

Pegasus Project Therapeutic Riding Program



Volunteer Manual

Mission Statement

The Pegasus Project therapeutic riding program provides quality therapeutic riding and equine related activities to people living with special physical and emotional needs to improve their health and well-being. We are dedicated to opening playful and productive avenues in therapy to our riders with an animal that we love and respect.

Located at Tumbleweed Ranch 4680 HWY 12 Yakima WA 98903
www.pegasusrides.com

Welcome. We are happy that you have decided to volunteer with the Pegasus Project. Pegasus Project relies on volunteers such as you. Volunteers are a vital part of our program! We are looking forward to having you join our team.

The Pegasus Project Confidentiality Policy

At the Pegasus Project Therapeutic Riding Center all staff and volunteers shall preserve the right of confidentiality for all individuals in our program. All persons are expected to keep confidential all medical, social, referral and personal information regarding all riders and their families.

This volunteer manual is meant to be a guide and reference for you. We appreciate that you take the time to read and understand all of the information that is provided. It is meant to increase your knowledge and confidence level while involved with our program. We want you to know that you are a valuable asset to us and we appreciate your time and expertise.

PEGASUS PROJECT THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

Thank you for your interest in our volunteer program. The Pegasus Project is a 501© 3 non-profit organization serving children and adults with disabilities. We provide a unique, recreational approach to therapy through the use of the horse.

Pegasus Project Therapeutic Riding Center's mission is to provide quality therapeutic riding and equine related activities.

Pegasus Project was founded in 2003, with 8 riders, one instructor, an imaginative director and advisory board for an initial 8 week session at the beautiful Snow Mountain Ranch. The Pegasus Project has grown to serve over 40 riders. We now have a Hippo-therapy program and four 8 week sessions yearly. We have a beautiful home at Tumbleweed Ranch and a new indoor arena for a year round program.

WHY therapeutic riding? **WHAT** makes a horse so special? **WHO** are the riders? **HOW** do they ride? **WHAT** can you do as a volunteer to help? This manual is designed to help introduce you to our program. Please look at the information, ask questions, and observe a few classes.

At Pegasus Project, our focus is on the ability level of each rider, not his or her disability. The results are quite remarkable. Fun games, obstacle courses, and trail rides are just a few of the activities in which our riders participate. These riders are an inspiration to all who have ever wanted a horse and to all who have experienced the joy of riding themselves.

INTRODUCTION TO NARHA

NARHA

North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) is a non-profit organization, headquartered in Denver, Colorado, that exists to promote equine activities for individuals with disabilities.

Formed in 1969, NARHA members are individuals and centers that participate in therapeutic riding programs. Individual members are volunteers, riding instructors, disabled riders and their families, physicians, therapists, teachers, researchers and concerned individuals. The NARHA centers are the heart of the riding for the disabled community as they bring together all the necessary individuals, horses, equipment and program knowledge. NARHA centers range from small, one-person programs serving a half-dozen riders, to large operations with several instructors serving up to 200 riders each week.

NARHA promotes therapeutic riding primarily through public awareness campaigns and educational events. Above all, NARHA is concerned with safety and service to members and riders. Consequently, NARHA has developed several programs that are designed to benefit everyone concerned with therapeutic riding.

Accreditation

This program assures that the NARHA center is running a safe and medically appropriate program and that it is following the NARHA Standards. All NARHA centers are expected to complete the accreditation process within the time frame prescribed. If they do not, they are no longer eligible for membership or insurance. NARHA centers must renew their accreditation periodically. The application includes paperwork, photos of the facility and equipment, and samples of forms used at the center.

Instructor Certification

This program provides criteria for competency and a process to recognize levels of capability for NARHA instructors to achieve professional certification. Three levels of certification are available: Registered, Advanced and Master Instructor.

For more information about NARHA, please visit their website @
www.narha.org

INTRODUCTION TO THERAPEUTIC RIDING

Therapeutic riding uses equine-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities. At Pegasus, Therapeutic Riding encompasses two unique programs:

1. Sport/Recreational Horsemanship Riding

Is a 45 min long lesson with 1 - 5 riders similar in cognitive age and ability. The lesson focuses on increasing individual riding skills while gaining a therapeutic benefit, as well as increasing muscle tone, strength, self esteem, improve coordination and balance, social interaction, communication and development of a sense of control. Class activities include learning riding skills, trail rides, and group activities such as competitive games. Students can also expand their horsemanship skills by learning how to help groom and tack their horses (as appropriate).

2. Hippo therapy

Hippo therapy consists of intensive 1 on 1 therapy sessions with a licensed therapist who utilizes the horse as a therapy tool. Physically, the horse moves in a three-dimensional pattern similar to the action of the human pelvis during normal, upright movement and cannot be duplicated in traditional clinical settings. Hippo therapy offers an increased potential for walking and normal hip development for individuals with disabilities. Upper body benefits include improved hand/eye coordination, posture, and balance.

Pegasus staff periodically reviews the offered programs to determine any changes or additions that are necessary to meet our riders' needs. The decision to add a new program is also dependent on the available resources (volunteers, horses, staff, arena time, and money).

VOLUNTEER PAPERWORK

All paperwork must be completed before volunteers may begin, and parental consent and signatures are needed for those under 18 years of age. As required by state and NARHA standards volunteer paperwork and background checks are updated yearly. Current volunteers should let the office know if there is a change of address, phone numbers, email, as well as changes in health or recent physical injuries. All volunteer information is kept confidential; we do not give out names, addresses, email addresses, or phone numbers unless we have the permission from the volunteer. However, we do provide the volunteer addresses to the rider with whom they work. The riders, parents, guardians and group homes like to thank the volunteers who helped their son/daughter or client at the end of each quarter. These people also know the information they

receive is confidential. As a volunteer, if you do not wish this information given out, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know.

As a volunteer, we ask that you keep the identity of the rider you work with confidential. Some of our riders, children and adults, may be under protective custody, a high-profile client, or a popular individual, and in consideration of all of our rider's right to privacy, we ask that you use appropriate discretion when outside of Pegasus. Talking to friends and family about your experience at Pegasus is fine; however, we ask that you do not use the last name of a particular rider.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Rights

- The right to be treated as a co-worker; not just free help.
- The right to know as much about the organization as possible; its policies, procedures, people and educational programs it may offer.
- The right to train for the job – attending thoroughly planned and effectively presented training sessions.
- The right to continuing education on the job as a follow up to initial training, information about new developments, and training for greater responsibility.
- The right to sound guidance and direction by someone who is experienced, well informed, thoughtful, patient, and who has the time to invest in giving guidance.
- The right to work in a place that is designated for the type of work to be done.
- To work in a place that is orderly, clean and safe.
- The right to advancement to assignments of more responsibility; to transfer from one experience to another.
- The right to be heard, to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions and have respect shown for an honest opinion.
- The right to recognition and appreciation for work that is done.

Responsibilities

- To be sincere in the offer of service and believe in the value of the job to be done.
- To maintain the dignity and integrity of the people with whom they work.
- To perform duties as assigned by staff members.
- To accept the guidance and decisions of the staff, and be accountable to the staff.
- To be willing to learn and participate in orientations, training programs, meetings and to continue to learn on the job.
- To understand the function of the paid staff; maintain a smooth working relationship with them and stay within the bounds of volunteer responsibility.
- Be aware and prepared for emergency drills and evacuation procedures during scheduled lessons.

- To keep Pegasus Project rider information confidential.

VOLUNTEER CONDUCT PLEDGE

Volunteers in the Pegasus program are vitally important and highly valued. You will have opportunities to meet the families of riders you work with, as well as helping in special events. We welcome you to our program and will give you the necessary training needed to assist our riders, care for the horses, and become capable representatives of the Pegasus Project mission. The following guidelines outline what behavior is expected while performing as a Pegasus Project Volunteer.

Volunteers must:

- Complete an application and liability release before working with horses and/or riders.
- Attend a volunteer training session.
- Be at least 14 years of age and have parental consent if under 18.
- Remain committed throughout the quarter you signed up for, and call ahead when you are unable to make it to your class.
- Not possess, use, or be under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs while in any Pegasus Project class or volunteering at any Pegasus Project event, meeting, or activity.
- Not use obscene or discriminatory language in any Pegasus Project class, event, meeting, or activity.
- Dress conservatively and appropriately at all times when on Pegasus Project premises and while volunteering for a Pegasus Project event.
- Handle Pegasus Project horses as you are trained at Pegasus Project, which includes to never strike, hit, slap, jerk, or discipline the program horses in any manner.
- Report the mistreatment of the horses to Pegasus Project staff immediately.
- Respect individual confidentiality, rights, safety, and property of others whether they are staff, riders, or fellow volunteers.
- Not discriminate in any practices on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, political association, sexual orientation, age, mental condition or disability.
- Always inform the Volunteer Coordinator or the Program Director if there is a change of address, phone number or emergency contact.
- Inform staff immediately if you have an injury or condition that would compromise safety to yourself, the rider, or others during your scheduled volunteer time.
- **Turn off cell phones** to avoid being distracted while with a rider or working in the barn.

- Follow established processes to report horse behaviors which are out of the norm to your instructor or therapist before you leave the Pegasus Project property for the day.

Your time and dedication our essential to our success and we thank you for your efforts!

REASONS FOR VOLUNTEER OR GUEST DISMISSAL

Volunteers are subject to rules and regulations to help produce a safe experience for everyone involved in Pegasus Project activities, and to avoid serious injury to riders, horses, staff or fellow volunteers.

Reasons for dismissal include but are not limited to:

- Creating an unsafe situation through careless behavior, disregard for rules or ignoring instruction from staff.
- Arriving under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or abuse of medication.
- A background check showing a history of criminal activity.
- Bringing a weapon- firearm, knife, hunting tools etc. If you carry a sidearm for your profession please leave it locked in your vehicle and provide written documentation to the Executive director detailing why you weapon must be on site (this information will be kept confidential)
- Breaking confidentiality
- Physical or emotional mistreatment or abuse of client, horse, staff member, volunteer or visitor to Pegasus project.
- Inappropriate use of facilities, phone, mailing lists or monies.
- Any other serious violation of the volunteer conduct pledge not listed above.
- Less serious infractions of rules such as absences, dressing inappropriately, use of foul or obscene language will be dealt with first with a verbal warning, then written, then dismissal.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Pegasus wants to assist you to solve problems and settle grievances quickly and fairly. We believe the best way to settle disagreements and a problem is to talk about them and try to find mutually agreeable solutions to the problems. The grievance procedure can be used if you feel you have been discriminated against due to race, creed, color, sex, and sexual orientation or if you feel your rights as a volunteer have been violated.

Solving Problems

If you have a complaint or disagreement with a volunteer, staff or the program the first step is to talk to the person about it. If you can not do that or you feel that the problem is still not resolved talk with a staff member or supervisor.

Depending on the situation the supervisor may talk with both of you together to help reach an agreement. If you can not agree the supervisor will make a decision on how to solve the problem. If you do not agree with the supervisor's decision you can talk with the Executive Director. They will talk with you and anyone else involved making a decision about how to settle the problem.

Filing a Formal Grievance

If the problem is not settled by the discussions above, you have the right to submit a written grievance to the volunteer coordinator and/or executive director. The grievance must be signed and dated by you/ or someone representing you. Useful information includes: the names of people involved, date of the incident(s), a description of what happened and other facts that describe the problem. If you need assistance in writing your grievance you may chose to be assisted or represented by an advocate not associated with Pegasus. Present your written grievance to the Program Director/ and or Executive Director. The Executive Director will investigate and respond with in 14 business days.

PROPER TREATMENT OF ANIMALS AND PEOPLE

Animals: This applies to all horses and/ or animals on the premises'.

- All animals need to be respected and treated in a kind and gentle manner
- **Riders', parents or volunteers** are not to discipline the horses in anyway. Never hit or slap a horse with your hand or piece of equipment –ever.
- All mis behavior of animals is to be reported as soon as possible to an instructor so that an incident report can be completed and given to the program director. Even if the incident is minor it could lead to unsafe situations.

Abusive behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse i.e. hitting with hands, lead ropes, bridles, or any other object
- Verbal abuse such as yelling, using loud voices, name calling
- Causing harm to any of the equipment that may be used on the horse, or using equipment in an inappropriate manner.

People

- All people need to be respected and treated the way you would like to be treated yourself.
- Other riders', parents or volunteers may not discipline the riders in anyway. All misbehavior of riders should be reported to instructor immediately.

Abusive behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Any type of physical abuse to a rider, parent, volunteer or staff member. Hitting, pushing or any type of inappropriate touching will not be tolerated.

- Any type of verbal abuse to a rider, parent, volunteer or staff member. Such as yelling, swearing or name calling will not be tolerated.
- Intrusion upon a persons personal space
- Causing harm to any person or their equipment on the property.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULING

All scheduling is done through the Volunteer Coordinator. If you have a last minute emergency and cannot make it to your scheduled time or are running late, please call the volunteer coordinator at 969-3310. If there is no answer, please leave a message. **Please do not cancel by email.** Advance notice is much appreciated! That will give us the time we need to find a replacement for you.

In the event of a rider cancellation, Pegasus will notify you as soon as possible.

You are extremely important to the successful operation of our program. Pegasus could not function without our volunteers; therefore, it is very important that everyone be **prompt** and **dependable**. We understand that scheduling conflicts will occur, yet because of the nature of our program, volunteer cancellations affect everyone involved in the class. Advance notice, when possible, is crucial so we can plan the class accordingly.

Why am I important as a volunteer?

Class volunteers are the backbone of our therapeutic riding program. Most of our riders would not be able to participate without the physical and emotional support of their volunteers. Your relationship with the rider helps to build confidence and self esteem. Your encouragement and assistance during the lesson help the rider to learn and be successful and foster independence.

What is my role as a volunteer?

Class volunteers play a key role in assisting riders to meet their goals. Both the rider and volunteer will benefit from establishing a lasting relationship with one another. Your feedback about rider's performance to the instructor after class is helpful in lesson planning and evaluation of the day's lesson.

DO VOLUNTEERS RIDE THE HORSES?

This is a question many volunteers ask! Because we focus on the needs of our riders, offering unlimited riding time to volunteers would be a strain on the horses and staff. Thus, volunteers are not allowed to ride our program horses.

VOLUNTEER ATTIRE

Hot Weather

- Long pants are always recommended; dust, horse hair and bugs can be bothersome. If you wear shorts, please make sure they are of appropriate length, i.e. Bermuda length.

- Summer shirts are acceptable. Shirts can be sleeveless, but **no bare midriffs**. Shirts must be long enough to cover the top of pants or shorts at all times.
- Sunglasses and sunscreen may be needed for outdoor riding. During warm weather we will go out for trail rides.

Cold Weather

- Dress in layers. Removing clothing is easier than adding.
- Gloves are advisable for warmth and protection. If you are leading a horse, please be sure your gloves will have a firm grip on the lead rope.
- Bring a jacket with you to the ranch. It can be cooler than you may think! Scarves should be tucked into your jacket. If you remove your jacket, sweater or sweatshirt, **do not tie it around your waist**. As it loosens it could drop to the ground, distracting you, tripping you, or spooking the horse.

Shoes

- **CLOSED TOED SHOES ARE REQUIRED!** Protect your feet! Supportive tennis shoes, hiking boots and paddock boots are ideal.
- Keep in mind that even during fall, the riders may go out for trail rides and the ground may be wet and muddy (be prepared to walk **through** puddles, not around them, which could take you away from your horse and/or rider).

Miscellaneous

- Long hair should be tied back.
- Wear shoes and clothes that are comfortable.
- No jewelry! Jewelry can get lost in the arena or in a stall. Anything that dangles may be an attraction to the rider – small children may grab or pull.
- Wear no perfume, and only unscented lotions. Certain scents may cause a reaction in some of the riders and it may attract bees or other bugs.
- **Women:** please note that some of our male clients have inappropriate social behaviors directed towards women. Please do not help stimulate this behavior and dress conservatively.
- You must wear your nametag at all times where it can easily be seen. This helps the other volunteers, the instructors, staff, riders, and the riders' families recognize you.

RIDER BOARD

The Rider Board is our daily schedule for each lesson; it will list the Instructors' initials, riders' name, which horse they will use, tack and stirrups, and volunteer names and assignments. Changes are made occasionally and the list is updated constantly. **It is**

extremely important for you to check the list each time you come in before getting ready for class; a rider may cancel, a horse may be substituted, or volunteers re-assigned. If you have any questions or concerns about the Rider Board, ask the Volunteer Coordinator or the Instructor for that class time for help.

Each volunteer is assigned by the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will take into consideration a volunteer's experience, age, height, and nature before pairing up with riders and horses. Volunteers with horse experience may be assigned as a 'Leader', but a *tall* volunteer with horse experience is extremely valuable to the class, as this volunteer will have no trouble or fear about getting close to the horse to assist the rider. **As a new volunteer, if you have any fear at all of horses please let your instructor know.** If you are unsure or unhappy with the position you've been assigned, please give it a chance before asking the Volunteer Coordinator for a change; he/she may feel you are 'just right' for this rider or horse.

- Volunteer names listed for each class will be on the board.
- Underlined names are Volunteer Captains; they can help you when the Instructor is unavailable and bridle the horse for you before classes.
- **Bold RED** names are new volunteers, and will remain bold throughout their first year.
- Color codes names are for all volunteers. Black = Veteran volunteers. Red = all new volunteers

If you notice your name is either spelled incorrectly, not represented correctly, or not on the list at all, please let the volunteer coordinator know as soon as possible!

PERSON-FIRST TERMINOLOGY

Just as any tool can be powerful in a positive or negative way, language can either work to your advantage or it can result in negative effects. If you are not aware of the appropriate language, you might inadvertently offend a person or convey a message you did not intend to convey.

When thinking about how to talk about disabilities, remember that a person with a disability is a person first. Referring to a person by a disability, for example "an epileptic" or "the deaf teacher," is inappropriate. Instead you might say "a person who has epilepsy" or "a teacher who is deaf."

People with disabilities prefer to be called just that, people with disabilities. Mention a person's disability only if it is relevant to the issue. If it is not relevant, why mention it?

GETTING TO KNOW THE RIDER WITH DISABILITIES

It is important to remember that every child or adult is an individual and wants to be treated with that understanding, regardless of having a disability or not. Each has his/her own style of learning, unique personality, and temperament. One must always look beyond the disability into the person.

Being around people with disabilities may be a new experience for you. You may be overwhelmed at first with things you have never seen or do not understand; this is natural for most people. Allow yourself time to get used to being with the person who has a disability. Do not give up on being a part of the program without a fair try, for your experience can be very rewarding. At first you may want to do jobs which are not in direct contact with the riders. Feel free to talk to a staff member about this; this is common. If working directly with our riders is difficult for you, consider helping Pegasus in some other way.

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES & SUGGESTIONS

- Relax and be yourself.
- Be open, accepting, non-judgmental, and erase preconceived notions from your mind.
- Speak directly to the person with the disability.
- Use active listening skills; listen for comments. Children and adults will be glad to talk about themselves.
- Use conversation and social behavior that you might use in any new situation.
- Use simple, clear, precise language.
- **Help only when it is needed.** Resist the temptation to constantly assist students who need to develop more independence by allowing them to do things for themselves.
- Be guided by the wishes of the person with the disability. Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, but do not pry.
- **Be patient.** Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to accomplish something or respond to something.
- Do not be afraid to say to either a child or adult, "I'm sorry, I cannot understand you. Please say it again."
- Be sensitive to separating a rider from his or her assistive devices unless asked.
- Enjoy your friendships with the riders. Their good humor, achievements and perspectives on life can be a rewarding experience for all involved.
- At the back of the manual are some basics on some of the disabilities we work with at Pegasus.

INTRODUCTION TO HIPPO THERAPY

Hippo therapy is a term that refers to the use of movement of the horse as a tool by Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech -Language Pathologists to address impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities in patients with neuromuscular dysfunction. Hippo therapy is used as one part of a patient's integrated treatment plan. The treatment is based on the therapist's evaluation and the functional goals of the patient. Standard documentation reflects progress of treatment, and follows the guidelines of the therapist's profession. CPT codes used for billing are chosen based on how this tool is used to address specific goals of treatment. The use of Hippo therapy is consistent with standard practice for PT, OT & SLP as the activity is experiential, functional and in a natural environment.

1. The team consists of the leader, 2 side walkers, the therapist, and the therapeutic riding instructor
 - a. The side walkers and horse leader are volunteers
 - i. The volunteer is trained by program staff through classroom instruction, completing assigned reading, attending workshops, and participating in hands-on training.
2. Clothing
 - b. Long pants, such as jeans, and sports shirts or sweat shirts are suitable.
 - c. They allow free movement yet do not get caught in the tack or frighten the horses by flapping.
 - d. Shoes must have low heels and closed toes, be sturdy so that they protect the feet from horses' hooves stability on rough surfaces of the arena and stable area.
 - e. Jewelry should not be worn as it may get caught in tack and create a dangerous situation.

The Therapist providing direct treatment services in a Hippo therapy program must meet the following qualifications:

1. Is licensed or registered to practice in nationally recognized health care profession
2. Maintains current professional liability insurance
3. Has received training through the American Hippo therapy Association (AHA) entitled "Introduction to Hippo therapy - Classic Principles"
4. Has a NARHA registered instructor assisting with all treatment sessions.

- Therapist is in direct attendance to the client at all times during the session.
- In the one-on-one session, the therapist will be actively engaged and focusing in the treatment of the individual. The treatment progress note will be kept on each child.
- Initial evaluation with an established treatment plan including long and short term goals. Long-term goals must be functional and relevant to each client's family/school/work situation; after each treatment session therefore consultation with the client's family is necessary.
- Documentation is provided through progress notes recorded
- Re-evaluation of each client is carried out at 3-6 month intervals to ensure the treatment plan and treatment goals remain appropriate for the client.

Roles of Therapist

1. Consultant for therapeutic riding program
2. Staff and volunteer training in body mechanics, physical and cognitive impairments, basic handling/transfer skills, precautions and contraindications
3. Community education
4. Liaison with the medical community
5. Recruitment of additional health care professionals
6. Referral of clients

HIPPOTHERAPY VOLUNTEER CRITERIA

Volunteer criteria:

1. Has been through Memorial's volunteer training and met all YVMH volunteer requirements.
2. Has previous horse experience and knowledge.
3. Be physically able and willing to walk around an arena side-by-side a horse with arms over their head to hold up a child on a horse. Most of these riders have limited trunk control and need extra help to ensure they don't fall.
4. Be conscientious and aware of the child's safety at all times.

Role of the side walker volunteer for hippo therapy sessions:

1. Horse preparation
2. Mounting preparation (putting helmet and safety belt on client)
3. Mounting and dismounting
4. Maintaining patient position on the horse
5. Ensuring patient safety

6. Obtaining or handling equipment needed by the therapist during the session
7. Facilitation or inhibition techniques at the direction of the therapist

SAFETY IN THE BARN AND ARENA

Keeping riders, volunteers, horses, families, visitors, and Pegasus staff safe each day is extremely important and everyone needs to help! Observing rules in and around the barn is not only a necessity, **it is MANDATORY**; failing to do so could result in serious injury. Refer to these basic rules your Volunteer Manual, and the Volunteer Conduct Pledge at all times when working with our riders and horses and supporting the mission of the Pegasus Therapeutic Riding Center. Thank you!

Please:

- Regardless of your experience with horses, it is imperative to adhere to 'the Pegasus Way' for handling our therapy horses, for consistency and safety, which may differ greatly from the way you handle your own horses.
- **Keep all rider information confidential.** In consideration of their privacy, please use discretion in comments and conversations, and never use a riders name outside our facility.
- Keep noise and tension levels to a minimum in the barn aisle and arena. No yelling, running, or sudden movements around the horses or mounting area. No obscene or discriminatory language.
- Keep aisle-way and tack room clear of unnecessary items. Backpacks, purses, or other items you bring with you should be stored in the parent area, locked in your vehicle or as a last resort in the Volunteer area. Help keep areas clear to avoid tripping or blocking safe passage at all times.
- Appropriate attire at all times. Dress conservatively; no bare mid-drifts (shirts must cover the tops of pants at all times). Closed-toed shoes when in the barn. Jackets should be zipped. Long hair tied back.
- **No cell phone use when 'on duty'**. Cell phones must be turned off or on silent.
- No dogs Allowed. Some of our riders may have a fear of dogs, or they may startle the horses and cause injury to a rider. Be sure dogs left in cars will not bark and scare passing pedestrians or horses.
- Gather needed tack and supplies *before* removing horse from their stall and taking them to tacking area.
- Do not leave a tied horse unattended at any time ~ especially if in cross-ties. Keep brush boxes away from horse to avoid you or the rider tripping over them and startling the horse.
- Be alert at all times when working around horses. Watch their body language (pinned ears, swishing tail) and take it seriously - back away! **Never discipline a horse at any time.** Horses may react out of fear or pain; never hit or slap a horse with your hand or equipment - **ever**, especially if a rider is

near in case the horse over reacts. Alert a staff member immediately if you need help.

- Do not snuggle or get close to the horse's face. A tied horse can feel 'trapped' and unable to get away from unwanted attention. Please respect their space and comfort level. Only the one or two volunteers assigned to that horse should be near them; one to groom, the other to tack. 50 volunteers a week can be too much attention for a 'working horse'. Pet them on their neck or shoulder only.
- Always use a halter and lead rope when leading a horse; even for just a few feet. Never lead a horse by the halter alone. Remove lead rope once horse is secured in cross-ties. Never attach lead rope or ties directly to bridle or bit.
- When there is a horse in the Mounting Ramp, use extreme caution at all times. Speak softly and step quietly on or around ramp area. Do not talk to or distract volunteers or Instructors with the horse and rider. Stay back from the fence near the mounting area until the rider is mounted and area is clear.
- 'Safety Spacing' at all times. Whether in the barn aisle, arena or on the trail, never get too close to the horses around you. Use caution and control when passing other horses in the barn aisle or at the tacking area, do not allow them to go nose-to-nose. In the arena and on the trail keep at least two horse-lengths distance between horses.
- Before you approach the mounting area the Instructor will do a final tack check. Leaders get into the halt position and step back from the horse. Even if you are familiar with the horse **assume all horses are 'girthy' this is a 3 step process!** Wait for the instructor to tell you to approach the mounting block or ramp.
- Do not use alarming statements. Common words or statements may cause extreme fear in some riders. To say a horse might "buck", "kick", and must provide good "get loose", or "throw their rider" could cause a rider to become fearful of the horse. Use 'horsey' descriptions carefully.
- If a horse gets loose in the arena keep your own horse and rider calm. Leaders stop and get into the halt position, side-walkers thigh-hold your riders. Do not leave your own horse and rider to help catch the loose horse. If the loose horse approaches you, tell the horse to whoa, speaking calm and firmly, until the instructor can approach to catch him.
- If a rider has a seizure, stay calm and alert the instructor immediately. Leaders stop and get into the halt position; side-walkers should help secure the rider with a thigh-hold. Do not attempt to remove the rider from the horse.
- If a rider falls from a horse, side-walkers stay with rider and follow directions from Instructor, leaders move horse safely away from rider. **Do not attempt to move the rider or help them up.** Other riders, leaders and side-walkers come to a halt and keep riders and horses calm until the instructor resumes the class.

- In case of fire or earthquake do not panic and stay as a group. If in the barn, EXIT. If in arena, keep riders and horses calm, thigh-hold position on riders, and follow the Instructor as a group to exit through the gate. Be prepared for emergency dismounts of riders. If in the office, exit front doors to the parking lot area. **Do not re-enter building or barn until staff announces all-clear; do not leave the property until each person is accounted for.**
Inform the staff immediately if you are injured in any way.

Thank you for your cooperation with safety for our riders, horses, staff and other volunteers.

CLASS INFORMATION

Arriving at the Barn

It is important as a horse leader to arrive 30-45 minutes before class time. Side walkers at least 15-20 minutes before the riders scheduled time.

- Wear your nametag on upper shirt or jacket area where it can be easily seen by riders, instructors, parents and other volunteers. Nametags are located on the table near the rider board and indicate your training and experience.
- Check the daily rider list before you begin. This will tell you which horses to prepare, what equipment to use and if there is any rider change.
- Groom and tack the horse; some riders may assist when appropriate. (See Barn Instructions)
- Wait for Instructor or the designated horse leader to bridle the horse for you, then when arena is clear from the previous class you can walk the horse to the arena to warm up.

During Class

- Listen for directions from the instructor
- Assist the rider only as needed; if you are not sure, ask the Instructor.
- Leaders are responsible for the horse; side-walkers are responsible for the rider; but you will work as a team. (See Leaders and Side-walkers)
- Be attentive to your horse and rider at all times.
- Socializing with your rider may be fun, but they need to pay attention to the instructor. Please limit social time to the mounting and warm up periods.
- After Class and Before Leaving Barn
- The rider will dismount with the help of the instructor.
- The leaders and side-walkers will take the horse back to the tacking area. Check to see if it is used in the next class. If not, you can remove all equipment, put horse in stall and put away the tack and equipment. (See Barn Instructions)
- Groom horse and clean feet. Remove halter and return all grooming equipment to its proper place. (See Barn Instructions)
- Be sure to secure stall door.

- Sign out in the volunteer binder to record your hours. Put your nametag away in the basket.
- Instructors' Duties for Class
- Make sure there are enough volunteers to assist in the class.
- Checks the tack and bridles the horse. This includes tightening the girth.
- Positions the horse for mounting. (See Mounting & Dismounting)
- Mounts the rider on the horse and makes sure they are settled before leaving the mounting area. (See Mounting & Dismounting)
- After warm-up, tack is checked again.

LEADER POSITION

You are directly responsible for the horse.

Leader Responsibilities

- Watch the spacing between you and the horse in front, which should be at least two horse lengths. Never get close to the horse in front of you!
- Watch out for the side-walkers on either side of the horse so you do not run them into the wall or arena props.
- Any sudden changes in speed or direction may cause the rider to lose their balance or leave your side-walker behind. Make smooth transitions with the horse, i.e., turning, stopping, starting, etc.
- Always lead the horse so that your shoulder is about even with his ears, and using two hands on the lead rope. One hand is holding loosely under the horse's chin, about 8-10 inches from the snap. The other hand is holding the excess lead, accordion style.
- **DO NOT** wrap the lead rope around your hand, drape it around your neck, put the end over your shoulder or let it drag on the ground. These are all potentially dangerous situations and could cause serious harm to you, your rider or the horse.
- Talk to your horse; most of them know verbal commands. Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep your horse moving. Do not drag the horse or let the horse drag you.
- When the horse is at the mounting ramp, it is important that the horse stands quiet and still until the rider is on and settled. (See Mounting & Dismounting)
- Once the rider is on the horse, they are in control. Whether they are an independent rider or someone who needs two side-walkers, you will get your cues from them or the instructor. Allow the rider to do as much as possible.
- When the instructor gives a direction, give the rider a chance to respond. Wait several seconds before you turn, halt, stop, or start. This will allow the rider time to prepare. You may need to remind the rider of what to do as well as show them (if your rider doesn't need side-walkers).

- Do not walk backwards to look at the rider; always watch where you are going.
- Whenever the rider is stopped, you will need to stand in the “halt” position (that is in front of the horse facing equine and slightly to the side). Make sure the horse is standing ‘square’ and does not walk forward. When the Instructor is making any adjustments to the rider or to the equipment, take a step back from the horse’s face a couple of feet, but not so far away that you are not in control.
- Do not ‘play’ with the horse you are leading. They should be working and paying attention to what they are doing. Do not allow them to nibble at you or your clothes or chew on the lead rope or eat grass.

Always let the rider and side-walkers know when you will be doing any sudden turning, stopping or walking!

If you have questions at any time, please ask.

SIDEWALKER POSITION

You are directly responsible for the rider.

Side-walker Responsibilities

- Until your rider mounts, you will wait inside the arena with you rider. When using the mounting ramp, you may be asked to stand on the block next to the rider. Remember to help support the rider and walk with them as they leave the mounting area.
- Important! Stay within arms reach of your rider at all times. Do not leave your rider at any time, even if you become tired. If you must stop, ask the Leader to bring the horse into the center of the arena so that you can safely stop and get assistance from the Instructor.
- One side-walker is the ‘primary side-walker’; if you are unsure who that is, ask the Instructor.
- Keep your hands and arms free at all times. Do not walk with your hands in your pockets or arms crossed.
- The Instructor will tell you how to support your rider. (i.e. Thigh hold, ankle hold, or none) Try to avoid wrapping your arm around the rider’s waist; this could throw off their balance.
- Establish one person to communicate with the rider. Talking to the rider must be kept to a bare minimum; however, you may need to repeat the directions of the Instructor.
- When there are two side-walkers, you may need to change sides (due to fatigue or directions from the Instructor). Wait until you go into the center of the arena and halt. Change sides, one person at a time. Do not both let go of

the rider; one person must secure them. If there is only one side-walker, go into the center and ask the instructor for help.

- If the equipment needs to be adjusted (saddle, stirrups, etc.), let the Instructor know and they will take care of it. Do not remove the rider from the horse. Go into the center of the arena for any adjustments, questions or problems.
- If the rider is showing signs of wanting to get off the horse and is determined to do so, get help from the Instructor. Whatever you are doing, keep doing until the Instructor says otherwise.
- Be careful not to lean or rest your elbow on the horses back as that area is very sensitive.
- Listen for directions from the instructor.
- You have the right to let the rider know when they are being inappropriate. (i.e. Pulling hair, kicking, using incorrect language) Use the word "NO" and ask them not to repeat the inappropriate action. Let the Instructor know immediately.
- If you have questions at any time, please ask. We are here to help you help our riders.

MOUNTING & DISMOUNTING PROCEDURES

THE INSTRUCTOR IS THE ONLY PERSON TO MOUNT OR DISMOUNT RIDERS.

There are three types of mounting...

1. **Mounting Ramp** – used for riders using a wheelchair, a walker or who are unable to climb stairs.
2. **Block Mount** – used for small riders or taller horses to get the rider to stirrup level.
3. **Ground Mount** – used when the rider is tall enough and capable of reaching the stirrup from the ground

MOUNTING PROCEDURES

At the Ramp/Block

Leaders

- Leaders wait until the instructor asks you to bring the horse toward the mounting area.
- Before bringing the horse into the ramp, stop, get into the halt position and wait for the instructor to check the equipment and tighten the girth – step back from horse for this.

- After the equipment is checked, remain in the halt position and walk carefully backwards, slowly guiding the horse between the mounting ramp and the block.
- Keep an eye on your horse's shoulders and the stirrups to make sure nothing gets caught on the ramp.
- Keep the horse as quiet as possible. Stand directly in front of the horse, the halt position and be alert at all times; do not allow anyone to distract you from the horse.
- Do not hold the bit! This could cause the horse to throw its head.
- When the horse is in position, stay in the halt position until the rider is secure on the horse and the Instructor is ready, and the *rider* gives a "walk on" command. Walk slowly out of mounting area and into the arena, and stop so the Instructor can make stirrup adjustments.

In the Arena

- DO NOT EVER ATTEMPT TO MOUNT OR TO DISMOUNT THE RIDER YOURSELF.
- The Instructor will always assist the rider.
- Position yourself in the halt position; in front of the horse and slightly to one side, and keep the horse steady while the rider mounts.
- Side-walkers can assist on the off-side by supporting the saddle and stirrup while the rider mounts and guiding the rider's foot into the stirrup.

DISMOUNTING

- In the Arena
- The horses will line up in the center of the arena. Be sure to watch your safety spacing!
- The instructor will dismount the riders one by one. When appropriate, the rider will help put their stirrups up and lead their horse back to the stall. Do not lead the horse from the arena until all riders have dismounted and the Instructor excuses the class.
- The riders then exit the arena with the horse, one at a time.
- The horse is taken back un-tacked, groomed and returned to the stall.
- To the Ramp
- Some riders dismount back at the mounting ramp.
- The horse is brought back into the ramp – the same as if the rider were getting on.
- After the rider is dismounted, the horse is taken into the arena to make a 20-meter circle, and then can be lead out to the barn. Do not lead the horse to exit immediately from the mounting ramp; always go into the arena first to make a circle, and then proceed to exit the arena.

BARN INSTRUCTIONS

Before Class:

If you are not comfortable entering a stall, please ask a staff person or experienced volunteer to help you.

- If you are unsure how to do something, please ask a staff person or another volunteer. We will always help you as you gain your confidence with the horses.
- If the horse is misbehaving, please let a staff person know immediately. Please do not discipline the horse! (This does not mean you can not correct the horse.)
- Horses must have their halter on and be attached to the pole for grooming and tacking. Never groom a loose horse.
- Riders must have a helmet on if they are going into barn area.
- When appropriate, assist the rider in the grooming process. Most riders must have a volunteer with them during this process.
- Volunteers clean the horse's feet and check for any injuries (cuts, scrapes, missing shoes, etc.). Let the instructor know of any injuries.
- When working with the horse and it is attached to the post, please walk behind the horse to get to the other side or in front of the post. Do not go under the neck of the horse and put yourself between the horse and the post.
- When appropriate, assist the rider in getting the correct tack for their horse.
- After the horse has the equipment on, do not leave the horse untied or unattended. Do not tie the horse to the post using the bridle orbit clips.
- Horses are bridled only by an instructor or a cleared horse handler; let them know when you are ready.
- Once the horse is ready and the arena is clear from the previous class you can lead the horse out to warm up. With the other class ending there may be many people in the barn aisle; pass other horses with caution making sure they do not get nose-to-nose.

After Class:

- Volunteers clean the horse's feet.
- When appropriate, assist the rider with removing all tack and taking their horse back to its stall. The rider waits outside of the stall. Never take the brush box or tack into the stall where it could be tripped over, startling the horse or causing injury to yourself or the rider.
- Be certain the rider is out of stall before you remove the horse's halter. Reattach the lead rope to the halter and return to tack room. Make sure the stall door is shut and locked.
- An extra step that is very helpful is to wipe down all the equipment - the saddle, the leather of the bridle and the bit.

- Be certain that rider is returned safely to parent or guardian; never leave a rider in the barn unattended.

GROOMING AND TACKING

Grooming is the daily attention necessary to maintain the coat and feet of the horse keeping them in good condition. The skin and feet will suffer unless cared for properly. Grooming is the start of the horse's workday. Make it pleasant for both you and the horse by talking to the horse and rubbing and talking to him while you work.

Grooming

- All grooming and tacking is done in the tacking area. Enter the stall and put on the horse's halter then proceed to the tacking area. Never groom a horse in the stall.
- When in the stall, keep the door shut to prevent the horse from attempting to escape.
- The horse is groomed and hooves picked. Look for any cuts, scrapes or injuries; let the instructor know if any are found.
- When moving side-to-side, go behind or in front of the horse. Keep one hand on the horse, stay close and move slowly.
- Never go under the horse's neck while it is attached to the post- always go around the back or in front of the post.

Grooming Kits

Each horse has a grooming box with their name on it in the tack room, which contains the following items:

Hoof pick - for cleaning feet

Stiff brush - for removing heavy dirt

Soft brush - for removing dust scurf (horse dandruff).

Curry comb - for removing dirt, mud, and old coat.

Sweat scraper/shedding blade - for removing sweat and facilitating shedding.

Grooming Procedure

It is important for the horse that you follow the order of this routine as closely as possible. Horses are creatures of habit and with the numbers of different people handling them; they rely on consistency in their routine. The horse might be groomed several times in one day and may not need a heavy curry or hard brushes, a soft gentle brushing may be all you need to do.

- Tie the horse to the post with safety knot or crossties.
- Hoof Pick: Pick out each foot, using heal-to-toe motion. Clean cleft of frog and check for signs of injury. Check shoes for security or loose nails.

- Curry Comb if needed: Begin at the poll on the near side of the horse and work toward the tail. Use small circular motions with firm pressure. Repeat on far side of the horse. Avoid bony and sensitive areas such as the face, ears, lower legs, etc. Watch the horse's reaction to your technique, if he pins his ears or swishes his tail lighten the pressure of your strokes. Do not discipline the horse.
- Stiff Brush: Again, work poll to tail. Brush vigorously with the direction of the hair growth. When working on the legs, squat, never kneel or sit.
- Soft Brush: Again, work poll to tail. Brush in short strokes with the direction of the hair growth. Use the soft brush on sensitive and bony areas such as the face, lower legs, and under the horse. When brushing the head, start at the poll and work toward the muzzle. Soft brush only on the horses face.

CROSS TIE ETIQUETTE

All of the horses are groomed in the CROSS-TIE AREA; using the rope ties at each side of the post or with a safety knot with the lead rope. As our class time preparations can be extremely busy, it can become very stressful for the horses; it is important to go over some points for safety, and for consideration of the horse.

Please read over these tips, even if you have done this a hundred times, to be sure those with the most experience are setting a great example for the riders and new volunteers just learning safe horsemanship.

- Gather all tack and supplies needed **BEFORE** bringing horse out of his stall – do not leave a tied horse unattended.
- Use halter and lead rope to lead horse out, even if just a couple of feet to the cross ties. **Never lead horse by halter alone.**
- Be sure stall doors on each side of the aisle are closed. This ensures the strength of the walls in case the horse should pull back.
- Once horse is secured, remove lead rope. Do not drape it over the horse's neck or let it hang down to the floor.
- **Do not pet or play with the horse while he is tied.** As tempting as it is, it is unfair to the horse that cannot get away from unwanted attention. You can help your horse by directing others to stay at a safe – and respectable – distance from his face.
- If you approach any horse in cross-ties and he pins his ears, swishes his tail, bobs his head or stomps his feet, take this warning seriously and back away immediately. **Never discipline a horse while in cross-ties by hitting, smacking, or jerking one of the ties.** If the horse is misbehaving, get the instructor right away for help.
- Never hang on ties attached to the horse while 'visiting' with the person grooming.

- The ties are designed to break away if the horse panics and pulls back. If this should ever happen, stay calm and talk softly. **Do not run at the horse.** Watch for riders that may be nearby and first help them get safely out of the way.
- Remember to always be alert and aware at all times when working around horses, for your sake, and other people around!

Thank you for your cooperation, and consideration for safety!

TACKING

Typically, horses are tacked from the left side. Our horses can have the equipment put on from either side. Remember: always halter and girth the horse from the left side.

- Put the saddle pads and saddle on first.
- When putting the girth on, start slowly. Pull the girth snug, but not tight. Always use a girth cover and make sure there are no rough areas or shavings against the horse's skin. The instructor will tighten the girth in the arena before the rider is mounted.
- Leave the halter on the horse and detach from the wall.
- Only the instructor or Volunteer Captains will put on bridles.
- Attach the lead rope to the halter, or the Bit Lead. Never clip lead rope directly to bit or bit clip.
- DO NOT attach horse to the POST by their bridle or bit clip.

HORSE HANDLING TIPS

- The horse will try to please you if he understands what you want.
- As you relax, so will the horse.
- Noises can make a horse anxious; minimize action and noise.
- Approach the horse calmly from its side.
- Rub the horse on the shoulder or neck, not the head.
- The horse will move away from pressure or resist force.
- Control your temper. Do not get angry and discipline the horses.
- Horses are generally gentle animals that love companionship.
- Be firm, consistent, kind and gentle.
- NEVER shout at or hit a horse

HORSE BEHAVIOR

One of the first things that people notice about Pegasus is our horses. And often, that is what brings them to volunteer with our program. Whether it's your expertise, or just plain horse-craziness that brings you to our barn, there are

many things we all need to know about the unique animal known as the **“Therapy Horse.”**

Not just any horse can be successful in our program, or tolerate all the different people they come in contact with here. Once a trial horse goes through the initial assessment and soundness exam, we expose them to wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, toys, balls, and games. If they are sound, quiet and happy, even with all this, they become a member of our team and stay busy five or six days a week. We calculate that each horse in our barn is probably handled or surrounded by more than 50 people per week. Grooming, tacking, leading, working, as well as people visiting and families petting, can get to be too much for some of them, and the horse can become picky, finicky, nervous, and down right grumpy at times, which may lead to Bad Behavior.

We have developed many ways to try to relieve some of the tension and stress for our horses such as massage, acupuncture, chiropractic treatments, days off, as well as teaching staff and volunteers about horse behavior in our training program. Here is a list of ways you can help our four legged therapists do their best at the job they are so good at doing.

Please:

- Keep noise levels and tension to a minimum in the barn aisle and in the arena. Our horses are sensitive by nature, and loud noises make them nervous.
- Be gentle in your grooming and tacking. Some of our horses have sensitive skin and soft brushing is better for them than rough currying.
- Be sure to schedule enough time for grooming and tacking so that you can have your horse in the arena 15 minutes before class. Therapy horses need to walk around and get stretched and warmed up before the rider mounts.
- Do not snuggle or get close to the horse’s face. Too much physical contact can be overwhelming.
- Horses in cross-ties can feel ‘trapped’ and unable to get away from unwanted attention. Please respect their space and leave them alone when they are tied. Even standing nearby watching the horse can make the horses uneasy. Only the one or two volunteers assigned to that horse should be near them; One to groom, the other to tack. Those volunteers assigned to the horse will be responsible for the horse’s space and comfort level.
- Stay at least three feet away from their head when they are getting girthed, or having their tack checked. Assume all horses are ‘girthy’ and stay back! Do not assume the horse “would never do that to me”.
- Never feed by hand. 50 volunteers a week doing it ‘just this once’ is a lot of hand feeding. Please refrain from giving the horses treats.
- Horses pin their ears when they are upset, please take this seriously and back away!

- Report any bad behavior, no matter how slight, to your instructor or the volunteer coordinator. Bad behavior builds up and another volunteer or a rider may get the brunt of it.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Throughout the year we will randomly do emergency procedures during class time.

Severe weather (wind, rain, hail, thunder and lightning) can come up suddenly. If the instructor deems appropriate, classes may be cancelled for safety.

Sudden Extreme Weather Problems

In the Arena

- All riders' halt, leaders get into the halt position (in front of horse, slightly to one side).
- Listen for directions from the instructor.
- If the horse is nervous, try to calm it down, using low voices.
- Side-walkers do a thigh hold on the rider and reassure them, using low voices.

In the Barn

If you are in a stall with a horse leave the stall, shut the door.

If a Rider has a Seizure

- Stay calm and use low voices.
- Leader stops the horse and gets in the halt position.
- Side-walkers secure the rider; do not remove them from the horse.
- If you are able, go to the center of the arena.
- Leader also gets the attention of the instructor as quickly as possible.
- Other riders, leaders and side-walkers come to a halt in the arena.
- Listen for directions from the instructor.

If a Horse gets Loose in the Arena

- All riders' halt and leaders get in the halt position.
- Listen for directions from the instructor.
- The other horses may get nervous so try to keep them under control using low voices.
- Side-walkers do a thigh hold on the rider to secure them.
- All volunteers stay with the rider; do not leave the rider to help catch the loose horse!

- The loose horse may come over to the horse you are with. If this happens, tell the horse to whoa, speaking softly.

If a Rider Falls Off

With a Leader and/or side-walker(s)

- Do not attempt move the rider.
- Get the instructor's attention and follow their directions.
- Leader move the horse a safe distance away from the rider.
- Side-walkers stay with the rider.
- All other riders come to a halt and leaders get in the halt position. One person may be asked to get help (never leave until you are directed to do so).

Independent Riding Class

- Listen for directions from the instructor.
- The volunteer assigned to the rider that fell off will secure the horse, if possible.
- All volunteers will go to the rider and horse they were assigned.
- One person may be instructed to get another staff person or emergency help.

If there is a Fire and/or the fire alarm signals

In the arena

- All riders' halt, leaders will get in the halt position.
- Listen for directions from the instructor.
- Do not panic. You must stay calm in order for the horse and rider to stay calm.
- The horses may get very nervous so try to keep them under control using low voices.
- Side walkers do a thigh hold on the riders and reassure them using low voices. Be prepared to do emergency dismounts if directed by the Instructor.
- If the fire is in the barn, please do not enter the barn. If the fire is in the office or storage area, Please exit immediately and go to port-a potty area.
- All volunteers will stay with the class until the situation is under control and riders and horses are safe. Do not leave your horse and rider.
- Volunteers must stay on the property until each person is accounted for.
- One person may be asked to get another staff member, call 911, or assist the instructor.
- All volunteers, parents, staff, in the barn or office area, will meet at the small white shed by the main parent parking lot.

Evacuation Procedures:

Designated Meeting Areas

- South end of the building, by pump house for arena evacuation.
- South end of the building by pump house for barn evacuation.
- The Volunteer Coordinator or staff member will pick up the Rider Lists to account for all volunteers.
- One staff or volunteer will call 911.
- If instructed, volunteers will lead horses to a designated safe place.
- An instructor or staff member determines/supervises immediate care of any injured person until emergency personnel arrives.
- An instructor or staff member determines/supervises immediate care of any non-injured person.
- Keep calm.

IN CASE OF FIRE IN THE BARN, DO NOT RETURN TO THE BARN FOR ANY REASON.

Without your dedication our program would not be possible.

We value your time, great spirits and giving hearts! Sincere thanks from Pegasus staff, riders and families.

GLOSSARY OF MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter in a therapeutic riding setting. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability. Rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how therapeutic riding can be beneficial.

Arthritis

Is described as an inflammatory disease of the joints.

Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid.

Characteristics: Pain, lack of mobility, deformity, loss of strength.

Benefits (of therapeutic riding): Gentle rhythmic movement to promote joint mobility and relieve pain.

Autism

A developmental neurological condition varying in severity, characterized by a difficulty in social communication and interaction.

Characteristics: Could include unresponsiveness to the presence of others; withdrawal from physical contact; severely delayed and disordered language; self-stimulating behaviors; unusual or special fears; insensitivity to pain; unawareness of real dangers; hyperactive; passive; unusual behaviors such as smelling/tasting/licking or mouthing all objects; ritualistic behaviors; developmentally delayed; unusual response to sounds; clumsiness; social withdrawal; resistance to change.

Asperger's Syndrome

A high functioning form of autism, usually with difficulty in social interactions.
Benefits: Interactions in a group setting stimulates interest away from self and toward others and the horses. Postural and verbal stimulation.

Cerebral Palsy

A broad term that describes a group of neurological disorders. It is a life long condition that affects the communication between the brain and the muscles. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.

Types and Characteristics:

Spastic – hyper tonicity with hyperactive stretch reflexes, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes.

Athetoid – extensor muscle tension, worm-like movements, abnormal posturing and slow and deliberate speech.

Ataxic – poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements and are often described as having a “rag doll” appearance.

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

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

Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA or Stroke)

Hemorrhage in brain, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.

Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of body. May cause mental impairment; impair speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength.

Benefits: Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech and socialization.

Developmental Disabilities (DD)

A general term applied to children functioning two or more years below grade level.

Characteristics: Varied, but can include slow physical, motor and social development.

Benefits: Provides arena for success, opportunity for sport and recreation, stimulates body awareness.

Down Syndrome

A genetic condition in which a person is born with an extra chromosome, possibly resulting in mental retardation and/or developmental delay.

Characteristics: Usually Hypotonic, have hyper mobile joints. Can be prone to respiratory infections.

Benefits: Riding improves expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, muscle tone, and coordination.

Emotional Disabilities

A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies.

Characteristics: Trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia and schizophrenia may be exhibited.

Benefits: Increases feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provides appropriate social outlet.

Epilepsy

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

Types and Characteristics:

Petit Mal: Brief loss of consciousness with loss of postural tone. May have jerky movements, blank expression.

Grand Mal: Loss of consciousness and postural control. Usually preceded by an aura.

(Note: an active seizure disorder is a contraindication for horseback riding.)

Hearing Impairment

Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound.

Characteristics: Communication difficulties – may use lip reading, finger spelling or sign language. Often phase out and have attention deficits.

Benefits: Stimulates self-confidence, balance, posture and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interactions.

Learning Disabilities (LD)

Catch-all phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving, but who appear to have otherwise typical or average intelligence skills.

Characteristics: Short attention span, easily frustrated, immature.

Benefits: Effects depend upon the particular disorder. Stimulates attention span, group skills, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination.

Mental Retardation (MD)

Lack of or decreases ability to learn and perform at normal and acceptable levels. Degree of retardation is referred to as educable, trainable, severe or profoundly retarded.

Characteristics: Developmentally delayed in all areas. Short attention span.

Benefits: Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. Provides a structured learning environment.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation.

Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Fatigues easily. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity.

Benefits: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for emotional therapy.

Associated Problems: Visual impairment, emotional lability, and impaired bowel and bladder function.

Muscular Dystrophy (MD)

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

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

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

Associated Problems: Lordosis, respiratory infection.

Polio

Infectious viral disease.

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

Benefits: Strengthens non-paralyzed muscles, stimulates posture.

Scoliosis

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

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

Benefits: Stimulates postural symmetry. Strengthens trunk muscles.

(Note: Severe scoliosis is a contraindication for therapeutic riding.)

Spina Bifida

A congenital failure of vertebral arch closure with resultant damage to the spinal cord.

Characteristics: Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss.

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

Associated Problems: Hydrocephalus, incontinence, urinary tract infection, lordosis, scoliosis, and hip dislocations.

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function.

Characteristics: Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores.

Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, is an option for sports participation and recreation.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

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

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

Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, gross & fine motor skills, speech & perceptual skills.

Visual Impairment

Moderate to total loss of sight.

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

Benefits: Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture and coordination.

Provides social outlet, structured risk taking and freedom of movement.

NOTES