



**HEARTLAND
THERAPEUTIC RIDING**

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Heartland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box, Stilwell, KS 66085-0391

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WELCOME TO HEARTLAND THERAPEUTIC RIDING!

We are so excited that you are participating in an equine assisted activity at Heartland. We look forward to getting to know you and helping you achieve your goals through equine assisted activities and therapies. As a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center, Heartland Therapeutic Riding offers the highest quality of safety and services to our participants.

With a therapy horse's non-judgmental approach, quiet trust and nurturing nature, participants are highly motivated to try new things. With encouragement, they can learn, practice and achieve goals, which lead to reaching their full potential. All Heartland horses have been specifically selected for their temperament and ability to provide a safe and trusting relationship. Ongoing training assures they remain trustworthy partners for participants in our programs.

In addition to well-schooled horses, all instructors at Heartland are certified by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH Intl.) and our therapists are certified by The American Hippotherapy Association (AHA), assuring that safe, goal oriented practices are in place in all our programs. As with our horses, our instructors and therapists are also in continual training to improve the quality of their service to participants. Their greatest teachers are their participants! They learn something new every day as they not only teach, but develop a loving, trusting relationship with their participants. They are always excited to learn something new! Open communication is vital to the success of all participants. You are always welcome to discuss your concerns with your instructor, therapist or Heartland's Executive Director.

We hope your time at Heartland will be rewarding. We know it will be for us. We look forward to witnessing the positive changes that will occur as we work together. Miracles can, and do happen, on the back of a horse!

MISSION

The mission of Heartland Therapeutic Riding, Inc. (HTR) is to serve children and adults with disabilities and to improve quality of life through equine-assisted activities and therapies. We are committed to changing lives, one ride at a time.

HEARTLAND STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Please call our main office number 913-897-3939 regarding absences or cancelations.

Position	Name	Office	Alt. Phone	Email
Executive Director	Kandi LaMar	913-897-3939	316-304-3865	Kandi@htrmail.org
Program Manager	Bonnie Bruns	913-897-3939		Bonnie@htrmail.org
Therapist & Instructor	Christine Tholen	913-897-3939		Chris@htrmail.org
Instructor	Meg Stafford	913-897-3939		Meg@htrmail.org
Instructor	Katie Loomis	913-897-3939		Katiep@htrmail.org
Volunteer Manager	Barb Sipes	913-897-3939		Barb@htrmail.org
Barn Superintendent	Sara Royster	913-897-3939		Sara@htrmail.org

BENEFITS OF OUR PROGRAMS

Equine assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) assist people with physical, cognitive and emotional challenges to achieve a quality of life that is enhanced and improved. Based on input from doctors, therapists, teachers, and parents, the participant's individual goals are designed to complement ongoing therapy and education. The benefits of EAAT are threefold:

1. **Physical** - The three-dimensional motion of the horse provides the participant hip, back and core action that simulates natural walking. Riding relaxes and strengthens muscles and improves body tone, posture, balance, joint mobility, and coordination.
2. **Emotional** - Contact with horses and horsemanship training provides a non-competitive setting for learning. New abilities, self-discipline, and improved concentration build self-confidence and emotional well-being. Participation in our programs can also foster a foundation of trust and emotional connection between both animals and humans alike.
3. **Social** - Horseback riding nurtures a positive self-image. Participants may, for the first time in their lives, experience some independence but also a sense of being part of a team. It is an opportunity for them to interact with instructors, other participants and their volunteer team, building relationships that will further enhance their positive self-image.

Heartland serves children and adults with a variety of different mental, physical and emotional disabilities. Instructors and therapists design and monitor individualized goals for each participant to address their physical, emotional, and social needs ensuring progress for all participants. Working towards their goals encourages each participant to be the best he or she can be, on and off the horse.

THE VOLUNTEER TEAM

The Volunteer Team is what makes EAAT possible for many participants. Without a volunteer team, many individuals would not be able to participate. Leaders and side-walkers form a team to support their participant during a lesson or hippotherapy session. We are thankful for all of our volunteer teams and the opportunities they provide for our participants.

The best-case scenario is to provide a long-term volunteer team for each participant, so both the participants and volunteers can benefit from continuity and establish a lasting relationship of trust with one another. A professional, safety-conscious environment for the participants, volunteers, staff and horses is also of major importance to Heartland. Volunteers play a key role in achieving this goal. All individuals must complete Heartland volunteer training to be considered for any volunteer position. Additional training is required for specific volunteer positions so you can rest assured that your volunteers are qualified to assist you in reaching your goals while maintaining the highest safety standards possible.

HEARTLAND PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Heartland's goal is to provide safe and productive equine assisted activities for all participants. If we cannot safely accommodate the participant's needs, or the act of riding or the environment will aggravate the individual's condition, equine activities may not be appropriate. As a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center, Heartland adheres to all guidelines and standards set forth by PATH Intl and AHA. In conjunction with PATH Intl. and AHA guidelines, we have established the following eligibility requirements for our programs (including, but not limited to):

Medical Release Statement: All participants are required to have a Medical Release Statement signed by a physician prior to participation. Medical forms require an annual update for continued participation. Any participant with a Medical Release Statement that is more than 12 months old will not be allowed to ride.

Diagnosis: All participants in our Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy classes should have a diagnosed special need/disability. The disability can be cognitive, physical or emotional in nature.

Age Policy: Participants must have a minimum developmental age of 2 years old for early intervention hippo-therapy and 6 years old for therapeutic riding. There is no a maximum age.

Weight Policy: The maximum weight for participants cannot exceed 180 lbs. The weight limit may be adjusted based on the rider's physical abilities, the equine available, and the ability of staff and volunteers to safely support the participant. Heartland staff will evaluate the participant's weight and physical abilities to determine if riding is a safe and an appropriate activity.

Precautions/Contraindications: Prior to starting any program, participants are evaluated on an individual basis with regard to precautions and contraindications as outlined by PATH Intl. and AHA guidelines. If the movement associated with EAAT will cause a decrease in the participant's function, an increase in pain or generally aggravate the participant's medical condition or if the equine assisted activities are detrimental to the participant or the equine in any way, equine activities may be contraindicated. Heartland staff will make the final decision to approve or deny participation.

Further Considerations: These may include the experience and expertise of the available instructor or therapist to address the needs of the participant, possessing a suitable equine for the participant, proper equipment, and availability of the appropriate number of volunteers for the participant. In addition, consideration will also be given to whether staff and volunteers are able to **safely manage the participant in any situation, including an emergency dismount.**

Botox Injections: The minimum time between a participant's botox injection and participation in our program is 48 hours.

Participant Dismissal

It is at the discretion of Heartland staff to dismiss a participant from the program. Participants or their families, who do not adhere to the rules, policies and procedures, or fail to meet the guidelines for eligibility are subject to dismissal. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct endangering another participant, staff, volunteer, equine, themselves or other.
- Repeated failure to follow established guidelines or policies.
- A gain in weight above the maximum capacity of the program horses available at the time.
- Repeated absences without notification.
- Failure to pay in accordance with Heartland's Payment Policy stated in this handbook.
- Achieving a proficiency in riding such that the participant would be better served in a traditional riding program for non-disabled participants or hippotherapy is no longer beneficial to participant.
- A change in medical condition in which it is no longer safe or beneficial for a participant to continue.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Planned and Unplanned Absences

If you are going to be absent from a lesson or therapy session, please inform staff as soon as you are aware of the date. There is a calendar in the volunteer office, please write the name of the participant and the dates you will be absent.

In the event you are unable to come at the last minute due to illness or family emergency, please call Heartland at (913) 897-3939 as soon as possible so that we can try to notify the instructor and volunteers. If there is no answer, please leave a detailed voice mail.

Cancelations

If your class at Heartland is canceled, a staff member will attempt to contact you by email and phone as early as possible. **Please make sure we have current contact information where you can be reached at the last minute.** If you are unsure about the weather, please check your email, voicemail and text messages and/or call the office to confirm that classes are being held.

The following are indicators that classes might be cancelled:

- Blue Valley Schools are closed due to inclement weather
- The wind chill is forecast to be 25 degrees or less
- The heat index is forecast to be 95 degrees or higher
- A threat of severe weather (Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Warning) at our location

What to Wear

For safety as well as comfort, participants should wear comfortable clothes that will allow them to move easily. Long pants are required to protect your legs from being rubbed by the saddle. Nylon "windbreaker" type pants are discouraged, as they are very slick. Dress in layers that you can shed as you ride, especially during cooler months. Please zip jackets and secure any loose items. Avoid dangly earrings, necklaces and bracelets that can hamper your movements, get caught on the saddle, or distract the horse.

The best footwear for riding is boots, hard soled shoes with a small heel. Athletic shoes may also be worn. Footwear must have closed toes and backs and be sturdy. High-heeled shoes, sandals and open heel shoes such as "Crocs" or clogs are not appropriate. **If you do not have appropriate footwear, you will not be allowed to ride.**

Helmets

All mounted participants must wear an (ASTM-SEI) approved helmet or acceptable alternative helmet (as indicated in the PATH Intl. Guidelines for Alternative Helmet Use). Heartland provides approved helmets for all participants.

If you choose to provide your own helmet please speak with your instructor or therapist first. Helmets must be inspected by a PATH Intl. Certified Instructor for approval to ensure the helmet bears the ASTM-SEI certified seal and is no more than 5 years old. If the use of an ASTM-SEI approved helmet has been tried and is not appropriate, then an acceptable alternative helmet may be used at the discretion of therapist and PATH Intl. Certified Instructor, however a consent form must be signed by the participant or their parent/guardian.

Arrival

Please arrive ten minutes prior to class time so you will be ready to mount at the scheduled time. Arriving more than fifteen minutes early is highly discouraged as the barn is busy and your volunteers will not be prepared to assist you. Upon arrival you should be greeted by one of your Volunteer Team members who will assist with finding your helmet, putting it on and preparing for your lesson. Please make sure your shoes are tied and jackets are zipped and any other loose articles are either removed or secured prior to mounting. **If you are more than ten minutes late, you may not be allowed to participate!**

Observing Lessons

We encourage parents/guardians to observe their participants' lessons. Observation areas are located beside the arenas. Access the observation area for the indoor arena through the outside door. If other children accompany you, please keep them under close supervision at all times. Please do not allow them to climb on the gate, make loud noises, throw things or try to get the participant's attention during lessons. No animals are allowed in the waiting area or the viewing area. We ask that service dogs stay out the viewing area, as they might scare the horses.

We ask that minimal interaction take place between the participant and observer. It is important for the participant's safety to focus on the instructor or therapist and their Volunteer Team during lessons. Interference from observers may compromise the safety of the participant if they become distracted and are not focused on the lesson. If your participant tries to communicate with you, please redirect their attention to the instructor or therapist.

LESSON FEES AND PAYMENT POLICY

Lesson Fees and Scholarships

- Therapeutic Riding is \$40.00 per lesson (\$320 per 8-week session)
- Hippotherapy is \$55.00 per therapy session (\$440 per 8-week session)
- Scholarships are available based on financial need

Heartland offers financial assistance in the form of Participant Scholarships. Our desire is to make EAAT affordable for individuals who would benefit from our programs. Heartland encourages anyone who wishes to participate in our programs but cannot afford full tuition to apply for a scholarship. Scholarship applications are available upon request.

Participant Payment Policy

- Invoices for the upcoming session will be sent by mail or e-mail to participants (or their parents/guardians) approximately three weeks before the start of the session.
- A \$50 deposit will be due at the time specified for each session attended which will go toward the rider fees for the corresponding session.
- A 5% session fee discount will be applied, if the session fee is paid in full on or before the participant's first scheduled lesson. This discount is not available for payments received by HTR after the first scheduled lesson. This discount is not available if a scholarship has been awarded.
- If a participant desires to pay in installments:
 - Two installments may be made: One-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the full session fee is due by the participant's first scheduled lesson. The other one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) is due by the fourth scheduled lesson.
 - If an installment is not received by the due date, the participant will not be allowed to participate in the remainder of the session until that installment is paid.
- If a participant has not paid the full amount due for a session by the last day of the session, the participant will not be allowed to participate in the next session and will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list, if the participant still desires to participate in HTR's program in the future.
- Participants will receive credits only for lessons that are cancelled by HTR. Participants will not receive credits for lessons missed due to illness, vacations, etc. of the participant or parent/guardian even when advance notice is given to HTR.
- If a participant is a "no call-no show" three times within a one year period, the participant will be dismissed from HTR's program. A minimum of two hours advance notice to HTR is required otherwise it will be considered a "no call-no show".
- Payments can be made by check, cash or credit card. If a credit card is used, a handling fee will be applied.

GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

Our top priority at Heartland is to ensure the personal safety of everyone on the property. Please take a few moments to review our policies on parental involvement and general safety:

- A caregiver, guardian or a parent must remain on site during the while the student is at Heartland. No exceptions.
- Smoking, drugs or alcohol is not allowed anywhere on Heartland property during operating hours.
- Please leave pets at home. Service dogs are allowed in the waiting area and outside, but not in the arena viewing area. Service dogs must be on a leash at all times.
- Cell phone usage is discouraged in viewing area and participant waiting area.
- Children must be supervised at all times. Do not allow them to climb on the gates, throw objects or engage in loud play in the arena viewing area. They must remain within sight of a responsible adult.
- Only staff, trained volunteers and participants are allowed in the barn or arena. All others must remain in the waiting or viewing areas, unless escorted by a Heartland staff member.
- Please do not feed the horses without permission from designated staff.
- Chewing gum while riding is a choking hazard. Participants will be asked to dispose of gum before mounting.
- If you choose to watch a participant from the viewing area located beside the arena, please do not make conversation with the participant or instructor during a lesson. If participant attempts to engage you in conversation, please politely direct their attention back to the instructor or therapist.
- If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns about any aspect of the program, please talk with your participant's instructor, therapist or another Heartland staff member.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

All staff, instructors and therapists are certified in techniques of immediate first aid and CPR. All volunteers, interns and assistants should follow instructions given by the certified emergency personnel. A basic human first aid kit is located in the barn near the tack room and major medical supplies are located in the marked cabinet in the instructor's office.

Emergency Medical Procedures

A. Major Injury

1. The instructor appoints someone to:
 - Phone emergency number and read directions to Heartland located by the phone.
 - Remain at the barn area to direct emergency vehicle and reassure people in the arena.
 - Get the injured person's file from the office and give it to the instructor.
2. The instructor appoints a volunteer to:
 - Go to the road and wait for the emergency vehicle to arrive.
 - Stop driver and have lights and sirens turned off so the horses and participants will not be frightened.
 - Tell the driver where the accident is and how to get there.
3. Instructor will decide who will remain with the injured person and who will take the class to the safest confined area away from the accident.
4. The class will continue in an orderly manner or return to the barn.

B. Minor Injury

1. The needs of the individual will be met as directed by the instructor or HTR Staff.
2. If the injured person can't or shouldn't walk, a car or cart may be driven to the area, if possible.
3. The rest of the class should continue in an orderly manner.

Weather

Riding classes will be canceled in advance in cases when current or approaching weather conditions may impact the safety of our participants, volunteers or horses. Some instances may be: tornado warnings, high heat index, icy or snowy road conditions, electrical storms, extreme cold temperatures and wind conditions. If classes are canceled, phone and email notification will occur as early as possible to the participants and volunteers.

Unexpected Weather Conditions

Heartland shall maintain a functional weather alert radio that is monitored when inclement weather is forecasted. If electrical storms or tornado warnings occur during class times, classes will be delayed until conditions are safe. In the event of a **sudden emergency or eminent danger**, horse leaders or staff members will hold the horses. Side walkers will **dismount the participants in the ring** and proceed to shelter

- **Electrical Storms:** Participants will dismount using normal dismounting procedures. Horse leaders will tend to horses and side walkers will escort participants back to waiting area.
- **Thunder Storms:** Participants will dismount using normal dismounting procedures. Horse leaders will tend to horses and side walkers will escort participants back to waiting area. Riders will not re-mount until there has been no thunder or lightening for a minimum of 30 minutes.

- **Tornado Warning:** Participants will dismount using normal dismounting procedures. Horse leaders will tend to horses and side walkers will escort participants. If conditions outside permit, all persons in the facility who are physically capable will proceed to the designated shelter area. Anyone unable to do so will proceed to the bathrooms until weather conditions are safe.

Directions to tornado shelter:

- Proceed to waiting area and exit through main door.
- Walk across parking lot towards the house and follow the sidewalk to the garage.
- Enter garage through the big garage door then go through small door in garage into basement.
- Everyone will remain there until the all clear signal has been given and it is safe to leave the basement.

Fire

In case of fire within the riding facility, at the Instructor’s direction, the procedures below will be followed:

- Participants will be dismounted.
- Participants and volunteers will vacate the premises immediately and proceed to outdoor arena.
- 911 will be called.
- Horses and other animals will be turned out of the barn.
- All staff will vacate the premises and proceed to the outdoor arena.
- Further instructions will be given by the Fire Department

RECEIPT OF PARTICIPANT MANUAL

Heartland Therapeutic Riding operates under the guidelines established by PATH Intl. These guidelines allow us to provide a quality riding experience while ensuring the safety of all participants. Please read this manual thoroughly and sign and return the lower portion of this page acknowledging that you have received, read and understand it. Please contact us at 913-897-3939 or info@htrmail.org with questions.

Thank you for your cooperation!

PARTICIPANT MANUAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Participant’s Name: _____
 (Please print)

I have read and understand the Heartland Participant Handbook and agree to the guidelines and policies set forth in it.

 (Signature of participant or parent/ legal guardian if participant is under 18 years old) (Date)

If signed by parent or legal guardian, please print your name: _____