



*Healing through Horses*

# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

*"Without you, they don't ride"*



Professional Association of Therapeutic  
Horsemanship International  
*Ensuring excellence and changing lives  
through equine assisted activities and therapies*

[www.chastainhorsepark.org](http://www.chastainhorsepark.org)

4371 Powers Ferry Road, NW

Atlanta, Georgia 30327

404-252-4244



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Mission

*Chastain Horse Park serves riders of all ages and abilities helping them to attain their highest potential in areas of cognitive, physical, and emotional development through the therapeutic relationship with a horse.*

### Vision

*To serve the Atlanta community and enhance the lives of our patrons through horsemanship by providing a combination of equestrian activities including therapeutic programs, beginner to advanced riding lessons, pony parties for children, and competitive show opportunities.*

Chastain Horse Park (CHP) is a premier non-profit, equestrian facility dedicated to serving riders of all skill levels from beginner to advanced, as well as riders with cognitive, physical or mental disabilities through our Therapeutic Programs and inner city and at-risk children with our Community Outreach Program. We develop and strengthen skills such as awareness, focus, leadership, confidence, coordination, and courage and have fun doing it!

**Thank You for volunteering!** You are the lifeblood of this program. Without you there would be no Therapeutic Program! Our riders would not receive the therapy they need if it were not for your generosity of spirit in the giving of your time and energy. We try to show our gratitude with scheduled volunteer appreciation parties, as well as awards for Volunteer of the Year each year. Please join us for these events!

### SESSIONS

CHP programs operate on a session's system:

Spring Session: *March, April, May*

Summer Session: *June, July, August*

Fall Session: *September, October, November*

Winter Session: *December, January, February*

### WEATHER DISRUPTIONS

Lessons are held rain or shine. We are very fortunate to have two covered arenas. When the weather does not allow mounted lessons, such as: thunder/lightening or below 36°F (real or feel) or above 95°F (heat index >98°F), high winds or for any other safety reason, we will have unmounted barn lessons, if the rider is capable.

### PUBLIC LESSON PROGRAM

CHP offers riding and horsemanship lessons to beginner through advanced level riders, and lesson horse leases for show or pleasure riding as available. To have your information distributed to potential instructors, send an email to [lessons@chastainhorsepark.org](mailto:lessons@chastainhorsepark.org) with your name, age, address, contact information, experience, and lesson time preference or call 404-252-4244, ext. 1

### HORSE BOARDING

- 3 Barns, immaculately kept – stalls available
- 4 Arenas, including 2 covered arenas and a 45,000 square foot jumping arena
- 12 x 12 stalls (dutch doors available)
- Individual turnout paddocks, with options for trailering to offsite pastures
- Top level instruction available on-site
- Local and A shows



Board includes:

- Feeding and stall care
- Daily turn-out
- Worming
- Blanketing in the winter
- 24-hour on-site management

### ***Therapeutic Program***

CHP's Therapeutic Program participants are children and adults with challenges that may include: traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism, multiple sclerosis, stroke, cancer, genetic disorders, developmental delays, sensory integration disorders, learning disabilities, conduct disorders, mental illness, and speech, hearing or vision impairments and other disabilities.

### **The Team**

1. Instructors teach therapeutic riding lessons. They also oversee Hippotherapy sessions, which are provided by licensed therapists. Instructors are certified as Registered or Advanced Level PATH Intl. instructors. Chastain Horse Park's instructors have been active on a national level, teaching PATH Intl. workshops, presenting at regional and national conferences, or serving a PATH Intl. committee.
2. Physical, Occupational, and/or Speech Therapists provide Hippotherapy sessions. Chastain Horse Park's Hippotherapy providers have completed specialized training and supervision through the American Hippotherapy Association.
3. Trained volunteers prepare (grooming & tacking) the horse, lead the horse or walk beside the rider as needed, and provide post session horse care (untack and groom, and put away the horse).
4. Horses—each equine is unique in personality, and has individual likes, dislikes and habits. The information gained from equine communication can be highly useful in all EAAT settings. Viewing the equine as a partner invites opportunities for relationship building and skill building with all participants served.

Therapeutic Riding is riding skill instruction from a PATH Intl. certified instructor. During Therapeutic Riding lessons, the rider learns skills to direct the horse's movement. Therefore, in Therapeutic Riding lessons, the horse's leader is encouraged by the instructor to permit the rider to increasingly control the horse's movement.

Therapeutic work with the horse is not just for those with physical challenges, but also those with learning disabilities and related challenges. Sensorimotor input provided by the horse's movement and horse-care tasks can help the central nervous system organize itself, improving eye-hand coordination, spatial awareness, midline orientation, attention span, dexterity, right/left handedness, verbalization and vocabulary, and sequential thinking.

There are important differences between "Therapeutic Riding" and "Hippotherapy":

"Hippotherapy" is a physical, occupational, or speech/language therapy that utilizes equine movement; Hippotherapy literally means "treatment with the help of the horse" from the Greek word, "hippos, "meaning" horse." During the licensed therapist's hippotherapy session a horse leader who has been trained in leading skills specific to hippotherapy, controls the movement of the horse as a key component to the therapy session. In other words, the horse's movement influences the rider, rather than the rider controlling the horse's movement.

Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech-Language Pathologists use the movement of the horse as a therapy tool. Hippotherapy research has shown relevant functional outcomes such as significant improvements in postural control, motor function, weight-bearing, and gait, as well as relaxation of spasticity.



### **Why is being on a horse therapeutic?**

Internationally, equine movement has been used as a treatment tool by medical professionals for over forty years.

Mental health professionals and educators are using equine assisted therapy to promote mental and emotional health in the burgeoning field of Equine-facilitated Mental Health. Studies have shown that therapeutic riding can result in statistically significant decreases in aggressive behaviors, and improvements in self-concept, intellectual and school status, perceived popularity, and self-satisfaction in emotionally disturbed children and adolescents. The therapeutic riding experience provides a rich environment for teaching cooperation, thoughtfulness, self-control, and for fostering self-esteem through the ability to do and succeed.

This is Chastain Horse Park's Therapeutic Program:

Therapeutic Riding Lessons

Hippotherapy: Equine assisted Physical or Occupational Therapy, or Speech Therapy

Equine-facilitated Learning programs for community groups

Because of its adherence to the highest standards in the industry, CHP is designated a ***PATH International Premier Accredited Center***. Instructors hold one or more certifications, and therapists have completed training through the American Hippotherapy Association. Riders range in age from children as young as two to adults in their senior years.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Involvement in the larger community is a hallmark of Chastain Horse Park with the following activities being provided:

- Sponsored riding lessons for those without opportunity or resources
- Summer camps for children from the inner city and local children
- Field trips for school and community groups
- Birthday Pony Parties
- Pony Rides
- Daily volunteer opportunities assisting during Therapeutic and Hippotherapy sessions
- Volunteer partnerships with businesses and community groups

### **CONTACT**

Public Riding Lessons/Camp	404-252-4244, ext. 1
Therapeutic Program/Community Outreach	404-252-4244, ext. 2
Emergencies on Property Requiring Immediate Attention	404-252-4244, ext. 4
Birthday Pony Parties/Pony Rides	404-252-4244, ext. 5
General information	404-252-4244, ext. 7



## VOLUNTEERING – MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE’S LIFE

Along with the horses, volunteers are the single most important part of any Therapeutic Program activity. Without dedicated people to help groom, tack, and lead horses, encourage and walk beside riders and do many other important tasks, Chastain Horse Park’s Therapeutic Program could not exist.

The two main volunteer tasks at Chastain Horse Park are horse leader and side walker.

The horse leader is responsible for the **horse**. The side walker walks beside the rider during the lesson and is responsible for **the rider**. On the following pages, these jobs are described in more detail, including emergency procedures. Please read these carefully! In addition to these tasks, volunteers may be offered opportunities to help with additional activities such as horse shows and fundraisers.

Volunteers are usually asked to help groom and tack up horses for lessons and untack and groom after lessons. The following pages will help you understand these procedures. Please consider signing up for mentoring sessions to groom and tack with an experienced mentor if new to volunteering at Chastain Horse Park.

You may participate as a volunteer for any lesson or multiple lessons. We ask that you consider volunteering for at least one lesson each week.

### **SCHEDULING:**

All volunteers must have completed a New Volunteer Orientation and have their completed liability and release forms signed and turned in to the Volunteer Coordinator or Instructor on duty **BEFORE** beginning any volunteer activity at the center.

You will need to go to an internet based site ([iVolunteer](#)) to access information on available volunteering opportunities. When you see an opportunity (commonly referred to as a “slot”) you can add yourself to the available slot. Please then take a moment to add the instructor’s phone number (shown on the slot information) to your mobile phone *Contacts* so you will be able to reach them -- should you have an emergency and need to cancel the day of your volunteer commitment. An email reminder will be sent prior to the day for which you have signed up to remind you of the time for which you have signed up.

### **CANCELLATIONS**

We ask that all our volunteers arrive at least 15 minutes before a scheduled class time. If you are unable to volunteer due to illness or other reasons, please do your best to find a replacement. If you can’t, then call the instructor so that we may secure a replacement. In many cases your attendance is critical for a client’s safety during a lesson. You need to keep the instructor’s contact information handy to be able to contact the instructor directly. **If you have to cancel** a “same day” slot that you have signed up for, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Please text or call the instructor if it is a “same day” cancellation – don’t email as it may not be in time.

When the instructor is made aware of a **rider cancellation** one or more days in advance, the instructor (or volunteer coordinator) will EMAIL the volunteers assigned to that rider’s lesson of the cancellation. Due to rider health issues, there may be times when the instructor is not notified in advance. In those same-day rider cancellations the instructor will call or text you to advise, at the number you provide at signup.

Be aware, **classes are not cancelled because of rain**. Should there be a reason such as icy or dangerous weather and classes have to be cancelled for the day, your instructor will let you know.

Recurring Volunteers: You may request a “regular” time slot. If you find a rider or time that you prefer, you may request that slot each week for the entire Quarterly Session. This means that you will not have to sign up weekly, but you will be required to give advance notice to your instructor or the volunteer coordinator should there be an unusual situation when you cannot be there for your recurring time slot.

At CHP, we understand that things come up at the last minute that causes volunteers to cancel. If a volunteer is a “NO SHOW” three times, that volunteer will be removed from the volunteer database and not allowed to volunteer.



A “No Show” is a volunteer who, after receiving confirmation of their commitment to volunteer at a certain time, does not come to the horse park or call to notify an instructor or volunteer coordinator that they cannot be present.

When there is an insufficient number of volunteers, for the safety of the rider lessons have to be cancelled.

## Volunteer Qualities

What does a volunteer need do to be a successful addition to the CHP family?

- A desire to help people succeed
- Bring a positive attitude
- Maintain rider safety
- Always be punctual and professional
- Uphold the commitment for sessions the volunteer signs up for
- Ability to follow directions of program staff and/or instructors at all times.
- Ability to become familiar with horses and riding equipment used in program.
- Ability to communicate diplomatically and enthusiastically with others.
- Honor a defined period of time to fulfill lesson and event responsibilities.
- A willingness and cooperation to learn necessary safeguards of program.
- Non-smoker (at facility), alcohol and drug free environment at CHP
- Able to physically sustain a brisk walk for 1 hour and jogging for short distances and able to use upper body strength if needed.

## Volunteer Training

You will be provided with training that will include:

- Orientation to the Horse Park’s Therapeutic Program
- Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities
- Emergency Procedures
- Safety
- Additional training is provided several times a year on topics that may include: Horse Psychology, Taking the Lead, Grooming & Tacking, and other topics

## Description of Disabilities

The following is a brief, non-medical description of some of the disabilities and conditions that volunteers may encounter in their work with CHP riders. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability but rather as a general overview, along with an explanation of how therapeutic riding is a beneficial treatment aid.

### Cerebral Palsy

“CP” is a non-progressive disorder that is caused by brain damage before, during or after birth, which results in an inability to control parts of the body. It can be combined with other disorders such as mental impairments, learning disabilities, vision or hearing problems. It can be very mild or severe and is divided into three general categories:

- **Spastic:** this is the most common type and is characterized by abnormally high muscle tone. The muscles stay flexed and tense and the facial muscle involvement may affect speech. Balance is generally poor.
- **Athetoid:** slow, writhing movements that exaggerate their voluntary movements characterize this type. Their trunk lacks stability. Speech functions are frequently involved.
- **Ataxic:** these persons have uncoordinated movements, lack trunk stability, have poor balance and an unsteady gait.



**Benefits:** riding may improve balance, posture, coordination and the ability for the muscles to relax. It also strengthens weakened muscles.

## Down Syndrome

This is a birth defect in which an extra chromosome is present. Most persons with Downs have poor muscle tone and possibly vision, hearing and respiratory difficulties. They have varying levels of mental ability.

**Benefits:** riding is a motivational opportunity to improve expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture and coordination.

## Emotional Disabilities

“ED” is a congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies. In general, emotionally disturbed individuals have trouble coping with every day life situations and interpersonal relationships. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression or paranoia may be exhibited.

**Benefits:** riding can provide structure to a disorganized thought pattern, increase feelings of self-worth and self-awareness and provide appropriate social therapy.

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism is a cognitive disability characterized generally by self-absorption, erratic behavior, perceptual challenges and often communication difficulties. Individuals with autism may have average intelligence and physical development and can be very athletic.

**Benefits:** therapeutic riding is a chance for the rider to learn to trust the horse, to practice social skills and to increase their sense of responsibility. The horse also provides a motivational opportunity to work on speech and communication.

## Learning Disabilities

“LD” is a catch-all phrase for individuals who have trouble processing, sequencing and problem solving, but who appear to otherwise have normal intelligence skills. New learning generally takes time to be integrated and may need to be reviewed frequently to ensure retention.

**Benefits:** riding may increase attention span, group activity skills, cooperation, receptive and expressive language skills, posture and coordination.

## Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

“IDD” is a person who can be mentally impaired due to genetic disorders, brain damage, under-development of the brain or lack of stimulation. They may also have delayed physical and emotional development.

**Benefits:** riding helps to increase group activity skills, balance and coordination, posture, gross and fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

## Volunteer tip: “Get to know your rider”

**General approach and interaction:** 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 their own learning rate, style of learning, unique personality and temperament. One must always look beyond the disability and into the person. Always provide them with the opportunity to be more independent.

## Suggestions to help you relate to your rider

*“Without You, They Don’t Ride”*



- Relax and be yourself.
- Speak directly to your rider. Your attention should be on them and not on someone with them.
- Offer assistance when asked or when the situation obviously requires it. Do not overwhelm the rider with help when they can manage alone. When a person is trying to increase their physical activity, effort is necessary.
- Appreciate what the rider *can* do. Remember that the difficulties that the individual may be facing could stem from society's attitudes and barriers and not from the disability itself. People with disabilities generally do not view themselves to be as handicapped as society perceives them to be.
- If you are unable to understand what was said, do not hesitate to tell them. The barn is the perfect place to practice speech. It is always better to understand what was said than to dismiss it.

Our riders are some of the most interesting and fun people that you will meet. Information on how to specifically help your rider will be given to you once the schedule is in place. The Volunteer Coordinator and Instructors will help you to understand what needs may be unique to each rider. If you feel uncomfortable with your role at any time, please feel free to ask as many questions as are necessary to help you feel more comfortable.

Always remember that you give the riders the joy of riding and the ability to achieve. This is an incredible gift made possible by the donation of your time and talent.

## POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

There is absolutely no smoking or solicitation on CHP premises.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

Information regarding clients of Chastain Horse Park is highly privileged and confidential. Additionally, all persons associated with Chastain Horse Park have a right to privacy that gives them control over the dissemination of their medical history or other sensitive information. All medical, social, referral, personal and financial information regarding any person and his/her family shall remain confidential. It is the responsibility of every volunteer to adhere to the privacy and confidentiality of all clients.

### **SAFETY**

For the safety and wellbeing of all individuals and program animals at CHP, we ask that you abide by the following set of guidelines when in our barn.

1. If you take it out, put it away.
2. If your horse makes a mess, clean it up.
3. All riders must wear a helmet when riding horses.
4. No running, yelling, jumping or screaming in the barn or observation areas. "Horsing around" can harm riders in the arena.
5. Know the horse "danger zones" and avoid them (directly behind, in front of and under the necks of horses).
6. Close-toed shoes must be worn when working with the horses (NO sandal or clogs). No bare feet inside the barn at any time.
7. Always use a lead rope when moving a horse. This includes all mounted riders outside an arena must be on a lead line.
8. Never lead a horse under another horse's occupied crossties. Have someone unhook the horse before leading your own horse through.
9. Riders and visitors may not be **INSIDE** occupied horse stalls without instructor permission. If you are in a stall with a horse, the stall door must remain halfway open.
10. Volunteers must have permission from the instructor/therapist on duty to move horses in or out of the paddocks.
11. Riders **MAY NOT** go **INSIDE** the paddocks except under volunteer or instructor supervision.

CHP holds several Safety Days throughout the year. The purpose of a Safety Day is to allow our volunteers to not only show the skills they have mastered, but also to learn new skills and to learn what is expected of them during an emergency situation.



## ***GUIDELINES TO DETERMINE ABILITY TO PERFORM AS A LEADER OR SIDE WALKER:***

1. Must be 14 years of age or older
2. Must complete volunteer training with Chastain Horse Park personnel
3. Must complete volunteer form with required releases.
4. Must adhere to Chastain Horse Park policies.
5. Must be able to respond to instructor's directions.
6. Must be attentive to rider and horse.
7. Must be reliable in attendance.
8. Must be able to follow emergency procedures.
9. Must handle horses only under the oversight of a Therapeutic Instructor.
10. Volunteers that lead horses in a lesson must be approved by an instructor.

## ***VOLUNTEER ATTIRE POLICY***

As partners in offering therapeutic services to the Horse Park's clients, volunteers are encouraged to wear attire that is appropriate to the work, yet professional. Horse Park volunteers are a significant part of the image the park presents to the surrounding community and the general public.

Volunteer attire must also be safe for the volunteer. For this reason, volunteers will be required to wear appropriate footwear during work in the barns and arenas. Shoes or boots that offer foot protection are suggested. Volunteers wearing open toed shoes or sandals will be unable to participate. Please, no halter-tops or sports bras showing.

Dangling jewelry may pose a hazard when working around horses as well as loose, floppy clothing or hats. These may catch on other items or equipment, or blow and spook a horse.

Perfumes can attract bees or biting insects or bother some participants.

Dress in layers as able for comfort or warmth. Bring a jacket and gloves and a secure hat during winter months. Sunscreen and a water bottle are suggested in warmer months.

NOTE: Please keep valuables locked out of sight in cars to prevent break-ins. Turn off cell phones and pagers during lessons.

## ***MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING POLICY***

To ensure the safety of the participants, only trained personnel are permitted to mount and dismount participants. Most participants in the Therapeutic Program will be mounted and dismounted only by the certified instructor. Occasionally, the instructor may need the assistance of another trained person to mount or dismount a client. In this case, instruction in proper mounting technique, disabilities, body mechanics and individual horse personalities must be provided by the instructor prior to granting mounting/dismounting privileges. The instructor supervises all mounting/dismounting during the lesson and assumes responsibility for the safe performance of any individual the instructor trains to mount or dismount program participants.

## ***NO TREATS FOR HORSES***

Our horses are fed very well. Occasionally, some horses require a special diet for health reasons. Please do not feed the horses treats. Horses that are fed treats can become nippy, endangering our participants.

## ***DISMISSAL POLICY***

Volunteers and guests are expected to follow Chastain Horse Park's rules and policies and may not engage in disruptive, unsafe or inappropriate behavior. In the event a volunteer or guest does not comply, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

**Initial Verbal Warning:** Breaking of Chastain Horse Park's rules and/or policies and procedures may be initially communicated by a one-to-one, e-mail, or phone warning.



**Meeting with Chastain Horse Park Personnel:** Breaking of Chastain Horse Park's rules and/or policies and procedures may be followed by a meeting with one or more Chastain Horse Park personnel for discussion regarding the infraction. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the problem with the volunteer/guest and explain the requirements for solving the problem as well as potential for dismissal if problem continues.

**Dismissal from Organization:** Immediate dismissal from the property and organization may be directed by a Chastain Horse Park staff member for:

- Endangering the safety of others
- Inappropriate use of the facilities, mailing lists or monies
- Disruptive or abusive behavior to the animals or people
- Repeated disregard of the organization's rules, policies and procedures
- Possession of a weapon
- Suspicion of the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Pattern of "no-showing" for lessons

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

**REMEMBER:** Working with horses is a risk activity and attention to safety is our first concern for all individuals involved. There are as many ways to do things as there are horse people. When you are here at Chastain Horse Park, we ask that you do things the way they are outlined in this training manual.

### EMERGENCY DISMOUNT

Instructors/therapists will always advise when an emergency dismount is necessary. In the event that a rider needs to dismount from the horse, please do the following:

1. Instructor will indicate need for emergency dismount.
  2. Leader – halt if possible, or stay with a moving horse.
  3. Right Side Walker – remove rider's foot from stirrup and assist leg over horse; go around to assist other Side Walker **after** the left Side Walker has a hold on the rider.
  4. Left Side Walker – pull rider from horse with his back on your chest, drag away from horse, and wait for further instructions.
- To dismount a rider, use either a croup or crest dismount as described below:
    - a. **Croup dismount:** Have the rider lean forward on horse's neck, placing their head to right side of the horse's neck and bring their right leg around the horse's croup. Gently let the rider down to their feet.
    - b. **Crest dismount:** Have the rider lean back and bring their right leg around to the front of horse. Roll the rider onto their stomach and gently let the rider down to their feet.
  - The Horse Leader should move the horse away from the rider by turning horse's head toward the rider and pushing the hind end away from rider. Then the Horse Leader should lead the horse to a neutral corner of the arena or remove the horse from the arena at the discretion of the instructor/therapist.
  - Side Walkers and/or the instructor/therapist should stay with the rider. They should support the rider emotionally and physically if necessary. Try to keep the rider calm.
  - When the instructor/therapist advises, remove all riders and horses from arena.

### LOOSE HORSE WITH RIDER

1. Immediately stop the class.
2. Give simple quick instructions to the rider such as "Sit up! or Pull up!"
3. The volunteer team should quickly and calmly approach the horse and regain control of the horse.
4. Do not step in front of the horse because the horse may swerve and potentially dislodge the rider.



### LOOSE HORSE WITHOUT RIDER

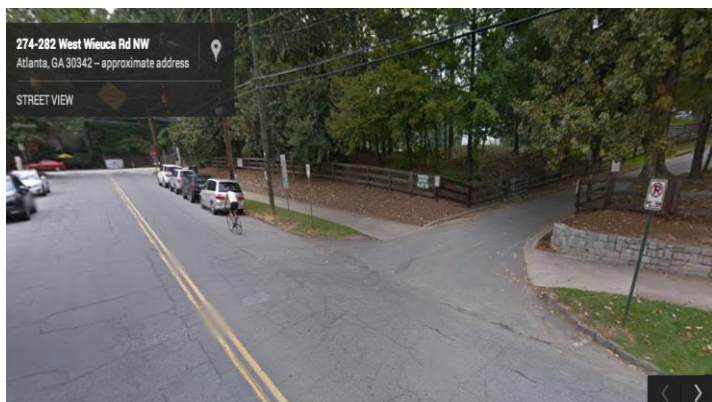
1. Immediately stop the class.
2. All leaders and Side Walkers should stay with their riders. Leaders should assume leader halted positions and Side Walkers should do thigh holds.
3. The instructor/therapist or designated volunteer will catch the loose horse.

### RIDER FALLS FROM THE HORSE

1. DO NOT PANIC if there is a fall and listen to the instructor/therapist for instructions.
2. In case of a fall, the instructor/therapist should immediately go to the rider and talk to them, the leader should keep the horse under control, and the Side Walkers should help keep the rider calm and follow instructor/therapist instructions. This will allow the instructor/therapist to assess the situation and give directions efficiently. The instructor/therapist and the rider's Side Walkers should remain with the rider at all times.
3. The fallen rider should remain lying down and still for at least ten minutes or until they can be checked for signs of injury. An individual onsite with the most advanced medical training will be summoned to examine the fallen rider.
4. 911 will be called if the injury is serious.
5. Signs of serious injury include:
  - a. Unconsciousness (even for a moment)
  - b. Bleeding or fluid draining from the mouth, nose, or ears
  - c. Serious bleeding (apply direct pressure)
  - d. Limb at unnatural angle or pain on pressure with pain on movement (do not move)
  - e. Pupils contract unevenly
  - f. Signs of shock (paleness, mottled color, sweating, nausea, fainting)
  - g. Consider the possibility of head injury and/or spinal injury in ANY fall. If it is suspected, keep the rider absolutely still.

### THE INSTRUCTOR/THERAPIST MAY ASSIGN A VOLUNTEER TO:

1. Retrieve the First Aid kit located in the barn or mailbox near the arena or on the trail.
2. Retrieve the rider's file from office (files are organized by day of the rider's lesson).
3. Call 911 - the caller should follow operator's instructions and stay on the telephone until operator tells you to hang up. Give directions to the horse park; directions are posted on a script in the Red Cross Mailboxes.
4. Take the rider's parent, guardian, caregiver, or any other person who brought the rider to the rider in the arena or on the trail. Make sure to involve the parent, guardian or caregiver because they know the rider best. If necessary, contact the fallen rider's parents, guardian, caretaker, or emergency contact. This information can be found in rider's file located in the office in barn 4.



If the instructor/therapist thinks the rider is injured and needs medical attention but 911 is not required, then strongly encourage the rider to be taken to the doctor, urgent care facility or the hospital (depending on the level of medical



attention needed). If the rider does not have visible injuries, suggest that the rider be taken to a doctor for evaluation as a precaution.

1. If the instructor/therapist thinks the rider is uninjured, then they should walk the rider to the waiting area. The rider should be reassured and the instructor/therapist will discuss with the rider what caused the fall. When the situation is under control, reassure the rest of the class and explain to them what caused the fall.
2. For ANY injury an instructor/therapist is required to fill out an Occurrence Report with the entire volunteer team, rider and parent, guardian or caregiver.

#### OCCURRENCE REPORT PROCEDURES:

All parties must sign the form, and then the form should be given to the Program Manager. This includes Volunteers!

1. The instructor/therapist should follow up with the rider's parent, guardian or caregiver within six hours of the incident, and again within 24 hours of the incident. All encounters should be documented and given to the Program Manager to be put with the Occurrence Report.
2. The instructor/therapist should make the Program Manager aware of any injury at CHP immediately in order to discuss if further actions need to be taken.

#### OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- If the horse is loose, the leader should capture the horse and remove the horse from the arena.
- The rider's Side Walkers and the instructor/therapist will stay with the fallen rider.
- All other leaders and Side Walkers should stay with their riders. Leaders should assume leader halted positions and Side Walkers should do thigh holds.
- If there are other riders in the arena or on the trail they should be dismounted, reassured, and taken to the waiting area near the grooming bays or near the arena; as directed by the instructor. All Side Walkers should remain with their rider and keep them calm.
- After the rider is dismounted, the Horse Leader should lead the horse to a neutral corner of the arena or remove the horse from the arena at the discretion of the instructor/therapist.

#### IN CASE OF FIRE

1. Evacuate the riders and volunteers calmly and quickly out of the barn or arena through the nearest exit. Keep everyone quiet and under control.
2. Call the fire department (911). Give the operator your name, the farm name, and the location. All this information is located by the telephone in the office and the arena. Stay on the telephone until the operator tells you to hang up.
3. With the instructor/therapist's permission, evacuate horses if possible. Get a halter and lead rope for the horses and lead them to the arena.
4. Do not let the horses loose outside of the barn since they may try to return to the barn. If the horse will not lead, blindfold the horse with a towel, a sack, or coat. If possible, wet the blindfold in the horse's water before putting it on the horse's head.
5. Make sure the driveway is clear for fire equipment.
6. Save equipment from the barn or tack room only after horses are out and if your safety will not be compromised.
7. Use fire extinguishers located in the tack room, the office, or the arena if your safety will not be compromised.
8. Once help arrives, immediately check the horses for injuries. Call the vet if horses are burned or have inhaled a lot of smoke.

IN CASE OF SEVERE WEATHER (i.e. high winds, thunderstorms, or tornadoes)



1. Lead riders and volunteers as quickly and quietly as possible to the designated safe area. For tornados, the Club House basement is the shelter area.
2. Instruct everyone to sit down, put their heads between their legs, and cover their heads. Leave helmets on the rider's head protection.
3. If there is not enough time to put horses in stalls, leave them in the arena with the gate closed. Remove Reins!
4. Remain in the designated safe area until the storm is over and the "All Clear" signal is given by the instructor/therapist.
5. Put horses back in their stalls when the severe weather threat is over if they are still in the arena.
6. When the severe weather threat is over, inspect the premises for downed power lines before permitting riders and volunteers to leave.

## SEIZURES

- Sometimes you or the rider can tell if a seizure is going to happen, other times you cannot.
- The main thing to remember is to not restrain a person when they have a seizure. Simply keep the rider safe until the seizure is over.
- If a volunteer or a rider knows that a seizure is going to happen, the instructor/therapist should be notified and the rider should be dismounted as quickly as possible. The rider should sit or lie down in a comfortable and safe place.
- If a seizure happens when a rider is on the horse, a volunteer should notify the instructor/therapist immediately. Have rider lean forward on the horse's neck with his or her head off to the side of the horse's neck.
- The instructor/therapist will evaluate the rider after the seizure is over. The rider will either be dismounted or will continue with the lesson.

## Understanding Horses

### **HORSE FEAR RELEX**

Horses do have a "sixth sense" when evaluating the disposition of those around them. They can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their gentle and sensitive response to a rider. At times, there may exist a personality conflict between horses and handlers. It is important to tell the instructor or instructor/therapist if you are having a difficult time handling a particular horse. Additionally, do not be embarrassed to tell an instructor that a horse that acts "strong" might intimidate you. It is better to work with a horse that you are compatible with than risk an accident by putting yourself in a situation that is uncomfortable.

In addition to understanding the horse's "sixth sense", we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the horse's lifestyle and the way they use body language to communicate. This will assist us in responding appropriately to his reactions to situations and his behavior.

### **Flight as Natural Instinct:**

Horses would rather run away from perceived danger than turn and face it. A horse's sense of hearing is thought to be so acute that "hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of his fright/flight response.

What this means:

- A sudden movement or noise may cause the horse to "spook" or try to flee. They might try to bolt sideways, or run forwards.
- Remain calm and in control. Speak to the horse in a reassuring manner.
- A horse may get frightened in the crossties or by being held or tied too tightly and he will try to "escape" by pulling back. Often until something gives—usually his halter or the cross ties. The best way to handle this is to relax your hold on him or untie him quickly and calmly and he will relax.
- Horses are herd animals. If a horse gets loose, often times they will run back to the herd for safety. In an arena setting this could be you (if there are no other horses in the arena) or the other horses in the arena.

Most horses in the therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee and are chosen for this reason. The horse may look to you for reassurance. It is helpful if the volunteer remains calm and talks to the horse in a soothing voice.



## More About Horses

When you handle a horse, the fact that they are flight animals is important to keep in mind. This flight response is so strong that even the most docile horse may react with sudden blind panic to a perceived threat. Defense mechanisms include kicking, biting, rearing, bucking and striking, although many of these behaviors are displayed only in situations of harsh manipulation and restraint. Most of the latter behaviors are the horse's way of preserving life in a non-domestic situation. Some, however, are seen in the domesticated horse.

Because horses are herd animals, they are social and follow a herd leader. In any given group one horse will be the leader. Even in a domestic situation where there might only be two horses, one will be the leader.

Horses do not understand delayed reward or punishment. Rewards or punishment given more than 3 seconds later will not be associated with the behavior. They may associate pats and a soothing voice with a job well done but the rewards should be immediate. An unfamiliar change to the horse's environment may make them uneasy until the "new thing" has been inspected and established to not be a threat. A patient handler gives the horse time to be comfortable with what is around him.

A horse has a keen curiosity. It needs to be very familiar with the details of its surroundings. Its curiosity quickens at the sight, sound, smell, or touch of a new object. What is this activity? What is that in the sky? What is that noise? The horse needs to identify and catalog these unfamiliar things. It is important to give him a moment to adjust to changes and understand that these changes are not a threat.

As discussed before, horses are prey animals and can become frightened. Because of this, the biggest safety risk to a human is being around a horse when it is frightened.

The easiest way to prevent accidents between horse and human is to understand what frightens a horse. As mentioned in the previous section, an unusual dog or car or object, a change to the horse's environment, an unfamiliar noise, or unsure footing are the most common things the horse will be nervous about. You will learn to notice when a horse is in alert mode about some new object or noise. First, a horse will usually freeze. This makes him less noticeable to the potential predator while being able to better identify the source of his fear. The horse will usually look intently in the direction of the surprising stimulus with its head up and ears perked.

Second, horses run. Many will freeze momentarily before running but many won't. Prior to running a horse may sidestep, spin, rear, or jump and it is these actions that are particularly likely to injure those around him.

When approaching a horse, be aware that horses are most easily scared by sudden movements or loud noises, particularly outside of their field of vision. In particular, avoid approaching horses from the rear where they may not see you. Most horses are used to being approached towards their left shoulder. Announce your presence and put your hand on the horse's neck or shoulder so he knows where you are.

As you spend more time around horses, it is easy to become too comfortable and forget to be careful, so remember a couple of things:

Don't let the horse's lead rope or reins hang down between the two of you or on the ground. If the horse steps on the rope or reins, quickly unhook the rope or reins if possible as the horse may struggle if he feels pressure as he raises his head.

The best approach is to simply pick up the horse's hoof or push him over until he steps off the lead line.

Don't get on your knees around a horse because you can't get out of the way fast enough if needed.

Don't position your head above the horse's head; he may bring his head up fast and hit you under your chin.

## HORSE BODY LANGUAGE

A horse communicates with its head and hindquarters. These are the "speaking ends" and the "dangerous ends". Watch both when you are working around the horse. The following is a quick look at some of the key signals to be mindful of.

### EARS BACK

*"Without You, They Don't Ride"*



The horse's ears are its most mobile and expressive feature. Most people believe that when a horse puts its ears back it is expressing anger or aggression. This is true only some of the time. Other times it may indicate that he's listening behind him, that he's afraid, or even that he is a little sleepy. When a horse puts his ears flat to his neck and shows the whites of his eyes, he means it! You should react with caution. You will mostly see this expression flashed between horses as they pass. You could see a mild version of this if you tighten the girth too rapidly.

When a horse's ears go back, it doesn't always mean it is angry or threatening. When you are working around him, a horse will tip one or both ears back. This shows that he's paying attention to you. He's listening for your voice or footsteps. This is a good attitude which increases your coordination together and your safety. If the horse is bored or half asleep, his ears will tip back and out to the side at a gentle angle. Approach a horse in this position slowly and give him a chance to realize you're there.

### **EARS FORWARD**

People usually interpret ears pointed forward as an expression of friendliness and good cheer, a safe expression.

Often this is true, but there are situations in which a horse's pricked ears are a definite danger signal. A horse's ears will always point to where its interest lies; that grain pail, the horse across the road, or the flying piece of newspaper. Usually the horse is taking in the sights and paying more attention to his surroundings than to you.

It can mean that the horse is nervous about some new object and needs a moment to establish that it is not a threat to him. It is a good idea to be extra watchful for a minute when the horse is in this posture because he can jump or spook if pushed before he settles back down.

If the horse doesn't seem to be settling down, inform the instructor right away.

### **HEAD MOVEMENT**

Horses make a lot of moves with their heads. Shaking their heads usually means they are being playful, as they frequently are when turned out with a friend. They also shake their heads when flies are bothering them.

A horse may also turn his head toward you for a good rub if he is itchy, or he may turn his head to nip you. To stop this, pull his head away from you or let him bump into your pointed finger a few times to discourage it. If you use this approach, bump on his cheek, not his muzzle to prevent head shyness.

A horse that lowers his head as if to touch his nose to the ground, or paws as doing so may be thinking about dropping to roll. Gently tug the horse's head up to a higher position and keep him walking.

### **A RESPECTFUL HORSE**

- walks in same step and rhythm with you
- keeps his head at least six inches away from you unless asked to come closer
- halts with you without pulling on lead line
- lowers head at or below withers and relaxes his neck
- stands still on a loose lead line until you ask him to move
- sighs gently or exhales
- makes a licking or chewing motion with his lips
- gently flicks his ears back and forth towards you

***Watch your horse after you have followed the steps below for a few minutes; as he accepts that you are in charge of how he moves his feet, you will begin to see a horse that respects your leadership.***

### ***“Ask, Tell, Reward” For Respect, Every Time***

Ask your horse to move his feet backwards or sideways to establish his respect for you each time you work with a horse – in nature, this is how a horse shows respect to another horse.



Tell your horse to move by using an assertive body posture and direct gaze (this is what horses do to “talk to” each other). Wave, then tap, then slap with the end of your lead rope or a crop if needed to make him move.

Reward your horse as soon as he takes a step, by slouching your body posture. Turn or move slightly away from him, and keep him in view out of the corner of your eye – the horse likes this reward even better than a hug. Move him backwards a step every time he steps towards you without your invitation. A respectful, safe horse moves his feet when you ask him to (a disrespectful, unsafe horse makes you move your feet instead!).

***Take steps to get your horse's respect FIRST every time, and then you'll be able to safely work with him!***

## Grooming

Use grooming equipment gently on the horse, particularly on animals with sensitive skin. Some horses begin nipping at you if they anticipate discomfort during grooming. Be sure not to leave grooming equipment where the horse could step on it.

Put the horse in an outside grooming bay, wash stall or hallway crossties before beginning grooming. When a horse is in crossties in the barn, the horse needs to face the covered arena or outside grooming stalls. This will prevent horses from being tail-to-tail or face-to-face. Stay near the horse and keep a hand on it at all times so you can anticipate its movements. Never sit on the ground or groom from your knees, and always be in a position to move away quickly.

Begin grooming with a rubber currycomb, which is gentler than a metal one. Start on the neck and brush in a circular motion. Work from front to back, grooming carefully in bony areas. Avoid using the currycomb on the face, lower legs, hips and shoulder (flanks and withers).

After you have loosened the dirt and hair with the currycomb or shedding blade, use a brush to remove it. If using two brushes, use the stiffer one first. Start on the neck and brush in the direction of the hair growth, working from front to back. Be sure to clean the horse's belly where the girth lies to prevent saddle sores.

Use a soft brush to put on the finishing touches and to brush the face. Work slowly and gently, as many horses are sensitive. Start on the top of the forehead and be careful around the eyes, mouth and nose. Avoid placing your face over or too close to the horse's face as the animal can move its head quickly and hit you. Use the soft brush on the mane and tail. If there are tangles, it is best to pick through them with your fingers to avoid pulling out too many hairs. Stand near and to the side of the hind leg when grooming the hindquarters and brushing the tail. If you must stand behind the horse, be sure you can move away quickly if something from the front scares the horse. When working in the flank and loin areas, get a feel for the horse's reaction. If it shows anxiety, work on these areas more gently.

Hooves should be cleaned daily. Pick out the horse's feet before and after each ride. Start with the left front and work around to its right front since most horses are accustomed to this order. Facing the rear of the horse, place your left hand on its shoulder, moving it down the back of his leg towards his hoof. Lean slightly against the horse to encourage him to balance on his opposite leg. If he does not pick up his foot, gently squeeze the tendons above the fetlock until he picks up his foot. If you try to force the foot up, it is likely that the horse will lean on you or lose its balance. As the hoof yields, slip your hand in front of the hoof and raise it to knee height promptly, but without jerking. Holding the hoof firmly will encourage the horse to not jerk it away from you. If the horse gets anxious and struggles, put the foot down and start over. Be sure your feet are not placed where the horse will step on them if he pulls away. Use the hoof pick in a downward motion toward the toe. Never use the hoof pick from toe to heel, because it is more likely to get caught in a crevice and puncture the sole or frog if the foot is jerked away from your grasp. Clean the sole, the frog and the crevices around the frog well. Look for bruises, punctures, foreign objects or signs of disease. If you find a problem, report it to the instructor.

When cleaning the hind feet, start with your hand on the horse's hip and repeat the same process. Make sure when you put the hoof down to release it slowly making sure not to drop it.



## Saddling and Bridling (Tacking) Horses Safely

### **SADDLING**

Most people choose to saddle the horse first, and then bridle it. This is the procedure used at our facility. In this way, you can still restrain the horse on crossties while you tack up.

Groom the horse before tacking up. Pay special attention to the areas where equipment will touch.

While grooming, check these areas for injuries. If you notice any abnormality that might hinder the ride, please report this to the instructor. When finished grooming, make sure all the hair that is to lie under equipment is brushed in its natural direction. Ruffled hairs under the saddle or girth can cause irritation and saddle sores. Make sure you pick out the horse's feet before the ride.

Generally, you saddle from the left or near side. Stand slightly behind the shoulder of the horse and place the saddle blanket with the straps toward the horse's head. Place the blanket just behind the horse's shoulder blades, partially covering the withers. Place the gel pad in the same position over the blanket. Next slide it backwards over the horse's back, leaving about one inch over the withers. This straightens the hair that is to lie under the saddle.

Make sure equal portions of the pad or blanket are on each side of the horse. Never slide the blankets and saddle forward! Instead, if they are too far back, take them off and start over. Pick up the saddle and arrange it so the stirrups and girth are not underneath the saddle or dangling. With an English saddle, the stirrups should be "run up" on the leathers and the girth draped over the seat. Since the western saddle is less frequently used at CHP, we will discuss English tack here. Place the saddle gently on the horse's back. Never throw the saddle on the horse's back, or drop it suddenly into place.

With the saddle in place, secure the girth to the saddle on the off-side first (the right side of the horse). The girth is secured a hand width behind the horse's front legs. The elastic side of the girth should be on left side of the saddle. Do not allow the girth to swing and hit the horse's legs. Go around to the other side of the horse, reach under the belly and grab the free end of the girth, making sure it is not twisted. Keep an eye on the horse as you do this. Some horses may try to kick or nip when you are not looking.

If you are using any straps that connect to the girth such as a breastplate or martingale, remember to connect them before you secure the girth on the near side (the left side of the horse). Make sure the martingale or breastplate is centered before securing the girth.

The girth should be tightened in 3 or 4 phases. Secure the near side of the girth loosely at first, not all at once with a quick jerk. A gentle, consistent movement is much more comfortable for the horse. The girth should be checked again before the lesson begins. The final position for the girth should be tight enough to slide only your fingers between the girth and the horse.

Make sure hair under the girth is lying flat and the girth is not pinching the horse's skin. Smooth any wrinkled skin under the girth by bending each front leg at the knee and gently stretching it forward from the elbow.

The stirrup should remain run up until the instructor mounts the rider and the stirrups are adjusted. It is up to the instructor whether you will help with stirrup adjustment or whether the instructor prefers to do this. The stirrups should be run up (English saddle) the leathers and the girth should be slightly loosened after the rider dismounts.

### **BRIDLING – (CHP uses bitless bridles)**

1. The crossties should be unfastened and the halter removed before bridling the horse.
2. Pick up the bridle by the middle of the crownpiece and carry the reins either over your shoulder or in your other hand.



3. Stand to the side and just behind the horse's head on the left side, facing in the same direction as the horse.
4. Standing in this position will protect your head from a blow if the horse tries to throw its head to avoid the bridle.
5. Place the reins over the horse's head. With your right hand, raise the crownpiece up to the horse's ears as you guide nose band with your left hand.
6. Once the nose band is in position, settle the crownpiece behind the ears, starting with the right ear.
7. Carefully fold the ears forward under the crownpiece to get it in position. Smooth any loose mane hairs that might be under the crownpiece. Pull the forelock over the brow band.
8. Adjust the bridle for comfort and appearance. The nose band should be fastened loosely enough to fit your finger between the strap and the horse's jaw.
9. **REMEMBER, never attach cross ties to a bridle.**

### **UNTACKING**

After the lesson, lead the horse back to the crossties or wash stall and attach the crossties to the halter. **Never attach crossties to the bridle.**

Make sure the stirrups are run up the leathers.

To unbridle the horse, simply reverse the process of bridling. Undo the nosepiece. As you slide the crownpiece over the ears and down the horse's head with your left hand, grasp the horse's nose with your right hand to keep its nose down low enough for you to reach and reattach the halter. Attach the halter as you did when bridling.

Unsaddling is also in reverse order. Undo the girth on both sides, left side first, and lay it over the saddle. Remove the saddle and pads from the left and return to the tack room. Place the saddle pads back on the stack in the tack room upside down so they can dry. Make sure to hang the girth on the hook labeled with the appropriate number.

Groom the horse after untacking, paying special attention to sweaty areas and places where the hair has been moved out of place by the tack.

If the horse is to be used again, you will probably want to take him to the stall to get water. Horses may be put in the stall for a short time with their saddles on, but someone must stay in attendance with the horse, and any halters or bridles must be removed.

Check to be sure the horse is sufficiently cooled down. A horse that is put in its stall while still hot can become seriously ill. Please have the instructor or a senior volunteer check the horse for you if you are not sure how to determine the horse's temperature. If the horse is too hot, it will need to be walked and hosed off.

Be sure to put all equipment you used during the lesson away. **DO NOT** leave grooming buckets or tack in the hallways of the barn or in the outside grooming bays as this can become a safety hazard.



## HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE HORSE LEADER

### **As the horse leader, you are in charge of the horse at all times!**

- Walk on the left beside the horse's head staying just behind the horse's nose.
- Hold right hand about 12-24 inches from the clip end of the lead rope.
- Hold extra rope folded in a figure eight in your left hand. NEVER loop the rope or wrap the rope around your hand.
- Look up and forward, but always be aware of the horse's focus.
- Keep your attention on the lesson and your team. Glance back occasionally at the rider and side walkers to make sure they are safe.
- Keep at least a horse length distance between your horse and the other horses. Wait for your rider to ask the horse to "walk on" before proceeding.
- Be sure you don't crowd your side walkers. If you don't watch your distance they can become squeezed between the horse and the fence.
- Walk on, giving a couple of clucks with your voice and use a gentle tug with the lead rope if your rider is unable to motivate the horse. Don't pull on the horse or face him to try and get him to walk on – If you have trouble getting the horse to start walking, turn his head away from you a bit (to the right) and then begin to walk forward.
- Try to synchronize your steps with the horse's footsteps, and he will be more likely to match your pace when you slow or speed up.
- When it is time to trot, make sure your side walkers and the rider are ready before proceeding.
- When trotting, look up and forward. Stay aware of the horse's focus. Start jogging slowly, cluck with your voice, and gently tug forward on the lead rope.
- During the walk and the trot, avoid downward tugs or pulls on the lead line – the horse may become unbalanced.
- Do not let the horse's head get too low to the ground. This may unseat the rider and it affects the way the horse moves.
- Adjust your step to the horse – be careful not to get too far ahead, behind, or away.
- Be aware of what the rider is asking of the horse. Turn as or after the rider uses the reins to turn the horse, not before. Encourage the rider to do as much as possible on his/her own – do not do it for them.
- Try not to put pressure on the horse's head if they are doing what is asked of them. The release of pressure is their reward for doing the right thing. **THIS IS IMPORTANT!** It continues the proper teaching of the horses.
- If you have the feeling your horse is tense, inform the instructor immediately. Pay extra attention to your horse when there is abnormal activity around the arena which might scare the horse (wind gusts, people running, trash blowing, noise from the parking lot, dogs barking, etc.).
- Avoid the temptation to interact and assist the rider while leading the horse.

**IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY OR ACCIDENT, THE LEADER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HORSE.  
STAY WITH THE HORSE AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTOR'S DIRECTIONS**



## HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE SIDE WALKER

### *As the side walker, you are responsible for the rider at all times!*

You are the person responsible for the rider's safety. You will help riders maintain their balance and feel safe during their lessons. Never leave the rider's side without instructor permission. Example: don't pick up dropped items unless told to do so by the instructor.

Depending on the rider's condition or balance, one or two side walkers may be assigned to the rider by the instructor.

Reinforce the instructor's directions. Some riders need a side walker to help them understand the instructor's directions.

When only one side walker is needed, this side walker will usually be on the right side of the rider, while the leader walks on the left side of the horse.

Different methods are used with individual riders depending on their needs. The instructor will tell you how much support the rider needs.

If directed to do so, give support at the thigh and/or ankle. Try NOT to lean on the horse or to put pressure on the rider's leg, as the horse will think he's being signaled to go faster or his gait may be affected.

If directed, walk beside the rider's leg assisting only when needed, for example at the trot or to reinforce the instructor's directions. Stay in position by holding excess stirrup leather or other piece of tack. Do not drop back beyond the horse's middle. In the case of an emergency dismount, the side walkers must make sure the rider's feet are out of the stirrups and the rider should be taken off the horse immediately.

### **Remember:**

Be sensitive to where you are touching the rider. It's easy to be holding a small child without realizing where your hands are. Be sure you are never touching a rider where you would not want to be touched.

Learn to visualize the basic riding position so you can help your rider adjust his position.

If the rider slips in one direction or another, have the rider regain position in the center of the horse. If necessary, halt, reposition the rider and continue the lesson.

Limit conversation during class. Direct the rider's attention to the instructor. Reinforce the lesson, encourage the rider give congratulations for a good effort.

If a problem arises, tell the leader and the instructor so that they can take appropriate action.

Change sides with the other side walker frequently. Ask the horse leader to halt and side walkers change sides one at a time. Never leave the rider alone or unassisted. Always walk in FRONT of the horse when changing sides.

Be sensitive to your rider. A rider who cannot speak can frequently hear and understand. Be careful that your elbows don't dig into the horse while holding the rider.

Be careful that you don't apply too much pressure to the rider's legs. Sometimes pressure on the thigh can increase or cause muscle spasticity. Check with the instructor on the best way to assist.



## OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

At times, there will be landscaping, trash pickup, office work and a variety of other possible volunteer jobs that need to be done. When these opportunities are available an email will be sent.

Fundraising is a regular part of our yearly activities at Chastain Horse Park. You will receive notices of fundraising activities and possibly a request for volunteers for some of these fundraisers.

Camps and special field trips are also held at varying times and will require volunteers to function as they would in a therapeutic class.

An annual therapeutic horse show is held and requires many volunteers to make it a success. Watch for the email!

Interested in becoming a certified therapeutic instructor? Go to [PATH International](#) or check with the Executive Director for more information.

We are always looking for volunteers to help train new volunteers. If you are good at presenting to a group and have experience with horses, you are a candidate. Let your instructor know if interested.

There are many needs when operating a therapeutic riding center so there are many ways we try to raise the funds we need in addition to our regular fundraisers. We have the “adopt a horse” program, scholarships for our therapeutic riders, and a “wish list” of equipment we need. Please take a look at the CHP website [chastainhorsepark.org](http://chastainhorsepark.org), to review these opportunities. We need you to tell our story; it helps remind people that we need their donations!

### **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

Each year, there is a Volunteer Appreciation gathering for the Chastain Horse Park family. At this gathering, we recognize outstanding contributions by volunteers.

### **VOLUNTEER INCENTIVE – RIDING LESSONS**

Volunteers can “earn” a free riding lesson with every twelve (12) hours of documented/approved volunteering hours in a calendar month. Hours do not accumulate across months and are not transferable. Earned hours must be redeemed within one calendar year.

Volunteers may also enroll as desired for lessons with any Chastain Horse Park instructor, at the instructor’s regular rates.