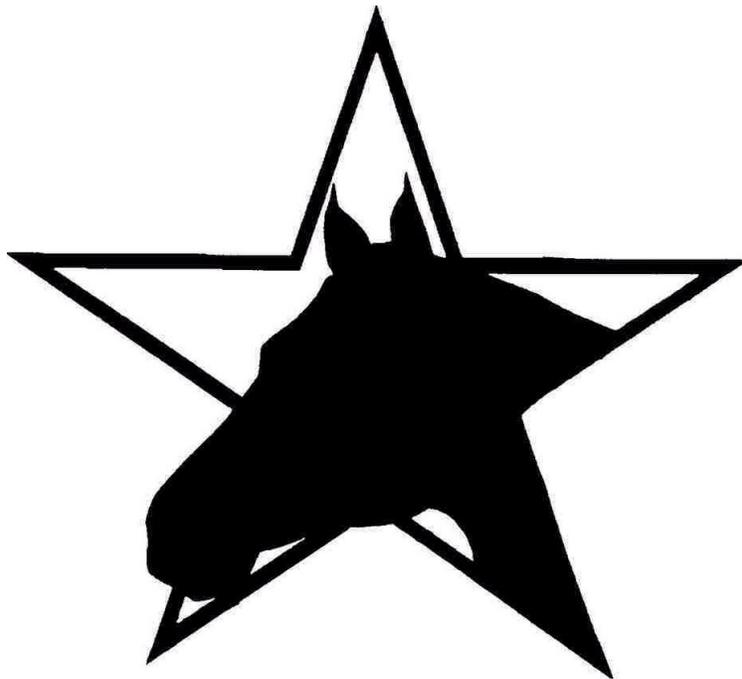


# **ALL STAR EQUESTRIAN**

# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**To improve physical, cognitive and emotional fitness through therapeutic horseback riding, equine assisted activities, and therapies.**

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## POLICY

1. No changes in the following policies are authorized without approval of the Board of Directors of All Star Equestrian Foundation (ASEF), and all changes shall be in writing and distributed to the staff. No one else is authorized to make any other representations. ASEF reserves the right to change or make exceptions to any of these policies or employee benefits at any time. This handbook is for informational purposes only and under no circumstances is it to be construed as a contract.

# **WELCOME**

The Staff and Board of Directors at All Star Equestrian Foundation would like to welcome you to our therapeutic riding program and equine assisted activities. Volunteers are the backbone of any riding program for physically, cognitively or emotionally challenged riding. Most of our students cannot ride without the support of their volunteers. While the volunteer brings enthusiasm and dedication to the purpose of a therapeutic riding program, it is the volunteer's understanding, observation and spirit of cooperation that assists in bringing the team together.

We hope to provide a volunteer team for each rider so that both the riders and volunteers can benefit from continuity and establish a lasting relationship of trust with one another. As a volunteer, you will be part of a professionally trained team. We not only have fun, but therapeutic riding done in a professional manner brings feelings of boundless joy and accomplishment for all those involved.

This Handbook is designed as a study guide during your training and as a reference after your orientation to our program. Volunteer duties, safety information, tips on working with horses and challenged individuals and specific information about All Star Equestrian are included. Whether you are attending a formal orientation or joining up after the session has begun, we ask that you carefully read through and study this Handbook and that you refer back to it throughout your stay with us.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THERAPEUTIC HORSEBACK RIDING**

Horseback riding helps cognitively, emotionally and physically challenged people improve their quality of life. Based on input from doctors, therapists, teachers and parents, the student's individual goals are designed to compliment ongoing therapy and education. The benefits of horseback riding are threefold:

**Physical** – The three-dimensional motion of the horse provides the rider with hip and back action that stimulates natural walking. Riding relaxes and strengthens muscles and improves body tone, posture, balance, joint mobility and coordination.

**Emotional** – Contact with horses and horsemanship training provides a non-confrontational setting for learning and nurtures a positive self-image. Connection with their horse fosters empathy and self-confidence. Horses are accepting of their riders regardless of social or economic status, providing a judgement free zone.

**Cognitive** – Riders benefit from interaction with both the other riders and their volunteers and may, for the first time in their lives, experience some independence and sense of being part of a team.

All Star Equestrian Foundation serves children and adults with a variety of cognitive, physical or emotional disabilities. Instructors design and monitor individualized treatment plans for each student to address their physical, emotional and social needs while they learn skills of horseback riding. Individual and class goals encourage each rider to be the best they can be, on or off the horse. Therapeutic horseback riding can be either a private, semi-private or group class.

## **THE PURPOSE OF OCCUPATIONAL OR PHYSICAL HIPPO THERAPY**

Occupational or physical Hippotherapy may use the horse's movement to improve neurological functioning in cognition, body movement organization, and attention levels to improve function off the horse. OT or PT therapy does not focus on horsemanship skills, but instead uses the horse as a treatment tool in conjunction with specific therapy goals with licensed and credentialed health care professionals. The sessions are a private one-on-one class, and the health care professional will address the hippotherapy team to assure that all members are aware of their positions and job duties before the class begins.

## **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION – A34**

### **REQUIREMENTS OF A GOOD VOLUNTEER**

Reliability – Regular attendance provides the rider with a consistent treatment program

Punctuality – Late arrive can be very frustrating to a student who has looked forward to his weekly ride – show up 30 minutes before your scheduled class. Call as soon as possible if you cannot make a class.

Physical Fitness – Volunteering in a therapeutic riding program definitely enhances physical fitness, but please be sure you are physically capable of walking for one hour, in sand, and up and down hills.

Alertness – Despite your outward relaxation, always anticipate an unexpected emergency. Notice unsafe conditions and tell a staff member.

Empathy – It is important to have empathy and genuine regard towards the riders, avoid false sentimentality

Horse Knowledge – Knowledge of horses is helpful, but many excellent volunteers have little previous experience. Horse Basics and Horse Handling and Leader workshops will be offered for those volunteer who desire to learn more.

Patience - Endless patience is necessary to adjust to the often delayed or slow movements and reactions of a challenged individual

Sensible and Comfortable clothing - Dress for the task and the day!

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Several opportunities are available for those volunteers wishing to do more than (or instead of) volunteering in the barn. If volunteering at the riding center doesn't appeal to you, but you want to promote our cause, consider volunteering for one of the "non-horsey" projects. All volunteers are encouraged to spread the word about All Star Equestrian programs to friends, clubs and organizations who might be interested in providing financial support, volunteers or riders. If you have a contact you would like us to follow up on, tell a staff member and they will get you in touch with the right person. Also, we need help in the office, feeding horses, grounds grooming,

etc. Please check with the Volunteer Coordinator if you have a special skill or desire to help out other than in the barn!

#### **HORSE RELATED OPPORTUNITIES – A34**

**LEADER** – A leader uses a halter and leadrope to lead the horse during a class. The leader is a person familiar with horses and their behavior and has gone through our leader workshops. A leader is responsible ONLY for the horse. If an incident occurs with the horse during a class, the leader NEVER lets go of the leadrope – a leader is a lifeline for a mounted challenged rider. Eligibility would include: attending Volunteer Orientation, Horse Handling, have a good knowledge of horses and horse behaviors, have a good knowledge of All Star's way of grooming, handling and tacking horses, able-bodied and in good physical condition, minimum of 14 years of age

**SIDEWALKER** – Sidewalkers are used during class to assist the rider with their balance and reining. Assistance may vary from merely walking beside the rider to fully supporting the rider on the horse. They may be asked by the instructor to use different types of handholds for support. If an incident occurs with the horse, the sidewalkers are responsible for scooping the rider off the horse. A sidewalker is responsible ONLY for the rider. Eligibility would include: attending Volunteer Orientation, possibly Horse Handling, able-bodied and in good physical condition, good knowledge of horse and horse behavior, knowledge of different handholds to use on therapy riders, minimum of 14 years of age

**CORE CAPTAIN** – A core volunteer helps train new volunteers during the session, helps, meets periodically with staff to get updates and give feedback to other volunteers. Requirements include: two-year previous volunteering with a therapeutic riding program, good working knowledge of the All Star ways to tack and groom, and knowledgeable about handholds and how to help riders during classes, Volunteer Orientation and Horse Handling, and this position is by invitation only.

**SCHOOLER** – A schooler is a volunteer that has been asked to help train, condition and exercise the therapy horses. They will pass a Schooling rider evaluation given by the Schooling Manager that shows that the schooler is capable of riding with good posture, balanced seat, sensitive hands, and is also capable of correcting a horse when needed. Each schooler should be able to correctly lunge a horse and work with problem horses as asked. Prerequisites: They should be experienced riders that are capable of performing elementary movements (leg yield, turn on the forehand, etc.), getting the horse in a round frame and bending through turns, smooth gait transitions and have knowledge of stress related problems that therapy horses endure., one to two years volunteering at All Star, 14 years of age, Volunteer Orientation, Horse Handling. If you are interested in talking more about this position, please talk to the Program Director.

**UNIFIED RIDER** – A unified rider is chosen by instructors from volunteers that express an interest in volunteering actively during class. Their responsibilities include: (1) riding in a specific therapeutic riding class, leading or riding drag as horses ride out on the trail (2) acting as an assistant to the instructor during class (3) helping to prepare the horses for class (4) verbally encouraging the challenged riders and creating a peer group for them (5) competing in eligible unified events at shows. Prerequisites: A unified rider must be 14 years of age, have good working knowledge of the All Star way to tack and groom, knowledgeable about working around horses, compassionate, and hard working, does not require previous horseback riding experience as they will receive instruction during class, Volunteer Orientation, and this class will

have a minimum fee of \$20 per class. If you are interested in this activity, please talk to the Program Director.

## **NON-HORSEY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES – A34**

If you have a special interest or ability in any of the following, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Executive Director:

FUND RAISING – Interested individuals are welcome to join any of the following committees active in meeting the financial needs of All Star's riding program. We always need volunteers to chair and staff special event committees such as Run for the Riders, Ride for the Riders, Christmas Party, Inhouse Horse Show, Pecan Festival, etc.

CORPORATE CAMPAIGN – Identify and solicit corporations and small businesses for general contributions and assist in follow-up and recognition of corporate donors.

RECRUITMENT DRIVE – Identify new personal contacts for All Star's volunteer membership drives.

FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS – Help identify foundations and/or grants with a potential for donation to All Star Equestrian Foundation.

GIFTS IN KIND – Contact vendors to donate needed items, thereby reducing All Star's program expenses

PUBLIC RELATIONS/MARKETING – Submit periodic press releases as needed. Obtain media coverage, striving for higher community visibility (at least 4 times per year). Assist in writing proposals and other written materials.

ASSORTED SERVICES/PROJECTS – Tack cleaning and repair, carpentry, painting, electrical or plumbing services, poster design, and helping keep our office clean are just some of the opportunities currently available. Workdays are held periodically, generally prior to a special event or before a session begins to give the riding center and horses a major "sprucing up".

## **GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION – A34**

### WHAT TO WEAR - A27

For safety as well as comfort, volunteers should dress in close-fitting (but not tight) clothing. Loose, floppy clothing can get tangled with equipment. Dress in layers that you can shed as you exercise, especially during cooler months. Bring a jacket and/or gloves, it is always cooler at the barn than at your home. During summer, dress in light clothing and you can wear a hat that will not fly off. Shorts may be worn, but we still recommend socks that at least cover the ankle and mid calf area because we walk through pastures. We ask that you not wear suggestive or provocative clothing (bare midriffs, extremely low necklines, sleeveless "muscle" shirts, short shorts) or shirts with questionable pictures or wording. Sunglasses are a big plus in the sunny months and sunscreen and bug spray are recommended. You will be doing a lot of walking and jogging on uneven terrain, so comfortable shoes are a must. It hurts when a horse steps on your foot, so make sure your footwear is sturdy (preferably hard-toed shoes) – no

sandals. Last, but not least, avoid perfume that attracts bees and dangly earrings and bracelets than can hamper your movements, get pulled off by a rider or distract a horse.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

We have an indoor arena, so classes are rarely cancelled. They will always be held unless there is weather that can be hazardous to drive in (snow or ice). Call if you have any doubts about two hours before the scheduled class.

### SUBSTITUTES

If it is necessary for you to miss your scheduled class, please call the office as soon as possible and let the Volunteer Coordinator know the date and time that you will be missing so that a replacement can be found. Volunteers that have available time and could come on short notice are needed to fill in when the scheduled volunteers are absent. If your schedule allows last minute changes, please let us know and we'll add your name to our substitute list.

### MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT

No one under the age of 14 is allowed to work directly with the horse and rider during a class (as a leader or sidewalker) due to our safety standards. However, youth aged 13 are welcome and will be trained as "Jr Volunteers" to clean tack, sweep the stable, groom horses, empty trash, pick up manure, move horses back and forth to pasture, and help with games during class. Jr Volunteers will be supervised by a Jr. Volunteer Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator. All Jr Volunteers must have gone through Volunteer Orientation, proven they are adequately trained to be around horses, and they must have shown a high level of awareness and safety around horses. This position is open on Saturday mornings only.

### SIGN IN PROCEDURES AND RECORDING HOURS

Your volunteer time is important to us for funding purposes and recognizing outstanding volunteers at the end of the year. Sign-in sheets are kept in the office on the Volunteer table. Please be sure to record your hours each time you arrive and when you leave. Do not include your drive time and round off your hours to the nearest quarter hour. If you work more than one class per day, record your total hours.

### HORSE HANDLERS

Horse Handlers are volunteers that have gone through the required number of Horse Handling/leader workshops. These workshops help the horse handler to become aware of special problems or issues that arise with certain horses during the year along with new safety procedures. Also, the accepted way of tacking, correcting and leading a therapy horse will be addressed. Horse behavior is emphasized and horse handlers are encouraged to study non-resistance training. Also, a horse handler is expected to know the correct ASEF way to perform grooming, tacking, leading and sidewalking. After completion, the staff will let you know if they would like for you to attend one more session of Horse Handling or if you will start getting assigned as a Leader.

### SAFETY RULES

- smoking is **NOT** allowed on the premises, except in designated areas only
- all children below the age of 14 must be supervised by an adult when on the premises
- instructors and volunteers should **NOT** bring children or animals into the class arena
- all riders and volunteers must wear approved safety helmets when mounted
- only authorized personnel (instructors, volunteers with current signed releases and staff) are allowed in the arena

- volunteer must pay attention to their horse and rider at all times. Do not leave your position when assigned a horse and/or rider
- Only authorized personnel are allowed in restricted areas. All other people are asked to not go in surrounding pastures, pond area, equipment shed, hay barn, stalls, all areas fenced for horses, observation deck, storage rooms.
- Cell phones and/or pages **ARE NOT** allowed in the arena area. Please go outside to use your phones
- Observe and obey all safety signs posted

### DO VOLUNTEERS EVER GET TO RIDE?

This is a question many volunteers ask! Because we focus on the needs of our challenged riders and providing a meaningful experience for them, offering lessons or riding time to our many volunteers would be a strain on the horses and staff. The staff will try to offer periodic horseback riding lessons for volunteers throughout the year. However, experienced volunteers willing to donate their expertise and ability are eligible for schooling horses.

### INCIDENT REPORTS – A24

Incident reports must be filled out each time an incident occurs that occurs that could involve the safety of a participant, staff, personnel or equine during the course of a therapeutic riding class or daily routine. It is the responsibility of the staff present to determine the severity of the occurrence and if it needs to be recorded. Forms are available in the office. If an incident occurs within a class you are volunteering in, you will be asked to either write the report or sign as a witness.

### GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

- Volunteers are to assist the riders with the appropriate services in a way that does not compromise or endanger the rider's physical or emotional health. If a threat to a rider's health is observed, the volunteer should contact an All Star staff member immediately.
- Volunteers are to keep all rider information confidential and may not discuss or make any written reports without the prior approval of the Program Director. Volunteers are not to use the last name of the rider at any time.
- Volunteers are to abide by the volunteer policies, conduct and procedures as outlined in this Handbook, cooperate fully with the Staff and are open to their guidance.
- Volunteers are to represent All Star in a positive manner to the larger community and not represent the agency in any capacity while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Volunteers are not to sexually harass riders, staff or other volunteers. This includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including comments or jokes of an "off color" nature. Be aware of who you may offend and set a good example for others.

# THE THERAPY RIDING LESSON

## PREPARING FOR CLASS

It is important to arrive 30 minutes' prior class time to help groom and tack the horses. Some of our riders come early to help out with your assistance, and it is especially important that you are timely.

- Record your arrival time in the Volunteer sign-in book and get your nametag
- Check the Daily Schedule on the tack room door for horses and tack to be used. If the Daily Class Schedule specified "HH (or Horse Handler)" beside the horse, only volunteers that have gone through the appropriate workshops should groom or handle those horses.
- Look at the pictures of the horses that need to be brought in the arena, get a halter and leadrope, catch up the horse and tie it to the inside arena wall at a "star" with a safety knot. If the horse has "HH" beside it, tie that horse up to the wall furthest from the tack room, all other horses can be tied up to the wall closest to the tack room.
- Do not duck under the neck of a horse when tied
- Do not kneel by the horse, it is too hard to get out of the way quickly if the horse gets startled

## GROOMING

Grooming keeps the horse's coat clean and healthy, eliminates dirt, dried sweat and loose hair that can irritate the horse under the tack. Grooming also stimulates nerve endings of the skin and helps to relax and warm up the muscles. Also, this is a good chance to check the horse for any injuries before the ride. Please alert the staff if you notice any injuries.

The rubber currycomb is used, if needed, in a circular motion on neck and body to loosen dried mud and/or dirt and stimulates skin. DO NOT use on face or on areas where bone can be felt. DO NOT use if horse is wet. If horse is wet and muddy, rinse off before comb or brush.

The body brushes (stiff or soft) are used in long, sweeping strokes on neck, body and legs. Stroke the direction that the hair grows. Use the stiff brush first to remove loosened debris, then follow with the soft brush to polish coat with short strokes. DO NOT brush a wet, muddy horse. Rinse off before brushing.

### Mane/Tail Brush

Stand to one side when grooming tail to avoid getting kicked. Start at the bottom and work up. Brush tail carefully to avoid pulling out long hairs. Show Sheen can be used to detangle the hair.

The hoof pick is used to remove any debris or stones embedded between the sole or shoe and the frog (the sensitive V-shaped pad in the center of the foot)

## CLEANING THE HOOF

Always clean the hooves in the same order – (1) the left fore, (2) left rear, (3) right rear and finally (4) the right fore. To lift the horse's foot, run your hand from the elbow down his leg to just above the hoof and squeeze slightly. The horse will usually lift his hoof. While holding the hoof, run the pick from the heel toward the toe. Place hoof back on the ground instead of just

dropping it. If you are uncomfortable cleaning the hoof, please ask for assistance from the instructor or a Volunteer Captain.

### SADDLING THE HORSE

- Check the Daily Schedule to see what tack the horse needs. Pull the saddle, pad, bridle and reins and put on the wall on the near side (left side) of the horse.
- Position the pad correctly on the horse, and then lift and position the saddle gently onto the horse's back
- Go to the offside and check to make sure none of the saddle is twisted underneath and let the girth down and size it
- Go to the nearside again and facing the back of the horse, reach under and get the girth
- Run the long latigo through the loop of the girth and loop on the saddle until 2 fingers can fit snugly under the girth at the lowest part of the barrel. Leave your left hand under the loop/girth as you tighten with your right hand to avoid hair/skin becoming pinched with the leather. This is Phase I of tightening the girth – tighten just enough to keep saddle on.
- Pull the bridle and reins asked for on the Daily Schedule and hang them over the horn (Bridles and reins are never put on the horse when tied to the wall)

### BRIDLING THE HORSE

After the leader is asked to get their horse and lead to the middle of the arena, call for a staff person to bridle (with a bit) the horse. If the horse is wearing a sidepull, it is okay to go ahead and put that on. Put the crown piece in your right hand and with your left hand spread the lower piece apart. Putting your right hand above the ears, lower the bridle and put the muzzle in the lower part by pulling up slightly. Put the right ear in first and then the left in the crown/brow band area. Go ahead and put on the reins also.

## **CLASS TIME**

### LEADER GUIDELINES – only to work with horse - A34

- When asked, lead your horse to the middle of the arena
- Check tack and re-tighten the girth if needed (Phase II). Tight enough for mounting!
- Lead to the mounting area when asked, and position the horse as closely to the block, ramp as possible
- Hold the lead rope about 12 inches from the snap to allow for the natural motion of the horse's head. Hold extra rope in left hand, doubling the excess back and forth across your palm. Never wrap it around your hand. Right hand with rope should be beside Horse's jaw.
- When asked, after rider says "walk on", you say "walk on" and lead on the left side of the horse, walking beside horse's jaw.
- Please watch your distance between horses when on the rail, try to maintain two horse lengths between horses
- Make turns softly and avoid sudden moves. Allow space for sidewalkers when next to a fence or obstacle.
- When the horse is stopped, turn and face the horse's head. Allow the horse to move his head and stretch, but keep him quiet and calm by softly speaking to him.
- To halt, say "whoa" and give the horse time to respond before pulling the leadrope. If the horse does not respond, pull back slightly on the lead and then release. Do not stand in front of the horse and try to stop him with your body.

- Students are urged to control their horses to the maximum of their abilities. A horse leader must never take the place of the student, but should be there to assist as directed to keep the horse in control. Check with the instructor before the lesson regarding your rider's level of ability in controlling his mount.
- When the rider is able to rein, allow a little more slack in the lead so that you will not influence the horse unless this becomes necessary for safety reasons.
- When changing pace, have the horse follow your pace rather than you following the horse's pace. Move from a walk to a fast walk into a trot and then down from a trot to a fast walk to a walk. This will make the transition smooth and will not throw the rider off balance.
- Never discipline a horse while a rider is mounted. Do not constantly say "NO" and "stop that!". It will make your rider feel that you do not have control. You need to learn a subtle and firm way of controlling your horse.
- If the horse should suddenly shy or pull, you might accidentally release the lead in your right hand, but maintain contact with your left hand on the end of the lead rope to control your horse. Reach again with right hand as soon as able. When a rider is mounted on the horse, never totally let go of the lead under any circumstance.
- When the lesson is finished and the rider dismounts, take the bridle and reins off and hang on the horn before tying to wall. Then take the horse to the appropriate wall and tie with a safety knot. Take the tack off, put up in the tack room, and take the horse back to his pasture.

#### SIDEWALKER GUIDELINES – Only to work with rider – A34

The sidewalker(s) help the rider with balance and reinforce instructions during the lesson. If there are two sidewalkers, whoever is most familiar with the rider should clarify the instructions. Too many people talking at once it is confusing.

- Check to see that your rider is prepared to ride before class. If he doesn't have on a helmet, help him fit one to his head or let the instructor know.
- There are different methods of support for each rider, and the instructor will let you know what to do at mounting – over the thigh, holding onto the gait belt, holding onto the heel of the boot or stirrup, spotting, etc.
- If a rider has a leader and one sidewalker, the sidewalker should walk on the offside.
- Observe the rider with your front or side vision at all times. Never become so relaxed that you are not totally aware of the rider, horse, leader, instructor and activities around you.
- Be sure not to lean on the horse or rider (elbows in the horse's loin area, leaning on the horse when halted, leaning on the rider's leg, etc) as this can unbalance the rider or irritate the horse.
- Don't pet the horse or touch in any way during a class
- Listen to the instructor's directions so you can be ready to reinforce when necessary, but allow the rider plenty of time to process the information before you begin to assist. For example, if the instructor says, "Pull the right rein towards me", and the rider seems confused, after a few seconds simply tap the right hand and say "Right".
- If the rider is unable to rein by themselves, take the hand holding the rein and help the rider do the correct rein.
- Talking to the rider while having a lesson is not recommended since it interferes with the communication between the rider and the instructor. Many disabled riders have difficulty focusing on instruction, so all talking should be kept to a minimum.

- Refrain from talking to the other sidewalker or leader during a lesson unless it has to do with the rider or rider's position. Any unnecessary talking distracts the rider, shows disrespect for the riding lesson and diverts the attention of the team.

## MOUNTING PROCEDURES

During mounting, leaders hold horses in the middle of the arena, while sidewalkers stay with the riders. Extra volunteers can make sure the rider's helmet fits correctly, then wait (in designated rider area) to be called into the arena by an instructor. The instructor conducts mounting, volunteers assist as directed.

There are three types of mounting:

Ramp mount – used for riders using wheelchairs or otherwise not able to climb  
The block. Also used for backrider mounts.

Block mount – used for the majority of our riders. Allows riders higher access  
To the stirrup, and it is an easier mount on the horse.

Ground mount – Our least used mount. We prefer to use the block or ramp because  
It is easier on the horse's back.

When using the mounting ramp or block, the leader should:

1. Approach ramp or block in the direction requested by the instructor, stop before entering ramp or block area until instructed to walk on, and then enter while turning to face the horse upon entering mounting area
2. Position horse close to the side from which mounting takes place
3. Do not put pressure on the lead rope; this may cause the horse to back up. If the horse should back up, DO NOT PULL, simply release pressure on the lead and go with him – he will stop
4. Allow the horse to relax, holding him quietly and not restricting his head
5. Once the rider is mounted and the cue is given by the instructor AND rider to "walk on", guide the horse out and along the mounting ramp slowly and quietly while still facing him. Once the horse is clear of the ramp or block, the instructor will give the command "halt" for final adjustments. Sidewalkers join the rider so that support can be given while instructor adjusts stirrups. The instructor will check the girth and tighten. Phase III of tightening the girth.
6. Lead the horse slowly and quietly from the mounting area once the rider and/or instructor has said "walk on".

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

1. Position yourself on the offside of the horse when asked.
2. Push down on stirrup to offset the weight of the rider, and assist with bringing rider's right leg over the saddle if needed. Instructor will tell you what handhold or support the rider needs.

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|---|
| MOUNTING IS ONLY DONE BY THE INSTRUCTOR OR BY SOMEONE SPECIFICALLY TRAINED IN APPROVED MOUNTING PROCEDURES. |
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## GUIDELINES DURING CLASS

Leaders and sidewalkers should work together as a team. Keep conversation very minimal so that the rider can listen to the instructor's directions

Sidewalkers should aid the rider as directed by the instructor, and walk beside the rider's stirrup (not behind or in front of).

Keep a safe distance from other horses. Maintain a safe distance between your horse and the horse in front of you. You can pass, circle or cut across arena to get more distance.

Sidewalkers should always stay with their rider. If you need to be excused, let instructor know so that they can find another sidewalker.

Leaders should stand in the correct position for:

Halt – on the side and facing the horse's jaw area. Don't hold the horse too tight, this is a good time for the horse to relax

Walk On – Facing forward

Back – face toward the back of the horse when asking a horse to back

Leader should avoid quick movements:

Circles – large circles to avoid throwing rider off balance

Transitions – Smooth transitions to avoid throwing rider forward or back

Ask the leader to stop and call the instructor if:

The rider is off balance and cannot regain it while horse is moving

The saddle pad has slipped or the girth is loose

The stirrups need adjusting

The rider's helmet needs to be adjusted

The rider is fatigued, in pain or needs to stop for other reasons

You need to change sides or are having some difficulty and cannot carry out your job in comfort. When changing sides, have one volunteer change sides at a time so that you never leave the rider unsupported

Be patient with your riders; give them time to respond, to try, and to do the task. The rewards, no matter how small or large, make your volunteer work very worthwhile. Without volunteers, we would have a tough time making this program a reality.

## RIDER COMING OFF THE HORSE

Falls off a horse are rare, but they can happen. Don't panic! The leader of that horse should hold the horse quietly. If the rider is near the horse's legs, don't allow the horse to move forward until the instructor removes the rider. After the rider is clear, the leader should walk the horse slightly away and halt. The instructor will assess the rider and will call for help if needed. If there are sidewalkers, please avoid tending to the rider until the instructor has assessed the rider. The other leaders and sidewalkers in the class will walk to the other side of the arena and continue walking and tending to their own rider and assuring them that everything is alright. If the rider is able, the instructor will remount and finish the class.

## AFTER CLASS

The leader or rider may lead the horse back to the tiedown on the rail. If the rider leads the horse, the leader should assist as instructed by the instructor.

### Leader responsibilities

1. Remove bridle and reins in the middle of the arena (or have instructor remove), hang on horn or saddle.
2. Return the horse to the appropriate rail and tie lead rope with a safety knot. Tie horses on the rail on ties above the stars
3. If the horse is not to be used with same tack again, remove saddle, brush the saddle area (or rinse in hot weather in the vet rack) and pick out hooves
4. Return equipment to the tack room. Bridles and saddles are to be put back in numerical order and blankets hung on the rack
5. If the horse is not to be used again, take him to the appropriate pasture
6. Be sure to record the time that you leave

### Sidewalker responsibilities

1. After dismounting, take your rider back to the helmet area to put away the helmet
2. Return rider to parents or guardians and help put up any tack they may have
3. Assist in untacking and grooming the horse
4. Be sure to record the time when you leave

## **GETTING TO KNOW THE CHALLENGED RIDER**

### GENERAL APPROACH AND INTERACTION

It is important to remember that every child or adult is an individual and wants to be treated with that understanding regardless of having a disability or not. Each has his own learning rate, style of learning, unique personality and temperament. One must always look beyond the disability into the person and provide them an enriched experience with warmth and a favorable environment in which to learn and grow. All people disabled or not, want to feel that they are not different from the rest of their fellow man.

### HOW TO RELATE TO THE CHALLENGED PERSON

Being around challenged people may be a new experience for you. You may be overwhelmed at first with things you have never seen or do not understand. This is natural for most people, and allow yourself time to get used to being around a person who is disabled. At first, you may want to do jobs which are not in direct contact with the riders. Feel free to talk with a staff member about this. This is a common problem, and if working directly with the riders is a hardship for you, consider helping All Star in some other way.

### SUGGESTIONS TO HELP YOU RELATE TO A PERSON WITH DISABILITIES

- Relax. Let the rider put you at ease if you do not know what to say
- Explore mutual interests in a friendly way. If the rider is verbal, ask about their horse and find out how verbal they are
- Speak directly to the person with the disability. Your attention should be to them and not to someone around him. Do not talk to an adult like they are a child.
- Children and adults will be glad to talk about themselves – tv shows, movies, sports, food, etc

- Offer assistance when asked or when the situation obviously requires it. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist up on helping when they are managing alone.
- Do not hinder the rider's ability to expand their skills and independence even when their movements may appear awkward to you
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to accomplish something or respond to something. Be patient
- Do not be afraid to say to either a child or adult, "I am sorry I cannot understand you, please say it again".
- Talk to each rider on his own level. Avoid the tendency to talk differently than you normally do (child-like talk, too sternly, too slowly or loudly). Even though a rider may appear very challenged physically, they may be very sharp mentally. Don't talk down to a rider or baby talk them. Use your normal tone of voice as if you were talking to any other able bodied person that age.

## **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**

PEACOCK STIRRUPS – Safety stirrups are used for some of our riders. The rubber bands face toward the front when saddling and to the outside when the rider is mounted. If a rider does not have appropriate shoes, they may use a safety stirrup. There are also other types of safety stirrups – “s” shaped, Devonshire, breakaway, hoop and many more.

### WESTERN STIRRUPS

Western stirrups may be used as long as they are 2” wide and hard soled shoes or boots are worn with a heel

### ANTI CAST

The anti cast provides a solid handhold for riders who are riding only with a blanket. It is used with one blanket and positioned over the withers.

### BREASTCOLLAR

This piece of equipment is sometimes used to keep the saddle in position and from slipping back. An instructor will help you properly fit and place the breastcollar.

### BAREBACK PAD

This pad is used primarily with the anti cast. An additional western type saddle pad should be used beneath the bareback pad for extra protection. There are several kinds-fleece, suede, etc.

### HALTER

The halter is used under the bridle for our riders. We keep a halter under the bridle for safety and so that the leader's commands are less likely to interfere with the rider's instruction.

### HANDHOLD

A leather strap that is attached to the front of the saddle and is used by the rider as an aid for balance

### HELMET

Necessary to ride – All helmets are ASTM approved and fitted to each rider.

### MOUNTING RAMP

Used by wheelchair riders and/or other riders to get to a level where the transfer from the chair to the saddle is much easier. Riders unable to climb stairs also use the ramp.

### MOUNTING BLOCK

Used by riders that are able to climb stairs. The block puts a rider at a level that is much easier to put their foot in the stirrup for mounting

### SAFETY KNOT

Horses must be tied to the wall with a safety knot. Please check with staff or a Core Volunteer if you need assistance.

### GAIT BELT

This is a wide belt worn around the rider's waist. The sidewalkers can help the rider maintain balance by supporting at the waist and/or lower back.

### PILLOW

Usually a "u" shaped pillow that is used to help the rider maintain a certain position on the horse. There are various sizes.

### RAINBOW REINS

Multi colored reins that our riders use to assist them in learning where to hold the reins and how tight to hold the reins

### RUBBER BANDS

Large rubber bands that are used to sometimes band a rider's foot into the stirrup. They easily release if the rider must be pulled off for any reason.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES – A25**

### Plan 1 (Major Injury)

1. The instructor appoints someone to:
  - A. telephone the emergency number and read directions to the facility that are hung beside the telephone
  - B. remain at the barn area to direct emergency vehicle and reassure people in the arena
  - C. get the Emergency Medical Release form of the rider out of the file and give it to Instructor
2. The instructor appoints volunteer to:
  - A. go to the road and wait for the emergency vehicle to arrive
  - B. advise drive to stop siren and have lights and sirens turned off so the horses will not be frightened
  - C. tell the driver where the accident is and how to get there
3. Instructor will decide who will remain with the grounded rider and who will take class to the safest confined area away from the accident
4. The class will continue in an orderly manner or return to the barn

### Plan 2 (Minor Injury)

1. The needs of the individual should be met, i.e., Band Aid, ice, taken in or out of the heat, etc.
2. If the injured is a rider, have the horse taken back to the barn and properly attended to
3. If the person in need can not walk, have a car or vehicle driven to the area
4. The rest of the class should continue in an orderly manner

FIRST AID KIT – Located in the Foyer of the bathroom/storage room, and a portable kit is located in the office

|                              |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Antiseptic Spray             | Antiseptic ointment             |
| Blood clotter                | Telfa pads                      |
| Band Aids                    | Finger tip bandages             |
| Eye and skin neutralizer     | Instant ice packs               |
| Non stick pads               | Scissors                        |
| Alcohol swabs                | Hydrogen peroxide               |
| Non stick sterile pads       | Gauze bandages                  |
| Triangular bandages          | Caladryl                        |
| Aloe vera gel                | Sterile multi trauma compresses |
| Disposable emergency blanket | Compress dressing               |

## **RISK MANAGEMENT – A26**

### **NATURAL HAZARDS SPECIFIC TO SITE**

1. Ants – Periodically apply granules to mounds in the pasture or in the feed room as needed
2. Mice – Barn cats monitor the feed room and barn during the evening hours. Mice bait is put in the attic, feed room, storage rooms to prevent infestation. Report any problems to the Staff
3. Flies – Fly spray is mixed as needed and always available to spray on horses at grooming
4. Snakes – Occasional sighting. Dog, cat and roadrunner population help dispose of snakes in the area. Report sightings to Staff and they will dispose of any in the barn area.
5. Poisonous Plants – Staff keeps watchful eye in the pasture and removes bothersome or Poison Control hotline telephone is 1-800-764-7661 if there are any questions. If you come in contact with any of the above and have a reaction, wash and get help.
6. Wasps/Bees – During warmer months, wasp and bee nests are sprayed to destroy eggs. Wasp/bee spray is kept in feed room and office. Please report sightings of nests to Staff.
7. Wild animals – Wild animals are occasionally sighted and heard during the night (coyotes, bobcats, etc), but the donkey and dog population usually scares off any predators. There have been no problems with coyotes or other wildlife attacking horses in the pasture. If a wild animal is observed, please inform the Staff and call Animal Control at 1-800-481-0315.
8. Trees/branches down – Volunteers and staff have periodic work days to fell dead trees and branches that are susceptible to high winds and dispose of them.

### **MANMADE HAZARDS SPECIFIC TO SITE**

1. Fencing – Fencing is maintained by the staff and crew hired by All Star.
2. Roads through center – Roads are graded and ruts filled in by volunteers and staff of both All Star.
3. Preparing and Maintaining arena flooring – Flooring is watered one to two times per week and disked afterwards or as needed by All Star staff.
4. Chemical Spills – If a chemical spill occurs, please notify the hotline for cleanup instructions at 1-800-424-8802.

### **OPERATION OF FACILITIES AND/OR EQUIPMENT**

1. Tractor and other Farm Equipment – All Star staff, volunteers are responsible for maintaining farm equipment, and only authorized people are allowed to drive the farm equipment. Signs posted.

2. Tack – Staff is responsible for periodic tack checks, usually between each semester. If you observe any broken or worn tack, please bring it to the attention of the staff. Cleaning of tack is done at least quarterly or as needed.
3. Electrocution – See Emergency Medical Treatment
4. Loss of electricity – Flashlights are located in office and feed room.
5. Loss of water – If the water company was contacted and there was to be a prolonged delay in repairing water line, stock can be watered at the tank located on the property.

## **DISASTERS**

1. Fire – (1) Call 911 for Fire Department. If classes are in arena, leave immediately.  
(2) Move mounted riders and horses to the nearest gate exit. (Round Pen, or Pen 3/Pen 4) and congregate in either round pen or Pen ¾.  
(3) Volunteers, families and other personnel are to accompany riders  
(4) Instructor may choose to dismount riders (in pens). Do not re-enter arena until safe to do so
2. Flood – (1) Move all horses to upper ground (indoor arena or upper pasture), or arrange transport to another location. (2) Call and cancel classes. If a flash flood occurs during class time (1) if any riders are mounted, remove the rider and take to higher ground (inside arena aisle) and volunteers and other personnel are to accompany riders (2) if there is no imminent danger remove tack and leave horses in indoor arena. Occasionally there is a flash flood in lower pasture (1) remove pasture horses to higher ground (upper pasture), (2) count the horses to see if they are all there (3) if not, begin to check the wash on the east side of FM 2738 to see if they were washed downstream. (4) Call the vet as needed.
3. Tornado – Preferred shelter is in either the Tack Room or the Storage Room off main aisle. (1) if classes are in session – remove riders from horses and walk/carry to one of the shelter rooms (2) rider families, volunteers and staff are to accompany riders (3) volunteers are to leave horses (still tacked) in indoor arena, (4) instructors will take bridle off and, if time, the rest of the tack. (4) Afterwards, staff will check for loose electric lines and any damage before people leave shelter area.
4. Hurricane – Usually, there are no hurricane effects this far North, we have adequate time to prepare (1) prepare for shortages of potable water or feed for the horses (2) if high winds or storms are forecast, cancel classes (3) Tie down all loose material that may harm either people or horses
5. Earthquake – If classes are in Arena, dismount and leave immediately.  
(1) Move mounted riders and horses to the nearest gate exit. (Round Pen or Pen 3/Pen 4)  
(2) Volunteers, families and other personnel are to accompany riders  
(3) Instructor may choose to dismount riders (in pens). Do not re-enter arena until safe to do so.

## **RIDER SELECTION AND DISMISSAL**

### Guidelines for Admission

Some guidelines for accepting riders into the program are:

Age (riders must be 2 years of age to begin)

Registrations are received in a timely manner

Rider has either a physical, cognitive or emotional disability and the disability is not contraindicated (PATH precautions should be noted and studied)

No riders over 200 lbs

There must be staff and volunteers adequate for class

An appropriate horse must be available

Appropriate tack/equipment/helmet must be available

Current ANNUAL paperwork on each rider and a current physician signed medical form

### Conduct for dismissal or reprimand

Some reasons for dismissal from the program or dismissal for behavior modifications may be:

Unruly behavior (flailing arms, hitting, cursing, talking back, etc)

Abusive behavior to personnel (hitting, biting, spitting, etc.)

Abusive behavior to horse (hitting, pulling hair, pinching, kicking, etc) which could cause the horse to react in such a way that could cause bodily harm to the rider or volunteers

Inappropriate behavior or contact (if the rider is constantly trying to touch volunteers or staff inappropriately)

Disruptive to class (constantly screaming or crying and a private class is not available)

Frequent absence or tardiness (TRiding is not effective if not done consistently, and if a rider is more than 15 minutes late 2 or more times per session, it holds up the class and affects the other rider's class time, or volunteers come in for no reason because the rider does not show)

When the benefit of therapeutic riding does not outweigh the risk

When physical limitations of the rider outweigh the strength of the volunteer force, etc.

The Program Director would be responsible for evaluating these reports and making the decision to dismiss a rider.

### Grievance Process

If the Program Director receives a written grievance due to unruly behavior or abusive behavior on one of the therapeutic riders at All Star (verified and witnessed by staff), the PD will then:

- a. Give a verbal warning to the rider and their family, including suggestions for specific steps for improvement. The written grievance will be placed in the riders file
- b. If the issue is not resolved, the PD will issue a written warning to the rider and their family, including additional steps for corrective measures. A copy of the warning should be placed in the riders file.
- c. If verbal and written warnings fail to correct the issues, the rider may be dismissed.
- d. All Star reserves the right to dismiss a rider without verbal or written warnings if it is deemed appropriate.

### How to deal with unruly conduct

The instructor will be responsible for deciding how unruly conduct will be addressed in their class, and the instructor may call additional staff for assistance if the rider is showing violent behavior if dismounting is necessary. The following methods may be used:

Timeouts

Remove rider from horse and/or class

Place rider in private class

Remove rider from class until unruly behavior is modified (support may be asked of guardians or staff)

## **VOLUNTEER AND GUEST DISMISSAL**

### Volunteer Conduct for Dismissal

Some of the reasons volunteers may be dismissed from a therapeutic riding program are:

Inappropriate behavior (intoxication, inappropriate touching of riders or other volunteers, loud and unruly behavior, abusive behavior to rider, horses or other volunteers, or lack of knowledge of horses which could result in bodily injury, etc.)

In the event of misconduct by a volunteer, the following process will be followed by the PD in order to provide the opportunity for corrective action:

- a. a verbal warning will be given to the volunteer, including specific steps for improvement. Documentation of the warning will be placed in the volunteers file

- b. if the situation does not improve, a written warning will be given to the volunteer, including additional steps for corrective measures. A copy of the warning will again be placed in the volunteers file.
- c. If verbal or written warnings fail to correct performance, the volunteer will be discharged
- d. All Star reserves the right to discharge a volunteer without verbal or written warnings if it is deemed appropriate given the serious nature of the violation.

### Guest Dismissal

If a guest's behavior is disruptive, loud, inconsiderate or distracting, or deemed to be causing a safety issue for classes, the following process will be followed by the Program Director:

- a. a verbal warning will be given to the guest asking to refrain from such behavior
- b. if the conduct continues, the guest will be asked to leave the premises. A staff member will approach the guest (always with another staff member) and never alone.
- c. if the guest refuses to leave the premises, the Johnson County Sheriffs office will be called to assist in removing the guest from the premises at 817-558-0022.
- d. It should be pre-arranged that if a staff member approaches a guest/rider/volunteer/family member that is violent, abusive or deemed dangerous in any way, there should be another staff member observing from office or further away that can be signaled for additional help if necessary.

## **POLICY ON ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Although we do not anticipate problems with abuse or neglect of our riders, agencies that fund our riders are requiring that our staff and volunteers be trained and demonstrate competency on the safe management of verbal and physical abuse or neglect. For that reason, we are including the following information on the various forms (or classes) of abuse and neglect and the resulting disciplinary action.

### **CLASS I**

Any act of failure to act done knowingly, recklessly, or intentionally, including incitement to act, which caused or may have caused serious injury to a rider or volunteer. Without regard to injury, any sexual activity between a volunteer, employee or an affiliate/agent and a client will result in immediate dismissal.

### **CLASS II**

Any act or failure to act done knowingly, recklessly, or intentionally, including incitement to act, which caused or may have caused non-serious physical injury to a rider or volunteer will result in a review and first warning. A second warning will result in dismissal.

### **CLASS III**

The use of verbal or other communication to curse, vilify, or degrade a rider, or threaten a rider with physical or emotional harm, or any act, which vilifies or degrades a rider, or threatens a rider with physical or emotional harm will result in dismissal.

### **NEGLECT**

Any negligence which caused or may have caused physical or emotional injury to a rider, including failure to carry out a rider's program/treatment plan, or failure to provide a safe environment will result in a review and further training.

It is the responsibility of each volunteer to report any concern, suspicion or incident of rider abuse or neglect to a class instructor or staff member. If you suspect rider abuse or neglect,

stay calm. Let the person who is committing the act know that you are present. Usually, the presence of another volunteer will help the volunteer regain control. If you are in a class, let the class instructor know of the problem. If you are not in a class, ensure the rider is no longer in danger of harm and see that he/she receives needed attention. You are then required to report the incident to a class instructor or staff member so that they may take the appropriate steps to correct the incident. Any incident of abuse can result in disciplinary action or criminal charges

## GLOSSARY OF PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter at All Star Equestrian and the beneficial outcome equine assisted activities can have. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of specific disabilities. Rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how equine assisted activities can be beneficial.

### **Arthritis**

Inflammatory disease of the 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 relieve 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

### **Cerebral Palsy**

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

**Types and 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, fine movements and are often described as having a “rag doll” appearance

**Benefits:** Normalization of tone, stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination

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

### **Cerebral Vascular Accident (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

### **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.

## **Down Syndrome**

Condition in which a person 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 hypermobile 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

## **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.

## **Epilepsy**

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

Types and Characteristics:

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

**Grand Mal** – Loss of consciousness and postural tone. Usually preceded by an aura (Note: an active seizure disorder is a contraindication for horseback riding).

## **Hearing Impairment**

Congenital or acquired hearing loss 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

## **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 the particular disorder. Stimulates attention span, group skills, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination

## **Mental Retardation (MR)**

Lack of ability to learn and perform within 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

## **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. 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.

**Associated problems:** Visual impairment, emotional ability, and impaired bowel and bladder function

## **Muscular Dystrophy (MD)**

Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males.

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

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

**Associated Problems:** Lordosis, respiratory infection

### **Polio**

Infectious virus disease

**Characteristics:** Flaccid paralysis, atrophy of skeletal muscle, often with deformity

**Benefits:** Strengthens non-paralyzed muscles, stimulates posture

### **Scoliosis**

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

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

**Benefits:** Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles (Note: severe scoliosis is a contraindication for therapeutic riding).

### **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:** Infection, lordosis, scoliosis, and hip dislocations

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

**Associated problems:** Hydrocephalus, incontinence, urinary tract infections, lordosis, scoliosis, and hip dislocations

### **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

#### **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**

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

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

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

#### **Visual Impairment**

##### **Moderate to total loss of sight**

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

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

## **DISCRIMINATION IS AGAINST THE LAW**

All Star Equestrian Foundation complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. ASEF does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex

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**All Staff reports to the Program Director**

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