



**EQUICENTER**  
AT THE WILLIAM & MILDRED LEVINE RANCH

# **Volunteer Manual 2013**

**WhenToHelp.com**

**Barn 585-624-7777**

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# Welcome to the EquiCenter

We are pleased that you have chosen to become an EquiCenter volunteer. Our program is fueled by volunteer energy and every volunteer hour is essential for our program to be a success. Therapeutic riding, done in a professional and safe manner, brings joy and accomplishment to all involved.

During lessons you will be an important assistant that facilitates the highest quality of therapeutic riding for our participants.

This manual is designed as a reference for you. We hope that the enclosed information will be a useful reinforcement of your training. For those wanting more information about horses, disabilities or therapeutic riding, we encourage you to become a member of PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International) and attend our continuing educational programs that we will be offering.

Your commitment and dedication is vital to the success of our program, and we thank you for your support.

## Program Goals

Are to provide children and adults with special needs the opportunity to experience the physical, social and emotional benefits of riding and to provide an environment where they can meet their individual goals. We will help to educate and safely teach basic skills of stable and horse management. As well as increase the riders self confidence, social skills and self esteem.

## Areas of Volunteering

### Lesson Program

- Horse Handler
- Side walker with Student
- Helping Hands for Lessons
- Horsemanship both mounted and un-mounted

### Facilities

- Stable/Farm Support
- Facility repairs and maintenance
- Gardening
- Tractor-use/mowing

### Administration

- Public relations
- Fundraising
- Clerical
- Volunteer recruitment
- Computer Work
- Website

### Special Events

- Planning Coordinating
- Attending/representing EquiCenter for both on/off site events



## **Mission Statement**

EquiCenter's purpose is to foster the personal growth and individual achievement of people with disabilities, veterans, at-risk youth and their families using a wide range of therapeutic equestrian activities.

## **Benefits of Therapeutic Riding**

For many years, people with special needs have been involved in horseback riding programs as a recreational activity. Only recently have the possible therapeutic benefits of horseback riding been seriously considered by instructors, therapists, and physicians. When examined closely, several nuances of the horse and its movements can be directly applied to common challenges facing individuals with disabilities.

In therapeutic riding, the horse is the instrument for change. The movement of the horse initiates passive and active movement that traditional physical therapy cannot replicate. The horses stride length and gait at the walk are almost identical to the gait of a human. The movement of the horse's pelvis is three dimensional, just like ours, it moves forward and



backward, side to side and up and down. The sensory and vestibular input that the rider receives stimulates muscles, tendons, bones and nerves. The natural movements of the horse can have a positive effect on the rider's posture, muscle strength, balance, and mobility. This movement can be especially beneficial for individuals using wheelchairs.

In addition to the physical benefits, the activities that the riders participate in can effectively teach them to handle new situations by learning to make decisions, overcome fears and frustrations, and to recognize success. Therapeutic riding also improves listening skills, eye-hand coordination, gross and fine motor skills, balance and tone. Acceptable behaviors are reinforced, and unacceptable behaviors are discouraged since the activity must be conducted in a safe manner. With the help of the horse, individuals receive dramatic improvements in physical and emotional well-being, as well as an enhanced quality of life.

Therapeutic riding is a social event. Instructors, therapists, volunteers, and riders come together to ride horses. Often the social interaction becomes just as important as the lesson itself. Riders become friends with their fellow riders, volunteers, instructors, and horses.

The riders also discover that horses are gentle, friendly, accepting animals that do not care about a disability. A human-animal bond forms and riders look forward to seeing their new friends each week. Research indicates that the resulting increase in self-esteem carries over into their everyday lives.

In addition to warm smiles and willing hearts, there are a few basic qualifications to be met by our volunteers in order for EquiCenter to conduct a safe, quality program. Volunteers should most importantly be able to function as part of the team. Because they work closely with clients, volunteers must have an understanding of and respect for behavioral, cultural, and ethnic differences. Many of our riders face considerable challenges and your support is critical.

Physical requirements are not demanding, yet they need to be addressed. Good health is important for volunteers working directly with the horses and clients. We work in varying weather and over diverse terrain. Volunteers must be able to walk and occasionally jog for an hour length class in order to work in the arena. Any special medical issues should be stated on the registration forms. Adequate vision, speech, hearing and mobility are needed for safe and effective communication between volunteers, riders and instructors. For volunteers interested in non-horse related activities, health factors should be addressed on an individual basis.

## **Volunteer Requirements**

- Volunteer must be at least 14 years of age or older with written parental consent for anyone under the age of 18.
- Appropriate forms must be completed: Release of Liability, Emergency Medical Authorization, and a volunteer data sheet.
- All volunteers must attend a volunteer training session.

## **Responsibilities**

When people decide to commit their time as volunteers, they become part of the EquiCenter Team. As such, it is important that they are on time and adhere to program policies. They should be familiar with the lesson format and be sensitive and understanding to the individual riders. To better serve the riders and maintain harmony, you are invited to request additional information or training and to ask questions. Please feel free to always seek information or assistance whenever you are unsure of a procedure.

The volunteer plays a crucial role in maintaining safety for riders, staff and the horse. Safety depends on the teammate's knowledge of where the first aid supplies, emergency phone numbers, fire extinguishers, and phones are located. Be calm and be familiar with emergency procedures.

It is very important that our volunteers set a good example for our riders in being responsive and caring to the horse at all times.

Prepared, caring and responsive volunteers form an invincible team. We all need to work together to provide the best care and attention to our students. They are the reason we are here!



# **General Volunteer Information**

## **Parking**

Volunteer parking is located on the west side of the north barn. Please use caution as the driveway to and from barn is a one lane road. The speed limit is 10 MPH and we ask everyone uses the designated pull offs when passing another vehicle.

## **Nametags**

Nametags should be worn on each visit to the farm, but they are especially important during class time.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In case of Emergency please use contact information posted by phone in the main aisle. The emergency meeting location is the picnic area, located between the driveway and pasture number 9.

## **Smoking**

For the safety, health and pleasure of all who spend time at the farm, smoking is not allowed except in personal vehicles.

## **Attire**

Due to the nature of riding activities, please wear comfortable clothing, which you don't mind getting dirty. Suitable footwear must be worn at all times. Proper footwear includes shoes that offer protection and support for walking and jogging. No open-toed shoes or sandals are permitted when working with the horses. Long pants are recommended. EquiCenter tee shirts are provided to you and we would appreciate it if you would wear them whenever the weather permits. Please do not wear low cut tops or tops that expose your midriff. Avoid dangling jewelry and clothing as they are unsafe. Avoid perfumes since they can be irritating to some participants and can attract stinging and biting insects. Wear gloves rather than mittens to allow for better grip. Remember, you are professionals and we want you to project that image.

## **Sign In/Out**

Upon arrival & departure please sign the volunteer registration log. Include your travel time and round to the nearest ½ hour. If you do any task work off property, please remember to log those hours as well.

## **Facilities**

A handicap accessible restroom is located adjacent to the indoor arena.

## **Confidentiality**

EquiCenter is bound by policy to maintain confidentiality of information regarding our students, staff and teammates. Any personal information you may become privileged to through your work must not be shared with others.

## **Communications**

Please keep all contact information current (email, telephone, address, medical changes, emergency contact, etc.). We do require you to complete an update form annually.

## **Attendance**

The objective of the program is to provide a safe and therapeutic riding lesson for our riders. Riders depend on their volunteers and it is important not to disappoint them. If a volunteer does not arrive as scheduled, the rider may not be able to ride! We realize that emergencies may come up that would cause you to miss class. In the event that we know in advance of a student's absence we will try to notify you by phone as soon as we know of the cancellation.

In the event you need to be absent the day of your scheduled lesson, please contact the barn phone at 585-624-7777. Any other schedule time that you're not able to make, you can visit [WhenToHelp.com](http://WhenToHelp.com) to remove yourself from that lesson day/time.

## How to Sign Up for Lessons

You will be assigned a username and password. Log onto [WhenToHelp.com](http://WhenToHelp.com). Click on “schedule”. Side walking positions are in the color green. Red areas indicate a “high impact” lesson. High impact is considered a partial trotting lesson. An open time slot will say “unassigned” and highlighted in yellow. If you should have any questions please feel free to contact us at 585-624-7777. You are also able to email us through WTH.

Here is a sample page on WTH:

Side Walker	Side Walker	Side Walker
3:30pm - 4pm Donna Budgeon SM Student Alex D Diana Fasanello SM Student Alex D	3:30pm - 4pm Claire DelMonte SM Student Jake -(high impact lots of trotting ) Laura Dustin SM Student Jake -(high impact lots of trotting )	3pm - 3:30pm Sally Di Poala SF Student Naomi Kathleen Jacobs SF Student Naomi
3:30pm - 5pm Miranda Latorre SM Student Toki	4pm - 4:30pm Claire DelMonte SM Student Zach H Laura Dustin SM Student Zach H	4pm - 5pm Sally Di Poala SF Student Jude Stephanie Donlon SF Student Justin N Megan Hall
5pm - 6pm Bridget Callard AE Student Paul B (high impact -lots of trotting)	4:30pm - 5:30pm Laura Dustin SM Student Jack D Judith Henderson SM Student Jack D Erin Kealy SM Student camille Lance Whitbeck SM Student camille	SF Student Jude Mary Vodicka SF Student Justin N
6:30pm - 7pm Allison Avery AE Student Gregory	5:30pm - 6pm Judith Henderson SM Student cailin Lance Whitbeck	6pm - 6:30pm (Unassigned) SF Student Joe B (high impact -lots of trotting) Mary Vodicka SF Student Joe B (high impact -lots of trotting)

## Cancellation Procedure

When the temperatures dip to **20° or below**, or it feels like **10° or below**.

When temperatures reach **90° or higher** or it feels like **95° or higher**.

All weather cancellations are according to the weather on our website at [www.equicenterny.org](http://www.equicenterny.org)

## Reasons for Volunteer Removal

EquiCenter, Inc. holds the right to dismiss any volunteers or visitors. Possible reasons for dismissal include but are not limited to:

- Any other items the instructors and staff deem to be inappropriate
- Failure to obey posted safety regulations
- More than one lesson disturbance
- Inappropriate or unsafe behavior
- Breach of confidentiality
- Two no shows / no calls for scheduled lessons

## Barn Rules and Safety

- Approach a horse at its shoulder so as not to surprise him. Speak to him when approaching so he knows that you are there. When you need to go behind or around the horse, talk to him and stroke his rump on the approach and as you walk behind. Keep your body close to him.
- Never run, make sudden movements, shout or scream around horses. Speak firmly, calmly and confidently to give the horse confidence in you.
- Never walk under a horse. Never walk under or over a tied lead rope.
- Never sit or kneel on the ground next to the horse, squatting is the safest way to work on the horse's legs.
- Riders must always wear properly fitting ASTM approved helmets, manufactured within the last 5 years, on or around the horses and while mounted.
- If the horse should step on your foot, calmly lean into his shoulder to unbalance him and cause him to move away.
- Never leave equipment (grooming or other) lying around. Whenever you get equipment out, it is your responsibility to put it away in its proper place.
- Follow posted safety procedures for emergency's (see emergency section)



## Side Walker Job Description

- Please to arrive at least 15 minutes before class time.
- Upon arrival, all volunteers must sign in and put on a nametag.
- Check the lesson boards for updates.
- Use the time before the students arrive to help prepare for class. Check in with your instructor.
- Greet your rider, then the parents/guardians. Review your rider's attire to check for appropriate and safe clothing, no dangling jewelry or clothing, etc.
- Help them fit their helmet and boots if necessary.
- Get to know your rider! If you ever feel your rider is "not himself" or have concerns, notify the instructor.
- Whenever appropriate, the riders will assist with grooming. Assist the instructor with the process and reinforce the names of the tools and proper use. Let the rider help as much as possible.
- Participate in stretching exercises with the student prior to mounting.
- The instructor will always assist in the mounting of riders. Listen for directions from the instructor for your rider to mount. When leaving the mounting ramp, remain at the rider's knee. The rider does not put his feet in the stirrups until he has left the ramp area.
- The side walker's position is at the rider's knee. The most common manual contact for riders needing stabilizing support is the "arm over the thigh hold".
- Communicate with your rider to see what pressure is comfortable yet provides the support that they need. If the rider has only one side walker, it is best for the side walker to be positioned on the rider's weaker side.
- Avoid putting a hand on the rider's back (unless told to do so). Encourage the rider to use his trunk muscles.
- During the lesson, side walkers need to reinforce the instructor's directions. When two side walkers are present, share the communication, being careful not to confuse the rider. Have the rider carry out the task to the best of his ability; allow time to process the instructions.
- The side walker should ask the rider or leader to bring the horse off the rail any time an adjustment is needed.
- Never leave your rider's side. If an object falls on the ground, ask the instructor to pick it up. If a side walker must switch sides, have one side walker always remain with the rider.
- If the rider is sliding towards you, ask him/her to correct themselves by sitting centered on the horse.
- If the riding is slipping towards you and they can't correct themselves, gently push him back to the midline using your forearm on the rider's thigh or push at the hip. Try not to pull the rider back into the midline.
- The rider remains on the horse until the instructor can assist with the dismount. If an emergency does occur where the team needs to dismount the rider, remove the rider's stirrups and take the reins away before dismounting. Hug the rider around the trunk and under the arms, and then pull the rider off and away from the horse.
- At the end of class, wait for the instructor to assist with the dismount.
- Take the rider back to the parents/guardians. Riders are your responsibility. You must stay with them at all times until they are returned to their parents/guardians. Spray with disinfectant and return rider's helmet to the storage area.

**We value your observations. The instructor cannot see all that goes on in class. Talk to your instructor after class to share accomplishments or concerns about your student's progress.**

# Manual Contact Used with Riders

To assist the rider a volunteer often has to touch the rider. Always speak to the rider first, asking permission to touch him/her and tell them the location that you will be touching. Most rider assistance can be given from the waist down. The “arm over the thigh hold” is the most widely used and should be used unless the instructor tells you otherwise.

## **Ankle Hold**

Often riders only need stabilization at their ankles. The imagery for this should be helping them wrap their leg down and around the horse. You want to avoid movements and pressure that pull the leg away. However we use a few variations of this hold. The side walker grasps the rider’s ankle from behind using the arm closest to the horse. Another option is using the hand away from the horse and crossing your midline. The last is using the hand close to the horse and applying pressure on the rider’s ankle, so your thumb runs down their heel. Each of these holds may be used for different reasons-check with your instructor and student to find out

## **Arm Over the Thigh Hold**

The volunteer uses his/her arm nearest the rider and grips the front edge or flap of the saddle in a spot that allows his/her forearm to rest on the rider’s thigh. You may press down and inward to provide greater security for the rider but will want to check with the instructor to find the appropriate level.

## **Holding the Rider’s Trunk**

Only when an emergency dismount is necessary should a side walker hold a rider’s trunk.

## **Belts**

While belts can be useful for transferring a large rider on and off the horse, they invite the side walker to hang onto it. Side walkers should not use belts unless directed to do so.

## **When the Rider is Lying Face Down Across the Horse’s Spine**

The side walker holding the rider’s legs may actually have to press downward on the rider’s thighs, just above the knees to assist the rider in feeling confident in this position. The leader should lead the horse in such a manner as to keep the rider’s head away from the wall or any objects.

## **Full Hold**

This hold is a combination of the previous two. It is used to provide the rider with “full” seat and leg support while on the horse. The hand closest to the horse braces the riders upper leg and pelvis while the outside hand crosses the side walkers midline and provides stabilization and support for the leg by suggesting with light pressure the heel goes down and the leg wraps around. Please check with your student and instructor as each individual abilities and flexibility differs. We do not want you to force the heel down- simply suggest with off and on pressure as a reminder to drop the energy down the back of the leg to stay centered on the horse.

## **When the Rider is Sitting Sideways**

Assistance will be needed to keep the rider from sliding off the horse. The side walker that the rider is facing can apply stabilization at the rider’s knees, while the side walker at the rider’s back can assist at the rider’s pelvis. It is more difficult for the rider to remain centered when they are facing the outside of the arena or circle. Slow wide turns will be necessary.

## **When the Rider is Lying Down**

### **Face Up**

Side walkers should guard the rider’s head and neck as the rider lies down, preventing too much extension or flexion in relation to the rider’s trunk. The horse’s gait should be slowed down in order to prevent excessive movement of the rider’s head

## **When the Rider is Laying Prone Facing Backwards**

Stabilization may be necessary at the trunk to keep the rider from sliding too far to one side. The horse’s speed will be dictated by the amount of movement the rider can safely tolerate as indicated by head and upper trunk movement. Watch closely for excessive or unusual movement and advise instructor.

## Horse Leader Job Description

- **The horse handler's responsibility is the horse, not the rider.** You will need to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to class time to prepare your horse for class: Locate horse, groom and tack. Only instructors and approved persons can bridle the horse and fully tighten the girth. At least 10 minutes prior to class, have your horse groomed and tacked (leave the girth less than tight) and have the bridle at hand for the instructor to put it on the horse. After tacking is completed, walk your horse in the arena to warm him up for class.
- If your rider is designated to assist in grooming, locate the side-walkers responsible for the rider and have them bring the rider to the grooming area. Be prepared with tools and equipment. Always require the rider to wear a helmet while grooming.
- The instructor always assists with the mounting of the riders.
- Pay attention to the instructor. The instructor will address the rider, but as leader you need to know the instructions too. Be calm, alert and be in charge.
- Whenever the horse is stopped, stand in front or at an angle to the horse's head to provide extra stopping power. This is during mounting, dismounting, rider exercises, emergencies...anytime the horse is stopped.
- When leading, stay between the horse's head and shoulder. Hold the lead rope with the hand closest to the horse about 12 inches from the snap. Hold the excess rope folded in your other hand. Never wrap the rope around your hand, wrist or body. Be sure that the lead rope dangles between the reins (rather than crossing over one of the reins).
- Maintain a steady pace. Avoid sharp turns or abrupt changes of pace and gait. Follow the rail unless directed otherwise. Do not cut corners.
- Maintain two horse lengths between horses.
- Allow the horse's head to point forward, not pulled toward you. This is especially important at the trot. Pulling his head toward you will make him move crookedly and cause the rider to become unevenly seated.
- Reinforce the rider's attempts to control the horse. Do not give a free ride! Sometimes this can be hard since the horse may tend to follow you. Keep an eye and ear on your rider's commands.
- Do not drag the horse along. Encourage the horse to move out (using short tugs rather than steady pull) and get the rider to help with their leg aids.
- Allow the rider time to process the information given by the instructor and to make an effort to comply...be patient.
- Be aware of the rider's uncontrollable body movements, vocalizations, and behaviors. Manage the horse to avoid problems.
- Anytime the rider or side walkers need to make any adjustments, have the rider bring the horse to the center of the arena. Avoid stopping on the rail.
- In case of any problem or general emergency not involving your horse or rider, bring the horse into the center of the arena. Stand in front of the horse and soothe him. Listen for instructions.
- If an emergency occurs with your horse or rider, such as: the rider having a seizure, the rider is falling off, the horse is frightened, or any other emergency requiring dismount: Stop your horse (turn him towards the wall as an aid for a quick stop if necessary) and stand in front of him and soothe him as the side walkers assist the rider. Remove the horse from the proximity of the rider and wait for instructions. Do not leave the horse for any reason or let go of the rope.
- After the lesson, wait for the instructor to help dismount the rider.

## Relating to a Disabled Person

Remember to be yourself. Relax and talk about mutual interests. Always speak directly to the person with the disability. Do not talk over or above the rider with a person who is with them, even if the student is non-verbal and the parents/guardian responds for them. Do not be afraid to ask the individual to repeat himself “I’m sorry I didn’t understand you, please say it again”. Some individuals may be slow to respond or accomplish a task. Be patient to allow them extra time to respond. Allow them independence to attempt the task. Do not be overly helpful. Supply assistance when asked or when the situation obviously requires it.

Realize and appreciate that a disability is only a characteristic of a person and does not define his/her entire personality. Do not feel sorry for our riders or show them exaggerated sympathy or affection. Treat the riders in an age appropriate manner and expect the same from them.

Choose words with dignity. When referring to a person with a disability, make reference to the person first, not the disability. Note the word “handicap”. This term is not a synonym for disability. A handicap describes a condition or barrier imposed by society, the environment, or one’s self. The term can be used when citing laws and situations, but not when describing a disability. For example, “The stairs are a handicap for persons in wheelchairs,” not, “Handicapped persons find it hard to use stairs”. As a general rule, please remove the word handicap from your vocabulary.



# Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

## Disability Descriptions

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

### AMPUTATION

**Loss of one or more limbs. Cause may be congenital, accidental or related to disease.**

**Characteristics:** Impaired balance; asymmetry; loss of sensation; contiguous muscle weakness.

**Benefits:** Stimulates balance; strengthens muscles; provides an alternative sport or recreation activity.

### CEREBRAL PALSY

**Brain damage occurring before, at, or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.**

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

*Athetoid:* Extensor muscle tension, worm-like movements, abnormal posturing and slow and deliberate speech.

*Ataxic:* Poor balance, difficulty with quick, free movements and are often described as having "rag doll" appearance.

**Benefits:** Normalization of tone, stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination. **Brain damage occurring before, at, or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.**

**Problems:** Seizures, hearing defects, visual defects, general sensory impairment, perceptual problems, communication problems, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, learning disabilities.

### ARTHRITIS

**Inflammatory disease of joints.**

**Types:** Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid.

**Characteristics:** Pain; lack of mobility; deformity; loss of strength.

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

### AUTISM

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

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

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



# Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

## CEREBRAL VASCULAR ACCIDENT STROKE (CVA)

Hemorrhage in brain which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.

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

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

## DOWN'S SYNDROME

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

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

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

## EPILEPSY

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

### Characteristics:

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

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

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

## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DD)

A general term applied to children functioning two or more years below grade level.

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

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

## EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES

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

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

**Benefits:** Increases feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness and provides appropriate social outlet.

## HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound.

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

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

# Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

## LEARNING DISABILITIES (LD)

**Catch-all phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving, but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills.**

**Characteristics:** Short attention span, easily frustrated, immature.

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

## MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS)

**Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts resulting in scar formation.**

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

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

## SCOLIOSIS

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

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

**Benefits:** Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles.

\*Note: Severe scoliosis is a contraindication for therapeutic riding.

## MENTAL RETARDATION (MR)

**Lack of ability to learn and perform at normal and acceptable levels. Degree of retardation is referred to as educable, trainable, severe, or profoundly retarded.**

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

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

## 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. Associated Problems: Lordosis (abnormal forward curvature of the spine in the lumbar region), respiratory infection.

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



# Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

## SPINA BIFIDA

**Congenital failure of vertebral arch closure with resultant damage to spinal cord.**

**Characteristics:** Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss. Problems: Hydrocephalus, incontinence, urinary tract infection, lordosis, scoliosis and hip dislocations.

**Benefits:** Stimulates posture and balance, improves muscle strength and self-image.

## SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI)

**Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function.**

**Characteristics:** 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, is an option for sports participation and recreation.

## VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

**Moderate to total loss of sight.**

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

**Benefits:** Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture and provides social outlets and interactions.

## TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

**Accidental injury to the head resulting in intra-cranial bleeding with death of brain cells.**

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

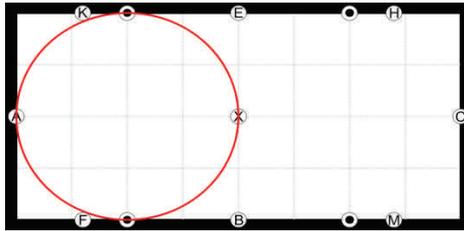
**Benefits::** Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills.



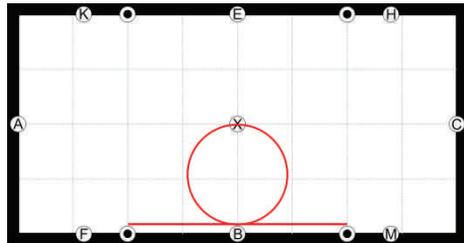
# Ring Patterns for Volunteers and Participants

As leaders or side walkers you may be asked to complete one of the following ring patterns. Here is a visual to help you better understand what we may be looking for.

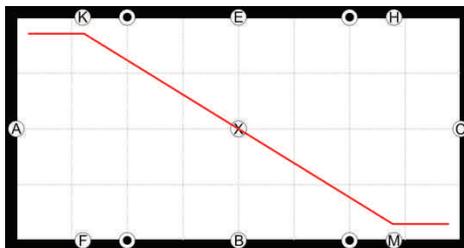
## 20-Meter Circle



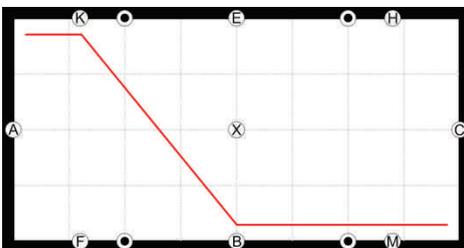
## 10-15 Meter Circle



## Changing Direction Across the Long Diagonal

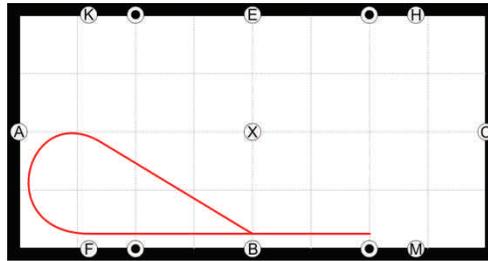


## Changing Direction Across the Short Diagonal

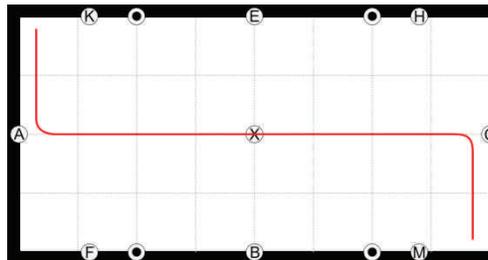


# Ring Patterns for Volunteers and Participants (cont'd)

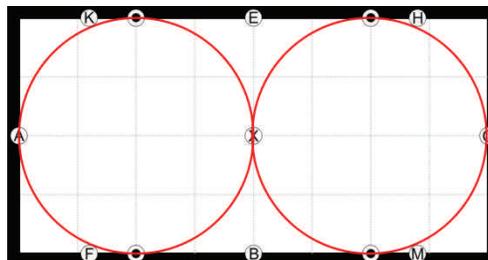
## Half Turn/Half Volte (to change direction)



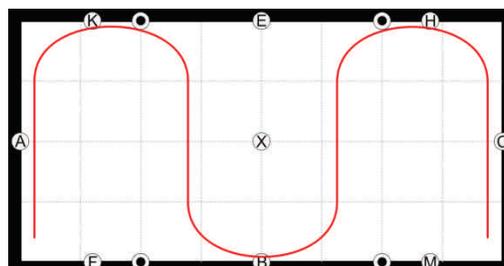
## Down Centerline



## Figure Eight



## Serpentine



# Emergency Protocol Manual

## Risk Management

Information for emergency calls is posted **on the office door**. We are located at **3247 Rush-Mendon Road, Honeoye Falls**. When in doubt, call 911!

Fire extinguishers are located throughout the barn. These locations are reviewed in your training session and are indicated by identifying signs throughout the facility and on the facility map contained in this manual.

Horses should only be removed from their stalls or paddock at the request of the instructor or designated staff member. If you are asked to relocate a horse, use a halter and lead rope.

### Seizures:

Get the instructor's attention immediately by shouting "STAFF". Only the instructor or designee is to provide first aid. If the rider is mounted, the instructor will decide whether or not to dismount the rider.

### Rider falls:

Falls from a horse are uncommon, but they can occur. If the horse spooks, do not leap or grab at a student as this may startle the horse more and unseat the rider further. If a fall occurs, all horses must stop and each volunteer attends to his/her own student or horse. The horse leader needs to move the horse away from the fallen rider.

## Risk Management Inventory

1. Natural Hazards specific to the site
2. Man-made hazards specific to the site
3. Operations of facilities and/or equipment
4. Natural Disasters
5. Hazards specific to the use of equines
6. Participant/Staff Briefing Conduct
7. Map of facility

## **1. Natural Hazards Specific to the Site, EquiCenter, Inc.**

### **Ticks/Lyme Disease**

Participants: Education on how to reduce tick bites, spray is available, avoid tall grass, recommend wearing light-colored clothing and long pants, frequent tick-checks are done

Horses: Front-line is used and horses are frequently checked for ticks. During tick season horses are monitored for symptoms of Ehrlichiosis and treated with tetracycline as vet recommended.

### **West Nile Encephalitis**

We monitor mosquito(s) and control with a repellent

We vaccinate all equines

### **Poisonous Plants/Shrubbery**

We monitor the growth of poisonous plants and avoid placing a pasture where there may be access to poisonous plants/Shrubbery

In the fall we maintain/clear pastures of leaves i.e. Maple.

### **Bee Stings**

The presence of bees are monitored, bee nests that are located near program activities are discarded. Records are maintained of personnel, participants and volunteers identifying bee allergies.

If an individual has been stung by a bee:

Remove stinger if possible/present

Put ice on area that has been strung to decrease swelling and pain/discomfort

Check records of individual

Check the individual's level of consciousness, breathing, and pulse. Call 911 if needed. Care for any life-threatening conditions i.e. epi-pen if indicated.

## **2. Man-Made Hazards Specific to the Site, EquiCenter, Inc.**

### **Hay Loft, Tall vertical staircase to hay loft and Parking Lot**

## **3. Operations of facilities and/or equipment, EquiCenter, Inc.**

### **Medical Emergency**

Only the instructor or designee\* is to provide first aid. If rider is mounted, the instructor will decide whether or not to dismount the rider. Information for emergency calls is posted **on the office door or in the first aid cabinet outside the office**. All volunteers are trained in emergency.

\*Designees may include parent/guardian or other persons with certified training

### **Farm equipment i.e. tractor and spreader**

### **Nuclear Power Plant**

## **4. Natural Disasters, EquiCenter, Inc.**

### **Fire Prevention**

Fire extinguishers are installed and tested annually by the Fire Department.

Fire extinguishers are placed throughout the facility and barn (see facility map)

All staff are instructed on the proper use of fire extinguishers

Cobweb removal is part of a cleaning routine in the barn

Smoking is prohibited

Emergency phone numbers are posted **on the office door.**

Practice fire evacuation procedures

### **In case of fire**

Clear the building: evacuate all participants, family, and guardians

Staff will assist with the evacuation and do a roll call

The designated meeting location will be in the parking lot

Notify staff of fire immediately

In case of fire call 911 and request that emergency vehicles turn off sirens as they approach the facility

If it's safe to enter the barn (a human life comes first), the staff will designate a crew to assist with evacuating the horses one at a time, starting with the most accessible

Attempt to halter horses and lead them to a paddock/secured location. Horses may want to run back into burning barns, so assure gates are securely closed. Do not turn horses loose in the indoor arena

Frightened horses may not want to leave their stalls, talk to them in a reassuring tone of voice. Use your judgment in deciding to blindfold a horse. It may help with some, and terrify others.

If a horse is unmanageable or refuses to leave stall, leave door open and move to the next horse. (if possible put on halter and leave on)

The Fire Department will evaluate when it is safe to re-enter the building

### **Power Outages**

**Run hot water off generator**

### **Ice Storm**

Horses are brought into stalls and/or indoor arena

There is more than one horse-friendly entrance in case of doors freezing

### **Excessive Snow/Freezing**

Horses are brought into stalls and/or indoor arena

Snow is removed from roof

## **4. Natural Disasters, EquiCenter, Inc. (cont'd)**

### **Cold Weather**

Avoid airtight barns, stables should be well ventilated

Maintain horse's muscle strength and flexibility with sufficient exercise

Warm the bit before putting it in the horse's mouth

After a session carefully cool down horses

Classes will be cancelled when the temperatures dip to 20° or below, or it feels like 10° or below.

Horses are blanketed at the discretion of staff – see blanket chart in feed room

Hay provides the most efficient heating fuel – go easy on the grain

### **Hot Weather**

Plan the content of riding sessions carefully, avoid repetitive movement and patterns.

Take precautions to protect horses that may be sensitive to UV rays (sunscreen, fly masks)

Lessons will be cancelled when temperatures reach 90° or higher or it feels like 95° or higher.

Have water available to participants, personnel and horses.

Consider scheduling lessons in the morning or late afternoon when temperatures might be cooler.

Consider limiting riding sessions to ½ hour.

Immediately after a session cool off your horse.

Sponge horse with cool water.

Consider cold packs for participants and personnel. Also consider fastening an ice-filled towel to the bridle's crown piece so that it rests on your horse's poll

## **5. Hazards Specific to the Use of Equines, EquiCenter, Inc.**

### **Loose Horse**

Let everybody know

Secure all areas leading to road (close gates)

Slow traffic

Identify staff to catch horse

If outside call 911 to help w/traffic

### **Horse Health/Isolation**

If quarantine needed, there are ways to separate horses

Put horses in North barn



## **5. Hazards Specific to the Use of Equines, EquiCenter, Inc. (cont'd)**

### **Excited/Spooked Horse**

If a horse becomes overexcited but rider seems able to handle the situation, the sidewalkers should place an arm across rider's thigh and grip front of saddle securely. An instructor may ask for a safety dismount. The near sidewalker handles this:

Designate the side walker that will do an/the emergency dismount. In most cases this is the volunteer walking on the inside (near center of arena) and/or tallest and strongest

Notify rider and team (other volunteers that you may be working with) that there will be a dismount

Ask rider and side walker to clear feet from the safety stirrups while the designated volunteer/staff puts his arms around rider's waist

Horse leader should stay with his mount, attempting to calm horse

(use a soft voice).

### **Rider Fall From Horse**

If the horse spooks, do not leap or grab at a student as this may startle the horse more and unseat the rider further. If a fall occurs, all horses must stop and each volunteer attends to his/her own student or horse. The horse leader needs to move the horse away from the fallen rider.

### **Horse Behavior i.e. kicking, biting, cranky**

Staff evaluation and discuss removal of horse from session or program, **refer to horse removal worksheet**

## **6. Participant/Staff Briefing/Conduct, EquiCenter, Inc.**

### **Personnel Policy**

Completes personnel training with Director of Programming

### **Participant Policy**

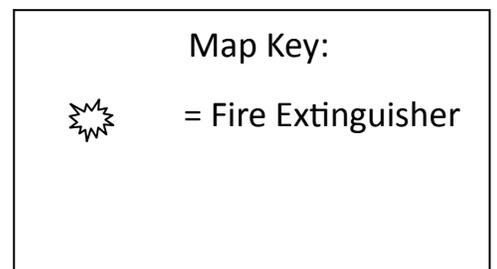
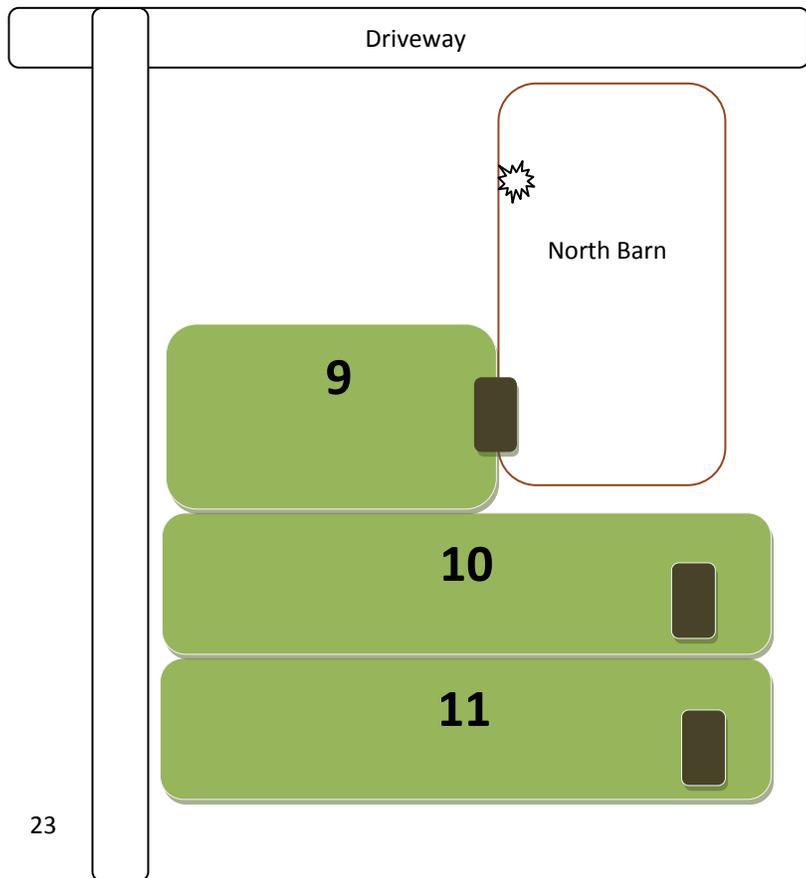
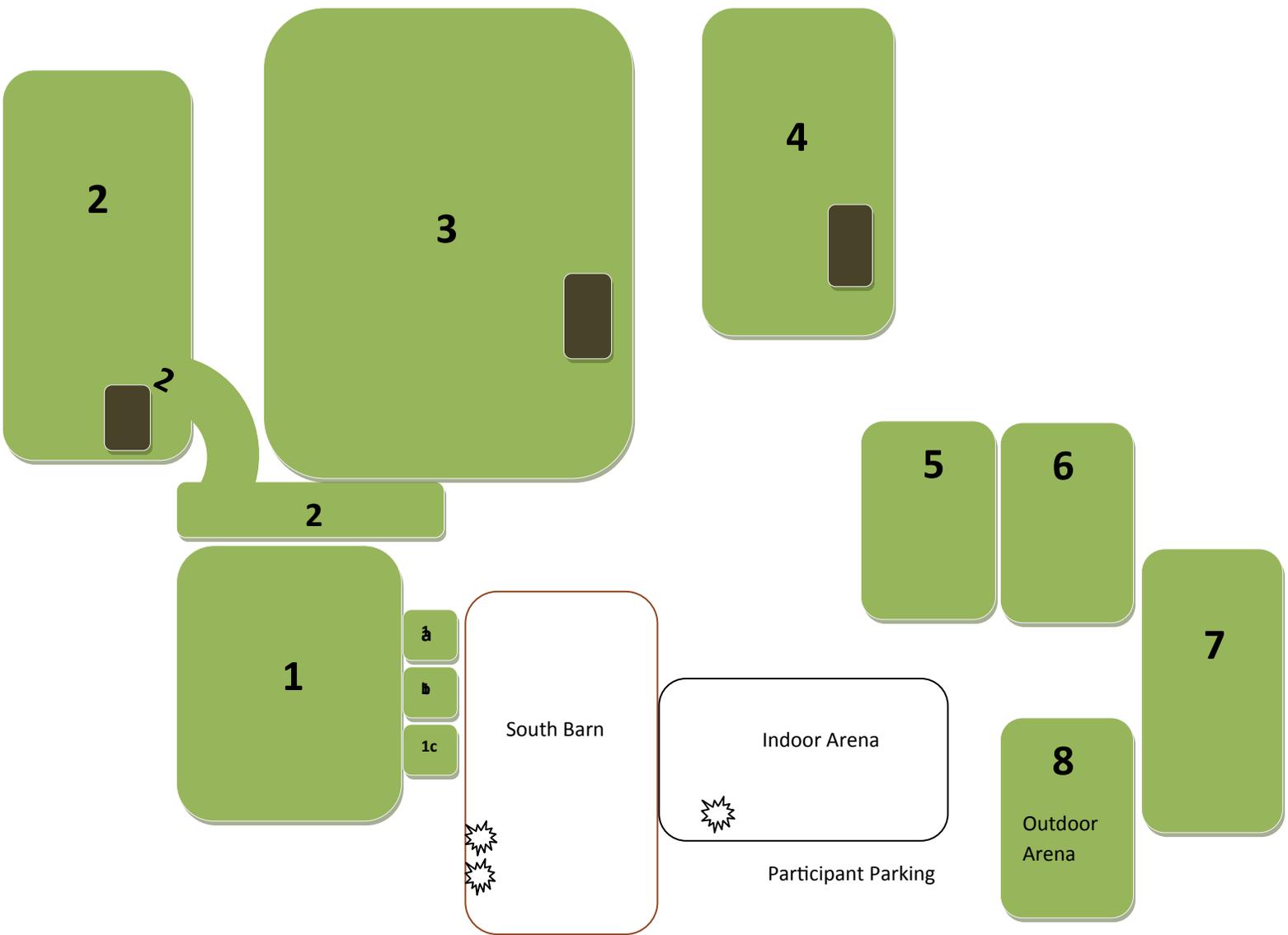
Registration forms include policies, please see registration forms

### **Volunteer Policy**

Volunteers have their own manual which they receive at the start of initial training

## **7. Map of Facility**

**(See page 23)**





## **2013 Lesson Schedule**

### **Session 1**

**January 7-February 17**

6 Week Session

**Break Week - February 18-February 24**

### **Session 2**

**February 25-March 31**

5 Week Session

**Break Week - April 1-April 7**

### **Session 3**

**April 8-June 29**

11 Week Session

**Break Week - May 27-June 2 (New Programs/Afternoon Horsemanship)**

**Break Week - July 1-July 7 (Day Camp)**

### **Session 4**

**July 8-September 1**

8 Week Session

**Break Week - September 2-September 8**

### **Session 5**

**September 9-November 24**

11 Week Session

**Break Week - November 25- December 1**

### **Session 6**

**December 2 -December 22**

3 Week Session