

HEARTLAND THERAPEUTIC RIDING, INC.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

The mission of Heartland Therapeutic Riding, Inc. is to provide therapy through the use of the horse; to offer people with disabilities an opportunity to increase their potential for fulfillment.



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VOLUNTEERS ARE VITALLY IMPORTANT

A volunteer is an individual who gives the gift of his/her time for the benefit of others. The volunteer plays a crucial role and takes an active part in making the program work. Many riders, especially in the beginning stages of riding, simply could not ride without the assistance of volunteers. Some of the riders need as many as three volunteers all working together, so you can begin to understand how valuable your volunteer time is.

A VOLUNTEER ...

- Is the SAFETY MONITOR and the extra set of hands for the instructor or therapist.
- Should be attentive to surroundings at all times.
- Should know the responsibilities and expectations of a leader and a side walker.
- Should be familiar with all Emergency Procedures.
- Should try to volunteer on a regular basis in order to experience the benefits of the program. One of these benefits is the special bond made with riders and other volunteers.
- Must be at least 14 years old, physically fit to walk approximately one hour and jog occasionally. Must be able to hold arms up at shoulder height to support a rider when necessary.
- Should NOT HANDLE THE RIDERS unless given specific instructions by the instructor or therapist. Handling a rider without knowledge of his/her disability could be harmful to the rider.
- Should be prompt and dependable.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

You should arrive at least 15 minutes before the class is scheduled to start. Upon arrival each time you come to volunteer, you will want to do the following:

1. Put on your name badge. Please leave it in the office when you're through.
2. Let office personnel know you have arrived.
3. Check the posted volunteer schedule to see what rider you will be working with. NOTE: This can change with rider cancellations or at the instructor's discretion.
4. Following Sports riding classes complete the "Volunteer Input - Team Evaluation" Form.
5. On the "Class Volunteer Hours" sheet, posted in the Volunteer Coordinator's office, record the time (in hours/minutes) you volunteer on that day. If you are a Horse Handler, record your hours on the "Barn Volunteer Hours" sheet on the bulletin board outside the Instructor's Office.

SCHEDULING PROCEDURES

- **ALL** scheduling of volunteers is done through the **Volunteer Coordinator**.
- If you have a last-minute emergency and cannot make it for your scheduled time, please call **Heartland at (913) 897-3939**. If there is no answer, please leave a voicemail message.
- If you need to make a change in your schedule that is NOT last minute, please write your name on the date on the large calendar in the Volunteer Coordinator's office or contact **Heartland at (913) 897-3939**.
- If you are going to be late for your scheduled class, please notify Heartland and let us know your estimated time of arrival.
- In the event that any or all classes must be **canceled** at Heartland, a staff member will notify all volunteers as early as possible. Please make sure we have a contact number where you can be reached at the last minute. If you have not heard from us and have questions about weather conditions, please call Heartland.

SAFETY POLICIES

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL: Are not allowed within any structure on Heartland's property. Volunteers are asked not to consume alcohol immediately prior to coming to Heartland.

PARKING: Designated parking areas are reserved for Heartland riders. Volunteers can park along the fence in front of the entrance or in the north parking lot behind the barn.

CELLULAR PHONES: Are not permitted in the riding arenas or on the trails.

REFRESHMENTS: Refrain from chewing gum or candy at the barn. Water is available in the Volunteer Coordinator's office area. Stay well hydrated!

PETS: Please leave pets at home.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS: Only certified personnel and trained volunteers are allowed in the barn. All visitors should remain in the parking area and designated viewing areas. An adult must attend children of volunteers while volunteers are in classes or working in the barn.

NO ONE PERSON WITH ONE RIDER: All volunteers are asked to never be alone with a rider. Should you be asked to take a rider somewhere, make sure you are in a group situation at all times.

EQUIPMENT: Must be put in its designated place after each lesson.

FEEDING HORSES: Only the Equine Manager and the Barn Manager are allowed to feed the horses. If you bring them a snack, leave it in the office with the horse's name on it and we will be sure the horse gets it.

LISTEN TO THE INSTRUCTOR: At all times. You must be aware of your rider's instructions.

RIDER: Make sure your rider is wearing proper attire before taking him/her into the barn (long pants, sturdy shoes with a heel, helmet and safety belt).

Only the rider and volunteers for the current class are permitted beyond the waiting area. Once students are prepared for class, the volunteer must see that the student remains in the waiting area until his/her class is called.

VOLUNTEER ATTIRE: Comfortable clothing is a must. We suggest walking/jogging attire and jeans. Closed toe shoes or boots are a must at all times. Please avoid dangling jewelry, large hats and ponytails within grabbing distance.

EMERGENCIES

All staff, instructors and therapists are certified in American Red Cross techniques of immediate first aid and CPR. All volunteers, interns and assistants should follow instructions given by the Certified Emergency Personnel. First aid kits are located in the barn and the Instructor's office.

PREEXISTING WEATHER CONDITIONS: Riding classes will be canceled ahead of schedule in cases where weather plays a role in the safety of our riders or in the safety of our volunteers and horses. Some instances may be: tornado warnings, high heat index, icy or snowy road conditions, electrical storms, cold temperatures and wind conditions. All factors will be considered and a determination as to the status of the classes will be made.

UNEXPECTED WEATHER CONDITIONS: Should electrical storms or tornado warnings occur during riding time, classes will be delayed until safe conditions are restored.

- **Electrical Storms:** Riders will dismount using normal dismounting procedures. Volunteers and riders will remain in the waiting area until further notice.
- **Tornado Warning:** Riders will dismount using normal dismounting procedures. Volunteers and riders will proceed to the basement of the house (shelter).

NOTE: In the event of a “**sudden emergency**”, *horse leaders, interns and staff* will hold the horse's head. *Side walkers* will help the instructor **dismount the riders in the ring** and proceed to shelter.

FIRE: In case of fire within the riding facilities, the procedures below will be followed:

- At the *Instructor's direction*, the volunteer will go to the head of the horse; rider will dismount in the arena.
- At the *Instructor's direction*, riders and volunteers will vacate the premises immediately.
- At the *Instructor's direction*, a call will be made to 911.
- Horses will be turned out to north pasture.
- Personnel will vacate the premises.
- Further instructions will be given by the Fire Department.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SIDE WALKER: A person who walks beside the horse and offers stability to the rider. This person must be attentive to the rider and the instructor.

HORSE LEADER: A person who is responsible for controlling the horse for the rider.

FLOATER: An extra person in a class who helps the instructor and fills in for absent volunteers in that class.

HORSE HANDLER: A person who is trained to be a side walker and a horse leader, but chooses to volunteer in the barn. This person is responsible for grooming, tacking and exercising horses in preparation for classes. Other responsibilities may include: equipment cleaning, general barn maintenance (picking stalls, watering, wiping stall bars, sweeping) and caring for horses after class.

All individuals must complete one day of training to be considered for a volunteer position in a class. An additional training session is required to be a horse handler.

VOLUNTEER TERMINATION POLICY

Volunteering at Heartland is a privilege. We do appreciate all the skill, energy and commitment volunteers bring to our program.

Please understand, for the safety, security and continuation of excellence in programming, an inattentive volunteer, or one who cannot perform the functions or duties of a volunteer, will be relieved of his/her volunteer position.

Absolutely no intoxicated or chemically impaired volunteer will be allowed to volunteer at Heartland. If there is a question, Heartland staff will err on the side of caution, and will not permit the individual to volunteer.

IMPORTANT FORMS

The following forms must be filled out and returned to the Volunteer Coordinator prior to your first volunteer opportunity. **Without these forms, we are unable to allow you to volunteer.**

Please use the following list as a check sheet for completed forms:

- Volunteer Information and Health History
- Handbook
- Photo Release
- Confidentiality
- Background Information
- Volunteer Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Volunteer Liability Release

YOU ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF OUR PROGRAM! WE COULD NOT FUNCTION WITHOUT OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS!