

HORSES *for* HOPE

Seasonal Therapeutic Riding Program with a Financially-Free Option

Frequently asked questions...

When do you offer the Seasonal Therapeutic Riding Program with the Financially-Free Option (STR)? Due to weather extremes we only offer this program in the Spring and Fall – both seasons are 10-week sessions and the rider participates in one lesson per week.

How much does it cost? This program costs \$300 for each 10-week session, however we do offer a **financially-FREE option** that comes with a 10-hour volunteer time commitment to be met within the 6-month semester (January 1-June 30 or July 1 – December 31) in which your 10-week session is contained AND a requirement to provide an in-ring assistant. In addition, we have a scholarship application that can be requested – funds are limited so there is no guarantee of acceptance. There will be no refunds, however, there may be exceptions if there is any extenuating circumstances - you must discuss it in advance with the program director before it can be considered.

What is the age limit for therapeutic riding? The minimum age is 4 and there is no maximum age.

What are the eligibility requirements?

- The participant must have a medical diagnosis as determined by the Participant Medical History and Physicians Statement completed by the participant's attending physician.
- All new participants must complete a rider evaluation at least 30 days prior to the start of the session. The rider evaluation will determine the level of support needed (see levels below).

Level 1 - needs 2 side-walkers and 1 horse-leader - will need assistance to stay on the horse, needs assistance with controlling the horse and with activities

Level 2 - needs 1 side-walker and 1 horse-leader - may need light assistance to stay on the horse, needs assistance with controlling the horse and with activities

Level 3 - needs 1 horse-leader - may need guidance in controlling the horse

Level 4 - independent rider (not eligible for the STR program)

- The non-refundable registration fee must be paid before the first scheduled ride date.
- All volunteer hours must be completed during the six months of the semester the rider is participating.
- At the beginning of each semester, the participant's family will need to identify whether they would like to pay for services or volunteer the 10 required hours.
- All volunteer hours must be recorded and approved each time you volunteer.
- All program fees must be current.
- Exception to obligations for medical reason, extenuating circumstances, etc. will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

How long will we be able to participate in the Program once we are enrolled? Due to limited availability of spots, Level 1 or Level 2 participants may only be in the STR program for 4 consecutive sessions. Level 3 participants may only be in the STR program for 2 consecutive sessions. At the end of their term they may enroll in the YTR program or request to go back on the waiting list. If you are forced to drop out due to medical reasons but are able to return for the next season we will hold your

spot for one season only. If you drop out by choice and then later want to return you will be placed on the waiting list if we do not have any openings.

Are there any other requirements to participate in this program? YES, to participate in the Seasonal Therapeutic Riding Program with a Financially-Free Option, there are two required **elements**:

1. The family is required to provide a qualified in-ring side-walker or horse-leader for each program session. If for some reason an in-ring participant is unable to be provided, this situation will be managed by the program coordinator and governed by the program policies. Please note that the in-ring horse-leader or side-walker does not have to work with their family's rider directly, but must assist on all agreed-upon riding days and times through the semester. (*In-ring responsibilities do not count towards the 10 hour volunteer requirement*)
2. Families are required to provide 10 hours of volunteer time for each participant, in lieu of volunteer time families can pay the full semester fee of \$300 or apply for assistance through our scholarship program when available to cover all or part of this (See Rider Scholarship Program section).

When should we arrive? No later than 20 minutes prior to the lesson ride time. Those riders who wish to groom their horse should arrive about 35 or 40 minutes prior to the lesson ride time.

Where do we park? You can park facing the horse trailers up to as far over as you can near ditch without blocking the driveway entrance, you can also park facing the old wooden farmhouse but do not block the driveway around the old house and we have 2 parking spaces facing the fence to the main area but please do not block the main drive thru gate next to the barn.

How do I get into the HfH main area? There are 3 ways to get in, you can walk through the "V" walkthrough (gateless opening), you can go through the big red gate (main drive through gate) or you can go through the small red gate near the port-o-let. If there is a lock on the gate please call a HfH staff member to unlock the gate.

Are there rules about the type of shoes the parents and riders are to wear? YES! No one is allowed in the main fenced in area with open-toed, open-heeled or any type of shoes with holes or openings. PLEASE be prepared and have a spare set of tennis shoes or boots in your car if you are coming on your way home from work.

What is the dress policy for riding? Riders should wear long pants and shoes or boots with a smooth sole and at least a ½ inch heel. There are special exceptions for those with leg braces. Please also bring a jacket in case it gets cold while in the riding session.

Where/who do we report to when we arrive? Report to the main barn tack room to get the riders helmet – you should be greeted by a Horses for Hope staff member or volunteer.

Does Horses for Hope provide helmets? Yes, you can find the helmets just inside the tack room on the right. There are many different size helmets to choose from. We do NOT allow bicycle helmets for horseback riding.

How do I know I have a correctly fitting helmet? When the chin strap is fastened the helmet should not move up and down or side to side when you shake your head up and down and side to side. You should not force the helmet on to fit tight and it should not sit up on top of the head. Some of our helmets have an adjusting knob on the back and can be twisted to make the helmet tighter or looser. The small round strap holders should be slid up or down to fit right below the ear and the chin strap

should fit snug but loose enough to stick one finger in between the strap and the chin. The brim of the helmet should be about an inch above the eyebrows and should be level – not tipping back or tipping forward. Staff is available to assist.

Where do I go once the rider's helmet is on? The rider should report to the outside of the riding arena gate with their volunteer side-walker if able enough to mount from the mounting block OR to the ramp system for mounting the horse from above. All riders MUST wait for the lead instructor to assist in mounting.

How do we know which horse the students will be riding? We assign horses based on the riders' size and ability. Generally we try to keep the rider on the same horse for the duration of the 10 week session. There may be times that we will need to change the horse for compatibility reasons either for the rider or horse or if the horse is lame or injured and can't be ridden.

How long are the lessons? 45 minutes. You MUST arrive on time (minimum 5 minutes before your lesson time) – we will not extend the lesson time or hold up the start of the lesson if you are late.

How will I know if lessons are cancelled due to adverse weather conditions? We post cancellations on our web site www.horsesforhope.org on the "Special Notification" box on our home page as well as on our Facebook page about 1 hour before the sessions begin. There are rare occasions that we are unable to get to a computer to post cancellations so if the weather is questionable and nothing is posted you can text (preferred) or call 919-270-4832 to verify – please announce who your rider is when texting.

What if we can not make our scheduled ride time? You are required to notify us at least 24 hours in advance via e-mail or text. If a last minute (within 24 hours of your ride time) sickness or emergency occurs you must text (preferred) or call us as soon as you know you will not make your schedule lesson time – please announce who your rider is when texting. If you do not notify us it will be counted as a "no show" and you will not be allowed a make-up lesson.

Are there make-up lessons for missed or cancelled lessons? **Missed Lessons, NO SHOWS and Cancellation Policy** – Horses for Hope will not issue monetary credit for missed lessons, cancelled lessons, or ***no shows**. Missed lessons with proper notification (minimum 3 hour notice) and cancelled lessons (cancellations due to weather, instructor being out, or an on-site or off-site HfH event) must be made up within 2 weeks of the missed or cancelled lesson. We will offer specific days for makeup lessons. Notification is **MANDATORY** by email AND text or call - as a courtesy, we ask that you notify us at least 24 hours prior to the lesson time or sooner if possible. ***NO SHOWS are MISSED lessons without proper notification (minimum 3 hour notice) and will NOT be allowed a make-up lesson for the missed lesson.**

Mounted and Unmounted Lessons – Unmounted lessons can be substituted for mounted lessons that would be cancelled due to weather related conditions. The instructor will decide when to substitute a mounted lesson with an unmounted lesson. Unmounted lessons can only be substituted once a month and only four times per year. Students MUST attend unmounted lessons. If a student fails to show up for an unmounted lesson without a 24 hour notice, they will not be allowed a make-up for that lesson.

What do we do once the rider has dismounted? Riders MUST wait for the lead instructor to assist in dismounting. Please return the helmet to the helmet storage area and you are free to leave afterwards, however if you were an in-ring assistant during the session you will need to write your session observations on the weekly TR form.

What are your rules about feeding the horses? We do NOT allow anything to be fed to the horses outside their scheduled feeding time. Participants who wish to give their horse a treat can do so by adding it to their nightly feed bag with the assistance of a staff member.

Are parents/guardians required to stay at Horses for Hope during the riding lesson? YES.

Are parents/guardians allowed to watch the students ride? Absolutely, we encourage families to watch their child/family member ride AND to give us feedback on their progress/changes they see from horseback riding.

Can I bring other children with us to watch a riding lesson? Yes, any children you bring are your responsibility and must be supervised at all times. Children can play on the swing set but are not allowed to play on the handicap ramp. No one is allowed to interact with the horses unless they have had proper training. Children may visit the chicken coop only when accompanied by an adult.

Volunteering

Can parents/guardians volunteer during the riding lesson? YES! We encourage the parents to get involved either with your child or with another rider. PLEASE let our volunteer coordinator know if you want to volunteer. Since it is mandatory to provide at least one assistant to be a side-walker, horse-leader or coach to participate, this can be your opportunity to meet this requirement.

What forms need to be completed in order to volunteer? Forms will be emailed to you once you notify our volunteer coordinator at volunteer@horsesforhope.org that you wish to volunteer OR you may print them off from our website.

Is there training for volunteers? YES! We have volunteer orientation days which include side-walker training, we also have horse-leader training days scheduled prior to the start of each season – you must attend one of those days prior to volunteering and you need to attend an annual refresher each year thereafter.

Contact Info

Main contact for Banks Rd location - **Gwen Roberts 919-270-4832** – gwen@horsesforhope.org

Secondary contact for Banks Rd location - **Tony Roberts 919-760-9293** – tony@horsesforhope.org

Other contact – **Dawn Guenot 919-761-0321** – dawn@horsesforhope.org