

2017
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



PPTRC

13620 Halleluiah Trail, Elbert, CO 80106

Phone: (719) 495-3908

Fax: (719) 494-1689

Web: www.pptrc.org

Email: pptrc@pptrc.org

Name: _____

Start Date: _____

Start Time: _____

Instructor: _____

Team Leader: _____

WELCOME

Volunteers are the heart and muscle of PPTRC. We hope you are as glad to be here as we are to have you. This guide is meant to help answer questions about our program, its purpose, policies and basic procedures. Nothing takes the place of hands-on experience, but this publication can serve as a helpful reference.

PPTRC MISSION

Utilizing the unique and therapeutic attributes of the horse, our mission is to serve those with diverse needs, empower change, foster resilience, and nurture whole health through sustainable and innovative programs.

PPTRC VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Pikes Peak Therapeutic Riding Center is a community based organization whose volunteers comprise its heart and hands. PPTRC volunteers are committed, passionate, willing, caring and professional. They enhance the quality of the therapies/activities we provide and are role models for healthy social behavior. At PPTRC we value people, and our volunteers are afforded the same respect and care that PPTRC provides its clients. From their service experience through PPTRC our volunteers are provided an avenue to help others, receiving in return many more blessings than given.

PPTRC NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Pikes Peak Therapeutic Riding Center, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, does not and will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, and gender expression. This non-discrimination policy includes, but is not limited to, employment, retention, salary and benefits, participation on the board of directors, acceptance of Volunteers, acceptance of riders desiring to utilize our services, and scholarships for those riders.

(Originally adopted by the Board of Directors February 16, 1999; reviewed and revised May 20, 2008)

VOLUNTEER QUESTIONS

What does my role as a Volunteer entail?

Volunteers working with horses and riders must be in good health and able to be physically active, mentally alert and focused for at least a two-hour period. He/she must also be able to tolerate heat, cold, dust & wind.

The two types of Volunteers utilized in classes are SIDEWALKERS and HORSE LEADERS. (See job descriptions on later pages.)

You will also be asked to help with barn work, getting horses ready for class and other duties around the ranch. We all are expected to pitch in with ANY work that needs to be done!

We are also looking for volunteer assistance that utilize your other talents. Photographers, videographers, writers, event planners, fund raisers, caterers, carpenters, mechanics, office assistants...if you have a skill or talent or trade, please let us know!!!

If you sign up to volunteer in a class, PLAN TO COMMIT TO THE ENTIRE 8 WEEK SESSION. The participants and instructors depend on you being there. You may also get a call or e-mail from our Volunteer Coordinator asking if you can fill in for another Volunteer who needs to miss their class. Please let us know if there are other days you might be able to fill in!

One of the greatest gifts you have to offer is to be a positive, **role model**. It does not matter if you are an expert horse person, trained therapist or novice Volunteer. If you are open and willing to learn new things, and if you conduct yourself with respect for people and horses, you will make a significant contribution to PPTRC. Not to mention, you will take away skills that are priceless!

When should I arrive for class?

Plan to arrive 45 minutes early on the first day of the new session or your first day here at the center. If you arrive and a class is underway, look for the Team Leader for direction. They will need time to meet you and give everyone appropriate assignments. For the rest of the session, arrive 30 minutes before class begins in order to have the horses and facility ready for the class. The Volunteer Coordinator will tell you what your time commitment is when you sign up. For a one-hour class, you should plan to spend two hours at PPTRC per week (1/2 hour before class, plus the time it takes to put the horse away and consult with the instructor).

What should I bring to class?

Bring a water bottle every time you come and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. There is drinking water available in the volunteer room. If you are new, you will need to complete and sign a Volunteer Registration and Release Form. If you are a minor, you will need your parents or guardians to sign the release. Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age to volunteer with PPTRC.

What should I wear?

Here are a few tips for you to prepare for your Volunteer duties at PPTRC. Although we work in a barn, we promote a professional atmosphere such as you might find in a clinic or classroom. Keep this in mind in the way you dress, speak and act.

- Dress in comfortable, layered clothing that can get dirty.
- Wear sturdy athletic shoes or boots, as you will be doing a lot of walking. Plain canvas shoes, sandals, or other non-sturdy footwear are not permitted. Also, remember that you will be walking in sand and it gets in tennis shoes and can be really irritating!
- It is always windier and cooler at the Center, so dress in layers and bring a jacket. Make sure all jackets, sweatshirts, shirts, etc. are buttoned, zippered or snapped to keep from flapping in the wind, which may spook the horses.
- Wear gloves during cooler weather.
- Wear a warm hat in the winter and a sun hat or baseball cap in the summer.
- Wear sunscreen.
- Long pants are mandatory.
- Tank tops are not permitted.
- Do not wear hanging jewelry, as it may dangle, get caught or tempt little rider hands.
- Hair should be tied back, out of the way.
- No perfumes and/or colognes, or lotions as they can attract stinging insects and sometimes irritate the horses.

What if I am unable to make it to class?

Please call 719-495-3908 or email (bennett@pptrc.org) as far in advance as possible. We prefer you inform us at least 72 hours in advance, so that we can find a substitute. If something comes up at the last minute, please call so we know you remain committed and we can count on you for future classes. If you are able to substitute, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator.

Commitment and consistency are vital to the therapy process. We require you to commit to an entire session unless you have made advance plans with our Volunteer Coordinator. Missing one week out of a session is acceptable. If you know you will be unable to attend most of your classes, please talk with the Volunteer Coordinator about other options. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of your consistent attendance as a Volunteer at PPTRC. We cannot conduct a

class without Volunteers. As a PPTRC Volunteer, you will reap the rewards of truly making a difference in people's lives.

What if the weather is bad? How will I know if my class is canceled? Will there be a make-up class?

As soon as we decide to cancel a class, we put a message on the answering machine greeting (719-495-3908). If you hear the "standard" message, your class is still on. We attempt to cancel class at least two hours before it is scheduled. Whatever the weather is at your home, it may be different at PPTRC, so call when the weather is questionable. The Volunteer Coordinator or Instructor/Team Leader will also call you. We do our best to contact all riders and Volunteers when we cancel classes. But we have many calls to make, and sometimes we fail to inform everyone before they leave home. We apologize, in advance, if this ever happens to you. It's always a good idea to call if there is any weather in the area. We do not hold make up classes due to scheduling constraints.

What kind of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies are offered by PPTRC?

PPTRC offers a number of different EAAT including Hippotherapy, Therapeutic Riding, Operation Mack - Healing with Horses, and Equine Facilitated Mental Health and Learning

Hippotherapy

The American Hippotherapy Association, Inc. defines hippotherapy as a physical, occupational or speech therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement. The word hippotherapy derives from the Greek word hippos, meaning horse. The term hippotherapy refers to the use of the movement of the horse as a treatment strategy by physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech/language pathologists to address impairments, functional limitations and disabilities in patients with neuromotor and sensory dysfunction. This treatment strategy is used as part of an integrated treatment program to achieve functional goals.

Hippotherapy sessions are provided in a one-on-one ratio of therapist to rider. The horse's movement is used to influence the rider.

Typical improvements from this therapy include:

- balance
- posture
- coordination
- core strength
- normalization of muscle tone
- speech and language skills

Many of the riders don't realize that they are in therapy as opposed to traditional physical therapy, which can often be a painful and arduous process for clients. Hippotherapy does not replace traditional therapy, but is designed to enhance it.

Therapeutic Riding

Therapeutic riding uses equine-assisted activities for the purpose of contributing positively to cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities. Therapeutic riding provides benefits in the areas of therapy, education sport and recreation & leisure. Throughout the world, there are thousands of individuals with special needs who experience the rewarding benefits of horseback riding. A disability does not have to limit a person from riding horses. In fact, experiencing the motion of a horse can be very therapeutic. Because horseback riding rhythmically moves the rider's body in a manner similar to a human gait, riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance and muscle strength. In addition to the therapeutic benefits, horseback riding also provides recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

Operation Mack – Healing with Horses

Our Operation Mack program addresses the special rehabilitative needs of military personnel recovering from injuries sustained in the line of duty, such as traumatic brain injuries, amputation and PTSD. The specific objectives of the therapy vary based on each participant's individual needs.

Physical benefits include:

- stretching of spastic muscles
- increased range of motion in the joints
- improved respiration and circulation
- reduction of abnormal movement patterns
- sensory integration

The psychological benefits often include:

- improved self-confidence
- development of patience
- emotional control
- self-discipline
- sense of normalcy
- decreased anxiety

Equine Assisted Therapy

Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT) is defined as a form of experiential psychotherapy that includes equine(s). It may include, but is not limited to, a number of mutually beneficial equine activities such as handling, grooming, longeing, riding, driving, and vaulting. The majority of our EFP activities are done as ground work and not riding. Equine Assisted Therapy is a treatment approach that provides the client with opportunities to enhance self-awareness and re-pattern maladaptive behaviors, feelings and attitudes.

Equine Assisted Therapy both promotes personal exploration of feelings and behaviors, and allows for clinical interpretation of feelings and behaviors. EAT denotes an ongoing therapeutic relationship with clearly established treatment goals and objectives developed by the therapist in conjunction with the client. The therapist must be an appropriately credentialed mental health professional to legally practice psychotherapy that has additional training in EAT.

Volunteers are utilized in these sessions as horse advocates. Training and requirements for volunteering in EAT are different than those for our mounted sessions. Please contact your Volunteer Coordinator if you'd like to know more.

All programs reach beyond the tangible benefits. Participants benefit emotionally in areas such as self-confidence, sense of accomplishment and motivation. Trust, communication, teamwork, responsibility, respect and caring are learned directly through horsemanship. Through mastery of consistent techniques, participants discover how to effectively communicate with 1,000-pound animals, even though they lack control in many other areas of their lives.

Other activities include participation in our Special Rodeo and riding demonstrations at our Miracles in Motion fundraising event. We also offer special educational opportunities for instructors and therapists around the country – amplifying our impact for those with disabilities throughout the United States. We offer continuing education trainings for our volunteers as well.

What else do I need to know about PPTRC Policies and Procedures?

We focus on safety, courtesy, respect and kindness. Here are the rules that help us maintain our standards:

- When you begin Volunteering at PPTRC, the Volunteer Coordinator will consult with you to decide where your abilities will best serve the program initially. Instructors and Team Leaders will give individual assignments during classes. The Instructor reserves the right to place and re-assign Volunteers based on his/her assessment of qualifications. The Volunteer Coordinator, Team Leaders, Staff and Instructors do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, nation origin, age or disability.
- Please DO NOT feed the horses.
- NO SMOKING anywhere on the property, including your vehicle. Second-hand smoke can affect some of our riders with compromised respiration. It is a safety and insurance risk.
- No littering. Cigarette butts can easily start a brush fire. Garbage becomes airborne.
- Speed limit on grounds is **10 MPH EVERYWHERE ON THE PROPERTY**. You may be ticketed on this property if seen speeding.
- Park in designated areas only.
- Pets are not allowed.
- No profane language is to be spoken at PPTRC. Remember that we are role models.
- No cell phone or IPOD usage is allowed while in the arena or on the trail. You WILL be dismissed if you are seen using, texting, or listening to either device during class.
- Guests or children of Volunteers are permitted by prior arrangement only. They are expected to follow all safety and courtesy rules. Children must be directly supervised at all times. PPTRC is not responsible for their safety and does not provide childcare service. PPTRC Staff and Instructors reserve the right to dismiss any guest or visitor for inappropriate behavior.
- *Always* sign in and out on the Volunteer attendance sheet located in the Volunteer Room. This information is imperative to our continuing grant support. We also review these records at the end of the year to determine the recipients of awards. If you require written documentation of the hours you have Volunteered at PPTRC it is your responsibility to log your time appropriately; please allow two weeks notice if you need this documentation.
- Hugs and other displays of affection should be left to our clients to initiate. Please refrain from asking our clients for hugs, and never give them without asking permission.
- Do not handle horses without permission/instruction from your instructor.
- Special grooming procedures (especially those that involve scissors or clippers) are not to be done without permission of a Team Leaders or the Instructor.
- Please notify the Center of address, email and phone changes as soon as they are in effect. If you decide to discontinue your participation in the PPTRC Volunteer program, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator and request to be placed on the inactive Volunteer list.
- No weapons or explosives of any kind are permitted on the property.
- Use of the PPTRC logo without permission from the Executive Director is prohibited.
- Conflicts with other Volunteers and/or staff should be brought to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will mediate between the concerned parties and will make every attempt to resolve issues in a timely and fair manner. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the agency or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, theft of property, abuse or mistreatment of clients, staff, horses or other volunteers, failure to abide by PPTRC policies and procedures, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.
- Treat every person and horse with respect. Help each other. We are *all* part of the team.

Confidentiality

We have a policy of confidentiality. Names, specific conditions or other personal details are to be held in strict confidence. By all means, share the stories, the successes and the warmth – but please leave out the personal details. This includes detailed information of participants, other Volunteers, donors, staff and instructors. All participants, Volunteers and instructors are asked to sign a PHOTO RELEASE so that photographs can be used for publications and on our website.

PPTRC clients are protected by HIPAA laws and protected health information should NOT be shared with any individual who does not have a “need to know”. Posting pictures or comments identifying a client and his/her disability to Social Media sites such as Facebook is not permitted and may be a HIPAA violation.

Emergencies

All Instructors are CPR and First Aid certified. Please follow the Instructor’s directions in the event of an emergency. Phones and emergency procedures are located in the PPTRC office. Emergency procedures are also posted in the Volunteer Room, Observation Room and barn. First Aid kits are located on the inside door to the tack room and the PPTRC Office.

Occurrences

An Occurrence is defined as an accident, event or circumstance that occurs on the premises of PPTRC or at another location conducting official PPTRC business that results in:

- * Injury or death to a participant, volunteer, employee, parent or other individual
- * Injury or death to a horse
- * A rider fall from a horse
- * PPTRC property damage
- * Property damage to a third party
- * Medical or mental health emergency

Volunteers are required to report to an instructor or PPTRC staff member if they witness a situation that may result in an occurrence or was a “near miss” occurrence so that preventative measures may be taken. An occurrence report will be filed by the instructor or staff member if an occurrence is reported to them or they witness such an occurrence.

Potential occurrences may be:

- * Natural hazard
- * Man-made hazards
- * Unsafe facilities operations
- * Unsafe equipment operations or damaged equipment
- * Disaster such as a fire or a tornado
- * Equine hazards
- * Unsafe or unacceptable personnel/participant conduct

Volunteer Orientation

Every new volunteer must attend an orientation. For orientation dates, call PPTRC at 719-495-3908 or visit our website at www.pptrc.org for details. Continuing education for volunteers is offered whenever possible.

Volunteer Comments and Feedback

Please share your ideas, questions and concerns to help us be the best EAAT program possible. We really do take your input seriously.



DESCRIPTION OF DISABILITIES

The following is a brief, non-medical description of some of the disabilities and conditions of riders. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability, but rather as a general overview, along with an explanation of how EAAT is beneficial.

Developmental Disabilities: A developmental disability is a condition that involves physical or mental impairments, develops before age 22, is expected to continue throughout the lifetime of the individual and is manifested through impairments in multiple domains of functioning. Many PPTRC riders are affected by Developmental Disabilities.

Developmental disabilities can be caused by numerous factors, including both prenatal and postnatal exposure to toxins, genes, malnutrition and diseases.

Most developmental disabilities can be placed into one or more of the following categories: neurological (autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation), sensory (blindness, deafness), metabolic (hypothyroidism) and degenerative (Rett Syndrome).

Autism/PDD (Pervasive Developmental Disorder) – A disorder of unknown origin in which the individual has difficulties with speech, social interaction and handling various sensory input. *Benefits:* Calming, social interaction, stimulation of speech and language skills.

Cerebral Palsy (CP) – A non-progressive disorder thought to be due in part to loss of oxygen to brain at or before birth. Speech, hearing, vision, learning and/or memory deficits may be present; however, normal intelligence is generally not affected unless further brain damage has occurred. There are three main types of cerebral palsy:

1. **SPASTIC:** Occurs in approximately 70 percent of all cases. It may impact motor function in one or more of the limbs. The muscles stay flexed and tense, and the facial muscle involvement may affect speech. *Benefits:* Riding may improve balance, posture, and the ability to relax. It also strengthens weakened muscles.
2. **ATHETOID:** Occurs in approximately 20 percent of all cases. It manifests itself in slow, jerky, involuntary movements of the arms and/or legs. It appears more obvious during period of emotional tension. Speech functions are usually involved. *Benefits:* Riding may improve balance, relaxation of muscles and posture.
3. **ATAXIC:** Occurs in approximately 10 percent of all cases. Weakness, poor coordination and difficulty with quick and fine motor movements result in loose, “rag-doll” appearance. *Benefits:* Riding may help strengthen and tighten loose muscles, while improving balance, posture and fine motor skills.

Down Syndrome – Also known as Trisomy 21, Trisomy G. It is one of the most widely identified hereditary disabilities. Individuals with Down’s Syndrome have a mean IQ of approximately 50, and are physically, mentally and developmentally delayed. *Benefits:* Riding improves expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture and coordination.

Emotional Disabilities (ED) – A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies. In general, people with emotional disabilities have trouble coping

with everyday life situations and interpersonal relationships. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, or paranoia may be exhibited. Benefits: Riding can provide structure to a disorganized thought pattern, increase feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provide appropriate social therapy.

Hearing Impaired – It may vary from mild to severe, and may be congenital or acquired. True deafness is defined as hearing loss in both ears severe enough to prevent communication through the ear, even with amplification. Communication with the deaf may involve lip reading, finger spelling (the manual alphabet) or sign language. Benefits: Riding helps increase self-confidence, balance, posture and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interactions.

Learning Disability (LD) – Learning disabled is a “catch-all” phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving, but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills. New learning generally takes time to be integrated and may need to be reviewed frequently to ensure retention. Benefits: Riding may increase attention span, group activity skills, cooperation, receptive and expressive language skills, posture and coordination.

Muscular Dystrophy (MD) – A hereditary disorder usually appearing in infancy or early childhood. It is characterized by progressive skeletal and muscle deterioration. There is no known cure for MD, which often reduces life expectancy. Benefits: Riding may slow muscle tone degeneration and maintain muscle function. Riding provides appropriate opportunities for social interaction and alleviating emotional depression.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) – A slowly progressive central nervous system disease usually occurring in adults between 20-40 years of age, and more frequently in women than men. Symptoms and manifestations include weakness in one or more limbs, visual impairment, minor gait disturbance, course of progression with periods of remission. There is no known cure for MS. Benefits: Riding maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides highly recommended opportunities for emotional therapy and social output.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – (PTSD) - An anxiety disorder that develops after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. Benefits: Participants relax in the presence of the horses, and are able to receive and reflect on feedback from the horse much more easily than in other settings.

Spina Bifida – A congenital defect where there is incomplete closure of the spinal column at birth. There are usually varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs; life expectancy is not necessarily shortened. Benefits: Riding improves balance, posture and muscle strength in the affected limbs.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) – Head injuries cause more disabilities in people under the age of 50 than any other neurological cause. Injuries may be closed head (intracranial bleeding causes pressure) or open penetration (profuse bleeding and open wounds ensure permanent damage). Deficits may include gross and fine motor skills, cognitive disabilities, speech, balance and psychological alterations. Social skills may be affected and appear inappropriate. Benefits: Riding improves balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, and cognitive deficits, such as sequencing and processing.

Visually Impaired – Visual deficits may range from severely limited to total, and may be caused by congenital defect, traumatic illness or injury. If the onset of impairment is from birth to five years of age, the person affected may have no visual memory. Impairments occurring after five years of age are accompanied by memories of people, places and things. Benefits: Riding helps orient the body in space and improves balance, posture, coordination and self-awareness.



FROM THE PARTICIPANTS PERSPECTIVE

Be sensitive to:

1. Separating us from our wheelchairs, crutches or braces. Do so only when asked. Do not sit or play with our wheelchairs or crutches without permission from us.
2. Helping us only when we request it. When we fall down or have difficulty outside the class period, allow us to solve the problem before asking if we need help.
3. Appropriate touching. Be aware of our level of tolerance. Volunteer and staff interaction with us should be conducted with our dignity in mind. Give warning of where your hands will be holding us whenever possible.
4. The commitment you have made: **WITHOUT YOU, WE CANNOT RIDE**

A HISTORY OF PPTRC

Pikes Peak Therapeutic Riding Center (PPTRC) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation committed to delivering the highest quality of therapeutic riding to people with disabilities. We are a professional, dedicated and responsive team working in partnership with the community.

PPTRC is the oldest, largest and the only PATH “premier accredited” center in southern Colorado. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) Originally called Acts 19:11 because of the “miracles” of therapeutic riding, PPTRC began in 1981 after several families and health professionals discovered the benefits of horseback riding for people with disabilities. Since becoming incorporated in 1982, we have provided equine-assisted therapy to riders facing physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral and learning challenges. Some of these challenges often are the result of cerebral palsy, developmental delays, autism, head injuries, Down syndrome, multiple sclerosis, and muscular dystrophy.

In 1999, it was apparent that we were outgrowing our five acres on the edge of Colorado Springs. After investigating numerous options ranging from partnerships with other agencies to limiting our offerings, we accepted the Pikes Peak Range Rider Foundation’s invitation to use a portion of their Latigo Heritage Center in northeast El Paso County. With the help of numerous Volunteers and generous donors, renovations were made and we moved into our new facility March 2004. Our primary focus is assisting people with disabilities in the greater Colorado Springs area.



VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

INSTRUCTORS AND STAFF DEPEND ON ALL VOLUNTEERS FOR ONGOING OBSERVATIONS. ALL DECISIONS AND STRATEGIES WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE INSTRUCTOR. THE INSTRUCTOR IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY.

SIDEWALKER JOB DESCRIPTION

SIDE WALKERS are responsible for the safety of riders. You may assist your rider with helmeting and mounting, at the instructor's direction. You guide your rider safely as he or she gets to know and care for the horse. During the class itself, your job is to provide safety and support for the rider, specifically to prevent the rider from falling off. Your instructor will give you directions on what type of hold to use with each rider.

- If a rider needs two side walkers, one will speak to the rider, reinforcing Instructor's directions and offering encouragement. The other side walker will remain silent to avoid confusion.
- Do not touch or influence the horse in any way; that is the horse leader's responsibility. It is disturbing for the horse to have unnecessary input.
- Be sure not to lean on the horse or rider, as it has a negative effect on them both.
- Observe the rider with your front or side vision at all times. Never become so relaxed that you are not aware of the rider, horse, leader, instructor and the activities around you.

HORSE LEADER JOB DESCRIPTION

HORSE LEADERS are responsible for the horse's safety and control at all times. Experience in horse handling is required. The horse, not the rider, is your responsibility. You reinforce rider's signals to the horse and maintain proper distance from other horses in the class while walking, changing directions, and passing. You don't interact directly with the rider; that is the side walker's job. This role takes extensive horse experience, and if you are new to horses you will be assigned to sidewalk first.

- Keep a minimum of two horse lengths between your horse and the horse in front of you.
- Always lead the horse next to its jaw, holding the lead line about 12 inches from the snap. Fold rather than wrap excess lead rope in your left hand. Make sure the lead rope is between the reins, not over them.
- Make turns slowly. Allow space for the side walkers when next to a fence or obstacle.
- If you experience problems, ask your instructor for direction. Do not attempt corrections without specific direction from staff. If you know what correction needs to be made, let your rider & sidewalkers know; for example "I'm going to back him up a few steps."



PPTRC Procedures for Horse Handling:

It is critical to the physical and mental well-being of our horses that we handle them in a mindful, consistent way. Please use these guidelines for the sake of our horses. Thank you!

√Leading the horse:

- Shopping cart method
- Always use the phrases “Walk on” and “Whoa”
- If the rider is able, wait for their cue to walk on and whoa, then reinforce
- If horse bites, use leading hand to block the horse
- Stay at horses head
- If the horse is walking too fast, slow down your own walk
- To speed up the horse, leader should “up” their own energy-can also use gentle tugging of lead rope or may need more motivation such as carrying a whip.
- Do not look at horse while leading
- If horse is turning in to leader, use pressure to push him back out
- Keep two horse lengths between horses
- While stopped (not at the mounting block), the leader should face the horse at a 45 degree angle, and not “play” with the horse
- Be aware of sidewalkers (walls, barrels, etc.)
- No chatting with sidewalkers or riders
- Your sidewalkers are supposed to focus on the rider. They are not to interact with the horse(touch, talk to, etc.) in any way.
- If a sidewalker does something inappropriate but not unsafe, take them aside after the class or ask your team leader to talk to them.
- If a sidewalker interferes with the horse in an unsafe way, you can immediately speak to the sidewalker, or let your instructor know.
- Face the horse to back it up
- When trotting, count 1-2-3 trot
- Know what a reverse on the diagonal is
- Know what a serpentine is
- Using a “long lead” means stepping back from the horse and letting the line out some in order for the rider to take more control, but it does not mean letting the lead line sag to the ground

√Mounting:

- Lead horse to letter “H” so you have a straight shot to mounting block
- Move into ramp using the step method, moving the horses head toward the ramp so the body follows
- Request that the sidewalkers do not try to push the horse over to get it closer to the ramp. It's better to lead him out and around again if he's not lined up close enough

- Try to get him to stand squarely, you may need to ask the instructor if she will wait for you to square him
- Stand at horses head on left side while mounting
- If horse gets in your space, firmly push him back out
- Walk the horse straight out of the ramp slowly, so that the instructor and sidewalkers can remain close
- Stop the horse at letter “C” so the instructor can check girth, stirrups, etc.

√In the arena:

- When going in or out of the arena announce “Gate” and wait for acknowledgement from somebody in the arena
- If gate to outside is being opened or closed, leaders should face their horses toward the gate (at “K” and “F”)
- When going in or out of the arena on bright days, leaders should stop the horse at the gate (or wherever the light change is) in order for the horses eyes to adjust to the light or shade
- To go around a slower horse, maintain a two horse distance and announce to the other team that you are “passing on right/left”

√Warming up:

- Use this time to work with your horse on speeding up and slowing down to match your speed
- Do serpentines
- Practice circles
- If the instructor has set up a course, take your horse through it
- Do only the posted warm-up. Do not do 7 Games, ground work. That is for schooling team members only

√Outside:

- Be in tune and observe the surrounding area (birds, dogs, cars, etc.)
- Watch out for trees and branches
- Stay close to group
- Don't let them graze

√Emergencies:

- If an emergency occurs, the leader should turn the horse toward the event
- If a horse is causing the emergency, the leader should move with the horse and give them space (know you cannot physically stop a horse from spooking)
- The instructor will review emergency procedures at the beginning of every session, and can review with others whenever necessary. Each of us is responsible for knowing the procedures!

√Gates:

- Swing your lead rope to drive away any horses hanging out by the gate.
- Make sure you have plenty of empty space around the gate area before entering or exiting – this prevents crowding and being in the middle of horse dominance behaviors.
- Open the gate into the pasture, this will help prevent escapes.
- Never let go of the gate, always keep one hand on it, or latch if you have to walk away.
- Ask the horse to wait until you go through the gate first.

✓Catching the horse:

- Get halter organized in your hands
- Approach from the shoulder. Talk to the horse quietly and get their attention on you as you approach
- Place (don't throw) the lead rope over the neck and hold both ends under the neck to secure the horse. Then halter using the "hug" technique (halter from the horses left side, not from the front)
- Be aware of other horses in the pen at all times and keep your spacing from them
- Watch for crowding at the gate
- Do not allow horses to graze

✓In the stall:

- One person at a time in the stall is best. If you are teaching someone, assist them, but only two people in the stall at once and ALWAYS both on the same side
- Never approach a horse from the rear; even the sweetest horse can kick if startled. Make sure the horse knows you are there. Only approach when you know they know you are there and they are facing you.
- Politely offer the back of your hand to smell and let them come to you. Don't go rushing in.
- Make sure you have plenty of empty space around the stall gate area before entering or exiting.
- Ask the horse to stop and wait until you go through the stall gate first.
- If you need to walk around the back of the horse in a small stall space, stay close to the hind end and keep one hand on the horse's hips as you move. If you are not comfortable with this, untie the horse, cross in front of him and retie. Never go under the lead rope while horse is tied up.
- We will demonstrate on changing sides in the stall
- Use an arms length of lead rope to tie the horse.
- Always halter and tie the horse up for grooming and tacking
- Never leave a horse untied with tack on
- When putting on the sidepull, untie the horse and put lead rope over the neck. Unbuckle the halter and buckle around neck while you put on the sidepull. Then remove the halter and switch the lead rope to the sidepull.
- If a horse's next class is over an hour away, turn him out.

✓Grooming:

- Schooling team and staff will certify hoof picking
- Focus grooming on saddle area only (back and belly) Use gentle-medium pressure and watch horse's response to your strokes. Leave manes and tails for barn buddies
- Bring any injuries, heat or swelling to Team Leader's attention

Who's that and what's their role?

There are many people who make up the team to provide Equine Assisted Activities at PPTRC.

Side walker - Is the closest point of contact for the rider in class. Provides support and safety, reinforces instructions when necessary and communicates to the instructor or therapist if there's a problem. They focus solely on the rider.

Horse Leader – An experienced handler, the leader is responsible for the horse. Reinforce rider commands when possible, follow directions from instructor, keep the horse focused on his job, communicate problems to instructor.



Team Leader – A volunteer who takes responsibility for overseeing the preparations for class, and supports the instructor in assigning tasks, coaching volunteers and more.

Instructor – PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor is ultimately responsible for the safety and procedures in class and in the barn. They are the horse professional in the arena and have the responsibility and the authority to direct all activities according to PATH and PPTRC standards. In a therapeutic riding class they are the only professional in the barn. They make the lesson plans, select horses and equipment, direct the activities in the class and troubleshoot any problems. In Hippotherapy they team with a therapist, supporting the therapist's treatment plan by monitoring horse behavior, equipment use, appropriate activities, volunteer coaching, consulting with therapists and more.



Therapist – May be a Physical, Occupational or Speech therapist, specially trained in Hippotherapy. Is responsible for choosing and directing treatment activities for Hippotherapy patients. Therapists can direct volunteers on what kind of interaction is needed with their patient, such as a support hold or how to refocus the person if needed. Typically they collaborate with the instructor on horse and tack selection.



Mental Health Therapist – A licensed professional such as a PsyD or LPC with advanced education in Mental Health counseling. Partners with a PATH Intl certified Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning (ES), the client and horse to deliver Equine Assisted Psychotherapy. The Volunteer oversees the physical and emotional well-being of the horse during EFP.

Equine Manager – Oversees all aspects of herd health, behavior and training. Supervises the Team Leads and schooling team in horse training and handling. These horse people are the ones who will help when we have any questions or concerns about handling the horses. They are the best resource for support with horses!

