



Equi-librium, Inc.

Participant Handbook

2017





2017 Season

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524 Fehr Rd.

Nazareth, PA 18064

Tel. 610-365-2266

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www.equi-librium.org



Partner Agency

Dear Equi-librium Participant:

Equi-librium is thrilled to welcome you to the 2017 Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy program season. This handbook will be your guide to our programs and services.

Our commitment is to safely provide quality instruction and a rewarding learning experience in a positive and welcoming atmosphere in order to enrich the lives of those who participate in our therapeutic horsemanship services.

We are thankful for the opportunity to serve you in 2017. Our staff, instructors, horses and volunteers are looking forward to another successful therapeutic riding/driving season.

Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call the office.

Sincerely,

Debra Hutchison
Program Director

EQUI-LIBRIUM, INC.
Mission Statement

Mission

Equi-librium empowers individuals with special needs to reach their highest potential through horse-related activities.

Vision

Our vision is that through the efforts and activities of Equi-librium and others we will assist in creating communities where...

- persons with special needs and their families will have greater opportunities for self-determination.
- inclusive recreational and therapeutic resources are available to provide needed, quality services to individual and their families.
- individuals with special needs are able to obtain a state of equilibrium in their lives mentally, physically and emotionally.

Goals

Equi-librium will be recognized as...

- an innovative leader in providing alternative programs with effective and functional outcomes that meet the unique strengths and needs of individuals with special needs.
- a leader in the use of equine and other animal-assisted therapies and activities that provide supportive challenges in a natural, inclusive environment to create change and improve the quality of life for individuals and their families.
- an organization that responsibly utilizes all income through cost efficient programs and services.
- an organization that works in collaboration with families and the community to maximize the opportunities and potential for individual growth and development.
- having dedicated professional staff and volunteers that are highly trained and committed.

Non-Discrimination:

Equi-librium does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, creed, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or heritage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER TO PARTICIPANT

MISSION, VISION & GOALS OF EQUI-LIBRIUM, Inc.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- Program Objectives 1 – 7
- Program Methodology 1
- Programs Available/Descriptions 1 - 3
- Admission Criteria 3, 4
- Discharge Criteria 4, 5
- Fees for Programs 5 - 7

CONTACTS AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS 7

2017 PROGRAM CALENDAR 8

DIRECTIONS 9

PARTICIPANT/FAMILY GUIDELINES 10

- Attendance 10
- Inclement Weather 10
- Arrival Time 11
- Attendance 11
- Vacation/Away Days 11
- Lesson or Treatment Times 11
- Participant Attire 11
- Family Involvement 12
- Facility Protocol 12, 13
- Horse & Team Selection 14
- Roles of Personnel 14

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES 15

BENEFITS OF EQUINE-ASSISTED ACTIVITIES & THERAPIES 16 – 18

- References 19
- Note: Other material and handouts may be given to you periodically. Please keep these articles on file for your reference.

EQUI-LIBRIUM PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Equi-librium is an equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) program. It is accredited by the Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Int'l). All activities are provided by licensed or certified staff with the assistance of volunteers.

- 1. Program Objectives** - By offering a progressive and individualized approach to equine-assisted activities, the services of Equi-librium
 - a. provide an equine-assisted adjunct that reinforces and enhances a program participant's occupational and physical therapy programs
 - b. provide a multi-sensory experience enabling program participants to develop their sensori-motor and perceptual motor skills
 - c. provide a psycho-educational opportunity for learning and achievement
 - d. provide an opportunity for socialization and recreation
 - e. provide an opportunity for program participants to achieve their highest potential possible in functional horseback riding skills.

- 2. Methodology - EQUI-LIBRIUM** uses a progressive, individualized program with each of its participants. Program participants are not usually started in the program learning traditional functional riding skills. Instead, each participant starts on the horse using an approach that reflects each participant's level of postural control, balance, coordination, and perceptual and cognitive skills. An individual program plan is developed at the start of each season creating objective goals for the program participant. As participants progress through their goals, they "graduate" to increased skill levels on the horse leading to functional and independent riding within their capabilities.

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE:

- 1. Hippotherapy:** A term that refers to the use of the 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 neuromusculoskeletal challenges. This tool is used as part of an integrated treatment program to achieve functional outcomes. Applicants for this program will receive special information on guidelines and billing after receipt of both the registration and medical forms. An evaluation by the PATH Int'l, American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) registered therapist is required to enter this program.

- 2. Sensory Integration and Movement Experience:** A program that provides the participant with a variety of sensory-motor experiences through changes of position (remedial vaulting) on the horse. These changes of position develop body awareness, improved posture and balance, coordination, and motor-planning. This is a private or semi-private session under the direction of a PATH Int'l certified therapeutic riding instructor who provides direct handling and cuing of the participant.
- 3. Equine Assisted Learning (Ride, Learn, & Grow):** An innovative educational program that engages the participant in a succession of creative activities, and interactive exercises with horses, teaching positive life skills, improvement of strength based developmental assets, and academics in a non-traditional positive learning environment. EAL is suited for preschool, elementary through high school students as well as after school or special learning programs. Cost for program is determined by size of group, session time and frequency.
- 4. Developmental Riding:** Let the horse get you moving! This program utilizes the unique combination of centered riding techniques along with strengthening and stretching exercises to provide the movement necessary to build core strength and muscle tone. Developmental riding is suited for individuals of all ages with impaired balance, arthritis, low muscle tone, decreased strength, low endurance or other physical disabilities and limitations. This program is a private or semi-private session under the direction of a PATH certified instructor and under the consultation of Physical Therapist and or Certified Athletic Trainer with the aid of one or more volunteers.
- 5. Trail Blazers:** This recreational riding program teaches functional riding skills using Centered riding techniques. Riding skills are practiced and developed over the year and participants may have the opportunity to participate in an onsite horse show. Trail Blazers is suited for individuals who desire to focus on riding skills and are ready to work toward independent riding. A participant may graduate from the Developmental Riding or Sensory Integration program to Trail Blazers. Participants may register for Trail Blazers as a private, semi-private or group session.
- 6. Therapeutic Cart/Carriage Driving:** Therapeutic driving is an activity geared toward those individuals who may use a wheelchair, do not wish to, or cannot ride astride a horse. Therapeutic driving produces similar benefits as riding such as improving balance, coordination, posture and independence. This is a private session in which participants work one to one with instructor learning how to groom, harness and hook up horse to cart. Participants learn how to communicate in order to steer and guide horse through patterns and obstacles.
- 7. Farm Visits:** Bring a group to the farm for a tour and meet our equine team. A Farm visit offers the opportunity to learn about the basic care, feeding, communication and movement of the horse. Riding or driving a horse can also be arranged adding more time for fun on the farm. Call the office for group rates.

- 8. Silver Saddles:** This program combines the teaching of Centered riding techniques, stretching and strengthening exercises into a group program especially designed with seniors in mind. Silver Saddles provides an opportunity to build relationships, increase balance, muscle strength and mobility. This is a great activity for men and women of retirement age with arthritis and low muscle tone.
- 9. Volunteer Training & Development:** Equi-librium requires an initial mandatory introductory training for all volunteers in compliance with PATH Int'l accreditation requirements. In addition, Equi-librium will from time to time offer workshops, seminars and additional training for those volunteers interested in increasing their knowledge in the field of equine-assisted activities. When available, discounted riding lessons will be offered to enhance volunteer understanding of the movement of the horse and interactive behaviors related to horse management. Riding lessons will continue as long as there is time and instructor availability. Equi-librium's first responsibility is to fulfill its mission to people with special needs. Volunteers interested in taking lessons should contact the Office.

ADMISSION CRITERIA: Program participants will be accepted into a program based on the following criteria:

- 1. Priority** - program participants are accepted on a first come, first served basis, in the order of their application and as spaces in the programs become available, assuming they meet all the other following criteria. Individuals that have been in the program during the prior season are given priority over new program participants as long as their application is received before the stated deadline.
- 2. Special Needs** – Equi-librium is open to anyone from 2 to 8 with special Needs, including physical and developmental disabilities, including but not exclusive to fine and gross motor skills, sensori-motor skills, sensory integration, cognitive ability or and social/emotional traumas affecting behavioral health. Each participant is evaluated for eligibility based on the PATH Int'l Guidelines.
- 3. Age Ranges** - The age ranges for new program participants entering our programs are as follows:
 - a. **Private and Educational Programs:** 4 years to adult. These people enter and continue in the program as long as appropriate horses, and staff are available and the participant continues to meet all other criteria.
 2. **Hippotherapy Program:** 2 years to adult are considered as long as appropriate horses and staff are available and the participant continues to meet all other criteria. Participants are evaluated and re-evaluated for this program by the physical therapist.
- 4. Weight Limit** - Individuals weighing more than 175 lbs. will be evaluated on an individual basis. Any current program participant weighing more than 175 lbs. will be re-evaluated each season. Weight is taken into consideration when determining the size, strength & availability of horses, and the safety of our volunteers and participants. It is also taken into consideration in relation to the nature of a participant's disability and the combined effect on the horse and participant.

5. **Height Limit** - Individuals more than six feet tall will be evaluated on an individual basis. Any current program participant who is more than six feet tall will be re-evaluated each season. Height considerations are taken into consideration when determining the size, strength and availability of horses and the safety of our volunteers and participants. It is also taken into consideration in relation to the nature of a participant's disability and the combined effect on the horse and participant.
6. **Evaluation** - Information received from the Registration packet is reviewed by the Program Director. After review, the Program Director may recommend that the new participant be evaluated prior to starting program by a PATH Int'l registered physical therapist or certified instructor. The physical therapist and/or instructor will determine that there is no presence of any contraindication for riding, driving and which program is appropriate for the participant.
7. **Availability** - Program participants will be accepted based on the availability of appropriate horses, equipment, volunteers, and scheduling.
8. **Program Expertise** - A program participant will only be accepted if the staff has the expertise to develop an appropriate therapeutic program for that individual.
9. **Level of Independence** - All individuals that meet the acceptance criteria are eligible for program regardless of their level of independence.
10. **Fees** - Acceptance into any program is based on the program participant's ability to pay the designated fee. All prior session fees must be paid in full. Fees do not cover the cost of service. Due to the expertise needed and the expense incurred in operating therapeutic horsemanship and hippotherapy programs, every participant is subsidized. Fees for service cover about 30% of the cost; more than 70% is covered by special events and charitable revenue. For this reason participation by riders and their families in fundraising activities is crucial. There is no sliding fee scale or scholarship program available at this time,

DISCHARGE CRITERIA:

Participants may be discharged from Equi-librium programs for the following reasons:

The Participant:

1. Exhibits behavior that is considered inappropriate and unsafe during program sessions.
2. Has three unexcused absences in a session when no prior notification was given to program staff.
3. Can be safely graduated into a mainstreamed commercial riding program with no loss of quality of function.
4. Develops a medical contraindication to riding. If the program participant develops a temporary contraindication (e.g. surgery) that requires discharge for the rest of the season, that program participant will be accepted back into the program after receiving medical approval to resume riding.

5. No longer qualifies under the guidelines of admission/eligibility criteria and would compromise the safety of the participant and/or staff.
6. Fails to remit designated fee for service according to our fee schedule.
7. Excessive absences.
8. Consistent disregard for any of the Participant/Family Guidelines.
9. **Hippotherapy only:** Does not show documented progress over the course of the hippotherapy treatment season without the existence of extenuating circumstances in accordance with the PA State Physical Therapy Practice Act.

FEES FOR PROGRAMS:

The programs provided by Equi-librium Therapeutic Horsemanship cost well above the fees charged for services. About 30% of the full cost is covered through fees. The remainder is obtained through charitable revenue. This means that all participants receive a charitable subsidy in order to have the opportunity to participate. All fees are due at the beginning of each 10 week session. Call the office if in need of special payment plan. If for any reason late payments occur, bills unpaid past 60 days will be charged 1.5% for each month thereafter.

On occasion, an instructor evaluation may be needed for program participation. The fee for such an evaluation will be \$25, and assists in placement into program sessions. Any evaluations conducted by the physical therapist will be charged \$80.

The following fee schedule is in effect for the 2017 season and is based on a 10 week session cycle. All fees may be subject to change.

Yearly Registration and Insurance Fee for All Participants: \$20.00

Equine-Assisted Activity Programs:

Trail Blazers - Group Sessions \$350.00

(3 or more participants, conducted by a PATH Int'l certified instructor with trained volunteers- 45 minutes)

Equine Assisted Sensory Integration and Movement Experience \$500.00

(1 participant with the hands-on involvement of a PATH Int'l certified instructor with volunteer assistants – 45 minutes)

Equine Assisted Developmental Riding \$500.00

(1 participant with the hands on involvement of a PATH Int'l certified instructor with volunteer assistants – 45 Minutes)
For a group rate call the office.

Trail Blazers Riding Instruction (Semi-Private) \$400.00

(For independent riders, 2 riders)

Trail Blazers Riding Instruction (Private) **\$450.00**
(For independent riders)

Therapeutic Cart/Carriage Driving **\$450.00**
(One on one with Driving Instructor)

******* The above lessons are tuition based programs based on a 10 week session schedule regardless of attendance. One excused absence (minimum 12 hour notice) is allowed for any reason and a make-up week will be provided as a courtesy following the 10 week session unless a scheduled holiday does not permit. A credit to your account will be given to be used toward a riding lesson in another session within the 2017 year if Equi-librium cancels a lesson. *******

(Very special circumstances such as surgeries, long term illness, or other extenuating instances may warrant review by the CEO or Program Director.) Extended fall and winter sessions will be billed on a 5 or 6 week basis without a make-up week.

Hippotherapy – Per Treatment Session **\$80.00**
(Conducted by a Physical, Occupational or Speech Therapist with trained volunteers.)

Hippotherapy is not currently billed through third party billing. In the future, payment may be made through third party insurance coverage if out-patient physical therapy is a covered service by an out-of-network non-participating provider, **however** insurance companies have been denying coverage for hippotherapy, and the future of reimbursement is in considerable doubt. **Equi-librium is not** a Medicare, Medicaid or Medical Assistance/Access provider. Hippotherapy follows the ten week program schedule and is billed on a monthly basis according to attendance.

At least 24 hour notice must be given for cancelations. Late cancelations and no shows will be subject to a \$25.00 cancelation fee to cover the cost of the therapist.

Outside Agencies/Schools: Outside agencies wishing to contract the services of Equi-librium will be able to do so provided all criteria for admission are met. Agencies interested in this option may contact the CEO/Program Director for detailed information and arrangements.

Vocational/Transition Work Experience Program: Equi-librium has provided High School Transition programming for school districts. If you are interested in a site placement for your student in this program, please call Debra Hutchison 610-365-2266 for details. This program would need to be placed in the student's IEP transition plan, and approved for payment by the school district.

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

At the time of Registration, complete instructions and a payment intent form will be included in your packet of information.

Private Pay: Invoices will be sent directly to participants and are expected to be paid in full upon receipt of the invoice. Personal check, cash, money order, or credit card.

FDSS: If you use FDFSS funds, upon receipt of your Equi-librium bill, attach the FDFSS reimbursement voucher to the bill and send immediately to Equi-librium at the

address below. Equi-librium will bill FDFSS directly. A copy of the voucher will be on file. Monthly bills will continue to be sent to families until the FDFSS payment is made. This is to keep families informed. Equi-librium is an approved organization for MH/MR FDFSS and certain vocational transition programs. Upon receiving payment, a paid receipt will be sent to you.

******Families are responsible for knowing the amount of money in their FDFSS or waiver accounts and will be held personally responsible for making sure their participant fees are paid.**

If you choose not to send the FDFSS voucher to Equi-librium, payment must be made in full prior to the start of program. A paid receipt will be given to you, whereupon you can request reimbursement directly from FDFSS.

ALL PAYMENTS MUST BE SENT TO:

EQUI-LIBRIUM, 524 Fehr Rd. Nazareth PA 18064.

**Do not leave payment at the barn or give to an instructor.
There is a locked mailbox at the office front door for after-hour payments.**

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Office – 610-365-2266

Office Fax # - 610-365-2263

Email: debbie@equi-librium.org

Website: www.equi-librium.org

CEO

Cheryl Baker

610-365-2266 cell: 610-248-0414

Program Director/PATH Int'l Certified Instructor

Debra Hutchison

610-365-2266

Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper:

Jennifer Housden

610-365-2266

Volunteer Coordinator:

Yvonne Darlington

610-365-2266

PATH Int'l Certified Instructors

Instructor & Therapists can be reached by calling or leaving a message at the office.

Yvonne Darlington

Samantha Hartzell

Debra Hutchison

Christopher Jones

Renee Vaughn

John Murdoch

2017 PROGRAM CALENDAR

Dates are subject to change depending on weather conditions, horse changes, or other circumstances. The following holidays are observed: New Years Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Exact session dates may end on different dates depending on the day and when holidays fall. There also may be changes due to special Equi-librium activities or cancellations. Weekly schedules start on Monday. Note: There are some school holidays that are not holidays for Equi-librium; if you have questions please contact the office or ask the instructor.

All Therapeutic Horsemanship Programs for 2017:

Winter: Start: Week of January 9th
End: Week of March 13th

Winter session will be billed for in advance for 5 lessons; pay as you go for balance. Credits left over will be applied to spring session bill. There will be no makeups.

Spring: Start Week of March 20th.
End: Week of May 22nd.

Spring session is a 10 week session and tuition based. Make-ups will be scheduled for the week of May 29th. (Due to the Holiday no make-up session for Monday is available)

Summer: Start: Week of June 5th
End: Week of August 7th

Summer is a 10 week tuition based session. Make ups will be held the week of August 14th. (A make-up for Tuesday is not available due to July 4th; therefore Tuesday participants will be billed for 9 weeks.)

Summer Break: Week of August 21st NO MAKEUPS AND/OR LESSONS

Summer Camps: June 19-23 ages 4-7; July 10-14 ages 8-12
July 24-28 ages 13-18+; August 14-18 ages 4 to 7

Fall: Start: Week of August 28th
End: Week of October 30th

Fall session is a 10 week tuition based program and make ups will be held the week of November 6th (Monday and Saturday participants will be billed for 9 weeks due to the Labor Day holiday and horse show)

Horse Show September 30th

Extended Fall: Start: Week of November 13th
End: Week of December 18th

Extended fall is a 6 week session. There are no scheduled make up dates.

Hippotherapy: Schedule is determined by the availability of the Therapist(s), and the days open for programming. It is not available in Winter. Please contact office for scheduling.

Driving: sessions are scheduled by the availability of the instructor. Please contact office for scheduling.

Volunteer Training Schedule: BASIC: March 11, March 18, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14. Trainings run from 12:30-3:30

DIRECTIONS

EQUI-LIBRIUM THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP CENTER 524 Fehr Rd. Nazareth PA 18064

From Stroudsburg: Take 33 south to Belfast exit. Make right onto Henry Rd. Turn left onto Jacobsburg Rd and make a right onto Rose Inn Ave. Take first right onto Fehr Rd. Equilibrium driveway is on the right.

From Allentown: Take US 22 East to PA 191 Nazareth Pike exit. Take right onto PA191/248 Easton Rd. Take second left onto Broad St.; South Broad turns into N. Broad, N. Broad becomes Bushkill Center. Take right onto Jacobsburg Rd and then left onto Rose Inn Ave. and first right onto Fehr Rd. Equi-librium driveway is on the right.



PARTICIPANT/FAMILY GUIDELINES

ATTENDANCE:

As consistency is extremely important to a participant's progress, it is expected that each participant will keep regular attendance.

In the event of vacation or other event would prevent you from coming to a riding session, an anticipated absence sheet is located on a clip board in the waiting area of the arena; you can also call or email the office to inform us of such events. Please indicate what dates you will be unable to attend ahead of time so that the instructor and volunteers can modify their schedules accordingly.

Please do not bring your participant to program if they are sick.

In the event of an unexpected absence please:

Call the Equi-librium Office 610-365-2266

Consistent failure to notify program personnel of your inability to attend may necessitate a review of your status in the program. Three (3) "no show" absences may result in discharge.

Our attendance guidelines have been created because:

- 1) at times we have a waiting list to get into Equi-librium,
- 2) our program is designed as a progressive educational program with individual program plans and progress notes written based on consistent attendance; it is not a recreational "come as you want to" program,
- 3) we have volunteers who have chosen to dedicate their time and effort to helping our participants; "no-shows" or excessive absences do not take into consideration the commitment of these willing volunteers,
- 4) our instructors carefully plan each lesson, make assignments, prepare the horses, etc.. "No-shows" or excessive absences affect the planning and execution of lessons.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

Occasionally programs need to be canceled due to snow, severe thunderstorms, tornado warnings, heat or cold. Equi-librium is guided by the Temperature Humidity Index in hot weather and the cold/wind chill index in cold weather. The regular program will not be held if the heat index is 95% or above, or if the temperature is 30 degrees or lower in the riding arena. However, we will make every accommodation to do other activities and will only cancel in the case of extreme weather conditions.

Equi-librium will notify you by phone in the event of cancellation. **It is important that we have a daytime phone number to contact you.** If you have not heard from us, or cannot be reached, and question whether the program will operate you may call: the Equi-librium Therapeutic Horsemanship Center Office.

As weather conditions vary significantly throughout the area, you are responsible for making sure the program is or is not going to take place. We try not to cancel but it does happen on occasion. If the session has started and weather conditions prevent participants from hands-on horse activities, alternative programming such as groundwork, games or other horse related activities will be conducted. There will be no make-up dates scheduled for alternative program sessions, as all aspects of the equine learning experience are valuable.

ARRIVAL TIME:

A late arrival means that your participant will not receive his/her fully allotted time. **Plan to arrive no earlier and no later than 10 minutes ahead of your session.** Too early an arrival time can create adjustment problems for a participant who has difficulty waiting for an activity to begin. A five or ten minute prior arrival allows for pre-session sign-in and preparation without creating stress.

ATTENDANCE:

Your instructor will be keeping the attendance records.

VACATION/AWAY DAYS:

There is a vacation sheet on a clip board for indicating any days you will not be attending. If you know that you will not be able to attend on a certain date, please write in your name and the date(s) you will be away, and/or call or email the office. This information is very important for volunteer and instructor planning. Remember, all but Hippotherapy is tuition based. There are no credits for vacation or away days.

LESSON OR TREATMENT TIMES:

Program lessons normally run for 45 minutes. This 45 minute segment includes helmet and belt fitting, mounting, the riding time, and dismount. It may include other ground activities such as grooming, leading, and tacking if appropriate. Each session is planned according to the participant's individual program plan, and adjusted according to the participant's needs during the session time.

PARTICIPANT ATTIRE:

Helmets are required for riding. ASTM-SEI (American Society for Testing and Materials – Safety Equipment Institute) approved helmets for equestrian use are provided by Equi-librium. Bicycle helmets or other alternative helmets can be used only in the hippotherapy program under the auspices of a licensed/credentialed therapist. We encourage families and/or participants to purchase their own ASTM-SEI approved equestrian helmet. Information on purchasing a helmet can be obtained from your program instructor. If you do purchase your own you must make sure it fits.

Participants are required to wear **tie shoes or sneakers**. Participants riding with vaulting pads and surcingles need to wear sneakers. Those in saddles not equipped with safety stirrups are required by PATH Int'l standards to wear tie shoes or boots with a small heel. This prevents the participant's foot from sliding through the stirrup. Currently all the stirrups we use are safety stirrups meeting the guidelines of PATH Int'l. Participants will not be allowed to ride if wearing inappropriate footwear.

Participants are required to wear long pants at all times. While it seems to be more comfortable for participants to wear shorts in the hot weather, the friction caused by the pads and saddles on bare skin can cause skin rashes, topical injury and increased risk of infection. Please! Long pants are required even in the hottest of weather. (If your participant is prone to skin breakdown avoid triple seam blue jeans that will cause irritation along the seams). Special permission may be granted for those having severe tactile or sensory issues.

In cold weather, please dress appropriately. Layered clothing, long underwear, knit hats, gloves are essential. Sweat pants over top of regular pants work well if you do not have long underwear. Snowsuits are also acceptable.

If a participant arrives wearing inappropriate attire, they will not be permitted to ride or drive; alternative programming may be conducted.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:

Families are invited to become actively involved in the development of their participant's individual program plan and in providing information and feedback as the program progresses. A plan information form is included in all registration packets. This form is used to assist the physical therapist and instructors develop appropriate goals for participants. The more information we receive from families the better goals can be set. Families and participants are encouraged to solicit feedback from the instructor on progress made within sessions.

It is important to inform your instructor prior to the lesson if there has been any significant event, illness, medication changes or other issue that might affect the performance or behavior of the participant during that lesson.

During the riding/driving lesson families are asked to remain outside the arena area or in the viewing room away from the participant. A climate controlled viewing area is conveniently located adjacent to the indoor arena accessible to parents and/or caregivers.

We have found that for both safety reasons and for the accomplishment of program objectives, family, caregiver or caseworker involvement during the actual riding session is best kept non-existent or kept to a minimum. The participant's attention to the movement of the horse, their balance, self-control and appropriate behaviors are essential to both safety and progress. The instructor will consult with the family during the session if appropriate. Questions and concerns can be addressed with instructors or the Program Director between sessions or during the week by phone. The instructor is responsible for the session; any involvement by family or other individuals is permitted only at the discretion of the instructor.

FACILITY PROTOCOL:

Families are asked to **observe any posted barn rules** that are present on the facility grounds. Certain areas are "**off-limits**" to participants and their families. Designated areas of traffic will be outlined to all at the beginning of the season. "Off-limit" signs will be clearly posted where necessary. **Off-Limit areas include the pond, climbing on trees, the manure pile and the barns. In addition, please refrain from walking around the arena when program is in session. A sudden noise or gesture can startle a horse when walking by the doors or on trail rides.**

No pets, please. Please do not bring a pet with you at all. Even in cars a noisy pet can startle a horse when riding past the parking lot and create an accident.

Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned to vibrate or silent when in or near both the indoor and the outdoor arenas. This is a safety issue. As the seating area is located next to the mounting block/arena ringing cell phones, handheld games with noise or music can startle a horse standing in the block or passing by the area.

Siblings or accompanying friends must be kept under family supervision. They need to remain in the reception area or may play outside with supervision during program and behave appropriately. Disruptions, excessive movement, and noise affects the behavior of the horses, is distracting to the participant and poses a serious threat to safety. Frequent inappropriate behavior will be cause for review regarding program participation.

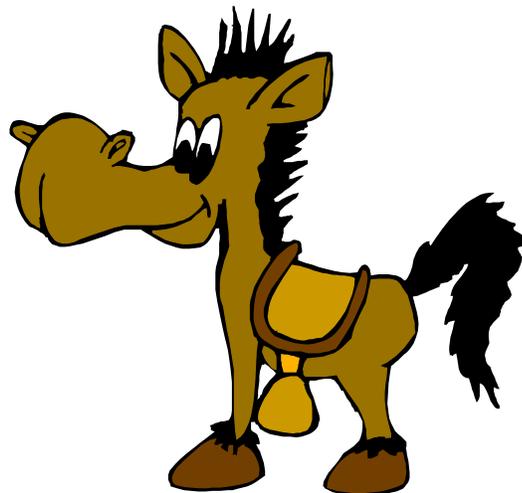
There is to be **no feeding of horses**, except under the direct supervision of the instructor. **Horses are never hand fed.** A treat bucket has been provided at the helmet area. Horses will be given their treats at mealtimes.

There is **no smoking anywhere** on facility property, and **no alcohol or drugs** on or near the program facility.

The seating area for observers is next to the riding arena, conversation and **noise must be kept to a minimum for program safety**, especially during the mounting of participants. A climate controlled viewing area is located next to the arena for observers as well as participants who are waiting for their lesson. No one is allowed in the arena at any time during tacking, mounting, while lesson is in progress, dismounting or untacking **unless you are an assigned volunteer** or have the permission **of the instructor**.

Notices include changes in calendar, special events, fundraising or special programs of interest.

Disregard for any of the family guidelines will result in re-consideration of the participant's status in the program and may result in dismissal.



HORSE & TEAM SELECTION:

Considerable thought and planning goes into the selection of the horse to be ridden, and the volunteer/instructor team. A participant is assigned to a horse that fits the person's needs at a particular time. From time to time horses will be re-assigned in order to determine whether changes in movement or other considerations affect or enhance the participant's program. Horses may also be re-assigned due to injury or ailment. These changes may include volunteer changes as well, and are made at the discretion of the instructor, therapist and director when appropriate. Consultation with the family may occur before or after such changes have been initiated. Questions regarding program should be directed to the Instructor or the Program Director.

ROLES OF PERSONNEL:

CEO: Is responsible for the overall functions of the organization. Handles major issues with program and volunteerism, and general questions regarding the organization - special events, committee and board involvement, as well as donations and funding information.

Program Director: Is the Program Administrator. Any questions regarding the program can be addressed to the Program Director. The Program Director also supervises instructors in matters of training, instruction and in the carrying out of individual program plans.

Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper: Handles participant and volunteer registrations, all accounting procedures, maintains records and databases, and runs the daily operations of the office.

Volunteer Coordinator: Supervises the volunteer team, consisting of a horse leader/header and one or two sidehelpers. Each volunteer has attended a training program and is assigned by the instructor in concert with the Volunteer Coordinator. Any questions or concerns regarding the volunteers should be addressed to the Volunteer Coordinator.

PATH Int'l Certified Instructor: In charge of all Equi-librium related activities occurring before, during and after the program; develops the individual program plan of each participant along with the physical therapist and Program Director, supervises volunteers and assists in the training of horses used in the program and consults with families regarding program objectives.

Assistant Instructor: Assists the instructor in preparation and instruction of participants and volunteers. May be a paid instructor or trained volunteer and or Instructor-In-Training.

Licensed, PATH Int'l or American Hippotherapy Registered Therapist: Evaluates some new program participants, works along with the Instructors in developing individual program plans, treats program participants in the Hippo therapy program and consults with families regarding program objectives.

Barn & Facility Maintenance Staff: Work under the supervision of the Program Director to carry out the day-to-day operations regarding equine care and facility maintenance.

Equine Staff: Our able and willing horses that serve with tolerance and patience. They are carefully selected, trained and conditioned for their role in the program.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN
For Indoor or Outdoor Incident/Accident

1. If an incident/accident such as a fall, a seizure, etc., happens while participants are mounted, all activity STOPS until further notice is given by the instructor.
2. Leaders and side helpers are to stay in charge of their own participant and/or horse with the leader in a halt position.
3. Horses and participants are to stay in location of halt unless otherwise notified by the instructor.
4. The instructor (or therapist if no instructor is present) is in charge of any riding session emergencies and has current certification in first Aid and CPR.
5. The type of accident or results of any mishap will determine whether the instructor will dismiss or continue the session.
6. NO ONE, including parents, is permitted in the arena or working area if an accident happens. Only those summoned by the instructor are allowed to enter the area quietly.
7. There is to be no excessive talking or noise.
8. Sidehelpers are to explain the situation quietly and reassure the other mounted participants.
9. The removal of the horse from an accident scene will be done in the safest way for the situation based on the horse's training and location of the participant.
10. If outside emergency assistance is needed the instructor or another designated individual is responsible for making the phone call to emergency services.
11. An emergency phone number sheet is located at the telephone call station at the program site.
12. An incident report will be filed for any incident/accident that may occur.
13. In the case of a fire, spill, or other emergency, each building has posted an emergency plan and a map with an evacuation route clearly defined.

Source: PATH Int'l (Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship International)

AAT Benefits (from the PATH International website – pathintl.org)

The benefits of animal-assisted activities and therapies have been recognized for a long time, but the specific benefits of interacting with horses may be less well known. Working with horses can have a major physical and emotional impact on people with a wide variety of issues and disabilities. Some (but not all) issues and disabilities for which equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) are useful are listed with supporting evidence where available.

Amputations: People who have experienced an amputation can be successful riders and drivers. Many para-equestrians have successfully competed with an amputation. Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) centers are experienced in creating adaptations in equipment to accommodate for people with amputations of upper and lower extremities. Drivers can learn one-handed driving and compete in pleasure driving competitions.

Borges de Araujo, Araujo, Santana, Lopes & Franck (2006) studied the use of hippotherapy as a physical therapy strategy to improve postural steadiness in patients with lower limb amputations. Data were gathered using a platform sensor F-Mat connected to a computer before the first physical therapy session utilizing hippotherapy and after the 20th session. Results from the three participants indicated increased speed and distance post treatment.

Attention Deficit Disorder: Children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have difficulties with attention and self-control of behavior. Horseback riding requires attention to the instructor and the horse. Children who participate in a riding program will be taught sequential steps for learning to control their horse and becoming more independent. Riding lessons can be modified in length to accommodate for decreased attention span in the beginning of the program. Children with ADD or ADHD may also benefit from participation in a vaulting program at a PATH Intl. center. Vaulting requires attention and timing for approaching the horse on the lunge line as well as mounting and dismounting. In vaulting, children work in groups requiring self-control and team work.

Autism: Children and adults with autism participate in a variety of PATH Intl. center programs including riding, driving, vaulting, hippotherapy, and equine-facilitated psychotherapy (EFP). Equine-assisted activities such as riding or vaulting and equine-assisted therapy such as hippotherapy or psychotherapy can impact the life of a person with autism.

Bass, Duchowny, and Llabre (2008) studied children with autism participating in a 12 week therapeutic horseback riding program. Two instruments were used to measure social functioning before and after the intervention: the Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS) and the Sensory Profile (SP). They found the children with autism who participated in the therapeutic horseback riding program improved in sensory integration and directed attention as compared to the control group.

Macauley (2007) studied children with mild, moderate and severe autism participating in a 10 week speech therapy session using hippotherapy. The children were evaluated using the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS) as well as attention to task and number of session goals met. All children showed progress on at least one of the following four CARS subtests: relating to people, listening behaviors, verbal communication and nonverbal communication.

Brain Injuries: People with brain injuries can experience multiple symptoms related to their injury. They may participate in a variety of programs depending on their abilities and goals. People with a brain injury who are seeking to pursue a new recreational outlet may benefit from riding or driving programs. Participants develop skills needed to direct their equine partners through obstacles, cones courses, or on trail rides.

Cerebral Palsy: People of all ages with cerebral palsy may enjoy interacting with horses. Children can learn a sport such as riding to share with their peers. Adults may treasure riding as a life-long leisure activity. Horseback riding requires skills including good posture, coordination, and balance to direct the horse. Riders with cerebral palsy may progress from riding with sidewalkers to riding independently. Some people with cerebral palsy may prefer to learn carriage driving and may even be able to drive from their own wheelchair in a specially designed carriage.

A large amount of research in equine-assisted therapy has involved children with cerebral palsy. Shurtleff, Standeven, & Engsborg (2009) measured head and trunk stability changes in children with cerebral palsy after 12 weeks of hippotherapy treatments provided by an occupational or physical therapist. The research team used a motorized barrel and video motion capture to challenge and measure the changes in motor control. The children showed very significant improvements in control of their trunks and heads at the end of the intervention period and maintained improvements after a 12 week period without treatment.

Cerebrovascular Accident/Stroke: People who have experienced a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) or stroke may experience challenges from deficits resulting from the area of the brain affected by the stroke. Examples of deficits include loss of the use of a limb such as an arm/hand, difficulty finding or understanding words, or balance issues. PATH Intl. centers offer a variety of programs to work with these challenges and those who have had a CVA may benefit from an enjoyable physical activity involving horses. They can learn to ride or drive with one hand or may use an adapted rein on their weaker side. Riding in a group is a great shared social experience as well as opportunity to interact with horses.

Deafness: People who are deaf or hard of hearing may experience improved self-esteem and a sense of independence and empowerment by becoming an independent equestrian. People with hearing impairments will develop unique ways to communicate with their instructor and equine partner while learning riding or driving.

Developmental Delay/Cognitive Delay: PATH Intl. centers are able to provide a variety of recreational programs that reflect personal preferences and choices for the person with developmental delays. Learning horseback riding skills includes leisure and recreational activities alone and with others, riding socially with others, taking turns, extending the time of the riding lesson and expanding one's repertoire of skills towards independent riding. Some persons may choose to compete in programs such as the Special Olympics.

Down Syndrome: Children and adults with Down syndrome may participate in equine-assisted activities or equine-assisted therapy if atlantoaxial instability (AAI) has been ruled out with current x-rays and/or the participant has no signs or symptoms of this condition per their physician.

Champagne and Dugas (2010) provided 11 weeks of hippotherapy to two children with Down Syndrome and measured changes in postural control. The Gross Motor Function Measure (GMFM) and accelerometry were the instruments used to measure. Improvements in gross motor behavior (particularly walking, running, and jumping) were revealed by the GMFM. The overall accelerometry data demonstrated interesting adaptive responses to the postural challenges induced by the horse.

Emotional Disabilities: Many people with emotional disabilities are able to enjoy equine based programs that promote physical activity and social interaction. PATH Intl. programs are designed for safety and close supervision as well as fun, interesting activities.

Learning Disabilities: Participants in a PATH Intl. program are presented information about riding and driving skills and horsemanship in a variety of methods. People with learning disabilities have the chance to learn through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods while learning to ride or drive a horse. They may be motivated to learn more about horses then they are in their school classroom. The horse's response to the aids given by the rider or driver is natural positive reinforcement and helps participants build skills.

Multiple Sclerosis: Therapeutic riding can be a great source of exercise in which people with multiple sclerosis may choose to participate. They can participate in riding within their limits of strength and energy and still enjoy an active recreational activity or sport. Riding may help people with multiple sclerosis stay limber and active.

Silkwood-Sherer and Warmbier (2007) studied the effects of hippotherapy on postural stability in persons with multiple sclerosis. They found that the group receiving hippotherapy (9 adults) demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in balance as measured by the Berg Balance Scale (BBS) and Tinetti Performance Oriented Mobility Assessment (POMA) following 7 weeks of hippotherapy intervention. The comparison group consisting of 6 adults showed no improvement in balance. A between group difference in the BBS scores by 14 weeks was noted, thus suggesting that improvements in the intervention group may have been caused by the hippotherapy treatments. None of the subjects in either the intervention or comparison groups participated in other forms of rehabilitation during the study.

Muscular Dystrophy: People with muscular dystrophy may participate in programs at PATH Intl. centers to keep active while engaging in an enjoyable activity. Riders may start out more independent, but may need more support as their disease progresses. Riding lessons may be tailored to the abilities and stamina of the rider. The PATH Intl. instructor may support their transition to a non-mounted program such as driving or a hippotherapy program as their needs change. This flexibility helps the person with muscular dystrophy stay active and engaged while coping with changes in their abilities.

Spina Bifida: Participants with spina bifida may participate in equine-assisted activities or therapies at a PATH Intl. center. Prior to participation, the client's doctor will need to carefully screen the participant for concerns such as tethered cord, hydromyelia or Chiari II malformation. Any changes in neurological status must be carefully monitored during participation in riding programs. Learning to ride or a horse may be an empowering experience and allow someone with limited mobility from spina bifida to experience a greater freedom on the back of a horse.

Spinal Cord Injuries: People who have had a spinal cord injury may have varied levels of impairments from sensory loss to quadriplegia. A complete spinal cord injury above T-6 is a contraindication for riding, but would not necessarily prevent a client's participation in other types of equine programs such as driving and unmounted activities. Many people who have had a spinal cord injury may participate in therapeutic riding lessons, carriage driving or may choose an equine-assisted therapy program to address challenges with trunk control or coping with their injury.

Lechner, Kakebeke, Hegemann, and Baumberger (2007) conducted research to determine the effect of hippotherapy on spasticity and mental well-being of persons with spinal cord injury (SCI). Spasticity was measured by the Ashworth Scale and subjects' self-rating on a visual analogue scale. Well-being was measured by subjects' self-report on the well-being scale Befindlichkeits-Skala of von Zerssen. The researchers found that only the effect of hippotherapy reached significance for clinically rated spasticity compared with the control condition (without intervention). Immediate improvements in the subjects' mental well-being were detected only after hippotherapy.

Visual Impairment: People who have a visual impairment are able to learn to ride or drive independently and compete in equestrian events. People with visual impairments may participate as part of a vaulting team. Strategies to help people with visual impairments include use of intercom systems with the instructors, learning to count steps/strides, or auditory markers in the arena. These strategies are frequently used at PATH Intl. centers and both instructors and horses are able to accommodate and accept the rider or driver's differences.

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Note: Following each reference citation is the type of evidence. In this set of references, the highest type of evidence is a published single research study, followed by a published descriptive report, and then an oral presentation of a single research project. Type of evidence is important and is a factor for consideration for evidence-based practice.