

# HORSES *for* HOPE

## Volunteer Manual



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# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc. Volunteer Manual

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# **Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.**

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### ***Foreword***

Thank you for volunteering at Horses for Hope TRC, Inc. (HfH)! We are very glad to see you and are excited to welcome you to our family! Volunteers are critical to the success of HfH and are at the very heart of the HfH programs. One might say that our volunteers are our ‘Secret Sauce’. We could not provide the high-quality or diversity of programs without you and we rely on you to help our program operate as safely as possible.

Many of our past and current volunteers have shared with us just how very exciting and often rewarding it is to watch riders develop their riding skills and become stronger over time. This strength may be an obvious physical strength, but also manifests as the riders achieving improved self-esteem and confidence and grow their inner strength and character.

Benefits to the riders is only one aspect of volunteering. We sincerely hope that your experience at HfH will bring you satisfaction, personal growth and fulfillment as well, just as it has for many before you. Your spirit of volunteerism is an invaluable asset and “thank you” is just not enough to express our appreciation for your time and talents. Every day, our staff is reminded of the beauty of the human spirit and generosity of others that keeps us going in our mission through the selfless acts and moments of epiphany realized in the interactions between our volunteers and program participants.

As you embark upon your journey with HfH, we want you to know we value your insights and experience as well as your time and effort. Please do not hesitate to share your opinions and questions with us to help our volunteer program be as enriching of an experience for you as it is for the lives you will touch.

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### ***Welcome to Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.***

Horses for Hope TRC, Inc. (HfH) was founded in July 2003 as a non-profit corporation to provide therapeutic healing of the mind, body and soul using horses as a dynamic, interactive tool for individuals of all ages with or without disabilities, including those who may suffer from physical or mental disabilities, physical or mental abuse or are financially deprived.

HfH uses the healing power of a unique team of horses, farm, VOLUNTEERS and professional staff to help individuals seeking physical, mental, spiritual or emotional healing.

Therapeutic riding applies the majesty, sensitivity, and physical attributes of a horse to the task of treating an individual with disabilities.

Examples of disabilities that therapeutic riding benefits:

- cerebral palsy
- spina bifida
- neuromuscular disorders
- post traumatic brain injury
- cognitive limitations
- emotional disabilities
- autism
- attention deficit disorder

HfH serves riders from the age of 4 years all the way into their 70s and 80s. A site visit and screening process is conducted by staff to determine a rider's eligibility into the program. During this process, staff can determine if the program activities will be safe and appropriate for the individual and what resources would be needed, such as horse, instructor/therapist, volunteers and equipment. Once in the program, rider goals are determined and progress is documented. Most of HfH's participants ride one time per week for a 30 min lessons during a 10 week session. Many of our riders continue from one session to the next, and we even have some riders who have been riding with us for many years. Lesson activities may include developing basic riding skills, exercises, games on horseback and riding around the property.

### ***Benefits of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies***

Physically, the horse's movement produces a 3-dimensional movement that closely resembles the normal human gait in the rider's pelvis and trunk. This movement helps to:

- strengthen muscles
- improves muscle coordination and motor skills
- improves balance
- improves posture
- increased endurance

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Socially and emotionally, therapeutic riding improves:

- self-esteem
- self-confidence
- social and communication skills
- relationship building
- overcoming fear and anxiety

Cognitively, the horse and rider is a strong motivator for participants to work on:

- following multi-step directions
- staying on task
- counting, etc.

### *Programs and Services offered at HfH*

**Therapeutic Riding:** This is our core program. The objective is to teach adapted riding skills to the rider. PATH certified therapeutic riding instructors conduct each lesson for a half hour, usually once a week for each client. The rider receives all the physical, cognitive, and emotional therapy in addition to learning how to ride with the goal of full independence.

**Hippotherapy:** Hippotherapy refers to the use of a horse as a treatment tool by professional therapists to address impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities in patients with neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction. It can improve dynamic postural control, balance, mobility, and function but may also be used to achieve sensory processing and psychological, cognitive, behavioral, and communication outcomes.

**Horses & Heroes:** A special program designed for wounded warriors who have served our Country so bravely. Riding the horses gives them peace, confidence and the physical benefits of the horses gentle three dimensional movement.

**Healing Horses:** A program designed for women and children from abused families that focuses upon restoring trust, self-esteem and confidence in themselves.

**Horses for Hope Riding Academy:** This is the HfH recreational riding program for riders of all abilities and ages. Using the HFH team of horses and a diverse set of professional instructors, HfH RA offers riding instruction in dressage, hunter/jumper, western barrel racing and basic riding skills for anyone interested in learning horseback riding.

**Horses for Hope Horse Camps:** HfH offers toddler camps, special needs camps and able-bodied camps to learn horsemanship and riding skills as well as gaining knowledge about horses, their care and many more fun facts. They will also do crafts, play games and interact with our miniature horses.

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### *HfH is a PATH Intl. Center Member*

#### **About PATH**

Founded in 1969 as NARHA and has since changed its name to Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International, Inc (PATH Intl.). PATH has encouraged best practices in the field of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) through accreditation, instructor certification and networking. In the United States, Canada and now internationally, there are over 850 member centers with new centers seeking membership and accreditation every day. Through these programs more than 62,000 individuals with disabilities benefit from activities, which include therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, equine assisted psychotherapy and learning, carriage driving, interactive vaulting, and competition.

### *Volunteer Opportunities*

Volunteers provide an invaluable service to HfH. No matter the amount of time you are able to devote, your time and support is greatly appreciated!

#### **Volunteer Requirements** *(for therapeutic riding)*

1. Due to insurance regulations and our PATH Center Standards, all Horse-leader and Side-walker volunteers must be at least 15 years old. **No exceptions to this policy.**
2. Volunteers must be available a minimum of 1 hour per week for the length of a 10 week session. New volunteers will receive their assignment and schedule following attendance at the Volunteer Orientation and Training. Volunteer assignments and schedules are based on interest, experience and availability.
3. Volunteer Application and Release forms must be completed and returned to HfH.
4. Volunteers must attend the trainings provided by HfH for the role they select.
5. Volunteering may involve moderate physical activity and working outside in varying weather conditions. Please be sure you are comfortable with the conditions of the role you select.
6. Volunteers must be able to work independently with minimal staff supervision.
7. Volunteers must have a positive attitude and be able to adapt to change and be flexible.
8. Volunteers must possess the ability to follow directions and take instruction.
9. Because of the nature of the service provided, HfH reserves the right to make the final determination as to the appropriateness of volunteers for our organization.

#### **Qualities of a HfH Volunteer**

- Reliable
- Flexible
- Punctual
- Alert
- Physically fit
- Empathetic
- Patient
- Common sense
- Positive attitude
- Commitment

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### Volunteer Program—Opportunities and Job Descriptions

As a general rule, volunteers must be at least 15 yrs old to volunteer, however there are some tasks such as grooming the mini horses, rock and stick cleanup, and poop scooping that can have volunteers as young as 5 yrs old **WITH help from their parent and while under close supervision of HfH staff.** Any volunteer 12 or younger **MUST** have a parent present with them as they volunteer.

**Lesson Program Volunteers:** Volunteers assist by leading horses or walking beside riders (side-walking) during lessons. Program Volunteers must be able to walk for an hour on uneven surfaces, jog short distances and be able to hold their arm above shoulder height and support a modest amount of weight. Lesson Program Volunteers assist with other barn chores and jobs that help the Lesson Program run smoothly.

- **Horse-leaders** ensure that each horse is groomed, tacked and warmed up prior to the start of each lesson. They help ensure the safety of horse and rider before, during and after the lesson. Leaders also help with un-tacking and grooming horses after the lesson. Horse Leaders must possess a basic understanding of horse behavior and demonstrate horse handling skills and the ability to assess and address horse behavior. Prior to handling horses or leading them in client sessions, volunteers with this prerequisite knowledge must attend and pass mandatory horse leader training. These training sessions are available throughout the year. Volunteers with no previous horse experience may attend horse handling and horse leader trainings to work toward gaining the skills necessary for this role.
- **Side-walkers** walk beside the horse in lessons and provide physical and/or emotional support to the rider. They help the rider to successfully reach their lesson goals, as well as ensure rider safety before, during and after the lesson.

**Equine Program Volunteers:** Volunteers work directly with barn staff to assist with horse care, grooming, feeding, cleaning stalls and paddocks, etc. While not the most glamorous job at HfH, these volunteers are essential for the care and safety of our very important horses. Prior to handling horses, an Equine Program Volunteer must attend mandatory horse handling training and be deemed ready for the role. These training sessions are available throughout the year.

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

**Office Volunteers:** Volunteers assist with word processing, data entry, reception and general office support.

**Special Events Volunteers:** Volunteers serve on event committees and assist with various fundraising events held throughout the year at HfH.

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

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### *Volunteer Appreciation and Incentive Program*

Horses for Hope TRC is so grateful to you for sharing your time and talents with HfH. You help us to run a high quality and safe program for our riders and horses, and we hope your experience at HfH will bring you satisfaction, personal growth and fulfillment.

Saying “thank you” is just not enough to express HfH’s appreciation for your support and this is why we created this three component *Volunteer Appreciation and Incentive Program*.

**1. Free Ongoing Trainings:**

Horse Handling Training  
Horse Leader Training

**2. Volunteer Appreciation Day**

Various times in the year HfH may have volunteer appreciations days. All volunteers are invited to come and eat lunch at the farm and mingle with the mini horses.

**3. Free Introductory Riding Lesson or Trail Ride**

Volunteers who demonstrate a commitment to their service to HfH are eligible for a free introductory riding lesson or trail ride to be redeemed during a specified time. Annual volunteer application paperwork must be up to date to participate. Volunteers must weigh less than 200 lbs to ride. Volunteers should contact lessons@horsesforhope to arrange their ride/lesson time. We hope that these lessons will be fun and safe for everyone!

How to qualify:

- Maintain perfect attendance and volunteer a minimum of 20 hours or more for a single 10 week TR session.
- Volunteer for an entire week of horse camp.

It is encouraged that volunteers track their own volunteer hours, however it is MANDATORY that volunteers sign in and out using the volunteer sign-in sheet to be confirmed for eligibility by the Volunteer Coordinator.

### *Volunteer Procedures*

#### **Program Operations**

HfH operates year-round, offering morning and evening programs. There are no therapeutic riding lessons on Wednesdays and Sundays and for most major holidays; though volunteers are still needed to care for the horses.

Each program session runs for the duration of 10-weeks. We ask that you commit to a day/time for the full session, which allows us to ensure we have the support necessary to hold lessons and provide consistency for the riders. The smooth operation of our program depends on the commitment and reliability of our volunteers.

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### **Program Closures and Lesson Cancellations**

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

### **Weather Cancellation Policy**

**Winter Weather:** On the day of lessons, please check the forecasted high for the day for Raleigh, NC. If the high temperature or wind chill for the day is 34 degrees or lower, lessons will be cancelled. A member of staff will post on our web site either the day before or the morning of lessons **IF LESSONS ARE CANCELLED.**

**Summer Weather:** On the day of lessons, please check the forecasted high for the day for Raleigh, NC. If the high temperature or heat index for the day is 95 degrees or higher, lessons will be cancelled. A member of staff will post on our web site either the day before or the morning of lessons **IF LESSONS ARE CANCELLED.**

**Cancellations due to weather will also be made if HfH staff determines that the following conditions exist one hour prior to class:**

- ~ Winds exceeding 25 MPH.
- ~ Tornado warnings, severe rain, hail, snow or thunderstorms.
- ~ Hazardous driving conditions.

### **Volunteer Orientation and Training**

Prior to each session HfH provides a mandatory initial Volunteer Orientation and Training session for all new volunteers. At this orientation session, volunteers will be introduced to HfH, the riders we serve, our horses, and our policies and procedures. New volunteers will then learn how our horses are prepared for their lessons and will receive hands-on training. Training and practice for side-walking will be provided so that new volunteers will be ready to begin assisting in lessons.

Volunteers are encouraged to attend additional training and learning opportunities that are provided by HfH for volunteers to gain more experience and knowledge with horses and in the field of EAAT. (Horse Handling Training, Horse-Leader Training, and any other posted workshops).

### **Volunteer Sign In**

Upon arrival, volunteers are required to sign in, put on their name badge and check the daily schedule for their assignment. At the end of their service, name badges are returned and volunteers are asked to sign out.

### **Volunteer Cancellations**

**Volunteers are critical to the success of our program. When you commit to your volunteer role, your support is truly needed to serve our riders and care for our very special horses. Please reserve canceling your scheduled day and time for emergencies only. If you must cancel, please call/text (919-906-3363) HfH as soon as possible so a substitute may be found. If possible, you may make up for your absence by volunteering on another day.**

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### **Food and Refreshments**

HfH is able to provide bottled water for volunteers – we ask that you write your name on the bottle and dispose of the empty bottle in the recycle can. Volunteers are welcome to bring food and drinks to HfH but must be kept at the picnic tables away from the horses. Please label any items with your name and date. All trash **MUST** be disposed of properly and cans/plastic must be disposed of in the recycle can.

### ***Volunteer Policies and Guidelines***

The following policies and guidelines should assist you with having a positive volunteer experience.

#### **Communication and Questions**

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

#### **Commitment and Availability**

Adequate support is critical in serving our participants and horses. HfH requests that volunteers be willing to commit to a minimum of 1 ½ hours per week (same day and time) for the length of a session. We understand that there are times when emergencies arise. Please notify HfH 24 hrs in advance or as soon as possible if you are not able to make your scheduled time.

#### **Physical Considerations**

Some volunteer roles such as leading, side-walking and assisting in the barn can be physically demanding. It is important that you inform an HfH staff member or instructor if you have a condition that may prevent you from lifting or working a full hour in the arena at a walk or jog. Other volunteer roles are needed, if you feel that being a lesson or equine program volunteer may be too physically demanding.

#### **Confidentiality Policy**

Any information in regards to the participants of Horses for Hope Therapeutic Riding including: participants, volunteers, and personnel shall remain privileged and confidential. This information may include but is not limited to any medical, social, referral, personal, and/or financial information. Information concerning students will be shared with volunteers on a need to know basis. Disclosure of any confidential information shall not be released to anyone not associated with Horses for Hope Therapeutic Riding. Volunteers must seek staff permission prior to taking any pictures or videos.

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### **Conduct and Behavior**

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a cooperative and appropriate manner at all times. Examples of inappropriate behavior include: any form of harassment, aggressive or abusive behavior to self or others, including horses. Please notify staff immediately if you are subject to any inappropriate behavior. Individuals exhibiting inappropriate behavior will be requested to leave the property immediately and additional assistance may be called if deemed needed. Inappropriate behavior may result in dismissal from the program. Please notify staff immediately of any concerns regarding the behavior of program horses such as biting, kicking, etc.

### **Accidents and Occurrences**

All accidents must be reported immediately to HfH staff and an occurrence form must be completed by all involved. Please request an occurrence form from staff.

### **Facility Operations**

Please respect posted off-limit areas. Volunteers are only on the property when HfH staff are on site.

### **Visitors**

Please make an appointment and check in at the office when bringing any visitors to HfH. We enjoy having visitors and are happy to guide you through the facility.

### **Clothing Policy**

Volunteers should dress appropriately for the weather, and in clothing that does not restrict movement or vision. All volunteers must wear protective footwear; a leather boot is recommended or another closed-toed shoe that will not hold sand from the arena.

Please respect the following guidelines:

- No open-toed shoes, open-heeled shoes, or hole(s) of any kind in the shoes are not allowed
- No dangling jewelry
- No perfume (attracts bugs/some participants may have allergies)
- No tank tops/halter tops/tube tops
- Modest shorts are permitted, but not recommended due to biting insects
- No obscene logos

Please keep in mind HfH is a professional organization and may often have unannounced visits or media opportunities. Please dress comfortably yet sensibly. If you are interested in purchasing HfH logo merchandise, please email us.

### **Reassignment and Termination Policy**

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

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

### **Additional HfH Policies**

- Cell phones and car alarms must be turned off as they disrupt lessons and startle horses
- The consumption of alcohol prior to and/or while at HfH is prohibited. The use of illegal substances prior to and/or while at HfH is strictly prohibited
- Please refrain from offering food or other gifts to participants without permission as they may have a medical condition such as food allergies, diabetes, etc.
- Please do not perform a volunteer role you have not yet been trained for

### ***HfH Farm Rules***

#### **General Barn Rules**

- Volunteers should always follow the direction of the supervising barn staff member
- Excessive noise or commotion in or around the stable or riding arena is not permitted
- All children must be kept under the supervision of an adult at all times
- All riders, volunteers, & guests must sign a release of liability
- Appropriate footwear should be worn around the horses and farm. Sandals, flip-flops, open-toed shoes, open-heeled shoes, or hole(s) of any kind in the shoes are not permitted
- The barn and grounds should be kept neat & orderly at all times. Unused equipment must be kept in its proper place. Aisle-ways should be kept clear of wheelbarrows, pitchforks, etc.
- Manure should be removed from aisle way or around the stable immediately
- Visitors / riders / parents should not enter the barn unless they have the express permission of a staff member – they should be supervised at ALL times

#### **Horse Rules**

- No changes to horse's equipment, appearance, feeding or exercise program without the direct approval of the equine and facilities manager
- NO TREATS ARE PERMITTED TO BE GIVEN TO ANY HORSE AT ANY TIME
- If you see any injury or abnormality on any horse, please notify the equine and facilities manager or barn staff member immediately
- Do not enter stall or fields that contain horses unless you have been asked to do so by a member of staff and are accompanied by a "buddy"

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### Facility Rules

- NO SMOKING or e-cigs/vapor e-cigs anywhere onsite
- No dogs anywhere on the property, including in unattended cars
- Keep all automobiles in designated parking areas
- Keep all driveways clear at all times. Driveways are also used as fire lanes
- Keep all gates closed and latched unless otherwise specified
- Hay shed, pastures, stalls and farm equipment are out of bounds unless accompanied or invited by a staff member. Volunteers should follow the direction of the supervising barn staff member
- If you notice a broken fence, gate or anything out of the ordinary on the grounds, notify the staff immediately
- The tack room, medicine cabinet & offices must be locked when closing the barn at night.
- Individuals should call “gate” prior to entering the arena if there are horses in the arena.

## ***WORKING WITH A SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION***

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

### **Wheelchair Etiquette**

Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind. Always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before you help; be respectful - people’s wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Don’t hang or lean on them unless you have permission; and speak directly - be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get yourself on the same level as the wheelchair.

### **Escorting an Individual with a Visual Impairment**

If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may only need verbal direction/cues. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to have assistance. Repeat/verbalize information that may be written/posted. If you’re uncertain of what to do, ask your instructor how you can be of further assistance.

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### General Guidelines for Working with Individuals with Hearing/Language Impairment

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

### Non-Verbal or Limited Verbal Expression

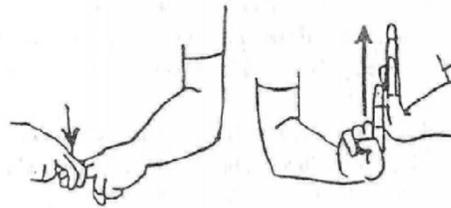
Many of our participants are non-verbal or limited in their verbal expression. To enhance communication with these individuals, instructors and volunteers may reinforce requests and directions with basic American Sign Language (ASL). Below are some common signs used in therapeutic riding.

### Sign Language



#### Halt/Stop

Side of right flat hand strikes left flat palm



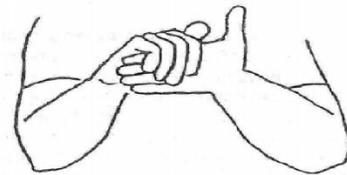
#### Sit Tall

Sign "Sit" and "Tall"



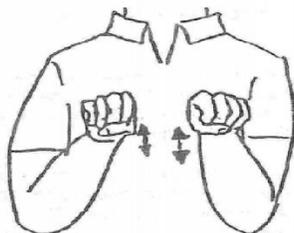
#### Walk-on

Hands are palm down, wrists go up & down



#### Saddle

Fingers of right hand hook over flat, palm-in left



#### Trot

Close fists with thumbs across fingers, motion up and down from wrists



#### Ride

Straddle palm-in left hand with first two fingers of hand, slide

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### GLOSSARY OF PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

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

**Arthritis:** Inflammatory disease of the joints. Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid. Characteristics: Pain; lack of mobility; loss of strength. Benefits of therapeutic riding: Gentle rhythmic movements to promote joint mobility and to relieve pain; increase strength.

**Autism & Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD):** A broad spectrum of disorders ranging from mild to severe, which affects thought, perceptions and attention. Characteristics: Impairments in social interaction and communication; restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities; impairments in the use of nonverbal behaviors such as eye to eye gaze and facial expressions; lack of social or emotional reciprocity; delays in, or lack of the development of spoken language; impairments in ability to initiate or sustain conversations with others; abnormal responses to senses such as sight, hearing, touch, balance, smell, taste, reaction to pain; deficits in gross and fine motor skills. Benefits: Provides sensory input and promotes sensory integration. Promotes communication skills (expressive and receptive). Develops strength, coordination, muscle tone and gross and fine motor skills. Promotes socialization.

**Cerebral Palsy:** Brain damage occurring before, at or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder. Types and characteristics: Spastic: increased muscle tone, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes. Athetoid: Extensor muscle tension, involuntary movements, difficulty maintaining upright posture. Ataxic: weakened muscles, poor balance, and difficulty with quick, fine movements. Benefits: Normalization of muscle tone, muscle strengthening, development of posture, balance and motor coordination, opportunity for promoting expressive skills, socialization and confidence.

**Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA) – Stroke:** Brain hemorrhage or brain emboli, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment. Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of the body. May impair thought, speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength. Benefits: Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech, socialization and confidence.

**Developmental Disabilities (DD):** A diverse group of physical, cognitive, psychological, sensory and speech impairments that begin anytime during development up to 18 years of age. Characteristics: Varied, but can include processing delays, and delays in physical, motor and social development. Benefits: Increase confidence and self-esteem, stimulates processing, speech and body awareness, provides opportunity for sport and recreation, promotes socialization.

**Down Syndrome:** A genetic disorder in which a person is born with an extra chromosome (chromosome 21). Characteristics: Mild to severe learning disabilities, low muscle tone, speech impairments. Benefits: Promotes expressive and receptive language skills. Increases gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination, posture and muscle tone. Promotes social skills. Increases confidence and self-esteem.

**Emotional Disabilities:** Social, emotional or behavioral functioning which is not age appropriate and affects a child's academics, social relationships and self-care. Characteristics: Difficulty coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations, inappropriate affect or behavior responses, depression, anxiety, physical symptoms, difficulty learning, withdrawal, and aggressiveness. Benefits: Increase confidence and self-esteem, provide opportunities for accomplishments, promotes positive socialization.

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**Hearing Impairment:** Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound. Characteristics: Difficulties in communication or communication through sign language, lip reading or finger spelling. Benefits: Increases confidence, self-esteem and sense of accomplishment. Provides recreational activity with opportunity for socialization. Stimulates balance, posture and coordination.

**Learning Disabilities:** Neurological disorders that interfere with a person's ability to store, process or produce information. Characteristics: Difficulties with reading, writing, speech, computing math. May affect development and social skills. Benefits: Promotes processing, language skills and attending skills, increases confidence and self-esteem, provides opportunity for success, increases balance, coordination and posture, provides opportunity for socialization.

**Mental Impairment or Mental Retardation (MR):** A disorder in which a person's overall intellectual functioning is below average with an IQ of 70 or less. Impaired ability to cope with common life demands and daily living skills. Characteristics: Impairments in learning, communication, social interaction, self-care. Benefits: Increases balance, coordination, strength and posture, improves gross and fine motor skills, promotes socialization, increases confidence, reinforce life and vocational skills.

**Multiple Sclerosis (MS):** Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation. Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity. Benefits: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles, maintains balance, increases confidence and self-esteem.

**Muscular Dystrophy (MD):** Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males. Characteristics: Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes. Benefits: Provides opportunity for recreational, physical, and social activity. May help slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, allows for movement free of assistive devices.

**Scoliosis:** Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S shape with rotary component. Characteristics: Shoulder, trunk and waistline asymmetry. May have back pain and postural fatigue. Benefits: Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles.

**Spina Bifida:** Congenital failure of vertebral arch closure which results in spinal cord damage. Characteristics: Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss. May also be associated with hydrocephalus, lordosis, scoliosis and hip dislocations. Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, increases strength, balance and coordination, promotes confidence and self-esteem.

**Spinal Cord Injury (SCI):** Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function. Characteristic: Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores. Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, and provides opportunity for recreational and social activity.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** Accidental injury to the head resulting in impairment of cognitive, emotional and/or physical functioning. Characteristics: May include deficits in gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination and strength. May have deficits in language, communication, processing, memory and perceptual skills. Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, coordination, and gross and fine motor skills. Stimulates speech and perceptual skills. Increases confidence.

**Visual Impairment -Moderate to Total Loss of Sight.** Characteristics: May include insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity and fearfulness. Benefits: Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture, balance and coordination. Provides opportunity for socialization, structured risk-taking and freedom of movement.

# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

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### *HfH's Equine Therapists*

We would not have a program if it were not for our amazing equine herd. The horse is perhaps the most important part of our therapeutic riding program. The horses at HfH come from a variety of backgrounds. Some of their careers have been as race horses, eventing horses, dressage horses, trail horses, and western pleasure horses to name a few. Most of our horses are being free-leased from Triangle Horsemanship LLC. Each has his or her own unique personality and needs.

When selecting and training the horses used in our program, many factors are considered. Horses must meet basic criteria including – possessing an exceptional level of tolerance, be gentle and well mannered, in good general health, and offer sound rhythmic movement as this is a key benefit of therapeutic riding.

Horses that meet the criteria are accepted on a trial basis, placed on an extensive training program to introduce them to their role in the program and the activities they will be exposed to. Mock sessions are conducted prior to having “real” riders on the horses.

HfH horses receive the very best of care. Each horse is on a schedule to assure good overall health including -- veterinarian care, hoof care, tooth care and a de-worming program. Additionally, each horse's work schedule is tracked and recorded in compliance with PATH Standards and Guidelines. Volunteers play a critical role in preparing horses for sessions and assisting with their daily care and we encourage volunteers to gain additional knowledge of our equine friends through a variety of opportunities. In addition to the Volunteer Orientation & Training session, HfH provides training opportunities in Horse Handling and Horse Leading, and may offer a variety of horse related educational opportunities throughout the year to encourage volunteers to spend hands-on time working with barn staff and seasoned volunteers.

### **Equine Senses**

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

**HEARING:** The horse's sense of hearing is very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. **“Hearing and not seeing” is often the cause of the fright/flight response.** When working with horses, note the position of the horse's ears. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet, calm and reassuring voice and gently stroke his neck. Watch your horse's ears for increased communication.

# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

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**SIGHT:** Horses' eyes are geared to finding danger. They don't have very accurate vision close up, but they can detect tiny movement at a distance. The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head; there is a good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poorer frontal vision. The lens of the horse's eye doesn't change shape as humans do. Instead, a horse focuses on objects by changing their head position and raising and lowering its head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color. The horse may notice if something in the arena or out on a trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with. The horse has better peripheral vision; consider a slightly looser rein, enabling him to move his head when taking a look at objects. Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. **The best way to approach a horse is to his shoulder, talking to the horse as you approach.** It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when hand feeding.

**TOUCH:** The horse's sense of touch is very sensitive. They can detect very light touch or pressure. Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas). Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses may also use touch to examine strange objects. They will look, sniff and feel an object with their muzzle. The tongue, lips, and bars of the mouth are especially sensitive places, and we need to use caution when a horse has a bit in his mouth. Horses are trained by applying and removing pressure and may be sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs. Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly. Riders may need assistance to reduce squeezing a horse with their legs. Ask the instructor/therapist what is the best handling technique.

**SMELL:** The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations. Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling. It is recommended that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them.

**TASTE:** Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects. A horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.

**SIXTH SENSE:** Horses do have a "sixth sense" when evaluating the disposition of those around him. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important to let the instructor/therapist know if you're having a difficult time relating to, or getting along with a particular horse.

# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

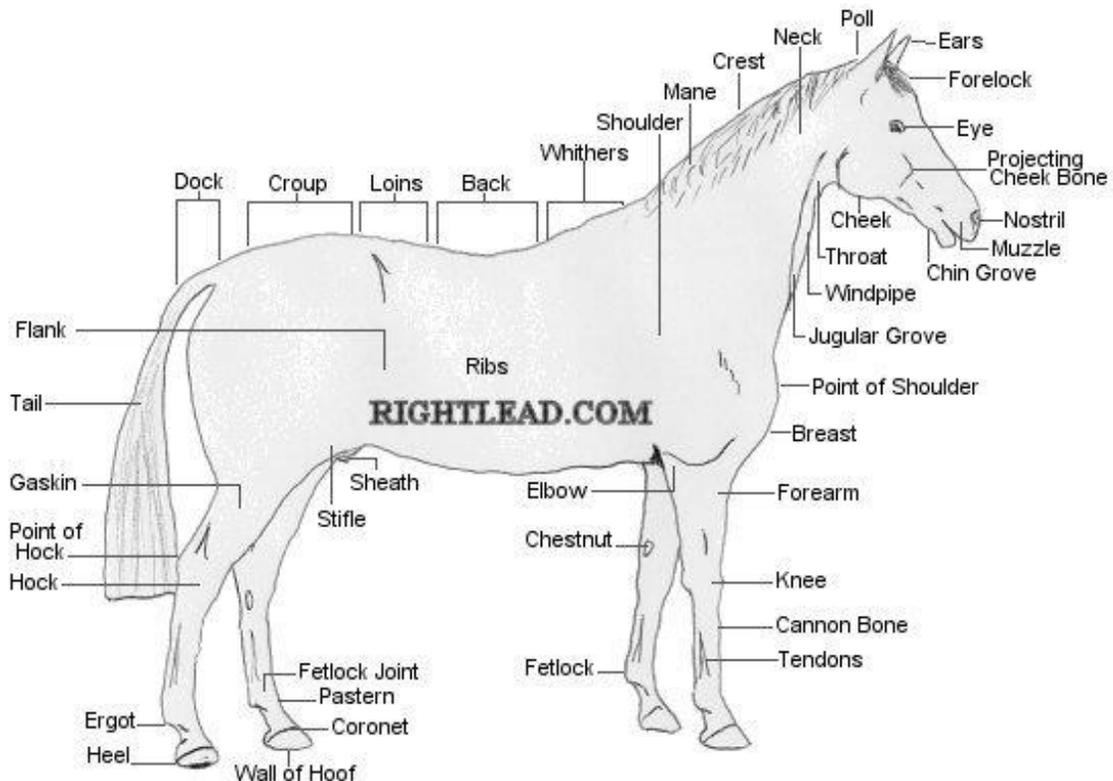
## Volunteer Manual

**FLIGHT AS NATURAL INSTINCT:** Most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. However, if frightened, horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it. At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly. A frightened horse being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like a stall. If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (note the position of the horse's ears in pictures below), alert program staff.

**HERD ANIMAL:** Horses like to stay together in a herd or a group with one or two horses dominant, with a pecking order amongst the rest. Some horses may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride. Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter. If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected. For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse's length between horses when riding within a group to respect the horse's space and pecking order.

### *Parts of the Horse*

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



# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc. Volunteer Manual

## Reading a Horse by Their Ears

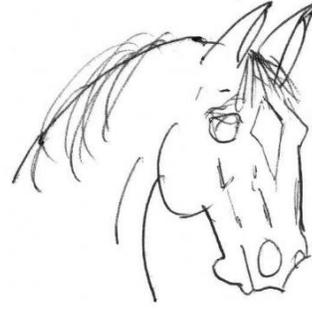
The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



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, head lowered.  
Calm and resting, horse may be  
dozing, can be startled easily.



Ears flattened back against neck.  
Really angry or in a frightened mood.  
May fight, bite, kick or rear and strike  
out with front hooves.

### 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!
- Swishing the tail.  
Annoyance and irritation:  
at biting flies, stinging insects or  
tickling bothersome actions of the 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 head.  
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.  
Watch out for biting or kicking.

# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

## Volunteer Manual

### *Teamwork in Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies*

In program lessons, you will be assigned to work with a team consisting of the:

- Horse
- Rider
- Leader
- Side-walkers (1 or 2)
- Instructor

Teams need to work harmoniously and smoothly for the benefit of the rider. Communication is key. If you feel uncomfortable for any reason with your team, please discuss this with your instructor or HfH staff member.

There may be many opportunities to talk socially with your rider and you are encouraged to do so. However, please do not disrupt the lesson. Many students have trouble concentrating so please take care not to interrupt the direct line of focus between rider and instructor.

There may be times when your rider cannot focus on anyone far away and you might have to relay information from the instructor. Team members need to communicate with each other. Let your team know if you need to halt, change direction, cut across the arena or proceed to the center of the arena.

### *Team Member Responsibilities*

#### **Horse-Leader**

The leader is responsible for maintaining control of the horse; they need to be alert and aware of the horse's movement and behavior at all times, as well as staying tuned in to the rest of the TEAM. Pay attention to safety at all times.

Horse-Leaders should arrive 45 minutes prior to the start of the lessons they are assigned for and should check the daily schedule for their horse and equipment assignment upon arrival. It is the leader's responsibility to be sure their horse is well groomed and tacked properly. Barn staff are supervising at all times if you are unsure of your assignment or the resources needed.

**Horse Handling:** Horse halters and lead ropes are kept in the tack room under horse's name on the left most peg. Locate the horse's halter and make sure lead rope is attached. When approaching the horse in the pasture, get the horse's attention, speaking gently and moving slowly towards their shoulder. Put the lead rope around the horse's neck for control should the horse decide to walk off. Place the halter on the horse's head then pull lead rope off the neck and walk the horse to the barn. Your 'buddy'/helper should open and shut the pasture gate for you. Once the horse is in the stall place the horse on cross ties facing the aisle way and remove the lead line. When returning horses to their pasture or stall, remove halter and close pasture gate or stall door.

# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc. Volunteer Manual

**Grooming:** Forty-five minutes prior to class, begin by thoroughly grooming the horse. Each horse has their own grooming kit located in the tack room under each of their names. Please never share grooming tools. Begin by using the Curry Comb (the metal one is for the winter coat and the rubber one is for their summer coat) – use the metal one in the direction of the hair growth and the rubber one in a circular motion – starting with the neck area and working down the body to the hind end to remove loose dirt and hair. The Curry is not used on legs or face. It is important while grooming to check the horse for any signs of illness or injury (unsoundness).



Next use the Dandy (or hard brush) with a flicking motion to remove hair and dirt, brushing in the same direction as the hair, always working from the neck to the back of the horse. The Dandy brush may be used on the legs, but not the face. Use the Body (or soft brush), to remove fine dust from body, legs and face. Use the main and tail brush or Dandy brush to remove any debris in main and tail.



To pick hooves, begin by facing the back of the horse and running your hand down the leg below the knee, gently pull and ask the horse to “lift” their foot. Holding the hoof securely, pick from the heel and forward to the toe, removing any caked dirt, and clean well on both sides of the frog (the deep crevasse areas) and between the frog (V shape). Notify the barn staff of any foul-smelling discharge, tenderness, or hoof cracks. Once the horse is groomed, please remove hair from brushes, place grooming tools back in their kit and return it to the appropriate trunk.



Keep one hand on the horse while you are grooming.



Face brush



Mane and Tail comb



# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

## Volunteer Manual

**Tacking up the Horse:** The horse's side-pull bridle (if not using the halter), reins, saddle and pads should be placed outside the horse's stall when you arrive. If it is not, please ask the Barn Staff on duty and refer to the Daily Assignment Sheet for scheduled equipment. Saddle the horse first by placing the square cotton saddle pad (if tacking English) or the western saddle pad on the horses back, covering the withers. If assigned, place the sheep skin half-pad or fuzzy fitted pad on top of the cotton pad (for tacking English). Place the saddle on top of the pad, being sure to push the saddle pad well up under the Pommel so the pad will not rub on the horses withers (this is called wither relief). Then attach the girth to the billet strap(s) on the right side of the saddle then the left side, ensuring that each side of the girth is even and one side is not higher than the other. Gently snug (**DO NOT TIGHTEN**) the girth making certain that you do not pull or snag any hairs or pinch the skin (for western girths you pull out then up to clear the hairs), you should be able to fit your fingers between the sternum of the horse and the girth. A final tightening will be done by the instructor, prior to riders mounting.

To bridle (if one is being used), undo the cross ties from the horse's halter and place the reins over the horses head and around the neck. Remove the halter. Hold the bridle crown in your right hand, and the bit or nose band for side-pull in your left palm, and slide your right hand up the front of the horses head, working the bit into the mouth GENTLY or slipping the nose band up around the nose. Place the crown piece over one ear at a time starting with the right ear. Attach the throat latch leaving enough room to place the width of your four fingers between the horse's throat and the strap. Tie up the end of the reins so they don't drag, place the reins back on the horse's withers, or place them over the saddle horn for western saddles. Place the neck strap (if one is being used) around the horse's neck. Please note: never take the bridle/side-pull apart or adjust the length of the cheek pieces. If you have any concerns regarding the horse's tack or condition, please see barn staff.

Horse Leaders use a lead rope attached to the horses halter. If a rider is to go off lead, the horse leader should remove the lead rope. Hold the lead in your right hand with fingers facing down, fold excess in left hand (butterfly style NOT looped around hand), open the stall and lead the horse out of the stall by standing on the horse's left side, then stepping out into the aisle and having the horse follow you.

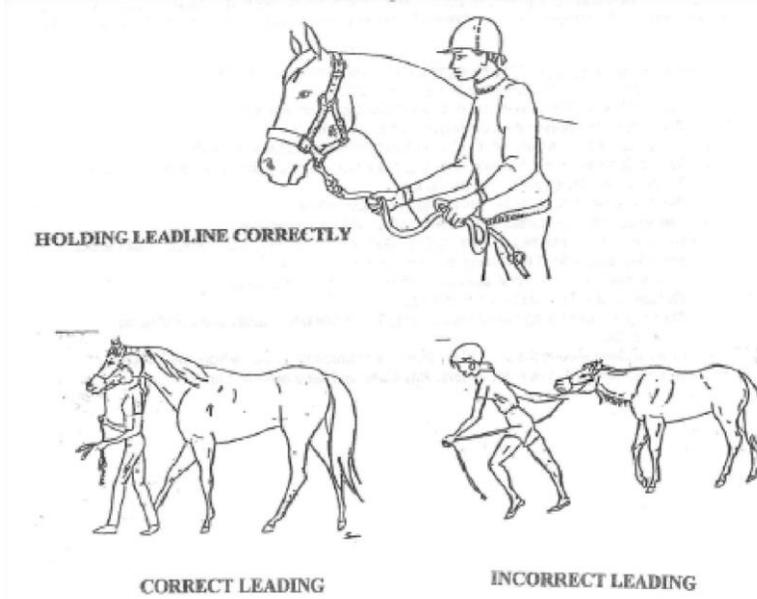
**In the lesson:** The horse may then be brought into the arena 10 to 15 min prior to the start of the lesson. Please call "gate" before entering, wait for the response "enter", closing the arena gate behind you. Lead the horse once in each direction around the arena to stretch and the instructor will ask for a soundness check - a trot in both directions down the long side of the arena. The instructor will also perform a final tack check to ensure proper fit and girth tightness.

During class, handle the horse according to the instructor's direction. Mounting and dismounting can only be done by the instructor or designated personnel. To help save the horses' backs, all riders mount from a mounting block or ramp. Instructors will advise regarding dismounts. Dismounts will be done primarily in the arena but may be done from the mounting ramp on rare occasions depending on the rider. The Leader's primary role during mounts and dismounts is to prevent the horse from moving. **IN AN EMERGENCY, THE HORSE LEADER STAYS WITH THE HORSE.**

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The Horse Leader leads from the horse's left side unless the instructor directs otherwise. When leading, keep between the horse's head and shoulder. Allow the horse to move head freely up and down as they walk - **DO NOT HANG ON THE LEAD ROPE**. This rhythmical movement starts at the head and moves all the way down the horse's spine - this movement is what makes horseback riding therapeutic. If the leader interferes with the horse's head the body stiffens up and there is no benefit from the horse's movement. Also, if you continuously constrict the movement of the horse's head they may become increasingly annoyed. Keep your attention focused ahead of you and square your shoulders in the direction you are going. Do not attempt to drag the horse, don't look him right in the eye – look forward in the direction of your movement. Use your voice “walk-on”, “whoa” or “trot” if the horse does not respond to the riders' ques. During times a horse must stand still, remain relaxed, turn around and position yourself in front slightly to the left of the horse facing the horse's head or shoulder. Avoid clamping down on their head, this will cause tension and they may react by backing away from you. Please inform your instructor of any problems or concerned while you are working with the horse.



When a horse has finished a lesson, if it is not used in the next lesson, please bring the horse back to his/her stall and untack, pick the horse's hooves and groom/bathe/blanket as appropriate. Ask your barn staff for assistance. Return the horse to the appropriate paddock or pasture. Please return all tack to its proper place.

### **Side-Walker**

Side-walkers should arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of their session. The side-walker's primary role is to walk alongside the rider and provide support as indicated by the instructor. It may be direct physical support, verbal support to reinforce the instructor's directions, or acting as spotters during sessions. One or two side-walkers may be assigned to each rider depending on the rider's needs. Upon arrival, please check the daily schedule for the rider you will be working with. You may greet your rider in the observation area, assist with their helmet, and wait with the rider until the instructor indicates it is time to mount. Please do not allow riders to enter the stable or riding area without an instructor's permission. **IN AN EMERGENCY, SIDE-WALKERS STAY WITH THEIR RIDERS.**

# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

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A variety of side-walking techniques are used according to the rider's needs. The instructor will indicate which type of support should be used. (Please use caution never to force movement or use excessive pressure when applying any of these techniques.) **Side-walk support techniques include:**

- **“Spotter position”**: The side-walker walks beside the rider (lined up with the rider's shoulder), prepared for “hands on” when indicated by instructor.
- **“Thigh hold”**: The side-walker places the arm closest to the rider over the rider's thigh and grasps the front edge of the saddle or surcingle. Apply light pressure to provide stability but not enough pressure to cause discomfort or bruising.
- **“Ankle support”**: The side-walker cups the rider's ankle to stabilize the rider's lower leg.
- **“Thigh hold & ankle support”**: Occasionally, a rider needs support provided by doing both an arm over thigh, and cupping the ankle or a flat palm on the riders' calf for a “calf hold”.

### Additional Information for Side-walkers

- When a rider requires two side-walkers, only one side-walker should be communicating with the rider at a time as too much input can confuse a rider.
- If a rider has only one side-walker, the leader and side-walker should walk on opposite sides of the horse.
- The role of the side-walker varies greatly between riders. It is important to have an understanding of your rider's needs and knowledge of his or her goals. Please ask the instructor to provide this information to you.
- The side-walker needs to be aware of the rider at all times. Even when the rider is not mounted, the side-walker should be conscious of the rider's safety.
- Side-walkers - Never place your hand or fingers in any of the saddle's rings or buckles while side-walking.
- If a rider or a horse behaves inappropriately or in an unsafe manner, please notify staff immediately.
- Never leave your position next to the rider. If you need to stop for any reason the whole team stops with you. Inform the instructor if you cannot continue your role of side-walker for any reason.
- Side-walkers may need to encourage, calm, reassure or divert the rider's attention to the instructor, be helpful but do not interfere. Side-walkers may need to reinforce what the instructor says and make sure the rider hears and understands what the instructor is asking.
- Remind instructor if you need to change sides in case your arms get tired.
- Keep your eyes on the rider and in the direction you are going.
- **DO NOT** interfere with the horse by petting, poking, leaning or bumping. Allow the leader to do the job of moving the horse forward. If you get left behind, do not run up behind the horse.

### Thigh Hold Support



# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

## Volunteer Manual

### Equine Program Volunteers

Primary responsibilities include the care and maintenance of the barn and HfH Herd, assuring that our horses receive the best possible care to keep them happy and healthy, allowing them to perform safely and to the best of their ability in program.

Barn volunteers may be horse knowledgeable or not, but must be willing to learn and adhere to the HfH methods of handling and caring of our horses to maintain a consistent and safe environment for our horses, staff, participants, and other volunteers.

Working in the barn is a great way to see our horses in their environment, learn horse behavior and handling to enhance your skills as a program volunteer. Most Equine Program Volunteers are scheduled around feeding times, which occur from 6:30-8 a.m. and 6:30-8 p.m.

### **Primary Responsibilities Include:**

- Bringing horses in and out from paddocks or pastures
- Grooming horses
- Assist with feeding horses
- Cleaning the barn, stalls, buckets, sweeping, and other barn chores
- Paddock, pasture and trail maintenance/cleaning, cleaning tack room and sheds.

Barn Volunteer Reminders: Please be sure to sign in and out, and wear your name badge. Touch base with barn staff when you arrive and before you leave. Check the barn “white” board for new barn chores to be completed that day. Dress appropriately to weather and working around the horses (sturdy boots, gloves, etc.). Please communicate any concerns regarding the horses or your role to barn staff or the volunteer coordinator.

### **Additional Rules for General Horse Safety: - Always think safety first!**

- Never wrap a lead line around your hand or yourself.
- Hold the lead with your right hand, and fold the excess in your left.
- Walk beside the horse when leading, not ahead or behind.
- Horses are led on the near (left) side, unless otherwise indicated by staff.
- Approach a horse from the side, avoiding quick movements, and speak in a low voice.
- Pat horses on the shoulder, not on the nose.
- When on cross-ties, have horses facing the isle way.
- Walk under the cross-ties to switch sides. Do not duck under horse’s neck or walk behind.
- Never let reins or lead lines hang to the ground.
- Always call “horse” or “gate” before entering the arena with a horse.
- Maintain a safe distance between horses.
- Shouting and/or running may startle horses. Try to use quiet voices and avoid quick movements.
- Avoid walking around the back of the horse or approaching a horse from the back end.
- When working near the hindquarters, stay close and keep one hand on the horse.

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### ***Risk Management***

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

### **Emergency Procedures**

Policies and procedures are put in place and expected to be followed for the safety and well-being of participants, staff, volunteers and guests of any and all HfH programs and facilities.

When working with horses, as much as we care and love them, a human's life has to ALWAYS come first. It is of utmost importance to remain calm, reassure riders, and take direction for HfH staff and instructors. HfH staff are responsible for managing the emergency and applying any first aid required. Volunteers may be called upon to assist.

### **Medical Emergencies**

HfH staff must be notified of any injury or medical emergency and are responsible for managing the emergency including evaluating the scene, determining if additional medical assistance is required, and providing any first aid required. An occurrence report must be completed by staff and involved individuals for every incident.

### **Calling for Emergency Medical Assistance**

In the event of an emergency, volunteers may be asked to call for emergency medical assistance. Telephone is located in the barn by the volunteer sign-in. Emergency call information is posted near the telephone.

### **Location of First Aid Kits**

A human first-aid kit is located in the tack room behind the tack room door. The horse first aid is located inside the feed room on the left side just as you come in the door.



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### Fire procedure

In the event of a fire, the following procedure will take place:

1. All persons will evacuate the area.
2. Horses will be evacuated by the staff to fields away from danger.
3. Staff member will extinguish fire with fire extinguisher if the fire is smaller than an office trash can.
4. Call 911 immediately if fire does not extinguish.
5. Riders will be dismounted and remain with their parents or caregiver and go to designated area out of harm's way.
6. Instructors/therapists will direct volunteers to remove equipment or untack horses and turn out in field away from danger. Equipment may remain where it is.
7. All persons will congregate in the large outdoor sand arena at the "C" marker. No one should leave until a staff member indicates it is safe to do so.
8. Volunteer Coordinator or Barn Staff will assist with a volunteer head count.
9. Instructors/therapists will assist with a rider head count.
10. Staff person in charge will complete the over-all head count.
11. All persons will remain in the large sand outdoor arena until the authorities have given other instructions.

### Tornado, hurricane or severe thunderstorm

The HfH Staff constantly checks the weather forecast for our location.

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

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

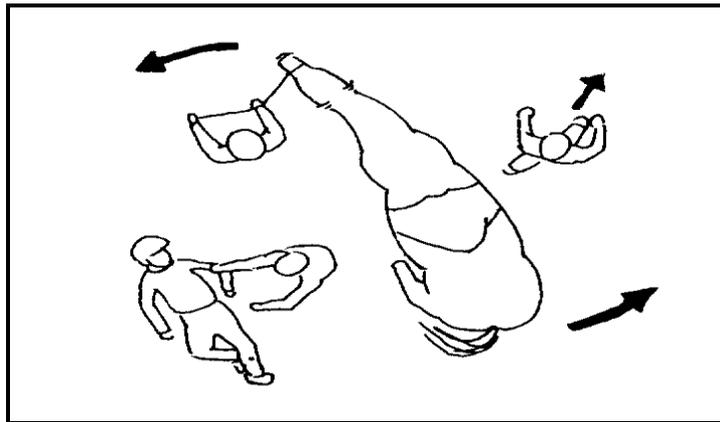
# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

## Volunteer Manual

### Emergency Dismount

During riding sessions, the instructor performs rider mounts and dismounts. However, in certain situations, the instructor may ask volunteers to perform an emergency dismount as follows:

When an instructor calls for an emergency dismount, horse leaders halt and turn to face their horse. Side-walker(s) inform rider of emergency dismount, make sure the rider has removed their feet from the stirrups, place your arms around the rider's waist and gently guide rider off and safely away from the horse. Horse leaders must keep the horse a safe distance from rider. In the event of a fall, the side-walker opposite the falling rider moves quickly away, allowing the horse an escape. The side-walker on the side of the fall may be able to assist the rider to the ground and remain with the rider until directed. Please await further direction from the instructor.



When a problem arises, all other horses should halt where they are. Facing the other horses toward the accident will help them stay calm. Side-walkers should apply thigh hold support and stay with their riders, waiting for further direction from the instructor. No one, including riders' parents should enter or leave the arena without directions from the instructor.

### Fallen Rider or Medical Emergency

Should a rider fall from a horse, become injured or have a medical emergency during a lesson, all activity will stop. The instructor is responsible for managing the incident including applying any first aid needed. Designated volunteers may be asked to assist by retrieving a first aid kit, calling for emergency medical assistance (911), and locating the rider's emergency medical form (located in the rider file drawer in the main office). An occurrence report must be completed by staff and involved individuals for every incident.

### Spooked Horse

Should a horse become frightened or overly nervous, side-walkers are to apply "thigh hold" support to the rider. The horse leader should attempt to halt the horse and turn to face the horse. The horse leader must always stay with the horse and be aware that the horse may move quickly forward or side step in either direction. As the horse moves, side-walkers need to continue their support to the rider, staying close to the horse's side as it moves. Follow direction from instructor.

# Horses for Hope TRC, Inc.

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### *Definitions*

**Aids** – signals used by a rider to communicate instructions to the horse. Aids may be natural – hands, legs, voice, seat, or artificial – crop, spurs.

**Bay** – color term for deep brown to blackish colored horse with black mane and tail.

**Bit** – used to control the horse and generally made of metal, bits attach to the bridle and are placed in the mouth.

**Bridle** – The complete outfit of headstall, reins, and bit used to guide the horse when riding.

**Canter** – A three beat gait of the horse, faster than a trot, a bit slower than a gallop.

**Cantle** – back of the saddle behind the seat.

**Chestnut** – color term used for horse with reddish to brown coat color. Mane & tail are usually the same color or lighter.

**Conformation** - structure and general makeup of the horse.

**Dressage Pad** – the largest of the cotton pads which goes under the saddle.

**Farrier** – profession of trimming and shoeing horses.

**Gaits** – various movements of the horse at different speeds; e.g. walk, trot and canter.

**Gallop** – fastest of the horse's gaits. A four beat gait.

**Gelding** – a male horse that has been castrated and incapable of breeding.

**Girth** – long strap with buckles on each end, attaches to saddle straps and holds saddle in place.

**Girth Cover** – soft fabric tube that slides over girth to help prevent horse from getting girth sores.

**Gray** – color term used for horses with coat color from white to dark gray in color.

**Ground poles** – wooden pole placed in arena used to school horse and/or practice rider's two-point position.

**Grooming** – caring for horse's coat includes currying, brushing, and picking feet.

**Half Circle & Reverse** – change of direction by turning horse toward the center of the ring and back to the rail.

**Halter** – leather or nylon bitless headstall used to control the horse when leading in or out to the paddock.

**Half-seat** – rider stands up with seat barely out of the saddle with upper body slightly forward, knees bent some and feet in stirrups with heels down.

**Hand** – a standard unit of measure equal to four inches, in determining the horse's height from the ground to point of the withers.

**Hoof or hooves** – horses feet.

**Lead line** – used to lead the horse, a cotton or nylon rope with snap on end which attaches to halter.

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**Long line** – use of long reins which run from the bit, through the sides of the saddle or surcingle, to steer the horse from behind.

**Long side** – the longer side of the arena

**Lunging** – exercising the horse by placing it on a long line, and having the horse go around in a circle.

**Mare** – female horse

**Mounting ramp** – area used to mount the rider on to the horse.

**Near side** – refers to the left side of the horse.

**Off side** – refers to the right side of the horse.

**Posting** – a rider moving up and down in rhythm with the horse at the trot.

**Rail** – the outside area of the arena along the fence line or wall.

**Reins** – long leather or cotton straps attached to the bit held by the rider to steer and control the horse.

**Saddle** – usually made of leather and placed on horses back for rider to sit on.

**Saddle pad** – cloth pad used under the saddle to protect the horse's back.

**Sidepull** – Type of bridle without a bit

**Sorrel** – color term used for horse with copper-red to reddish coat color. Mane & tail are usually the same color or lighter. Some breeds call this color Chestnut.

**Stirrups** – made of iron, they hang from the saddle and rider places feet in them.

**Tack** – term used to refer to riding equipment.

**Trot** – a two beat diagonal gait.

**Two-Point Position** – rider places hands on horses neck and stands up in stirrups, hips folded, heels down and knees bent.

**Walk on** – command to have the horse move forward into a walk.

**Withers** – bony projection on the top of the horse between the horse's neck and back.

**Whoa** – command to stop the horse from any gait.