the volunteer.
- We do ask the volunteer to occasionally make a donation to the stables (Feed the horses, treats, equipment, etc.) and to assist when needed to clean up around the stables on planned work days.

Volunteer Conduct
- We expect volunteers to treat both riders and horses with respect.
- If there are allegations of abusive behavior of mistreatment, the staff/stables owners will make a careful examination and the volunteer may be asked to leave the premises.
- There are to be no drugs, alcohol or cigarettes consumed on location during business hours or when therapeutic riders are present.
**Safety and Rules**
- A phone is located in the barn for local calls.
- Please keep cell phones on silent or vibrate mode during class.
- You cannot answer or use cell phones during class, please wait until after class to do so.
- No MP3 or IPODS allowed.

**Medical Conditions** - If you have a medical condition that will affect your ability to safely perform your volunteer job please discuss it with the Director or the Volunteer Coordinator.

**Stay Hydrated** – Participation at Serendipity Horse Haven can require strenuous activity. It is very important especially during the summer months to stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water throughout the day and take frequent breaks.

**Follow the Serendipity Way**
- Serendipity has many volunteers, students, and families come through our gates each week.
- When working with horses and students we stress the importance of consistency.
- Follow the procedures and techniques demonstrated in training when working with our horses and our students.

As of September, 1995, Texas enacted the following law: Texas Law (Chapter 87, Civil Practice and Remedies Code) an equine professional is not liable for the injury or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risk of equine activities.
DISCIPLINE & DISMISSAL OF VOLUNTEERS & GUESTS

Serendipity Equine Haven of Ft. Worth relies greatly on volunteers as important members of the team that provides services to and assists our program participants. We also recognize the extreme importance of safety and well being of our participants, volunteers, guests, and animals. SEH is responsible for the safety of all who visit or volunteer at our facility or attend our events.

All volunteers and guests are expected to follow SEH’s rules and policies and may not engage in disruptive, unsafe or inappropriate behavior.

Volunteers and guests may be asked to leave the program and the SEH property for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to:

- The use or expression of vulgar language, inappropriate jokes, or disrespectful language.
- Frequent missed volunteer commitments, (example: lessons, mandatory training, events, etc.), without prior explanation.
- Smoking or the use of an open flame in prohibited areas.
- Persistent disruption during lessons or special events.
- Any behavior deemed to be inappropriate by Serendipity Equine Haven.

Immediate Dismissal from property and organization will occur for:

- The use of or being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol on the grounds, or at an SEH event or representing SEH elsewhere in the community.
- Verbal or physical abuse or sexual harassment or other inappropriate behavior toward participants or other volunteers,
guests or board members. Disruptive or abusive behavior to the animals at SEH.

- Creating an unsafe situation through careless behavior, disregard for the rules, or ignoring the needs of the participant.
- Endangering the safety of others.
- Possession of a weapon.
- Inappropriate use of student information, the facilities, mailing lists or monies.
- Breaking confidentiality. If you are found to have distributed confidential information about participants, incidents occurring at SEH, financial information regarding participants or SEH activities or any information that you have been instructed by SEH as being confidential.
- Acting as an agent or representative of SEH to request money or fundraise without prior consent of the Board of Directors.
- Repeated disregard for the organization’s mission statement, rules, policies and procedures.

A volunteer’s first offense will be addressed in private in the following manner:

- The offense will be addressed by the person who witnessed the infraction and the SEH Board member who was informed of it.
- An authorized agent of SEH will inform the volunteer or guest of SHE’s policy or rules pertaining to the infraction and will discuss what was inappropriate.
- The SEH agent will complete the form title “Accident and Incident Report.
- The volunteer or guest should sign the A&I report.
• The SEH agent will inform the SEH Board of Directors of the situation. If the volunteer or guest chooses to not sign the A&I report or follow SEH’s policy and procedures, the volunteer or guest will be immediately dismissed.

The second offense will be addressed with the same procedure and the first offense with the instructor or barn manager being present with an SEH board member.

The instructor or barn manager and SEH Board member may, depending on the severity of the infraction, after the first or second offense, issue the following or a combination of the following.

• Dismiss the volunteer or guest from any further service or participation in the program.
• Place the volunteer on probation and they continue to volunteer.
• Reassign the volunteer to a different task.
• Assign materials or skills to be learned before returning as a volunteer.

If at any time the leader or instructor feels the situation is escalating and could become dangerous to students, volunteers or horses, they should call the Fort Worth Police Department, or 911 for assistance. Any unlawful act will be reported to the appropriate authority.

Please sign the bottom portion of this form and return this form with you registration forms. A copy of this form is in your Volunteer Handbook for your reference and records.
I understand that safety is of the utmost importance to the Serendipity Equine Haven. I have read and understand the policies and program rules by which Serendipity Equine Haven operates. By signing below I indicate my willingness to abide by these rules and policies, and intend to help SEH reinforce the importance of safety. I further understand that failure to comply with these policies and rules may result in discharge from the program.

Volunteer Name (Please Print) ________________________________________

Signature of Volunteer: ____________________________________________

Parent or Guardian (Print Name) ____________________________________
(If volunteer is less than 18 years of age.

Signature of Parent or Guardian ____________________________________
EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In the event of an emergency, telephones are at the barn, in the stable area, tack room and office.

- When calling 911
- Stay calm
- Be accurate
- Location and type of emergency
- Telephone number you are calling from
- The caller’s name
- What happened
- The number of victims
- The victims condition and names
- Tell emergency personnel to turn off sirens when they reach the gate to avoid spooking the horses.
- Have someone open the gates to allow entrance.

Do not hang up until told to do so by the dispatcher or 911 operator.

**Barn phone number** 817-457-8680

**Address**

2416 Canton Dr.

Fort Worth, Texas 76112

**Directions**

From Interstate 30, take 820 South to Meadowbrook Drive.

Take Meadowbrook Dr. west to Canton Drive

Turn left on Canton Dr.

Turn right at first driveway on West side.
Police/Fire/Ambulance:  911

Veterinary:  Dr. Kelly Bruner
            940-328-4585

Ferrier:  Tony Fields
         817-846-0579

Dr. Truman’s Office  817-446-5500

Debra Truman’s Cell Phone  817-680-5474

Dr. Truman’s Cell Phone  817-992-8694
EMERGENCY PLANS

THUNDERSTORMS:  At the first sign of lightening and/or thunder, all riders will be dismounted and class will be cancelled.

TORNADO WARNING:

- In the case of tornado warning, leaders will dismount all riders.
- All riders, parents and visitors will be led to a safe area.
- Leaders will untack all horses and return them to the pasture.
- All Volunteers and instructors will go to the safe area.
- Riders will keep their helmets on anyone wanting a helmet will be given one.
- Everyone will remain inside until warning is over.

FIRE:

- In event of a fire, all riders will be dismounted and escorted away from the source of the fire. Side Walkers will stay with their riders.
- Leaders will untack all horses and return to the pasture away from the fire.
- The instructor or their designee will immediately call 911.
- The staff person closest to the fire extinguishers and/or water hose will attempt to put out the fire.
- The instructor will make sure everyone is accounted for.
**ACCIDENTAL INJURY:**

- When an individual is injured in any situation at the facility, the instructor will designate trained personnel to administer first aid.
- If riders are mounted, the instructor will decide if the riders are to be dismounted or if the class will continue.
- All volunteers will stay with their assigned horse and rider until the instructor dismounts the riders and dismisses class.
- Side Walkers should remain with their students. Talk to your rider, reassure them and keep them quietly occupied.
- Leaders stay with your horses. Keep them calm in the center of the arena until you are dismissed to the paddock area.
- If emergency assistance is necessary for the injured person, the instructor or designee shall call 911. The instructor or designated first aid personnel will remain with the injured person until emergency personnel arrive and take over.

**LOOSE HORSE:**

- In the event of a horse getting loose in the arena during class, all leaders will halt their horses and side walkers will remain beside their riders in full support position.
- The instructor will direct leaders where to stand with their horses if it is necessary to move their positions.
- The instructor will be responsible for catching the loose horse.
- If a horse gets loose outside, a staff member will get a lead and some grain and quietly walk up the horse and catch it.
• If the horse cannot be caught, DO NOT CHASE. Speak calmly and quietly to the horse, show it the grain and guide it away from the road toward the closest pasture area.
• Keep everyone not directly involved with the capture away from the situation. A loose horse may decide to run for home and the safety of their turn out.
GETTING TO KNOW THE DISABLED RIDER
WHEN YOU MEET A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

If you have never had the opportunity to meet people with disabilities, this aspect of working at an equine rehabilitation center can be intimidating and a little frightening at first. You may be feeling insecure about how to act or react to people who may look, sound, move and behave differently from what you usually expect. It can also be unsettling to meet a person who you know has a terminal illness or the parent of a teenage of a teenage child who has cognitive limitation. What do you say? What do you not say? What is the best way to help? These questions and the feelings of uncertainty they bring with them are perfectly normal and you need not be embarrassed about them.

Here are some basic suggestions on how to relate to individuals with disabilities.

- A person with a disability is an individual first and is entitled to the same dignity, respect and considerations expected by anyone.
- Treat adults as adults. Only call an adult person with a disability by his or her first name after asking for the privilege.
- Only help a person with a disability if they ask for assistance. You may offer assistance, but if it is declined, do not be offended.
- When assisting an individual with a disability always ask “how” you can help. Do not take over.
- Always address the person with a disability directly. Do not speak “about” them as if they were not present.
- Do not shout. Hearing aids make noises louder, not clearer. Blindness does not affect a person’s hearing.
• If a person has difficulty speaking, allow them to finish their sentence. If you do not understand what they are saying, tell them so. Do not pretend you understood if you don’t.
• When meeting a person with a visual impairment, always identify yourself and tell them you are leaving before you walk away.
• Visually impaired individuals may only need verbal direction. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold on to your arm above the elbow and walk on-half step ahead. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to be assisted.
• Do not push a person’s wheelchair, grab their arm or try to help without asking first. Never move someone’s crutches, walkers, canes, service animal or other mobility aid without permission.
• When speaking to a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair, find yourself a chair or crouch down at a comfortable distance so that you can converse on the same level.
• When speaking to someone with a hearing impairment speak slowly, clearly and face them directly while speaking.
• Do not assume that students who do not communicate with words do not understand what you are saying. Try to talk to them like you would to any other person. Many people who are non-verbal have hand gestures they use to communicate.

“People” First Language

• The individual is always placed before the disability. It is a “person with a disability” – not a “disabled person.”
• Never refer to a person by their disability, example “a paraplegic,” “a blind person” – the accepted terminology is a “person who has paraplegia,” a “person who is blind.”

• People are not “confined” or “bound” to wheelchairs. They “use” these devices for mobility and to enhance their freedom. It is more appropriate to say “an individual who uses a wheelchair.”

• Completely avoid emotionally laden terms such as “suffering with a disease,” “afflicted with" “burdened by” – a person with a disability may “have” an illness or may be “challenged” by condition, but one should never assume that a person is suffering, burdened or afflicted.

• When writing or speaking about individuals with disabilities always focus on ability, accomplishment and quality of life.

• Avoid using “us” and “them” language when speaking of people with disabilities versus people who are able bodied. Statistics have shown that most able-bodied people will experience a disability at some point in their life. We are all people first.

Unnecessary talking during riding lessons should be avoided: It may distract or confuse the rider.

Be patient and clear with your communication.

Be positive and confident: your attitude will be mirrored by our riders!
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
The side-walker’s responsibility is the participant (not the equine). You are asked to arrive 30 minutes before class so that you can be prepared to give the participant your undivided attention. Get to know your client! If ever you feel participant is “not herself/himself” or are concerned about the participant, notify the instructor. At every lesson, reinforce what has been learned regarding helmets, grooming, and riding. Ask the participant to share what they remember.
• Use the time before participants arrive to help prepare for class. Ask your instructor if you can help with the arena set-up, watering the arena, or any other needs.

• Greet your participant, then the parents/guardians. Review your participant’s activities attire to check for appropriate and safe clothing, no chewing gum, dangling jewelry or objects, etc. assist the participant with his/her helmet as needed.

• Show the participant the proper way to approach the equine, by the shoulder and never from behind, and also how to correctly pass behind the equine. Encourage the participant to get to know the equine.

• The instructor will always assist the participant onto his/her equine. Listen for directions from the instructor for your participant to mount in the arena or at the mounting block. If using the mounting ramp, walk down the ramp always staying at your participant’s knee.

• The side-walker’s position is at the participant’s knee. The most common manual contact for participants needing stabilizing support is the “arm over thigh hold”. This is done using your arm nearest the participant. Reach up and grip the front edge or flap of the saddle in a spot that will put your forearm across the participant’s thigh, apply pressure on the thigh in order to stabilize participant when necessary. Communicate with your participant to see what pressure is comfortable yet provides the
support they need. If your participant has only one side walker, it is best for that side walker to be positioned on the participant’s weakest side. If both sides are the same, you should walk on the side opposite the equine leader.

- **Crutch Support** is used for riders who cannot support their upper body. Facing the front of the horse, the hand closest to the horse forms a crutch under the armpit of the rider, with the thumb in front on the shoulder and the fingers behind the shoulder. Resting your elbow on the saddle will increase the support and help prevent fatigue on your arm.

- **Ankle Support** is the least restrictive form of support, allowing the rider to use all muscles to provide his or her own support. Facing the front of the horse, the hand closest to the horse encircles the rider’s ankle lightly. In the event that the rider slips, a light tug will bring the rider back into alignment with the saddle. **DO NOT** yank on the ankle.

- Do not keep constant pressure downward on the ankle. If the rider loses balance forward, gently moving the leg forward, will counterbalance the rider. If the rider loses balance backward, gently moving the leg backward will also counterbalance the rider.

- Avoid putting a hand on the participants back (unless told to do so). Encourage the participant to use his trunk muscles.
• During the lesson, side walkers need to reinforce the instructor’s directions. When two side walkers are with one participant, they can share the task of communications with the participant, but be careful to not confuse the participant with too much verbal stimulation. Have the participant carry out tasks to the best of his/her abilities allowing time to react to the instructions.

• Encourage the participant to do the exercises and games. Help him/her reinforce and use his/her new skills.

• **Do not discipline an equine** while participant is mounted, this could endanger or frighten the participant.

• Never leave your participant’s side! If an object falls onto the ground, such as glove, etc. leave it lay and the instructor will pick it up.

• At no time, should the side-walker lean on the equine. If your arm becomes tired, tell your equine leader and they will come to the center of the arena. You may then, one at a time switch sides with the other side walker. Remember switch one at a time. At no time should your participant be left unattended. If there is only one side-walker, ask the instructor for assistance.

• Side-walkers who are not required to hold onto the participant must still keep their eyes on them and stay close enough to assist, if needed, without moving closer to the equine.
• You will find that some participants want to talk to you a great deal. Do not ignore them, but do try to direct their attention to the lesson.

• One of the worst distractions in the arena is excessive talking. Please keep conversation with participants and volunteers to what is necessary until after the lesson.

• The side-walker should ask the participant and the leader to bring the equine off the rail and into the center of the arena anytime a stop is needed. Some examples are: the participant is off balance and cannot regain balance while equine is moving, the saddle has slipped or the girth is loose, the stirrups need readjusting, the participant’s helmet needs adjusting, the participant is fatigued, in pain or needs to stop for any other reason (be discreet when discussing a participant in his presence).
Goal: The responsibility of a horse leader is to control the horse. A good leader can provide real therapeutic input to the rider, as well as make it safe for him to have run riding. For this reason, a horse leader should be someone with some experience in horsemanship. The rider has a leader because he or she is unable, at this time, to control the horse fully.

Primary Responsibility: The goal is to allow the rider to be as independent as possible. Although the leader is responsible for guiding the horse, stopping and starting, the leader should allow the rider to do as much of this as possible, assisting only when necessary or directed by the instructor.
Before Class:

- Arrive 30 minutes before class to help with the horse.
- Tack up in the stall. Secure the horse in the stall using a quick release knot.
- Check the tack to be sure it is the right tack for the horse you are using.
- Only a designated horse person can bridle a horse.
- 10 minutes before class take your horse out into the arena for a warm-up. This is the time for the horse to get tuned into the leader, to loosen up and warm up his muscles and to familiarize him to any toys that may be used in the class.
- Warm ups should always include leading the horse in large circles both directions, starting and stopping, weaving back and forth across the arena, going along the rail in both directions and possible trotting. Check with the instructor about trotting.
- Continue to warm up your horse for the entire 10 minutes, and then wait in the middle away from the edge of the arena.

Mounting: Mounting is the time when there is the most potential for danger. The leaders should keep their attention focused on the horse at all times during the mounting process. Riders either mount at the ramp or from a mounting block in the arena.

**Mounting at the ramp:**

- Stop for the instructor to check the girth, and then lead the horse toward the chute between the offside block and the mounting ramp. Stop just before entering this area, get in front of your horse and slowly walk backwards and guide the horse into the space between the ramp and the block.
Keep the horse close to the ramp. When you stop the horse, make sure he is standing square on all four feet.

Stand in front of and facing the horse, but a little to the off side block, while the rider is mounting. This is a psychological barrier to the horse and he is less likely to try to walk forward.

You may gently hold the cheek piece of the halter or bridle if necessary to ensure the horse stays still during mounting. Never put your fingers through bits or halter rings.

When the instructor is ready and the rider and the rider gives the signal, either a tap on the saddle or the command “Walk ON”, slowly move the horse forward.

Lead from the offside – walking forward, not backing – keeping the horse as close to the ramp as possible, as you leave the mounting area. **(Remember there is someone walking down the ramp trying to keep a thigh hold on the rider.)**

Enter the arena in a straight line – the rider may not be properly balanced yet and any sharp turns may upset his balance.

Once in the arena, the instructor will have you stop to adjust the stirrups and make a final tack check.

**Mounting from a mounting block in the arena:**

Position the horse so the block is on the left side of the horse.

Stand the same as for mounting at the ramp, in front of and a little to the side of the horse with a gentle hold on the
cheek piece of the halter or bridle, so the horse is still while the rider is mounting.
  • If there are not side-walkers, the leader may be asked to walk around to the side, while holding the lead rope loosely, to put some weight in the offside stirrup while the rider mounts.

Lesson:
  • An effective leader pays close attention to the rider’s needs and where the horse is going. This attention reinforces the rider’s attempts to control the horse.
  • Do not execute an instruction for the rider before he has time to process the information and make an effort to comply.
  • It may be appropriate to walk up to a fence and stand until the rider figures out what to do.
  • Avoid the temptation to talk to the rider or other volunteers. Too much input may confuse a rider.
  • Try to think like the horse. Anticipate things which may frighten or upset him.
  • The leader must consider the side-walkers, making sure there is enough room along fences and around obstacles for them to pass.
  • The lead rope should be looped in a figure eight, not coiled around the hand.
  • Hold the lead rope 8-10 inches from snap, allowing free motion of the horse’s head. This is more therapeutic for the rider and less irritating to the horse. Do not drag the horse.
  • Always leave two horse lengths between you and the horse in front of you.
• If passing is necessary, pass toward the inside of the arena.
• Whenever you halt for more than a few seconds, remember to wait for the “Whoa” signal from the rider, then stand in front of an diagonally facing the horse to be a psychological barrier.
• If you are leading with no side walkers, you are still mainly in charge of the horse, but should also be aware of what the rider is doing so you can help the horse respond to the rider’s cues.
• If a rider should fall, the leader is responsible for the horse ONLY! Keep the horse calm and move it away from the fallen rider. **STAY** with the horse! The instructor will take care of the fallen rider.

Dismounting: The instructor will assist in most dismounts, either to the ground in the arena or at the ramp.

Dismounting to the ground:
- Keep the horse still as when mounting.
- Some riders may help with untacking their horse. The leader is still in control of the horse while the rider removes tack and places it on the fence.

Dismounting to the ramp:
- Lead the horse **SLOWLY** between the offside block and the ramp, stopping just before the rider gets to the ramp so his foot may be taken out of the stirrup so it does not get pinched between the horse and the ramp.
- When the horse is in position for the rider to dismount, stand in front of an facing the horse’s head as you did for mounting.
- Be sure the rider has completely dismounted before leading the horse away.
After Class:

- Lead the horse back to the tacking area to untack. Attach the trailer tie to the halter, never the bridle. Never tie horses by the reins.
- If the equine is going to be used again shortly, loosen the girth.
- If time permits between classes, Leaders may untack, groom and return their horse to the pasture.
- Be sure to return all tack to its place in the tack room and return the grooming bucket to its proper place.
Leader Positions During Mounting at the Ramp

**KEY**

- Horse
- Leader facing direction of arrow

1. **Instructor checks tack.** Stand facing but at slight diagonal to horse. Head stall girth is tightened. May need to hold checkpiece with straight arm.

2. **Move in front of and facing horse as you gently walk backwards.** Guiding horse as close to ramp as possible.

3. **Stand in front of and facing horse, diagonally towards the block.** While rider mounts. May need to hold checkpiece with a straight arm.

4. **When rider gives "Walk on" signal, face forward (do not walk backwards) on off side (not ramp side) and lead horse straight out keeping horse as close to ramp as possible all the way to the end of the ramp.** Continue leading from off side all the way into the arena.

5. **Still leading from the off side, enter arena in a straight line and stop once you are well inside the gate.** Move to the front diagonal position again during stirrup adjustment and find tack check.
**EMERGENCY DISMOUNT PROCEDURE:**

- If you are side-waking an equine that becomes involved in an emergency, shout “**STAFF!**” to alert your instructor and equine leader and try to stabilize the participant using the “arm over thigh hold” manual contact. If the participant slides toward you, try to push him/her back to midline using your forearm on the participant’s thigh or, if necessary, push at the hip. If the participant slides away from you, encourage the other side-walker to push the participant back toward you. Try to not pull the participant back into the midline. It is always preferred if at all possible, even in an emergency, to have the participant remain on the equine until the instructor can do a dismount. If an emergency dismount becomes necessary, the side walker needs to remove the stirrup and reins from the participant, while the side-walker towards whom the participant is falling needs to remove the stirrup and then hug the participant around the trunk and the arms, then pull the participant off and away from the equine. If the side-walker feels he or she cannot bear the full weight of the descending participant, a controlled fall can be initiated, taking care to protect the participant’s and side-walker’s heads and roll with the fall as much as possible. It is important that the side-walker break the participant’s fall and does not fall on the participant.

- Once the rider has fallen, the side-walkers stay with the rider while the horse leader moves the horse out of the way. **DO NOT** attempt to help the rider – this is the responsibility of the instructor. Be prepared to go for help at the direction of the
instructor. Know where the first aid kit is, where the phone is, and where the emergency numbers are.

- If there is only one side-walker and no leader, the side-walker takes on the additional responsibility of control of the horse in the event that the rider has trouble controlling his mount. This is ONLY done when the rider’s balance is sufficient to not need support and the rider is beginning to ride independently.

- At the end of class, wait for the instructor to dismount all participants. Only instructors or their designees can dismount the participant.
OTHER POSITIONS AVAILABLE
**Volunteer Trainer**

Requirements – To be a Volunteer Trainer you must have 1 year previous volunteer experience with a therapeutic riding program and a good working knowledge of tacking, grooming, and helping other riders.

- The Volunteer Trainer will help train new volunteers at orientation and during lessons.
- Volunteer Trainers help coordinate volunteers for special events.
- Volunteer Trainers meets with staff regularly to evaluate our program from a volunteer’s perspective.

See our Director of Volunteer Services if you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Trainer or Junior Volunteer Leader.

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**Schooling the Horses**

**Schooling** – Our horses need periodic “tune-ups” to keep them interested and responsible in their work in the therapeutic setting. Experienced riders capable of performing elementary movements (leg yield, turn on the forehand, etc.), getting the horse in a round frame and bending through turns, and smoothing gait transitions, are eligible. Those interested should contact our Program Director for a riding test.
Barn Worker

Since our horses are an integral part of the therapy team, their care is of the utmost importance. Barn tasks include:

- Stall and barn cleaning
- Daily turn out/in
- Basic first aid
- Completion of daily barn chores
- Working with instructor to make sure the correct horses/tack are ready for class.

Gatekeeper

The primary job of the gatekeeper is to open/close the appropriate gates during class, and be ready, if any emergency occurs, to follow the directions of the Instructor. This is an extremely important task because if a gate is left open:

- The horse can get loose and create a safety problem
- Unauthorized persons can enter the ring or holding area and create a safety problem.
Ring Assistant

The primary job of the ring assistant is to help the Instructor with any special needs during class. (i.e. bringing items into the ring, helping with games, switching outside walkers who need relief, etc.)

Team Leader

The primary job of the team leader is to act as a mentor to new volunteers and assist staff in a variety of ways, such as:

Work with instructor on volunteer assignments for a particular class.

Work with volunteers regarding questions, concerns and attendance.

Report any concerns, questions, or needs to the Volunteer Coordinator and/or Program Director.
MOUNTED ACTIVITY EMERGENCY PLAN

If there is an emergency while a lesson is in session:

- All horses will be halted.
- All leaders will position themselves in front of the horse. The leaders are responsible ONLY for the horse, not the riders.
- All side walkers will stabilize their riders (arm of leg support). If there are two riders on the same horse, the side walker on the left supports the rider in front and side walker on the right supports the rider in the back. The side walkers are responsible ONLY for the rider, not the horse.
- The instructor will supervise the dismounting, either verbally or personally. If there are two riders on the same horse, the side walker on the left is responsible for dismounting the rider in front. The side walker on the right is responsible for dismounting the rider in back.
- In the event that a rider must be removed from the horse quickly, as in a seizure or a spooked horse, the side walker on the left is responsible for dismounting the rider.
- If circumstances call for the arena to be evacuated, the riders will be escorted out first by their volunteers (If used) and the horses will be removed by their leaders to an appropriate place, after the riders are out of danger.
- The instructor will determine if medical personnel are required and will request assistance in contacting specific personnel.
• All tack has a designated spot in the tack rooms. Please return things to their proper places.
• Horses should be bridled and unbridled by a Designated Horse Person (DHP) or Instructor ONLY! Bridles are worn OVER halters with throatlatch and noseband fastened under halter. Do not allow horses to eat grain, hay or grass while bridled.
• The following rules apply to horses tacked in stalls: There should only be one volunteer in the stall with the horse. Connect trailer tie in stall to horse’s halter (never the bridle). Unsnap trailer ties
when horse is finished and tack is removed to allow horses free access to water. Horses wearing tack should always be secured by the trailer ties. Reins should never be attached while the horse is in the stall.

- Latch all stall doors even if you leave for only a moment.
- Grooming tools are assigned to each horse to reduce the spread of skin infections. Please do not borrow from another grooming bucket. Let’s keep our horses healthy. Grooming buckets should be returned to their proper place when classes are over.
- Saddle pads should always be placed on the horse with attachments, straps, leather inserts, etc. UP! Doing this wrong is very uncomfortable for the horse and may cause sores.
- English saddles: Return saddles to their proper racks, turned so that the number shows and with stirrups run up. Saddle pads should be left with same saddle, but turned upside down on top of saddle so they can dry. Girths should be removed and hung on the hook according to length.
- Western saddles: Return saddles to their proper racks, with stirrups hanging down. The letter on the back of the saddle should be visible. Girths should be removed and hung on the hook according to length. Pads are stacked on the rack separate from the saddle. Quilted baby pads are used under all western pads. Fold and return them to the stack for re-use, or, if dirty, place in laundry basket.
- Tighten girth or cinch slowly in 3 steps:
  
  **Step 1.** While still in tacking stall, tighten only enough to keep saddle from slipping during warm-up. Never pull up abruptly.
Step 2. During warm up, gently tighten again in increments. Check for correct tightness under horses belly, not behind elbow. Be careful not to over tighten.

Step 3. Instructor will check girth a final time before rider mounts.
- Bareback pads: Girths are removed from those that have buckles (English style), but remain on those that are tied (Western style).
- Bridles are hung by the top (crownpiece) with brow and nosebands lacing out. Detach and return reins to their proper hook.
- Try to keep the door to the tack rooms closed as much as possible to keep room clean.
GENERAL SAFETY RULES

• Speak to the horse in a low, calm voice before approaching him to avoid startling him.
• Always walk around the back of a tied horse, never under or over a lead rope, with your hand on his rump so that he knows you are there.
• You are not to bring up or work with horses without permission. Do not ride horse from pasture to barn.
• Pet a horse by placing a hand on his shoulder or neck, not on the nose. The horse's nose is a sensitive spot.
• If a horse rears up, release the hand closest to the halter to avoid being pulled off the ground.
• After leading a horse into a stall, turn the horse so that he faces the door.
• Close the door, leaving enough space for the volunteer (not the horse) to exit before releasing the lead rope or removing the halter.
• Don’t leave horses tacked for more than 30 minutes. Slightly loosen girth between classes.
• Only two people allowed in stall with horse.
• No halters should be on horses in stalls unless horse is tied.
• When tacking or working with horses in stalls, horse must be tied with a quick release knot to the ring in the stall, **NOT TO THE GATE**.
• Keep reins and lead lines off the ground so a horse doesn't step on them.
• When cleaning hooves, do it from the side, and facing the rear of the horse. Position yourself so that your feet are to the side and not where the horse can step on them. Never squat or kneel down on the ground when cleaning hooves or grooming the legs. Maintain a quick escape position in case the horse moves.

• When grooming or saddling a horse in a tacking stall, have the horse properly secured with the quick-release end of trailer tie attached to the bars on the stall and the other end to the halter. If there is no trailer tie, use the lead rope tied in a quick release knot.

• When bringing a horse in from the pasture, be constantly aware of the other horses in that pasture. They can quickly appear at the gate with you if they think it is time to come in for lunch! Always assume that the hot wire is ON. When turning a horse back out in the pasture, shut and latch the gate, walk away from the gate a few feet and turn the horses head towards the gate before taking the halter off the horse.

• People weigh a lot less than any equine. If a horse spooks or suddenly pulls back, do not try to out-pull him. This could cause him to pull back even harder. Step back with him until he calms down. If a horse rears up, release the hand closest to the halter to avoid being pulled off the ground.

• Never slap or kick a horse. If horse needs discipline, inform the instructor.

• When you are at a halt, face the horse and stand slightly off to the side.
• You should always lock all gates and use chains. Do not climb over, jump over or hang from any fences or gates. Think of a horse as having a 6-foot “danger zone” surrounding it. Within 6 feet, the horse can kick; buck, cow kick (kick to the side), bite, or rear – and you or a student can be seriously injured. Approach the “danger zone” with caution. If you must walk behind a horse, approach from the side, touch the horse and speak to it. Keep touching it as you walk very closely around the horse.

• Approach from the side, NEVER from the rear.

• When standing next to a horse, stand VERY close. If the horse kicks, he can’t kick very hard if you are close. Keep your feet away from the horse’s hooves and from beneath the horse. You might get stepped on.

• Never walk under a horse’s neck it might rear from fright). Never walk under a horse. You might not be that short, but some children are.

• Never stand directly in front of a horse except to hold the horse for a rider. Never stand behind a horse for any reason.

• Hand feeding is an invitation to have your fingers bitten. After the food is gone, your fingers still carry the smell. A horse can’t tell the difference between a carrot and a finger that smells like a carrot. Keep your hands away from the horse’s mouth. ALL horses bite! Keep horses well away from each other at all times. Fighting horses are a danger to everyone nearby. Keep an eye on their heads and rear ends. If the ears are flattened the horse is about to fight. If he lifts
his leg, he is getting ready to kick. DO NOT ALLOW HORSES TO SNIFF EACH OTHER.

- Never tie a horse to the arena or fences. Use the tie rails or hold the horse.
- Always use a halter to tie a horse in the crossties. NEVER tie a horse by his bit or his reins.
- Always lead a horse by his lead rope and halter, not by the reins.
- If a tied horse rears or pulls back, or otherwise acts upset, STAY AWAY. Let the instructor handle the problem. A panicked horse is very dangerous.
Why do we do a safety check before we mount?

No matter how carefully we check when we saddle the horse, or how many times we have done it before, there is always the possibility that we overlooked something. An incorrectly fitted saddle or saddle pad can irritate or hurt the horse, and an unhappy horse may hurt the rider. A loose girth will cause the saddle to slip when mounting or riding. If the bridle is not properly fitted and buckled, it may come off while riding. An extra minute is all it takes to do a safety check by walking around the horse before mounting and following these steps.
MOUNTING

- Never mount a horse while the horse is tied. If the horse pulls back, the rider and the horse could be injured. Never mount next to a fence, car, another horse, or any solid object that the rider could be thrown into. Never mount on pavement.
- Lead an un-mounted horse on your right. Use two hands – the right hand should be about 6 inches below the snap, and the lift hand holds the FOLDED (not coiled) end of the lead rope. Don’t let the lead rope drag on the ground. It could trip you or your horse could step on it. Don’t throw it over your shoulder. It could get tangled and choke you.
- Always check the girth for tightness before mounting or helping a student to mount. Check that the saddle and bridle are placed properly on the horse, the stirrups are the correct length and are down, and that nothing is broken or warn. MAKE SURE THE RIDER HAS HELMET ON SECURELY. Don’t assume that someone else will do this. Better to check twice than not at all.
- All riders must be mounted by the instructor or under the instructor’s supervision.
- When mounting from the ground, one volunteer stands at the head of the horse and holds the lead rope. A second volunteer stands on the off-side of the horse and puts weight into the stirrup to counter-balance the rider. The instructor may assist the rider to mount as necessary. If the saddle starts to slip or the horse starts to walk forward during mounting, stop the mounting and remedy the situation before continuing.
• If a rider is mounting with a “leg up”, be sure that both the rider and the person giving the leg up know what they are doing. Do not use your knee as a mounting block, even for a small rider. You could get hurt.
• Ask for assistance if the rider is unable to mount unaided. Do not attempt to help the rider alone. Assisted mounting from the mounting ramp is always done by the instructor you may be asked to assist on the opposite side of the horse.
• When assisting at the ramp. Stand on the block, not on the ground. It is dangerous to be standing between the block and the horse, especially if the horse spooks or moves.
IN THE ARENA

Students should never be in the arena other than when mounted except to mount or dismount and leave the arena.

- The arena gates must be closed and latched at all times when there are horses in the arena.
- If you are leading a horse, walk between the horse’s head and shoulder, NOT in front of a horse.
• When leading or holding a horse with a mounted rider, always inform the rider BEFORE moving or changing directions. Avoid sharp turns or sudden stops.
• Allow the rider to initiate all movement if possible, give the rider time to give commands to the horse. ALWAYS let the rider to do as much as possible.
• Help your rider if he or she needs it, but first allow plenty of time for the rider to perform independently. Responses often take longer than we expect. Allow the rider to perform at his or her own pace. But do make sure the rider understands the instructor.
• Riders should always stay at least 2 horse lengths apart from each other, whether moving or standing still. If your rider’s horse gets too close to another horse, ask the rider to circle or cross to the other side of the arena.
• When passing another horse, always pass on the inside (the side closest to the center of the arena).
• Do not circle a horse near another horse. Watch that no other horses are in the way.
• All horses should be going in the same direction. If one rider reverses, all riders must reverse. A reverse is always made by turning in toward the center of the arena.
• Never trot a horse up to or past a walking horse. Never canter up to or past a walking or trotting horse.
• When leading a rider in the arena, always walk on the inside (closest to the center of the arena). Do not allow the horse to get too close to the fence.
• It is very important to pay attention to the rider and instructor. Don’t chat with riders or other volunteers while the class is in
session. Be friendly, answer direct questions from the rider briefly, but keep your ears on the instructor and your eyes on the rider.

- You may reinforce what the instructor is saying by showing the rider or touching the appropriate area. Try not to talk to the rider unless absolutely necessary.
When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment for equine assisted activities. Learning to understand horse senses, instincts and body language is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships. Being aware of horse behaviors is one of the best safety precautions that can be practiced at SEH. Knowing how to read your horse can prevent an accident and increase the quality of your "mutual" relationship. If you ever are uncomfortable working with or handling an individual horse, please speak up.
EQUINE SENSES

**Smell:** The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows the animal to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations. Implications:

- Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling.
- It is recommended that treats aren't carried in your pocket since horses may attempt to go after them.
- Volunteers might be discouraged from eating or having food in the arena.

**Hearing:** The horse's sense of hearing is also thought to be very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. The situation of a horse "hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of the fright/flight response. Note the position of the horse's ears (pictures following article.) Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears that are laid back often communicates they are upset and/or showing aggression towards another horse or person. Implications:

- Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him/her in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse.
• Watch your horse's ears for increased communication. Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.

**Sight**: The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head. There is good (lateral) peripheral vision but poorer frontal vision. Horses focus on objects by raising and lowering their head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color. Implications:

• The horse may notice if something in the arena or out on a trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with.

• As the horse has better peripheral vision; consider a slightly looser rein, enabling the animal to move its head when taking a look at objects.

• Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is at the shoulder. It may startle a horse if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when hand feeding.

**Touch**: Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs.
Implications:

- Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly.
- Horses have sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas).
- Watch the riders' leg position. The rider may need appropriate assistance to reduce a "clothes pin" effect with their legs. Ask the instructor/therapist what is the best handling technique.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing over it.

**Taste:** Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

Implications:

- Taste is closely linked with smell and touch; therefore, a horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, this could lead to possible biting.

**Sixth Sense:** Horses do have a "sixth sense" when evaluating the disposition of those around them. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important for the instructor/therapist to know if you're having a difficult time relating or getting along with a particular horse.

**The Horse's Lifestyle:** In addition to understanding the horse's sixth senses, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the
horse's lifestyle. This will assist us in responding appropriately to his/her reactions to situations.

**Flight and other Instincts:** Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it.

**Implications:**

- At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly.

- A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie the horse quickly and usually it will relax. Be sure not to stand directly behind the horse.

- If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like the stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working around the horse in a stall.

- If a horse is nervous or fearful it may be helpful to allow a more experienced horse handler to lead.

- Most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. However, the horse may look to you for reassurance. It is helpful if the volunteer remains calm and talks to the horse in a soothing voice.

**Herd Animal:** Horses like to stay together in a dearly defined herd or group with one or two dominant horses "in charge", with the rest of the group living in an established social hierarchy. Implications:
• Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride.

• Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter.

• If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.

• For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse's length between horses when riding within a group to respect the horses space and hierarchical order.
The horse’s ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.

**Ears forward but relaxed**
- Interested in what’s in front of him.

**Ears turned back but relaxed**
- Listening to his rider or what’s behind him.

**Ears pointed stiffly forward**
- Alarmed or nervous about what’s ahead. Looking for danger.

**Ears pointed left and right**
- Relaxed, paying attention to the scenery on both sides.

**Ears stiffly back**
- Annoyed or worried about what’s behind him; might kick if annoyed.

**Droopy ears**
- Calm and resting. Horse may be dozing.

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**Other signs you should notice are:**

- **Tucking the tail down tightly.**
  - Danger to the rear.
  - Horse may bolt, buck or kick.
  - Watch out if ears are flattened, too!

- **Switching the tail.**
  - Annoyance and irritation:
    - at biting flies, stinging insects or
    - tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.

- **Droopy ears and resting arm blind leg on toe.**
  - Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.
  - Don’t wake him up by startling him!

- **Wrinkling up the face and swaying the head.**
  - Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.
  - Watch out for biting or kicking.
GLOSSARY OF PHYSICAL & COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter at a NARHA Center and the beneficial outcome equine assisted activities can have. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of specific disabilities. Rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how equine assisted activities can be beneficial.

Arthritis
Inflammatory disease of the joints
Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid.
Characteristics: Pain; lack of mobility; deformity; loss of strength.
Benefits: Gentle rhythmic movement to promote joint mobility and relieve pain.

Autism
A self-centered mental state from which reality tends to be excluded.
Characteristics: Unresponsiveness to the presence of others; withdrawal from physical contact; severely delayed and disordered language; self-stimulating behaviors; unusual or special fears; insensitivity to pain; unawareness of real dangers; hyperactive; passive; unusual behaviors such as smelling/tasting/licking/mouthing all objects;
ritualistic behaviors; developmentally delayed; unusual response to sounds; clumsiness; social withdrawal; resistance to change.

**Benefits:** Interaction in a group setting stimulates interest away from self and toward others and the horses. Postural and verbal stimulation.

**Cerebral Palsy**

Brain damage occurring before, at, or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.

**Types and Characteristics:**

**Spastic - hypertonicity** with hyperactive stretch reflexes, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes.

**Athetoid** - extensor muscle tension, worm-like movements, abnormal posturing and slow and deliberate speech.

**Ataxic** - poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements and are often described as having a "rag doll" appearance.

**Benefits:** Normalization of tone, stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination.

**Associated Problems:** Seizures; hearing defects; visual defects; general sensory impairment; perceptual problems; communication problems; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; learning disabilities.
**Cerebral Vascular Accident - Stroke (CVA)**

Hemorrhage in brain, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.

**Characteristics:** Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of body. May impair mentation, speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength.

**Benefits:** Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech and socialization.

**Developmental Disabilities (DP)**

A general term applied to children functioning two or more years below grade level.

**Characteristics:** Varied, but can include slow physical, motor and social development.

**Benefits:** Provides arena for success, opportunity for sport and recreation, stimulates body awareness.

**Down Syndrome**

Condition in which a person is born with an extra chromosome, resulting in mental retardation and developmental delay.

**Characteristics:** Broad flat face, slanted eyes, neck and hands are often broad and short. Usually hypotonic, have hypermobile joints and tend to be short and slightly overweight. Prone to respiratory infections.
Benefits: Riding improves expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, muscle tone and coordination.

Emotional Disabilities

A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies.

Characteristics: Trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia or schizophrenia may be exhibited.

Benefits: Increases feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provides appropriate social outlet.

Epilepsy

Abnormal electrical activity of the brain marked by seizures with altered consciousness.

Types and Characteristics:

Petit Mal: Brief loss of consciousness with loss of postural tone. May have jerky movements and/or blank expression.\ on their face.

Grand Mal: Loss of consciousness and postural tone; usually proceeded by an aura. (Note: An active seizure disorder is a contraindication for horseback riding).
**Hearing Impairment**

Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound.

**Characteristics:** Communication difficulties - may use lip reading, finger spelling (manual alphabet) or sign language. Often "phase out" and have attention deficits.

**Benefits:** Stimulates self-confidence, balance, posture and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interactions.

**Learning Disabilities**

Catch-all phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving, but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills.

**Characteristics:** Short attention span, easily frustrated, immature.

**Benefits:** Effects depend upon the particular disorder. Stimulates attention span, group skills, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination.

**Mental Retardation (MR)**

Lack of ability to learn and perform within normal and acceptable levels. Degree of retardation is referred to as educable, trainable, severe or profoundly retarded.

**Characteristics:** Developmentally delayed in all areas. Short attention span.
**Benefits**: Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. Provides a structured learning environment.

**Multiple Sclerosis (MS)**

Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation. **Characteristics**: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40-year-old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Fatigues easily. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity.

**Benefits**: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for emotional therapy. Associated Problems: Visual impairment, emotional ability, and impaired bowel and bladder function.

**Muscular Dystrophy (MD)**

Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males.

**Characteristics**: Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes.

**Benefits**: Provides opportunity for group activity, may slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, and allows movement free of assistive devices.

**Associated Problems**: Lordosis, respiratory infection.
**Polio**

Infectious virus disease.

**Characteristics:** Flaccid paralysis, atrophy of skeletal muscle, often with deformity.

**Benefits:** Strengthens non-paralyzed muscles, stimulates posture.

**Scoliosis**

Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S curve with rotary component.

**Characteristics:** Postural asymmetry. May wear scoliosis jacket or have had stabilization surgery.

**Benefits:** Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles.

(Note: Severe scoliosis is a contraindication for therapeutic riding).

**Spina Bifida**

Congenital failure of vertebral arch closure with resultant damage to spinal cord.

**Characteristics:** Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss.

**Problems:** Infection, lordosis, scoliosis and hip dislocations.

**Benefits:** Stimulates posture and balance, improves muscle strength and self-image.

**Associated Problems:** Hydrocephalus, incontinence, urinary tract infection, lordosis, scoliosis and hip dislocations.
**Spinal Cord Injury**

Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function.

**Characteristics:** Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury - can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores.

**Benefits:** Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, is an option for sports participation and recreation.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**

Accidental injury to the head resulting in intra-cranial bleeding with death of brain cells. Characteristics: Gross and fine motor skills deficits. Often have impaired memory, speech, balance and/or vision. May have psychological effects. Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills.

**Visual Impairment**

Moderate to total loss of sight.

**Characteristics:** Insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity, fearfulness and developmental delay.

**Benefits:** Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture and coordination. Provides social outlet, structured risk- taking and freedom of movement.
NON-HORSE RELATED ACTIVITIES

If you have a special interest or ability in any of the following, please contact our Director of Volunteer Services.

**Volunteer Recruitment & Coordination** – These volunteers assist the Director of Volunteer Services with recruiting volunteers, scheduling, and record keeping.

**Fundraising** - Interested individuals are welcome to join any of our committees active in meeting the financial needs of Serendipity Equine Haven Programs.

**Special events volunteers** – These volunteers assist in the planning and execution of special events such as Chisholm Challenge, Special Olympics, holiday parties, appreciation dinners, riding demos, and various other events.

**Assorted services and projects** – Tack cleaning and repair, carpentry (building ramps, shelves, etc.), Painting, electrical or plumbing services, poster design. And taking pictures of new horses are just some of the opportunities currently available. Workdays are held periodically, generally prior to a special event or before a session, to give the riding center and horses a major “sprucing up”.

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**Technical support for computers** – These volunteers provide as-needed technical support for the various office computer systems, including software and hardware, program installation and updates, and general maintenance.

**Gifts in kind** – You will contact vendors to donate needed items, thereby reducing *Serendipity Equine Haven’s* program expenses.

**Foundations and grants** – You will help identify foundations or grants with a potential for donating to *Serendipity Equine Haven*.

**Clubs and organizations** – Identify and cultivate clubs and organizations in the community willing to offer financial assistance and / or volunteers.
DECLARATION OF READING AND UNDERSTANDING THE VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

I ________________________________, have read and fully understand the Volunteer Handbook. If there was any section which I do not understand, I have asked my Supervisors for an explanation.

_________________________________________   ________________
Signature of Volunteer                      Date

_________________________________________   ________________
Signature of Volunteer Coordinator or Program Director

Please turn this page into the Volunteer Coordinator or Program Director prior to your first day of Volunteering.
APPENDIX
CORRECT POSTURE AND REIN CONTROL
PARTS OF THE HORSE

- CLEFT
- HEELS
- BARS
- TOE
- HOOF
- FROG
- WALL
- SHOE
- PASTERN
- FETLOCK
- BULBS OF HEEL
- MANE
- WITHERS
- TAIL
- HEAD
- MUZZLE
- FORELEGS
- HINDLEGS
- HOCK
- HOOF
- FETLOCK

Mane, withers, tail, forelegs, hindlegs, fetlock, hock, hoof and frog.
LEADING THE HORSE
may burst and become saddle sores. Proper grooming prevents this problem.

b. Recognize that a third purpose of grooming is to show your appreciation of the horse: the horse will respond better as this relationship is established.
GROOMING THE HORSE

f. Clean the curry comb periodically by tapping it on a hard surface so dirt and dust fall out.
WASHING THE FACE
MANE AND TAIL COMB
HOOF PICK

tently lift leg up and back. Gently pick the hoof clean, starting at the toe and working to the heel; be very careful when cleaning the frog (the central part of the hoof that is very soft and sensitive), and do not pick deeply to the hoof.

Clean each hoof: start with the foreleg, then move to the hindleg of the same side.
HOW TO APPROACH THE STALLED HORSE

TASK ANALYSIS
a. Talk softly to the horse when entering its stall.
b. Approach the horse from a front side so the horse can clearly see you.
c. When moving around the back of the horse, keep one hand on the horse's hind-quarters so the horse knows you are there.
d. Avoid standing still behind the horse where it cannot see you.
e. Avoid making loud noises or sudden moves around the horse.
f. Open the stall door fully before leading the horse out of the stall.
g. Always lead the horse from its left side; hold the halter and turn the horse to the right away from one's feet; lead the horse out of the stable, walking next to the horse's head.
h. Pat the horse on its neck; show affection often for the horse by patting its neck.
i. Avoid scratching the horse's muzzle.
j. Learn a quick-release knot for tying the leadline to a rail or post.
k. Keep grooming tools clean and in a safe place.
l. Keep the tack clean and in its proper place.
m. Keep the stall's cleaning equipment (brooms, rakes, etc.) in the proper place.

• Show pictures of proper horse handling techniques.
• Ask the athlete to identify safe situations.
• Explain to the athlete that safe handling practices are important for athlete and horse alike.
HALTERING THE HORSE
LEADING THE HORSE
ENGLISH BRIDLE

BROW BAND

CHEEK STRAP

THROAT LATCH

NOSE BAND

BIT

REINS
WESTERN AND ENGLISH SADDLES
BRIDLING THE HORSE

[Three illustrations showing the process of bridling a horse]
ENGLISH TACK

3. Correctly saddle the horse.

**TASK ANALYSIS**

a. Select the desired saddle (English or Western).
b. Select a saddle pad.
c. Place the pad on the horse so a part of the pad rests on the horse’s withers.
d. Slide pad back to spot where saddle will sit in the hollow just behind the withers; this maneuver will smooth out the hair beneath the pad.
e. Standing at the horse’s left side, lift up saddle with left hand under the pommel (the front of the saddle), and the right hand under the cantle (the back of the saddle).
f. Set the saddle gently down onto the pad; avoid dropping or throwing the saddle onto the horse. It will not appreciate 25 pounds of leather thrown on it.
g. Shift the saddle slightly so it settles into the hollow just behind the horse’s withers; be sure that neither the pad nor the saddle pinches or presses against the horse’s withers.
h. Attach the girth/cinch to the right side of the saddle.
i. From the horse’s left side, reach under the horse’s belly for the girth/cinch, pull it up and buckle/knot it securely to the left side of the saddle.
j. Make sure the girth/cinch is not twisted and is positioned correctly.
k. Tighten girth/cinch to a snug fit.
l. Buckle the flank cinch loosely (Western).

**COACHING SUGGESTIONS**

- Demonstrate the proper saddling technique.
- Emphasize the need to put the tack on the horse in the proper order.
- Assist the athlete until he/she is comfortable with the entire process of tacking the horse.
- Practice taking the saddle off the horse.
- Practice running up and pulling down the stirrups (English).
- Practice carrying the saddle correctly; over both arms which are crossed in front of the body.
- Demonstrate the proper care of the saddle; cleaning it and putting it away on its designated rack.
PARTS OF A HORSE

To select a sound horse by type of individual, the majority of persons suggest using the following criteria.

Know the names of the various anatomical parts.--Master the language that locates and describes the parts of a horse. Know which of these parts are of major importance and what comparative evaluation to give the different parts.

Know what you want.--Have an ideal in mind. Be able to recognize desirable characteristics and common faults.

Follow a definite procedure in examining.--Evaluate a horse. Look at the horse from the front view, the rear view, the side view, and while the horse is moving. Check for soundness. Following the method, one will not overlook anything and will find it easier to remember observations as they are made. When looking at several animals at the same time, keep them at a distance. Keeping the horses at a distance will allow an overall view of the horses. It is hard for to evaluate the merits of even one horse when standing close to the animal.

Make a sound evaluation.--Evaluate all of the animals good and bad points. Keep the common faults and your ideal type in mind. When looking at several animals, rank them in your mind by their rating on important points.

Pedigree.--Selecting animals by pedigree, or on the basis of their ancestors, is of special importance when the animals are to young or out of condition for one to determine their individual merit. Pedigree may be the determining factor when you select between animals of comparable individual merit.

Show-Ring Winnings.--Because training plays such an important part in show-ring performance and winnings, this method of selection is of less value from a breeding standpoint than with other classes of farm animals.
FORMS AND APPLICATIONS
Serendipity Equine Haven of Fort Worth

Volunteer Liability Release Agreement

I, ________________________________, (Volunteer’s Name) would like to participate in the SEC program. I acknowledge the risks and potential risks of horseback riding. However, I feel that the possible benefits to myself/my child/my ward are greater than the risk assumed. I hereby, intending to be legally bound, for myself, my heirs, my assigns, executors or administrators, waive and release forever all claims for damages against SEC, its Board of Directors, Guarantors, Instructors, Therapists, Aides, Volunteers and/or Employees for any and all injuries and/or losses I may sustain while participating in SEC programs.

Warning – Under Texas law (Chapter 87, Civil Practice and Remedies Code) an equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities.

Date: ________________________________ Signature: ________________________________
Volunteer, Parent, Guardian, or Adult Caregiver

Volunteer Consent to Photograph, Video Tape, Televise Recordings and/or Like Media Recordings

I hereby (Circle One) Consent Do Not Consent
To authorize SEC’s right to photograph, televise, film, video tape and/or sound record the acts, appearances, and utterance of the undersigned and to use any descriptive words or names, including the name of the undersigned in connection therewith and without limit as to time, to produce and reproduce and part thereof by any method and to use said photographs, films, video tapes and/or sound recordings for any purpose which SEC deems proper in the interest of newspapers, television media, brochures, pamphlets, instructional material. All such photographs, films and/or sound recordings shall be the exclusive property of SEC and I hereby relinquish all right, title and interest therein. With respect to the foregoing, inducements or promises have been made to me to secure my signature to this release other than the intention of SEC, to use or cause to be used such photographs, films and pictures for the primary purpose of promoting and aiding SEC and its work.

Date: ________________________________ Signature: ________________________________
under 18
## References

**List other organizations you have volunteered with (if any)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Volunteer Position</th>
<th>Supervisor &amp; phone #</th>
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### Personal References

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I hereby give permission to SEC to perform reference check.

Date: ___________________________  Signature: ___________________________

Volunteer or Parent/Guardian if under 18
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

SEH shall preserve the right of confidentiality for all individuals in its program.

No one associated with SEH will reveal any medical, social, referral, personal and financial information regarding any participant or any other person associated with SEH to anyone unless required by court order.

This policy applies to:
- Participants
- Full and part-time staff
- Independent contractors
- Temporary employees
- Volunteers
- Board members

Infants and children under age 18 do not have legal authority to consent to disclosure. Only parent(s), legal representatives, or others defined by state statute generally have this authority.

Failure to comply can result in reprimand, loss of certain job responsibilities, or termination.

I understand and will observe the confidentiality policy of SEH.

________________________  ______________________
Signature                  Date
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS

- We will honor our commitment to confidentiality, which is signed under the Volunteer Contract.
- We shall always abide by the Code of Conduct for the Policies and Procedures for Volunteers.
- We will cooperate fully with our staff supervisor and be open to their guidance.
- We will represent SEH in a positive manner to the larger community.
- We will not represent SEH in any capacity while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- We will not smoke, use drugs or alcohol while on the SEH property.
- We will not sexually harass participants, employees, or other volunteers.

We will not physically or verbally abuse any person or animal while on SEH property.

I understand and will abide by the SEH Code of Conduct.

___________________________________________________________
Signature

___________________________________________________________
Date
## SEHFW Volunteer Log Sheet

Please make an entry for each day's volunteer activities. List the times of classes you assist with. Include the transit time as part of your hours.

**CALCULATING TIME:**

-    \( \frac{1}{4} \) HOUR = .25
-    \( \frac{1}{2} \) HOUR = .5
-    \( \frac{3}{4} \) HOUR = .75 ROUND OFF YOUR MINUTES TO NEAREST \( \frac{1}{4} \) HOUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>ACTIVITY [Example: worked class, cleaned stalls, worked horses, etc.]</th>
<th>Time In</th>
<th>Time Out</th>
<th>Today's Hours</th>
<th>Cumulative Hours</th>
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VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM

I. Personal Information

Today’s Date:_____________________

Name_________________________________ Birth Date:______________________

Address:_______________________________ E-Mail:__________________________

City:_________________________________ Home Ph:_______________________

May we contact you at work? YES NO Work Ph:__________________________

Parent/guardian/caregiver name & phone:_____________________________________

Occupation:__________________________ Employer:__________________________

Do you have any physical limitations? Describe____________________________________

II. General Information

How did you hear about SEC:____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Describe you experience with horses?____________________________________________

III. Areas of interest:

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

IV. Skill Areas:

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Please list any other information about yourself that you feel could be useful to the program.
SERENDIPITY EQUINE HAVEN OF FORT WORTH

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

I, the undersigned rider/boarder/horse owner/parent/legal guardian, do hereby release, waive, and discharge from any and all claims, Silver Star Stables, Serendipity Equine Haven of Fort Worth, Christ Truth League, Michael Truman, Debra Truman, employees, and leasees, I may now have or hereafter have as rider, boarder, horse, owner, parent, legal guardian of ____________ for damages, for death, for personal injury, or property damage which may subsequently accrue to me as a result of my or my invitees and my families participation in equestrian activities.

This release is intended to discharge in advance Silver Star Stables, Serendipity Equine Haven of Fort Worth, Christ Truth League, Debra Truman, Michael Truman, the facility, and their respective employees, leases and independent contractors.

I further understand horse riding and all associated activities is a potentially dangerous activity and that serious accidents can occur at equestrian facilities and that participants, riders, boarders, visitors, and horses can sustain mortal or serious personal injuries or property damage as a consequence thereof. Acknowledging and knowing the above stated risks, I hereby agree that I and my family, friends, riders, visitors, students, invitees, or trespassers assume those risks and release and hold harmless all of the persons or entities mentioned above, Silver Star Stables, Serendipity Equine Haven of Fort Worth, Christ Truth League, Debra Truman, Michael Truman, any leases, employees, and independent contractors associated with the facility and all owned adjacent property.

It is further understood and agreed that this waiver, release, discharge, and assumption of risk is binding on my heirs, executors, administrators, legal representative and assigns.
PLEASE PRINT

I have read, understand, and agree to the terms contained herein:

I am under the age of 18 and understand that I must wear a riding helmet while riding. (Please initial) Rider or Participant____ Parents/Guardians____.

A medical form must be filled out for emergency purpose and copy of shot records must be on file. (Please initial) Parents/Guardians____.

Name of Rider or Participant: __________________________ SS# __________________

Address:__________________________ City ___________ St.________ Zip. __________

Home Phone:__________________________ Cell:____________________________

Parent/Legal Guardian: ________________________________ SS#__________________

Address:__________________________ City ___________ St.________ Zip __________

Home Phone:__________________________ Cell:________________ Work: __________

Emergency Contact:__________________________ Ph.#____________________

Any lost or stolen property is the sole responsibility of the owner and not of Silver Star Stables, Serendipity Equine Haven of Fort Worth, Christ Truth League, Debra Truman, Michael Truman, employees, or independent contractors.

Rider’s Signature ____________________________ Date __________

Parent/Guardian’s Signature ______________________ Date __________