

# Volunteer Handbook

Eagles' Wings Stable, Inc.  
Therapeutic Riding and Equine Assisted Activities



Dear Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in EAGLES' WINGS STABLE's Therapeutic Riding and Equine Assisted Activities program. We are pleased and fortunate to be able to provide this most worthwhile and helpful program to Miami County and the surrounding area. Volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Without the help of a good volunteer team, our program cannot exist.

We require all volunteers to attend a training/orientation session before working and this booklet is designed to help outline what is expected of our volunteers. Read it carefully, as it is important for the safety of the students (riders) as well as your own.

Thank you for caring enough to help keep our riders in the saddle!

Sincerely,

The Staff of Eagles' Wings Stable, Inc.

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## Important Phone Numbers and Email Addresses

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**OUR HISTORY** - Eagles' Wings Therapeutic Riding Center was co-founded by Keith and Ann Schaurer and Keith's mother, Sandra Knipe. The Schaurer's became involved in Therapeutic Riding in 2003 after a nephew was diagnosed with transverse myelitis. In 2004 they began development of a business model, became involved with The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH), built a new stable, converted an existing machine shed to an indoor riding arena, began training for Keith to become a Certified Riding Instructor, and launched a successful pilot program. They received their 501 (c) (3) status from the IRS in 2006.

**OUR MISSION** - Eagles' Wings Stable, Inc. provides equine-assisted therapeutic activities for people with special needs to benefit and improve development and quality of life.

**OUR VISION** - Eagles' Wings Stable, Inc. recognizes the importance of physical, mental and emotional well-being for each participant. Participants develop balance, strength, stability, social, emotional and cognitive skills that enrich their daily lives and their contribution to society.

**OUR VALUES** - We value the multidimensional motion and personality of the horse as a therapist to make the movements and connections necessary to improve the participants' well-being

## Our Staff Organization

Our Board of Directors provides guidance and direction to our staff members

- Our Riding Instructors are responsible for conducting therapeutic riding classes as a registered therapeutic riding instructor or instructor in training as required by the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA).
- We have two part-time coordinators that manage our operations.
  - The Student Coordinator manages all aspects of the student program including publicity, recruitment, scheduling, family liaison, medical records documentation, class documentation, invoice management, and data management.
  - The Volunteer Coordinator manages all aspects of the volunteer program including recruitment, training, data management, task management, scheduling, support, and recognition of sufficient volunteer resources to support Eagles' Wings Stable program operations and special events.

## What Does Therapeutic Horseback Riding Accomplish?

Doctors, therapists, instructors, and the disabled have become aware of the positive physical and mental benefits of horseback riding. The horse's movement provides the sensory input of a precise, repetitive pattern of movement remarkably similar to the movement of a person's pelvis during normal human gait. The horse's center of gravity shifts forward, backward, up, and down, and side to side just as the human's does. Riders have the four legs of the horse that they can direct as they wish, which conveys a sense of mobility and power not otherwise available to the physically and mentally challenged.

Additionally, muscle tone is improved through movements transmitted by the horse, and the body warmth of the horse aids muscle relaxation. Head and trunk postural control is encouraged, and body symmetry (balance) is enhanced. The riding participants receive benefits relating to body awareness, spatial orientation, and endurance. Interestingly, there has also been found a beneficial effect on digestion. Contact with the horse demands constantly changing, adaptive responses and automatic self-correction by the rider resulting in increased responsiveness and adaptability.

The horse is a social creature that will readily bond with people. If you are kind to him, he will be kind to you. He will respond to you without caring if you can walk or talk; he does not care if your body works. He will love you because you are kind. That is all he needs. A rider's bonding with the horse can provide the motivation to do dramatic things. A ten-year-old boy with autism who had never spoken joined a riding program. After several months of riding, he was waiting in line for his turn, and someone cut in front of him. In an extraordinarily strong voice he said, "It's my turn." This wonderful moment was the beginning of his entry into the speaking world.

The lessons that we provide will help the riders to gain self-confidence and self-esteem. The horse will motivate the riders to strive for higher goals. The motivation that the riders achieve through their lessons frequently will carry over into their everyday lives and make their world a happier place.

Eagles' Wings Stable cannot exist without volunteers. Our fund-raising efforts and nominal charge to the riders does not cover the costs of maintaining our horses. We are grateful for our volunteers, and we depend on them for the operation of our program.

If you are comfortable around horses, we have many ways for you to contribute. You can groom and tack the horses, lead the horse, be a side walker, or help maintain the stable area. We also have office work, fund-raising, and special events for those volunteers who do not want to work directly with horses. Whatever direction you choose will be unique and rewarding. Join our team and share the joy!

## Volunteer Guidelines

Volunteers are the backbone of our program. Without you and the hours you put into Eagles' Wings Stable, we would not be able to provide these special opportunities to our clients. THANK YOU!

The Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) provides us with national accreditation and guidelines of operations to encourage safety for you and our riders. **Always be alert and think safety.** Please don't be offended if the instructor offers comments or suggestions. The safety of our riders is paramount to the success of our program.

Please remember that although our horses are very trustworthy, strange situations can cause panic. Cameras with flashes, shrill voices, and sudden moves by people or other horses can cause problems. **Always approach the horse from the side rather than directly from the rear.** This enables the horse to anticipate your arrival. Talk calmly to the animal as you approach. If you walk behind a horse, be far away and talk as you walk. There should not be groups standing and chatting around horses.

Parents/Guardians, siblings, friends, and visitors must stay in the viewing area at all times. Volunteers should remain in the viewing area, except when performing a specific duty.

## Volunteer Requirements

### *General Requirements*

1. The minimum age for volunteers is 14 (unless individually waived by the Volunteer Coordinator).
2. The yearly training (orientation) session is mandatory.
3. Horse experience is desirable but not essential, as long as the volunteer has no fear of horses and is willing to learn how to work around and with them.

### *Physical Fitness*

1. Leaders and Side walkers must be able to walk at least one hour and jog occasionally, often on thick footing. Volunteers who cannot do this easily can be asked to help with other Eagles' Wings Stable needs.
2. It is wise to keep your tetanus shots up to date.

## *Orientation*

1. You will receive orientation and training to explain the safety and procedural rules of the program.
2. You will need to fill out our Volunteer Application form - <https://www.eagleswingsstable.org/volunteerapplication> before you begin your work.

## *Attire*

1. **Always wear closed toe shoes or boots that offer foot protection. NO SANDALS OR CLOGS.**
2. Do not wear dangling jewelry as it is unsafe to wear with some participants.
3. Do not wear heavy perfume since it may attract bees or other biting insects and may affect some students' allergic reactions.
4. Dress for the weather and know where you will be working.
5. Wear appropriate clothing that is not revealing (no bare midriffs or short shorts), tattered, or depicting inappropriate slogans or decals. Remember that you will be working in a professional service setting.

## *Commitment*

Volunteers must be willing to commit to a standing obligation. Promptness, regularity, and reliability are the KEY. Arrive on time. Find a replacement if you are going to miss a class. Give advance notice by calling our office if you are unable to make your scheduled time and inform us of your replacement. Instructors, therapists, and most of all, the participants depend on you to be there. Accept full responsibility for any task you undertake and follow it through to its conclusion. Work cooperatively with all of our personnel and other volunteers.

## *Confidentiality*

Eagles' Wings Stable staff makes every effort to maintain confidentiality regarding individual participants and their personal information. This can be difficult, since many participants are very open about their disability, medical history, or personal challenges.

During riding lessons and therapy sessions you may be told information about participants in order to assist a person safely and effectively. This information is confidential. **Never discuss our students' disabilities with outsiders. Do not pass on information you may be told during a session.**

Use common sense. If anyone at the center tells you something that is troubling to you and/or you may question the participant's safety, by all means, discreetly discuss this with the instructor or person in charge. Above all, SAFETY FIRST.

## *Considerations*

Certified Horsemanship Centers provide services, programs, and activities for individuals with physical, cognitive, or psychosocial disabilities or challenges. It is imperative that you understand this responsibility and familiarize yourself with some basic rules of conduct.

It would be impossible to summarize all of the diseases, syndromes, disabilities, and other medical and psychological conditions that exist. As an Eagles' Wings Stable volunteer, you will meet individuals with common disabilities, but also may encounter individuals who have rare medical conditions. **Always remember that focus at Eagles' Wings Stable is on a person's ability, not on their disability.**

We serve individuals of all ages starting as young as two years old, and usually have a mix of participants of all ages.

When first starting as an Eagles' Wings Stable volunteer, it can be tempting to try to find out as much as you can about the type of disability each of the individuals you will be working with may have. You will certainly be told what you need to know in order to effectively help a participant, or to understand the goals of the instructor or therapist. However, do not be surprised if you are not told much about a participant. You also may not get answers to your questions, even if you ask. Understand that this is a component of confidentiality and that many people with a disability want to keep the details of their medical history private. You and Eagles' Wings Stable staff must respect that privacy.

## Volunteer Expectations

### *Before the lesson*

1. Please call if you find you cannot come at your regular time. When possible, give us at least 24-hour notice and find your own replacement.
2. Please arrive at least 15 minutes before class begins.

### *When you arrive*

1. Find the volunteer sheet and check the date by your name.
2. Look at the student roster for the day's assignments. Know your student's and your horse's names.
3. Put on your name tag.
4. Horse Leaders - Go out to the stable to get your horse. If time allows, brush your horse before putting on his halter and bringing him in.
5. Side walkers - Make sure your rider has a properly fitted safety helmet and any other safety devices needed. ALL riders must wear helmets. (The instructor will specify the helmet to be worn by each rider.)
6. Horse Leaders - Lead your horse a lap or 2 around the arena to get him ready for class. Lead him around any equipment or props that are present. The instructor will alert you when it is time to park your horse. Stand in front of the horse with the lead rope in your hand during grooming and tacking.  
**NEVER LEAVE YOUR HORSE UNATTENDED!**

### *During class*

1. Please refrain from unnecessary conversations—it distracts the rider. Use non-verbal communication whenever possible during lesson times. Exception: **TELL THE INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY OF ANY UNSAFE SITUATION.**
2. **Pay attention to the instructor throughout the lesson.**
3. Horse Leaders: In case of a problem, bring the horse into the center of the arena. Avoid stopping on the rail if possible, as this causes traffic jams.
4. It the Horse Leader's job to keep the HORSE safe. It is the Side walkers' job to keep the RIDER safe.
5. Notify the instructor of any unusual signs or problems, such as drowsiness, fatigue, or emotional stress. Be discreet, however, when discussing a student in his/her presence.
6. Keep alert! You are responsible for your rider, as well as for the safety of the other riders in the class.

7. Expect good behavior. Notify the instructor if you are having any problems. We do not tolerate hitting, biting, spitting, kicking, etc.
8. Be relaxed, confident, and reassuring. Your rider will respond accordingly.
9. Games are important in almost every lesson. They may be simple, like Simon Says, or something more complex. The volunteer plays an important part in every game. The instructor will give the students the rules for the game to be played. Watch the rider to see if they understand the directions.
10. It helps if the volunteer is excited, too, but not so much that you play the game instead of the rider. Allow the rider to do as much as possible by him or herself. The real accomplishment comes when the rider knows they have done it themselves.
11. **Listen to the instructor.** Commands are given to everyone as a class, or to the rider as an individual, so it is necessary to listen closely to the instructor. Excessive talking is one of the worst distractions in the arena. Please keep conversations with the riders to what is necessary and save the conversations with other volunteers until after class. This is difficult at times, but with a number of people in the arena at a time, the confusion and noise can get out of hand.
12. **Rider Control:** It is difficult not to do things for the riders, such as guiding, stopping, etc., but the only way they will learn is to do it themselves, even though it may take twice as long for them to complete a task that you would do without thinking. Use common sense. If a rider has a real problem or becomes too frustrated, of course you can assist. But the more we let them do on their own, the more they will learn and feel a true sense of accomplishment. Give a lot of encouragement and praise.

### ***In an emergency***

1. Immediately halt all horses, with the leader taking the position at the front of the horse.
2. Falls are rare but can and do happen. In case of a fall, the instructor is trained to make the necessary decisions and will take care of the student.
3. Try to keep your rider's attention away from the rider with the problem.
4. **Be calm and alert.** Both riders and horses will respond to your quiet reassurance.
5. Remember, sudden noises and movement can frighten both people and horses.

## Basic Safety Rules Around Horses

1. Always speak to the horse as you approach or before touching him.
2. Always approach the horse from the side or shoulder area, never from the rear, as he cannot see you.
3. Avoid ducking under or stepping over crossties or leads. Walk right beside the horse. Stay close to him as you walk. Keep one hand on the horse and talk to him; this way he will know where you are.
4. Let the horse know what you are going to do. Example: Run your hand down his leg before lifting his hoof.
5. Always wear boots or sturdy shoes. No sandals or clogs and NEVER barefoot.
6. Do not tie the horse by the reins or bit.
7. Do not leave the reins or lead hanging on the ground for the horse to step on.
8. Secure the reins to the safety strap or handhold on the saddle whenever the horse is without a rider or tie them to the handhold with the lead.
9. Never wrap the lead rope or the reins around your hand, wrist, or any part of your body.
10. Always tie with a quick release knot.
11. Do not tie the horse to a movable object such as a barn door, trailer door, the arena fence, or bench.
12. If the horse becomes frightened or nervous, stop and talk to him reassuringly, stroking him on the neck and shoulder.
13. Never tease a horse in any way.
14. When grooming, always maintain a position that allows you to move quickly should the horse move suddenly.
15. Make sure that the stall doors and gates are open completely with latches secured before leading the horse through.
16. Always lead the way through openings.
17. Open gates wide and be sure the gate does not squeeze or bump the horse as he goes through.
18. If another horse in the arena is loose or exhibiting unsafe behavior, halt your horse, remain calm, and wait for instructions from the instructor—DO NOT LET GO OF YOUR HORSE.
19. Pay attention to your footing. Weather may be a factor or objects may be in your path.
20. If in doubt about a procedure or instruction, ask the instructor.

## Working with People

If you have never had the opportunity to meet people with disabilities, this aspect of working at a Certified Horsemanship (CHA) Center can be intimidating and a little frightening at first. You may be feeling insecure about how to act or react to people who may look, sound, move, and behave differently from what you usually expect. What do you say? What do you not say? How should you react? What is the best way to help? These questions and the feelings of uncertainty they bring with them are perfectly normal and you need not be embarrassed about them.

Do not worry about making mistakes when meeting and communicating with a person who has a disability. Relax and let the person with the disability put you at ease. You will find that with experience and time you will come to know them as individuals and will reach the point where you will see them as friends and people first— without dwelling on the differences or constantly worrying about what to say or how to act.

Here are some basic suggestions on how to relate to individuals with disabilities:

- A person with a disability is an individual first and entitled to the same dignity, respect, and considerations expected by anyone. They are like everyone else, except for the special limitations of their disability.
- Be yourself when you meet them.
- Treat adults as adults. Only call an adult person with a disability by his or her first name after asking for that privilege.
- Talk about the same things as you would with anyone else.
- Help them only when they request it, or you may ask if they would like assistance. If help is declined, do not be offended.
- **When assisting a person with a disability, always ask "how" you can help. Do not take over.**
- Address the person with a disability directly. Do not speak "about" them as if they were not present.
- Be patient. Allow the person to set his own pace in walking or talking.
- If a person has difficulty speaking, allow them to finish their sentence. If you do not understand what they are saying, tell them so. Do not pretend you understood if you did not.
- Do not push a person's wheelchair, grab their arm, or try to help without asking first.
- **Never move someone's wheelchair, crutches, walkers, canes, or other mobility aid**

without permission.

- When speaking to a person who uses a wheelchair, find a chair or crouch down at a comfortable distance so that you can converse on the same level.
- The individual is always placed before the disability. He/she is a "person with a disability," not a "disabled person."
- When writing or speaking about individuals with disabilities, always focus on ability, accomplishment, and quality of life.
- Don't show pity or charity. People with disabilities want to be treated as equals in all things. They want a chance to prove themselves.
- Don't ask embarrassing questions. If the person wants to tell you what his disability is, he will bring up the subject.

## **Build Supportive, Safe, and Appropriate Relationships**

Your role is to be a helpful presence and to support the staff. Over time you will develop friendships and personal relationships with participants of all ages. This is a wonderful part of being an Eagles' Wings Stable volunteer. It allows you to become part of the lives of a variety of people and lets you share your personal skills and talents.

Since Eagles' Wings Stable works with children, you will get to know parents, grandparents, and siblings of participants who may come along to observe a lesson or therapy session. You will get to participate in the rehabilitation of participants who may be recovering from injury or share the progress and setbacks of participants who have particular life challenges.

During your volunteer training, you will be introduced to the specific guidelines and rules that the stable maintains to ensure that the extent of the relationship you have with the participants feels safe and appropriate for everyone.

It is important to keep in mind that "boundaries" are an important part of establishing relationships as a volunteer. While you will become a friend to many of the participants, you should also try to maintain a professional relationship. Remaining professional protects both you and the participant. While you will be asked to physically support a rider on the horse, it is usually discouraged to show physical affection to participants. This is especially true of children. There are many ways you can show that you care and that you are happy to see the participants without touching.

However, boundaries go further than touch. You must prepare yourself for participants who, due to their disability or personality, may be difficult, possibly rude, or overly dependent and attached to you. Remaining professional will help you deal with those situations.

The key to building supportive, safe, and appropriate volunteer relationships is to help where you can, but to keep in mind that you are a volunteer—not a psychologist, a counselor, or a therapist. Know your limits and role.

# Volunteer Roles

## Horse Leader

The main responsibility of the Horse Leader is the HORSE - the Horse Leader is to maintain the safety of the horse at all times. You MUST pay attention to your horse and their body language.

Horses are herd animals. This is based on natural instinct. A herd is made of 3 types of members: The Leader, Peers, and Followers. If you learn to lead your horse correctly, he will learn to trust you and will be eager to please you and follow your commands.

- **The Leader (or Alpha) is always first.** You have to prove to your horse that you are the leader. You must place yourself in a leadership position—at the horse's head.
- Peers are equals in the herd. Standing at the neck allows the horse to choose if he wants to follow you or not.
- **Followers are always last**—last to the food or to the gate. Standing at or behind the horse's shoulder tells the horse he is in control of you.

You can learn a lot about your horse by learning your horse's language. Learn to read your horse. Anticipate your horse's reactions by watching the horse's head, eyes, and ears for cues. Each movement may be interpreted as an emotion. Common expressions will indicate whether your horse is afraid, confident, anxious, nervous, calm, angry, happy, alert, relaxed, curious, or bored.

- Eyes
  - Round, soft eyes = calm and receptive to learning
  - Whites showing = excited, nervous, scared
  - Triangle shaped = worried anxious
  - Half open = relaxed, bored, disconnected
- Ears
  - Both ears back = listening to rider or something behind him
  - Both pointed ahead intently = sees something interesting or scary
  - Rapidly flicking side to side, back and forth = nervous about something, ready to flee or fight
  - Half-mast, slowly going back and forth = calm, listening, content
  - Both ears back and pinned = aggressive, unhappy
- Nose
  - Soft, rounded, no noticeable movement = normal
  - Pinched at the top = holding his breath
  - Snorting = cautioning others, mad
  - Pointed and flaring in and out = trying to scent something or catching

his breath

- Triangle shape = anxious, worried, cautious
- Licking, big breath out = mind is relaxed, calm
- Nostrils flared = wants to flee

You can learn more about your horse by looking at the whole horse and all of his movements. If you want to learn more, please visit your local library to find books about horse body language or study a horse.

Mounting - The instructor will explain the mounting needs for each rider to you. Some riders can mount using the step while some may require the mounting platform. It is especially important for the rider's safety as well as the horse's safety to lead the horse as close to the step/mounting platform as necessary.

It is your responsibility to keep the horse as quiet and still as possible. Stand in front of the horse's head with your hands on the lead or reins.

After the rider is mounted, and before the stirrups are adjusted, you may be asked to move the horse forward a few steps. Stop when told by the instructor. After the stirrups are adjusted, the instructor will have you lead the horse and rider in the arena.

REMINDER: Leading the horse is your responsibility. The student is the side walker's responsibility. Please let the instructor know if there is something the side walkers or student is doing that you do not feel is safe.

Once you have entered the arena with your mounted rider, the instructor will give you directions. Be sure you are a safe distance from the horse in front of or beside you (at least two horse lengths). As the class begins all instructions will be given to the rider by name, so be sure you know your rider's name. Try to discourage casual conversation and direct the attention of your rider to the instructor. **Never let go of your horse!**

Rider falls are rare but can and do happen. If your rider falls, your only concern is the HORSE you are leading. The instructor will take of the rider.

If another rider falls and his horse gets loose, **stop immediately** in front of your horse and hold him as you would when in the mounting area. **Never let go of your horse!**

The proper position for the leader is to walk at the horse's head. Stay even with the horse's eye. Do not walk in front of the eye or too far behind.

It is important to keep two horse lengths between riders—also known as “an elephant's length.”

**The lead line should never be used to pull the horse forward.** For all practical purposes,

the horse should not know that you have a lead on him—only that you are walking beside him. Care must be taken to ensure the horse’s head is not up too high in the air or too low to the ground, as to throw the rider off balance.

Hold the lead line in the hand closest to the horse, approximately six to eight inches away from the ring or buckle. **Hold the extra line in the other hand, but never wrap it around your hand. Loop and hold it tightly.**

In order for the rider to have complete freedom to use the reins correctly, care should be taken to ensure that the lead line is not run over the reins. The lead line must be hanging between the reins and not over the top of them.

Remember, just as the size of the mount varies, so do their steps. With some horses, you will be able to walk faster than others. Adjust your step to that of the horse so you are not pulling him forward or holding him back but try to encourage the horse to have an easy, forward-moving, steady walk.

If you are leading a lazy horse, the leader should not try to take the place of the rider either by pulling the horse forward or turning or stopping the horse. The rider should do as much as possible alone. When a rider has been asked to perform a task, allow him a reasonable length of time to accomplish it on his own before helping.

Look up and ahead to where you are going. Many leaders forget they have side walkers and get too close to arena walls, poles, etc. Avoid sharp turns and cutting corners. These are hard on the riders, side walkers, and horses.

Give yourself room from the horse in front of or beside you. Though none of our hoses are known kickers, all horses will kick if pressured by a mount being too close to their hind legs. **If the rider cannot maintain a safe distance, then you may always help him/her do so.** Use common sense. If you see the rider getting into trouble and unable to follow the instructor’s directions, certainly you can assist.

Be aware of your horse (mood, speed, and quality of walk), the instructor, the student, and your position in the arena at all times.

One of the most important tasks the leader has, particularly with a handicapped rider, is at the halt. Whenever the horse and rider are stopped, stand in front of or just to the side of your horse’s head holding the lead rope. Allow the horse some freedom to move his head but keep him quiet and calm by petting him or softly speaking to him.

Often during a lesson, the rider will be asked to trot or jog. Make sure the rider and side walkers are ready before you trot.

Start your gait a little faster and say “Trot!” Most of our horses are good on voice

command, though you can have a horse that is having a lazy day and just does not want to do more than walk. A clucking sound usually helps. Do not pull on the lead. This will only make the horse mad, and he will fight it. When the command is given to walk or stop, do so in a steady, straight line so as not to unseat the rider.

Stop the horse if:

- The rider is off balance and cannot regain his balance while the horse is moving.
- The saddle pad has slipped, or the girth is loose.
- The stirrups need adjusting.
- The rider is fatigued, in pain, or needs to stop for any other reason.
- The side walkers need to switch sides or are having difficulty and cannot carry out their job in comfort or safety.
- Unless it is an emergency, take the horse to the center of the arena so as not to block other riders while tack is adjusted, or the rider is properly settled.

Dismounting - The instructor will dismount the rider. You will receive specific instructions as to whether to bring the rider to the mounting area or remain in the arena. Once again, keep your horse quiet by standing in front and keeping him still while dismounting is taking place.

When finished with the lesson, the side walker accompanies the rider back to the viewing area. Once the horse is untacked and all of the riders are safely out of the arena, the leader will take the horse either to his stall or turn him out into the pasture.

Before you leave - Please share any ideas, problems, observations, or suggestions you have with the instructor. Our volunteers are a vital part of the team and we want to hear from you.

### Side Walker

The main responsibility of the side walker is the RIDER - the side walker helps maintain the balance of the rider when he cannot do so for himself, to clarify instructions and directions when needed, and to provide reassurance and encouragement to the rider. **NEVER LEAVE YOUR RIDER UNLESS SOMEONE IS THERE TO TAKE YOUR PLACE!**

Some riders, especially in the beginning stages, have a definite balance problem, off the horse as well as on. Some riders will need to be helped by the placement of your forearm over their thigh, while some riders will not have to be held at all or will only need the reassurance of your hand on their ankle. The instructor will inform you as to the requirements of your rider. You may be asked to spot or assist with mounting your rider.

While in the arena, **be alert to your rider at all times, especially the ones with balance problems! Never become so relaxed that you are not totally aware of the rider, the horse, the leader, the instructor, and the other activities around you.** Be careful not to walk with your eyes to the ground since you will not be able to observe the rider for any sudden loss of balance or be able to assist the rider if the horse should stumble or shy.

If a rider starts to slip, do not just grab the rider; gently push him back into the proper position. Side walkers are especially important, as they are constantly aware of the rider and what he/she is doing. The safety of the rider depends on you.

Side walkers should position themselves at the rider's knee, facing forward. Stay close to the rider's knee at all times so the horse knows where you are. In this position, you can easily and quickly place your forearm across the rider's upper leg to aid their balance.

Since the side walker is close to the rider, you will find they will want to talk to you a great deal. Do not ignore direct questions but try to get your rider to pay attention to the instructor. Many handicapped riders have difficulty focusing on the instruction, so all talking should be kept to a minimum.

Side walkers should be listening to the instructor's directions so you can be ready to reinforce the directions, assist the rider in carrying out the instructions, or direct the rider's attention to the task at hand.

A side walker may need to assist the rider to hold or position the reins, hold onto the handhold, or use the leg aids. Watch your rider carefully during exercises and assist them as needed.

Do not panic if there is a fall. Riders fall frequently in all types of situations. They fall on sidewalks, off swings, etc. The fall off a horse is really not any worse than they could get at home. Be calm. The instructors are trained to handle any situation—that is their job, so allow the instructors to do their job.

Before trotting, make sure the rider is positioned squarely in the saddle and that they are holding the handhold. Ask the leader to stop the horse if:

- The rider is off balance and cannot regain his balance while the horse is moving.
- The saddle pad has slipped, or the girth is loose.
- The stirrups need adjusting.
- The rider is fatigued, in pain, or needs to stop for any other reason.
- You need to change sides, or you are having any difficulty and cannot carry out your job in comfort and safety. Avoid twisting yourself or trying to walk in

- an awkward position.
- Unless it is an emergency, the leader will take the horse to the center of the arena so as not to block other riders while tack is adjusted, or the rider is properly settled.

When dismounting, the instructor will inform the rider and the side walker of the correct procedure during the dismount. When dismounted, some riders are able to run up the stirrups or help put the tack away.

When finished with the lesson, the side walker accompanies the rider back to the viewing area, helps him/her put his/her helmet away, and turns him/her back to his/her parent/guardian.

Before leaving the arena, please share any ideas, problems, observations, or suggestions you have with the instructor. Our volunteers are a vital part of the team and we want to hear from you.

### Barn Buddy

Barn buddies clean the stalls Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. Each volunteer helps one night and cleans 2-3 stalls, sweeps the aisle, provides freshwater, and may groom the horses if desired. This is typically an hour to two-hour commitment per week.

### Guidelines for Stall Bedding Maintenance:

- Initially, use a shovel and scoop out the sodden urine-soaked spots. Typically, the boys' wettest areas are centralized in the stalls. Girls' typically towards the outsides.
  - Just because it's dark doesn't mean it's too wet.
  - A gauge to determine whether to toss or reuse is to step down with full body weight on the bedding. If it cakes under your foot, nudge the cake with the shovel or your boot. If the cake falls apart it is good for another round. If it stays caked when handled, it's time to go. If it doesn't cake, it shouldn't go out.
- Remaining loose material should have "apples" sifted out through a basket fork into a clear area, and then toss the apples into the wheelbarrow.
- Sifted bedding should then be scraped away from the walls 2-3 feet toward the center of the stall. The central area should then be leveled.
- Total bedding in the stall should not exceed a 2-bag equivalent. Too much material makes it too difficult to sort and process.
- Adding bedding pellets:
  - Lay bag in a level spot on stall floor.
  - Cut bag from each corner to center of bag so that four triangles can be laid back. Be sure to cut completely into the corners for full watering.

- Sprinkle one full gallon of water (white jug is one gallon) over exposed surface of pellets. Be sure to get water into the corners of the bag.
- Allow to soak for at least 20-60 minutes. Pellets take longer to fluff and swell if the water is cold.
- After pellets are swelled and fluffy, dump bag in center of stall and level off with existing material.
- There should be very few to no dry pellets. Dry pellets on the floor do not perform properly and are dangerous. They are like trying to walk on marbles. Horses can strain fetlock joints and people can fall and crack tailbones and skulls.
- If there are excessive dry pellets, use the water hose and sprinkle those areas to start the swelling process.

### *Grooming (Cleaning the Horse):*

1. Start with the curry comb to loosen the dirt. Move the curry comb in circles.
2. Brush the dirt off using the hard brush/body brush. Flick your wrist at the end of each stroke to flick off the dirt.
3. Remove all of the small particles with the soft brush/Dandy brush. This brush may also be used on the horse's face.
4. The instructor will usually clean the horse's hooves with the hoof pick. Proper use of these grooming tools will be demonstrated at volunteer orientation.

### *Stall Etiquette:*

- Remember that the stall is the horse's own space. If the horse shows any defensive behavior, put the halter on the horse and put the horse in the crossties. **Never leave a horse unattended in the crossties.**
- If a horse is in the crossties and becomes agitated, unhook him from the crossties, and if necessary, return him to his stall and call for help.
- **NEVER leave the stall door open when the horse is in the stall.**
- **NEVER lock yourself in the stall with a horse.**
- You may hook the top stall guard and leave the bottom down so that you can get out underneath.
- **Always make sure the horse knows you are coming in.** Talk to him and he will usually turn and face you.
- Stay close to the horse as you move around him/her.
- **When returning the horse to the stall always enter slightly ahead of the horse.** Make sure the stall door is all the way open and the latch is pushed all the way back so the horse cannot catch his side on it.
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*Tacking (Saddle, Bridle, etc.)*

*First: Saddle the horse.*

1. Place saddle pad on even on both sides covering the shoulders.
2. Place the riser or lift pad, if needed, on top of the saddle pad.
3. Set saddle on the horse.
4. Slide the saddle back to 4 fingers width behind the shoulder blade.
5. Buckle the girth on the right side with the end of the girth without rollers present. Attach the side with rollers present on the on side last.
6. **NEVER tighten the girth. That is the instructor's responsibility.**

*Next: Bridle the horse.*

1. Put the reins over the horse's neck.
2. Put the bit in the horse's mouth and slide the bridle over the ears.
3. Make sure brow band, nose band, and bit are even on the horse.
4. Attach throat latch (four fingers fit).
5. Attach noseband snug (one or two fingers fit).
6. Attach lead to noseband making sure it is between the reins.

## General Rules

**THE ENTIRE FACILITY IS A TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT - ABSOLUTELY NO SMOKING IS ALLOWED ON THE PROPERTY**

The stable and arena areas are only open to riders and volunteers at your scheduled class times. You are **NOT** allowed on the grounds at any other time, unless accompanied by an instructor, staff member, or an appointment is made with the Board President

Only instructors, riders, and volunteers are permitted in the riding ring. The arena, tack area, and aisle way are limited to riders and staff only.

Observers are to sit quietly in the designated observation area. No loud talking or rowdy behavior is permitted for the safety of the riders, volunteers, and horses. Parents, siblings, and other visitors may be invited by the Program Director to visit the horses after they are in their stalls. Any treats, such as carrots or apples, may be given to the horses at the discretion of the staff and must be placed in the feed bin. **NO HAND FEEDING!**

Again—

Thank you for your willingness to be a part of our program. Volunteers are **ESSENTIAL** to the success of our program. The entire staff of Eagles' Wings Stable, Inc. appreciates YOU!

We cannot say thank you enough, but we will try again...**THANK YOU!**