



*Turning Disabilities into Possibilities*

## **VOLUNTEER MANUAL**

**9168 T.N. Skiles Road, Ponder, TX 76259  
940-479-2016**

Updated Summer 2015

## **THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING WITH RIDING UNLIMITED!**

**WELCOME!** The riders, horses, current volunteers and staff are very grateful that you have decided to share some of your valuable time with Riding Unlimited. Our riders are the heart of our program and you, the volunteer, are the heartbeat.

Riding Unlimited's mission is to provide a therapeutic horsemanship program that is dedicated to enabling the North Texas disabled community by enhancing their physical, social, educational and emotional abilities. We cannot achieve this mission without your generosity and kind heart.

We value your stay with us highly and believe that you will benefit from your volunteer work with Riding Unlimited. Our goal is to ensure that you find your time here valued, appreciated, rewarding and enjoyable. I am reminded daily of the impact your decision to share your knowledge, your patience and an arm of support has made upon our riders and their families.

If I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me. Once again, **THANK YOU** for becoming the heartbeat of Riding Unlimited.

Demi Prentiss, Volunteer Coordinator  
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*"Struggles come with the territory, the difference is attitude. You can look at a disability negatively or choose to view it positively and turn it into ability. I love being a Riding Unlimited volunteer, especially when I watch faces light up as riders 'walk' with the help of their horses".*

~ Mike Marinko, Volunteer



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## **MISSION & HISTORY**

Riding Unlimited is a 501(c)(3) non-profit therapeutic horseback riding program and a PATH (formerly North American Riding for the Handicapped Association) Premier Accredited Center. Riding Unlimited is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with physical, educational and intellectual disabilities through the power of the horse. Riding Unlimited – a place where the possibilities are unlimited! Founded in 1990, Riding Unlimited acquired its current 49-acre facility in the fall of 1997. Classes are currently being provided Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

## **FUNDING**

Riding Unlimited receives no funding from any federal or state sources. Our program relies on private and corporate donations, grants, rider tuition, and proceeds from special events. If you would like to help by donating items, prizes or sponsorships for events please call the Riding Unlimited office: 940-479-2016.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Riding Unlimited serves participants with a wide range of physical, mental, emotional, and learning disabilities. The participants range in age from 2 years to senior adults. Riding Unlimited currently serves approximately 75 riders. For more enrollment information, contact the Director at (940) 479-2016 or via e-mail at [director@ridingunlimited.org](mailto:director@ridingunlimited.org).

## **STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

Riding Unlimited is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. In addition to the staff, approximately 200 volunteers donate over 12,000 hours of service annually! Volunteers assist in classes, with feeding, special events, board committees, clerical, promotional, and fundraising activities. Riding Unlimited instructors have attained certification as a PATH certified instructor. For more information on volunteering, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (940) 479-2016 or [volunteer@ridingunlimited.org](mailto:volunteer@ridingunlimited.org).

## **HORSES**

Riding Unlimited currently has 15 horses; most have been donated to the program. Our horses are composed of a variety of breeds, shapes and sizes. Prior to acceptance into the program, all horses are extensively evaluated and screened before they are accepted. Riding Unlimited only accepts gentle horses with good dispositions that are basically sound and have appropriate movement for therapeutic riding. For more information on donating a horse or tack, contact our Director at (940) 479-2016 or [director@ridingunlimited.org](mailto:director@ridingunlimited.org).

## WHAT IS THERAPEUTIC RIDING

Horseback riding as a therapy originated in Europe in the 1950's. Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH) (previously NARHA – North American Riding for the Handicapped Association) was established in 1969 to promote, support and regulate the practice of therapeutic riding around the country. There are four primary fields of therapeutic riding each with a different approach and focus. An integrated approach uses all four fields; however, each can be practiced as a specialty.

**THERAPY:** Equine activities are used as a form of therapy to achieve physical, psychological, cognitive, behavioral, and communication goals. The therapy is provided by a licensed/credentialed health professional.

**EDUCATION:** Equine activities are used to achieve psycho-educational goals for people with physical, mental and psychological impairments as well as to provide the individuals with skills in the sport chosen. The horse is a strong motivator of accomplishing these goals.

**SPORT:** People with physical, mental and psychological impairments can participate in sport activities with the horse. These activities include riding, driving and vaulting as forms of recreation and competition. Activities are directed toward the acquisition of skills leading to the accomplishment of specific horsemanship goals.

**RECREATION & LEISURE:** People with physical, mental and psychological impairments may use equine activities as an enjoyable and relaxing experience that provides benefits in the areas of socialization, posture, mobility and an overall improved quality of life.

### ***BENEFITS INCLUDE:***

- ◆ Improving gross and fine motor skills.
- ◆ Experiencing the 3-dimensional movement of the horse that provides hip and back action that simulates natural walking gait and cannot be duplicated in a clinical setting.
- ◆ Enhancing balance and posture.
- ◆ Stimulating the cardiovascular system.
- ◆ Building self-esteem and confidence.
- ◆ Developing a meaningful relationship with the volunteers and horse.
- ◆ Channeling aggressive or hyperactive behavior into constructive activity.
- ◆ Increasing ability to follow directions.
- ◆ Improving memory utilization.
- ◆ Developing sequencing abilities.

Riding Unlimited is a PATH Premier Accredited Center. PATH centers are the heart of the riding for the disabled community as they bring together all the necessary individuals, horses, equipment and program knowledge. PATH centers range from small, one-person programs serving a half-dozen riders to large operations with several instructors serving up to 200 riders per week.

The purpose of the PATH Accreditation Program is to provide a process of evaluation that recognizes a center's program as meeting basic standards for health and safety to promote the well-being of all participants and horses. PATH centers must renew their accreditation every five years through the process of an on-site visit, which includes a review of administration, program and facility standards. PATH also provides a program for instructor certification.

## ***Questions to ask when selecting a therapeutic riding program...***

### ***About Safety...***

Does the program use appropriate safety equipment?

- ASTM-SEI approved helmets
- Safety stirrups

*All Riding Unlimited saddles are equipped with safety stirrups. Participants are encouraged to also wear boots or hard-soled shoes with heels. Any saddles belonging to Riding Unlimited participants, volunteers, or staff must have safety stirrups or the rider must wear riding boots or hard-soled shoes with heels. All Riding Unlimited participants, staff, volunteers, and guests are required to wear ASTM/SEI approved helmets when mounted.*

Do they have a safely built, fully enclosed indoor/outdoor arena accessible to people with disabilities?  
*Riding Unlimited has a fully enclosed indoor arena and two accessible enclosed outdoor arenas.*

Is the program equipped with a ramp and mounting block? *Riding Unlimited has a ramp and mounting blocks.*

What are the program's emergency procedures and are all the volunteers trained in this procedure?  
*See Volunteer Manual pg. 3.7 – 3.8) Emergency drills are done during the third week of every session.*

### ***About Volunteers...***

Do the volunteers receive training?

*No volunteer is allowed to work in the classes until they have been trained. See the Volunteer Manual for specific responsibilities and training.*

What role do the volunteers play? *Primarily Horse Handlers and Sidewalkers See Volunteer Manual.*

### ***About the Program...***

Is the program accredited with the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH)?

*Adhering carefully to PATH standards is a good indication of a conscientious riding center. PATH is the national association for therapeutic riding (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International). It establishes industry standards, policies and procedures that promote safety to all riders and volunteers. It is an excellent resource for obtaining extensive information regarding therapeutic riding or information on a particular center in your area. You can call 1-800-369-7433.*

*Founded in 1990, Riding Unlimited is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Riding Unlimited is a PATH Premier Accredited Center. Accreditation focuses on education and evaluation of a center's program using standards that are considered basic to therapeutic riding. There are over 80 PATH Standards encompassing administration, program and facility issues.*

Are the instructors PATH Certified? *Riding Unlimited instructors hold PATH certification.*

Does the program require a physician's release for participation?

*All participants should have an up-to-date physician's release.*

*All participants are required to have a physician's release in order to participate.*

### ***Other information you might want to know...***

Does the program charge a fee? *Yes*

Does the program provide scholarships? *Scholarships are awarded on a sliding scale.*

Does the program run year round or is it seasonal? *Year round*

Have the horses been trained for therapeutic riding? *Most of the horses are donated. All incoming horses are taken on a 60 day trial. They are introduced to the many things that a therapeutic riding horse is required to deal with – mounting ramps, balls and toys being thrown, people walking on both sides of them, etc. The horses must pass a long list of checks in order to be accepted into the program.*

Do the horses seem happy, healthy, willing, alert, and responsive? *Please come for a visit and see!*

Are the horses checked periodically by a veterinarian and a farrier? *They are regularly seen by veterinarians and a farrier.*

# **THE RIDING UNLIMITED TEAM**

## **A Horse, a Heart, and a Heartbeat**

Each riding lesson centers on a team effort of people and horses working together to accomplish certain therapeutic riding goals. The Riding Unlimited Team consists of:

### **THE RIDER**

The Heart of our team!

### **THE HORSE**

Whose job is to carry the rider safely, smoothly, and obediently. Their hoofbeats often go unnoticed, but their imprint is significant.

### **THE INSTRUCTOR**

Whose job is to set goals for the rider and through guidance, encouragement, and knowledge help him/her to reach those goals.

### **THE HORSE HANDLER**

Whose job is to maintain constant awareness and control of the horse.

### **THE SIDEWALKER**

Whose job is to greet the rider, secure the designated helmet for the rider, pay constant attention to the rider and give physical and motivational support as indicated by the instructor.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT DURING A LESSON**

One two or three volunteers and an instructor may work with a group of riders in an enclosed arena, pasture, or barn for any of several purposes. The rider may learn special riding skills, care of the horse or how to saddle a horse. The rider may play games on horseback, learn dressage or go for a trail ride or participate in the carriage driving program. Each rider has individual goals to work toward. As a volunteer you will be involved in every aspect of the lesson from grooming and tacking, greeting the rider, during the class itself, feedback to the instructor, and clean up following class.

# HORSE HANDLERS

To ensure the safety of our participants, volunteers and horses, anyone wishing to lead a horse in Riding Unlimited classes should have **significant previous experience working with horses**. Potential handlers will be evaluated on their skill at working safely around horses, reading a horse's attitude and body language, knowing how to react to horse behaviors, being aware of their own body language and the environment and remaining calm and focused.

**Handler Certification:** Qualifications for Horse Handler Certification:

- ◆ Significant prior experience with grooming, tacking, and handling a variety of horses.
- ◆ Commitment to read, understand, and apply all RU equine procedures.
- ◆ Pass the Riding Unlimited Horse Handler Certification test.

Handler Certification will be conducted in three phases:

Phase 1 – candidates will be asked to:

- Halter a specific horse in a pasture with other horses
- Lead the horse through the gate
- Lead the horse and put him into a specific stall or to the assigned tacking area
- Groom and clean hooves
- Tack horse for class

Phase 2 – demonstrate safe horse handling skills (before and during class) and the ability to learn Riding Unlimited methods during the Volunteer Training session.

Phase 3 – candidate must pass a written handler test.

## **Primary Responsibility of a Horse Handler**

**The horse handler is directly responsible for the horse.**

## **Handler Responsibilities**

- Arrive 45 minutes before class time for grooming/tacking horses.
- Upon arrival get the assigned horse from stall or pasture, groom, and tack correctly. **Begin warming up assigned horse 10 – 15 minutes before class begins.** Warming up consists of a hand walk/trot/halts and familiarizing with props to be used in class that day.
- Mounting

## **Mounting:**

To lead the horse into the mounting ramp the horse handler must turn and walk backwards. Stop the horse just before his front legs reach the exit steps. In the event the horse is too far forward, take the horse around again – **NEVER BACK THE HORSE IN THE RAMP!** Stand in front of the horse while the rider is mounting. This serves as a psychological barrier to the horse and he is less likely to move forward. Give the horse an arms length of “personal space” – do not crowd his head.

## **Riding:**

In order to avoid a dangerous situation, **never drop the lead rope or leave the horse unattended.** Slowly move the horse forward only when the instructor indicates or the rider gives the signal, either a tap on the saddle or the command to “walk on!” **Give rider time to process information before gently making the horse comply with any command.** Sometimes it may be appropriate to walk up to a fence and stand until the rider figures out what to do. **Let the riders ride!** Avoid the temptation to talk to the rider or other volunteers. Too much input is confusing.

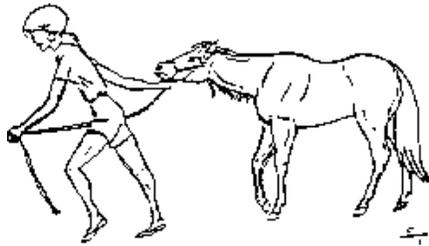
**Lesson:**

A horse handler's primary responsibility is the horse, but he must also be constantly aware of the rider, instructor and any potential hazards in or around the arena. Try to think like the horse. Anticipate things that may frighten or upset him. In addition, the horse handler must consider the sidewalkers, making sure there is enough room along fences and around obstacles for them to pass.

**Figure A** depicts a few faults common among leaders. Here is a leader grimly marching along. Her head is down, one hand on the lead snap, the other inside the coiled end of the rope and she's dragging a strung-out horse. In a battle with a horse, you lose. You must get the horse to cooperate. Walk alongside the horse about even with his eye. This position helps keep him in a proper frame, which is more beneficial for everyone.

Talk to the horse; most of them know "whoa", "walk on", and "trot". Watch where you're going and what's happening around you. **Do not** walk backward to look at the rider. It's dangerous for everyone and the horse isn't eager to follow someone who can't see where he is going.

Figure A



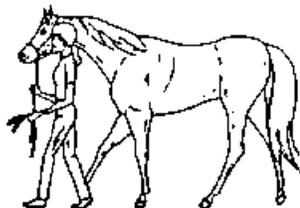
**Figure B** shows the correct position for leaders. The lead shank is held with the right hand, 6-12 inches from the snap, allowing free motion of the horse's head. This position is more therapeutic to the rider and less irritating to the horse. The tail end of the lead should be looped in a figure eight in the left hand to avoid tripping on it. **Never coil the rope around your hand.** A sudden pull could crush or amputate your fingers.



Correct hold

Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving. The horse can set himself against a steady pull, but tugs keep him awake. When halting for more than a few seconds, remember to wait for the "whoa" signal from the rider then stand in front of the horse's head. Always leave two horse's lengths between you and the horse in front of you. If passing is necessary, pass toward the inside of the arena.

Figure B



**In case of an accident:**

If the worst happens and there is an accident, stay with the horse. There are other people to care for a fallen rider. The situation could easily become more dangerous if there are loose horses running around the arena. Move your horse as far from the fallen student as possible and keep calm. Listen for the instructor's directions.

**Dismounting & Procedures after class:** Leaders do not dismount riders! Be sure the rider has completely dismounted and left the arena before leading the horse away. Encourage the rider to give the horse a pat. If the horse is not being used in the next class, return him to the stall or pasture upon instructor's request. **Never tie a horse by the reins, bridle or side pull. Use halters only to tie a horse.**

**Goal:** The goal of a good horse handler is to control the horse, be a good aide to the rider, and a valuable assistant to the instructor. You can provide real therapeutic input to the rider, as well as make it safe for him to have fun riding.

# SIDEWALKERS

## Primary Responsibilities:

Sidewalkers are the ones who normally get the most hands-on duties in therapeutic riding. **The primary responsibility of a sidewalker is the rider.** As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson. Sidewalkers should supervise the riders upon arrival and until they leave. This means greeting the rider, helping him/her find the appropriate helmet and waiting with the rider until it is time to mount. This is a good time to visit and get to know the rider.

## Mounting:

One sidewalker may be asked to stand on the offside mounting block. If there are two sidewalkers, the other one will wait just inside the arena gate to take over from the mounting personnel. Once the rider is securely in the saddle after mounting, the instructor or rider will give the signal to "Walk On!"

## Riding:

The instructor will inform the sidewalker(s) about the kind of assistance the rider needs. It is important to maintain a position by the rider's knee. Stay within arms reach of your rider at all times. Being too far forward or back will make it very difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy.

Some riders require the "over the thigh" hold (see picture). The sidewalker places his forearm *gently* over the rider's thigh and holds on to the front of the saddle. Be careful that the elbow doesn't accidentally dig into the rider's leg. Likewise, **do not rest your elbow on the horse's back or lean on the horse. It hurts the horse.** If your arm tires, ask the horse handler to go into the center of the arena. Stop and switch sides moving in front of the horse, **one sidewalker at a time. Do not both let go of the rider; one person must secure them.** If there is only one sidewalker, go into the center and ask the instructor for help.



Do not wrap an arm around the riders' waist. It is tempting, especially when walking beside a pony with a young or small rider, but it can offer uneven support. At times, it can even pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. Some riders do not require any "hands on" assistance.

## Lessons

Sidewalkers should help the rider focus his attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with either the rider or other volunteers. Allow enough time for the rider to process directions. 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 there are two sidewalkers, it is preferred that only one sidewalker verbally reinforce the instructor's directions. Too much input can be confusing to the rider. If the instructor says, "turn right", and the student seems confused, gently tap the right hand and say "right" to reinforce the command. You will get to know the riders and learn when they need help and when they're just not paying attention.

Sometimes the volunteers forget that the riders are doing the exercises and the sidewalkers are there to reinforce and assist. Encourage riders to use their own trunk muscles to the best of their abilities. The same applies to games. Avoid being so competitive that the rider doesn't get to use his/her own skills because you do it for him/her in an all out effort to win.

Should the need arise for an emergency dismount, it is the responsibility of the instructor to perform an emergency dismount. However, if the circumstances are such that the instructor is not close enough to do the emergency dismount it then becomes the responsibility of the sidewalker on the inside circle of the arena, if possible.

## Goal:

The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch, grow, and develop to his fullest potential. Your job by the rider's side is to help the instructor challenge him/her to the best of his/her ability.

## **Guidelines for volunteers in a driving class:**

*There is additional training required to be a volunteer in a driving class.*



- ◆ Headers (trained horse handler) and spotters should be within a reasonable distance to render aid. The designated header will have a lead rope with them at all times.
- ◆ Volunteers should know where to locate emergency equipment (i.e. whistle)
- ◆ Operating knowledge of all securing mechanisms and loading and unloading procedures.
- ◆ Headers attach lead rope to noseband when heading the horse. Attach the lead to the ring on the underhalter or the ring on the halter if it is under/over the bridle. If the bridle has a noseband the lead rope may be attached to the underside of the noseband.  
Unless the header is leading the horse, lead ropes should be removed. NEVER attach the lead rope around the horse's neck.
- ◆ Additional volunteers may be needed on the ground for beginning drivers.  
Spotters may be needed for advanced whips.

## GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Opportunities:** Most volunteers will serve as either horse handlers or sidewalkers. However, there are many other areas in which you can assist that do not involve working directly with our riders. (See Riding Unlimited Volunteer Registration)

**Requirements:** Volunteers who work with the riders must be at least 14 years old and physically able to occasionally jog for short distances during the 45-60 minute class. Take into consideration conditions such as bad knees, recent surgery, asthma, etc.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is **vital** to our program. We ask that a session volunteer commit to a full session. In the event that you must be absent, please call your Daily Coordinator at 940-479-2016 as soon as possible so a substitute can be found. Upon arrival, check off your name on the Attendance Sheet (located in the RU Corral). Remember that, for safety reasons, **nametags (first and last name) are mandatory**. Before you leave, record your hours and return your nametag.

**Punctuality:** Volunteers should arrive at least 15 minutes before the class starts. Horse handlers need to arrive 45 minutes before class to groom and tack assigned horse and to hand walk/trot as warm-up 10-15 minutes prior to class. Late arrivals are frustrating to a rider anticipating their weekly ride. Please call the Riding Unlimited office if the unexpected should arise and you are running late (940-479-2016).

**Bad Weather:** Classes will only be cancelled in the event of dangerous or threatening weather. **IT IS THE VOLUNTEER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CALL THE RIDING UNLIMITED OFFICE 940-479-2016.**

**Parking:** Please park in the assigned volunteer parking area located next to the two tan barns (to your right just inside the second gate). Look for the "Volunteer Parking" signs. Parking in front of the arena and "Mare Motel" is reserved for clients. Staff parking is at the far end of "Mare Motel."

**Dress:** Wear sensible and comfortable clothing. Closed covered shoes are a safety requirement. The weather can be unpredictable so come with a few layers of clothing. When it is hot, bring water in cups that are easily identifiable and one that will not blow away. During and following wet weather, bring boots and any appropriate raingear. Jewelry can get lost in the arena or in a stall. Anything that dangles may be an attraction to the rider – small children may grab or pull. Wear no or neutral perfumes and lotions. Certain scents may cause a reaction in some of the riders and it may attract bees or other bugs. Tie long hair up or back.

**Children & Pets:** Due to safety concerns, **unsupervised children and pets are not allowed**. Please make other arrangements for your children on days that you volunteer with Riding Unlimited. A Junior Volunteer Program is offered (ages 11 - 14).

**Conduct at the Center:** It is mandatory that everyone complies with all posted **safety rules**. Abide by all posted **off-limit areas**. Riding Unlimited is a **no smoking** facility and the use of **drugs or alcohol on the property is strictly forbidden**. No mistreatment or abuse of any animal will be tolerated.

## VOLUNTEER STEPS

It is very important that every volunteer take the time to record hours worked. This record is the only verification of your volunteer time. Volunteer hours are also very important to our program in relation to grant writing.

1. **SIGN IN:** You must record both your attendance and your hours. The Volunteer Attendance and Hours Notebook is located in the RU Corral. Record ALL scheduled absences by placing an "A" next to your name corresponding to the dates you will be absent and inform your Daily Coordinator of those days.
2. **NAME BADGE:** For safety reasons, a name badge is **MANDATORY**. If yours is missing, use a stick-on tag found in the RU Corral – first and last name are required. Return your badge before you leave.
3. **CHECK BULLETIN BOARD** for any announcements. This board is located in the RU Corral. Due to our extensive volunteer base the bulletin board is the quickest way we have of communicating with everyone. Use the Pony Express Mailbox for comments, suggestions, etc.
4. **CHECK ASSIGNMENT BOARD** located in the Indoor Arena.
5. **CHECK CLASS & EQUIPMENT LIST** on the clipboard in the tack room. If you have any questions, please consult the Daily Coordinator or Instructor.
6. **HORSE HANDLERS:** Groom and tack up the assigned horse. Check the tack sheet (in the tack room) to make sure the horse has the appropriate tack for the upcoming class.
7. **SIDEWALKERS:** Greet your rider, assist him/her with the helmet and wait with the rider until time to mount. If you arrive before your rider, you may help with the horses or you may be needed to help set up the arena for the lesson.

### **BEFORE YOU LEAVE:**

1. **CHECK WITH DAILY COORDINATOR OR INSTRUCTOR BEFORE YOU LEAVE.** If the rider to whom you are assigned is absent you may still be needed to help with the other riders.
2. **RECORD VOLUNTEER HOURS IN BOOK** located in the RU Corral and collect personal belongings. Return your name badge.
3. **HORSE HANDLERS:** Untack horses and return them to their stalls or the pasture (refer to the stall and/or pasture assignment chart). Replace all tack correctly (See **FACTS ABOUT TACK**). Don't forget to sign out!
4. **SIDEWALKERS:** Ensure that your rider gets safely from the arena to parent. Once your rider has left you may help put away tack and clear arena. Don't forget to sign out!

## GENERAL SAFETY RULES

All participants, volunteers and staff must comply with all posted safety rules. The Riding Unlimited staff requests that all volunteers help enforce these rules as safety **MUST** be a top priority.

1. **NO SMOKING** anywhere on the property. If you want to smoke, you must go out to Skiles road. The use of, or being under the influence of, drugs or alcohol is strictly forbidden.
2. Restricted Areas (must have instructor/volunteer present):
  - ❖ Barns, runs, and pastures
  - ❖ Mare Motel stalls
  - ❖ Arena mounting area
  - ❖ The tacking area
  - ❖ Feed room
3. Off limits areas: Machine storage areas, equipment storage, tool shed. Any posted “Authorized Personnel Only” areas.
4. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children **at all times**.
5. In order to avoid distracting riders during class, everyone is asked to refrain from leaning or climbing on all fences.
6. Carrots **MAY** be allowed as treats for some horses. Please consult with instructor regarding treats feeding. Riders may feed carrots (using a carrot feeder) under the supervision of the instructor. **NEVER HAND FEED CARROTS TO THE HORSES**

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP OUR FACILITY CLEAN BY  
DISPOSING OF TRASH PROPERLY**

## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**NON-DISCRIMINATION** Riding Unlimited maintains a policy of non-discrimination and is fully committed to the principles of equality in volunteer employment and opportunity for all, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientations, age or handicap. Volunteers will likewise not discriminate against a client, other volunteers, or Riding Unlimited staff based upon the above mentioned parameters.

**VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL FILE** Every active volunteer must have completed and returned each item listed to be included in their file:

- ◆ Volunteer Registration Form
- ◆ Volunteer Emergency Medical Form
- ◆ Volunteer Liability Release Agreement
- ◆ Photo Consent
- ◆ Confidentiality Agreement and Code of Conduct
- ◆ Criminal Background Check release form

All information in volunteer files is kept confidential and will not be released without consent of the volunteer.

**ELIGIBILITY** Volunteers who work with the riders must be at least 14 years old and physically able to occasionally jog for short distances during the 45-60 minute class. Take into consideration conditions such as bad knees, recent surgery, asthma, etc.

**ORIENTATION SESSION** Every prospective volunteer must attend one Orientation session. Information about Riding Unlimited and its programs, volunteer roles, and key policies are addressed.

**TRAINING SESSIONS** No volunteer may work directly with a Riding Unlimited participant without completing Orientation and Training and all required forms.

**JOB DESCRIPTION** See Volunteer Manual under "Horse Handler" and "Sidewalker".

**REPORTING PROCEDURES** In order to keep accurate records of our work for submittal to grant sources, volunteers need to report the hours and types of services rendered. Volunteers will follow the specific procedure set up by Riding Unlimited.

**CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS** With the signed permission of the volunteer, a criminal background check will be initiated. In order to volunteer in any capacity, this authorization must be signed. Criminal histories received by Riding Unlimited will be kept confidential. A criminal history does not automatically disqualify a volunteer applicant. Attention to the nature and severity of the offense, the length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, and other factors as deemed appropriate under the circumstances may be taken into consideration.

**VOLUNTEER AND/OR GUEST DISMISSAL POLICY** In the event of misconduct by a volunteer, the volunteer's direct supervisor will counsel the volunteer in order to provide the opportunity for corrective action. A written record of any actions or suggestions will be maintained. See Volunteer and/or Guest Dismissal Policy (pg. 3.6).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

- Riding Unlimited shall preserve the right of confidentiality for all individuals in its program.
- No one associated with Riding Unlimited will reveal any medical, social, referral, personal or financial information regarding any participant or any other person associated with Riding Unlimited to anyone unless required by court order.
- This policy applies to:
  - participants
  - full and part time staff
  - independent contractors
  - temporary employees
  - volunteers
  - board members
- Children under age 18 do not have legal authority to consent to disclosure. Only parent(s), legal representatives, or others defined by state statute generally have this authority.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS**

- We will honor our commitment to confidentiality.
- We will always abide by the Code of conduct and the Policies and Procedures for Volunteers.
- We will cooperate fully with our staff supervisor and be open to their guidance.
- We will represent Riding Unlimited in a positive manner to the larger community.
- We will not represent Riding Unlimited in any capacity while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- We will not smoke, use drugs or alcohol, or possess a weapon while on Riding Unlimited property.
- We will not sexually harass clients, employees, or other volunteers.
- We will not physically or verbally abuse any person or animal while on Riding Unlimited property.

### **Riding Unlimited Stirrup Policy**

All Riding Unlimited saddles are equipped with safety stirrups. Participants are encouraged to also wear boots or hard-soled shoes with heels. Instructors are responsible for including this in their safety check.

Any saddles belonging to Riding Unlimited participants, volunteers, or staff must have safety stirrups or the rider must wear riding boots or hard-soled shoes with heels. This applies when these privately owned saddles are used in the course of lessons or schooling of Riding Unlimited horses.

### **Riding Unlimited Helmet Policy**

All Riding Unlimited participants, staff, volunteers, and guests are required to wear ASTM/SEI approved helmets when mounted or driving. If an alternative helmet is deemed necessary, the helmet must meet PATH Alternative Helmet guidelines.

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

Conditions that may lead to dismissal:

- Failure to comply with the Riding Unlimited Confidentiality Policy guidelines.
- Repeated violation of safety rules including smoking on the property.
- Use of, or under the influence of, drugs and alcohol on the property
- Disruptive or inappropriate behavior, theft, or violence
- Threat of violence or mistreatment to any person or animal

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURE**

1. The Instructor or the Daily Coordinator will be the person in charge of directing actions to be taken any time an accident or incident occurs.
  - A. When an accident or serious incident occurs in the arena, the Instructor working with the person(s) and/or horses involved is in charge.
  - B. In cases of accident & incidents outside the arena or when the instructor is with a class, the Daily Coordinator is in charge.
  
2. Actions to be taken in case of a major occurrence are:
  - A. Horse handlers leading a horse at the time will take the steps below, unless directed otherwise by the person in charge.
    1. Horses are to be stopped as soon as possible.
    2. Horse handler is to stand in front of the horse's head, facing the horse.
    3. When it is safe to do so, horses will be taken to the end of the arena opposite the accident, or removed from the arena.
  - B. Sidewalkers are to remain with their riders and follow the directions of the Instructor.
  - C. Other staff present will have students, family members (other than those of an injured rider), and volunteers move away from the immediate scene, and help maintain calm.
  - D. Staff or other volunteers familiar with horses will remove any horses not under the control of a Horse Handler from the immediate area as soon as possible. **Do not** run at a loose horse.
  - E. Person in charge will evaluate the situation and direct the others to take any or all of the following actions, as needed.
    1. Call EMS, Fire Department, or Sheriff by dialing 911. State that Riding Unlimited is in Denton County. Emergency information is posted by every phone.
    2. Send one person to Skiles Rd. to wait for and direct emergency personnel to the scene.
    3. Summon others with medical training to assist in evaluating and treating injured person.
    4. Bring first aid kit from tack room.
    5. Bring rider's/volunteer's emergency medical form(s) from office.
  
3. Actions to be taken in case of minor **accidents/incidents** will be determined by the person in charge, but will generally include determining who should provide first aid treatment, and whether the activity can continue.
  
4. All occurrences should be reported to the Program Director. The instructor (or the person in charge of the situation) will complete an Occurrence Report after the situation is resolved and before leaving the site for the day. Witnesses should complete the appropriate section of the Occurrence Report. Submit the completed report to the Program Director for review and filing.
  
5. In case of horse health emergencies:
  1. Contact one of the following: Instructor on site, Barn Manager, or Executive Director.
  2. If necessary, call vet (name and number posted in barn and in horse first aid kits)

## Natural Disaster Procedures

### ***Thunderstorm:***

#### **Before Lightning Strikes...**

- Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, flashes of light, or increasing wind. Listen for the sound of thunder.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.
- Listen to Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for the latest weather forecasts.

#### **When a Storm Approaches...**

- Find shelter in a building or car. Keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles. •Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances.
- Avoid running water for any purpose.
- Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressor.
- Draw blinds and shades over windows. If windows break due to objects blown by the wind, the shades will prevent glass from shattering into your home.

#### **Protecting Yourself Outside...**

- Go to a low-lying, open place away from trees, poles, or metal objects. Make sure the place is not subject to flooding.

### ***Tornado:***

#### **When a Tornado WARNING Is Issued...**

- If you are inside, go to the safe place you picked to protect yourself from glass and other flying objects (interior bathroom or hallway of RU private residence). The tornado may be approaching your area.
- If you are outside, hurry to a nearby sturdy building (interior bathroom or hallway of RU private residence) or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.
- If you are in a car or mobile home, get out immediately and head for safety (as above).
- Horses are to be turned loose in the pastures. Remove tack only if there is sufficient time to do so.

### ***Heat Emergencies:***

- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Drink plenty of water regularly and often.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Water is the safest liquid to drink during heat emergencies. Avoid drinks with caffeine in them. They can make you feel good briefly, but make the heat's effects on your body worse.

### ***Fire:***

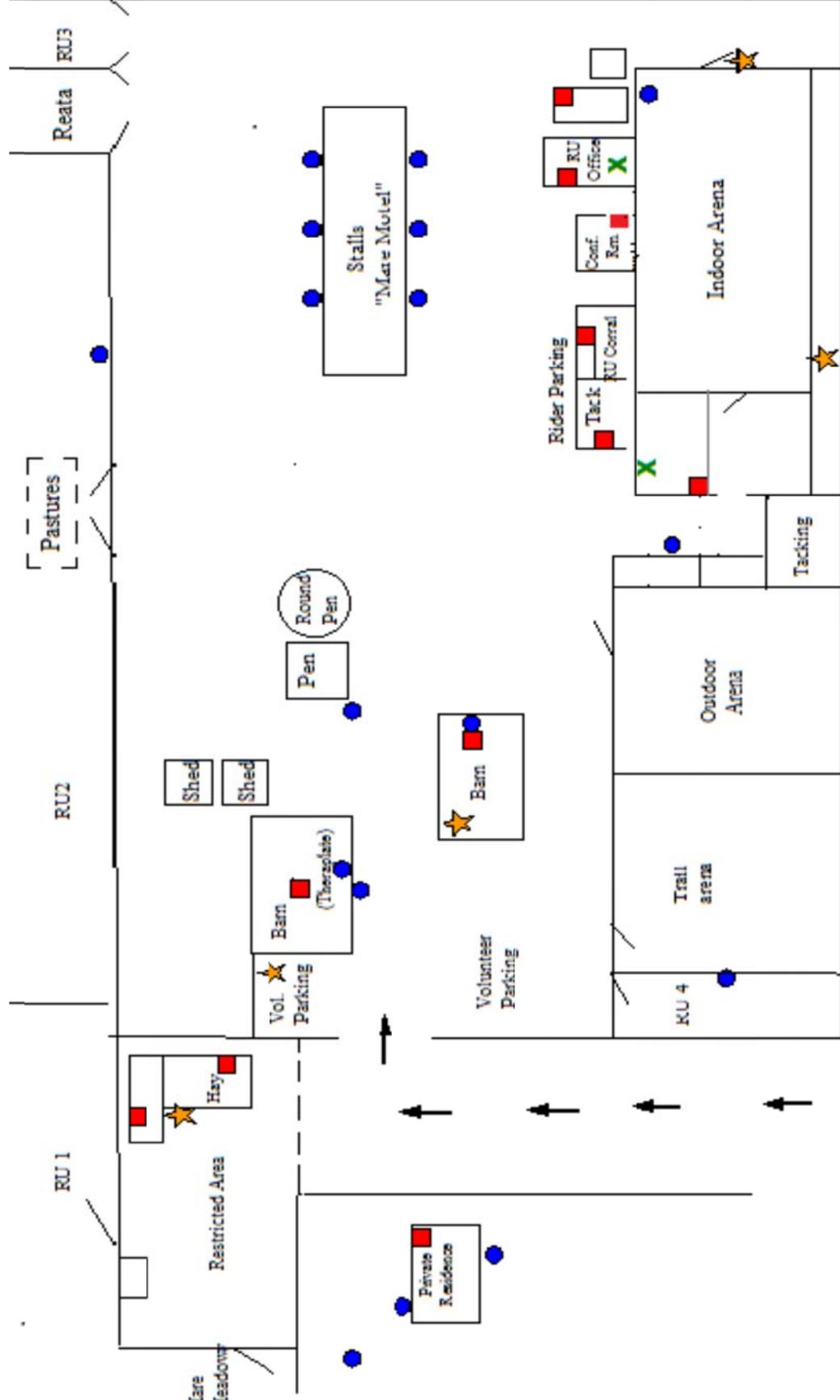
- If you hear the smoke alarm, or hear someone shouting "fire", immediately evacuate. Assist those who need help in evacuating.
- Go to the designated meeting place – Riding Unlimited Office or covered arena, whichever is furthest from the source of the fire.
- Do not re-enter a burning building.
- Only trained horse handlers will evacuate horses.

Horses would be put in paddocks. "Because the old story about leading horses from burning buildings, only to have them rush back to the traditional safety of their now unsafe stalls, is not a total myth, be sure there is a paddock with a gate near the exits of the barn where a horse can be safely deposited and the rescuer return to save another. Be sure the gate swings easily and the latch is dependable and easy to figure out."

**Power Outages:** Flashlights (along with fire extinguishers) are provided in several locations. See map.

**LOCATE SAFETY EQUIPMENT ON THE MAP FOR REFERENCE. MAPS ARE LOCATED IN THE RU CORRAL, ARENA, TACK ROOM, BARN, AND OFFICE.**





# Riding Unlimited

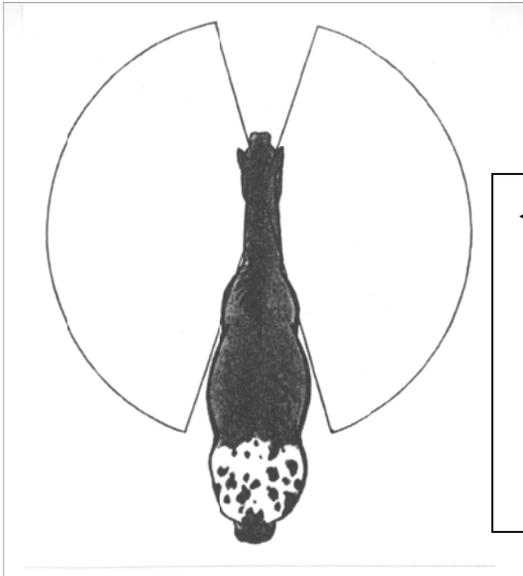
1968 T.N. Skiles Road, Ponder, TX 76259

## Facility Map



## SAFETY RULES FOR WORKING AROUND HORSES

1. **Approaching a Horse:** Speak to the horse in a low, calm voice before approaching to avoid startling him. Approach a horse from the side, never the rear, so that the horse can see you. Keep a hand on the horse's body when walking around him. Always walk around a tied horse. **NEVER WALK UNDER OR OVER A LEAD ROPE OR TRAILER TIE!**



◀ A horse can see this much when facing straight ahead.

One of the horse's blind spots is directly behind, so you should never approach a horse from the back unless the horse already knows you're there.

2. **Petting a Horse:** Pet a horse by placing a hand on his shoulder or neck not on the nose. The horse's nose is a sensitive spot.
3. **When a Horse Startles:** People weigh a lot less than any equine. If a horse balks, do not try to out-pull him. A quick tug on the lead shank will generally move him forward. If a horse rears up, release the hand closest to the halter to avoid being pulled off the ground.
4. **Tying horses:**
  - Short tie:** If you tie a horse up with too much slack in the lead rope, the horse inevitably gets a foot hung up in the rope or ends up with the rope over his neck. Twelve inches of slack is a good length.
  - Ducking under:** Never duck underneath a horse's neck to get to the other side. Although many horses don't mind, you could end up with a serious injury.
  - Frontal approach:** To avoid startling a horse and perhaps causing him to pull back when tied, always be slow and quiet when approaching from the front.
  - Safety restraints:** When tying a horse, always use a safety knot, or at RU, use a quick release trailer tie.

5. **Loose Horse:** Never chase a loose horse. Move slowly and speak calmly when approaching.

- \* Don't panic: Stay calm and shout "Loose horse!"
- \* If the escapee is not your charge, but you are leading or standing next to your horse when the horse gets loose, be aware that your horse is probably going to react with excitement.
- \* If a horse you were handling gets away from you, **DO NOT** chase him: Chasing the horse only makes him run away with increasing speed.
- \* Walk slowly in the direction the horse ran: Most don't go far.
- \* If he has stopped to eat, speak softly and walk up to him slowly, placing a lead rope around his neck.
- \* If he is not eating but just milling around, get a handful of hay or a carrot and slowly walk in his direction. Offer him food in an outstretched hand as you speak to him softly. Speak softly and slowly place a lead rope around his neck.
- \* If the loose horse has stopped to eat, but takes off again when he sees you approaching, you'll need the help of one or two other people to catch him.

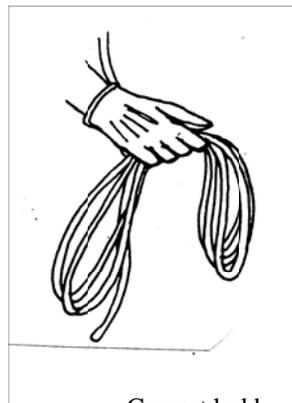
6. **Returning a Horse to Pasture or Stable:** After leading a horse into a stall or pasture, turn the horse so that he faces the door or gate. Close the door/gate, leaving enough space for the volunteer (not the horse) to exit before removing the halter.

7. **When Leading a Horse:**

- \* To avoid a horse stepping on reins and lead line, keep reins and leads off the ground.
- \* Never lead a horse with your hand in his halter:
- \* **NEVER** wrap the lead rope around your hand as it may tighten if the horse pulls suddenly and can cause serious injury.



Incorrect hold



Correct hold

# **UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOR**

## **EQUINE SENSES**

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding the horse senses, instincts and implications is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

### **SMELL:**

The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations.

### **Implications:**

- Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling.
- It is recommended that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them.
- Volunteers should be discouraged from eating or having food in the arena.

### **HEARING:**

The horse's sense of hearing is also thought to be 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 the fright/flight response. Note the position of the horse's ears (picture following article). Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears that are laid back often communicates that they are upset and/or showing aggression towards another horse or person.

### **Implications:**

- Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse.
- Watch your horse's ears for increased communication. Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.

**SIGHT:**

The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head; there is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poorer frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color.

**Implications:**

- The horse may notice if something in the arena or out on a trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with.
- The horse has better peripheral vision; consider a slightly looser rein, enabling him to move his head when taking a look at objects.
- Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider two blind spots; directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is to his shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when hand feeding.

**TOUCH:**

Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs.

**Implications:**

- Handlers should treat horses gently but firmly
- Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas).
- Watch rider leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to reduce a "clothes pin" effect with their legs. Ask the instructor what is the best handling technique.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing over it.

**TASTE:**

Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

**Implications:**

- Taste is closely linked with smell and touch; therefore, a horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible 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 handler and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important to let the instructor know if you’re having a difficult time relating or getting along with a particular horse.

**THE HORSE’S LIFESTYLE:**

In addition to understanding the horse’s six senses, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the horse’s lifestyle. This will assist us in responding appropriately to his reactions to situations.

**FLIGHT AS A NATURAL INSTINCT:**

Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it.

**Implications:**

- At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly.
- A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. Be sure not to stand directly behind the horse.
- If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like the stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working around the horse in a stall.
- If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (note the position of the horse’s ears in picture following article), it may be helpful to allow a more experienced horse handler to lead the horse.

**HERD ANIMAL:**

Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two horses dominant, with a pecking order amongst the rest.

**Implications:**

- Be aware that a horse 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, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse’s length between horses when riding within a group to respect the horse’s space and pecking order.

**READING HIS EARS**

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



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 pointed stiffly forward  
alarmed or nervous about what's  
ahead. Looking for danger.



Ears pointed left and right  
relaxed, paying attention  
to the scenery on both sides.



Ears stiffly back  
annoyed or worried about what's  
behind him: might kick if annoyed.



Droopy ears  
calm and resting,  
horse may be dozing.



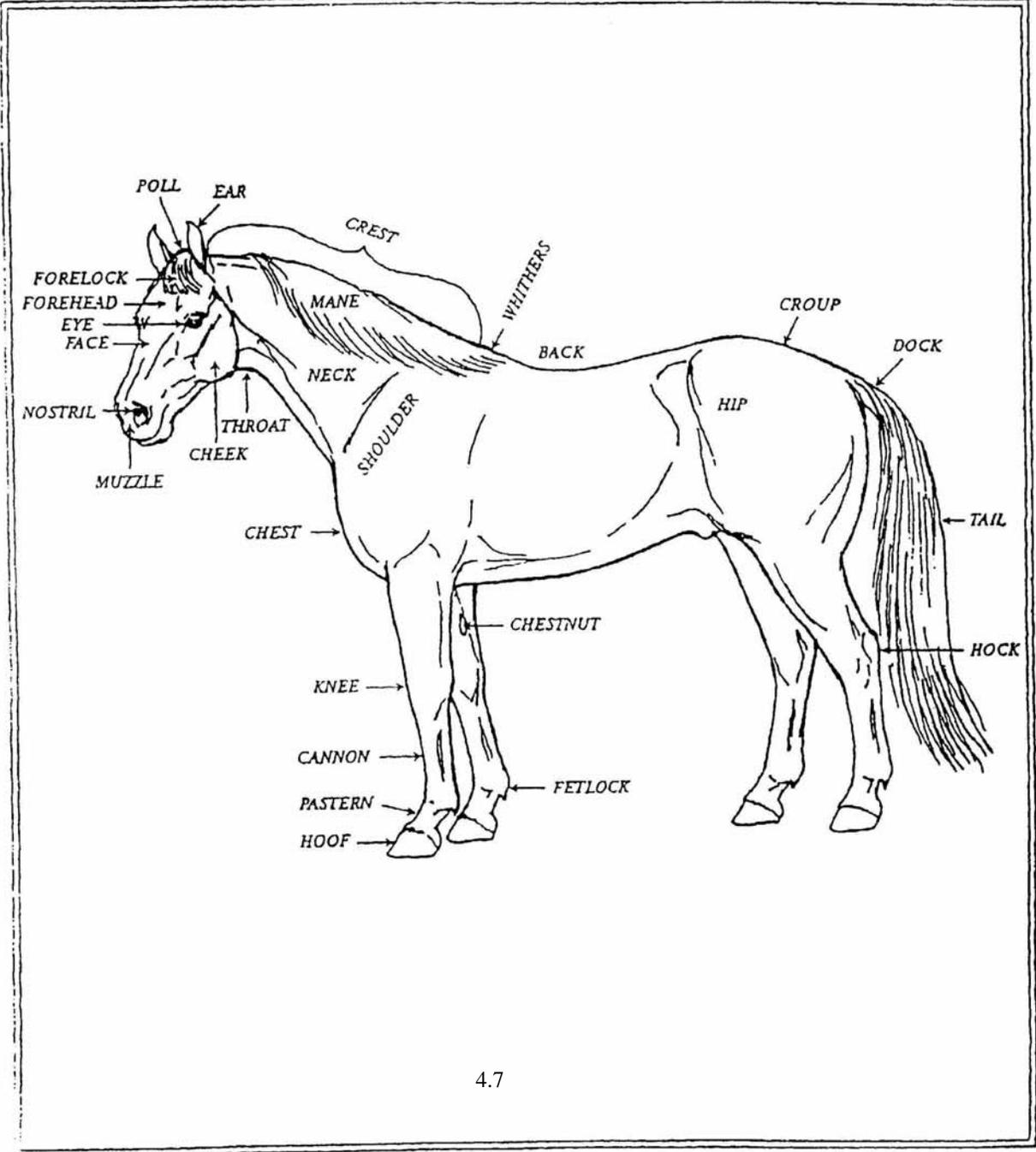
Ears flattened against neck  
violently angry, in a fighting mood.  
May fight, bite or kick.

- OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:**
- **Tucking the tail down tightly.**  
Danger to the rear.  
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.  
Watch out if ears are flattened, too!
  - **Switching the tail.**  
Annoyance and irritation:  
at biting flies, stinging insects or  
tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
  - **Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.**  
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.  
Don't wake him up by startling him!
  - **Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.**  
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.  
Watch out for biting or kicking.

# PARTS OF THE HORSE AND TACK

## PARTS OF THE HORSE

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



## FACTS ABOUT TACK

1. All tack has a designated spot in the Tack Room. Please return things to their proper places. Because we have so many volunteers using the tack room, this practice keeps things running smoothly. **A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING AND EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE!**
2. **Only authorized personnel will bridle horses.** Only trained, authorized volunteers should put side pulls on horses. The lead rope attaches to the lead shank under the horse's chin. **Never** tie the horse by the side pull. Horses may be tied with halters placed over side pulls with the lead rope attached to the halter only.
3. Tacking is done in the tacking pen outside the west end of the enclosed arena. Look for tie rings on the pipe fence that designates tacking stations. Horses are to be tied using trailer ties found in the Tack Room. Lead ropes should be removed and tied on the fence. In bad weather, horses can be tacked up in stalls, or in the indoor arena with the gate closed and area clearly marked with cones.
4. Grooming buckets are labeled for each horse. Place grooming buckets outside the fence – away from horse's feet. To reduce the spread of skin infections, please do not borrow from another grooming bucket. Let's keep our horses healthy. Please return grooming equipment to proper bucket and return to the designated spot in the tack room.
5. Return saddles to their appropriate racks designated by number. Place saddles with the pommel closest to the wall.
6. Detach girths from all saddles and replace them on the proper hook, sorted by length.
7. Halters, bridles, and side pulls hang by the top of the headstall and brow and nosebands facing out. Detach and return reins to their proper hook. Do not remove parts of tack. Keep bridles, and side pulls complete (no missing parts)! If you find any equipment that is missing pieces, please tell the Instructor and Daily Coordinator.
8. Do not store saddles with the stirrups crossed over the seat.

## GROOMING & TACKING GUIDELINES

### 1. Grooming bins and tools, halters, bridles, and side pulls:

All are labeled with horse's name and special instructions if applicable.

### 2. Overview of Tack Room:

Saddles - English and Western

Bridles, halters, & side pulls are labeled with horse's name

PBM Pads (white foam pad)

Saddle Pads - Western, Navajo, Square English

Surcingles

Bareback Pads

Stirrups, stirrup leathers and extra reins

Girth extenders

First Aid - Human & Horse

### 3. Stall Safety:

**ALWAYS** close gate/door behind you!!!

**ALWAYS** put halter on horse when grooming

Always tie horse with a trailer tie or, if not available, a quick release knot.

Never go under a horse's neck while tied up!

Walk closely around the horse's rear-end with hand on horse.

### 4. Grooming Tools:



Curry comb - small circular motion; dislodges dirt & hair. Be careful around bony areas. Never use on the face



Dandy/stiff brush – stiff bristled brush; the motion for this brush is like the same motion you use when sweeping a floor. You “flick” the brush away and up from the coat.



Body brush – soft bristled brush; quick strokes; removes dirt & hair. Smooth it flat over the coat



Mane & Tail comb/brush – use gently to remove dirt.



Hoof Pick - clean frog & pad; both front & rear.

- ### 5. Cleaning Hooves:
- When checking or cleaning hooves, do it from the side, and facing the rear of the horse. Bend at the waist, never squat or kneel down. Stay on both feet. Scrape away from you. Thoroughly clean out the hollow areas on both sides of the frog and around the sole of the foot.

## 6. Tacking Horse:

- Check tack sheet in the Tack Room for specific horse tack.
- Take trailer tie and grooming bin to tacking area. Hook tie to a tacking station ring.
  - Grooming bin placed outside of fence away from horse's feet.
- Utilize horse safety procedures.
- Make sure tack is placed out of horse's reach.
- Placement of pads on horse's back - forward over the withers with equal amounts on each side; Navajo pads always go first; PBM never goes directly against the horse's back.
  - Make sure the pad is raised a bit over the withers as saddle is placed on the horse.
- Attach girth to saddle - elastic goes on left (side you are saddling on).

## Saddling a Horse:

- (a) *When saddling* have horse properly secured with a trailer tie (so he will stand quietly). If a trailer tie is not available, use an approved quick release knot so the horse can be easily released, in case of emergency.
- (b) *Tighten the girth or cinch **SLOWLY*** - do not pull up abruptly nor over tighten. Adjust saddle carefully with girth tight enough so the saddle will not shift when mounting. Horses often swell up when first saddled, and failure to re-tighten the girth just prior to and after mounting can result in a serious accident.

**Bridle** - only instructors will put on bridles.

**Side pulls** - trained, authorized volunteers may put on side pulls.

**Halter** placed over the bridle/side pull and tied using trailer tie. Lead rope to be removed and tied to fence. If trailer tie is not available, tie with a quick release knot.

**NEVER** tie a horse up with lead rope attached to bit/bridle or side pull.

Remove halter and attach lead rope to noseband or lead shank for class.

Exit from stall or tacking area with horse - announce to others "horse coming through".

## 6. After Class:

- Return horse to tacking area and untack.
- Remove side pull.
- Replace halter & tie horse.
- Remove girth - remove from both sides; lay over saddle.
- Lift saddle and pads together from horse's back.
- Take all tack to tack room and put away in the correct place.

\*\* If horse is to be used in the next class, put halter over the bridle/side pull and tie horse at a tacking station using a trailer tie.

\*\* Instructor or Daily Coordinator will direct leaders to put horse in the stall or pasture (check stall and pasture assignment sheets).

## 7. Return Tack to Tack Room:

- Hang girths on appropriate hook (small, medium, large, western, pony, dressage)
- Place pads (sweaty side up) in appropriate place.
- Place saddle on correct number corresponding rack – do not cross stirrups over seat.
- Rinse bit in water/sponge.
- Hang bridle/side pull on correct hook.

If you are uncertain, at any time, about tack or procedures, *please* ask.

## WHEN YOU MEET A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

1. **Be yourself.** Relate to a person with a disability the same way you relate to other people. Use conversation and social behavior that you might use in any new situation.
2. **Allow the person with a disability to be himself/herself.** With or without disabilities, each of us is a unique individual.
3. **Appreciate what a person with a disability can do.** Once you get to know him/her, his/her interests and his/her ability may surprise you. Remember that the difficulties the person may be facing could stem from society's attitudes and barrier rather than from the disability itself. Disabled people generally do not view themselves to be as disabled as society perceives them to be.
4. **Explore mutual interest in a friendly way.** Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, but don't pry. Develop a friendship by showing an interest in the person, not his/her disability. Most people prefer to have someone ask them about their disability rather than receiving stares.
5. **Be patient.** Let the person with the disability set the pace for walking, talking and other activities. Be considerate of the extra time it might take to accomplish something or respond to something.
6. **Do not separate a person with a disability from a wheelchair, crutches or other aids unless he/she asks.** These aids may need to be nearby.
7. **Offer encouragement but not pity.** The person with the disability wants to be treated as an equal in all things. Give him/her a chance to prove himself/herself.
8. **Respect a person's independence.** He/She may prefer to do things for himself/herself. Wait until help is needed or requested. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist upon helping when he/she is managing alone.
9. **Enjoy yourself.** Do not be afraid to laugh and have fun. You will be developing a friendship with a person from whom you may learn a great deal about life and how to live it.

## PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

**Disability Description** – The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of participants in therapeutic riding. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability. Rather it is a general overview with an explanation of how therapeutic riding can be beneficial.

**Arthritis:** Inflammatory disease of the joints.

Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid.

Characteristics: Pain, lack of mobility, deformity and loss of strength.

Benefits: Gentle rhythmic movement to promote joint mobility and relieve pain.

**Aspergers:** One of several autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Characteristics: Difficulties in social interaction and by restricted, stereotyped interests and activities, intense preoccupation with a subject. Distinguished from other ASD's in having no general delay in language or cognitive development. Atypical use of language is frequently reported.

Benefits: Interaction in a group setting stimulates interest away from self and towards others and the horses. Postural and verbal stimulation.

**Autism:** A self-centered mental state from which reality tends to be excluded.

Characteristics: Unresponsive to the presence of others, withdrawal from physical contact, severely delayed and disordered language, self-stimulating behaviors, unusual or special fears, insensitivity to pain, unawareness of real dangers, hyperactive, passive, unusual behaviors such as: Smelling/tasting/licking/mouthing all objects, ritualistic behaviors, developmentally delayed, unusual response to sounds, clumsiness, social withdrawal, resistance to change.

Benefits: Interaction in a group setting stimulates interest away from self and towards others and the horses. Postural and verbal stimulation.

**Cerebral Palsy:** Brain damage occurring before, at or shortly after childbirth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.

Types & Characteristics:

*Spastic-hypertonicity* with hyperactive stretch reflexes, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes.

*Ataxic-poor* balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements and are often described as having a "rag doll" appearance.

Benefits: Normalization of tone, stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle Strengthening and perceptual motor coordination.

Associated Problems: Seizures, hearing defects, visual defects, general sensory impairment, perceptual problems, communication problems, mental retardation, emotional disturbance and learning difficulties.

**Cerebral Vascular Accident-Stroke (CVA):** Hemorrhage in brain, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.

Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis or arm and leg on the same side of body. May impair speech, sight balance, coordination and strength.

Benefits: Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning speech and socialization.

**Developmental Disabilities (D.D.):** A general term applied to children functioning two or more years below grade level.

Characteristics: Varied but can include slow physical, motor and social development.

Benefits: Provides arena for success, opportunity for sport and recreation, stimulates body awareness.

**Down Syndrome:** Condition in which a person is born with an extra chromosome resulting in mental retardation and developmental delay.

Characteristics: Broad flat face, slanted eyes, neck and hands are often broad and short. Usually hypotonic, have hyper-mobile joints and tend to be short and slightly overweight. Prone to infections. Usually have some heart problems.

Benefits: Increase feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provide appropriate social outlet.

**Emotional Disabilities:** A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies.

Characteristics: Trouble coping with everyday life situation and interpersonal relations. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia or schizophrenia may be exhibited.

Benefits: Increase feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provide appropriate social outlet.

**Epilepsy:** Abnormal electrical activity of the brain marked by seizures with altered consciousness.

Types and Characteristics:

*Petit Mal:* Brief loss of consciousness with loss of postural tone. May have jerky movements, blank expression.

*Grand Mal:* Loss of consciousness and postural tone. Usually preceded by an aura.

\*NOTE: An active seizure disorder is a contraindication for horseback riding.

**Hearing Impairment:** Congenital or acquired hearing loss vary from mild to profound.

Characteristics: Communication difficulties – may use lip reading, finger spelling (Manual Alphabet or sign language. Often phase out and have attention deficits.

Benefits: Stimulates self-confidence, balance, posture and coordination, it also provides appropriate social outlet and interactions.

**Intellectual Disabilities:** A term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of himself or herself, and social skills.

Characteristics: Developmentally delayed in all areas. Short attention span.

Benefits: Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, and eye-hand coordination. Provides a structured learning environment.

**Learning Disabilities (L.D.):** Catchall phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills.

Characteristics: Short attention span, easily frustrated, immature.

Benefits: Effects depend upon the particular disorder. Stimulates attention span, group skills, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination.

**Multiple Sclerosis (MS):** Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts resulting in scar formation.

Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbations and remissions. Fatigues easily. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, and loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity.

Benefits: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for emotional therapy.

Associated Problems: Visual impairment, emotional liability, and impaired bowel and bladder function.

**Muscular Dystrophy (MD):** Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males.

Characteristics: Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes.

Benefits: Provides opportunity for group activity, may slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment and allows movement free of assistive devices.

Associated Problems: Lordosis, respiratory infection.

**Scoliosis:** Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S curve with rotary component.

Characteristics: Postural asymmetry. May wear scoliosis jacket or have had stabilization surgery.

Benefits: Stimulates postural asymmetry.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** Accidental injury to the head resulting in intra-cranial bleeding with death of brain cells.

Characteristics: Gross and fine motor skills deficits. Often have impaired memory, speech, balance and/or vision. May have psychological effects.

Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills.

**Visual Impairment:** Moderate to total loss of sight.

Characteristics: Insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity, fearfulness, and developmental delay.

Benefits: Stimulates spatial awareness, posture and coordination. Provides social outlet, structured risk taking, and freedom of movement.

## CHOOSING WORDS WITH DIGNITY

When talking about a person with a disability, **make reference to the person first, not the disability**. For example, “people with intellectual disabilities”, not “the intellectually disabled”.

The preferred terms focus attention on the uniqueness and worth of the individual rather than emphasizing the disabling condition. Words such as defective, deformed, invalid, lame, maimed, spastic and crippled imply pity, infirmity and general lack of competence. People are neither invalid nor defective. People are not spastic, muscles are. By choosing words carefully positive images can be conveyed about people with disabilities.

**AVOID:** *Cripples*  
**USE:** Person with physical disabilities, person who is physically challenged.

**AVOID:** *Stricken with*  
**USE:** Person who uses a wheelchair, crutches, etc.

**AVOID:** *Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, crutches, etc.*  
**USE:** Person who uses a wheelchair, crutches, etc.

**AVOID:** *Afflicted with blindness*  
**USE:** Person who is blind or visually impaired.

## BEATITUDES FOR FRIENDS OF THE DISABLED

*Blessed are you, who take the time to listen to difficult speech, for you help me to know that if I persevere I can be understood.*

*Blessed are you who never bid me to “hurry up” or take my tasks and do them for me, for often I need time rather than help.*

*Blessed are you who stand beside me as I enter new and untried ventures because for me failures will be outweighed by the times I surprised you and myself.*

*Blessed are you who understand that it is difficult for me to put my thoughts into words.*

*Blessed are you who, with a smile, encourage me to try once more.*

*Blessed are you who never remind me that today I asked the same question twice.*

*Blessed are you who respect me and love me as I am, just as I am.*

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## What jobs can volunteers do?

- ◆ Lead or sidewalk for riders in the arena
- ◆ Prepare horses for lessons and clean up afterward
- ◆ Clean tack
- ◆ Provide professional services; therapy, veterinarian care, electrical, plumbing, carpentry, etc.
- ◆ Work toward becoming an instructor
- ◆ Help with fund-raisers, special events or public relations campaigns
- ◆ Serve on the board of directors
- ◆ Serve on a committee (see below)
- ◆ And on and on!

## Board Committees:

**Nominating Committee:** (1) identify and recruit candidates to serve on the Board of Directors to increase the diversity of board members, (2) update the board manual, (3) conduct board training and new director orientation. *Seeking volunteers with non-profit board experience and network of potential director candidates.*

**Development Committee:** (1) develop strategy and tools for mass media, target appropriate newspapers, radio, TV and magazines, cultivate contacts, (2) maintain and expand web site, (3) create public relations and marketing material for special events, Annual Campaign, (4) help with production of quarterly newsletter. *Seeking volunteers with media or public relations experience, good writing skills, desktop publishing skills, graphics experience, computer skills and media contacts.*

**Finance Committee:** (1) educate Board and Staff on relevant tax laws to ensure understanding and compliance, (2) assist Treasurer in preparation of annual budget and identification of ways to reduce operating costs. *Seeking volunteers with financial background, especially tax, insurance and accounting, also need volunteers with bookkeeping, banking, or investment experience.*

**Personnel Committee:** (1) prepare strategy plan and review program to set job goals, identify individual development and training objectives, measure and assess performance at least twice a year. (2) update and develop personnel policies, (3) help staff to develop a core of volunteer staff, (4) review progress and assist staff on expanding volunteer base. *Seeking volunteers with human resource, organizational psychology, training and mentoring experience.*

**Outreach Committee:** (1) explore possible partnerships with other agencies and local schools, (2) create a speakers bureau to identify speaking opportunities and prepare volunteers and staff to speak about Riding Unlimited including props and audio-visual tools. *Seeking volunteers who have been active in community work with knowledge of and contacts with schools, local health and social services agencies. Good communication and organizational skills and, if possible, able to volunteer during business hours, Monday through Friday. Contacts with local and state riding clubs and horse associations are also helpful.*

## **Volunteering For Charity Can Produce Tax Deductions**

With the encouragement of the President, more individuals are volunteering their services to charitable work as part of the national fight against terrorism. People who volunteer their services generally do so as a philanthropic gesture, but they should be aware of the tax breaks arising from their generosity.

### **Value of Services**

There is no deduction for the value of services provided to a charity, even if an individual would normally be paid for the services provided. For example, an attorney who provides free legal services cannot deduct what he or she would normally charge for those services.

### **Away-from-home Travel**

Volunteers frequently pay their own way when they travel away from home overnight in connection with charitable work. These out-of-pocket costs are deductible if they are properly substantiated, are reasonable in amount, and there is no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation in the travel. Deductible expenses include the taxpayer's out-of-pocket round-trip travel cost, hotel, lodging, and meals.

### **Transportation By Car**

Volunteers who use their vehicles in connection with volunteer charitable work (e.g., driving to a charitable location where the services are performed, delivering food packages to the poor, etc.) may deduct either the actual, unreimbursed out-of-pocket expenses directly attributable to the charitable work, such as expenses for gas and oil or 14¢ per charitable-use mile.

### **Entertaining for Charity**

Volunteers may deduct the cost of entertaining others on behalf of a charity (e.g., wining and dining potential large contributors), but the costs of the volunteers' own entertainment (or meals) is not deductible.

### **Purchase of Equipment (Assets) Needed to Perform Volunteer Duties**

Volunteers who purchase assets and use them while performing volunteer services for a charity can't deduct their cost if the volunteer retains ownership of the asset, even if it is used exclusively for charitable purposes.

### **Cost of Maintaining an Asset**

A taxpayer may deduct the cost of maintaining a personally-owned asset to the extent its use relates to providing services for a charity. For example, a volunteer can deduct the fuel, maintenance and repair costs (but not depreciation or the fair rental value) of piloting his plane in connection with volunteer activities for the Civil Air Patrol. Similarly, a taxpayer who participates in a mounted posse, which is a civilian reserve unit of the county sheriff's office, can deduct the cost of maintaining a horse but not the cost of the animal.

### **Uniforms**

The cost of uniforms that are required to be worn when providing services to a charity are deductible as long as the uniforms have no general utility. For example, if you volunteer in a charitable hospital and have to wear a uniform, you can deduct the cost of buying and cleaning the uniform.

## Riding Unlimited Glossary Therapeutic and Equine Terminology

- **Accreditation** - This voluntary process recognizes centers that have met established industry standards. The PATH On-Site Accreditation Program is a peer review process, in which trained volunteers visit and evaluate centers according to administrative, facility and program standards. Centers that meet the accreditation requirements become accredited for a period of five years.
- **AHA** - American Hippotherapy Association is a special interest section of PATH. The objective of AHA is to provide research, education, and communication among physical and occupational therapists and others, utilizing the horse in a treatment approach based on the principles of Classic Hippotherapy.
- **Aids** - Signals the rider gives to the horse to control speed and directions.
  - a. Natural aids: legs; seat; weight; hands; voice
  - b. Artificial aids: whip; spurs; martingale
- **Barn Manager** - Supervise barn hand; provide for pick-up or delivery of all hay, feed, shavings, medicines and supplements; responsible for 24-hour emergency horse care and follow up care; set up regular farrier and vet health care services and maintain organized records of these services.
- **Change rein** - To reverse direction
- **Daily Coordinator (DC)** - manages the volunteers for each day, communicates volunteer needs to the Volunteer Coordinator, and distributes volunteer awards.
- **Developmental Riding Therapy** - This area of therapeutic riding has a rider-centered focus, sensory stimuli, use of developmental positions, use of adaptive equipment, and develops interrelationships among the rider, instructor, and the horse.
- **Driving** – Activities related to carriage driving following PATH standards and conducted by a PATH certified driving instructor. May also be done in competition.
- **Equine Facilitated Mental Health (EFMH)** - inclusive of equine assisted activities and therapies with a focus on mental health issues.
- **Executive Director** - supervises Program Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Facility Supervisor, and Barn Manager; conducts staff meetings; sees that all aspects involving the riding classes and the management of the facility are taken care of; manages the enrollment and re-enrollment process for clients; oversees the hiring and selection of all program staff; manages the accreditation process; and serves as PATH liaison.
- **Schooling Team** - Assists in the training of all the therapy horses. Schooling team captain works closely with the Executive Director on selection & training of horses.
- **Facility Supervisor** - Responsible for structural or permanent changes to anything on the RU property that requires large scale costs. Coordinates, supervises, or completes any facility repairs and/or projects.

- **Farrier** - One who shoes horses.
- **Forehand** - The front section of the horse; forelegs, shoulder, neck and head.
- **Free Walk** - A walk on a "loose rein" (long rein) to allow the horse to stretch his neck.
- **Gait** - The way of going paces; walk, trot, pace, lope, canter, gallop.
- **Hand** – method measuring horse height from ground to withers. Hand equals 4”.
- **Head Instructor** - supervises, trains and evaluates other instructors; manages the development of program and curriculum; manages planning and implementation of riding classes; manages the process of goal setting and progress assessment for clients; directs the selection and training of horses; finds homes for retired therapy horses; manages client participation in special events.
- **Horse Length** - The suggested distance between horses (eight feet).
- **Horse Handler (HH)** - This is the part of the therapeutic riding team who is directly responsible for the horse.
- **Hippotherapy** - a form of treatment performed primarily by a physical or occupational therapist using the horse as a therapeutic intervention. The primary goal is improvement of function through the improvement of balance, postural alignment and spinal/pelvic mobility.
- **Inside leg** - The leg on the inside of the arena (or) the bend of the horse.
- **Jog** - A slow trot in western riding.
- **Lengthening of stride** - Increasing the length of the stride within a set frame.
- **Long lining** - The handler guides the horse while walking behind with the use of long reins or lines.
- **LSTEN - Lone Star Therapeutic Equestrian Network** is PATH’s Region 8 therapeutic riding organization, which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.
- **PATH – Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International** is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and support equine-facilitated activities for individuals with disabilities. PATH sets national safety guidelines, oversees site accreditation, and instructor certification.
- **PATH Registered Instructor** - This is the first level of certification available. It is an evaluation process that tests an instructor’s ability to conduct a safe, basic equestrian lesson. The registered level is the minimum level of certification required of each instructor teaching at a PATH operating center.
- **PATH Advanced Instructor** - This is the second level of certification available. An Advanced Instructor is knowledgeable in horse mastership and is well versed in the understanding of disabilities and their relationships to therapeutic riding. This instructor is able to conduct safe, challenging, therapeutically effective lessons.

- **PATH Master Instructor** - This is the highest level of certification available. A Master Instructor has thorough knowledge of horse care and horse handling. This instructor is a well balanced, sensitive rider who has considerable experience teaching and who demonstrates a deep understanding of the relationship between specific disabilities and horseback riding. This process consists of several days of testing through written, oral and hands on skills evaluation.
- **Near side** - The left side of the horse.
- **Off side** - The right side of the horse.
- **On the bit** - The position of the horse's head; the face is close to vertical, neck slightly arched with light contact to the reins.
- **Outside leg** - The rider's leg on the outside of the arena or turn (bend, circle).
- **Posting** - "Rising trot" ~ the rising and descending of the rider with the rhythm of the trot.
- **Showmanship** - Class of competitions where the exhibitor, on foot, presents the horse before the judge. Judging is based on the presentation of the horse and showmanship skills, condition and grooming of the horse, and appearance and grooming of the exhibitor.
- **Sidewalker (SW)** - Sidewalkers may be classified as a coach or safety sidewalker: The Coach Sidewalker greets the rider, communicates the directions of the instructor, if necessary, and gives physical support as needed. The Safety Sidewalker pays constant *quiet* attention to the rider and gives physical and motivational support as needed.
- **Serpentine** - Series of circles and straight lines crossing from one side of the arena to the other; a schooling exercise.
- **Shortening of stride** - Decreasing the length of the stride with a set frame.
- **Sitting trot** - The rider sits deep in the saddle and maintains contact with the saddle while trotting.
- **Special Olympics** - Area, state, and world games for people who have various forms of development delay or mental retardation. Riding Unlimited is in Texas Area 11 and participates in Area Equestrian Games in April and Texas State Games in May.
- **Stride** - One complete circuit of the stepping of all four feet.
- **Surcingle** - Piece of tack that encircle the horses' girth and has one or two handles which may be helpful for weight-bearing through the arms, movement exploration for children and in developing midline awareness.
- **Tack** - The saddle, bridle, etc. used in riding or working a horse.
- **Therapeutic riding** - The use of equine-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well being of people with disabilities.
- **The RU Corral** – Volunteer and rider information center.

- **Therapeutic team** - The Riding Unlimited team consists of the rider, the horse, the instructor, and if needed, the horse handler, the coach sidewalker, and the safety sidewalker.
- **TR** – Abbreviation for Therapeutic Riding TRC: Therapeutic Riding Center
- **Track right** - Riding with the right rein to the inside of the arena (right rein).
- **Track left** - Riding with the left rein to the inside of the arena (left rein).
- **Transition** - To change from one gait to another, changing the stride within the gait (i.e. lengthen, shorten; downward trot...walk)
- **Vaulting** - Equestrian discipline where the horse handler controls the horse with the lunge line. The horse circles around the handler with one or more vaulters performing gymnastic exercises on the horse.
- **Volunteer Coordinator (VC)** - Serves as contact person for all new volunteers; selects, trains, and manages all daily coordinators; manages volunteer appreciation; works closely with PR person to see that volunteer needs are being publicized; conducts New Volunteer Orientation; and maintains volunteer hours and attendance records.

## Glossary of Driving Terms

**AB Whip** – Stands for Able Bodied Whip (driver); experienced driver who holds the second set of reins and assists the participant (with a disability) as needed. The AB whip must always have control of the horse while the participant is entering or exiting the driving vehicle.

**Advanced Independent Driver (AID)** – A Whip with disabilities who has the necessary experience to safely drive a vehicle unassisted by the accompanying AB Whip. This experience should include at least 50 hours of driving in various terrain and conditions, and a complete knowledge of harness and vehicle terminology. The AID will progress to this designation as his/her skills increase and will be the goal of many in driving programs.

**Bit** – The part of the bridle that goes into the equine's mouth, used to control the equine.

**Blinkers** – Two flaps on a bridle that keep the equine from seeing to the sides.

**Breastcollar** – The part of the harness which fits around the chest of the equine, and against which the animal exerts pressure in pulling a load.

**Breeching** – A harness strap around an equine's hindquarters to help in holding back a vehicle on a downgrade.

**Breeching Straps** – Straps that attach the breeching to the shafts of the driving vehicle.

**Bridle** – A head harness for guiding an equine; it consists of a headstall, bit and reins.

**Cart** – A two wheeled driving vehicle.

**Carriage** – A four wheeled driving vehicle.

**Collar** – Pad going around the equine's neck, accommodating the hames to which the traces are attached. An alternative to a breast collar.

**Crupper** – A padded leather strap passed around the base of an equine's tail and attached to the harness to keep it from moving forward.

**Halter** – A bitless headstall for tying of leading an animal.

**Hames** – Two arms that are joined so as to fit in the groove of the collar, and to which the traces are attached.

**Harness** – Noun: The assemblage of leather or synthetic straps and metal pieces by which an equine is fastened to a vehicle, plow or load. Verb: To attach an equine with a harness to something, as a wagon.

**Header** – A trained equine handler who stands at the head of the equine with an attached lead line whenever the equine is standing still. Required while equine is being put to or taken from the vehicle, and while participant is entering or exiting the vehicle. Available whenever assistance with the equine is needed.

**Impairment** – A loss or abnormality of a specific body function.

**Instructional Driving** – Driving when the participant holds the reins and proceeds to learn how to drive.

**Lead Rope** – A rope used to lead the equine.

**Participant** – The driver with a disability; client driver.

**Personnel** – Trained volunteers and staff who assist in the driving program.

**Pleasure Driving** – An AB whip taking participants with disabilities for a drive for their pleasure without any effort by that participant to learn to drive.

**Putting To** – The process of attaching the equine and driving vehicle together. Always bring the driving vehicle up to a harnessed equine that is standing still. Never back the equine into the vehicle.

**Saddle** – A padded part of a harness worn over an equine's back to hold the shafts.

**Spotter** – A trained assistant on foot in the driving area who watches for a possible problem and is prepared to take immediate action.

**Terrets**—The rings on a harness through which the reins pass.

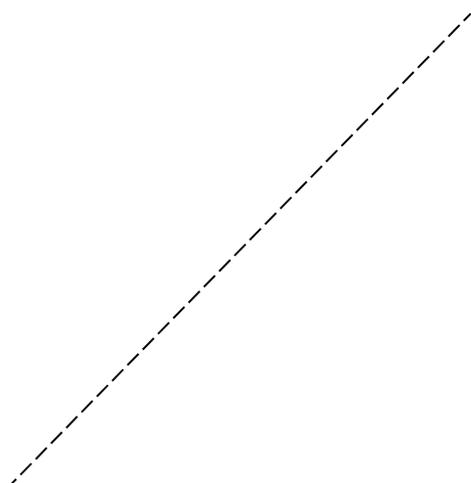
**Traces** – The two straps from the breast collar connecting an equine's harness to the vehicle drawn.

**Tugs** – Part of the harness used in a single hitch through which the shafts pass.

**Turnout** – A driving vehicle with its equine or equines.

**Vehicle** – Any device or contrivance for carrying or conveying persons or objects over land. In driving, this may be a two or four-wheeled vehicle or a sleigh with runners.

**Whip** – Preferred term for the driver.



## Volunteer Manual Verification

When you have read the manual completely, please sign and remove this sheet. Drop this form into the Pony Express mailbox in the RU Corral. Don't forget to sign and date this form.

I have read the Riding Unlimited Volunteer Manual in its entirety. I agree to follow the policies and procedures set forth in this manual.

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*Signature*

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*Date*

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*Printed Name*

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## ***101 WAYS TO BECOME A MORE EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER...***

1. Consider safety first at all times.
2. Treat riders and horses kindly but firmly.
3. Give instructor 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 positions of hands and body when necessary.
6. Remain calm in an emergency 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 hang or rest on 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. First ask the rider to do the task independently, then assist.
17. Ensure a rider's feet are out of 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're not sure, don't be afraid to ask questions.
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 your center's emergency procedure(s).
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 a program's success.
40. Greet your rider upon arrival and acknowledge their departure.
41. Notify a volunteer organizer ASAP of scheduling conflicts.
42. Maintain a professional but friendly relationship with a rider.
43. Your genuine friendship and empathy are appreciated.
44. Do not prejudge a person's abilities.
45. Remain calm in any emergency or stressful situation.
46. Weakness in the rider's neck and trunk require precaution.
47. Give verbal cues prior to change for the visually challenged.
48. Remember that smoke may irritate the sensitive rider.
49. Make new friends while being of assistance to others.
50. Make reference to the person first, not the disability.

51. To further understand a rider, try to observe them. The eyes, mouth, face and body movements are all key communicators.
52. Accept each individual as they are and respect each person's individual needs.
53. Listen to and help the rider focus on the instructor's directions.
54. Respect everyone's right to confidentiality.
55. Know and respect your center's policies.
56. Encourage the rider to be as independent as possible.
57. Allow a rider to fail as well as succeed.
58. Bring your positive energy, not your problems, to the rider.
59. Be attentive to the instructor. Keep talking to a minimum.
60. Allow the rider's efforts to succeed in games, not yours.
61. Allow the rider ample time to process a direction.
62. Help maintain a safe and welcoming environment.
63. Never wrap a lead around your hand, butterfly wrap the excess.
64. Check clothing under rider's legs to make sure it's not binding.
65. Be conscientious about dress and personal hygiene.
66. Remain calm and avoid rushing.
67. Offer physical support only when needed.
68. Be willing to learn and participate in center educational programs.
69. Supervise riders when away from their caregiver or parents.
70. Don't suffer through a personality clash. Ask to be reassigned.
71. Treat another as you would like to be treated.
72. Never become so relaxed or distracted as to forget your rider.
73. If using a safety belt, don't pull your rider off balance.
74. Allow riders to share their lives and friendship without prying.
75. Return things to the spot where you found them.
76. Use a halter and a lead rope when going to and from stabling areas.
77. If something is broken or needs fixing, let someone know.
78. If a horse is lame or injured tell an instructor immediately.
79. If a rider has fallen never move them. Defer to the instructor.
80. Pet a horse on the neck or shoulder, not on their face.
81. Any form of injury to yourself or others must be reported.
82. Pay attention to how you move and know your physical limits.
83. When lifting, use your legs, not your back.
84. Do not run or make loud noises around horses.
85. Be aware of the phone and first aid kit locations(s).
86. Do not bring pets, children or others without prior permission.
87. Respect your coworkers and their responsibilities.
88. Sign or check in and out every time you volunteer.
89. Check your schedule and get a nametag upon your arrival.
90. Choose your words carefully, they can impact other's lives.
91. Call in advance if ill or unable to report for your assignment.
92. Patience + Praise = Success & Results.
93. Be attentive to signs of rider fatigue and frustration.
94. Be sincere in the offer of services.
95. Do not force a rider's body parts into desired positions.
96. Alert the instructor immediately if a seizure takes place.
97. Be sober and drug free when you volunteer.
98. Enjoy the pleasure in helping in an assisted riding experience.
99. Share knowledge and experiences with others.
100. Maintain the dignity and integrity of the Center's service.
101. Remember that your dedication and sincerity truly make a world of difference!