

Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Revised July 2021



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Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Welcome	Table of Contents	2
About PATH Intl.		3
About Inspire		3
Mission		
Vision		
Programs and Services		
Volunteer Program Information		4-7
Volunteer Requirements		
Volunteer Training		
Volunteer Job Descriptions		
Volunteers with Disabilities		
Volunteer Appreciation and Incentive Program		
Volunteer Procedures, Policies, & Guidelines		8-11
Volunteer Sign In/Out		
Program Closures and Lesson Cancellations		
Volunteer Commitment		
Volunteer Cancellations		
Reassignment and Termination Policy		
Volunteer Scheduling		
Confidentiality Policy		
Communication and Questions		
Name Badges		
Clothing Policy		
Food & Refreshments		
Working with a Special Needs Population		
Inspire Operations & Policies		12-17
Program Operations		
Inspire Farm Rules		
General Rules		
Horse Rules		
Facility Rules		
Inspire's Equine Staff		
Inspire Social Media Policy		
Risk Management		
Emergency Procedures		
Emergency Dismount		
Fallen Riders, Medical Emergencies, Accidents & Injuries		
Calling for Emergency Medical Assistance		
Location of First Aid Kits		
Fire Procedure		
Tornado, Hurricane, or Severe Thunderstorm Procedure		
Your First Day!		18



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering at Inspire Equine Therapy Program (Inspire)! We are very glad to see you! Volunteers are critical to the success of Inspire. We would not be able to provide a high quality program without you and we rely on you to help our program operate as safely as possible.

We hope your experience at Inspire will bring you satisfaction, personal growth, and fulfillment. Your spirit of volunteerism is a valuable asset and “thank you” is just not enough to express our appreciation for your time and talents.

We welcome you as a member of the team! Please do not hesitate to share your opinions and questions with us to help our volunteer program be an enriching experience for you.

Contact Information

(727) 348 - 7104

volunteercoordinator@inspireequinetherapyprogram.org



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

About PATH Intl.

PATH International (PATH Intl.) was founded in 1969 as the North America Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) to encourage best practices in the field of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) through accreditation, instructor certification, and networking. PATH Intl. consists of over 850 member centers worldwide. Through these programs more than 40,000 individuals with disabilities benefit from activities, which include therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, equine assisted learning, carriage driving, interactive vaulting, and competition.

About Inspire

Inspire Equine Therapy Program (Inspire) was founded in October 2016 by Melissa Yarbrough and is a PATH Intl. Member Center. Inspire serves more than 200 clients each year with a wide range of physical, emotional and cognitive challenges.

Mission: Improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and disabled veterans through therapeutic riding and other equine related programs

Vision:

To be the standard of excellence in our industry by providing the highest quality experience to teens, adults, and families who experience physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral special needs. To be a champion in the lives of disabled veterans and first responders

Programs & Services

Adaptive Riding: At the core of Inspires mission is the adaptive riding lesson program.

PATH Intl. certified riding instructors conduct lessons to teach adapted riding skills. The rider receives physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits in addition to learning how to ride with the goal of maximum independence. Physical benefits of adaptive riding include improved muscle tone, balance, posture, coordination, and motor development. Adaptive riding offers sport, recreational, and educational benefits while promoting emotional and psychological well-being, confidence, and communication skills.

Carriage Driving: Driving is an equine activity for people with various disabilities, in which the participant sits in a cart, pulled by a horse and learns the skills necessary to drive a horse. Driving is available for any participant who is interested in learning this skill, and also offers further independence and opportunity to participants who are unable or uninterested in riding for various reasons.

Veterans Programs: Free programs for disabled veterans and first responders. Participants can choose from carriage driving, horsemanship (unmounted), or equine facilitated learning in personal development.

Equine Facilitated Learning: Equine-Facilitated Learning is an experiential learning approach that promotes the development of life skills for educational, professional, and personal goals through equine-assisted activities. This experiential approach integrates horse-human interaction that is guided by a planned learning experience to meet the identified goals or desires of the participant(s). Simply put, EFL is where we take individuals who want to help improve their life skills out to work with the horses. Through working with horses and through this process of building relationships and connections they can better learn how they relate to themselves, each other, and their environment.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Agricultural Job Training Program: This a a job skills training program for individuals with disabilities ages 22 and older. Learn how to take care of a barn environment, take care of horses, learn to grow vegetables and care for a garden. We currently partner with LYF, Inc. in Clearwater to offer this program.

Stable Memories: Inspire Equine Therapy program partners with senior living communities to provide equine assisted activities to address the unique needs of our county's senior citizens who may or may not be in residential care, rehab facilities, or other long-term care settings. Equine assisted services can help seniors reconnect with memories, improve fine motor function and provides a fun new opportunity for social interaction!

Equine Partners: Equine Facilitated Learning for organizations. This program is for organizations and groups to work on teamwork and communication skills with the partnership of horses.

Adaptive Equestrian Sports: Inspire Equine Therapy Program is pleased to have an Special Olympics Equestrian team that represents Pinellas County every year at Area and State Games.

Volunteer Program Information

Volunteer Requirements

1. Due to insurance regulations and our PATH Intl. center accreditation standards, all volunteers must be at least 14 years old. **No exceptions to this policy are possible.**
2. Volunteers are expected to demonstrate commitment, punctuality, and reliability. It is preferred that volunteers are available a minimum of 2 hours per week for the duration of a session. Sessions are typically 12 to 15 weeks. Volunteer assignments and schedules are based on interest, experience, and availability.
3. Volunteer Application and Release forms must be completed and returned to Inspire. Volunteer paperwork also must be updated annually to comply with PATH Intl. standards for accreditation. Annual updates are available for completion at the end of the year, and also must be completed when a past volunteer is reinstated to the program.
4. Volunteers must attend the trainings provided by Inspire for the role they select.
5. Volunteering may involve moderate physical activity and working outside in varying weather conditions. Please be sure you are comfortable with the conditions of the role you select.
6. Volunteers must be able to work independently with minimal staff supervision.
7. Volunteers must have a positive attitude and be able to adapt to change and be flexible.
8. Volunteers must possess the ability to follow directions and take instruction.
9. Because of the nature of the service provided, Inspire reserves the right to make the final determination as to the appropriateness of volunteers for our organization.
10. Due to insurance requirements, the nature of the service provided by Inspire and the population served, it is Inspires's policy that potential volunteers may not be accepted into the program that have been charged with a crime within the last 5 years. Background checks will be completed on anyone age 18 years and older.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Volunteer Training

Inspire provides a mandatory initial Volunteer Orientation and Training session for all new volunteers. At this orientation session volunteers will be introduced to Inspire, our policies and procedures, how horses are prepared for lessons, and side walker training. Volunteers are encouraged to attend additional trainings throughout the year to gain more experience and practice their skills. Informational handouts are also available. Ask the Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

Volunteer Job Descriptions

Lesson Program Volunteers: To assist with lessons, volunteers must be able to walk for at least 30 minutes on uneven surfaces, jog short distances and lift at least 25 pounds.

- **Horse Leaders** are responsible for the care of the horse before, during, and after the lesson. Therefore, they should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the lesson and anticipate staying 15 minutes afterward. This includes grooming, tacking, and warming up prior to the start of each lesson. Horse Leaders help ensure the safety of horse and rider during the lesson. After the lesson, horse leaders bring the horse back to the barn, untack, groom, and turn out to pasture if needed. Volunteers who wish to serve as Horse Leaders must attend and pass a mandatory Horse Leader Training. Prior to attending the training, potential horse leaders must possess a competent working knowledge and have experience working with horses to understand equine behavior and to demonstrate strong horse handling skills. Volunteers with little or no previous horse experience may attend Horse Handling and Horse Leader Prep trainings to work toward gaining the skills and experience necessary for this role. Please refer to the Horse Leader Job Description for more information.
- **Side walkers** walk beside the horse in lessons and provide physical and/or emotional support to the rider. They help the rider to successfully reach their lesson goals, as well as ensure rider safety before, during, and after the lesson. Side walkers must be able to hold their arm above shoulder height and support a modest amount of weight. Please refer to the Side walker Job Description for more information about this role.
- **Carriage Driving Volunteers** assist with the carriage driving lessons and the wheelchair accessible carriage.
- **Equine Facilitated Learning Safety Volunteers** act as spotters during the on the ground lessons on personal development and learning.
- **Agricultural Job Training Program Volunteers** work side by side with adults with disabilities on teaching important job skills.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Barn Volunteers: Volunteers work directly with Barn Manager and Assistant Barn Manager to assist with barn chores. While not the most glamorous job at Inspire, these volunteers are essential for the care and safety of our very important horses. Please be sure to wear your name badge and touch base with the Barn Manager or Assistant Manager when you arrive and before you leave.

*Barn Volunteers scheduled while lessons are occurring are “standby” side walkers; where they may be called upon to assist as a side walker if the lesson is shorthanded. If your preference is to be a Barn Volunteer only, be sure to communicate that to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Horse Buddies: Each horse at Inspire is paired with a “Horse Buddy” volunteer to provide additional grooming and care of their belongings. Horse Buddy roles are reserved for long-term, dedicated volunteers who show an exemplary commitment to the program. Buddies are expected to commit to 1-2 hours a week outside of regular volunteer duties and are encouraged to schedule their buddy time for the same day and time each week. Interested applicants should contact the Barn Manager for more details. In order to be considered for a buddy position, volunteers must have completed the following criteria:

- Completed Volunteer Orientation & volunteered at least 1 year with a good history of attendance
- Completed Horse Handling Training
- Completed and passed Horse Leader Training
- Completed Horse Buddy Application
- Completed Horse Buddy Training

Facility Volunteers: Volunteers help with gardening, general maintenance, repairs and improvements to the facility.

Office Volunteers: Volunteers assist with general office support (data entry, reception, etc.).

Special Events Volunteers: Volunteers serve on event committees and assist with various fundraising events held throughout the year to benefit Inspire.

Special Skills Volunteers: Many volunteers come with special skills and talents such as photography, computer knowledge, grant writing, etc. and we encourage you to share those skills with us.

Senior Volunteers: This leadership position is reserved for individuals who demonstrate an exemplary commitment to the program and play a major role in supporting new incoming volunteers to the program. To learn more about becoming a Senior Volunteer, contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Senior Volunteer Criteria:

- Consistent volunteer service for 1 year
- Attend and pass Horse Leader Training
- Able to lead any horse, even most challenging
- Eager to share information & wisdom in a positive manner, and ability to effectively teach others
- Positive, friendly, patient, flexible, responsible, and mature
- Follow all Staff directions and accepts suggestions
- Demonstrate the ability to assist with grooming, tacking, basic horse handling and barn chores
- Works as a team member, following all Inspire guidelines & demonstrating a collaborative attitude
- Willing to continue learning by attending Inspire trainings and workshops
- Commit to a regular session schedule
- Knowledgeable of Inspire’s policies and procedures
- All staff feel volunteer is safe and effective in their role



Volunteer Training Manual Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Volunteers with Disabilities

Volunteer opportunities for individuals with disabilities are available on a case-by-case basis. Volunteer service by these individuals cannot interfere with the delivery of program services. To ensure that volunteering is a safe and enjoyable experience, volunteers with disabilities that require additional support and supervision must be accompanied by an aid. Service begins with a 2-week trial period to ensure suitability of the role.

Volunteer Appreciation and Incentive Program

1. Free Ongoing Trainings

Horse care and handling, horse leading, carriage driving, tack and equipment

2. Free Educational Workshops

Horse Behavior, equine health, disabilities

3. Discounted Professional Workshops

PATH Workshop and Certification

4. Volunteer Appreciation Week & Picnic

Inspire participates in the annual recognition of National Volunteer Week each spring. Participants, parents, staff and all those who have worked with and are supported by Inspire volunteers are encouraged to express their appreciation throughout the week. The week concludes with a Volunteer Picnic for volunteers and their families.

5. Free Introductory Riding Lessons, Carriage Driving, & Ground Lessons

Volunteers who demonstrate a commitment to their service to Inspire are eligible for a free introductory riding lesson, carriage ride, or ground lesson to be redeemed during a specified time. Annual volunteer application paperwork must be up to date to participate. Volunteers must weigh less than 200 lbs to ride. Volunteers are contacted via email to arrange their lesson time.

How to qualify:

- a. Maintain perfect attendance throughout a full-length session (minimum 2 hrs per week)
- b. Serve 50+ hours total during a full-length session.
- c. Each time a volunteer covers a shift as a substitute they will be entered for a chance to win a free incentive.

6. Incentives are available following a full-length session only (minimum 12 weeks)



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Volunteer Procedures, Policies, & Guidelines

Volunteer Sign In/Out

Upon arrival, volunteers are required to sign in, put on their name badge, and check the daily schedule for their assignment. At the end of their service, name badges are returned and volunteers sign out. Recording attendance is necessary for awarding volunteer riding incentives, writing recommendations for schools and employers, applying for grants, board reports, and most importantly to be accountable for all individuals on the property in the event of an emergency. Please allow up to 5 days to fulfill requests for a record of service or written letter of recommendation.

Program Closures and Lesson Cancellations

In the event that Inspire must close due to inclement weather, rider cancellations, or other circumstances, we will make every attempt to notify volunteers at least two hours in advance to their scheduled volunteer time. Inspire reserves the right to cancel lessons based on the availability of instructors, volunteers, and/or horses. Further, any factor or situation considered by Inspire staff to be a threat to the safety of students, volunteers, staff, or horses is reason for cancellation.

Weather Cancellation Policy

Lessons will be canceled if any of the following conditions occur:

- The high temperature or wind chill for the day is 25 degrees or lower
- The high temperature or heat index for the day is 98 degrees or higher
- The following conditions exist one hour prior to lesson time:
 - Winds exceeding 35 MPH
 - Tornado warnings, severe rain, or thunderstorms
 - Hazardous driving conditions
 - Tropical Storm or Hurricane Watches or Warnings

*In the event of extended closures, lessons will be canceled until the Executive Director determines the suitability of the horses to return to work.

Please note: When lessons are canceled, the barn will close at 4:00 pm. Barn Volunteers are still needed in the event of weather-related cancellations to care for our very special horses, *except in the case of unsafe driving conditions*. Our volunteers come from near and far, so if driving is hazardous in your area, please do not feel obligated to attend your regularly scheduled volunteer shift.

In the event that a severe weather emergency prevents a Barn Staff member from reporting to the farm, *all volunteers will be canceled*. The Executive Director will be able to tend to the horses during a severe weather emergency.

When in doubt about whether or not to attend your volunteer shift you may call or text 727-348-7104; email volunteercoordinator@inspireequinetherapyprogram.org; or check messages on Facebook.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Volunteer Commitment

Volunteer service is critical in serving our participants and horses. Our horses and participants depend on you and volunteer attendance is crucial to the success and safety of our programs. Inspire requests that volunteers be willing to commit to a minimum of two hours per week (same day and time) for the length of a session to ensure we have the support necessary to hold lessons and provide consistency for the riders. The smooth operation of our program depends on the commitment and reliability of our volunteers.

Excessive absences, defined as 3 times within a given session, may be grounds for reassignment or dismissal at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator. Inspire's relationship with its volunteers is of utmost importance; therefore, volunteers will be given an opportunity to discuss their attendance if corrective action is needed.

Volunteer Cancellations

When you commit to your volunteer role, your support is truly needed to serve our participants and care for our very special horses. Please reserve canceling your scheduled day and time for emergencies only. If you must cancel, please call Inspire (727-348-7104) at least 48 hours in advance so a substitute may be found. If possible, you may make up for your absence by volunteering on another day.

Reassignment and Termination Policy

Inspire policies have been determined to serve the best interest of the entire Inspire community. Safety and respect for participants, volunteers, staff, and horses are of utmost importance in providing a high quality program, and are the primary reasons for the strict adherence to these policies and procedures.

Volunteers who are not able to perform their volunteer role, or maintain a reasonable level of commitment, or fail to observe the policies and procedures of the program will be given an opportunity to discuss the situation that is perceived to be in violation of the Inspire policies and may be provided with job re-assignment. Because of the nature of the service provided, Inspire reserves the right to make the final determination as to the appropriateness of volunteers for our organization and may determine that it is in the best interest of the program to terminate a volunteer's involvement with the program.

Volunteer Scheduling

Volunteer assignments and schedules are based on interest, experience, and availability. Volunteers must confirm their shift each session. Volunteers continuing service from the prior session are given precedence for the coming session to remain in their shift. The program schedule may vary slightly from session to session, causing a change in horses, participants, and staff that are scheduled at a given time. We appreciate your flexibility and willingness to adapt to such changes.

Our program faces various operational and capacity limitations which in turn limit the number of volunteer shifts available at any given time. Please do not arrive at a time you are not scheduled. Limited numbers of volunteers are scheduled to ensure that everyone has a safe, valuable, and rewarding experience at the farm. If a volunteer's preferred role or time is not available, they will be placed on the Wait List until there is an opening. Volunteers on the Wait List are encouraged to continue their service by attending workshops, helping with special events, and picking up shifts as a substitute. Thank you for your patience and willingness to grow with us!



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Confidentiality Policy

Any information in regards to the participants of Inspire including: riders, volunteers, horses, and personnel shall remain privileged and confidential. This information may include, but is not limited to, any medical, social, referral, personal, and/or financial information. Information concerning students and horses will be shared with volunteers on a need to know basis. If you have a concern or question regarding a participant or horse, please communicate directly and privately with the involved Instructor, or Staff Member and remember to maintain confidentiality of the issue. Disclosure of any confidential information shall not be released to anyone not associated with Inspire. Volunteers must seek staff permission prior to taking any pictures or videos.

Communication and Questions

While you are volunteering...

If at any time, you are unclear regarding your volunteer role or responsibilities, please direct questions to the Volunteer Coordinator, an instructor, or staff member. During lessons, the instructor is responsible for each rider, horse, and volunteer in the lesson. All directions from the instructor should be followed including the assignment of riders, horses and volunteers, mounts/dismounts and lesson structure. For the safety of all, it is crucial to adhere to the instructor's decisions. In the barn, the Barn Manager or Assistant Barn Manager is responsible for each horse and volunteer. All directions from the Barn Managers should be followed including preparation of the horse for lessons, assignment of volunteers, and tasks to be completed. Always ask if you are unsure of anything or do not feel comfortable completing a task.

Volunteer Room

Check the bulletin board and sign-in table for news, messages, and special treats!

Email

Monthly newsletters and weekly substitute requests are distributed via email. *The best way to reach the Volunteer Coordinator is via email.* Please be sure to notify the Volunteer Coordinator if your email address changes so you do not miss any important correspondence.

Name Badges

Different name badge stickers are assigned depending on the role of the volunteer. Please see the chart in the Volunteer Room for what each sticker means.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Clothing Policy

Volunteers should dress appropriately for the weather, and in clothing that does not restrict movement or vision. All volunteers *must* wear protective footwear; a leather boot is recommended or a close-toed shoe that will not hold sand from the arena. Please keep in mind Inspire is a professional organization and may often have unannounced visits or media opportunities. Each volunteer will receive one Inspire logo t shirt with their registration fee. Additional shirts can be purchased.

Please respect the following guidelines:

- No open-toed shoes of any style
- No dangling jewelry
- No perfume (attracts bugs/some participants may have allergies)
- No tank tops/halter tops/tube tops
- Modest shorts are permitted and must be mid thigh in length
- No obscene logos or political statements

Food and Refreshments

Inspire provides a refrigerator for volunteers. We often have water and snacks available, but cannot guarantee additional refreshments. Volunteers are welcome to bring food and drinks to Inspire. Please label any items put in the refrigerator with your name and date.

Working with a Special-Needs Population

Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take time to know your participant and direct questions to the instructors. Often, a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others. Above all, please treat individuals with respect, being considerate and sensitive to their needs.

Wheelchair Etiquette: Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind. Always ask the wheelchair user 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; and speak directly - be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get yourself on the same level as the wheelchair.

General Guidelines for Working with Individuals with Hearing/Language

Impairment: Try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking to him/her. Speak clearly, avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words and avoid long verbal instructions/conversation. Become familiar with hand gestures/body positions that the participant may be using to represent words and concepts. Direct questions to your instructor. Provide assistance with communication when needed (i.e., visual cues, gestures, etc). Alert the Instructor if the participant is having difficulty with hearing aid (i.e., ringing).

Escorting an Individual with a Visual

Impairment: If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. 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. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to have assistance. Repeat/verbalize information that may be written/posted. If you're uncertain of what to do, ask your instructor how you can be of further assistance.

Non-Verbal or Limited Verbal Expression:

Many of our participants are non-verbal or limited in their verbal expression. To enhance communication with these individuals, instructors and volunteers may reinforce requests and directions with basic American Sign Language (ASL).



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Inspire Operations & Policies

Program Operations

Inspire conducts lessons year-round except on Sundays, in July and August and for major holidays. Volunteers are still needed on days without lessons to help care for the horses. Each program session typically runs for the duration of 12 weeks, followed by either a holiday or summer break. No lessons occur during breaks, but barn volunteers are still needed to care for the horses.

Inspire Farm Rules

General Rules

- Volunteers should always follow the direction of the supervising Staff member.
- Excessive noise or commotion in or around the stable or riding arena is not permitted.
- All children must be kept under the supervision of an adult at all times.
- Appropriate footwear should be worn around the horses and farm. Sandals/open toed shoes are not permitted.
- The barn and grounds should be kept neat & orderly at all times. All equipment must be kept clean and in its proper place. Aisles should be kept clear of wheelbarrows, pitchforks, etc.
- Manure should be removed from aisle way or around the stable immediately.
- Visitors are welcome with prior approval by the Volunteer Coordinator outside of your volunteer shift hours. All visitors must sign a release of liability.
- Visitors/participants/parents should not enter the barn unless they have the express permission of a staff member – they should be supervised at ALL times.
- Cell phones and car alarms must be turned off as they disrupt lessons and startle horses.
- The consumption of alcohol prior to and/or while at Inspire is prohibited, except for events approved by Inspire. The use of illegal substances prior to and/or while at Inspire is strictly prohibited. Firearms are not allowed on Inspire property at any time.
- Please refrain from offering food or other gifts to participants without permission as they may have a medical condition such as food allergies, diabetes, etc.
- Do not perform a volunteer role you have not yet been trained for.

Horse Rules

- No changes to horse's equipment, appearance, feeding or exercise program without the direct approval of the Executive Director.
- **NO TREATS ARE PERMITTED TO BE GIVEN TO ANY HORSE BY HAND AT ANY TIME.** Treats may be given to the Barn Manager to determine suitability to add to a horse's meal.
- If you see any injury or abnormality on any horse, please notify a staff member immediately.
- Do not enter stalls or fields that contain horses unless you have been trained and asked to do so by a staff member.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Facility Rules

- NO SMOKING anywhere except on the dock by the water.
- Only pre approved service dogs allowed on property.
- Keep all automobiles in designated parking areas.
- Keep all driveways clear at all times. Driveways are also used as fire lanes.
- Keep all gates closed and latched unless otherwise specified.
- All sheds, pastures, stalls and farm equipment are out of bounds unless accompanied or invited by a staff member. Volunteers should follow the direction of the supervising Barn Manager.
- If you notice a broken fence, gate or anything out of the ordinary on the grounds, notify the staff immediately.
- The Main Office is for staff only. Volunteers can not hang out in the Main office. They may take their breaks in the Volunteer Room.
- Volunteers are not permitted to drive any equipment on the property unless trained by the Barn or Facilities Manager.

Utility Cart Rules

1. No one under the age of 16 or without a driver's license is permitted to drive the utility cart unless given permission from a staff member.
2. When driving anywhere on the property speed limit must not exceed 5 mph.
3. Always use caution when driving in and out of paddocks. Make sure there are no horses near the gate before opening and make sure the gate is opened wide for the utility cart to have enough clearance to pass.
4. Keep a safe distance from horses at all times. Never drive up behind a horse.
5. Always look behind you when backing up. Do not rely on the backing signal to warn others.
6. When approaching a horse and rider anywhere on the farm, stop and wait for them to pass you. If they give you the OK to pass, drive slowly and quietly.
7. When parking the utility cart turn the key to the off position. This will help preserve the battery life.
8. Only 2 people may ride in the utility cart at one time.

Inspire Social Media Policy

- [Facebook.com/InspireEquineTherapyProgram](https://www.facebook.com/InspireEquineTherapyProgram)
- [Twitter.com/ETInspire](https://twitter.com/ETInspire)
- [Instagram.com/inspireequinetherapy](https://www.instagram.com/inspireequinetherapy)
- [TikTok.com/inspireequinetherapy](https://www.tiktok.com/inspireequinetherapy)
- Social media platforms are used to promote Inspire's mission and share information related to its programs, operations, needs and events. Inspire reserves the right to monitor its sites for inappropriate messages or misuse and remove offending material at our discretion. Inappropriate use of Inspire sites includes, but is not limited to, posting spam, unauthorized advertising, offensive statements, inaccurate information, foul language, and irrelevant, hurtful or nonconstructive criticism of Inspire, the Inspire family, or the greater equine assisted services community. Postings on Inspire social media sites constitutes permission to use comments, photos, and videos (provided they do not violate privacy policy) in both online and offline venues, including but not limited to our website, social media platforms, presentations to supporters, brochures, direct mail, and publications.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

1. The Inspire Team will monitor our social media sites daily to ensure that cases of exploitation or misuse are dealt with promptly.
2. Inspire staff will respond to user feedback in a timely manner, directing inquiries to the appropriate staff member to follow-up.
3. Inspire will acknowledge mistakes when they are made and address them in a timely and open manner with an eye toward continuous improvement.
4. Inspire will correct inaccurate information when it is posted on one of our sites.
5. Inspire will remove postings on Inspire social media sites that purposely or inadvertently violate our participants rights to privacy.
6. We will remove vulgar or inflammatory postings.
7. Inspire will review postings to ensure that they do not violate our participants privacy and that they have consented to release of photos or other audiovisual material depicting them. If they have not consented, the images will be removed.
8. We will remove postings that represent advertising for products or services not associated with Inspire.
9. We will remove negative postings on Inspire social media sites about competitors.
10. Inspire will respect copyright restrictions in what is posted on our sites, ensuring where possible that sources for information, photos, and thoughts are cited properly.
11. Postings, including photos and videos, on Inspire social media sites become part of the public domain and are subject to exchange and sharing.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Risk Management

Volunteers are responsible for knowing and following all safety rules, emergency policies and procedures as indicated, supporting all efforts to promote safe working conditions, making full use of safety equipment, immediately reporting any unsafe working conditions or behaviors, and knowing the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, emergency exits and emergency plans.

Emergency Procedures

Policies and procedures are put in place and expected to be followed for the safety and well-being of participants, staff, volunteers and guests of any and all Inspire programs and facilities. When working with horses, as much as we care and love them, a human's life must ALWAYS come first. It is of utmost importance to remain calm, reassure participants, and take direction from Inspire staff and instructors. Inspire staff are responsible for managing the emergency and applying any first aid required. Volunteers may be called upon to assist.

Emergency Dismount

During riding sessions, the instructor performs rider mounts and dismounts. However, in certain situations, the instructor may ask volunteers to perform an emergency dismount. For a detailed description of emergency dismount procedures, please refer to the Horse Leader Training or Side walker training handouts.

Fallen Riders, Medical Emergencies, Accidents, & Injuries

The Inspire staff Manager on Duty must be notified of any injury or medical emergency occurring on the property. The manager on duty is responsible for managing the emergency including evaluating the scene, determining if additional medical assistance is required, and providing any first aid required. Designated volunteers may be asked to assist by retrieving a first aid kit, calling for emergency medical assistance (911), and locating emergency medical forms. An occurrence report must be completed by staff and involved individuals for every incident. Blank occurrence report forms can be found in the red binder on the bookshelf in the Main office. Completed reports should be left on the desk of the Executive Director for review.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Calling for Emergency Medical Assistance

In the event of an emergency, volunteers may be asked to call for emergency medical assistance. They may use a personal cell phone or find the telephone located on each desk in the Main Office. Emergency call information is posted beside the telephone.

Location of First Aid Kits

Human First-Aid Kit - Located in the main office.

Horse First-Aid Kit - Located in cabinet in tack room.

Fire Procedure

- A Staff Member may extinguish fire with fire extinguisher if the fire is smaller than an office trash can.

Locations of Fire Extinguishers

- Main Barn (2) – one next to tack room and one near the feed room
- Maintenance Room (1) – on wall by main door
- House (1) – located by front door

- If the fire cannot be extinguished without the assistance of emergency personnel, a Staff Member will call 911.
- All persons will evacuate and congregate at flagpole in the backyard. No one should leave until a staff member indicates it is safe to do so. Volunteer Manager will take head count of volunteers; instructors will take head count of riders. Manager on Duty will complete overall head count.

Equine Procedures

- Horses will be evacuated by Barn Staff to fields away from danger.

Lesson Procedures

1. Riders will be dismounted and remain with their parents or caregiver and go to designated area out of harm's way.
2. Instructors will direct volunteers to remove equipment/un tack horses and turn out in field away from danger. Equipment may remain where it is.
3. All persons will congregate at flag pole in the backyard.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Tornado, Hurricane, or Severe Thunderstorm Procedure

Manager on Duty is responsible for monitoring the weather forecast for the farm.

If a severe weather advisory has been announced or there is an imminent threat, all lessons will be canceled and volunteers will be advised NOT to come to the farm if there is sufficient time to do so and the following procedure will take place:

1. Any person that arrives at the farm or is already present will be asked to leave if it is safe to travel.
2. Riders will be dismounted and remain with their parent or caregiver in a designated safe area.
3. Instructors will direct volunteers to untack horses and return them to a safe place, such as their stall.
4. If it is not safe to move horses to their stall from riding arena, they should remain in the arena, un-tacked if possible and held by a competent person.
5. Equipment can be left safely out of the way.
6. Instructors will remain with volunteers and horses in the arena if they cannot return to barn.
7. Barn Staff members will tend to the horses.
8. Horses will be untacked and provided with a safe place, such as their stall, with plenty of water and supply of hay.
9. Stall doors and windows will be closed with at least one window cracked for ventilation
10. No one should enter stalls for any reason.
11. Lights and electrical equipment should be turned off and unplugged.
12. The large barn doors can be closed.
13. Humans should seek safety in buildings and possibly in doorways until the threat has passed.
14. Riding helmets can be worn if needed.



Volunteer Training Manual

Inspire Equine Therapy Program

Your First Day...

“Wow! This has been a lot of information to remember!” Once you get used to the routine at Inspire, it really is quite easy. Always feel free to ask a staff member any questions you may have. This page has been provided as a quick reference to help you get started as an Inspire volunteer.

When you arrive

1. **REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE** on the Volunteer Attendance Portal (located on the tablet in the Volunteer Lounge). If you leave keys, jackets or other personal belongings, please remember that Inspire is not responsible for loss of those items. When possible, items should be locked in your car.
2. Put on a **NAMETAG**. If yours is missing, make a temporary one. It is very important to wear your name tag so others can identify you. *Notify the Volunteer Coordinator if you need a new name badge so the appropriate identifications can be assigned.*
3. **CHECK BULLETIN BOARDS FOR ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS, FLYERS, OR SIGN-UP SHEETS**. Please remember to check for updates by reading Inspire e-mails.
4. **CHECK IN WITH THE BARN STAFF**. Check the schedule for the day posted in the Main Barn.

LEADERS - Help groom, tack, and warm up your assigned horse.

SIDEWALKERS - Greet your rider, and, if necessary, assist them with their helmet. Then wait with the rider until time to mount. While waiting for your rider, you may help with the horses or you may be needed to help set up the arena for the lesson.

BARN VOLUNTEERS – Communicate with Barn Staff about tasks for the shift.

Before you leave

1. **LEADERS**: Make sure all grooming kits and tack are put away. If the horse is not used again, you may leave him in the stall or turn out to pasture at the request of the Barn Staff.
2. **SIDEWALKERS**: Once your last rider has left, you may help put away equipment and pick manure from arena.
3. **BARN VOLUNTEERS**: Inform the Barn Staff before you leave.
3. **ALWAYS CHECK WITH INSTRUCTOR OR BARN STAFF BEFORE YOU LEAVE**. If the rider to whom you are assigned is absent, you may still be needed to help with other riders or the barn.
4. **RECORD VOLUNTEER HOURS** in Volunteer Attendance Log. Collect any personal belongings and return your name tag.

Thank you for your volunteer service and commitment to Inspire!