



## **Welcome!**

Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Horsemanship Program is a volunteer-based, 501c-3 non-profit organization which provides the opportunity for personal growth to children, adults and military veterans facing challenges through the horsemanship experience. Our mission is to provide an adaptive equine experience which develops physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities and enhances self-esteem.

Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Horsemanship Program (BTG) is a PATH International organization.

The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International is a non-profit association that promotes and supports equine-facilitated activities for individuals with disabilities. PATH International sets the safety guidelines and teaching standards for the industry. BTG Instructors are certified by PATH International.

### EQUINE LIABILITY LAW

According to Ohio House Bill 564 which became effective March 3, 1997: Equine (Horse) Activity Sponsor, Equine And/Or Property Owner Is Not Liable for Any Damages Suffered During An Equine Activity On These Premises. A Horse Is A Large Animal And May Be Unpredictable And Dangerous At Times. Extreme Caution Should Be Taken In Their Presence. Participants Assume The Inherent Risk Of Equine Activities.

### Non-Discrimination Policy

Boots to Grasses does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

### Overview

#### Therapeutic/Adaptive Horsemanship

Therapeutic/adaptive horsemanship contributes to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of individuals with disabilities. Throughout the world, thousands of individuals with disabilities experience the rewarding benefits of horsemanship.

## Major Concept & Skill Development

- Body Localization - Participant develops the ability to locate and identify parts of the horse's body. This activity aids in developing awareness and understanding of one's own body.
- Body Abstraction - Participant develops the ability to generalize and transfer body localization to himself/herself and others.
- Muscular Strength - Participant develops the ability to use his muscles to perform physical tasks with the horse.
- Health & Hygiene - Participant develops an understanding of the principles of health and hygiene. In caring for the horses, participants are led to understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- Balance & Rhythm - Participant develops the ability to maintain gross and fine motor balance and to move rhythmically with the horse. The participant is continuously involved in interpreting and reacting to the horse's movements.
- Body Spatial Organization - Participant develops the ability to move in space. The majority of the activities require the participant to direct and move the horse within a given area.
- Directionality & Laterality - Participant develops the ability to know and respond to right, left, up, down, forward, backward, and directional orientation. Activities focusing on directing the horse in a specific direction are used to aid the participant in developing sensitivity to directionality of his/her body and space.
- Time Orientation - Participant develops an awareness of time concepts, by involving him/her in determining feeding time, exercise time, and resting time for the horse; participants develop an awareness of the effect of weather and seasonal changes on horseback riding activities. They learn to anticipate riding activities based on weather conditions.
- Visual Acuity - Participant develops the ability to see objects in his visual field and to differentiate them meaningfully and accurately. Activities, which require the participant to direct and move his/her horse around objects or through objects in the riding, ring aid in developing this skill.
- Visual-Form Discrimination - Participant develops the ability to visually differentiate the forms and symbols in the horse's environment. Activities in and around the stable aid in developing this skill. A participant identifies equipment, stall, food and the name of "his/her" horse.
- Anticipatory Response - Participant develops the ability to anticipate the probable outcome of his behavior with the horse. If he/she yells or kicks the horse, he/she knows the horse will probably become frightened or run. This aids the participant in predicting the consequences of his/her own behavior and that of others in a given situation.
- Comprehension - Participant develops the ability to use judgment and reasoning in riding and working with the horse. This enhances his/her ability to use judgment and reasoning when interacting with other forces in his/her environment.

## **Rider Placement Process**

### Intake Assessment

All riders are assessed prior to placement in Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Horsemanship Program. An intake assessment serves to orient the rider and parents and/or caregivers to the facility, the program and the various services offered. This assessment is completed by BTG staff to determine a rider's functional ability, overall behavior, educational goals, communication needs, and appropriate placement into a program.

### Eligibility Criteria

Safety and maximizing the therapeutic benefits of equine activities are primary concerns of a successful program. Due to the capacities of volunteer sidewalkers and current program horses, insurance requirements and industry standards, BTG is limited to accepting riders who:

- 3 years old minimum
- negotiable maximum weight
- ambulate with min assist (ex. can climb 2 stairs)
- Are able to be effectively supported by sidewalkers - sufficient core strength to hold self and head upright with minimal support
- Do not exhibit conditions that are contraindicated
- Committed attendance
- Have current signed and dated paperwork
- Complete an intake assessment where it is determined that eligibility criteria are met
- Do not threaten the health or well-being of other participants, horses, volunteers or staff

### Acceptance

A potential rider is not a candidate for equine programming if conditions exist that contraindicate equestrian participation as determined by PATH International, or if a rider is unable to adhere to BTG policies as set forth in this Participant Handbook. Eligibility will be re-evaluated as necessary.

### Waiting List and Placement

Upon completion of all required paperwork and an intake assessment, prospective riders will be added to the primary Waiting List. It is the student's responsibility to notify BTG of any changes in contact information. Failure to do so may impact notification of lesson openings.

## **Rules**

### Attire

For student safety, appropriate footwear for horseback riding is important. Closed, sturdy shoes are required - ankle-high boots with a heel no greater than one inch are recommended. Shoes with bulky rubber soles do not move easily into and out of the stirrup and are therefore unsafe for horseback riding. Footwear for students with special physical needs will be considered on an individual basis. No Crocs or Sandals.

Appropriate trousers/pants for horseback riding include jeans, heavy cotton trousers, riding breeches or chaps over trousers, non-baggy sweatpants, or leggings. Shorts are not recommended.

### Safety Rules

Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Horsemanship Program strives to provide the safest possible environment for students, volunteers, staff and visitors. Horses, however docile, are capable of reacting in panic to unforeseeable stimuli. Working around, and riding horses is a risk activity. All riders must wear an ASTM/SEI approved riding helmet with the chin harness secured when riding.

The following rules must be followed at all times:

- No smoking or vaping anywhere on the premises.
- No pets allowed on the grounds.
- All minors (including siblings) must be supervised.
- Closed shoes are required in the barn area. No sandals or Crocs™ permitted.
- Riders, parents and visitors must be escorted by a Boots to Grasses volunteer or staff member when visiting the working areas of the barn. During lessons, parents, support individuals and visitors must stay in the observation area.
- No running, pushing, yelling or other actions that might frighten a horse.

### Code of Conduct

Thoughtful conduct and self-control factor into the safety and enjoyment of all participants. All persons at Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Riding Program will be expected to adhere to the following code of conduct:

- Respect all persons and horses—no abusive language or actions
- Respect all property
- Refrain from loud, abrupt noises, actions or behaviors which may startle horses

### **Payment**

Effective 1/1/25

Out-of-Pocket Private Lesson - \$40

Out-of-Pocket Group Lesson - \$25

Lesson Covered by Outside Funding Source (ex. BODD) - \$50

### **General Information**

#### Cancellation Policy

Notification of cancellation by client by phone or text 24 hours before scheduled lesson. If notification is not received 24 hours before the scheduled lesson, the full lesson fee will be charged.

#### Makeup Policy

As agreed upon by the student and instructor.

Weather Policy

In case of inclement weather, we will notify you if your session will be cancelled. Assume your session is proceeding if you do not receive a call or text from your instructor.

Confidentiality

Rider medical histories, diagnoses and related information are used by the Instructor to develop goal-oriented lesson plans. General information, as it relates to the success of the riding experience, is shared with volunteers on a need-to-know basis. Specific information relating to riders' diagnosis or personal situations is *absolutely confidential*.

I have read and understand Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Horsemanship Program's Participant Handbook and agree to abide by the same.

---

Signature

Date

---

Print Name

---

Phone number