



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

**Please read this Volunteer Manual and then  
sign and return the Receipt of Volunteer  
Manual form.**

**Faith Run Farms**

60575 Billadeau Road, Bend OR 97702

**Pole Creek Ranch**

15425 Mckenzie Hwy, Sisters, OR 97759

(541) 241-6597 (phone) [candacem@stirruppurpose.org](mailto:candacem@stirruppurpose.org) (email)

[www.stirruppurpose.org](http://www.stirruppurpose.org)

**Receipt of Volunteer Manual**

This manual contains important information volunteers need to help the organization provide a safe and meaningful equine experience for its participants and clients. Please read carefully, then sign and return just this page, acknowledging your receipt and understanding. Please contact us at 541-410-0164 with any questions.

Volunteer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

I have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules and policies in StirrUp Purpose's Volunteer Manual. I acknowledge that failure to comply with StirrUp Purpose's policies may result in dismissal from the program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Volunteer, Parent, Guardian, or Caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## THANK YOU!

We are grateful that you are interested in volunteering with StirrUp Purpose. We understand that your time is limited and we value every minute you are able to spend with us.

Volunteers are an incredibly important part of our organization, we literally *could not* serve our community of people with disabilities without your help! On the flip side, we will do everything possible to ensure that volunteering at StirrUp Purpose provides you with an enriching, fun and rewarding experience that you will treasure. Our culture is that of loving people, respecting horses and making a difference in the world around us.

After reading this manual, we hope that you will join us in a Volunteer Training and become a valued member of the StirrUp Purpose team!

Thank you, again, and please do not hesitate to reach out for assistance.

Penny Campbell, Executive Director  
541-410-0164  
[pennyc@stirruppurpose.org](mailto:pennyc@stirruppurpose.org)

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## ABOUT STIRRUP PURPOSE

StirrUp Purpose is an equine assisted services organization founded in 2023. Core operations take place on the 20-acre equine facility in SE Bend, while additional services are provided in Sisters, OR.






### **Mission Statement**

To provide purpose and healing through meaningful equine experiences.

### **Vision**

StirrUp Purpose envisions a world filled with communities powered by purpose, inspired by the equine-human relationship and grounded in values such as kindness, care and compassion which results in purpose and hope.

### **Values**

-  Relationships - Forming meaningful connections between people and horses through shared experiences and therapeutic services.
-  Excellence - Improving the lives of individuals in need by acting on the core values of excellence and integrity.
-  Empathy - "Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, hearing with the ears of another, and feeling with the heart of another." - Alfred Adler
-  Service - We have an undeniable passion for serving. This passion for service and helping others find purpose in their lives will be central and integral to every decision, motivation, and action undertaken by StirrUp Purpose.
-  Community - a more significant impact is achievable when there is partnership among individuals and organizations with a shared vision.

### **Locations**

Faith Run Farms: 60575 Billadeau Rd Bend, OR 97702

Pole Creek Ranch: 15425 Mckenzie Hwy, Sisters, OR 97759

### **Contacts**

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## **Our Services**

### Therapeutic Horsemanship

Interacting with horses, on the ground or on their backs, has a profoundly positive effect on the physical, emotional, and cognitive health of children and adults with diverse needs. Qualified instructors lead activities in riding, handling, leading and grooming in a safe and encouraging environment. Therapeutic Horsemanship is a non-therapy service that builds strength, coordination, balance, confidence, connection and purpose.

Classes are offered 6 days per week in private lessons groups of up to three.

### Veterans/First Responders

StirrUp Purpose is dedicated to supporting and improving the lives of its veteran and first responder communities. Equine services provide emotional, cognitive, social and physical benefits for veterans, first responders and their families. Multi-day retreats, equine-assisted activities and back country rides provide an opportunity for relationship building through recreation.

### Hippotherapy


Hippotherapy refers to the utilization of natural, rhythmic equine movement as a specific treatment tool by occupational therapy, physical therapy, or speech-language therapy professionals as part of their overall treatment plans. Clients can experience more normal movement patterns which can improve posture, balance, sensory integration, endurance and ultimately, gait. With the support of a therapist, sidewalker and professional horse handler, clients work astride the horse for approximately 30 minutes.


To provide hippotherapy, StirrUp Purpose partners with Treehouse Therapies (a nonprofit pediatric PT,OT, BH organization with multiple clinics throughout central Oregon, including one on the StirrUp Purpose site) and Trudi Trygg, PT providing adult physical therapy.

### Sport Riding

StirrUp Purpose believes in empowering individuals with an enthusiasm for learning the art of being with horses, fostering skill development and enriching lives through positive and healthy connections with these incredible animals. Beginner lessons in horsemanship, ground work and sport riding are offered on a limited basis.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

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

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

- 🚫 This policy applies to: participants, full and part time staff, independent contractors, temporary employees, volunteers and board members.
- 🚫 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.

### **Volunteer and/or Guest Dismissal Policy**

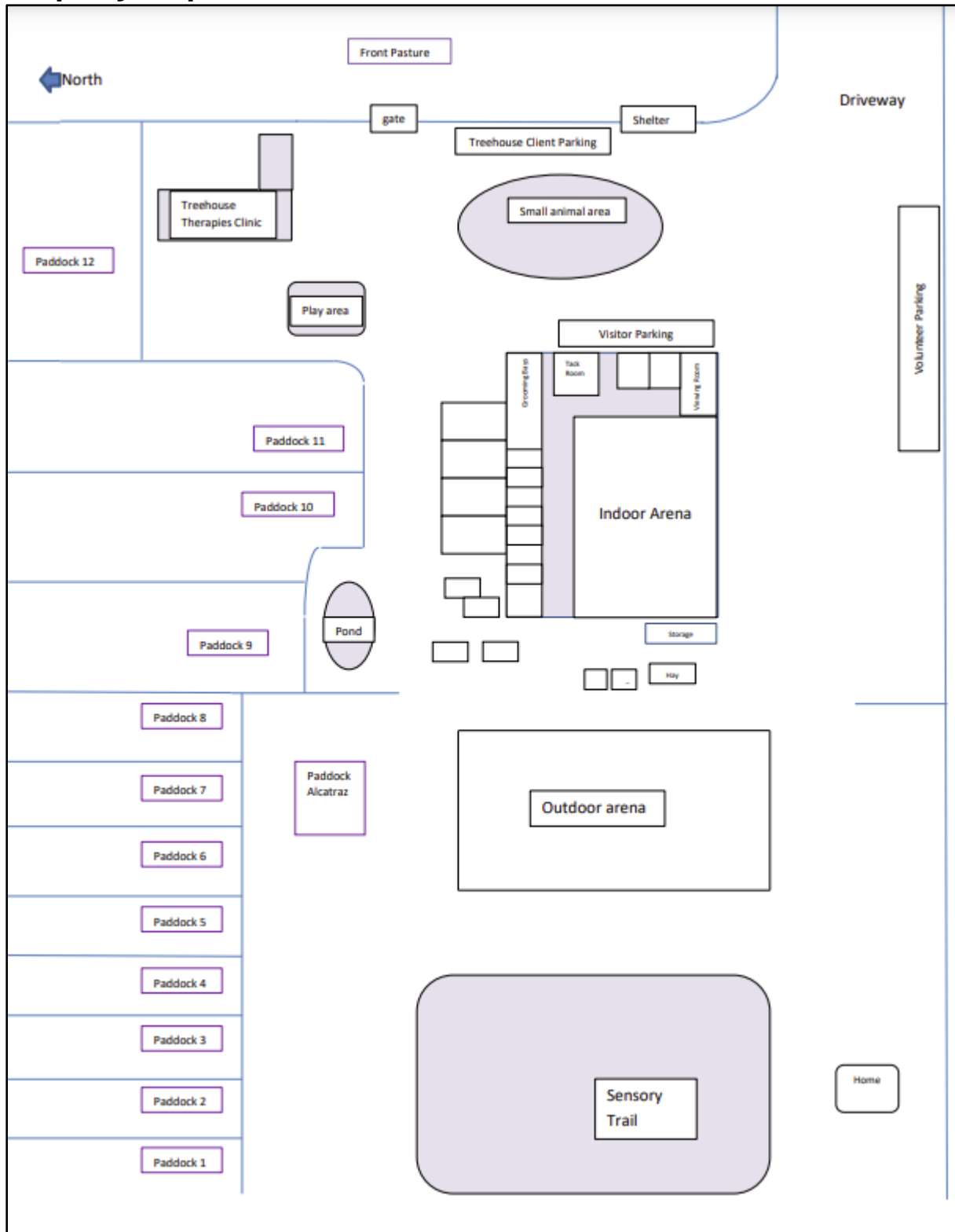
In the event of misconduct by a volunteer, the volunteer's direct supervisor will counsel the volunteer in order to provide the opportunity for corrective action. A written record of any actions or suggestions will be maintained.

### **General Farm and Safety Rules**

To keep everyone safe, there are a few things to remember when on the StirrUp Purpose grounds:

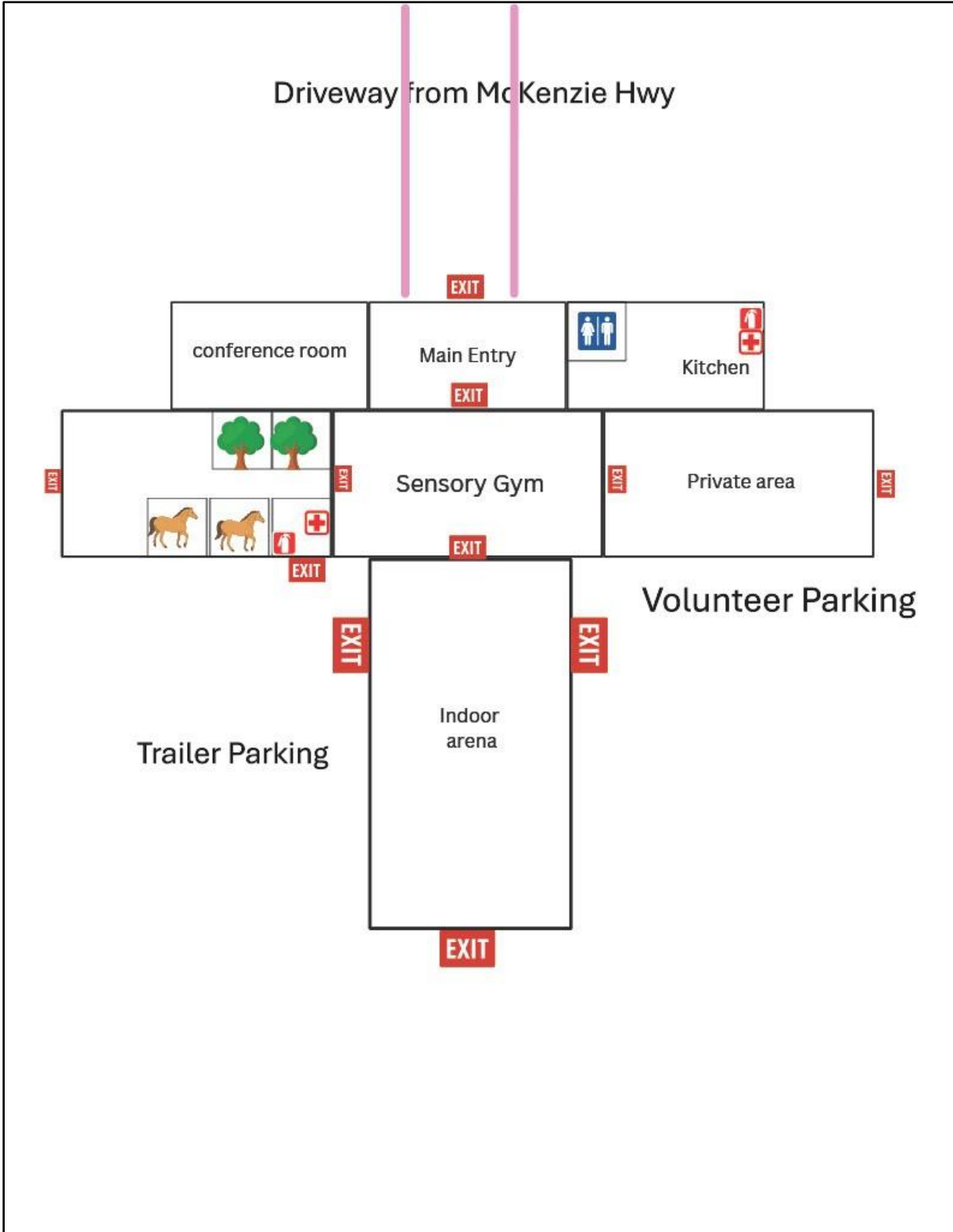
- 🚫 No smoking or vaping.
- 🚫 No alcohol, or illegal substances.
- 🚫 Respect "Staff Only" areas.
- 🚫 The speed limit is posted at 5 mph.
- 🚫 Only service dogs are allowed; dogs must be identified as such, on leash and supervised at all times.
- 🚫 Visiting minors must be supervised at all times.
- 🚫 Treat animals with respect.
- 🚫 Please do not feed treats or carry them in your pockets. You are welcome to offer healthy treats for a staff member to feed at meals.
- 🚫 Please, no pictures of clients or students without written consent.
- 🚫 Visitors should not approach, feed or touch horses without permission.

# Faith Run Farms Property Map












# Pole Creek Ranch Property Map



## VOLUNTEERING AT STIRRUP PURPOSE

### Job Opportunities

-  Horsemanship Sidewalker – greets, secures helmet and pays constant attention to horsemanship students in tasks of grooming, tacking, groundwork and riding. Gives physical and motivational support as indicated by the instructor.
-  Hippotherapy Sidewalker – support mounted physical and occupational therapy clients under the direction of therapists.
-  Horse Handler – maintain constant awareness and control of the horse before, during and after therapeutic horsemanship lessons to ensure a safe and enriching experience for the student.
-  Mounted Schooler – Beginner and Advanced mounted schoolers support the fitness and training goals of the StirrUp Purpose herd.
-  Unmounted Schooler – groundwork support for the herd.
-  Facility Volunteer – provide manure management, barn upkeep and cleanliness and grounds beautification.
-  Administrative Volunteer – office support in areas of mailings, data entry, filing, special events and more.

### Job Requirements




Minimum age, physical requirements and minimum skill requirements vary depending on the volunteer job. Please see individual job descriptions in Appendix G in this manual for more information. All volunteer candidates over the age of 18 must submit a background check prior to volunteering for a nominal fee.

### Weather and Smoke

When extreme weather or smoke impacts the health and safety of our students and horses, we will make the decision to cancel lessons. Cancellation notifications will be sent by text no less than 1 hour prior to lesson start time. The following policies are guidelines as measurement systems can differ.




#### Smoke

We use the Purple Air/Paku App and decisions will be based on our device or those in the area .



-  0-99 AQI: No Lesson Restrictions
-  100-149 AQI: Ground Lessons only
-  150+ AQI: No Lessons

## Temperature:


We use the Wunderground App and decisions will be based on the temperature shown on devices in the area.

-  20 degrees or below: No lessons
-  95 degrees or hotter: No outside lessons
-  100 degrees: No lessons

## Precipitation/Storms

-  Indoor arena classes will continue as scheduled if the instructor deems the environment safe. A ground class may be offered.
-  Outside classes will be cancelled when heavy precipitation, hail, thunder or lightning is present.

## School District Cancellations & Delays





-  When Bend La Pine school district issues a cancelation, a 2-hour delay or early release due to weather/hazardous roads, StirrUp Purpose will cancel classes falling into the associated time frames.

## **Calendar**

StirrUp Purpose operates 12 months out of the year. We will take all major holidays off as well as additional time to give the herd a break or offer special events. Our calendar can be viewed on our website. Please ask if you would like a paper copy.

## **Attire**








Recommended:

-  Wear sturdy, close toed shoes for walking/jogging on uneven ground. Muck and/or snow boots are recommended when navigating the property in inclement weather. No steel toed boots.
-  Wear layers in order to be comfortable in all types of weather. Hats are ok. Avoid low cut & shorty tops or revealing attire.
-  Avoid dangly jewelry that students might want to grab.
-  Please, no perfumes.

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

In order to volunteer in any capacity, an authorization to conduct a criminal background check must be signed. Criminal histories received by StirrUp Purpose will be kept confidential. A criminal history does not automatically disqualify a volunteer applicant. Attention to the nature and severity of the offense, the length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, and other factors as deemed appropriate under the circumstances may be taken into consideration.

## **Code of Conduct for Volunteers**

-  We will always abide by the Confidentiality Agreement, Code of Conduct, Farm and Safety Rules and the Policies and Procedures for Volunteers.
-  We will cooperate fully with staff and be open to their guidance.
-  We will represent StirrUp Purpose in a positive manner to the larger community.
-  We will communicate kindly and constructively with StirrUp Purpose staff and fellow volunteers.
-  We will not smoke, use drugs or alcohol, or possess a weapon while on StirrUp Purpose property.
-  We will not sexually harass clients, employees, or other volunteers.
-  We will not physically or verbally abuse any person or animal while on StirrUp Purpose property.

## LESSON & SESSION PROCEDURES

### **Horsemanship Sidewalker**

1. Arrive 15 minutes before class start time.
2. Connect with the team for lesson and student information. If there are two Sidewalkers, the instructor will define who will be reinforcing the Instructor's directions, who will be support and who would perform an emergency dismount if necessary and during the lesson.
3. Greet student, fit with helmet.
4. Assist student with grooming and tacking (bridle/sidepull is the Horse Handler's responsibility).
5. Assist Horse Handler if needed during the leading of horse in the arena. Stay with the student until Instructor arrives for tack check. Sidewalker may be asked to take the student to the block and wait.
6. Assist with mounting – typically Sidewalker is needed on the off-side, at the block. A second Sidewalker may be needed on the block with the instructor or waiting at letter K. Stand near the divider cones and support the student's mount as directed by the Instructor.
7. The instructor will direct Sidewalkers on the type of physical support that is needed. Thigh hold, Ankle hold and Spotter are the main supports. Sidewalkers should be positioned at the student's knee, not too far forward or behind. Free hand should not be in pockets. It is important to stay with the student at all times.
8. At the end of the lesson, Sidewalkers support the dismount and stay with the student while leading the horse to the grooming stall. If the Instructor allows, assist student in untacking and light brushing.
9. Remove helmet and give the student and enthusiastic "see you later"!
10. Assist the team in cleaning up the work area.

*How Horsemanship Sidewalkers can help the student get the most out of a lesson.*

- Help the rider focus his attention on the instructor. Stay on task.
- Try to avoid unnecessary talking with either the rider or other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone, and to riders who already have perceptual problems, it can be overwhelming.
- Allow enough time for the rider to process directions.
- Use prompts such as verbal, target, tap, hand-over-hand. Never grab the rein and steer the horse for the student.
- Get to know the riders and learn when they need help and when they're just not paying attention.
- When playing games, avoid being so competitive that the rider doesn't get to use his/her own skills because you do it for him/her in an all out effort to win.

- If your arm gets tired from a thigh hold, let your team know. The horse will be stopped and Sidewalkers can take turns changing sides while supporting the student.
- Avoid hanging on the horse, saddle or rider.
- Always ask the team before leaving the student to help with an activity.
- Put cell phones on silent and do not take calls during a lesson.

### **Horsemanship Horse Handler**

1. Arrive 40 minutes before lesson start time.
2. Retrieve horse from paddocks. Use this time to do ground work (leadership) activities with the horse. Provide a light lunge if necessary. Observe horse for soundness, injury and behavior. Report any concerns to Instructor.
3. Groom horse thoroughly.
4. Connect with the team for lesson and student information.
5. Greet student. Supervise horse during student grooming.
6. Bridle/Sidepull horse (student involvement here varies)
7. Assist student in leading the horse in the arena prior to mounting.
8. When the instructor indicates, walk the horse to the block or ramp, turn around and face the horse and lead, walking backwards, into the mounting area.
9. When the student is ready, they will ask their horse to “walk on” or provide some verbal or physical prompt. Slowly and smoothly walk the horse forward, staying close to the ramp or block, and out of the mounting area.
10. Lead the horse throughout the lesson, using verbal cues and light tugs. Stay in position next to the horse’s head while moving. Provide room for sidewalkers on the rail and while moving through obstacles.
11. Once the student has dismounted, assist student in leading the horse back to the grooming area if requested by the Instructor. Leaders never dismount students.
12. Supervise the horse during untacking, if requested by the Instructor.
13. Return horse to paddock.
14. Assist the team in cleaning up the work area.

### *How Horsemanship Horse Handlers can help the student get the most out of a lesson.*

- Be constantly alert and have awareness of the horse, the instructor, the student, and the environment, including other horses.
- Understand that the instructor will address the student, not the volunteer team. The team’s job is to support the student and encourage independence whenever possible.
- Give time for the student to respond to instructor’s directions and give a prompt before asking the horse yourself. It is important that the student receive the effect of their prompt, even if much of the horse’s response is initiated by the Horse Handler.

- Always stand in the neutral position when standing still to reinforce the halt for the horse.
- Avoid talking to the student during the lesson. Keep your focus on the horse.
- Be your horse's advocate. If you see signs of discomfort or concern, inform your team and the instructor.
- Put cell phones on silent and do not take calls during the lesson.

### **Hippotherapy (HPOT) Sidewalker**

1. Arrive 15 minutes before the session.
2. Assist HPOT Horse Handler in preparation of horse and tack.
3. Wait at the mounting area for the therapist.
4. Standing on the off-side at the mounting block/ramp, support client mount based on therapist instructions.
5. Walk beside horse during therapy session, supporting client, helping with activities and opening and closing gates.
6. Support client dismount based on therapist instructions.
7. Assist the HPOT Horse Handler in cleaning up after the session.

*How Hippotherapy SW can help the client get the most out of a session.*

- Remember that the therapist is in charge of the treatment.
- Never leave the client without support until clearing with the therapist.

### **Emergency Dismount Procedure**

Typically, an emergency dismount will be to the middle of the arena as opposed to toward the rail. However, if the horse is shying away from the wall, the rail side may be the safer choice.

**\*\***In a hippotherapy session, the therapist always performs the emergency dismount.

1. Instructor signals the need for an emergency dismount.
2. Horse handler immediately stops the horse and stays close to the horse's head to calm the horse.
3. If stirrups are being used, the off-side Sidewalker frees the student's foot.
4. The near-side Sidewalker grasps the rider firmly around the hips, pulls the rider toward them and moves their arms under the arms of the student allowing the student to slide off the horse without lifting them.
5. At the same time:
  - a. The off-side Sidewalker pushes the reins toward the horse's head, lifts the student's leg over the horse's mane and moves forward out of the way of the horse.
  - b. The Horse Handler turns horse's head toward the side to which the rider is dismounting so that the hindquarters automatically swing away from the rider.

6. The instructor/therapist will give directions to take rider to a safe, quiet area and check for any injuries or emotional instability.
7. Follow emergency response procedures if necessary.



## RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### **Emergency Response Procedures**

In the event of an emergency, everyone needs to be familiar with the proper procedures. All Instructors are CPR and First Aid certified.

1. Listen to the instructor/hippotherapy horse handler for directions! This is very important to prevent further chaos. Do not take matters into your own hands. Stay focused on your job.
2. Emergency information will be posted; Faith Run Farms - by the tack room door, Pole Creek Ranch - in equipment room. This will include a human First Aid kit and a list of phone numbers, facility address, and directions to provide to the emergency dispatch. A designated person will be sent to call 911, if needed.
3. In the event a student falls, do not panic. Stay calm and listen for instructions. Keep other students on their horses if in a group lesson. Horse Handlers will lead all horses to "parking places" at the end of the arena farthest away from the student who has fallen. Sidewalkers will keep students calm and distracted (or assist therapist in hippotherapy). In the event that emergency vehicles need to be called, all students will be dismounted and escorted back to their parents or caregivers.
  - a. If you are leading the horse that a student has fallen from, make sure the student is not entangled in the tack and the tack is not impeding the horse's movement. Once the student is cleared and unsafe equipment removed, immediately move the horse away from the fallen student and away from any other students and horses. Sidewalkers for this student will stay with the student until further instructions are given.
  - b. If a loose horse is involved, a staff member or Horse Handler will secure the horse (Do Not chase a loose horse). Students will stay mounted until the horse is secured.
4. In the event of severe storm or weather emergency, students will be dismounted if riding is deemed to be unsafe. One Sidewalker for each student will immediately remove students from the riding area. The other Sidewalker will un-tack the horse quickly and quietly. Horse Handlers will keep horses in-hand. DO NOT TIE horses in this case. As soon as all tack is removed and students are safe, horses will exit the arena and be put away. If Sidewalkers are not utilized in the lesson, students will dismount themselves leave the arena.
5. All major and minor emergencies will be reported to the Executive Director and an Incident Report form will be completed.

### **Horse Health Emergencies**

Contact the Equine Manager, Instructor or Executive Director if a horse is observed with an injury or illness.

## Natural Disaster Response

### Barn Fire:

- All students will dismount immediately and with assistance if available (Instructor or therapist directs the type of dismount).
- Horse Handlers or staff will calmly remove horses from the barn, untack if possible, and release them in outdoor arena or second arena, then proceed to the emergency meeting area at; Faith Run Farms - Treehouse Therapies, Pole Creek Ranch – at driveway entrance.
- Students and caregivers are escorted to the forementioned emergency meeting areas.

### Wild Fire:

- StirrUp Purpose staff will execute an evacuation procedure for the horses and other livestock. Students and families/caregivers will be asked to leave the area and get to safety.

### Sudden Storms:

- In case of sudden severe weather such as wind, hail or lightning storms, the Instructor/therapist will direct the dismounting of students (emergency or normal).
  - Horse Handlers will place horses in a stall or keep them on a lead in the arena, depending on the behavior of the horse.
- 
- Fire extinguishers are stored; Faith Run Farms - at each end of the main indoor arena, Pole Creek Ranch – in the equipment room. Flashlights are stored near the tack room door at Faith Run Farms.
  - Emergency numbers are posted with emergency information.

## APPENDIX A: TERMINOLOGY

It is important that the proper terminology is used when describing equestrian activities. Below are a few key terms to keep in mind to properly describe therapeutic horsemanship, hippotherapy, and equine assisted learning.

### **Therapeutic vs Therapy**

#### THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP

An area of non-therapy services focused on various riding disciplines, carriage driving and interactive vaulting for individuals or groups with diverse needs. Qualified equine professionals with specialty training or certification develop lesson plans that may include mounted and unmounted activities and fun, creative games to develop horsemanship skills and provide the healthful benefits of interacting with horses. Therapeutic Horsemanship sessions are conducted by a team that includes a certified instructor and the number of center volunteers deemed necessary by the instructor for the activities in the lesson plan.

#### THERAPY

Therapy is provided by licensed/certified medical professionals working within their scope of practice in occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology. The therapist determines how equine interactions, equine movement or aspects of the equine environment may enhance the client's individualized treatment plan with the goals of improving the client's sensorimotor and cognitive function for improved health and wellness. Best practice dictates that therapy professionals obtain specialized training focused on the safe inclusion of horses in treatment. When discussing therapy, indicate the therapy/therapist first followed by how the horse is included. This is considered 'therapy first' language. Examples of this are:

- Physical therapy including hippotherapy/equine movement
- Occupational therapy in the equine environment
- Speech-language pathologist who incorporates horses in treatment

Therapy professionals may work with a treatment team; trained staff/volunteers, to support session safety and care for the horses.

### **American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) Glossary of Terms**

#### HIPPOTHERAPY CLINICAL SPECIALIST® (HPCS)

An experienced, licensed therapist (OT, PT, SLP) who demonstrates an advanced level of knowledge and reasoning in using equine movement in treatment.

Certification requires experiential pre-requisites and successful completion of the

national board written examination and is overseen by the American Hippotherapy Certification Board (AHCB). Recertification is required every five years.

#### HIPPOTHERAPY (HPOT)

The term hippotherapy refers to how occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech-language pathology professionals use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement as a therapy tool to engage sensory, neuromotor and cognitive systems to promote functional outcomes. Best practice dictates that occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech-language pathology professionals integrate hippotherapy into the patient's plan of care, along with other therapy tools and/or strategies. Hippotherapy exists within a medical model of treatment, in which the equine movement is a treatment tool applied by the therapist.

#### HORSE HANDLER

Indicates the individual preparing and handling the horse prior to, during and following a treatment session. They respond to directions by the therapist to alter the movement of the hippotherapy horse to cause a response in the patient during a therapy session... They are responsible for monitoring the safety and well-being of the horse at all times.

#### THERAPY AIDE/SIDEWALKER

A therapy aide/sidewalker follows the direction of the therapist in maintaining the safety of the individual during a treatment session when a client is positioned on the horse and may assist the therapist with other therapeutic activities. This non-licensed individual may be paid staff or a volunteer. They are trained in and adhere to regulations regarding confidentiality and safety.

#### HIPPOTHERAPY HORSE

A horse that has been selected, conditioned, and trained to be included in the delivery of hippotherapy. Characteristics include but are not limited to: excellent quality of movement that is symmetrical, rhythmic, supple, straight, adjustable, and with self-carriage. A horse working in hippotherapy must be sound and well-conditioned to the task which usually will consist of moving in a frame with handling from the ground (leading or long lining), with an elevated top line, ability to vary impulsion, halt squarely and stand calmly during transitions on and off and during treatment. The hippotherapy horse is able to discern between the communication from the handler and the patient on their back, and is tolerant of a variety of people around, sounds, sights and experiences without significant reaction. *The term 'hippotherapy horse/therapy horse' is only applicable to horses included within treatment sessions.* Note: For horses in non-healthcare settings, the terms lesson horse, school horse, adaptive riding horse, or program horse are appropriate.

## **Equine-Assisted Learning**

This area is a non-therapy service comprised of equine-assisted learning (EAL) in education, in organizations and in personal development. Specially trained or certified professionals leverage experiential learning activities involving interactive mounted and/or unmounted activities with horses and the equine environment to benefit participants.

- Equine-assisted Learning in Education: Professionals with a knowledge of learning theory and teaching methodology focus on life skills, including leadership, character-building and academic skills. They may develop contracts with schools and integrate specific educational strategies, academic standards and character education within their curricula and provision of services.
- Equine-assisted Learning in Organizations: Professionals assist members of corporations, organizations and other work groups in building effective teams and leaders that enhance work dynamics and performance. They must have knowledge of organizational theory, team building, strategic planning or leadership development and may integrate a variety of strategies.
- Equine-assisted Learning in Personal Development: Professionals assist individuals and groups in handling life challenges and opportunities by developing skills in effective problem-solving, decision-making and communication. Service providers must have extensive training or certifications in facilitation, coaching or teaching, and knowledge of the distinct differences between personal development and psychotherapy.

**To ensure specificity and accuracy, the following outdated and/or incorrect terms should be avoided:**

- Equine Therapy
- Horseback Riding Therapy
- Equine-assisted Therapy, Equi-therapy
- Equestrian Therapy
- Horse Therapy
- EquiTherapy
- Hippotherapist
- Hippotherapy Program/ Clinic
- Equine Assisted Therapies Equine-assisted activities

## APPENDIX B: WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities have the same needs we all do: first and foremost among them is to be treated with dignity and respect, kindness and caring.

### **Tips for working with people with disabilities**

1. Use the word disability as opposed to a euphemism such as “special needs” or “differently abled”.
2. Typically, use person first terminology such as “person who uses a wheelchair” or “Person who has cerebral palsy”. Some people prefer identity first, such as “autistic person” or “disabled individual”. Volunteers should address students by their names and not their disability when working with them directly.
3. Always ask before giving assistance. Don’t assume they are unable to perform a task or make a decision. Always allow opportunities for students to try a task instead of doing it for them.
4. Ask before touching students. Example; “May I take your hand and support you?”
5. Avoid showing pity or being patronizing.
6. Speak to a person directly (as opposed to their aides or parents) and focus on their abilities.
7. When working with people in wheelchairs, put yourself at eye level when possible and do not touch their chair/device without asking
8. When communicating with someone with a cognitive disability, speak clearly and simply, giving them time to process and answer.
9. Do not speak to adults with disabilities as children.
10. Do not grab students by their clothing or “steer” them to a task.
11. Introduce yourself and offer a handshake. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. The person will often tell you if they are not able to shake hands.
12. Do not touch a person on their head or touch their wheelchair, scooter, cane, or any assistive device.
13. Do not pet service animals without checking with the owner first.
14. It is acceptable to ask questions if you are unsure how to proceed or what to do next.
15. Some disabilities are hidden and not at all apparent or obvious. Please respect every person’s requests and needs.
16. Enjoy yourself. Laugh and have fun!

## APPENDIX C: THE EQUINE

## Equine Behavior

### Survival Traits:

1. The horse is a prey animal and depends on flight as its primary means of survival. Its ability to outrun predators is critical. As humans, we need to understand their natural flightiness in order to fully understand horses.
2. Horses are one of the most perceptive of all domestic animals. Since they are a prey species, they must be able to detect predators. A stimulus unnoticed by humans is often cause for alarm for horses.
3. The horse has a very fast response time. A prey animal must react instantly to a perceived predator to be able to survive.
4. Horses can be desensitized from frightening stimuli. They need to learn quickly what is harmful (e.g., lion, cougar, etc.) and what is harmless (e.g., tumbleweeds, birds, a discolored rock, etc.), so they do not spend their whole lives running away.
5. Horses forgive, but do not forget. They especially remember bad situations! This is why it is critical to make the horse's first training experience a positive one.
6. Horses categorize most experiences in one of two ways: a) something not to fear, so ignore or explore it, and b) something to fear, so flee. Therefore, when presenting anything new, the horse needs to be shown that 'a' is the case.
7. The horse is a herd animal where a leadership hierarchy is always established. If done correctly, human leadership can easily be established.
8. Horses exert leadership by controlling the movement of their peers. Horses accept leadership when: a) we or another animal cause them to move when they prefer not to, and b) we or another animal inhibit movement when they want to flee. Examples include using a round pen, lunge line, or hobbles; or the more dominant horse in the field chasing the less dominant one away.
9. The body language of a horse is unique to the equine species. As a highly social animal, the horse communicates its emotions and intents to its herd mates through both vocalization and body language. A person handling horses needs to be able to read the horse's body language to be an effective trainer.

### The horse's brain:

The prefrontal cortex is responsible for what we call the executive function—planning, organizing, deciding, evaluating, and strategizing. It's also responsible for judging, worrying, and manipulating. Humans rely strongly on the prefrontal cortex. Horses do not. Horses have no prefrontal cortex. They do not even have a frontal lobe. Horses do not need a prefrontal cortex because their memories serve them better than ours serve us. The last thing a prey animal needs to survive is a

prefrontal cortex. All that time spent pondering, deciding, and planning is time taken away from fleeing danger. A horse who considers the meaning of a movement in the grasses is a horse who becomes a predator's dinner.

The lack of the prefrontal cortex in horses is a gift to them and us. It keeps them alive and helps to sharpen their memories. But it allows us to work with animals who live in the moment, who do not—indeed, cannot—judge, criticize, worry, or manipulate. What a refreshing experience!

## **Horses are good at letting us know exactly how they are feeling!**

### Body Language - Ears:

1. Neutral: is when the ears are held loosely upward, openings facing forward or outward.
2. Pricked: ears held stiff with openings pointed directly forward means the horse is alert.
3. Lowered: the ears flop out laterally with openings facing down, usually meaning the horse is relaxed and comfortable.
4. Ears angled backward (with openings directed back towards a rider): usually mean attentiveness to the rider or listening to commands.
5. Ears pinned flat against the neck: that means watch out! The horse is unhappy.

### Body Language-Tail

1. High: they are alert or excited
2. Hanging straight down or swinging naturally with movement: they are relaxed and comfortable.
3. Held high over its back: (as seen in most foals) they are playful or are very alarmed
4. Swishing: they are irritated (maybe flies).

### Body Language-Legs

1. Pawing: they are frustrated
2. One front-leg lifted: can be a mild threat (or a normal stance sometimes when eating)
3. A back-leg lifted: is often a more defensive threat
4. Stamping: indicates a mild threat or protest (or they may be getting rid of insects or flies biting their legs).

### Body Language-Face

1. Flared nostrils: usually means they are excited or alert.
2. Wrinkled nostrils or eyebrows can mean pain or discomfort.

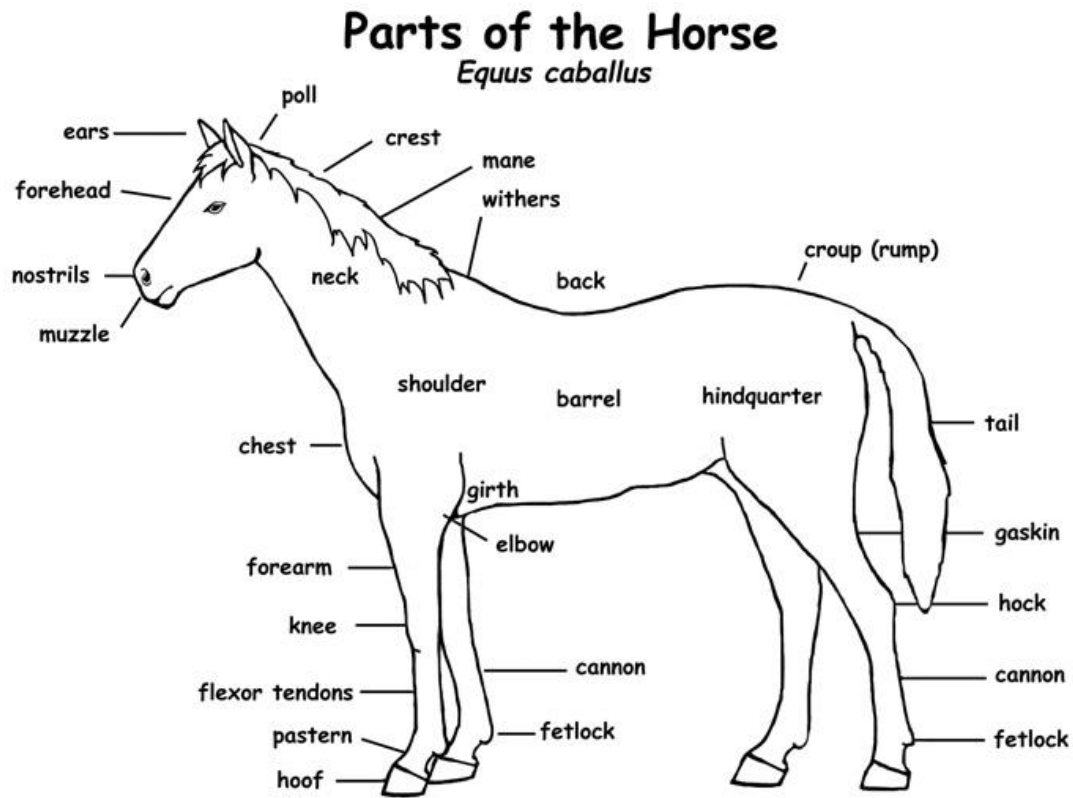


3. Showing white around the eyes: can mean they are angry or scared, although some breeds always show white.
4. The Flehmen response: This is caused by an intense or unusual smell, usually in stallions when they sense a mare in heat. They stick their nose in the air and curl the upper lip over their nose.

## APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY OF TERMS – LESSONS & HORSES

-  **Aids** - Signals the rider gives to the horse to control speed and directions. a. Natural aids: legs; seat; weight; hands; voice b. Artificial aids: whip; rein; martingale.
-  **Canter** - a three-beat gait of a horse between a [trot](#) and a [gallop](#).
-  **Reverse on the Half Circle** -To begin a circle away from the rail and reverse direction halfway through the circle.
-  **Gait** - The way of going paces; walk, trot, pace, lope, canter, gallop.
-  **Jog** - A slow trot in western riding.
-  **Horse length** - The suggested distance between horses (eight feet).
-  **Inside leg** - The leg on the inside of the arena (or) the bend of the horse.
-  **Leg yield** - a lateral movement in which a horse travels both forward and sideways at the same time, mainly staying straight in the body.
-  **Lengthening of stride** - Increasing the length of the stride within a set frame.
-  **Lope** - easy, natural gait of a horse similar to a canter.
-  **Near side** - The left side of the horse.
-  **Off side** - The right side of the horse
-  **Outside leg** - The rider's leg on the outside of the arena or turn (bend, circle).
-  **Posting or Rising trot** - the rising and descending of the rider with the rhythm of the trot.
-  **Serpentine** - Series of circles and straight lines crossing from one side of the arena to the other; a schooling exercise.
-  **Sidepass** - the horse should move sideways with his head and body straight—not moving forward or backward—and with the horse's legs crossing over each other.
-  **Sitting trot** - The rider sits deep in the saddle and maintains contact with the saddle while trotting.
-  **Tack** - The saddle, bridle, etc. used in riding or working a horse.
-  **Track left** - Riding with the left rein to the inside of the arena (left rein).
-  **Track right** - Riding with the right rein to the inside of the arena (right rein).
-  **Transition** - To change from one gait to another, changing the stride within the gait (i.e. lengthen, shorten; downward trot...walk).
-  **Trot** - a two-beat diagonal horse gait where the diagonal pairs of legs move forward at the same time with a moment of suspension between each beat.
-  **Turn on the forehand** - The front section of the horse; forelegs, shoulder, neck and head stay in place as the haunch moves in a circle around it.
-  **Turn on the haunch** - the back end of the horse; hip and back legs stay in place while the forehand moves in a circle around it.
-  **Yield** – when pressure is applied (verbal, body language, touch), the horse moves away from, or yields to the pressure. Release of the pressure is the reward.

## APPENDIX E: HORSE PARTS

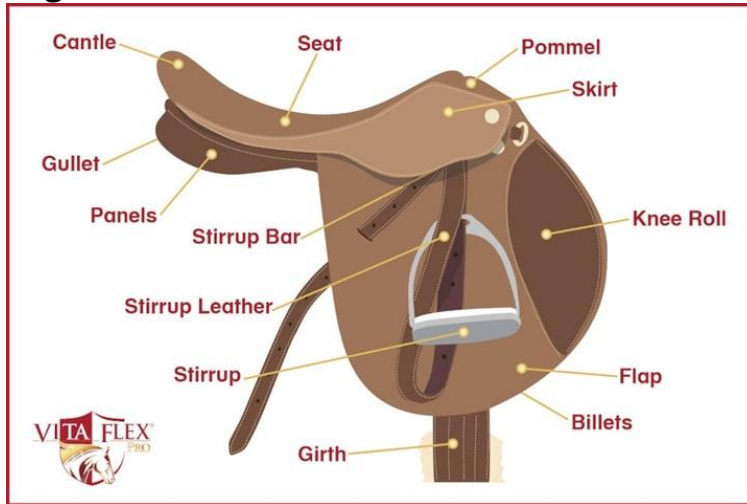


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## APPENDIX F: TACK

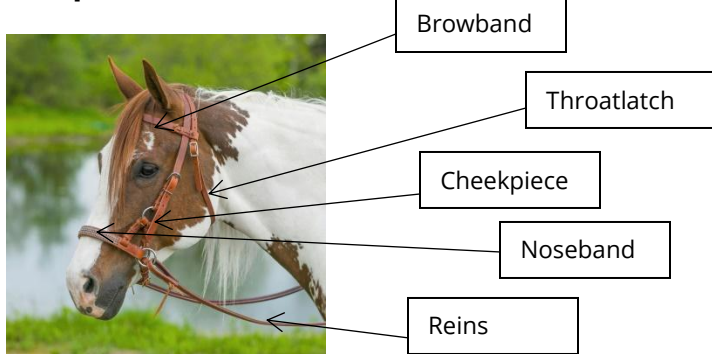
### English Saddle



### Western Saddle



### Sidepull



## APPENDIX G: GROOMING TOOLS



### **Rubber Curry Comb**

Made of rubber with textured nubs. Use in a circular motion to loosen dirt. Best used on large, well-muscled parts of the horse's body. Do not use on face or lower legs.



### **Dandy Brush (Bristle Brush)**

Stiff bristled brush; the motion for this brush is like the same motion you use when sweeping a floor. You "flick" the brush away and up from the coat, in the direction of the coat hair.



### **Metal Curry**

Useful for removing caked mud or shedding hair. Use in the direction of the hair. Used under supervision as they have sharp teeth.



### **Hoof Pick**

Cleans frog & pad; both front & rear hooves.



### **Mane and Tail Comb**

Gently used to remove dirt and debris from mane and tail. Supervised use only. Start from bottom and work up.

## APPENDIX H: VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

### **Job Title: Horsemanship Sidewalker**

**Supervisor: Volunteer Coordinator**

### **Job Summary**

The Horsemanship Sidewalker provides physical, verbal and emotional support to a wide range of children and adults with disabilities in a mounted and unmounted Therapeutic Horsemanship environment.

### **Major Duties and Responsibilities**

- Greet the student and assist with helmet fitting.
- Provide appropriate grooming and tacking assistance to students.
- Assist with student mounts and dismounts as directed by instructor.
- Observe and act to ensure student safety.
- Walk/jog beside student to provide the appropriate level of physical assistance and verbal prompts.
- Support instructor goals with appropriate student guidance through activities.
- Communicate effectively with team before, during and after lessons.

### **Minor Duties and Responsibilities**

- Help with clean up after lessons.
- Ensure tack and equipment is stored properly.

### **Key Competencies**

- Minimum age 14 years old.
- Effective communicator with individuals with a wide range of physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities.
- Positive and enthusiastic.
- Caring and supportive.

### **Education and Experience**

- Complete StirrUp Purpose Volunteer Sidewalker Training.
- Willing to attend continuing education offered throughout the year.

### **Physical Requirements**

- Able to physically react with agility and swiftness to maximize safety of student.
- Able to lift 25 lb saddles and clean up manure and debris.
- Able to walk on uneven surfaces (arena and trail) with occasional jogging.
- Able to bend and pick out hooves.
- Able to position arm above shoulder height for length of lesson.
- Able to perform an emergency dismount.

*Other duties may be requested.*

**Job Title: Horsemanship Horse Handler**  
**Supervisor: Volunteer Coordinator**

**Job Summary**

The Horsemanship Horse Handler is responsible for the control, safety and effectiveness of the horse before, during and following a Horsemanship lesson.

**Major Duties and Responsibilities**

- Prepares horse for Therapeutic Horsemanship lessons: warm up, grooming and observation.
- Supervises horse during student grooming.
- Leads horse during lessons. Responds appropriately to Instructor directions and student response.
- Closely monitor the horse's behavior during lessons.
- Return horse to paddocks at the end of the lesson.

**Minor Duties and Responsibilities**

- Help with clean up after lessons.
- Inspect all tack and fittings before and after sessions.

**Key Competencies**

- Must possess significant prior horsemanship skills and have experience handling and lunging horses.
- Minimum age 16 years old.
- Knowledge of horse health and wellness issues.
- Able to read horse body language, know how to react and be aware of their own body language and its effect on the horse.
- Positive and enthusiastic. Caring and supportive.
- Maintain a clean and orderly barn/arena at all times.
- Follow the horse handling techniques of StirrUp Purpose for consistency and safety.

**Education and Experience**

- Complete StirrUp Purpose Volunteer Sidewalker Training
- Horse Handler Training
- Complete Horse Handler Horse Knowledge Checklist

**Physical Requirements**

- Able to walk/jog on uneven surfaces while leading a horse.
- Possesses the agility and dexterity to react calmly to horse behavior changes.

*Other duties may be requested.*

## **Job Title: Hippotherapy (HPOT) Sidewalker**

**Supervisor: Volunteer Coordinator**

### **Job Summary**

The HPOT Sidewalker works in a hippotherapy sessions and follows the direction of the therapist in maintaining the safety of the individual during a treatment session when a client is positioned on the horse. They may assist the therapist with other therapeutic activities and are trained in and adhere to regulations regarding confidentiality and safety.

### **Major Duties and Responsibilities**

- Assist with client mounts and dismounts as directed by the therapist.
- Observe and act to ensure client safety and treatment effectiveness.
- Walk/jog beside client to provide the level of physical assistance as instructed by the therapist.
- Communicate effectively with team before, during and after lessons.

### **Minor Duties and Responsibilities**

- Clean up work area after lessons.
- Ensure tack and equipment are stored properly.

### **Key Competencies**

- Minimum age 14 years old.
- Effective communicator with individuals with a wide range of physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities.
- Positive and enthusiastic.
- Caring and supportive.

### **Education and Experience**

Complete StirrUp Purpose Volunteer Sidewalker Training.

### **Physical Requirements**

- Able to physically react with agility and swiftness to maximize safety of student.
- Able to lift 25 lb saddles and clean up manure and debris.
- Able to walk on uneven surfaces (arena and trail) with occasional jogging.
- Able to bend and pick out hooves.
- Able to position arm above shoulder height for length of lesson.

*Other duties may be requested.*



**Resources list:**

John Hopkins University: <https://accessibility.jhu.edu/tips-for-working-with-people-with-disabilities/>

Special Olympics: <https://www.specialolympics.org/about/intellectual-disabilities/how-to-speak/>

Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/horse-brain-human-brain/202304/prefrontal-cortex-in-horses-and-humans>

Rutgers: [https://esc.rutgers.edu/fact\\_sheet/the-basics-of-equine-behavior/](https://esc.rutgers.edu/fact_sheet/the-basics-of-equine-behavior/)

H&R Block: <https://www.hrblock.com/tax-center/filing/adjustments-and-deductions/volunteer-work-tax-deductions/>

PATH, Int'l: <https://pathintl.org/>

CHA: <https://cha.horse/>