



Lesson Aide Volunteer Manual

Mission:

To provide children, youth, and adults the opportunity to grow and develop through therapeutic, educational, and recreational activities with horses.

Role Overview

The **lesson aide** provides essential behind-the-scenes support to instructors and fellow volunteers to ensure lessons run smoothly, safely, and efficiently. This role focuses on arena preparation, equipment staging, organization, and lesson transitions.

The lesson aide does not provide direct horse handling or participant support and does not lead, sidewalk, tack, or untack horses. All responsibilities are carried out under the direction of instructors and program leadership.

Requirements

Minimum Age: 14

Paperwork & Trainings: Complete all paperwork (application, waivers, background check, compliance agreements); attend all orientation and lesson aide trainings and pass all skills checklist(s); follow verbal and visual instructions and communicate effectively with staff and fellow volunteers.

Required Knowledge & Skills

- Safety
 - Entering Arena During Lesson
- Horse Behavior
 - Working Around Horses
- Emergency Procedures
 - Loose Horse
 - Weather
 - Fire
 - Fallen Rider
 - Injury
- Understanding Organizational Systems Used in Tack Room
- Identifying Basic Tack
- General Cleaning



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Benefits of being a Lesson Aide

All of these activities keep you moving and thinking at the same time. This provides benefits to physical and mental health.

Being an aide is essential to everyday activities surrounding lessons. It is purposeful and meaningful and increases self-esteem and confidence.

Lesson Aides keep the team together and everything running smoothly.

Provides opportunities to directly participate in lesson activities and witness the growth of our riders.

Time & Scheduling Commitment

- Arrive 30 minutes prior to scheduled lesson.
- Commit to a minimum of 1 lesson and maximum of 4 lessons per day.
 - Commit to a consistent schedule (minimum of one day a week for 1 session [4 weeks]; maximum of 4 days a week for up to 6 sessions [24 weeks])
 - Schedule with Volunteer Coordinator

Physical Requirements

- Ability to stand and walk for extended periods during lesson blocks
- Ability to walk on uneven surfaces
- Ability to perform light to moderate physical activity, including
 - Safely lift and carry saddles and other equipment weighing approximately 25 – 30 pounds
 - Bending and reaching

Training & Supervision

- Complete all orientation and lesson aide trainings
- Report to Directors and/or Instructors

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Lesson Aide Responsibilities

Note: This section of the manual assumes you have arrived, signed in, checked the posted lesson schedules, understand your assigned role, and are ready to carry out the following responsibilities. If at any time you are unsure of expectations, procedures, or priorities, ask an instructor or director for clarification.

Prior to Lessons

Arena Preparation

- Check with staff to determine whether **arena watering** is needed
- If watering is required, complete this task **first**
 - Hose is located along the rail between letters **B and M**
 - Dampen the entire arena surface
 - This process may take **up to 30 minutes**

Watering the arena helps **control dust and maintains safe footing**. Excessive dust can be harmful to the **respiratory health of horses, participants, staff, and volunteers**, and uneven or overly dry footing can affect horse movement and lesson safety. We have taken additional measures to reduce dust, including the use of **magnesium chloride hexahydrate** in the arena footing. While this may lessen the need for frequent watering, conditions vary based on weather and use. For this reason, arena watering remains an important safety and horse-welfare practice and should be completed when directed by staff.

Prepare and Stage Tack for Upcoming Lesson

- Use the lesson schedule to determine tack needs for each horse used in the lesson
- Obtain saddle, saddle pad, cinch/girth, headgear, reins as Indicated for each horse used in lesson
- Stage tack in the arena:
 - Place saddle and pad on the wooden removable saddle racks located along the rail between letters K, E, and M
 - Hang headgear on the wall hanger

Grooming Buckets

- Obtain the assigned grooming bucket for each horse
- Place the bucket on the ground
 - Position to the right of the saddle (left or on side of the horse)

Arena Setup

- Check with staff regarding arena setup needs
- Assist with Pattern & Game Setup
 - Ground Poles
 - Vertical Poles
 - Cones
 - Games or Activity Materials

During Lessons

Preparing for Subsequent Lessons

- Identify tack needed for upcoming lessons
- If tack is currently in use:
 - Prepare as much as possible in advance
 - Know where it will be staged next
- If tack is not in use:

- Match saddles, pads, cinches/girths, headgear, and reins to assigned horses

Instructor Support

- Enter the arena only when directed, following proper procedures
- Act as a runner as needed (e.g., retrieving supplies, delivering messages)
- Assist with Mid-lesson pattern or game changes
- Assist with Waste Removal

Tack Room Support (If Time Allows)

- Dust or wipe down horizontal surfaces
- Sweep floors
- Assist with returning lesson materials not in use to proper storage totes

Between/After Lessons

- Communicate with **sidewalkers and horse leaders** regarding:
 - Which tack remains in the arena
 - Where it should be staged
- Assist with returning unnecessary tack to the tack room
- Stage tack and grooming buckets for the next lesson
- Assist with any additional cleanup as directed by staff

Role Boundaries

The Lesson Aide role does not include:

- Horse handling
- Leading
- Sidewalking
- Tacking or Untacking Horses
- Participant Support
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Maintaining clear role boundaries supports participant safety, horse welfare, and program risk management, in alignment with PATH Intl standards.

If you are done for the day, make sure to return your nametag and sign out!

Thank you for fulfilling this important role and for being part of the Bluff & Ridge Team!

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Site/Mailing Address: 23797 County Highway CM,
Tomah, WI 54660

Phone: 608-343-7740

Email Address: info@bluffandridge.org

Web Site: www.bluffandridge.org

Facebook: [@bluffandridge.org](https://www.facebook.com/bluffandridge.org)

Volunteer Coordinator: Renee Stroh: (608) 387-9248
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CONTACT INFORMATION

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