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# Volunteer Handbook

Your guide to getting to know Equest and becoming a volunteer.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Equest Mission Statement                                   | 1  |
| Equest Vision Statement                                    | 1  |
| OVERVIEW                                                   | 2  |
| The Benefits                                               | 2  |
| Our History                                                | 2  |
| Governance and Support                                     | 3  |
| Our Accreditation                                          | 3  |
| Our Instructor Training Program                            | 3  |
| In summary....                                             | 4  |
| SAFETY                                                     | 5  |
| <b>Basic Guidelines</b>                                    | 5  |
| <b>Medical Releases and First Aid</b>                      | 5  |
| <b>In the Event of...A Fire or Other Evacuation Event</b>  | 6  |
| <b>In the Event of...A Tornado or Other Severe Weather</b> | 8  |
| <b>In the Event of...A Medical Emergency—Major Injury</b>  | 9  |
| <b>In the Event of...A Medical Emergency—Minor Injury</b>  | 9  |
| <b>In the Event Urgent Action is Required</b>              | 10 |
| GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION                              | 12 |
| Minimum Age Requirement                                    | 12 |
| What to Wear                                               | 12 |
| Sign-in Procedures and Recording Volunteer Hours           | 13 |
| When You Can't Be There...                                 | 13 |
| Inclement Weather                                          | 13 |
| Attributes of a Good Volunteer                             | 13 |
| Dismissal of Volunteers and Guests from Center Activities  | 14 |
| In summary....                                             | 15 |
| THE RIDING LESSON                                          | 16 |
| Description of a Lesson                                    | 16 |
| Riding Lesson Timeline                                     | 16 |
| Preparing for Class                                        | 17 |
| <b>Safety Rules in the Stall</b>                           | 17 |
| <b>Tying a Quick Release Knot</b>                          | 19 |
| <b>Grooming the Horse</b>                                  | 19 |
| At Class Time                                              | 20 |
| Mounting Procedures                                        | 20 |
| Learning to Lead a Horse                                   | 21 |
| Learning to Be a Sidewalker                                | 23 |
| Special Notes                                              | 24 |
| After the Lesson                                           | 25 |

|                                                                  |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| In summary....                                                   | 26        |
| GETTING TO KNOW THE EQUEST CLIENT                                | 26        |
| General Approach and Interaction                                 | 26        |
| Relating to Individuals with a Disability or Learning Difference | 26        |
| Choosing Words with Dignity                                      | 27        |
| APPENDICES                                                       | 29        |
| Frequently Asked Questions                                       | 30        |
| Horse and Tack References:                                       | 31        |
| Parts of the Horse                                               | 31        |
| Horse Markings and Patterns                                      | 32        |
| Parts of the Saddle - English and Western                        | 33        |
| Parts of the Sidepull and Bridle                                 | 33        |
| Special Equipment                                                | 35        |
| Understanding and Working with Horses                            | 37        |
| <b>Reading His Ears</b>                                          | <b>37</b> |
| <b>Pointers for Handling the Horse</b>                           | <b>38</b> |
| <b>The Nature of a Horse</b>                                     | <b>38</b> |
| Common Schooling Maneuvers                                       | 39        |
| Program Descriptions                                             | 40        |
| <b>Therapeutic Riding</b>                                        | <b>40</b> |
| <b>PT/OT</b>                                                     | <b>40</b> |
| <b>Carriage Driving</b>                                          | <b>41</b> |
| <b>Vaulting</b>                                                  | <b>41</b> |
| Hooves for Heroes                                                | 42        |
| Disabilities Frequently Encountered                              | 43        |
| Volunteer Roles                                                  | 46        |
| <b>Volunteer Sidewalker</b>                                      | <b>46</b> |
| <b>Volunteer Horse Leader</b>                                    | <b>46</b> |
| <b>Volunteer Captain</b>                                         | <b>48</b> |
| <b>Schooler</b>                                                  | <b>48</b> |
| <b>Groom-and-Tack Trainer</b>                                    | <b>49</b> |
| <b>Horsepitality</b>                                             | <b>49</b> |
| Other Volunteer Opportunities                                    | 50        |
| Becoming a PATH International Certified Instructor               | 53        |
| Whistleblower Policy                                             | 55        |
| Board of Directors                                               | 56        |

### **Equest Mission Statement**

To enhance the quality of life for children and adults with diverse needs by partnering with horses to bring hope and healing through equine assisted equine assisted activities and therapies.

### **Equest Vision Statement**

Be the model of excellence for worldwide therapeutic riding centers in Equine Assisted Equine Assisted Services (EAS) (EAAT), continuing education, and instructor certification and training. We strive to be distinguished in equine therapy through:

- Exceptional instruction and the safest delivery of superior programming
- Comprehensive and compassionate care of our horses
- High standards and professional leadership, coupled with staff and volunteer development
- Creating a positive and energizing work environment
- The development of innovative programs that blaze new trails in the international therapeutic horsemanship industry

**It is the vision of excellence that will ultimately lead to the growth,  
well-being, and achievements of our clients.**

## OVERVIEW

### The Benefits

The premise of therapeutic riding is that the act of riding on a horse provides a positive mental and physical experience that is especially beneficial to individuals with a disability. Quality of life, from the simplest of tasks to personal relationships, is improved, enhanced and enriched. The benefits of horseback riding are threefold:

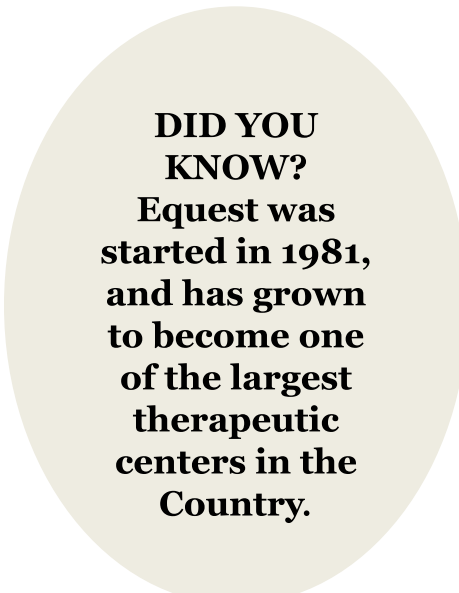
- Physical - The three-dimensional motion of the horse provides the client with hip and back action that simulates natural walking. Riding relaxes and strengthens muscles while improving body tone, posture, balance, joint mobility, and coordination.
- Emotional - Contact with horses and horsemanship training provides a non-competitive setting for learning. New abilities, self-discipline, and improved concentration build self-confidence.
- Social - Horseback riding in a positive environment nurtures a positive self-image. Clients may, for the first time in their lives, experience some independence and a sense of being part of a team.

Equest serves children and adults with a variety of cognitive, physical, and/or emotional challenges. Based on input from doctors, therapists, teachers, and parents, the client's individual goals are designed to complement ongoing therapy and education. Instructors design and monitor individualized treatment plans for each client to address their specific needs while they learn and practice the skills involved in riding. Individual and class goals encourage each client to be the best they can be, on and off the horse.

### Our History

Equest was founded as Freedom Ride Foundation in November 1981, by Evelyn Zembrod and Susan Schwartz. Their special creativity, energy, and skills as equestrians and teachers attracted the interest and support of clients, volunteers, and the community at large. What began with five clients, two horses, and Evelyn as the sole instructor, has grown to the program we have today. We serve more than 260 clients annually with the help of horses, certified riding instructors and therapists, and more than 400 volunteers.

In November of 1987, the Board of Directors approved a name change to Equest and in August of 1988, the program moved to Wylie, Texas. The Wylie facilities included 40+ stalls, two arenas, tack room, grooming stalls, wash stalls, barn manager's office and workroom, commons area and offices for instructors, a PT/OT room, an administrative building, two separate residences for staff members, a dormitory for interns and instructor candidates, and several turnout paddocks.



**DID YOU  
KNOW?  
Equest was  
started in 1981,  
and has grown  
to become one  
of the largest  
therapeutic  
centers in the  
Country.**

In December of 1992, a partnership between Equest and Texas A&M University was announced. Equest was chosen by the University because of its size, endurance, and reputation throughout the country as a quality therapy program. The partnership is aimed at developing courses to train instructors and interested students in the special education, pre-medical and pre-professional health care curricula, and to provide scientific research that will document the benefits of therapeutic horseback riding and development of new and effective rehabilitation methods. This historic partnership has positioned Equest as a national model for a therapeutic riding center and is a valuable resource for riding centers all over the world. The benefit to our own clients is immeasurable; to receive state-of-the-art techniques and procedures.

In November of 2007, Equest became the therapeutic riding center partner for the Texas Horse Park project. The City of Dallas opened the 302-acre park in March 2015. Equest has been busy ever since in this handsome new location adjacent to the Great Trinity River Forest.

### **Governance and Support**

An Executive Committee and Board of Directors oversee general operations, while the day-to-day operations are coordinated by the Executive Director. An Advisory Board offers counsel in specific areas of expertise and provides additional community awareness. The Medical Advisory Board focuses their efforts on education and outreach to the medical community and provides oversight for clinical research conducted at the facility.

The actual lesson program is coordinated by a Program Director with the help of a barn manager, a staff of dedicated instructors, therapists, and volunteers.

The Equest Women's Auxiliary is a supporting organization that assists Equest in all of its efforts, with particular emphasis on fundraising and educating the community about the program and its goals. Each participant in Equest is an important part of a special family.

### **Our Accreditation**

Equest is a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International premier accredited center (<http://www.pathintl.org/>). PATH Intl.'s mission is to change and enrich lives by promoting excellence in Equine Assisted Services (EAS). There are hundreds of PATH Intl. centers all over the world.

### **Our Instructor Training Program**

Equest is certified to offer a six-week training course that graduates PATH Intl.-certified instructors at Registered and Advanced levels. (See Appendix for more information on the instructor training course.) Two times a year, candidates come from all over the globe to participate. While there are some local candidates, most of these men and women travel to Wylie, to live in our dormitory or with a volunteer family, while going through the course. Our own instructor staff, along with outside professionals, has developed an intensive classroom and teaching experience that ultimately spreads the benefits of therapeutic riding to all parts of the world.

***In summary....***

- Any individual can experience the benefits of riding a horse, or just being around a horse, but for someone with disabilities, it can be transformational.
- Equest has been serving the Dallas/Rockwall/Collin County area since 1981 and has grown to be a nationally known center that strives to provide high-quality services.
- We are an accredited program, which helps us to maintain our high standards.
- Not only do we provide services to our own clients, but we also teach others so that they can expand the benefits of therapeutic riding around the world.



## **SAFETY**

### **Basic Guidelines**

Safety is paramount to Equest, both on and off the horse. In addition to knowing and understanding basic safety and emergency procedures, it is important for all volunteers to be aware of additional precautions needed when working with horses and clients.

All individuals, regardless of their purpose for being at Equest on any given day, must comply with the following:

- Equest is a non-smoking facility., including vaping and e-cigarettes. Smoking is allowed in personal vehicles **ONLY**.
- All children should be supervised by an adult when on the premises.
- Volunteers should not bring unsupervised children to class.
- Only authorized personnel (instructors, volunteers and staff) are allowed in the stalls and teaching arenas.
- Unauthorized personnel are not allowed in the fields.
- Observe and obey all safety signs posted.
- Follow instructions provided in the event of a fire or tornado alarm on the premises.
- No guest dogs are permitted on the property.

Mounted persons (program clients, volunteer riders, schoolers, and instructors/staff) must wear a helmet at all times.

Horses must be properly tacked with safe equipment. Any equipment or tack that is worn or stressed to the point of breaking should be brought to the attention of an instructor for repair or to be discarded, and an appropriate substitution made.

During your volunteer training, your groom-and-tack trainer and/or your Leader trainer will talk to you about safe horse-handling practices you should strive to make a part of your routine each and every time you are working with any of our Equest horses.

### **Medical Releases and First Aid**

Every volunteer and client is required to provide emergency medical contact information, a medical release authorizing treatment in the event of an emergency (or indicating No Treatment), and information about current conditions, precautions, allergies, treatment or medications which might be important for us to know. An example of such medications might be epinephrine for allergies, an inhaler for asthma, or prescription medicines carried by the individual. This information must be updated annually, at a minimum.

A first-aid kit is maintained in the commons or the barn. It contains items such as bandages for a variety of minor wounds, rubbing alcohol, antiseptic spray/ointment, and ice packs. It does NOT contain aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or any other oral remedies commonly used. It is our strict policy, required by insurance, that no staff or volunteer associated with Equest can offer or administer anything that must be taken orally, nasally, or via syringe. Only external treatment, such as disinfecting and covering a wound or application of an ice pack, can be offered. An **AED** is on the wall outside of the tack room.

#### IMPORTANT

*It is strongly advised that any volunteer or client who may require a medical device, such as (but not limited to) an inhaler or an epinephrine pen, should have that device with them or easily accessible while on the property, and make it known to the instructor where and how to retrieve said device if needed.*

#### **In the Event of...A Fire or Other Evacuation Event**

A fire at any location has great potential for danger, but especially so in a barn. It is vital to take

#### **CALLING 9-1-1**

*When calling 9-1-1 for medical or fire-related emergencies, please use the wording below:*

**"We are calling from 811 Pemberton Hill Rd.. We have a medical/fire emergency."**

*This will allow for a faster response on the part of ambulances and fire trucks.*

*For non-EMS and non-fire emergencies (such as reporting a crime), we are still located in the Dallas County Sheriff's jurisdiction.*

notice and respond immediately when a fire alarm is sounded. In order to assure staff, volunteers, clients, and guests are safe in the event of a fire, please follow this procedure:

Upon ANY indication of a fire in progress, sound the fire alarm. DO NOT investigate first! There is an alarm switch by each exit. It is prominently marked.

**a. The alarm for a fire is a steady, continuous siren.**

- b. If you see a fire in the beginning stage (first flames, or initial spark) and you feel capable of extinguishing the fire, retrieve the nearest fire extinguisher and proceed to put out the fire. The fire department should be notified that the initial fire has been put out but requested to come inspect the area to ensure it has been completely extinguished.

Call 911. (See **Calling 9-1-1** on previous page for instructions on getting the call routed properly.) There are phones on desks in all offices, in the Commons

#### USING THE PHONE SYSTEM

*When making an emergency call from any Equest office, simply dial 9-1-1.*

area on the volunteer sign-in desk, in the File Room, the PT/OT Room, the barn manager's office, and of course you may use your personal cell phone.

ALL individuals should proceed in an orderly fashion to the parking lot via the nearest exit without going through the barn if at all possible. Clients shall be immediately assisted from the building, preferably after being dismounted by the instructor(s).

- c. Instructors are responsible for indicating the direction of the nearest exit and seeing that all clients and volunteers immediately exit the building and quickly proceed to the parking lot.
- d. If there is a class in progress in the outdoor arena, the clients will be dismounted and saddles will be immediately removed. The instructor will provide directions to safely attend to the horses.
- e. Each instructor shall perform a headcount of clients and volunteers upon arriving at the parking lot. Because of this, **no one is allowed to leave the property during a fire evacuation.**

A senior staff member shall take charge of the meeting area. Their responsibilities are:

- f. Determine from instructors and others any persons unaccounted for.
- g. Establish that the fire department has been contacted. If not, a designated person will be sent to the nearest safe phone.
- h. Arrange for First Aid or emergency medical needs of any person(s).
- i. Know the whereabouts of any staff members that have returned to the building or are on errands.

No one shall reenter the building unless given permission by the senior staff member. The only reason to reenter the building is to assist clients in evacuating the building. Persons who reenter to assist in evacuation should do so in pairs and should NOT enter an area where smoke impedes vision.

At staff discretion, horses that can be removed while exiting, without endangering the evacuation of persons, may be taken to the outdoor arena or turn outs and turned loose. Loose horses that can be safely captured shall be put in the outdoor arena or turn outs.

Should circumstances make any of these procedures impractical (i.e., wind conditions, location of fire) the senior staff member shall make necessary modifications.

Fire extinguishers shall be mounted within a maximum travel distance of 75 feet. Fire extinguishers shall be inspected annually and recharged when necessary. All staff shall be instructed in the use of fire extinguishers.

### **In the Event of...A Tornado or Other Severe Weather**

During a tornado or severe weather conditions, all persons should congregate in a designated safe location. **The fire alarm will be used as an alert, sounding in short intervals.**

Instructors are responsible for supervising the dismount of clients, and directing clients, volunteers and others to the nearest safe spot. The safest place to congregate is in the tack room or the restrooms in the Commons area (when there are only a few people present); for larger numbers, the next safest place is the Commons area itself.

As everyone gathers, instructors shall perform a headcount of clients and volunteers.

Weather radios and flashlights should be retrieved (if possible).

- Weather radios are at the Reception Desk and in the Tack Room
- Additional flashlights are located in the Tack Room.

The senior staff member shall take charge of the safe room. The priorities are to:

- Determine any persons unaccounted for.
- Arrange for first aid or emergency needs of any person(s) to the extent possible.
- Know the whereabouts of any staff members not present.

**If time allows**, these tasks may also be executed, at a staff member's discretion:

- Untack horses that were in class and leave in a secured arena.
- Or—in the case of severe weather—horses may be put into stalls.

**\*\*\*Stay under cover until assured that all danger has passed\*\*\***

*RED fire extinguishers are filled with CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) and should be used for trash, liquids, chemicals, electrical and structural fires.*

*SILVER fire extinguishers are filled with H<sub>2</sub>O (water) and should be used for structural and trash fires only. **Do not use a silver fire extinguisher for an electrical or chemical fire.***

*Fire extinguishers are located:*

- 1)inside main entrance to Commons,*
- 2)Barn 5 outside the storage room,*
- 3)Barn 6 outside the feed room,*
- 4)outside the tack room,*
- 5)At the covered arena on the N, S, and E sides*

*To operate the fire extinguisher:*

- 1) hold the extinguisher upright and pull the ring pin;*
- 2) stand back 10 feet, aim at base of the fire, and squeeze lever, sweeping the extinguisher from side to side.*

### **In the Event of...A Medical Emergency—Major Injury**

If there is an accident involving a major injury, such as a broken limb or head trauma, please follow this procedure:

The instructor (if the injury involves a client or volunteer in a class) will appoint someone to:

- a. Telephone the emergency number and read directions to the barn, located by the telephone.
- b. Remain at the barn area to direct emergency personnel and reassure others in the area.

The instructor will also appoint a volunteer to:

- c. Go to the road and wait for the emergency vehicle to arrive.
- d. Stop the driver at the gate and have lights & sirens turned off so the horses will not be frightened.
- e. Direct the driver to where the injured person is resting.

The instructor will decide who will remain with the grounded client and who will take the class to the safest confined area away from the accident.

The class will continue in an orderly manner or return to the barn.

If the instructor is injured, the most experienced volunteer in the class will take temporary charge, following the procedures outlined above, until another instructor or staff member arrives.

If the injury occurs outside of class, a staff member or instructor should be brought to the scene immediately to assess the situation and take charge.

### **In the Event of...A Medical Emergency—Minor Injury**

Minor injuries or falls do occur occasionally. In such a situation, please follow this procedure:

An individual nearest the injured person at the time of the accident should calmly instruct the individual to stay down (if fallen) or assist them if in immediate danger of falling.

A staff member or instructor should be brought to the scene immediately to assess the situation and take charge.

If the injured person is a mounted client, the horse will be taken back to the barn and properly attended to.

If the injured person should not or cannot walk, someone will be requested to bring a wheelchair or car.

Needs of the individual (i.e., band-aids, ice, taken in/out of the heat) will be addressed.

The rest of the class will continue in an orderly manner.

### **In the Event Urgent Action is Required**

Urgent Action Procedures apply in cases of injury such as a tractor accident or malfunctioning equipment/structures, suspected criminal activity such as assault or theft, suspected child abuse, suspected improper behavior, or suspected animal abuse.

When visible injury requires first aid or CPR, in addition to the procedures described below, follow Emergency Medical Procedures as outlined on pages 16-17.

Contact appropriate authorities immediately. Phone numbers are posted by every phone.

Make sure all clients, parents and visitors are in a supervised group away from the emergency. Tend to all human needs first, then address animal needs.

- Contact the Director of Program Quality & Development.
- If unable to contact the Director of Program Quality & Development, contact the Chief Executive Officer.
- If unable to contact either, contact the Chairman of the Board.

Do not volunteer information to spectators or strangers. Explain that an investigation is still in process.

Document as soon as possible all facts, details, and telephone conversations. Obtain

### **INCIDENT REPORTING**

*All incidents, minor and major, must be officially reported. A staff member or instructor will fill out the appropriate form. If you are involved in or a witness to any incident or accident, please do not leave the premises until you have talked to the staff/instructor in charge and provided any information you know. Timely, first-person, thoughtful input is critical to having an accurate and thorough report.*

statements from witnesses as soon as possible. Make sure Program Director and Executive Director have information about clients involved so parents or families may be informed quickly.

Dealing with reporters:

Always refer media inquiries to the Executive Director. Do not volunteer opinions, speculate on causes for the emergency, or make policy statements.

If child abuse is suspected, take immediate action.

- a. Contact the Program Director or Executive Director. In their absence, contact the Chairman of the Board who will notify Child Protective Services.
- b. Separate the suspected abuser from all program participants.

*Once any employee is notified of or becomes aware of any incident or situation that contradicts operating policy or has the potential to compromise the safety and welfare of program participants, that employee is obligated to report such information immediately to the Program Director and the Executive Director. From a legal perspective, employee knowledge is considered agency knowledge. Volunteers who are notified or become aware of any such incident or situation should notify a staff member immediately. (For additional information on Equest policy regarding official reporting of incidents, see Whistleblower Policy, in Appendix.)*

***In summary....***

- Observe and obey all safety rules—around the property, with the horses, and in the event of an emergency.
- Let an instructor/staff member know if you may require attention for any chronic medical condition, and the best way to make it available. Be sure your medical and information release is up-to-date in the office.
- Remain calm in case of emergency and look to an instructor/staff member to tell you what to do next.
- Familiarize yourself with emergency procedures so that you can be a part of the solution, not exacerbate the problem.
- Conduct yourself in a manner that is helpful, respectful, and courteous at all times.



## GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

All Equest volunteers must complete all necessary paperwork before each session begins. Make sure your updated paperwork is turned into the Director of Volunteer Services as soon as possible for each session. This is an accreditation requirement.

### Minimum Age Requirement

It is a general Equest guideline that the minimum age for volunteering to work with the horses and clients is 14 years old. Allowances can be made at staff discretion for individuals who are 13 years old, if that individual is extremely experienced with horses, can provide a written letter of recommendation, and participates in appropriate training. Any individuals who are at least 12 years old are welcome to clean tack, sweep the stable area, etc. Because working with horses can be a potentially dangerous situation, we ask that all prospective volunteers sign the liability release on the back of the volunteer registration form.

### What to Wear

Volunteers should dress appropriately for horse related activities around children.

- You will be doing a lot of walking and jogging on uneven terrain, so supportive, comfortable, closed-toe, closed-heel shoes are important. It hurts when a horse steps on your foot, so make sure your footwear is sturdy as well.
- Dress in close-fitting clothing that is weather appropriate. Loose, floppy clothing can get caught and tangled with equipment.
- Dress in layers that you can shed as you exercise, especially during cooler months.
- Bring a jacket, even if you don't need it in town—it's cooler at the barn than you may think!
- Long pants are recommended but shorts of reasonable length are allowed. During the summer, be sure you dress coolly and wear a hat that will not fly off.
- Avoid dangly earrings and bracelets that can hamper your movements, get pulled off by a client, or distract the horse.
- Sunglasses are a big plus in the sunny months and sun screen is recommended.
- Avoid scented perfumes and lotions, as these can attract insects and distract the horse or client.
- Leave your cell phone in your car or at home. Even on vibrate the phone can be a distraction to you, the client or the horse. If this is a problem, see the Director of Volunteer Services, or your instructor.

### Available at the barn for your use:

- ✓ Lockers
- ✓ Water dispenser
- ✓ Refrigerators
- ✓ Microwave oven

### Sign-in Procedures and Recording Volunteer Hours

Your volunteer time is important to us for fundraising purposes and recognizing outstanding volunteers. Please be sure to record your hours on the sign-in computer each time you come.

Sign-in sheets are kept on the volunteer table, if necessary. Include your drive time and round off your hours to the nearest half hour.

### **When You Can't Be There...**

**It is your responsibility to find a substitute in the event you must miss a class.** A sub list is published when the volunteer schedule is set for each session and made available to all volunteers. You can send out a group email to individuals on the sub list or call them to find someone who will sub for you. If it is close to class time or you have really tried to find a sub and can't, call the Director of Volunteer Services (972) 412-1099 and let them know as soon as possible.

If you would like to be on the sub list, you can sign up at volunteer orientation, mark it on your registration form, or let the Director of Volunteer Services know. Offer to sub only if you really want people to contact you and you would be able to help at least occasionally.

If you are running late due to traffic conditions, weather, car problems, or other situations, please notify the office with your ETA. If we know you're on the way, someone can stand in for you until you arrive.

### **Inclement Weather**

Classes are rarely cancelled due to weather conditions; however, if driving conditions become unsafe, be sure to call the Office at (972)412-1099 no sooner than two hours prior to your scheduled class time. In the event of large scale cancellations, we try to post on Facebook and text, call or e-mail the volunteers for the specific classes affected.

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### **Attributes of a Good Volunteer**

|                  |                                                                                                    |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reliability      | Regular attendance or the provision of a reliable substitute                                       |
| Punctuality      | Late arrival can be very frustrating to a client who has looked forward to their weekly lesson.    |
| Physical fitness | Within reason!                                                                                     |
| Be relaxed       | An anxious volunteer contributes to a nervous client and a tense mount.                            |
| Alertness        | Despite your outward relaxation, always anticipate an unexpected emergency.                        |
| Empathy          | Avoid false sentimentality. It is important to have empathy and genuine regard toward the clients. |

|                                |                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Horse knowledge                | Knowledge of horses is helpful, but many excellent volunteers have little previous experience but are willing to learn. |
| Patience                       | Help others learn and progress at their own pace.                                                                       |
| Sensible, comfortable clothing | Sneakers or boots only, pants that stay up, no underwear worn as outerwear.                                             |
| COMMON SENSE                   | Always!                                                                                                                 |

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### **Dismissal of Volunteers and Guests from Center Activities**

Equest relies greatly on volunteers as important members of the team that provides services to and assists our clients. Equest also welcomes guests to visit at any time classes are in session or when there is a staff member present on the property to greet and assist them.

While recognizing the extreme importance of the safety and well-being of our clients, volunteers, staff, guests, and horses, there may be occasions when a volunteer or guest must be dismissed and/or told to leave the premises. When this occurs, the following guidelines apply, as appropriate.

A volunteer or guest may be told to leave the premises immediately if, for example, he/she:

- Threatens the safety of others;
- Is disruptive or abusive;
- Is not in compliance with Equest policies;
- Fails to properly follow established safety procedures;
- Is in possession of a weapon;- new rule in TX
- Is under the influence or in possession of alcohol or drugs
- Is under age and is using or in possession of tobacco or related materials;
- Is of age and using tobacco products in a non-designated location;
- Mistreats any animal or person at Equest;
- Acts or speaks inappropriately or dangerously.

A volunteer or guest who commits any of the above actions, or whose actions may result in a situation of a potentially serious nature, will be told to leave by (preferably) the most senior staff member available at the time (when it is a guest) or by the Director of Volunteers Services (when it is a volunteer). It is preferable that two staff members be involved in any decision that may result in expulsion from the premises and that two staff members participate in confronting the offending volunteer or guest. In situations where circumstances are not as clear as possible, the Executive Director should be contacted to either resolve the situation personally or to provide guidance to and/or authorize others to do so.

At any time, if any staff member or volunteer feels threatened, law enforcement officials will be contacted for assistance and security as appropriate.

In addition, if a volunteer is in violation of any Equest policies or procedures, fails to follow or ignores instructions from a staff member, or is not adequately performing their responsibilities as a volunteer, the Director of Volunteer Services will be notified. The Director of Volunteer Services will investigate, interviewing all individuals who can help establish the facts, and then document the findings and review them with the Executive Director. If warranted, the Director of Volunteer Services and the Executive Director or another staff member will jointly counsel the volunteer in a private meeting. Documentation of the investigation and counseling notes from the counseling session (which should be written immediately following the session) will be kept in the volunteer's file.

If the Director of Volunteer Services and the Executive Director or other staff members believe that, as a result of the investigation and counseling session, the volunteer will be able to improve and go on to effectively serve the clients and the program, then they may be permitted to continue serving as a volunteer. However, if the results of the investigation and counseling session reveal that there are or will be no improvements on the part of the volunteer, or that the volunteer's continued presence at the facility is in any way detrimental to the program, Equest reserves the right to terminate the volunteer's services and direct them to leave. A volunteer will be dismissed only after consultation with the appropriate staff affected by the volunteer's actions and the Executive Director or the Executive Director's proxy. The Director of Volunteer Services, with the consultation of the second staff member and the approval of the Executive Director, has discretion to invite the volunteer to return after an appropriate probationary period has been served and all other conditions as set by the Director of Volunteer Services have been met.

In dealing with these types of situations involving either guests or volunteers, all individuals involved will maintain the utmost tact and decorum. All discussions and any confrontations will be conducted in private, out of sound and sight from clients, families, other staff and volunteers not involved in the situation.

***In summary....***

- Minimum age for volunteers working with clients and horses is 14 years old. Exceptions can be made with a written letter of recommendation. Junior volunteers can assist with barn chores and other tasks starting at age 12.
- Dress appropriately, for your own comfort, in consideration of the horses, and as a role model for our clients.
- Please conduct yourself in a mature and responsible manner at all times while at the barn. This includes regular participation in class, communication with staff when you

must be absent, using appropriate language and exhibiting appropriate behaviors at all times.



## THE RIDING LESSON

### Description of a Lesson

One or more volunteers and an instructor can work with a group of clients in an enclosed ring, open field, or stable area for any of several purposes. The client may learn special riding skills, care of the horse, or how to saddle a horse. The client may play games on horseback, perform gymnastic movements on the back of a horse, learn dressage, jumping, or carriage driving, or go for a trail ride. A physical, occupational or speech therapist may be consulting and offering “hands-on” assistance in positioning and recommending activities for clients. Each client will be working toward individual goals. As a volunteer, you will be involved in every aspect of the lesson from grooming and tacking, through the class itself, and cleanup afterwards.

If you are new to working around horses, or are unsure about working with a horse on your own, please ask for assistance or clarification from a staff member, your volunteer captain, or “buddy up” with another volunteer. Do what you feel comfortable doing—it’s okay to ask for help!

### Riding Lesson Timeline

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 45 minutes before class    | Sign in on the attendance sheet in the tack room. Prepare the horse for the lesson.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 10-15 minutes before class | Meet at the round table with the class instructor for your class assignment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 5-10 minutes before class  | If you are leading, take your horse to the designated warm-up area and wait for the instructor to call for you and your horse.<br>If you are sidewalking or have another class assignment, wait behind with the clients to assist in mounting if necessary. At the instructor’s discretion, you may aid the clients in finding and putting on their helmets. |
| Class                      | Usually lasts about an hour.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| After class                | If you are <u>leading</u> a horse, take him back to his stall. Remove his tack, pick his feet and provide any cool-down requested by your instructor. Return tack to its appropriate location in the tack room                                                                                                                                               |

UNLESS the horse is being used in the following class. The client may assist you in putting away the tack, to learn new skills and take on more responsibility.

After class

If you are sidewalking, accompany the client to his or her family, or back to the barn as necessary. If the client is capable of putting away the tack, monitor or assist to ensure safety and correct placement. If the client does not stay, assist the leader with untacking the horse.

### **Preparing for Class**

It is important to arrive 45 minutes before class time for grooming/tacking horses and volunteer assignments. Some of our clients come early to groom and tack their horses with your assistance. It is especially important that you are timely for these classes.

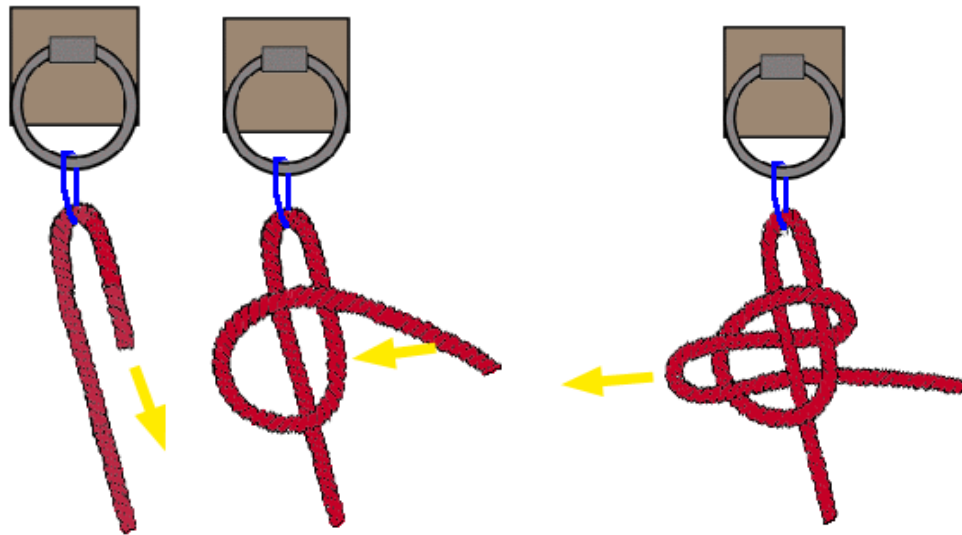
1. Be wearing or pick up your name tag and record your hours on the sign in sheet.
2. Check Class assignment sheet for horses and tack to be used.
3. Check your horse's stall door for any special messages. For example: some horses are only groomed in cross-ties or may require an instructor to pick their hooves.
4. Each horse has its own grooming tools. Look for your horse's name on the grooming buckets across from the tack room.
5. Tie the horse in the stall using a quick release knot (p.27). The horse should be tied on the side of the stall with his head on the same side as the stall door if possible, so that his head is closest to you as you enter. If your horse should be tacked in the cross-ties, lead him there with his halter and lead rope. Attach the cross ties to the side of the halter on both sides and remove the lead rope from the halter.
6. When you are in the stall, leave the stall door open wide enough to comfortably walk through yourself, but not wide enough for the horse to walk through. Some of our horses are talented enough to untie themselves! If you need to leave your horse during the grooming and tacking process, close and lock the stall door while he is tied up.

### **Safety Rules in the Stall**

- Be calm and quiet. Sudden moves can cause a horse to shy (jump sideways) or kick out.
- When grooming and tacking, tie your horse up. A loose horse in a barn can cause havoc. And never leave a tied horse unattended; if you have to leave the stall or cross ties, check regularly and often on him.
- When tying, use a quick release knot so that if your horse gets scared and pulls he can be freed quickly. The feeling of being constrained can make a scared horse panic to the point of hurting himself or you.

- Never stand directly behind a horse. If you are grooming its tail, stand to one side and pull the tail gently over. When going around a horse, stay close to his tail and keep your hand on his rump.
- Do **NOT** kneel around a horse. It's hard to get out of the way quickly. Bend from the knees and waist instead.
- Do **NOT** duck under the neck of a tied horse because he may be startled. Safety first—go around.
- The safest place to stand is beside your horse's shoulder where you can see each other, or at least 10 feet away.
- When going through a doorway (in or out), be sure that YOU are the leader and move into the space first, leading the horse, rather than allowing the horse to be the leader.
- Also when going through a doorway, make sure the door is wide open and the horse is turned so that he goes straight through the opening, allowing him to maneuver and turn once through it. Approaching at an angle and/or through too narrow an opening, may cause the horse to run into the door or wall, startling him or causing an injury.

## Tying a Quick Release Knot



## Grooming the Horse

Grooming keeps the horse's coat clean and healthy, eliminates dirt, dried sweat and loose hair that can irritate the horse under the tack. Grooming also stimulates nerve endings of the skin and helps to relax and warm up the muscles.

1. Use the hoof pick to thoroughly remove dirt and debris from all four hooves. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, or find it difficult, ask for assistance. It is vital to not skip this task.
2. Use the rubber curry comb in the large muscle group areas (neck, shoulder, back, chest, gently around the barrel, and hindquarters) to loosen the deepest layer of dirt, mud and dead skin from the horse's hide. Use a firm, massaging touch in a circular pattern, working from the horse's head to the rear. Be sure to smooth your hand across the horse's chest (between the front legs) to check for cuts, scrapes, or mud that you can't see.
3. Use the dandy or body brush (stiffer bristles) to lay the hairs down on the skin. Brush in the direction of hair growth, starting at the horse's head and working towards his tail. Use the dandy or body brush (stiffer bristles) on large muscle group areas only.
4. Use the polishing brush (soft bristles) to do a final sweep of dust from the hair. Again, brush in the direction of hair growth, starting at the horse's head and working towards his tail. You can use this brush all over the body – all the way down the horse's legs (where it is skin on bone) and on the face, gently working around the eyes and nostrils and not brushing dirt into the eyes.

5. Use the hairbrush or comb provided in the bucket on the mane and tail to remove twigs, bits of hay, shavings, burrs, etc. Start at the bottom and work your way to the top. Remember, if you are grooming a tail, stand to one side and pull the tail gently over.

### At Class Time

- Leaders Check to make sure your horse is properly tacked and tighten the girth a bit if necessary before leaving the stall. Lead the horse with the lead rope attached to the sidepull or bridle. **Equest horses should never be tied to their stall with the lead rope attached to a bridle. An instructor, staff member or certified volunteer will bridle for you just prior to departure.** Proceed to the mounting area designated by the instructor. The instructor will do the final tightening and tack check at mounting.
- Sidewalkers Check to see that your client is prepared to ride. **All clients must wear a safety helmet.** Helmets will be fitted to each client the first day of class and sizes recorded. Check to make sure that the client's helmet fits properly and that the chin strap is fastened. If your client wears a gait belt or safety belt, make sure it fits properly on the outside of jackets. Sidewalkers are to stay with their clients while the horses are led to the mounting area.

### Mounting Procedures

During mounting, leaders hold horses in the designated holding area, while sidewalkers stay with the clients. Make sure your client's helmet fits correctly, then wait (in the designated client area— to be called by the instructor. Mounting is conducted by the instructor; volunteers assist as directed.

There are three types of mounting:

- |              |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ramp Mount   | Used for clients using wheelchairs or otherwise not able to climb stairs.                                                                                             |
| Block Mount  | Used for small clients or taller horses to get the client to stirrup level.                                                                                           |
| Ground Mount | Used when the client is tall enough and capable of reaching the stirrup from the ground. The leader holds the horse quietly while the sidewalker assists as directed. |

When using the mounting ramp or block the leader should:

1. Approach ramp or block in the direction requested by the instructor, turning to face the horse just upon entering.
2. Position the horse close to the spot where the client will be positioned for mounting. The offside person will help with this task.
  - Do not put pressure on the lead rope; this may cause the horse to back up. If the horse should back up, **do not pull**. Simply release pressure on the lead and go with him—he will stop.
  - Allow the horse to relax, holding him quietly and not restricting his head.

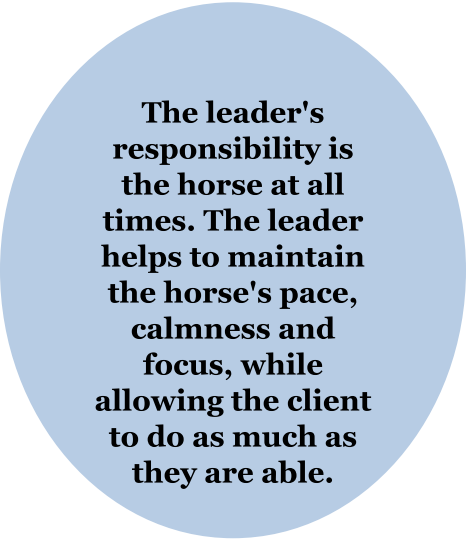
3. Once the client is mounted and the cue is given by the instructor and client to “walk on”, guide the horse out slowly and quietly while still facing him. Once the horse is clear of the ramp or block, then turn to face forward and walk into the arena and stop in the center with the horse’s tail towards the gate. Sidewalkers join the client so that support can be given while the instructor adjusts the stirrups.
4. Once stirrups and girth are adjusted and the client has said or otherwise indicated “walk on”, lead the horse slowly and quietly to the rail and continue around the arena.

When using the mounting ramp or block the sidewalker(s) should:

1. Position yourself at the end of the ramp or block when called by the instructor.
2. Support client as directed by instructor.
3. If you are acting as offside during mounting at the block, position yourself close enough to the block so that the horse has to stay close to the block.
4. When instructed to by the client, pull down the stirrup into riding position. As the client mounts, put weight into the offside stirrup or pull down on the stirrup leather to balance the weight being added by the client on the near side. You may also need to help the client's right leg clear the horse’s back. Help the foot into the stirrup.
5. If you are acting as offside during a ramp mount, follow your instructor’s requests. You will be positioned on the horse’s right side. Your main job will be to support the client’s back and help them bring the right leg into position.

### Learning to Lead a Horse

- Hold the lead rope 6-12 inches from the snap to allow for the natural motion of the horse’s head. Hold the extra rope in your inside hand, doubling the excess back and forth across your palm. Never wrap it around your hand.
- Always lead on the inside of the horse, just behind the horse’s head, holding the lead line. Make sure the lead rope is between the reins, not over them.
- Keep a minimum of 2 horses length distance between your horse and the horse in front of you.
- Make turns gradually; sharp turns can throw the client off-balance. Allow space for sidewalkers when next to a fence, rail or obstacle. Make a big circle or cut across the arena to avoid getting too close. Let the sidewalkers and client know when you are about to turn, circle or cut across the arena.
- When the horse is stopped, the leader stands at a 45-degree angle in front of the horse, toes pointed at his chest, to keep the horse stationary. Allow the



**The leader's responsibility is the horse at all times. The leader helps to maintain the horse's pace, calmness and focus, while allowing the client to do as much as they are able.**

horse to move his head and stretch but keep him quiet and calm by petting him or softly speaking to him.

- To halt, say “whoa”, or “ho”. If the horse does not stop, tug slightly backward on the lead, then release. If the horse does not respond immediately, repeat with several small tugs.
- Clients are urged to control their horses to the maximum of their abilities. A horse leader must never take the place of the client but should be there to assist as directed to keep the horse in control. Check with your instructor before the lesson regarding your client’s level of ability in controlling their mount.
- When the client is controlling the horse, allow a little more slack in the lead (12 inches or as directed by instructor) so that you will not inadvertently influence the horse. The horse may become confused if he feels a tug both on the lead line and the reins and may not attend to the reins as he should.
- When changing pace, have the horse follow your pace rather than you follow the horse’s pace. Transition the horse from a walk to a fast walk into a trot by increasing your own walking pace and lengthening your stride, rather than jogging. Conversely, make a downward transition from the trot by slowing down to a fast walk, then to a walk. This will make for a smoother transition and will not throw the client off balance.
- Avoid making gait transitions on the turn (in the corner of the arena).
- **Be sure to hold the horse’s head straight, especially at the trot.** Keep the horse’s head level as well. If his head is too high, the horse will hollow his back and unbalance the client. If his head is too low, the horse will pull the client forward.
- Pulling the horse will distort his gait and make him move crookedly; the client will become unevenly seated and lose the rhythm of the gait. Even steps of the horse are crucial to maintain the client’s balance. Short tugs work better than a steady pull on a poky horse.
- If a horse steps on your foot, mentally count “101, 102” (this keeps you focused on something other than the pain!) while leaning against his shoulder to unbalance him. The horse probably doesn’t know he is on your foot. Your objective is to not frighten the horse or client with a loud “OUCH”.
- Always keep the horse away from any possibly dangerous obstacles such as mud holes, broken fences, trash, wire, etc.
- If you must stop during the lesson for any reason other than making a halt at the instructor’s request, come to the center of the ring to stop so as not to create a traffic jam on the rail.

*Horses perform best when they are given a command and allowed time to process it. To help keep the rider and horse balanced use smooth transitions, clear commands, large circles instead of small ones, and gradual starts and stops.*

- If the horse should shy or suddenly pull, release the lead in the right hand, but maintain contact with your left hand on the other end of the lead to control the horse. **When a client is mounted on the horse in this situation, make every effort to maintain control via the lead rope without pulling or yanking.**
- When the horse is frightened by an object, let him stop, face the object, look at it, and sniff it (don't let the horse spin and try to flee). Give the horse time to overcome his fear. Reassure him and help to calm him in a slow, soft voice.
- Keep conversation to a minimum so that the client can listen to the instructor.
- When the lesson is finished and the client dismounts, assist the client with running the stirrups up. Be sure they walk in front of the horse to get to the other side.

### **Learning to Be a Sidewalker**

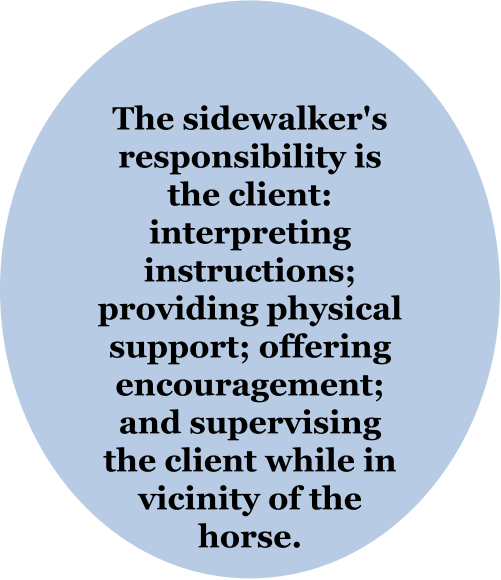
The sidewalker's role is to help the client with balance and reinforce instructions in the lesson. If there are two sidewalkers, the inside sidewalker (the one closest to the center of the ring) will clarify instructions. Too many people talking to the client can be confusing.

Different methods of physical support may be designated by the instructor, depending on the client's needs. For example:

- Thigh Hold: Place your arm closest to the client across the client's thigh and grasp the front edge of the saddle.
- Ankle Hold: Hold the client's boot/shoe near the ankle.
- Belt Hold: Hold the client's safety belt or gait belt to assist with balance. This is done while supporting the legs.
- Spotting: Walk beside the client's leg to assist when needed (i.e., at the trot or to reinforce directions).

If you are not clear on what you should be doing, ask your instructor.

- Observe the client with your front or side vision at all times. Never become so relaxed that you are not totally aware of the client, horse, leader, instructor, and activities around you.
- Be sure not to lean on the horse or client since this pressure may unbalance the client or irritate the horse.



**The sidewalker's responsibility is the client: interpreting instructions; providing physical support; offering encouragement; and supervising the client while in vicinity of the horse.**

- When the client is using body and leg aids and does not need to be supported, do not touch the horse, saddle, or pad, since this may interfere with the aid applied by the client.
- You may need to reinforce the instructor's directions, assist the client in carrying out instructions, or direct the client's attention to the task.
- Listen to the instructor's directions so you can be ready to reinforce, when necessary, BUT allow the client plenty of time to process the information before you begin to assist. For example, if the instructor says, "Pull on the right rein towards me," and the client seems confused, gently tap the right hand and say, "right."
- Talking to the client while having a lesson is not recommended since it interferes with the communication between the client and instructor. Many clients with a disability have difficulty focusing on instruction, so all unrelated talking should be kept to a minimum.
- Refrain from talking to the other sidewalker or leader during the lesson unless it has to do with the client's position, balance, or horse. Be sure that you do not talk with other teams as they pass you. Any unnecessary talking distracts the client, shows disrespect for the riding lesson, and diverts the attention of the team.
- Clients who need moderate support, especially support to the back, will need more attention. Be sure you understand and are comfortable with the method of support, both mentally and physically, before moving into the riding area.
- If you become tired during the lesson and would benefit by switching sides, let the instructor and leader know. The leader will bring the horse to the center of the arena, and the instructor can provide support to the client while you walk to the other side of the horse.
- Be careful to not inadvertently pull the client towards you when you are physically supporting them.
- When your client is dismounted, make sure he or she always walks in FRONT of the horse when going from one side to the other.
- Always stay with your horse and client, unless otherwise instructed.
- **ALWAYS:** If you tire enough that you are unable to support the client with the requested hold, let the instructor know. There are often other volunteers available to take your position while you rest; or you may be able to trade places with a sidewalker that is working with a client that does not require as much support.

### Special Notes

Falls off a horse are rare, but they can happen. Don't panic! Leaders stop all horses, and each volunteer tends to their client or horse. The instructor is responsible for the fallen client. Be patient with your clients; give them time-and-a-half to respond, to try, to do the task. The rewards, no matter how small or large, make your volunteer work very worthwhile. Without volunteers, we would have a tough time making this program a reality.

## After the Lesson

The leader or the client and leader may lead the horse back to his stall. If the client leads the horse, the leader should walk on the right side of the horse to assist if needed. The client should

### MAKING ADJUSTMENTS IN CLASS

*It is always appropriate to ask the leader to stop the horse if...*

- ✓ *The client is off balance and cannot regain it while the horse is moving.*
- ✓ *The saddle pad has slipped, or the girth is loose.*
- ✓ *The stirrups need adjusting.*
- ✓ *The client's helmet needs to be adjusted.*
- ✓ *The client is fatigued, in pain, or needs to stop for other reasons.*
- ✓ *You need to change sides, or if you are having some difficulty carrying out your job in comfort or efficiently. When changing sides, have one volunteer change at a time. NEVER leave the client unsupported.*

hold the lead rope with two hands, and the leader generally holds the reins on the opposite side.

Leaders:

1. Return the horse to his stall. Detach the lead rope from the sidepull noseband, remove the sidepull and put on the halter, with the lead rope attached. Tie the horse in his stall using a quick release knot. NEVER tie a horse with the lead rope attached to a bridle, or by the reins.
2. If the horse is not to be used again, remove the saddle. Brush the saddle and girth area. Pick out his hooves. If your horse is sweaty (in hot weather), check with your instructor about sponging the sweaty areas, or running the hose over him in the shower stall.
3. Untie the lead rope and remove the halter. Close and secure the stall door.
4. Put away all tack in its proper place.

Sidewalkers:

1. After dismounting, take your client back to the helmet area to put away the helmet, and safety belt, if necessary.
2. Return your client to parents or responsible party.
3. Assist in untacking horses.
4. Your client may be capable of helping with untacking. If so, assist or monitor the client as needed with the tack, ensuring it is returned to its proper location in the tack room.

- Your client may wish to give the horse a treat after the lesson. ALWAYS have the client give treats by using a carrot cup. Please also take note of any notices on the stall door. Some of our horses are on dietary restrictions and cannot have treats.

***In summary....***

- Your commitment to one class will be about two hours in length (not including travel time to/from the barn): arriving 45 minutes before the stated class time to groom and tack the horse, 60 minutes in class, and 5-15 minutes returning the horse to the stall, untacking, and a final grooming.
- Leaders and sidewalkers each have very specific responsibilities. Learning to be an effective leader and/or a sidewalker requires time, teamwork, and attention to detail.
- Although leaders and sidewalkers are vital to our clients, the client is here for a LESSON. To the extent possible, keeping safety in mind, allow the client to be in control of the horse and decisions made in the lesson.



## GETTING TO KNOW THE EQUEST CLIENT

### **General Approach and Interaction**

It is important to remember that every person, child, or adult, is an individual and wants to be treated with that understanding, regardless of having a disability or not. Each has their own learning rate, style of learning, unique personality, and temperament. One must always look beyond the disability into the person, aiming to provide them with a warm and favorable environment in which to learn and grow. All people, with and without a disability, want to feel that they are not different from the rest of their fellow men.

### **Relating to Individuals with a Disability or Learning Difference**

Being around someone with a disability, especially if it is more profound, may be a new experience for you. You may be overwhelmed at first with things you have never seen or do not understand. This is natural for most people. Allow yourself time to get used to being with a person who has a disability. Do not give up on being a part of the program without a fair try, for your experience can be very rewarding. At first you may want to do jobs which are not in direct contact with the clients. Feel free to talk to a staff member about this. This is not an uncommon request. If working directly with our clients is a hardship for you, consider helping Equest in some other way. (See page 60 for other Volunteer Opportunities.)

Each of us must learn how to relate to others, especially if it requires new skills and understanding. Here are a few suggestions to create a positive relationship with a client:

- Be yourself.

- Relax. Let the client put you at ease if you do not know what to say.
- Explore mutual interests in a friendly way. For starters, talk about the horse and whether the person has ridden before.
- When conversing with the client or the parent/caregiver near the client, speak directly to the client or include them in the conversation. They may not be able to speak, or even appear to be listening, but they appreciate the consideration.
- Use conversation and social behavior that you might use in any new situation. Clients enjoy discussing things such as TV shows, school, movies, sports, foods, and other things we are all interested in.
- Offer assistance when asked or when the situation obviously requires it. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist upon helping when they are managing alone. When a person is trying to increase their physical ability, effort is necessary.
- Allow the client to expand their skills and independence, even when their movements may appear awkward to you. Stepping in to help them too quickly may hinder their efforts.
- Respect the person's right to independence and their request for the kind of assistance they require.
- Be guided by the wishes of the person with the disability. Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally but respect their privacy as well.
- Appreciate what the client can do. Remember that the difficulties the person may be facing could stem from society's attitudes and barriers rather than from the disability itself. People with disabilities generally do not view themselves to be as handicapped as society perceives them to be.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take someone to accomplish or respond to something. Be patient.
- Let the person set the pace in walking and talking.
- It is okay to say to either a child or an adult, "I'm sorry, I cannot understand you. Please say it again."
- Be sensitive to separating a client from a wheelchair, crutches, or braces unless asked.
- Communicate with your heart and see each person from their heart.
- Acknowledge that we all have the opportunity for vast potential in our lives. Share the feeling that our potential is found in the present moment.
- Please respect the privacy and confidentiality of our clients and their families.

## Choosing Words with Dignity

Without realizing it, you may have adopted some common reference words or phrases about individuals and groups of people with disabilities in ways that undermine them as functioning, viable persons with their own unique abilities, interests, and skills. Almost everyone can contribute via their personal circle of family, friends, co-workers, and others they meet. Even when active participation or communication is not possible for an individual, they can feel and express happiness, joy, pride, and a sense of accomplishment if encouraged. We are all people first, and when you refer to others in that manner, you exhibit and model that attitude.

Many times, it may not even be relevant to mention a person's disability, but when it is, make it a habit to mention the person first and the disability second. The disability should never be used as an adjective to describe the individual (i.e., autistic child, Downs child), instead it should be used as a noun (i.e., child with autism, child with Down syndrome). Avoid speaking with labels such as "he's crazy" or "she's autistic", or using words that have a negative connotation, such as "she suffers from a birth defect". Instead, phrase it as "'she is an individual with autism" or "she has a congenital disability". ***In summary....***

*Say...*

*She is a person with a disability.*

*Instead of...*

*She is handicapped or disabled.*

- Look beyond the disability into the person and encourage them to do their best.
- If necessary, allow yourself time to get used to being around individuals who have a disability; have confidence in your own ability to relate to all individuals.
- Examine your words, and make sure you put the person first.
- Use patience and understanding when helping individuals who may do things differently than you do, or learn differently, or have different physical abilities.



## **APPENDICES**

The following pages offer additional information to help you learn more about Equest and being a volunteer. There are many opportunities to expand your horse knowledge, to add to your experience working for a non-profit, and to increase your responsibilities as a volunteer. We encourage you to utilize your skills and interests while volunteering at Equest.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Q: Do volunteers ever ride Equest horses?***

**A:** Equest is pleased to show our appreciation to our beloved volunteers by offering volunteer riding lessons (all classes are English-style riding). Current volunteers, board members and committee members are eligible to take riding lessons. Lessons offered are:

**Greener than Grass:** For clients who have never had formal riding lessons or who have never ridden.

**Rusty but Ready:** For clients who have ridden a fair amount, either English or Western at the walk, trot and canter, but who may be rusty.

**Tally Ho:** For clients, who are confirmed at the walk, trot and canter, who know their diagonals and leads and who are ready to start or have already started over fences.

Instructor approval is required for admission to this class.

Please contact the Registrar for more information.

### ***Q: Where do the horses come from?***

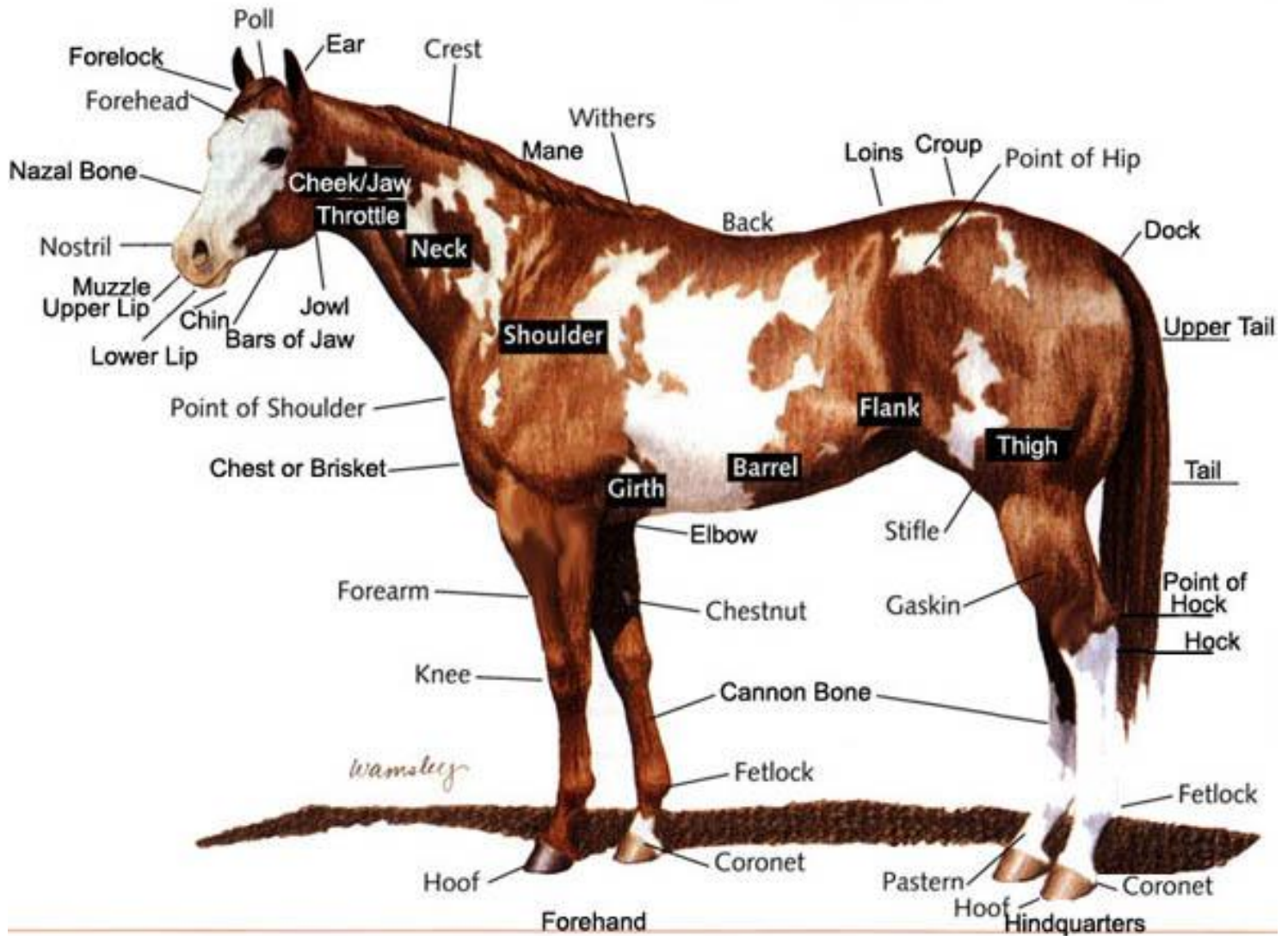
**A:** Our horses are primarily donated to Equest, from a variety of sources. Very rarely is a horse purchased. When a horse is offered to Equest, it will be brought into the barn on a trial basis and carefully tested and examined for temperament, ability, soundness, and willingness. This trial period may last several weeks. Not every horse is suited for doing therapy work. In the event it is not a good match, the horse either returns to the original owner or a new home is identified.

### ***Q: Who do I contact about:***

|                                            |                                             |                                |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>A:</b> Becoming a schooler              | .....                                       | Equine Coordinator             |
| Donating a horse                           |                                             | Equine Coordinator             |
| Signing up for volunteer riding lessons    |                                             | Registrar                      |
| Finding out more about client scholarships |                                             | Registrar                      |
| Client admission process                   |                                             | Registrar                      |
| Corporate fundraising.....                 | Director of Community Engagement            |                                |
| Making a donation                          |                                             | Director of Development        |
| Hosting/coordinating a fundraising event   | .....                                       | Director of Development        |
| Women's Auxiliary                          |                                             | Director of Development        |
| Helping with shows and special events      |                                             | Director of Volunteer Services |
| Taking the instructor course.....          | Director of Program Quality and Development |                                |
| Getting involved on a governance committee |                                             | Chief Executive Officer        |
| Helping in the barn/around the grounds     | .....                                       | Facilities Maintenance Manager |

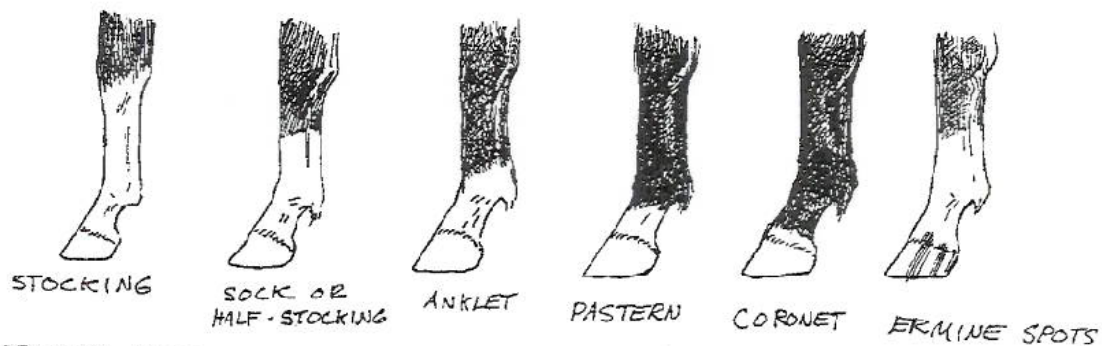
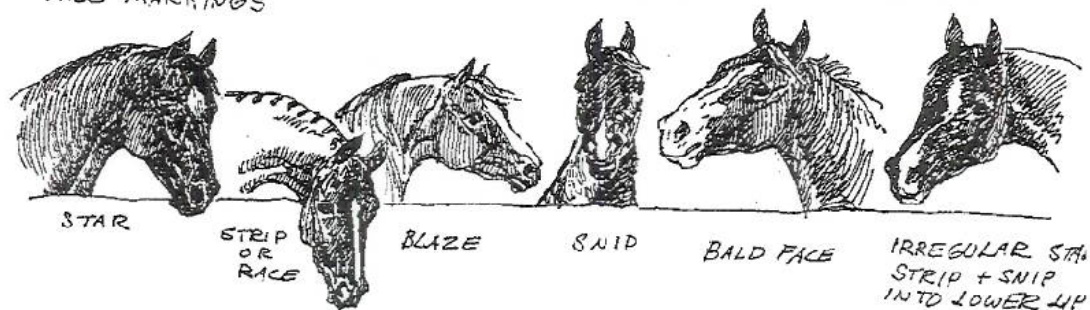
## Horse and Tack References:

### *Parts of the Horse*



## Horse Markings and Patterns

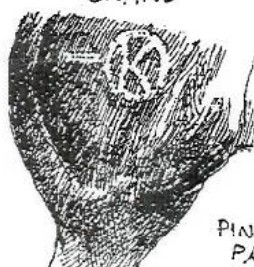
### FACE MARKINGS



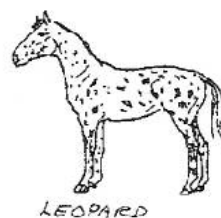
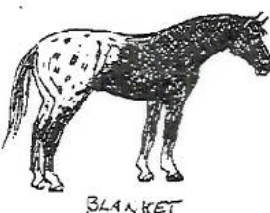
### TYPICAL PINTO MARKINGS



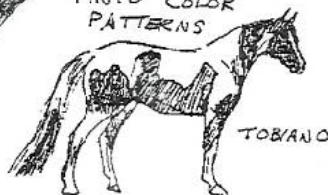
### BRAND



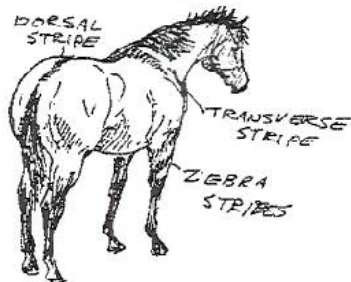
### APPALOOSA COLOR PATTERNS



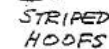
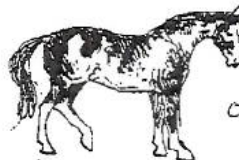
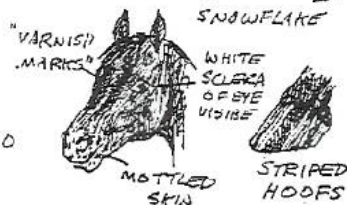
### PINTO COLOR PATTERNS



### DUN MARKINGS

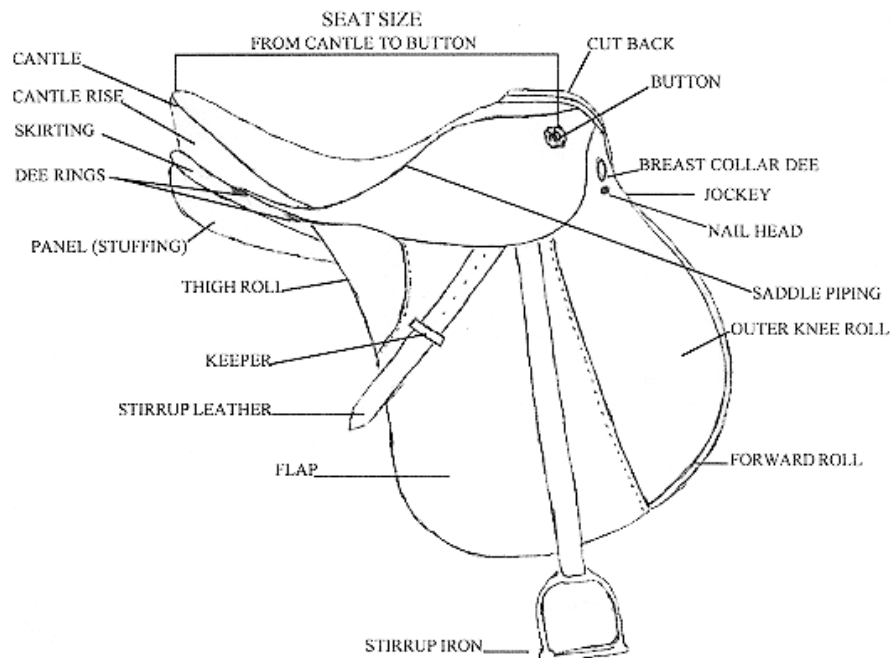


### APPALOOSA MARKINGS

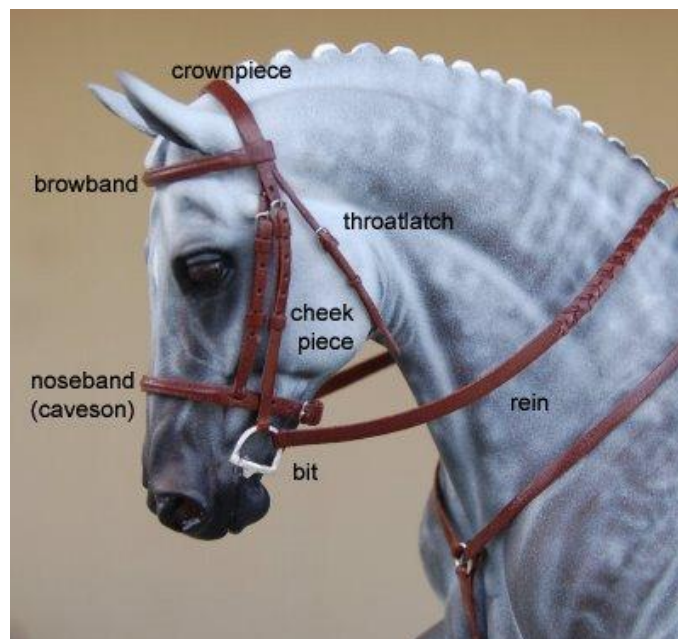
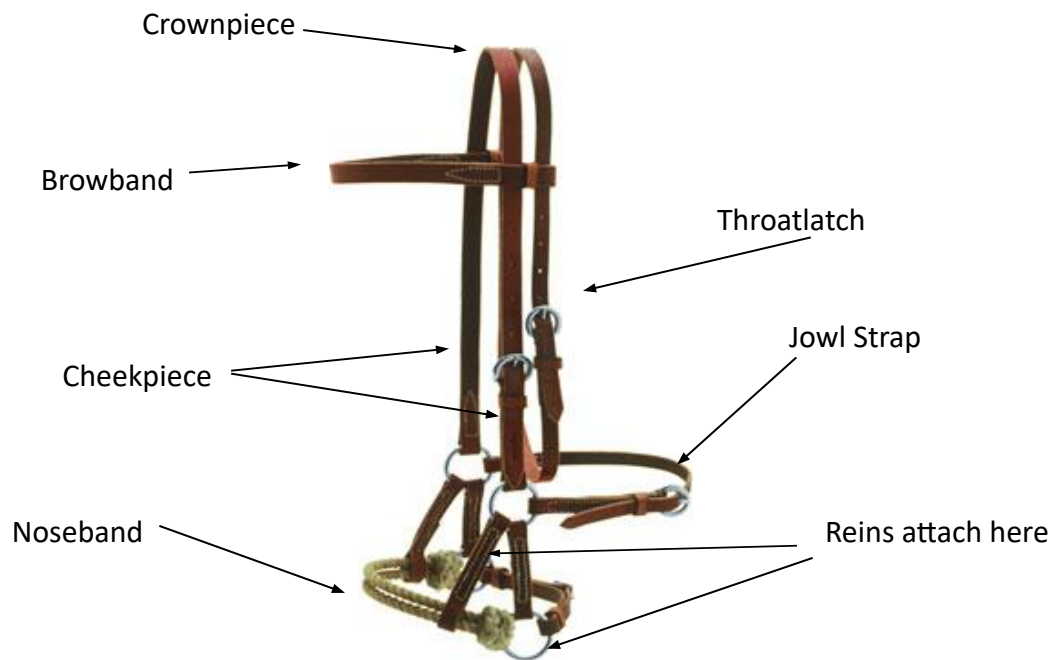


## *Parts of the Saddle - English and Western*

### ENGLISH SADDLE



### *Parts of the Sidepull and Bridle*



## Special Equipment

Your horse may require one or more pieces of special equipment. Here are some that are commonly used at Equest and are frequently referenced on the tack sheet.



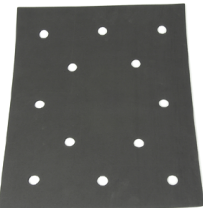
**Bareback pads** – Often used in PT/OT. Provide the client with greater ease of movement on the horse's back than is allowed in a saddle. They also allow the horse's movement to translate freely to the client for the most benefit.



**Devonshire boots** – These modified, covered stirrups allow a person added security when the heel of the foot cannot be pushed down. The client's foot is prevented from running through the stirrup.



**Gait belt/Safety belt** – A medical device/product designed to provide stability for the user during ambulation or transfer to a chair/bed. We use them to give sidewalkers a hand hold for some clients.



**Non-slip pads** – Thin rubber pad that is usually placed between the horse's back and the saddle pad. Keeps the saddle pad or bareback pad from slipping as the client moves on the horse's back.



**Peacock Stirrups** – Safety stirrups used for most of our clients. The rubber band faces toward the front of the horse when saddling and to the outside when the client is mounted. When pressure is applied to the elastic, it releases, making it impossible to get the foot caught in the event of an accident.



**Rainbow Reins** – Rainbow reins are colored at intervals for appropriate cuing and holding with relation to the horse's face and client's arm length. Clients can easily understand "Hold green to walk" or "Hold blue to trot."



**S Stirrups** – Another type of safety stirrup. The bended side faces toward the front of the horse when saddling and to the outside when the client is mounted. In the event of an accident, the bend makes it easier for the foot to slip out of the stirrup.



**Safety helmet** – All riders must wear a well-fitting helmet at all times while mounted. This includes clients, schoolers, volunteer riders and instructors.



**Seat Savers (or Fleece Saddle Covers)** – Provides extra cushioning and comfort for the client



**Silly String pads** – Thicker rubber pad that is usually placed between the saddle pad and saddle. Used to create more cushion between horse and saddle and keep the saddle from slipping.



**Surcingles** – Used in the equine world primarily for vaulting patterns. Vaulting is a series of gymnastic movements performed on/with the horse at varied gaits and usually the client is standing, kneeling, circling the barrel or any combination of the above. In PT/OT, surcingles provide one or two handles with which to assist a client's balance. The surcingle is placed on the bareback pad and attached using a dressage girth over the bareback pad cinch.



**Thinline pads** – Creates a better cushion than a saddle pad alone, allowing for more comfort and shock absorption. Often used on our older horses.

## Understanding and Working with Horses

### 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.

### Pointers for Handling the Horse

- If you have had a busy day and are a little nervous, try to relax, breathe deeply and evenly and speak to the horse. Keep your movements slow and deliberate. As you relax, so will the horse.
- Running around the horse can make him nervous. Minimize extreme joy or excited vocalization. Noises can make a horse anxious.
- When possible, approach the horse calmly from its side.
- If you must approach the horse from the rear, always speak to him, since he may not see you, even if you think he knows you are there.
- The horse can learn to understand the sounds of different words.
- Pat the horse on the shoulder or neck, not on the head. Rub his head instead, he will enjoy being caressed. (Museler, 1984)
- Do not abuse a horse. Horses are not naturally vicious. Control your temper. “Never deal with the horse when you are in passion.” (Xenophon, 380 BC)
- Soft, rhythmic music, like Western or classical music, calms a horse.
- Be firm, consistent, kind and gentle.

### The Nature of a Horse

- The horse will try to please you if he understands what you want.
- The horse will move away from pressure or resist force.
- Horses are herd animals and need the companionship of other horses, animals, or people. They copy other horses’ actions.
- Horses are gentle animals who will accept you as their leader.

*Be kind to your horse and he will do as you desire.*

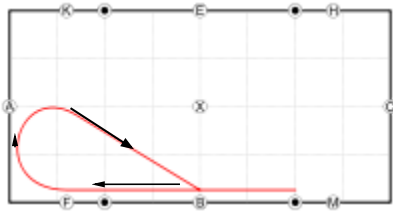
*(Xenophon, 380 BC)*

## Common Schooling Maneuvers

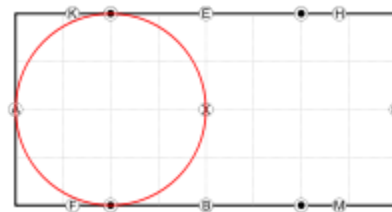
Changing directions:

Other:

Half Circle Reverse



20-meter circle



Across the short diagonal

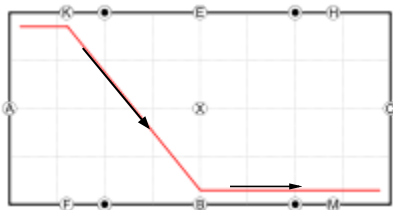
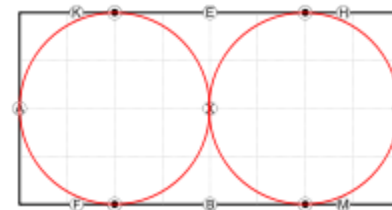
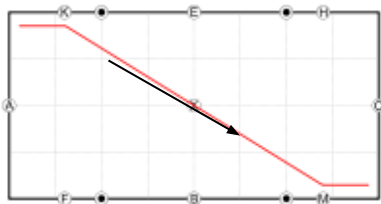


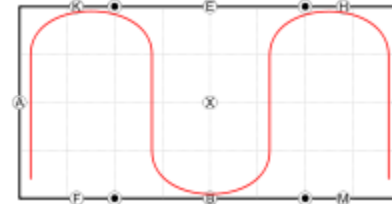
Figure 8



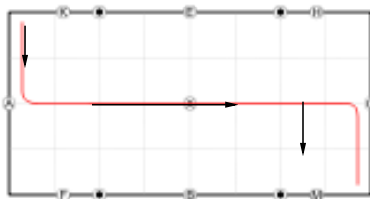
Across the long diagonal



Three-loop serpentine



Down the center line



## Program Descriptions

### Therapeutic Riding

Equest's Therapeutic Horsemanship program focuses on teaching riding skills to participants as young as four (4) years of age with physical, cognitive and/or emotional disabilities. Our PATH Intl.-certified therapeutic riding instructors work with the clients to participate in a recognized sport and to develop independent skills that carry over to their everyday lives. Once they are mounted, many of our clients experience a freedom of motion and ability that they do not or cannot enjoy in other aspects of their lives.

Therapeutic riding classes are conducted as group, semi-private or private classes. Clients are encouraged to set individual goals and progress is made at each individual's pace. These goals may range from holding the reins for one full circuit of the arena to qualifying for and competing in the international arena. Our instructors are dedicated to helping our clients grow and achieve their independent potential.

**Physically**, the horse in motion moves a client with disabilities rhythmically and naturally through space in a way that simulates the human walking gait. This type of motion develops core muscle strength, balance, and posture. Horseback riding also develops gross and fine motor control and promotes coordination.

**Cognitively**, horseback riding increases concentration improves sequential thought processing and develops spatial awareness.

**Socially**, horseback riding nurtures a positive self-image and self-confidence as riding skills are learned. Clients often experience independence for the first-time in their lives at Equest. Being part of a class or competing on a team at Equest offers opportunities to make friends and become part of a group activity.

**Emotionally**, horseback riding provides an opportunity for clients to bond with the horse, their instructor and the volunteers. This helps develop trust and reinforces appropriate behaviors.

All new clients will visit Equest for an initial evaluation and orientation. During this visit, we will talk about issues and goals, and begin to develop a plan of treatment to allow us to best serve that person's needs.

## PT/OT

Equest Therapy Services provides outpatient physical and occupational therapy to children and adults with movement dysfunction. Disabilities that benefit from PT/OT include (but are not limited to) cerebral palsy, stroke, traumatic brain injury and multiple sclerosis.

PT/OT – using equine movement as a treatment strategy – has been successfully used to achieve functional outcomes in therapy throughout the United States since the late 1970's.

In PT/OT, the client receives treatment while mounted on the horse. The horse provides a consistent and rhythmic movement pattern that helps improve trunk mobility and strength, postural strength and endurance, proprioception, weight bearing and motor planning. PT/OT is used primarily to achieve physical goals but may also affect psychological, cognitive, behavioral and communication outcomes. At Equest, our therapists have strong treatment backgrounds in posture and movement, and neuromotor function. They are all state-licensed therapists and are specially trained in the use of PT/OT as a treatment strategy.

The therapy team consists of the therapist, a PATH Intl.-certified riding instructor, three volunteers, the horse, and the client – each member of the team plays a unique role to ensure the client receives the best and most effective treatment. New clients receive an initial evaluation, during which functional goals are established and a plan of treatment is outlined based on the Neurodevelopment Treatment Approach (NDT). The client participates in a 50-minute individual therapy session that is generally divided into three parts: preparation before mounting; balance; and strength work on the horse; and then functional activity after dismounting.

The minimum age to participate in PT/OT is two years old. A physician's prescription and an initial evaluation with our staff are required for treatment.

## Carriage Driving

Therapeutic Carriage Driving is an activity that allows an individual with disabilities who cannot be, or does not wish to be, mounted, the opportunity to participate in equine-assisted services while "mounted" in a carriage. Carriage driving has many physical benefits including improved posture and improved motor skills. Other benefits include increased attention span, improved spatial planning skills and increased self-esteem.

Carriage driving is scheduled based upon an individual and space available basis. All new participants will visit Equest to be assessed as to the suitability of this activity to their needs.

Volunteers who are interested in carriage driving should let the volunteer dept. or any carriage instructor know about their interest in learning more. We have some special training materials

and volunteer mentors who can help you get started. Tacking and volunteer responsibilities are very specific, and more information is available from them.

### Vaulting

Equest is excited to offer Therapeutic Interactive Vaulting. This is a small group class activity where clients learn to independently execute gymnastic and dance exercises on a moving horse. The horse is controlled by the instructor on a lunge line while each client takes turns executing the movements. The other clients will act as spotters and provide encouragement and support from the ground.

Each lesson begins with the clients working together to prepare the horse for class. They may warm up and/or learn new exercises on a vaulting barrel before trying the skill on the horse.

**Socially**, vaulting promotes teamwork and cooperation among the clients.

**Physically**, vaulting develops core muscle strength, balance, and coordination.

**Emotionally**, vaulting develops confidence and self-esteem.

Generally, current clients who are interested in learning a new skill participate in vaulting, but this activity is available to any client who can ride independently at the walk and trot.

### Hooves for Heroes

**This program is devoted to improving the lives of our military service men and women.**

**Our Focus:** To strengthen our community by leveraging the power of horses to help warriors achieve optimum wellness and successfully transition to civilian life. H4H serves current service members, honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, and adult military family members.

**Horsemanship:** Participants join fellow veterans and military spouses to learn the fundamentals of working with horses on the ground and in the saddle. Classes are taught by PATH Intl. certified therapeutic riding instructors. Benefits include improved balance, motor skills, core strength, and endurance.

**Carriage Driving:** is also conducted in a group setting and teaches the importance of developing a partnership with a horse to learn the skill of driving.

**PT/OT:** is conducted with a certified physical or occupational therapist partnered with a certified therapeutic horseback riding instructor and is prescribed in conjunction with traditional physical therapy.

**Psychotherapy:** a unique form of emotional health therapy utilizing the horse as a therapeutic partner. Veterans or family members with emotional health disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), depression, and anger management will benefit from our program.

Clients will work with a licensed mental health professional, a professional equine specialist, and a horse to accomplish personal goals such as trust, socialization, and communication through equine assisted activities.

Services are individually tailored to benefit each client, providing life tools that will extend beyond the arena and into their daily lives. Equine-assisted services designed to optimize client wellness and smooth civilian transition.

**Goals include:**

- Improved relationships
- Greater self-confidence
- Emotional regulation
- Enhanced self-awareness
- Fellowship/Comradery
- Reduce anxiety
- Teamwork

Staff working with veterans will be given a 2-hour introduction/training into the veteran space, program goals, and what can be expected while participating in the Hooves for Heroes program.

**Disabilities Frequently Encountered**

This list provides a brief, non-medical description of some of the disabilities and conditions of Equest clients. It is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability but rather as a general overview, along with an explanation of how therapeutic riding is a beneficial treatment aid.

Autism – a neural development disorder, characterized by impaired social interaction and communication and by restricted and repetitive behavior. Asperger Syndrome is another disorder within the autism spectrum that lacks the cognitive development and language delays that characterizes autism.

*Benefits:* Working with horses can improve the client's communication and social skills, teach them to focus on one task at a time, improve motor skills and respond to verbal cues.

Cerebral Palsy ("CP") - a non-progressive disorder, thought to be due in part to loss of oxygen to the brain. Speech, hearing, vision, learning and/or memory deficits may be present; however, normal intelligence is generally not affected unless further brain damage has occurred. There are three main types of cerebral palsy:

1. *Spastic:* Occurs in approximately 70% of all cases. It may affect motor function in one or more limbs. The muscles stay flexed and tense, and the facial muscle movement may affect speech. Balance is poor.

2. *Athetoid*: Occurs in approximately 20% of all cases. There is constant movement in a disorganized, uncontrolled manner. Often worm-like movement. The use of arms and hands for support, grasp, and holding on are inadequate. It appears more obvious during periods of emotional tension. Speech functions are usually involved.
3. *Ataxic*: Occurs in approximately 10% of all cases. Weakness, poor coordination, and difficulty with quick and fine motor movements result in loose, "rag-doll" appearance.

*Benefits*: Riding may improve balance, posture, and the ability to relax. It also strengthens weakened muscles.

Down Syndrome (also called Trisomy 21 or Trisomy G) - It is one of the more easily and widely identified hereditary disabilities. Individuals with Down syndrome have an average IQ of about 50 and are physically and cognitively developmentally delayed.

*Benefits*: Riding improves expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, coordination, and muscle tone.

Emotional Disabilities ("ED") - A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies. In general, emotionally disturbed individuals have trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relationships. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia, or schizophrenia may be exhibited.

*Benefits*: Riding can provide structure to a disorganized thought pattern, increase feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provide appropriate social therapy.

Fragile X - a genetic syndrome which results in a spectrum of physical and intellectual limitations and emotional and behavioral features which range from severe to mild in manifestation. Individuals with Fragile X may exhibit delays in speech, language and motor skills, as well as cognitive impairment.

*Benefits*: Riding can increase motor skills and coordination and provide practice in social skills and communication.

Hearing Impairment - May vary from mild to severe and may be congenital or acquired. True deafness is defined as hearing loss in both ears severe enough to prevent communication through the ear even with amplification. Communication with the deaf may involve lip reading, finger spelling (the manual alphabet), or sign language.

*Benefits*: Riding helps increase self-confidence, balance, posture and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interactions.

Intellectual Disability ("ID") - A genetic defect where the individual develops below normal rate in terms of intelligence. It may also involve delayed physical and emotional development.

*Benefits*: Riding helps increase group activity skills, balance, coordination, posture, gross and fine motor skills, and eye-hand coordination.

Learning Disabilities ("LD") - "Learning disabled" is a catch-all phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem-solving, but who appear to have otherwise normal intellectual skills. New learning generally takes time to be integrated and may need to be reviewed frequently to ensure retention.

*Benefits:* Riding may increase attention span, group activity skills, cooperation, receptive and expressive language skills, posture, and coordination.

Multiple Sclerosis ("MS") - A slowly progressive central nervous system disease usually occurring in adults between 20-40 years of age and more frequently in women than in men. Symptoms and manifestations include weakness in one or more limbs, visual impairment, minor gait disturbances, weakness on one or both sides of the body, emotional highs and lows, and inattention. MS runs a course of progression with periods of remission. There is no known cure for MS.

*Benefits:* Riding maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides highly recommended opportunities for emotional therapy.

Muscular Dystrophy ("MD") - A hereditary disorder usually appearing in infancy or early childhood. It is characterized by progressive skeletal and muscle deterioration. There is no known cure for this disease, which often severely shortens life. People with MD are easily fatigued, especially when it is hot or cold.

*Benefits:* Riding may slow muscle tone degeneration and maintain muscle function. Riding provides appropriate opportunities for social interactions and elevating emotional depressions.

Spina Bifida - A congenital defect where, at birth, there is incomplete closure of the spinal column. There are usually varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs; however, life expectancies are not necessarily shortened.

*Benefits:* Riding improves balance, posture, and muscle strength.

Traumatic Brain Injury ("TBI") - Head injuries cause more disabilities in people under the age of 50 than any other neurologic cause. Injuries may be closed head (CHI), where intracranial bleeding causes pressure, or open penetration where profuse bleeding and open wounds insure permanent damage. Deficits may include gross and fine motor skills, cognitive disabilities such as long- and short-term memory functions, visual limitations, speech, balance, and psychological alterations.

*Benefits:* Riding improves balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, and cognitive deficits such as sequencing and processing.

Visual Impairment - Visual deficits may range from severely limited to total, and may be caused by a congenital defect, traumatic illness, or injury. If onset is from birth to five years, the person affected has no visual memory. Impairments occurring after five years are accompanied by

memories of people, places, and things. A person is blind only if they have total loss of vision. If some vision is present, then the person is visually impaired.

*Benefits:* Riding helps orient the body in space and improves balance, posture, coordination, and self-awareness. The voice of the instructor is a point of orientation in space for the rider; therefore, unnecessary sounds should be avoided, as they are a distraction.

## Volunteer Roles

### Volunteer Sidewalker

### Volunteer Horse Leader

## Leader Training Components

### “Blue Star” Leader Training Components

1. Holding the Lead Rope & Position with the horse
2. Review W-H-W transitions, backing and squaring the horse
3. In-Lesson Leading at the walk, reverse, and trot down the long rail
4. Leading through the Mounting Block (High & Low Blocks)
5. How to tie up lead rope for emerging independent riders
6. Leading/Spotting with the lead tied up
7. Leading through obstacles (poles, cones, barrels, etc.)
8. Questions/Troubleshooting

### “Gold Star” Leader Training Components

1. Groundwork – Human body language and translation to horse at walk and trot (Showmanship) – review hands on horses, positions, etc
2. Leading for PT/OT with Hippo Chains
3. Mounting through the Ramp
4. Protection – Leading with a crop – Horses that nibble/bite
5. Training – Leading for training – new/trial horses
6. Troubleshooting – fidgety, in your space horses
7. Questions/Anything else/Troubleshooting

### Blue Star Leader Training – Mid Session Outline

Volunteers interested in Blue Star leader training (mid-session) will need to complete the following curriculum to become “Blue Star Leaders” (BSL). Volunteers are NOT limited to a 4 session system. Depending on skill level, comfort level around the horse, and horse knowledge, volunteers may take less sessions or more sessions to feel adequately trained for this position. Instructors must also feel mutually the same about readiness before volunteer can take the leader test. Ideally, volunteers will work with different horses at each session to build up more confidence and skills throughout the training. Leader testing will take place during semester breaks such as fall break (October), Easter Break, or during session breaks. Some in-session testing may occur as time, resources, and instructors can allow in the schedule. If leaders do not

pass testing, they will be referred back to the training practices for additional guidance and practice.

#### Session 1 Training/practice (Horse 1)

- Lead Rope, Body position, Body Language & Horse Sense
- Walking with the horse, halt, Squaring, reversing directions
- Leading at the trot on a straight away rail
- Emergency Procedures – spooking, etc.

#### Session 2 Training/practice (Horse 2)

- Review leading – walk, halt, square, trot, reverse
- Mounting Block
- How to tie a lead – emerging independent
- Leading with a tied lead rope

#### Session 3 Practice (Horse 3)

- Review all 7 skill points
- Leading through obstacles (poles, cones, barrels)
- How to protect yourself & correct the nibble/in your space horse

#### Session 4 Practice/Testing (Horse4)

- Review all skills
- Take leading test

## Mid Session – Gold Star Training

Volunteers interested in Gold Star leader training (mid-session) will need to complete the following curriculum to become “Gold Star Leaders” (GSL). Pre-requisite includes Blue Star leader status. Volunteers are NOT limited to a 4 session system. Depending on skill level, horse management, and horse knowledge; volunteers may take less sessions or more sessions to feel adequately trained for this position. Instructors must also feel mutually the same about readiness before volunteer can take the leader test. Ideally, volunteers will work with different horses at each session to build up more confidence and skills throughout the training. Leader testing will take place during semester breaks such as fall break (October), Easter Break (April), or during session breaks. Some in-session testing may occur as time, resources, and instructors can allow in the schedule. If leaders do not pass testing, they will be referred back to the training practices for additional guidance and practice.

#### Session 1 Training/practice (Horse 1)

- Review Blue Star Material as needed
- Body Language & Horse Sense
- Showmanship 101 – Precise & effective advanced leading

#### Session 2 Training/practice (Horse 2)

- Leading for PT/OT – Hippo chains

- Mounting at the ramp

#### Session 3 Training/Practice (Horse 3)

- Leading with a crop
- Difficult horses... hows, whats & whys
  - Biters, Fidgeters
  - New & In-Training Horses

#### Session 4 Practice/Testing (Horse4)

- Review all skills
- Take leading test

### **Volunteer Captain**

Veteran volunteers who are recognized as ready to move to a new level may be asked to serve as a Volunteer Captain. The minimal requirements to serve as a Captain are:

1. At least two sessions of experience with Equest.
2. A good working knowledge of grooming and tacking.
3. A good working knowledge of how Equest operates.
4. A desire to become more involved with the program.

The role of a Captain may vary from class to class, and even from instructor to instructor. Generally, a Captain should be ready to step up their visibility in a class by:

- Effectively monitoring the progress of all horses in the class towards being groomed and tacked on time.
- Being able to assist volunteers in the stall by demonstrating proper techniques and answering questions.
- Keeping an eye on and working with new/inexperienced volunteers to provide them with a positive learning experience.
- Acting as a liaison with the instructor for tack changes, instructions regarding the class, or special requests.
- Reviewing tack on the horse for basic correctness – cleanliness and tack placement – before it leaves the stall and correcting with positive encouragement.
- Checking that all horses are safely returned to the stall and properly undressed after class.

Some instructors may utilize their Captain during the mounting process by having them check girths, adjust stirrups to the proper length, and apply bands and laces as appropriate to the rider.

### **Schooler**

The Schooling Program at Equest contributes to the horses' well-being by riding and schooling them in a manner that keeps the horses fit, agile, balanced, supple, relaxed, and able to

perform their job to the best of their ability. Research has proven when therapy horses are schooled on a regular basis they stay sounder and are more comfortable in therapy settings than horses that are not.

If you are interested in the Equest Schooler Program, contact the Schooling Instructor for more information. Eligible candidates are required to take and pass a test to be considered.

The general requirements are:

1. Must be at least 16 years of age.
2. Must be able to ride with a secure seat, correct alignment, balanced weight distribution and strong and effective aids.
3. Can communicate with the horses in a beneficial manner both mounted and unmounted.
4. Must possess a thorough understanding of equine psychology and behavior.
5. Riding skills required include riding the horse on the bit; working knowledge of diagonals and leads; ability to bend and supple the horse; lateral movements such as leg yielding; side passing; turn on the forehand and haunches; simple lead changes; warm-up and cool-down procedures; and the ability to identify unsoundness, stiffness, gait and behavioral problems.

### **Groom-and-Tack Trainer**

Groom-and-Tack trainers help teach new volunteers the basics of grooming and tacking during new volunteer training. Volunteers should have a good understanding of horse management and be capable of answering any question concerning tack and grooming. Eligible candidates are required to take and pass a test to receive further training from the instructor staff.

#### **Requirements:**

- Minimum 18 years of age
- Recommendation by a minimum of two members of the instructor staff
- Participate as an active volunteer (Spring, Fall and/or Summer within one year) as either a volunteer captain, schooler, or a whip for driving classes

#### **Study References:**

- U.S. Pony Club Manuals Vol. 1,2,3 - may be purchased from most book retailers
- Horse Watching, by Desmond Morris

### **Horsepitality**

Volunteers who have prior horse experience and/or Equest experience under their belt frequently want to spend more time with the horses. We like to keep our horses looking well-groomed, and exhibiting the show standards established by AQHA, the Arabian Horse Association, dressage/hunter groups, and other applicable standards relevant to the breeds in our barn. To offer the opportunity to learn more advanced grooming, our instructors and experienced mentors will train interested volunteers in clipping the muzzle, ears, fetlocks and some body clipping, mane pulling/braiding, bathing, and show preparation. Volunteers who are

a part of “Horsepitality” are also responsible for prepping horses participating in Special Olympics, Chisholm Challenge, the North Texas Hunter/Jumper Show, AQHA events, and any shows or exhibitions Equest attends. The minimum age to participate is 16 years old (unless an individual can demonstrate prior experience). Some experience working with the horses is preferred. Very new volunteers who have never been around horses need to attain a comfort level of being very close to the animals, recognizing signs of discomfort and/or skittishness with the tasks being done, and helping the horse through it.



## Other Volunteer Opportunities

### *Women's Auxiliary*

The **Equest Women's Auxiliary (WAUX)** was founded in 1986 for the purpose of supporting and promoting Equest. What began as a small group has grown into an Auxiliary with a membership of more than 250 women, and a signature annual event that continues to grow by leaps and bounds each year. Each October, the Women's Auxiliary Luncheon and Style Show is chaired by a prominent leader in the Dallas community. If you'd like to learn more about their mission and becoming a member, please let us know.

### *Fundraising*

If you have a talent for talking with people and want to share what Equest means to you, working one of our fundraisers might be just what you're looking for. Whenever we partner with a group to support Equest, we need volunteers. Or we might put on a **pledge drive** or **plan an event** for our supporters. Please let us know if this is something you enjoy doing or have a suggestion.

### *Office*

If you have spare time on your hands, and are willing to help with filing, copying, answering the phones, data entry, or general sprucing up, you're welcome to come **help us in the office**. There's always something that needs to be done. Computer skills are not a requirement; we're not super high-tech!

### *Special Projects*

If you have spare time on your hands and are willing to help with gardening or other facilities projects, you're welcome to come **help with special projects**. There's always something that needs to be done.

### *Special Events*

**The Gala, FallFest, and Volunteer Appreciation Banquet, Horse Shows. manning a booth/table** at an exhibition on behalf of Equest... **these are just a few** of the varied ways you can become involved. *Many volunteer opportunities are described below.*

*The Gala* celebrates the achievements of Equest's remarkable history of enhancing the quality of life for children and adults with diverse needs through the human-horse connection. This event includes subcommittees working on set-up, grounds maintenance, communications, obtaining underwriters, and other activities.

*The RideFest Committee* includes subcommittees working on prizes, communications, raising awareness, obtaining underwriters, and other activities.

*The Client and Volunteer Appreciation Banquet* is all about organization and pulling all the details together; it might seem a bit unusual that we need volunteers to help put on the Volunteer Appreciation Banquet, but we always get lots of help and that's one of the reasons we love you all!

### *Horse Shows*

The Spring Horse Show is held at the end of each Spring session. Equest hosts a **horse show for all current Equest clients**. Regular Saturday classes are not held that day, but volunteers are needed to help with all aspects of the show. Just like any other horse show, there are multiple classes and riders are assigned to the appropriate class. It's a great opportunity for them to show off their skills to family and friends. Besides grooming and tacking, we need volunteers for *parking duty, registration, clean-up, food tables, and general organization*.

**Special Olympics-North Texas Area Games** are held at Equest each Spring, typically in April. It's a lead-up to the state-wide Special Olympics Equestrian Event held in late May/early June. Most of the participants are our own riders, but we do have guests who also come to participate. Just like the Annual Horse Show, we need volunteers to serve in several areas.

### *Facilities*

**Tack cleaning and repair, carpentry (e.g., building jumps or putting up a shed), painting, electrical or plumbing services, poster design, and taking pictures of new horses** are just a few of the things our volunteers help us tackle. Whether it's one individual offering their skills and experience, or a work group coming from a church, service organization, or school, we can use you! For groups, workdays can be scheduled, generally prior to a special event or between sessions.

### *Grant Writing*

If you have experience writing grants, we can use your talents! This is a highly specialized area, and vital to any non-profit seeking funds.

### *Internships*

If you're **pursuing a degree or training related to equine activities, equine science/animal care, physical or occupational therapy, special education, or public administration**, you can get experience that will benefit your future career by doing an internship at Equest. We can work with you whether your program has a formal requirement, or you simply want to learn more independently of an academic setting. We've had interns from around the U.S., and even from other countries, who come to learn from our wonderful staff.

### *Barn and Facilities*

For those of you who just like a little physical activity and enjoy being around the horses, there's always barn work. Help is especially needed on Saturdays and Sundays with feeding the horses, turning them out on good-weather days, mucking stalls, and cleaning the barn. The work starts early (7:00 a.m.) and finishes around 3:00 p.m. You don't have to stay the entire time. Up-to-date volunteer paperwork is required, even for your family member/friend who comes to help, and horse contact may be limited if someone is not a regular program volunteer, but there's much to be done and all hands are appreciated.



## ***Becoming a PATH International Certified Instructor***

Have you ever considered a career in Equine Assisted Services? Equest offers a PATH Intl.-approved instructor training course that is designed for experienced horse people, with a variety of riding backgrounds, who wish to pursue careers as therapeutic riding instructors or current instructors seeking continuing education and/or preparation for certification.

### **Overview**

The Equest Instructor Training Course is a full-time six-week program offered twice a year in the Spring and Fall. A detailed course calendar will be provided on the first day of the course. Vacancies for the course are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. A maximum of ten students are accepted into the course. The curriculum includes:

- Human Anatomy and Kinesiology
- Human Psychology
- Teaching Methodology
- Disabilities
- Mounting Techniques
- The Therapy Horse
- Adaptive Equipment
- Volunteer Recruitment and Management
- PT/OT
- Practical Teaching Experience
- Nonprofit Administration

### **Requirements**

To accomplish the demands of this course and to qualify for certification upon completion, those candidates entering the course must meet certain competency requirements. To be accepted into the course, a candidate must complete and submit two proficiency exams – a written exam covering horse management, and a riding test (demonstrated on a video).

The exam covers equine conformation, blemishes and unsoundness, general feeding requirements, ailments, diseases, and their treatments, worming and vaccination requirements, stable maintenance, grooming, breeds, first-aid treatment, and movement analysis. This exam must be completed and submitted with the application.

Candidates of varying riding backgrounds are accepted into the course; however, a solid knowledge of walk-trot-canter with correct leads and diagonals, simple lead changes, leg yielding, turns on the forehand and haunches, and suppling exercises is needed. The riding skills test may be taken in either English or Western tack, but all students must be familiar with the English discipline as this is the style most of our clients ride and will be the style you will be teaching.



### **Entrance Test Suggested References**

Horse, J. Warren Evans, et. al.

The United States Pony Club Manual (level D, C, A/B)

Horse, Gaits, Balance and Movement, Susan Harris

101 Arena Exercises, Cherry Hill

Becoming an Effective Rider, Cherry Hill

### **Certification**

Candidates who successfully complete all training course requirements will take the Path Intl. Registered exam at the end of the course. Upon passing the exam, candidates will be recommended to PATH Intl. for registered level certification. With approval of the course director, candidates will also have the option of taking the Advanced level exam at the end of the course as well. These candidates must meet the Advanced level criteria before taking the exam.



## Whistleblower Policy

This policy is intended to encourage Board members, staff, and others to report suspected or actual occurrence(s) of illegal, unethical, or inappropriate events (behaviors and practices) without retribution. In the event of such action:

1. The Whistleblower should promptly report the suspected or actual event to his/her supervisor.
2. If the Whistleblower would be uncomfortable or otherwise reluctant to report to his/her supervisor, then the Whistleblower may report the event to the next level of management, or the Office and Accounting Manager. In the event that the Whistleblower is a Board member, they may report to the Executive Director or the Board President.
3. The Whistleblower can report the event with his/her identity or anonymously.
4. The Whistleblower shall receive no retaliation or retribution for a report that was provided in good faith – that was not done primarily with malice to damage another or the organization.
5. A Whistleblower who makes a report that is not done in good faith is subject to discipline, including termination of the Board or employee relationship, or other legal means to protect the reputation of the organization and members of its Board and staff.
6. Anyone who retaliates against the Whistleblower (who reported an event in good faith) will be subject to discipline, including termination of Board or employee status.
7. Crimes against person or property, such as assault, rape, burglary, etc. should immediately be reported to local law enforcement personnel.
8. Supervisors, managers, and/or Board members who receive a report must promptly act to investigate and/or resolve the issue. The Executive Director or Board President should be consulted immediately after a report is received to ensure that proper procedures are followed.
9. The Whistleblower shall receive a report within fifteen (15) business days of the initial report, regardless of the investigation, disposition or resolution of the item.
10. If the investigation of a report, that was done in good faith and investigated by internal personnel, is not to the Whistleblower's satisfaction, then he/she has the right to report the event to the appropriate legal or investigative agency.
11. **In order to be protected by this policy, the Whistleblower must follow the internal reporting steps above before they file a report to any external source.**
12. The identity of the Whistleblower, if known, shall remain confidential to those persons directly involved in applying this policy, unless the issue requires investigation by law enforcement, in which case members of the organization are subject to subpoena.



## **2023 Board of Directors**

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**Staff Directory: to be supplemented on new website**

