



# Central Illinois Riding Therapy (CIRT)

**Our mission is to** promote the well-being of persons with disabilities through the provisions of horseback riding and other related activities within a safe and enjoyable atmosphere designed by professionals and implemented primarily by volunteers.

Central Illinois Riding Therapy (CIRT) began early in 1983, a large group of people from Peoria and Tazewell counties met for the first time to discuss the possibility of starting a handicapped riding program for the area. In October that year, CIRT began its first classes funded by seed money provided by 4-H. CIRT operates under the 4-H not-for-profit 501C3 charter and in accordance with the guidelines established by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA), now known as Professional Association of

Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.). CIRT moved to various places throughout the Peoria and Tazewell County area until a permanent location was found in the spring of 1988. This was provided through an agreement with the Fondulac Park District, at our present location in Neumann Park at, 305 Neumann Drive in East Peoria, IL (off Route 150).

CIRT is a non-profit organization serving children, youth, adults and veterans from 4 years old to those in their 70's with mental, physical, emotional and behavioral disabilities from Tazewell and surrounding counties, in a comprehensive recreational and therapeutic horseback riding program.

We are committed to the principle that persons with disabilities are entitled to the same opportunities and rights as their non disabled peers. Our program provides activities that enhance physical and mental skills, aids in mobilization, promotes socialization and communication; and builds independence and self-confidence. Skills developed lead to integration into typical community riding programs, as well as transfer to other activities of daily living. We strive to enrich the quality of life of our participants while offering a unique experience.

## BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS (to name a few)

- Increased balance, strength, and flexibility
- Increase ability to process information
- Independence, self-control and confidence
- Improve language and communication skills
- For movement impaired disabilities, horseback riding mimics the human motion of walking in a way that is not replicated by any equipment
- Increase quality of life – It's Fun!

Horseback riding is strongly motivating for the person with disabilities. The bond between horse and participant is unmatched. Participants are required to reach their fullest capabilities through a non-traditional environment which promotes therapy and fun. The program is open to any person with a disability whose doctor has determined that horseback riding could provide beneficial therapy. We serve individuals with a variety of physical, emotional, behavioral and mental disabilities including Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Autism, visual and hearing impairments, Wounded Warriors, learning disabilities and many others.



**Weekly Riding Lessons...** Individually tailored therapeutic horseback riding lessons for children, youth, adults and US Veterans with physical, mental, emotional and behavioral disabilities.

**Volunteer Opportunities...** If you like horses and like helping people (no horse experience required), join our team, make new friends and be a part of a great community! Approximately 100 volunteers help with riding lessons, fundraisers and special events.

**Would like to donate... FROM THE HORSES MOUTH:** Grass or Grass/Alfalfa Mix Hay, Alfalfa – Pellets, Moorman Senior Grain, Muck Buckets, Brooms (Big and Small), Shovels, Salt & Mineral Blocks. **FOR THE RIDERS:** Money-Scholarships to help those with financial needs. **GIFT CARDS:** Farm & Fleet, Tractor Supply, Gas, Wal-Mart. **Any Monetary Donations**



For additional information on volunteer opportunities, make a donation, or to request a Rider Packet for a prospective student please visit our website <https://cirt.info>, email [cirt@cirt.info](mailto:cirt@cirt.info), find us on Facebook or call us 309.699.3710.

