

Volunteer Handbook



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Educational Program
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Welcome

Welcome to the Horse Heritage Volunteer Program! Working together with other volunteers, YOU make it possible to provide adapted horseback riding for disabled children and adults in Stevens County and surrounding areas. A TEAM approach is emphasized to provide an active, enjoyable, challenging experience.

Horse Heritage Educational Program is fully insured and accredited by PATH Intl (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International). It is a 501©3 non-profit organization funded through grants and contributions from individuals and the community.

This information booklet, along with training sessions, should answer many questions. However, please feel free to speak to our volunteer coordinator, the program director, or the instructor should you have other questions or concerns regarding your volunteer role.

Our Mission

To enrich the lives of youth and families through the use of horses, community, and nature while teaching confidence, responsibility, and respect.

Adapted Riding Program Benefits

The horses, students, instructors, and volunteers make up a unique team providing an opportunity for physical, emotional, social, recreational, and educational gains. We at Horse Heritage focus on the ability not disability of our students.

General Benefits

Physically

- It is the horse's movement, which has a dynamic effect on the rider's body. The horse stimulates the rider's pelvis and trunk in a manner that closely resembles the normal gait of a human. This movement can be used to produce specific physical changes in the rider including normalization of muscle tone, improvement in posture, balance, coordination, and increased endurance.

Emotionally

- The success of overcoming fear and anxiety and the ability to achieve riding and other related skills help individuals realize self-worth and increase self-esteem. For those involved with various activities of an adapted riding program, the companion animal bonding and development of new skills are critical components to the success of the experience offered. Relationships develop between participants, volunteers, horses and staff and are an integral part of a positive, emotional experience provided by adapted riding program.

Cognitively

- The horse provides a strong motivator for students. Riding lessons incorporate activities and games on horseback designed to help achieve specific goals such as following multi-step directions, staying on task, color and number recognition, and reinforcing existing skills as well as learning new ones.

Socially

- Adapted riding programs and their associated activities provide an excellent opportunity for students to interact with peers, program volunteers and staff in a positive and enjoyable environment.

Mentally

- The horse and the riding environment offer a wide variety of input to participants. Movement exploration on the horse combined with so many other sights and sounds one encounters in the riding program contribute to the overall sensory experience.

Benefits for Various Disabilities

This section has been included to assist volunteers with a basic knowledge of common disabilities, the challenges they pose for students, and what benefits adapted riding can provide. The list is not all-inclusive but is intended to aid the volunteers in providing the best experience they can for our clients. Student's needs vary greatly. Remember that each client is a unique individual and that we need to focus on meeting those individual needs.

Disability	Challenges to Student	Benefits of Adaptive Riding
Autism	Inattentive, limited eye contact, delayed language, unusual fears	Postural and verbal stimulation
Cerebral Palsy	Impaired balance, fatigue, uncoordinated movement	Promotes symmetry, balance, posture, increases muscle strength
Down Syndrome	Characteristics vary, but may include mild to severe learning disability, poor muscle tone	Improvement of expressive and receptive gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, muscle tone and coordination
Emotional Disabilities	Trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relationships, short attention span	Increases self-confidence and self-awareness and provides appropriate social outlet
Hearing Impairment	Challenged communication, may have attention deficits	Promotes self-confidence, attentiveness, balance, posture and coordination
Learning Disabilities	Problems sequencing and problem solving	Stimulates attention span, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination
Mental Retardation	Developmentally delayed in all areas, short attention span	Stimulates group activity skills, balance, posture, coordination, eye-hand coordination
Muscular Dystrophy	Muscular weakness, fatigues easily	Stimulates postural and trunk alignment, may slow progressive loss of strength
Multiple Sclerosis	Fatigue, weakness, visual impairment, loss of coordination	Promotes balance, symmetry, strengthens muscles, socialization
Spinal Cord Injury	Trauma to spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function	Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, is an option for recreation
Traumatic Brain Injury	Impaired balance, motor skills, speech, paralysis, weakness	Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills
Visual Impairment	Insecure posture, lack of visual memory, fearfulness	Stimulates spatial awareness, posture and coordination, provides structured risk taking and freedom of movement

About Us

Horse Heritage Educational Program is based in rural Valley, WA, with satellite locations throughout the northwest. It was founded in early 2010 by Elissa & Ryan Wellhausen and Matt & Melissa Scott. Through personal experience, they have each seen how involvement with horses has proven to be a catalyst to help students learn about themselves and others and to foster relationships and bonding while gaining unlimited physical benefits.

HHEP's Adapted Riding Program serves individuals over the age of 4 years old with various disabilities that may benefit from our program. As a PATH Intl Center, we fully ascribe to the Precautions and Contraindications as recommended by the PATH Intl Medical Committee as well as professional standards. Therefore, our professional staff provides initial and ongoing evaluations for all prospective and active students.

When selecting and schooling horses used in our program, many factors are considered. Horses must meet basic criteria and are placed into training to introduce them to their role in the program and activities they will be exposed to. Additionally, we track and record each horse's work and training schedule in compliance with PATH Intl Standards and Guidelines.

Introduction to our Programs

Horse Heritage offers Equine-assisted services (EAS), which includes any activity in which the participants and equines are involved. These include grooming and stable management activities, mounted and ground activities, and horsemanship activities.

Horsemanship



- Adapted riding utilizes the equine to achieve psychological and educational goals for people with physical, mental and psychological impairments as well as provide the individual with skills in the sport of riding. The emphasis is to incorporate cognitive, behavioral, psychological and physical goals into the program plan while teaching adapted riding, driving, or vaulting. The horse is a strong motivator for accomplishing these goals. People with physical, mental and psychological impairments may use equine activities, adapted as needed, as a recreation and leisure experience. The emphasis is on an enjoyable and relaxing experience that provides additional adapted benefits in the area of socialization, posture, mobility, and an overall improved quality of life. Individuals may participate in horse-related activities to their maximum ability in an atmosphere of support, structure and socialization for the primary purpose of the intrinsic enjoyment of the activity.

Learning



- Learning experiences are carefully created equine-assisted activities that promote human development. This is an experiential approach to personal growth and learning. Experiential learning refers to a style of learning often described as “learning by doing” that occurs when a person is interacting with their environment. Participants commonly experience improvements in mental and physical health while learning about horses and themselves, while building skills that are carried into their lives. We also add emotional and cognitive aspects of helping the whole person in a multi-dimensional way.

Therapy



- Therapy is a treatment style that incorporates equine activities with rehabilitative goals related to the patient’s needs. A physical, occupational or speech therapy treatment strategy that utilizes the movement of the horse to address impairments, functional limitations and disabilities in patients with neuromotor and sensory dysfunction, hippotherapy is effective in improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Horse Heritage DOES NOT have a therapy division within their program.

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl) is a non-profit organization, headquartered in Denver, Colorado. PATH Intl exists to promote equine activities for individuals with disabilities and sets the policies and procedure for running safe and effective programs all over the world.



Formed in 1969, PATH Intl members are individuals and centers that participate in Equine Assisted Activity programs (EAA). Individual members are volunteers, riding instructors, riders with disabilities and their families, physicians, therapists, teachers, researchers and involved community members. The PATH Intl centers are the heart of the horse community for those with disabilities as they bring together all the necessary people, horses, equipment, and program knowledge. PATH Intl centers range in size from one-person programs to larger operations with several instructors serving well over 200 riders.

PATH Intl centers, such as Horse Heritage, are expected to complete an accreditation process that insures we run a safe and medically appropriate program following PATH Intl standards. We are currently a recognized center and are working towards accreditation.

PATH Intl also provides criteria for competency and process to recognize levels of capability for riding instructors. Our instructor at Horse Heritage is a certified riding instructor and has been through a rigorous training and testing process to ensure the safety and well-being of our riders.

For more information about PATH Intl, or to become a PATH Intl member, please visit their website at www.PATHIntl.org.

Volunteering for Horse Heritage Educational Program

We, at Horse Heritage Education Program (HHEP), welcome you to the growing family of individuals whose lives are enriched by their efforts to help others. Your service of volunteerism is a valuable asset and you will always be appreciated. Fees charged to students cover less than 50% of program expenses so class volunteers are vital to our adapted riding program. Most of our students would not be able to participate without the physical and emotional support of their volunteers. Your compassion and gift of time adds an important dimension to their lives. Both the volunteer and the student benefit from establishing a lasting relationship with each other.

The volunteer experience offered through HHEP is as rewarding as it is unique. It is an opportunity to channel individual talents and skills into many volunteer activities. In doing so, you contribute to the process of giving children and adults with special needs one of life's most precious gifts – a feeling of self-worth, accomplishment and SELF-ESTEEM! ***The only requirement of potential HHEP volunteers is an interest in supporting the program.*** By volunteering, you can learn about people with disabilities, horses, and make new friends. You'll gain tremendous satisfaction from watching the participants enjoy contact with horses physically, mentally, and emotionally. You will help us change lives one ride at a time, while having fun!

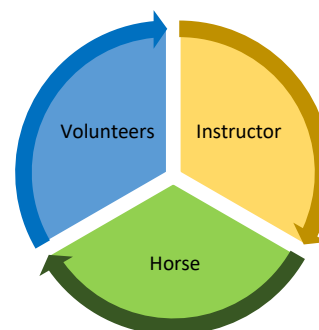
Volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds who have energy, skills and compassion to share. HHEP insurance requires volunteers to be a minimum of fourteen (14) years old to work with horses or in a class setting. Volunteers working directly with students and horses must be able to walk a minimum of sixty (60) minutes and jog for brief intervals. It is not necessary to have previous experience with horses or individuals with special needs.

Benefits of Volunteering



Team Approach

At HHEP we practice a team approach. No matter what job you choose to volunteer for at Horse Heritage, you are an integral part of our team. A PATH Intl certified professional will always be present to oversee the safety of equestrian interactions no matter what volunteer job you choose. Whatever your choice, you are part of the HHEP team and are greatly valued!



Volunteer Opportunities & Jobs

At HHEP there is a job for everyone! Not all our volunteers are experienced equestrians. Certain tasks require horse experience, but that is not necessary in many others volunteer roles. Many of our volunteers begin with little or no experience, but through HHEP's hand-on educational opportunities, have gone on to become fine horse handlers.

Class volunteers are invaluable to the HHEP Adapted Riding Program, as each student needs up to three volunteers.

Horse Handler	Side Walkers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands horse body language and horse psychology • Maintains control of the horse during adapted riding sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greets students as they arrive • Gets helmets fitted properly on students prior to beginning of lessons • Reinforces instruction throughout the adapted riding session, yet promotes independence of the rider • Walks alongside the rider providing balance and support with specialized holds • Helps maintain the safety of the rider during adapted riding sessions • Assists in mounting • Understands the special needs of each student • Understands safety and emergency procedures

Volunteers are priceless. In order for HHEP to function properly the office and business end of the program is necessary. Volunteers who help in this capacity make the entire program run smoothly.

1. Promotions
2. Fund Raising
3. Grant Writing
4. Special Events
5. Photography
6. Administrative & Marketing

Volunteer Responsibility Guidelines

For many of you, this may be the first time around either horses or people with special needs. PATH Intl and Horse Heritage have established many guidelines and standards to provide for the safety and comfort of our students, volunteers, and horses. They will assist you in having a positive volunteer experience.

Time Commitment and Attendance

- Time commitments vary depending on the activity. However, volunteers working during class are asked to commit to an entire session of lessons (4 weeks) to provide continuity for the participants.
- When signing up for a class, you are expected to attend every class for that session. **Missing a class means that the participant cannot ride.**
- Whenever possible, it is beneficial to work with the same participant each time. This saves time explaining what help is needed for that participant for each class and builds relationships. This is more effective and allows the rider to progress more rapidly. Time before and after class can be spent getting to know the families.
- The volunteer coordinator will handle all scheduling. Please allow at least 24 hours prior to your scheduled time in the event you are not going to be able to assist in your class.

- **Contact Information for Karen Scott, Volunteer Coordinator:**
- HHEP Phone (509)844-2556
- Cell Phone (509)993-2226
- Email volunteer@horseheritage.org (use only for pre-arranging an absence)

- Please be prompt. Arrive 5 minutes early to check in, meet with the instructor for any special updates, help with pre-class set up, and help the riders with their helmets while they are waiting.

Paperwork Requirements

- You must submit all completed and signed information and consent/release forms prior to scheduling. This information is updated annually.
- Volunteers under age 18 must submit a signed parental consent form.
- You must report any changes in your information and/or health to the volunteer coordinator immediately. All information is confidential.

Conduct & Behavior

- We expect volunteers in our program to conduct themselves in a cooperative and appropriate manner at all times. Possession or use of drugs/alcohol, use of obscene or discriminatory language, or any form of harassment, aggressive or abusive behavior to self, others (including horses), or equipment is unacceptable. Please report mistreatment of horses or suspicion of abuse/neglect of any student, child, or vulnerable adult to HHEP staff. Volunteers exhibiting inappropriate behavior will be requested to leave immediately.

Confidentiality

- Horse Heritage places great importance on protecting the confidential information of our students, staff, and volunteers. "Confidential Information" includes, but is not limited to, personally identifiable information such as surnames, telephone numbers, addresses, emails, etc., as well as non-public business records of HHEP. In particular, medical information about students, and information about their disabilities or special needs, must be protected. Volunteers shall never disclose confidential information to anyone other than HHEP staff. Volunteers must seek staff permission before taking any pictures or videos.

Parking

- Parking for volunteers is south of the arena.

Helmet, Clothing and Footwear

- *Helmets*
 - Volunteers must wear an ASTM-SEI approved helmet while mounted.
- *Footwear*
 - Closed toed shoes are required! Supportive tennis shoes, hiking boots, paddock or western boots are ideal. Be prepared to walk on muddy, uneven ground.
- *Safety Stirrups*
 - Volunteer schooling team members must use safety stirrups (stirrups with safety features) unless riding boots or hard soled shoes with an at least ¼ inch heel are worn.
- *Attire for Class Volunteers*
 - All volunteers should dress suitably to weather and season in clothing appropriate for equestrian activities.
 - Clothing or hats that restrict movement or vision are unsuitable.
 - We discourage the wearing of jewelry. It can catch on tack and can easily become lost.
 - Please wear long hair pulled back.
 - Refrain from wearing highly scented products, such as perfume and lotion. It can be distracting and may attract bees and flies.
 - Dress conservatively. Some students could display inappropriate social behaviors.

HOT weather:

- We recommend long pants; dust, horsehair, and bugs can be bothersome. If you wear shorts, please make sure they are of appropriate length (just above the knee).
- Summer shirts are acceptable. Shirts can be sleeveless, but no tank tops with straps narrower than three finger-widths or bare midriffs. Shirts must be long enough to cover the top of pants/shorts at all times; remember that you will need to raise your arms while assisting students.
- Sunglasses and sunscreen are recommended for outdoor activities.

COLD weather:

- Dress in layers. Removing clothing is easier than adding.
- Gloves are advisable for warmth and protection. If you are leading a horse, please make sure your gloves will give a firm grip on the lead rope.
- If you remove your jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt, do not tie it around your waist. As it loosens, it could drop to the ground, distracting you, tripping you, or spooking the horse.

Parking

- Parking for volunteers is south of the arena.

Communication and Questions

- If, at any time, you are unclear regarding your volunteer role, please feel free to talk to the Volunteer Coordinator, the Instructor, or the Program Director. During lessons, the instructor is responsible for each rider, horse, and volunteer. All directions from the instructor must be followed. To ensure everyone's safety, it is important to adhere to the instructor's decisions.
- Please keep all of your contact information current (email, phone number, address, etc.). The primary means of providing written information to all volunteers is email.

Emergency and Safety Issues

- Report all accidents, even if there is no injury, immediately to HHEP staff. Everyone involved in the incident, within 24 hours, must complete an occurrence report. Request an occurrence report from HHEP staff. Please report all misbehaviors of horses to staff as soon as possible. Even if the incident seems minor, it could lead to unsafe situations.

Volunteer Dismissal or Reassignment

- HHEP developed our policies to serve the best interests of the entire Horse Heritage community. Safety, confidentiality, respect for each other – human and equine – and the preservation of an optimal environment for beneficial adapted riding are the primary reasons for strict adherence to these rules.
- Individuals who are unable to perform their volunteer role, or maintain a reasonable level of commitment, or fail to observe the rules and procedures of the program will be given an opportunity to discuss any situation that is perceived to be in violation of HHEP policy and may be provided with job re-assignment. However, HHEP reserves the right to determine, at its discretion, that it may be in the best interest of the program to terminate a volunteer's involvement with the program.

Additional Volunteering Policies

- Individuals must be 14 years old to volunteer with HHEP.
- Weapons (firearm, knife, hunting tools, etc.) are not allowed at HHEP activities. If you carry a sidearm for your profession, (sheriff, police officer, etc.), please leave the weapon locked in your vehicle and provide written documentation to the Program Director detailing why your weapon must be kept on-site.
- HHEP has a strict non-smoking policy.
- **Turn off cell phones** and car alarms as they disrupt class and startle horses.
- Please use a quiet voice while working around the horses.
- Refrain from offering food to students without permission as they may have a medical condition (allergies, diabetes, etc.).
- Hand feeding HHEP horses is strictly prohibited. To avoid nipping, we never hand feed the horses. Please place treats in buckets or pans.
- No dogs or other pets are allowed. Please leave your pets at home where they will be safe and comfortable while you perform your volunteer role.
- Please do not perform a volunteer role you have not yet been trained for.
- Please keep the arena and check-in area free of unnecessary items. Backpacks, purses, or other items should stay in your car.
- Children must be supervised at all times and cannot be in the arena with you while you are volunteering.

Emergency and Risk Management

- Volunteers are responsible for knowing and following all safety rules, emergency policies, and procedures, supporting all effort to promote safe working conditions, making full use of safety equipment, reporting, immediately, any unsafe working conditions or behaviors, and knowing the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, emergency exits, and emergency plans. Please review the following policies and procedures on how to handle specific emergencies.
- It is important to remember, in any emergency to stay calm, reassure riders, and take direction from Horse Heritage instructors. They are responsible for managing the emergency and applying any first aid required. Volunteers may be called upon to assist.

Location of first aid kits

- Human first aid kits are located in the tack room and under the mounting ramp.
- An equine first aid kit is located in the tack room.

Calling for emergency assistance

- If you are directed to call for emergency medical assistance, a cell phone is located at the arena, along with the address and directions to your location. Please request emergency vehicles to turn off their sirens as they approach.
- It is the policy of HHEP to call an ambulance if there is any doubt as to the seriousness of an illness or injury.

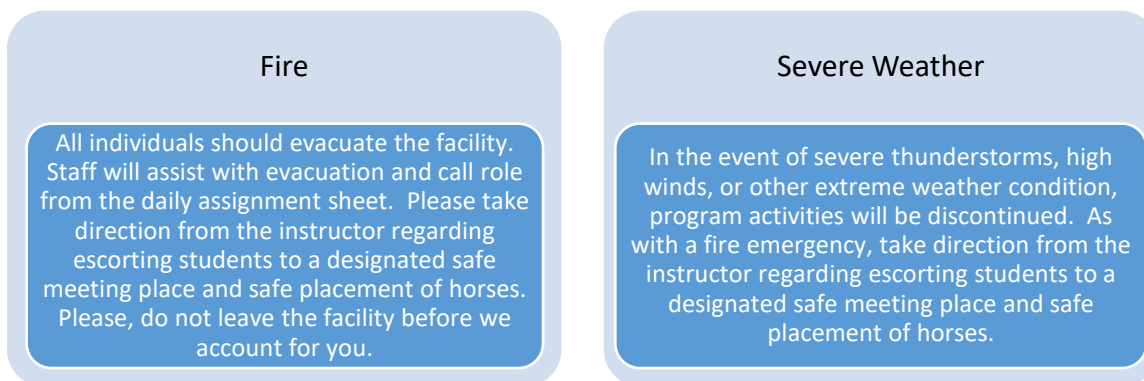
Medical Emergencies

- You must notify Horse Heritage staff of any injury or medical emergency. Staff members are responsible for managing emergencies, including evaluating the scene, determining if additional medical assistance is required, and providing any first aid required. An occurrence report must be completed by staff and involved individuals for every incident.

Bodily Fluids

- Universal precautions are used to minimize contact with blood and body fluids by taking steps that may prevent non-intact skin exposures of individuals to specific organisms. When you follow universal precautions, you assume that all persons are potentially infected with blood-borne pathogens.
- Wear disposable latex or vinyl gloves when it is likely that hands will be in contact with bodily fluids.
- Wear eye masks, or eye protection when it is likely eye and/or mucus membranes will be splashed with bodily fluids.
- Wash hands often, even if gloves are worn, for 15-20 seconds with soap and warm water or antiseptic towlettes.
- Resuscitation masks should be used for CPR.
- Offer tissues to students, but let them dispose of used tissues on their own.
- Encourage the person to self-manage their own injury whenever possible through the use of paper towels and/or pressure to bleeding wounds or bloody noses.

Evacuations



Working with the Students

- It is important to remember that every child or adult is an individual and wants to be treated with understanding, regardless of having a disability or not.
- Each has his or her own style of learning, unique personality, and temperament. One must always look beyond the disability into the person. Often, a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others.
- Being around people with special needs may be a new experience for you. You may be overwhelmed at first with things you have never seen or don't understand; this is natural for most people. Allow yourself time to get used to being with a person of special needs. Your experience can be very rewarding.
- Remember to speak about a person with a disability as a person first, rather than by their disability (person who is deaf rather than deaf person).
- Relax and be yourself. Treat him or her like any other person.
- Speak directly to the person. Talk about the same things you would with anyone who comes to ride.
- Actively listen for comments. People will be glad to talk about themselves.
- Use simple, clear, precise language.
- Do not offer too much help. It will be requested if needed. Allow students more independence by allowing them to do things for themselves.
- Do not show pity or sentimentality. People with special needs want to be treated as an equal.

- Do not be afraid to say, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand you. Please say it again."
- Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, but don't pry.
- Don't make up your mind about the person before getting to know him or her.
- Be patient. Students will set their own pace walking, talking and thinking.
- Enjoy your friendships. Individuals with handicaps often have a super abundance of good humor, wisdom, acceptance, courage, and ability.
- Do not separate a person with disabilities from his or her assistive devices unless asked.

Terminology

- Improper Terminology

Just as some well-known, four letter words are offensive, so are some words used in referring to people with disabilities. Here are some to avoid when speaking to or about people with disabilities:

Afflicted	Disease	Poor
Cerebral Palsied	Epileptic	Retarded
Confined to a Wheelchair	Gimp	Spastic
Courageous	Handicapped	Suffering
Crippled	Mental Illness	Unfortunate
Deaf and Dumb	Normal	Victim
Deaf Mute		

- Proper Terminology

Persons who are:

Blind
Visually Impaired
Deaf
Hearing Impaired
Non-disabled
Physically Challenged
Challenged

Persons with or who have:

Cerebral Palsy
Down Syndrome
Head Injury
Mental Health Problems
Multiple Sclerosis
Muscular Dystrophy
Paraplegia
Quadriplegia
Partial Hearing Loss
Seizure Disorder
Specific Learning Disability
Speech Impairment
Hearing Impaired

Wheelchair etiquette

- Always ask the person in a wheelchair if they would like assistance before you help.
- Be respectful. People's wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Don't hang or lean on them unless you have permission. Speak directly. Be careful not to exclude the person in the wheelchair from conversations.
- If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get you on the same level as the wheelchair.

Escorting a person with visual impairment

- Ask first before assisting.
- The individual may also have a specific way they prefer to have assistance
- Remember, that they may only need verbal direction/cues.
- If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead.
- Repeat/verbalize written or posted information.

Working with hearing/language impaired

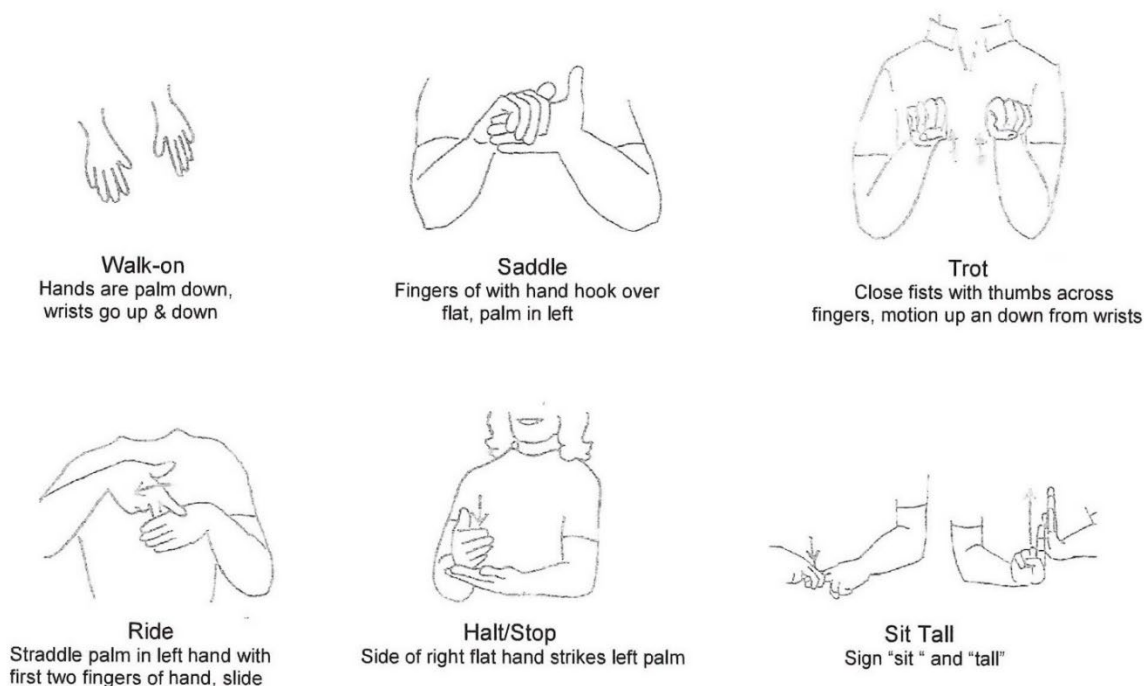
- Try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking to him or her.
- Speak clearly and avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words.
- Avoid overly long verbal instructions/conversation.

- Become familiar with hand gestures/body positions that the student may be using to represent words or concepts.
- Alert the instructor if the student is having difficulty with hearing aid (ringing, etc.).

Non-verbal or limited verbal

- To enhance communication with these students, instructors and volunteers may reinforce requests and directions with basic American Sign Language (ASL).

Sign Language



The Adapted Riding Lesson

- Check the Rider List. The Rider List is our daily schedule for each session. It will list the rider, which horse they will use, and volunteer names and assignments. We occasionally make changes and update the Rider List. It is important that you check this list each time you come, before getting ready for class.
- Log in your time to help keep track of your volunteer hours.

Basic horse safety

- Horses cannot see your hand when you pat their noses. This may cause them to jerk their heads up so keep your head in a protected position when handling horses.
- Always walk around your horse, preferably in front unless he is tied to a rail.
- Never duck under or step over the lead.
- Always tie your horse with the lead at wither height to a strong pole or hitching rail.
- Be alert at all times when working around horses. Watch their body language and take it seriously.
- Horses may kick, bite and bolt if startled

- Make sure that all gates and doors are always closed and secure. If you open it, close it!
- Think safety! The student will be more likely to do as you do.

Side-Walker Responsibilities

- Side walkers are the ones who normally get the most hands on duties in adapted riding. **Side walkers are directly responsible for the rider.** As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson.
- Be prepared to give the rider your undivided attention. Get to know him/her!
- In the arena, the side walker should help the student focus his/her attention on the instructor. Try to avoid 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.
- When the instructor gives a direction, allow your student plenty of time to process it.
- In an emergency, you must stay with the rider.
- The role of side-walker varies greatly between riders. It is important to have an understanding of your rider's needs and knowledge of his or her goals.
- Prior to Class:
 - Please arrive 5 minutes prior to lesson time so that you are available when the rider arrives.
 - When your rider arrives, greet your rider and the parents/guardians. Review your rider's attire – check for appropriate shoes, safe clothing, etc.
 - Fit your rider with a properly sized helmet. Each rider is assigned a helmet which is kept in a labeled bag and hung on the fence each morning for the appropriate riders. See Helmet Fitting Guidelines in this manual for more information. When around a horse it is **required that the rider always wear a helmet.**
 - Prepare the horse's treats. Help the rider choose a feed pan and place 3 treats in it to give to the horse after the lesson.
 - Be aware of the rider at all times. Even when the rider is not mounted, you should be conscious of the rider's safety.
 - Stay with them until the instructor is ready for them to enter the arena and mount. Please do not let them enter the arena without the instructor's permission.
- During Class:
 - Only the instructor is allowed to mount the rider. Listen for directions from the instructor for your rider to mount. Generally, the rider does not put his feet in the stirrups until he is fully away from the mounting block.
 - If you have any questions at any time, please ask.
 - Stay within an arm's reach of your rider. Never leave the rider unattended.
 - If an object falls onto the ground, leave it and tell the instructor who will then pick it up.
 - Keep your hands free at all times. Do not walk with your hand in your pocket or arms crossed.
 - Never place your hand or fingers in any saddle rings or buckles while side walking.
 - You have the right to let the rider know when they are acting inappropriately (pulling hair, kicking, using offensive language). Use the word "no" and ask them not to repeat the inappropriate action. If a rider or horse behaves inappropriately or in an unsafe manner, please notify staff immediately.
 - If you become tired, need to switch sides or stop, ask the leader/handler to bring the horse to the center of the arena so that you can safely stop and get assistance from the instructor.
 - Change sides, one person at a time. Do not both let go of the rider; one person must secure them. If there is only one side walker, ask the instructor for help.
 - If equipment needs adjustment, let the instructor know and they will take care of it.
 - If the rider is showing signs of wanting to get off the horse and is determined to do so, get help from the instructor. Continue as directed in the class until the instructor says otherwise.
 - Do not lean or rest your elbow on your horses back as this is a very sensitive area.
 - At the end of class, wait for the instructor to dismount your rider.
 - At the conclusion of the riding portion of the lesson, students may pet their horses and feed treats. Please remain with your student and supervise these activities for safety. Treats are fed out of containers – DO NOT hand feed the horse.
- After Class:
 - Accompany your rider to the parents/guardians.

Side Walking Techniques

- Depending on the rider's needs, there are a variety of support techniques. The instructor will indicate which type of support to use. Please use caution – never force or use excessive pressure when applying any of these techniques.
 - "Side-walk" The side-walker walks beside the rider (lined up with the rider's shoulder), prepared for "hands-on" when indicated by the instructor
 - "Arm-over thigh" The side-walker places the arm closest to the rider over the rider's thigh and grasps the front edge of the saddle
 - "Ankle support" The side-walker cups the rider's ankle to stabilize the rider's lower leg
 - "Arm-over thigh and Ankle support" Occasionally, a rider needs support provided by both techniques together.
- If the instructor chooses to use a safety belt on your rider, be very careful not to pull down or push up on it. As your arm tires, this becomes more difficult. Rather than grip the handle firmly, just touch your thumb and fingers together around it. This way you are in a position to assist the rider if needed, but will not pull him/her off balance.

Horse Handler Responsibilities

- Prior to Class
 - Always use a halter and lead rope when leading a horse. Never lead by the halter alone.
 - All horses are to be tied using a quick release knot or a tie blocker.
 - Only instructors are allowed to put on bridles!
 - At least 5 minutes prior to class and until the class begins, warm up the horse by leading the horse around the arena including turns both ways. Horses should not be tied to the rail prior to class.
 - Leading:
 - Always lead the horse from the near (left) side so that your shoulder is about even with his ears, using two hands on the lead rope. One hand is holding loosely under the horse's chin, about six inches from the snap. The other hand is holding the *FOLDED* excess lead rope. Never wrap the rope around your hand, drape it around your neck, put it over your shoulder, or let it drag on the ground.
 - Talk to your horse. Most of the horses are learning or know verbal commands such as "walk on," "trot," and "whoa."
 - Do not allow the reins or lead rope to drag on or near the ground.
 - Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep your horse moving or to slow him down.
 - If a horse rears, release the hand closest to the horse's head so that you will not be lifted off the ground.
 - Do not pull down on the lead as this causes pressure on the horse's head and can make him irritable.
 - You weigh a lot less than a horse; you cannot "out-pull" him.
 - If a horse pulls back, step with him rather than pull against him.
 - If the horse will not move, try turning his head away from you.
- During Class
 - The horse leader/handler's first responsibility is to focus on the horse and the horse's comfort level, but at the same time maintaining an awareness of the rider, instructor, side-walkers, and environment.
 - The instructor always mounts and dismounts the rider.** Pay attention to the instructor. The instructor will address the rider, but as the handler you need to know what the instructions are as well.
 - Please do not visit with other volunteers during a lesson. It is very distracting to the students.
 - Watch out for the side-walkers on either side so you don't run them into a wall, arena props, or into brush.**
 - Keep at least two horse lengths of spacing between you and the horse in front of you.
 - Always make smooth transitions when starting, stopping, or turning. Any sudden change in speed or direction may leave a side-walker behind or cause the student to lose balance
 - Once the rider is on the horse, they are in control; whether they are independent or need side-walkers.
 - When you hear directions from the instructor, give the rider a chance to respond. Wait several seconds before you turn, stop, etc. This will allow the rider time to prepare and do as much as possible. A good handler will be aware of just how much or little assistance to offer the student during a lesson.
 - Do not walk backwards to look at the rider; always watch where you are going.

- For mounts, dismounts and extended halts, you will need to stand in the “halt” position (facing the horse in front of and slightly to the side). Make sure the horse is standing “square” (all four feet under the horse and evenly spaced) and does not walk forward.
- Whenever the instructor adjusts the rider or equipment, step back from the horse’s face a couple of feet, but not so far that you are not in control.
- Do not “play” with the horse you are leading. He should be working and paying attention to what you are doing. Do not let him nibble at you or your clothes or chew on the lead rope.
- At the conclusion of the riding portion of the lesson, students may pet their horses and feed treats. Please remain holding your horse during these activities.
- If an accident occurs, the handler’s responsibility is to stay with the horse, not the student.
- If a rider falls off, the leader/handler should move the horse across the arena, a safe distance away from the rider.
- After Class
 - After riders dismount, you will return your horse to the tacking area.

Mounting and dismounting

- There are three types of mounting
 - **Ramp mounting**
This is used for riders using wheelchairs, those who are unable to climb stairs, or those who need the height advantage of the ramp. We mount nearly every rider from the ramp.
 - **Block mounting**
This is used for small riders or taller horses to get the rider at stirrup level.
 - **Ground mounting**
This is used when the rider is tall enough and capable of reaching the stirrup from the ground. HHEP does not use ground mounting as it is harder on the horses.

Mounting responsibilities for Horse Handler

- The instructor will always assist the rider. Never attempt to mount or dismount the rider yourself.
- Wait until the instructor asks you to bring the horse near the mounting area.
- Halt prior to entering the mounting area for the instructor to do a tack check and tighten the girth/cinch – step back from the horse for this.
- When asked by the rider, bring the horse up to the ramp/block.
- Watch that the horse is close enough to the ramp/block, and that the stirrup and shoulder are not catching.
- Halt when in line with the ramp/block. If the horse overshoots, lead the horse out and start again. **Do not back the horse into position.**
- You should be in “Halt” position in front of the horse while the rider mounts. Be alert at all times. Do not become distracted from the horse during this time.
- Do not hold the bit. This can cause the horse to throw his head.
- Stay at the “halt” position until the rider mounts and gives the command “walk on.”
- Walk slowly out of the mounting area and into the arena. Be sure to allow the instructor time to move with the student.

Mounting responsibilities for Side-walkers

- You should assist on the off side by supporting the saddle and stirrup and guiding the rider’s foot into the stirrup.
- Stay with the horse as the rider commands “walk on.”

Dismounting in the arena

- The instructor will always assist the rider. Never attempt to mount or dismount the rider yourself.
- Horse handlers will line the horses up in the north end of the arena, keeping proper spacing
- Riders will dismount directly to the ground.
- If a rider needs immediate support, they will dismount near the gate, or a wheelchair or a stool will be provided.

- The instructor will dismount riders, one by one. Do not lead the horses out of the arena until all riders have dismounted and the instructor excuses the class.
- Riders and volunteers will exit the class before the horses.
- Horse handlers take the horse back to the tacking area and tie them up.
- Side-walker will help the student remove his/her helmet and escort him/her away from the arena area to his or her parent or care-giver.

Emergencies During a Class

- The word "STAFF" is called out alerting everyone in the arena to HALT.
- The instructor proceeds to the emergency situation and assesses the incident. If necessary, the instructor designates a volunteer for call 911. If injury should involve a horse, the instructor designates a volunteer to call the vet.
- If the incident is not serious, class resumes.
- If the incident is serious, the instructor designates trained volunteers to dismount the remaining students and remains at the incident site until emergency personnel arrive.
- If the incident is serious, the horse handlers should remove the horses from the arena.
- REMEMBER: If an emergency occurs during class, the horse handler is responsible for the horse and the side walkers are responsible for the student.

Falls from the Horse

- **Horse handlers** will move the horse a safe distance from the fallen rider. Stay with the horse. Listen for the instructors directions
- **Side walkers** are to stay with the rider. If the rider starts to fall, it is usually most effective to push them back in the saddle. If a fall cannot be prevented, try to soften the fall, but do not compound the problem by getting in the way
- All other riders are to halt.
- No one is to move the rider until the instructor has assessed the situation.
- The instructor will determine if medical personnel are required and will request assistance in contacting them.

Emergency Dismount

- If you are side walking next to a horse that becomes involved in an emergency, shout "STAFF" to alert the instructor and horse handler of the situation.
- If an emergency dismount becomes necessary, the sidewalker the sidewalker is falling away from needs to remove the stirrup and reins from the rider.
- The side walker towards whom the rider is falling needs to remove the stirrup then hug the rider around the trunk and under the arms, pulling the rider off and away from the horse.
- If the side walker feels he cannot bear the full weight of the descending rider, a controlled fall can be initiated, taking care to protect the rider and side walker's heads and roll with the fall as much as possible.
- It is important that the side walker break the rider's fall and does not fall on the rider

Other Emergency Items

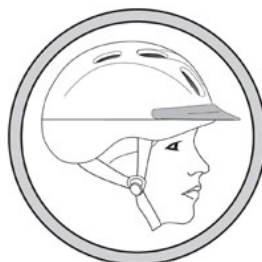
- Seizure of a Rider
 - Halt the horses in the arena.
 - Do not remove the rider unless the instructor indicates to do so.
- Loose Horse
 - All riders halt.
 - All volunteers are to stay with their rider – do not leave the rider to catch the horse!
 - The instructor will direct catching the loose horse.

Helmet Fitting Guidelines

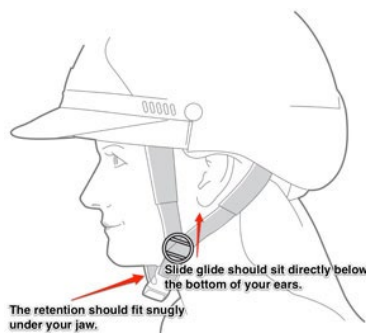
- A properly fitting safety riding helmet is the single most important piece of equipment.
- Posture and balance is directly affected by the fit of the helmet.
- Ill-fitting helmets will make proper balancing more difficult and will fail to protect the head during a fall.
- Properly fitted helmets should be snug.
 - Overly large helmets are uncomfortable, may tip, obscure vision or fall off.
- A well-fitting helmet should stay on the head when harnessed without rocking or moving.
- All participants in classes are required to wear a helmet when they are participating in the program, even for ground work.



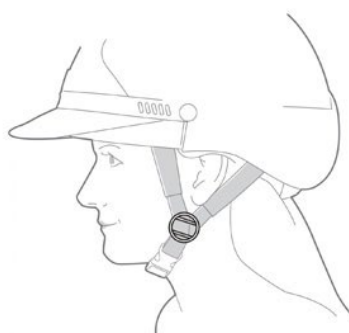
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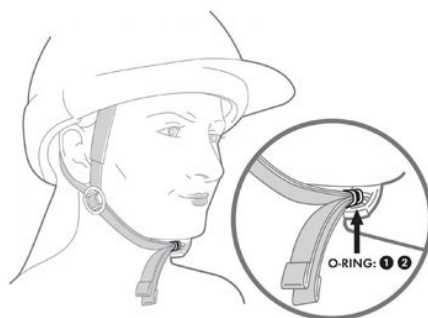
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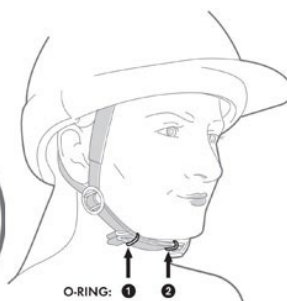
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Helping a Student with Their Helmet

- Choose a helmet of the designated size for each rider as determined by the instructor.
- Loosen the dial at the back of the helmet completely.
- Place helmet on the head sliding it front to back. It should sit level on the head with approx. 2 finger span above the eyebrows.
 - Hair styles may need to be lowered or removed if causing the helmet to sit improperly
- Make sure the helmet is centered correctly and fasten the chin strap. Be sure it is tight enough so the helmet doesn't slip, but not so tight the rider cannot breathe.
 - A good test is to see if the rider can comfortably open his/her mouth and talk.
- Readjust the dial in the back of the helmet to snug up the helmet.
- Ask the rider how the helmet feels.

Understanding the Horses

- When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is the key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a adapted riding setting. Understanding the horse's senses and instincts is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

Hearing

- The horse's sense of hearing is very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds.
- "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of fright/flight response.
- When working with horses, note the position of the horse's ears.
- Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest.
- Drooping ears indicate relaxation, in-attentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion, or illness.
- Flattened ears indicate anger and nervousness.

Sight

- Horse's eyes are geared to find danger.
- They don't have very accurate vision close up, but they can detect tiny movement at a distance.
- The eyes are set on either side of the head, allowing for good peripheral vision.
- Although the horse has good peripheral vision, he also has two blind spots, directly in front and directly behind. A horse may be startled if approached from the front or behind. The best way to approach a horse is to his shoulder.
- The lens of the horse's eye doesn't change shape like a human eye. Instead, a horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head.
- Horses have excellent visual memory. They may notice if something in the arena or out on the trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at the new objects. Introduce props, in which the horse may be unfamiliar, slowly.

Touch

- The horse's sense of touch is very sensitive. They can detect very light touch or pressure.
- Each horse has his own specific sensitive areas that handlers should be familiar with (flank, belly, etc.).
- Touch is a communication between horses as well as between horse and human. Horses may also touch to examine objects. They will look, sniff, and feel an object with their muzzle.
- Horses are trained by applying and removing pressure and may be sensitive to either soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs. Handlers should treat horses gently but firmly.

Smell

- The horse's sense of smell is very acute. It allows him to recognize other horses and people.
- Smell also enables him to evaluate situations. Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling.
- Because horses have such an acute sense of smell, they may nip and nuzzle clothing if treats are carried in pockets.

Taste

- Taste is closely linked with smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.
- A horse may lick and nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, this could lead to biting.

Sixth Sense

- Horses do have a "sixth" sense when evaluating the disposition of those around him. 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 be a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important to let the instructor know if you are having a difficult time relating to or getting to know your horse.

Fight or Flight Instinct

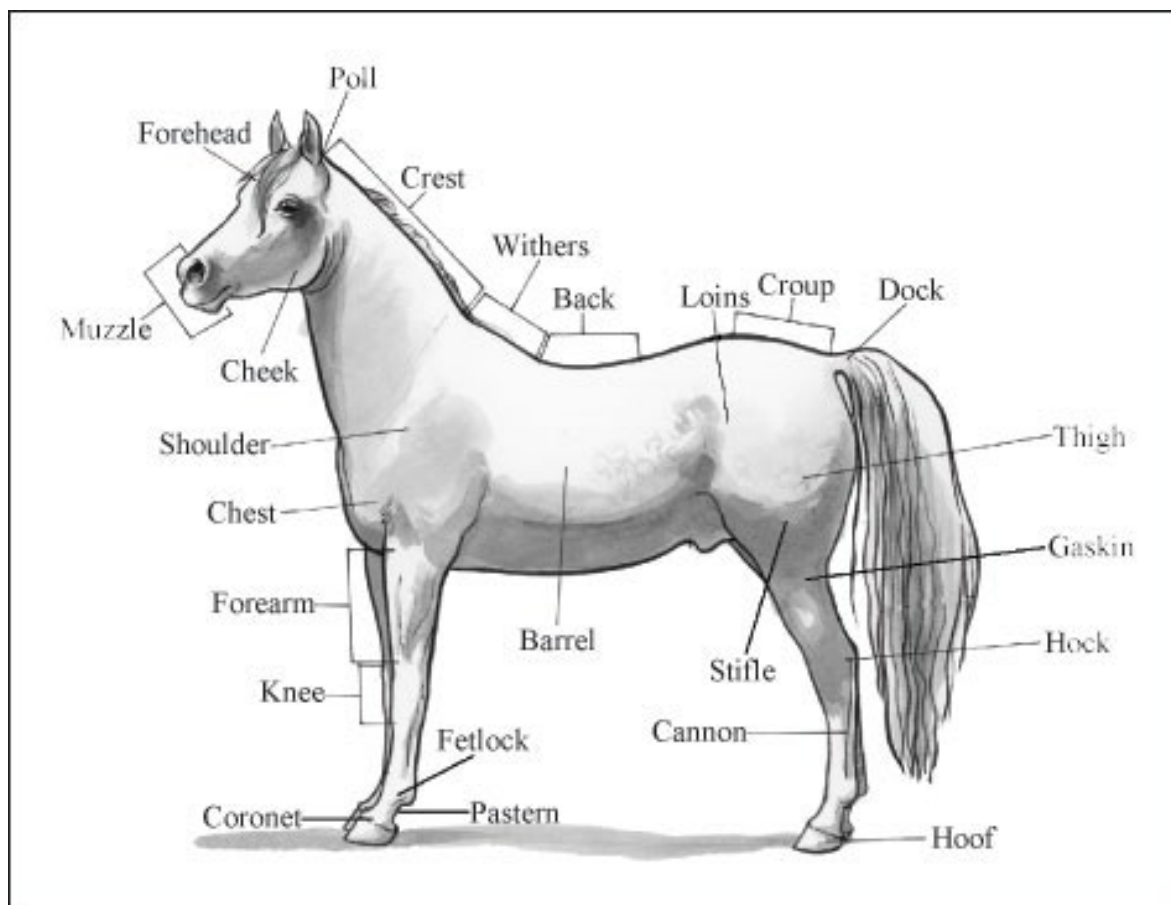
- Most horses chosen to work in an adapted riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. However, if frightened, horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face it.
- At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to him calmly and he will probably relax.
- A frightened horse held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and move with him. This will usually calm him.
- If flight is not possible, the horse could turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in tight areas like a stall.
- Alert program staff if a horse appears to be frightened or fearful.

Herd Behavior

- Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two horses dominant and a pecking order amongst the rest.
- Some horses 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, surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, at least two horse lengths should be kept between horses when riding in a group to respect the horse's space and pecking order.

Parts of the Horse

When working around horses there are special words and terms that you will need to know. Some of the parts of the horse are shown below.



Reading ears

The horse's ears and actions are key to his emotions. You can tell where his attention is and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts.



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 stiffly back
Annoyed or worried about what's behind him. He might kick.



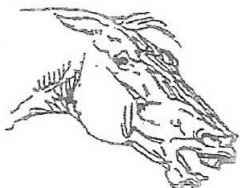
Droopy ears
Calm and resting. May be dozing.



Ears stiffly forward
Alarmed or nervous about what's ahead. Looking for danger.



Ears pointed left and right
Relaxed. Paying attention to the scenery.



Ears flattened against neck
Already angry. In fighting mood
May fight, bite or kick

Other signs you should notice

Tucking the tail down tightly

Danger to the rear
May bolt, buck or kick

Resting one hind leg on toe

Calm and resting, may be sleeping
Don't wake him by startling him

Switching the tail

Annoyance and irritation
at biting flies, stinging insects or
bothersome actions of rider or another horse

Wrinkling up face and swinging head

Threatening gesture of angry or bossy horse
Watch out for biting or kicking

Horse and Arena Terms Glossary

- Bit: The part of the bridle that goes into the horse's mouth, used to control the horse.
- Bit Rings: The part of the ends of the bit to which the reins and bridle attach.
- Cavaletti: Logs or poles laid on the ground over which the horse steps. These may be raised slightly off the ground.
- Cinch: Wide strap that goes around the horse and buckles to the saddle to hold it in position. It is usually made of leather, nylon, or cotton.
- Forehand: The front section of the horse: forelegs, shoulder, neck, and head
- Girth: Wide strap that goes around the horse and buckles to the saddle to hold it in position. It is usually made of leather, nylon, or cotton.
- Gullet: The open channel that runs the length of the saddle on the bottom. It keeps the saddle off the horse's spine.
- Halter: Straps that buckle around the horse's head that allows the horse to be lead or tied.
- Haunches: The hindquarters of the horse – rear legs, rump and tail.
- Lead Rope: A rope used to lead the horse.
- Muzzle: The nose and mouth area of the horse.
- Posting: "Rising trot" the rising and descending of the rider with the rhythm of the trot.
- Rail: An arena term meaning the fence around the arena.
- Saddle: A structure that is strapped onto the horse's back to facilitate the riders comfort and balance and distribute their weight evenly on the horse's back.
- Serpentine: A maneuver completed in the arena where the rider maneuvers the horse in a "zig-zag" pattern.
- Track: Indicates the trail into which the rider directs the horse around the inside of the arena near the rail. To "track left", the left hand is toward the inside of the arena.

100 Ways to Become a More Effective Volunteer

1. Consider safety first at all times.
2. Treat riders and horses kindly but firmly.
3. Give instructors feedback about the rider at appropriate times.
4. Do not mistreat or abuse horses or riders.
5. Assist your rider in maintaining the order of activity, the horse's spacing and position of hands and body when necessary.
6. Remain calm in an emergency or stressful situation and remember your job.
7. Praise should be given equivalent to the deed accomplished.
8. **Smiles say a thousand words – only louder!**
9. Acknowledge the efforts of your rider.
10. Consult instructor/staff in praise techniques for each rider.
11. Allowing riders to feel upset helps them accept their feelings.
12. Do not rest on the horse, rider, fencing or rails.
13. Always inform a rider before touching them.
14. Wear sensible clothing and shoes.
15. Minimize the distractions for riders who are easily distracted.
16. Ask the rider first to do the task independently, then assist.
17. Ensure a riders feet are out of the stirrups prior to dismounting.
18. At first, offer support at the trot.
19. Always encourage the rider to thank the horse.
20. Maximize, not minimize, your rider's capabilities.
21. If you are afraid or apprehensive, the horse will know it.
22. Do not talk through your rider...talk to your rider.
23. Support your team, don't criticize or make fun of others.
24. Encourage teamwork.
25. Re-latch all doors and gates behind you.
26. If you are not sure, don't be afraid to ask.
27. Notify an instructor immediately if a horse is acting oddly.
28. The riding instructor is in charge of all riding emergencies.
29. Never approach an unsuspecting horse from the rear.
30. Never walk under a horse's neck.
31. Be familiar with emergency procedures.
32. Contact the instructor about all mishaps and their circumstances.
33. Stay attentive to the horse, rider, instructor and situation.
34. If you are unable to understand a rider, ask for assistance.
35. Never hand feed the horses.
36. Park in designated areas.
37. Be reliable, everyone is depending on you to do your part.
38. Be courteous and respect each person's needs.

39. Promptness and reliability are key to the success of horse Heritage Educational Program.
40. Greet your rider upon arrival and acknowledge their departure.
41. Notify the volunteer coordinator ASAP of scheduling conflicts.
42. Maintain a professional but friendly relationship with each rider.
43. Your genuine friendship and empathy are appreciated.
44. Do not prejudge a person's abilities.
45. Talk about your experiences and promote the program at HHEP.
46. Give verbal cues prior to change for visually impaired riders.
47. Remember HHEP is a no smoking facility.
48. Make new friends while being of assistance to others.
49. Make reference to the person first, not the disability.
50. To further understand a rider, try to observe them. Their eyes, mouth, face, and body movements are all key communicators.
51. Accept each individual as they are and respect each person's individual needs.
52. Listen to and help the rider focus on the instructor's directions.
53. Respect everyone's right to confidentiality.
54. Know and respect Horse Heritage policies.
55. Encourage the rider to be as independent as possible.
56. Allow your rider to fail as well as succeed.
57. Bring your positive energy, not your problems, to the rider.
58. Be attentive to the instructor.
59. Allow the rider's efforts to succeed in games be theirs, not yours.
60. Allow the rider ample time to process a direction.
61. Help maintain a safe and welcoming environment.
62. Never wrap a lead around your hand! Hold the excess folded in a figure 8.
63. Check clothing under the rider's legs to make sure it isn't binding or rubbing.
64. Be conscientious about dress and personal hygiene.
65. Remain calm and avoid rushing.
66. Offer physical support only when needed.
67. Be willing to learn and participate in HHEP educational programs.
68. Supervise riders when away from their parents/guardians.
69. Don't suffer through a personality clash. Ask to be reassigned.
70. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
71. Never become so relaxed or distracted as to forget your rider.
72. If using a safety belt, don't pull your rider off balance.
73. Allow riders to share their lives and friendship without prying.
74. Return things to the spot you found them.
75. Use a halter and a lead rope when going to and from barn areas.
76. If something is broken or needs repair, let someone know.
77. If a horse is lame or injured, tell the instructor immediately.
78. If a rider has fallen, never move them. Defer to the instructor.
79. Pet a horse on the neck or shoulder, not on their face.
80. Any form of injury to yourself or others must be reported.
81. Pay attention to how you move and know your physical limits.
82. When lifting, use your legs, not your back.
83. Do not run or make loud noises around the horses.
84. Be aware of the phone and first aid kit location.
85. Do not bring pets or children to your volunteer activities.
86. Respect other volunteers and their responsibilities.
87. Sign in each time you volunteer.
88. Before bringing others, please get permission.
89. Choose your words carefully; they can impact other's lives.
90. Call in advance if you are ill or unable to come to your assigned time.
91. Patience + Praise = Success and Results
92. Be attentive to signs of rider fatigue and frustration.
93. Be sincere in the offer of services.
94. Do not force a rider's body parts into desired positions.
95. Alert the instructor immediately if a seizure takes place.
96. Be sober and drug free when you volunteer.
97. Enjoy the pleasure in helping in an assisted riding experience.
98. Share knowledge and experiences with others.
99. Maintain the dignity and integrity of the services provided by HHEP.
100. Remember that your dedication and sincerity truly makes a world of difference!