



*WindWalkers*  
*Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy Center*  
**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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## ***Welcome to the WindWalkers' Volunteer Program! We are so excited to have you!***

The volunteer experience offered at WindWalkers is as rewarding as it is unique. It's an opportunity to channel individual talents and skills into a variety of volunteer activities. Working together with our staff and other volunteers, you make it possible to provide equine assisted services for [dis]abled children and adults in the Roaring Fork Valley and the surrounding areas. In doing so, you contribute to the process of giving our participants one of life's most precious gifts – a feeling of self-worth, accomplishment, independence and confidence. By volunteering you can help people with [dis]abilities, work with horses and make new friends.

You will gain tremendous satisfaction from watching the participants enjoy contact with horses physically, mentally and emotionally. You will be giving back to the community while having fun! WindWalkers volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but they all have this in common: highly skilled professionals, positive energy, enthusiasm, and compassion to share. The primary requirement of a WindWalkers volunteer is an interest in supporting our participants, their families and the exceptional herd that carries them, literally. At WindWalkers, we emphasize a team approach to provide active therapy as an enjoyable yet challenging experience. WindWalkers follows PATH International's established safety standards and teaching techniques for operating our center.

**For everyone's safety and enjoyment, please take the time to read through this handbook. The information included is vital for a safe and enjoyable experience. Please download and keep your handbook for review.**

### **OUR MISSION**

WindWalkers Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy Center is where horses and caring professionals help families and individuals with challenges from Aspen to Parachute, Parachute to Eagle to grow and thrive! We are unwavering in our commitment to improving the physical well-being, behavioral development and emotional health of our students, their families and the communities of which they live in.

### **WINDWALKERS BRIEF HISTORY**

WindWalkers Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy Center ("WindWalkers") began with exactly 2 clients and only 1 horse. We now serve over 135 clients weekly with 24 equine therapy horses along with many specialized groups who include at-risk teens, students with Significant Identifiable Emotional Disabilities (SIED), development delays, autistic, TBI's, PTSD, to list a few. Since inception, WindWalkers can proudly boast providing 110,000+ service hours - "butts in the saddle and boots on the ground" as we like to say – to over 13,000 "unique" individuals.

WindWalkers is where horses and caring professionals help families and individuals with challenges from Aspen to Rifle to grow and thrive! Our service area includes 3 counties (Garfield, Pitkin, and Eagle), 1+ towns and a population of over 130,000.

At our core is a unique family-centric approach that strongly recognizes that one's challenge does not affect the individual only it equally impacts every member of their family and the community at-large. Since, family is the basic building blocks of our society. WW is firmly committed to aiding not only the rider but also their parents, siblings and care-providers. We are unwavering in our commitment to improving the physical well-being, behavioral development and emotional health of our students, their families and the communities of which they live in. The practical implications of our services are immense not only for the people with disabilities but the society as a whole.

WindWalkers also enjoys long standing cooperative relationships with other non-profits, schools, school counselors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, client families, medical professionals and teachers. With only a small staff, a 7 person volunteer Board of Directors, 130+ highly skilled volunteers and an annual budget just over \$1.1 million WindWalkers' impact is far reaching.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THERAPUTIC RIDING**

References to the physical and emotional benefits of therapeutic horseback riding date back to writings in the 1600's. However, when Liz Hartel of Denmark won the silver medal for dressage at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games despite having paralysis from polio, medical and equine professionals took active notice. It wasn't long before therapeutic riding was being used for rehabilitation in England and then in North America. The first centers for therapeutic riding in North America began operation in the 1960's. The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH), formerly known as NARHA, was established in 1969 and today there are over 800 PATH affiliated centers internationally. PATH fosters safe, professional, ethical and therapeutic equine activities through education, communication, research and standards. The association ensures its standards are met through an accreditation process for centers and a certification process for instructors. Visit PATH International at [www.PATHintl.org](http://www.PATHintl.org) . Each year dozens of new centers initiate new programs and more than 38,000 individuals with disabilities benefit from activities which include therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, equine assisted psychotherapy, carriage driving, interactive vaulting, and competition.

## **PROGRAM OPERATION**

WindWalkers operates Monday through Saturday, year-round. We offer four units (or semesters): Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. Semesters vary in length from 7-14 weeks. A calendar of class dates will be provided. We are closed on Sundays and major holidays. If classes are canceled due to inclement weather, rider cancellations or other circumstances, we will notify volunteers at least two hours prior to the class. Please keep your contact information up to date with our office.

## **PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE PROCEDURES**

Therapeutic riding is not just a pony ride. All riders are carefully evaluated prior to joining the program. A set of goals are established and incorporated into the rider's "plan" which includes the activities and exercises that will direct the lessons. Therapeutic riding has many components, including physical, psychological, recreational and educational. The natural, unrestricted and three-dimensional movement of the horse provides a unique action that stretches and strengthens joints and muscles and has been extremely effective in building muscle tone, relaxing spastic muscles and developing balance, coordination and perception. Therapeutic riding also provides recreational, socialization and educational opportunities, as well as personal development, elevated self-esteem and self-confidence for people with disabilities of all ages. The riders have various physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, and Traumatic Brain Injuries. Regardless of the riders' challenges, the riders gain a sense of mobility, freedom, and joy through the partnerships made within the Pegasus program.

## **FEES & SUPPORT**

Our fees for service - are only approximately one-third of the actual cost of each session. Those unable to pay the fee are encouraged to apply for scholarship funds. Individuals are not turned away because they cannot afford to pay for services. However, as the cost of caring for horses is significant, the remainder of funds must be made up through fundraising efforts including special events, grants and foundation support. Donations to support our Scholarship and Hay funds are greatly appreciated.

## **OUR SPECIAL RIDERS**

Although individuals receive services from WindWalkers due to their [dis]ability, we recognize every individual as a person first and not by the challenges he or she faces. The person-centered approach requires awareness in the language we use and in the way we communicate with our riders. Although our riders may face challenges, they are individuals who have the right to encounter life just as any other person.

At times some of our riders may not be able to or might have difficulties expressing their needs. If you see or suspect at any time that a rider may be uncomfortable or in need of assistance, you should address them in a supportive manner and alert staff to help meet any needs.

Understanding the rider's needs can help you gain a perspective of how you can be of assistance to them. This can be achieved by actively listening and providing empathy to our riders. Allowing riders to feel heard is an important factor so that they can feel understood. It is also important not to talk over the riders with other volunteers in a manner that ignores the rider.

## **THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING**

- Gain experience working with individuals with [dis]abilities and horses;
- Build references for school and employment;
- Meet volunteer service requirements;
- Provide a great way to give back to your community; and,
- Be part of an exciting team working in a fun and supportive environment;

## **WINDWALKERS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

1. **Sidewalkers** – receive training on how to provide physical and emotional support to their rider during the lesson. They work directly with the instructor and remain with their rider at all times.
2. **Horse Leaders** – are individuals with horse experience and under the direction of the instructor, are responsible for horses before, during and after lessons. They receive training on how to prepare horses (groom & tack), and to safely & effectively lead horses during lessons, and the process for removing tack and turning out horses following lessons.
3. **Barn & Facility** – these volunteers assist program staff in keeping the barn, pastures and facility clean and in good repair.
4. **Special Events** – help staff with the coordination of various fundraisers and special events as well as the day of the event.
5. **Special Skills** – work with staff to share technical or professional skills that may be of benefit to the program such as – graphic design, computer knowledge, grant writing, marketing, photography, etc.

**Unmounted Horsemanship & EFL(Health) Coach** – assist the instructor in providing a safe and beneficial experience for the unmounted horsemanship and equine facilitated learning participants.

### **PURPOSE OF THE NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION & TRAINING SESSIONS**

To assist in providing the safest and most enjoyable environment possible, all volunteers are required to attend a New Volunteer Orientation & Training Session to orient them to the organization and facility, and to introduce them to Equine Assisted Activities and the population the program serves. Training also includes an opportunity to practice the volunteer roles, safely working with horses, emergency procedures, and general policies regarding all aspects of the program.

### **CONTINUING LEARNING & ADVANCEMENT**

The New Volunteer Orientation & Training is just the beginning of an exciting learning process. WindWalkers will continue to provide volunteers with ongoing guidance, support and special learning opportunities throughout the year allowing volunteers to grow and advance in their roles should they choose.

### **VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

The following policies & guidelines are in place to assist you in having a positive volunteer experience.

### **VOLUNTEER SIGN IN**

**Upon arrival**, volunteers are kindly asked to sign in, put on a name badge, and check the schedule for their assignment. After completing the volunteer assignment, name badges are returned and volunteers are asked to sign out, noting the number of hours and the area worked.

### **VOLUNTEER CANCELLATIONS**

Volunteers are critical to the success of the program. When you commit to your volunteer role, your support is truly needed to serve our participants. Please reserve canceling your scheduled day and time for emergencies. If you must cancel, we ask that you please call WindWalkers as soon as possible so a replacement may be found. And if possible, please make up for your absence by volunteering another day.

### **PLEASE... NO SMOKING on the premises.**

- Turn off cell phones & car alarms
- Refrain from offering food to participants or horses without permission.
- Please do not bring your dogs/pets to WindWalkers. (dog policy attached)
- Do not perform a role or go into areas you have not been trained for.

**COMMUNICATION & QUESTIONS** The instructor is responsible for each rider, horse and volunteer. If you have any concerns or questions during a session, please bring to the instructor or a staff member's attention. Program updates will also be communicated through email and posted on the bulletin board in the stable. We greatly value feedback and suggestions from our volunteers!

**COMMITMENT & AVAILABILITY** Adequate support is critical in serving our participants. Most roles require volunteers to commit to a minimum of one (1) hour each week (same day and time) for the length of a semester. Please reserve this time on your calendar. If there is an emergency and you are not able to make your scheduled day and time, please notify WindWalkers as soon as possible. If possible, please offer to volunteer another day to make up for your absence.

**PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS** Some volunteer roles such as leading, sidewalking and assisting in the stable can be physically demanding. It is important for you to inform WindWalkers staff if you have a condition that may prevent you from being able to perform your role including supporting a rider at a walk or a jog, or in an emergency situation. If you feel being a riding program or barn volunteer is too physically demanding, volunteers are needed in many other areas.

**CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY** We place great importance on protecting the confidential information of our clients, staff and volunteers. "Confidential Information" includes, but is not limited to, personally identifiable information such as last names, telephone numbers, mailing and email addresses, participant diagnosis and any personal information. WindWalkers volunteers agree not to disclose confidential information to anyone other than staff unless they have permission from the participant or parent and it directly relates to the rider's safety (diabetics, severe allergic reactions, seizures, etc.). Please seek permission before taking any pictures or videos of participants or other volunteers.

**ACCIDENTS & OCCURRENCES** All accidents must be reported immediately to WindWalkers staff and an occurrence form must be completed by all involved. Please request an occurrence form from staff.

**VISITING THE FACILITY** WindWalkers Therapeutic Riding center is located on private property. It is important that volunteers and guests respect posted off-limit areas and notify staff if you would like to visit outside your regularly scheduled days/times.

**CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR** To promote a safe environment at the program, all persons are required to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Inappropriate behaviors would include disregard for program policies, the use of alcohol or illegal substances before or while at WindWalkers, any form of harassment, aggressive or abusive behavior to self, or others including horses. Individuals exhibiting inappropriate behavior will be requested to leave and if determined, assistance may be called (911). If you are subject to, or observe inappropriate behaviors by persons or horses (biting, kicking, etc.), please notify staff immediately. WindWalkers prohibits firearms and weapons on the property.

**REASSIGNMENT & TERMINATION POLICY** Individuals not able to perform their volunteer role or fail to observe policies may be provided with job re-assignment. However, WindWalkers reserves the right to determine that it may be in the best interest of the program to terminate a volunteer's involvement with the program.

## **HELMETS**

All participants are required to wear an ASTM-SEI approved helmet while taking part in any program activity. Volunteers and staff are required to wear an approved riding helmet for any mounted activity. Instructors are responsible for ensuring proper helmet fit for participants. Helmets are disinfected and inspected on regular basis.

## **SAFETY STIRRUPS**

Stirrups with safety features that reduce the chance of foot entrapment are required on all WindWalkers saddles. Approved safety stirrups include “S” shaped and Peacock style.

## **FOOTWEAR**

Comfortable boots or sturdy shoes with a ¼ inch heel are recommended when riding or working around the horse. No loafers, open toed shoes or sandals.

## **CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES**

Please dress appropriately for an outdoor activity. Clothing, hats or jewelry that restrict movement or vision are considered unsuitable. Also, please be aware that strong perfumes or colognes may irritate individuals with allergies or sensory issues.

## **WINDWALKERS PARTICIPANTS**

WindWalkers TRC serves individuals over the age of 4 years. An assessment and screening process is conducted by staff to determine eligibility into the program. The assessment process provides an opportunity to determine if the program activities would be safe and appropriate for the individual and what resources would be needed such as – horse, riding equipment, volunteer and staffing needs.

Once accepted into the program, individual goals are established for the participant and progress is documented each week. Most participate in one 30-45 minute session each week for the length of the semester, with the majority continuing from one semester to the next. Lesson activities may include developing basic riding skills, exercises, playing games on horseback and trail riding.

## **BENEFITS OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING & UNMOUNTED EQUINE ASSISTED**

### **ACTIVITIES**

**Physical** - It is the horse's movement which has a dynamic effect on the rider's body. The horse stimulates the rider's pelvis and trunk in a manner that closely resembles the normal gait of a human. This movement can be used to produce specific physical changes in the rider including normalization of muscle tone and improvements in posture, balance, coordination, and increased endurance.

**Sensory** - The horse and the riding environment offer a wide variety of input to participants. Movement exploration on the horse combined with so many other sights and sounds one encounters in the riding program contribute to the overall sensory experience.

**Emotional** - The success of overcoming fear and anxiety and the ability to achieve riding and other related skills help individuals realize self-worth and increase self-esteem. For those involved with the various activities of a therapeutic riding program, the companion animal bonding and development of new skills are critical components to the success of the experience offered. Relationships develop between participants, volunteers, horses, and staff and are an integral part of a positive, emotional experience provided by a therapeutic riding program.

**Cognitive**- The horse provides a strong motivator for participants. Riding lessons incorporate activities and games on horseback designed to help achieve specific goals such as following multi- step directions, staying on task, color and number recognition, and reinforcing existing skills as well as learning new ones.

**Social** - Equine assisted activities provide an excellent opportunity for participants to interact with their peers, program volunteers and staff in a positive and enjoyable environment.



## **WORKING WITH A SPECIAL-NEEDS POPULATION**

Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take time to know your participant and direct questions to the instructors. Physical or mental impairments may be present at birth, or may be due to injury, disease, or aging. Allow individuals their independence to the degree possible. And never assume because someone is nonverbal they don't understand you. Above all, please treat individuals with patience and respect - being considerate and sensitive to their needs.

### ***WHEELCHAIR ETIQUETTE***

Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind. Always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before you help; be respectful - people's wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Don't hang or lean on them unless you have permission; and speak directly - be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to place yourself on the same level as the wheelchair.

### ***ESCORTING AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT***

If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may only need verbal direction/cues. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to have assistance.

### ***HEARING/ LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT***

Try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking to him/her. Speak clearly, avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words and avoid long verbal instructions/conversation. Become familiar with hand gestures/body positions that the participant may be using to represent words and concepts. Provide assistance with communication when needed (i.e., visual cues, gestures, etc). Alert the Instructor if the participant is having difficulty with hearing aid (i.e., ringing).

### ***NON-VERBAL OR LIMITED VERBAL EXPRESSION***

Many of our participants are non-verbal or limited in their verbal expression. To enhance communication with these individuals, instructors and volunteers may reinforce requests and directions with basic American Sign Language (ASL). Attached is a sheet of some common signs used in therapeutic riding.

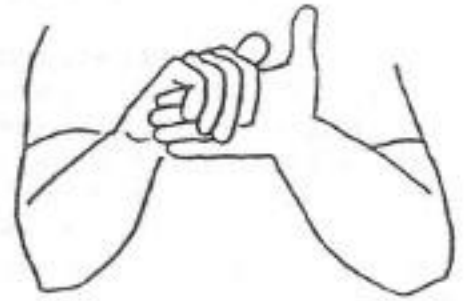
# SIGN LANGUAGE

## Riding Skills



### Walk-on

Hands are palm down, wrists go up & down



### Saddle

Fingers of right hand hook over flat, palm-in left



### Trot

Close fists with thumbs across fingers, motion up and down from wrists



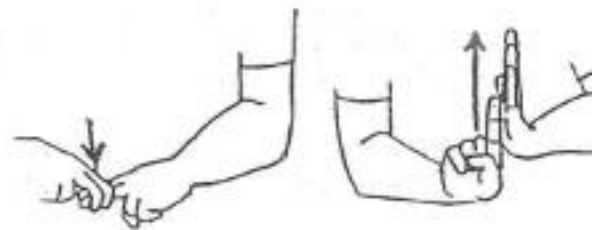
### Ride

Straddle palm-in left hand with first two fingers of hand, slide



### Halt/Stop

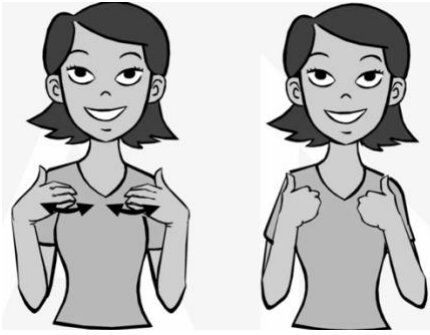
Side of right flat hand strikes left flat palm



### Sit Tall

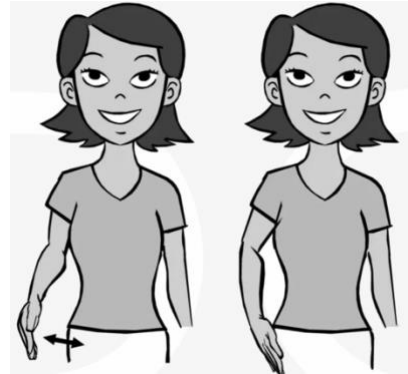
Sign "Sit" and "Tall"

## ASL Conversation - Animals



### Animal

hold the tips of your fingers on your chest and flap your arms like a bird. When children learn this sign, they will tend to simplify this to just flapping, often with clenched fists instead of open hands.



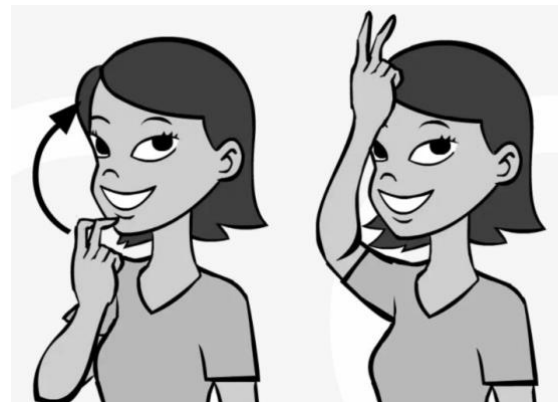
### Dog

Patting your outstretched hand with fingers together on the side of your hip, just as if you were calling the dog.



### Horse

Take your dominant hand - put the thumb on your temple, and move the index finger and middle finger



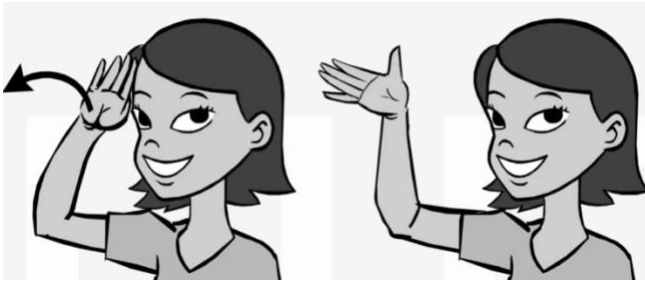
### Goat

Make a slightly bent or curved 'V' with your dominant hand, then tap your chin with the two fingers, followed by tapping your forehead with the same curved - or now straightened - 'V' hand.



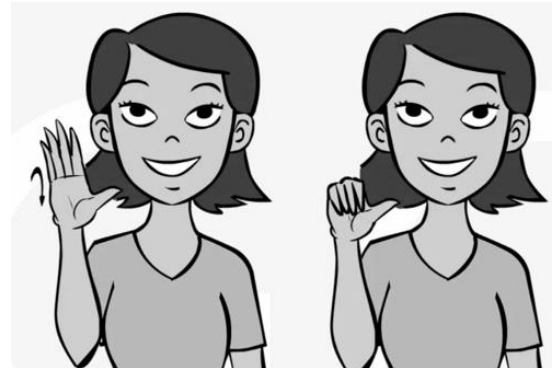
### Cat

with both hands pinch your thumb and index finger together by the side of each cheek, while keeping your remaining fingers straight out. As you pinch your fingers together, take them from each side of your face outward.



### Hello

make the sign by extending your fingers and cross your thumb in front of your palm. Now take the hand, starting with your hand in front of your ear, and extend it outward and away from your body.



### Goodbye

the same as the traditional gesture for the word. Open your palm, folding down your fingers, then open your palm again. An ASL alternative for goodbye or bye-bye is to wave your open hand sideways, like a leaf swaying in the wind.



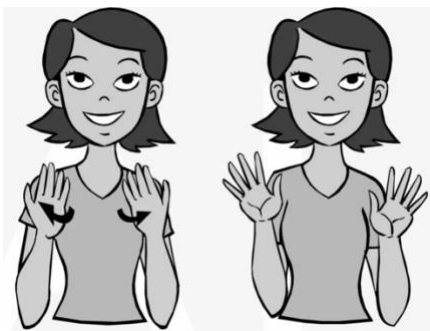
### Thank You

extend your fingers and thumb. Touch your fingers to your chin and bring your fingers forward. It is almost like you are blowing a kiss out, to thank the person – but the sign is a bit lower.



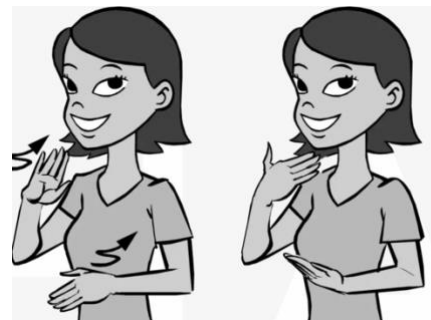
### You're Welcome

signed the same way as Thank You. Take your flat, open, dominant hand, and starting from your chin, take your hand out as it arcs down and away from your face.



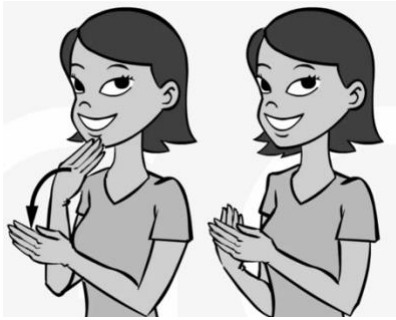
### All Done

You start with palms facing in, then turn the hands so that they are facing out.



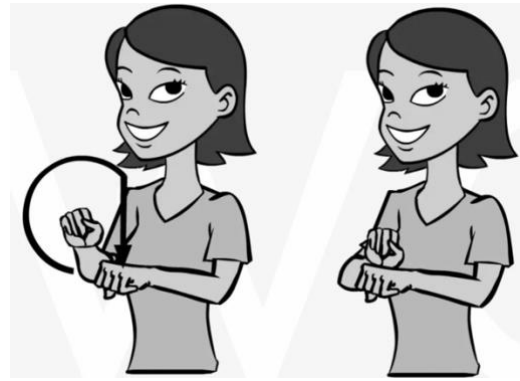
### Happy

take your open hand (or both hands) and brush up your chest a couple of times.



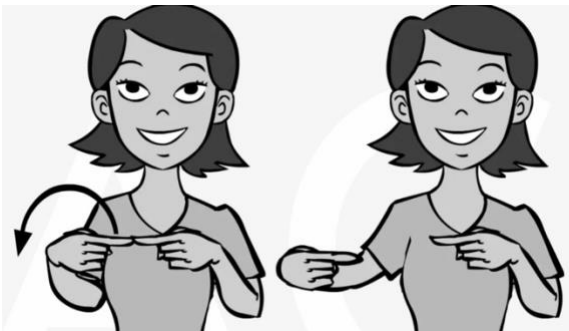
### Good

take your flat, open dominant hand with fingers together, and starting from your chin, move your hand in a downward arc. You may also have your flat non-dominant hand, palm facing up, to act as a support for your dominant hand.



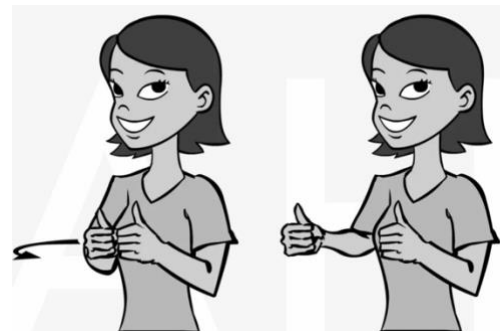
### Work

Close both hands into fists in front of you, then tap your dominant fist on top of your non-dominant fist a couple of times at the wrist area. It is as if you are hard at work doing something.



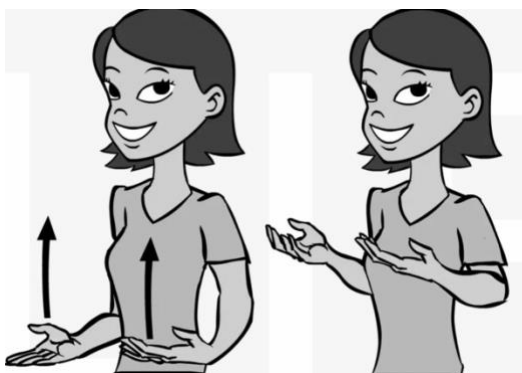
### Across

Your non-dominant hand is bent at the elbow, with your index finger pointing straight ahead of you. Then your dominant hand's index finger travels forward, from touching your non-dominant index to about half a foot further ahead, indicating a short distance across something.



### Ahead

Begin by making fists with both hands and bringing them together, fist to fist, with thumbs sticking up. Then keep your non-dominant fist in place as your dominant fist moves away, in a half-circular motion, ending up ahead of the other hand by a foot or so.



### Lift

Hold both open hands in front of you with palms facing up. Stoop forward slightly then straighten your back as you motion to lift something invisible with your open hands.

## **GLOSSARY OF PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DISABILITIES**

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

**Arthritis:** Inflammatory disease of the joints. Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid. Characteristics: Pain; lack of mobility; loss of strength. Benefits of therapeutic riding: Gentle rhythmic movements to promote joint mobility and to relieve pain; increase strength.

**Autism & Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD):** A broad spectrum of disorders ranging from mild to severe, which affects thought, perceptions and attention. Characteristics: Impairments in social interaction and communication; restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities; impairments in the use of nonverbal behaviors such as eye to eye gaze and facial expressions; lack of social or emotional reciprocity; delays in, or lack of the development of spoken language; impairments in ability to initiate or sustain conversations with others; abnormal responses to senses such as sight, hearing, touch, balance, smell, taste, reaction to pain; deficits in gross and fine motor skills. Benefits: Provides sensory input and promotes sensory integration, socialization, and communication skills (expressive and receptive). Develops strength, coordination, muscle tone and gross and fine motor skills.

**Cerebral Palsy:** Brain damage occurring before, at or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder. Types and characteristics: Spastic: increased muscle tone, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes. Athetoid: Extensor muscle tension, involuntary movements, difficulty maintaining upright posture. Ataxic: weakened muscles, poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements. Benefits: Normalization of muscle tone, muscle strengthening, development of posture, balance and motor coordination, opportunity for promoting expressive skills, socialization and confidence.

**Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA) – Stroke:** Brain hemorrhage or brain emboli, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment. Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of the body. May impair thought, speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength. Benefits: Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech, socialization and confidence.

**Developmental Disabilities (DD):** A diverse group of physical, cognitive, psychological, sensory and speech impairments that begin anytime during development up to 18 years of age. Characteristics: Varied, but can include processing delays, and delays in physical, motor and social development. Benefits: Increase confidence and self-esteem, stimulates processing, speech and body awareness, provides opportunity for sport and recreation, promotes socialization.

**Down Syndrome:** A genetic disorder in which a person is born with an extra chromosome (chromosome 21). Characteristics: Mild to severe learning disabilities, low muscle tone, speech impairments. Benefits: Promotes expressive and receptive language skills. Increases gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination, posture and muscle tone. Promotes social skills. Increases confidence and self esteem.

**Emotional Disabilities:** Social, emotional or behavioral functioning which is not age appropriate and affects a child's academics, social relationships and self-care. Characteristics: Difficulty coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations, inappropriate affect or behavior responses, depression, anxiety, physical symptoms, difficulty learning, withdrawal, and aggressiveness. Benefits: Increase confidence and self-esteem, provide opportunities for accomplishments, promotes positive socialization.

**Hearing Impairment:** Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound. Characteristics: Difficulties in communication or communication through sign language, lip reading or finger spelling. Benefits: Increases confidence, self-esteem and sense of accomplishment. Provides recreational activity with opportunity for socialization. Stimulates balance, posture and coordination.

**Learning Disabilities:** Neurological disorders that interfere with a person's ability to store, process or produce information. Characteristics: Difficulties with reading, writing, speech, computing math. May affect development and social skills. Benefits: Promotes processing, language skills and attending skills, increases confidence and self-esteem, provides opportunity for success, increases balance, coordination and posture, provides opportunity for socialization.

**Multiple Sclerosis (MS):** Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation. Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity. Benefits: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles, maintains balance, increases confidence and self-esteem.

**Muscular Dystrophy (MD):** Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males. Characteristics: Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes. Benefits: Provides opportunity for recreational, physical, and social activity. May help slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, allows for movement free of assistive devices.

**Scoliosis:** Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S shape with rotary component. Characteristics: Shoulder, trunk and waistline asymmetry. May have back pain and postural fatigue. Benefits: Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles.

**Spina Bifida:** Congenital failure of vertebral arch closure which results in spinal cord damage. Characteristics: Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss. May also be associated with hydrocephalus, lordosis, scoliosis and hip dislocations. Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, increases strength, balance and coordination, promotes confidence and self-esteem.

**Spinal Cord Injury (SCI):** Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function. Characteristic: Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores. Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, provides opportunity for recreational and social activity.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** Accidental injury to the head resulting in impairment of cognitive, emotional and/or physical functioning. Characteristics: May include deficits in gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination and strength. May have deficits in language, communication, processing, memory and perceptual skills. Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, coordination, and gross and fine motor skills. Stimulates speech and perceptual skills. Increases confidence.

**Visual Impairment -Moderate to Total Loss of Sight. Characteristics:** May include insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity and fearfulness. Benefits: Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture, balance and coordination. Provides opportunity for socialization, structured risk-taking and freedom of movement.

## **WINDWALKERS HORSES**

Our horses provide the magic at WindWalkers. They come from a variety of backgrounds such as show, lesson or pleasure horses. Each has his or her own unique personality and needs.

When selecting and training the horses for EEA, many factors are considered. Horses must meet basic criteria including – possessing an exceptional level of tolerance, be gentle and well mannered, in good health, and provide rhythmic movement as this is a key benefit of therapeutic riding.

Horses that meet the criteria are accepted on a trial basis and placed on a training program to introduce them to their role in the program and the activities they will be exposed to. Mock sessions are conducted prior to having “real” riders on the horses.

WindWalkers horses receive very good care. Each horse is on a conditioning and health care program to assure its physical and mental well-being. Additionally, each horse’s work schedule is tracked and recorded in compliance with PATH International Standards and Guidelines.

Volunteers play an important role in preparing horses for sessions and we encourage volunteers to gain additional knowledge of our equine friends through a variety of opportunities. **In addition to the Volunteer Orientation & Training session, WindWalkers provides ongoing opportunities working directly with staff and special learning sessions.**

## **EQUINE SENSES**

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding the horse senses, instincts and implications is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

**Hearing:** The horse’s sense of hearing is very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. “Hearing and not seeing” is often the cause of the fright/ flight response. When working with horses, note the position of the horse’s ears. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, in-attentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet, calm and reassuring voice. Watch your horse’s ears for increased communication.

**Sight:** Horses’ eyes are geared to finding danger. They don’t have very accurate vision close up, but they can detect tiny movement at a distance. The horse’s eyes are set on either side of the head; there is a good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poorer frontal vision. The lens of the horse’s eye doesn’t change shape as humans do. Instead, a horse focuses on objects by changing their head position and raising and lowering its head. The horse’s visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color. The horse may notice if something in the arena or out on a trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with. The horse has better peripheral vision; consider a slightly looser rein, enabling him to move his head when taking a look at objects. Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is to his shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when hand feeding.

**Taste:** Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects. A horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.



**Touch:** The horse's sense of touch is very sensitive. They can detect very light touch or pressure. Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas). Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses may also use touch to examine strange objects. They will look, sniff and feel an object with their muzzle. The tongue, lips, and bars of the mouth are especially sensitive places, and we need to use caution when a horse has a bit in his mouth. Horses are trained by applying and removing pressure and may be sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs. Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly. Riders may need assistance to reduce squeezing a horse with their legs. Ask the instructor/therapist what is the best handling technique

**Smell:** The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations. Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling. **It is recommended that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them.**

**Sixth Sense:** Horses do have a "sixth sense" when evaluating the disposition of those around him. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important to let the instructor/therapist know if you're having a difficult time relating to, or getting along with a particular horse.

**Flight As A Natural Instinct:** Most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. However, if frightened, horse's would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it. At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly. A frightened horse being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like a stall. If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (note the position of the horse's ears in pictures following article), alert program staff.

**Herd Animal:** Horses like to stay together in a herd or a group with one or two horses dominant, with a pecking order amongst the rest. Some horses may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride. Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter. If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected. For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse's length between horses when riding within a group to respect the horse's space and pecking order.

## READING HIS EARS

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



Ears forward but relaxed  
interested in what's  
in front of him.



Ears turned back but relaxed  
listening to his rider  
or what's behind him.



Ears pointed stiffly forward  
alarmed or nervous about what's  
ahead. Looking for danger.



Ears pointed left and right  
relaxed, paying attention  
to the scenery on both sides.



Ears stiffly back  
annoyed or worried about what's  
behind him: might kick if annoyed.



Droopy ears  
calm and resting,  
horse may be dozing.



Ears flattened against neck  
slenderly angry, in a fighting mood.  
May fight, bite or kick.

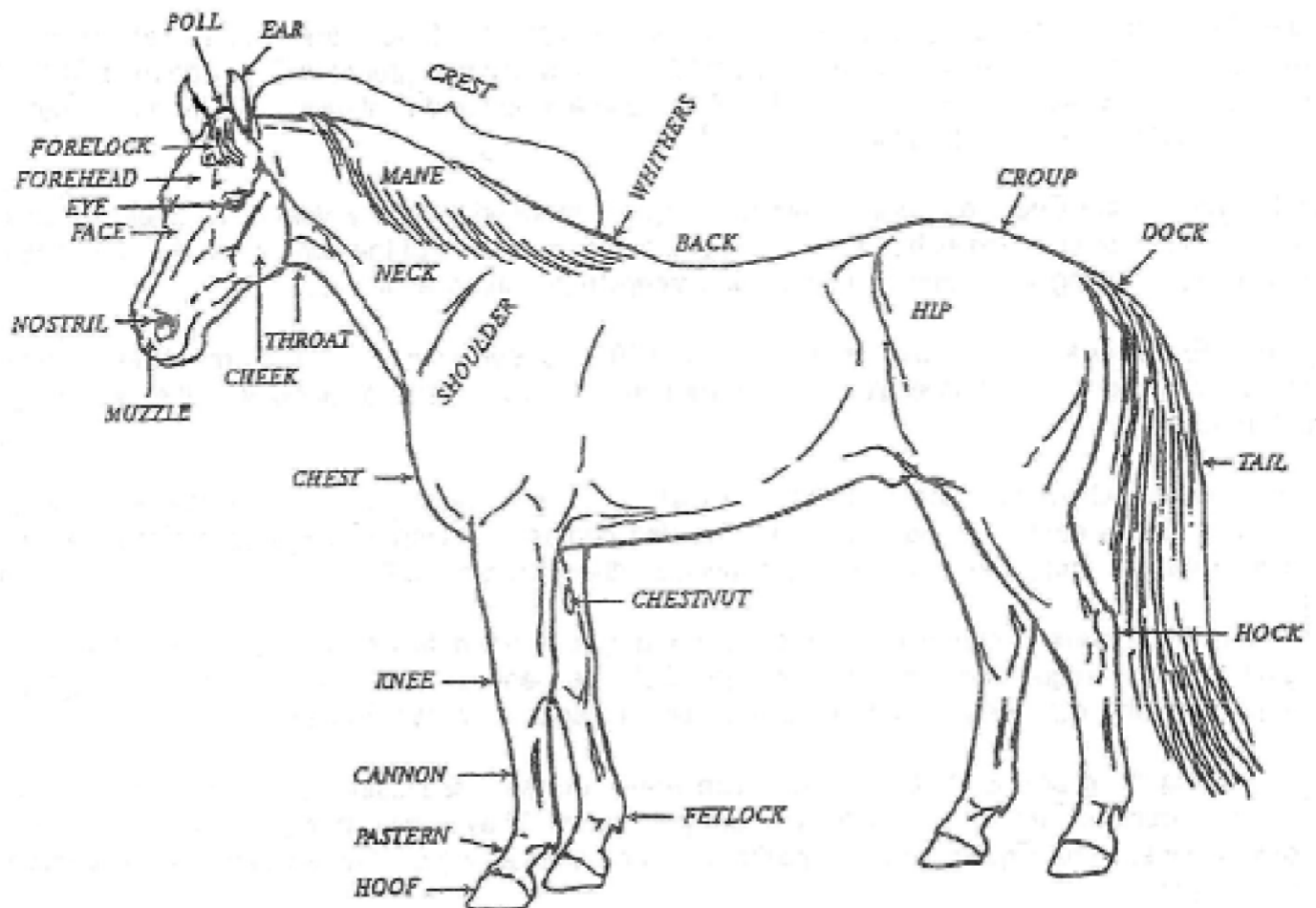
### OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

- Tucking the tail down tightly.  
Danger to the rear.  
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.  
Watch out if ears are flattened, too!
- Switching the tail.  
Annoyance and irritation:  
at biting flies, stinging insects or  
tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.  
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.  
Don't wake him up by startling him!
- Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.  
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.  
Watch out for biting or kicking.

# PARTS OF THE HORSE AND TACK

## PARTS OF THE HORSE

When working around horses there are some special words and terms that you will need to know. Some parts of the horse are shown below.



## **VOLUNTEER ROLES**

**Horse Leaders:** Volunteers who have solid horse knowledge and have attended both the general orientation & training and Partnership (leader) training, may become a horse leader. Horse Leaders are responsible for the horse during class and must be alert and aware of the horse's movement and behavior at all times. Horse Leaders arrive 30 minutes prior to session and check the daily schedule for their horse assignment. They assure the horse is well groomed and the tack is put on and adjusted properly. A list of the assigned equipment for your horse is included on the daily schedule. If at any time, you are unsure of your assignment or the resources needed, please seek advice from the instructor.

**Horse Handling** – when entering a pen, speak gently and quietly to get the horse's attention. Close the stall door three quarters of the way behind you and place the halter on the horse with the lead line connected. Be sure not to wrap the lead around your hand. Open the pen gate and lead the horse out by standing on the horse's left side, then stepping out into the aisle and having the horse follow you. Never enter a pen if you have concerns regarding a horse's behavior. When returning horses to their pen, remove halter and lead, and close the door securely.

**Grooming:** Thirty minutes prior to class – begin by thoroughly grooming the horse. Each horse has their own grooming bucket. Please do not share grooming tools. Begin by using the Curry Comb in a circular motion starting with the neck area and working down the body to the hind end to remove loose dirt and hair. The Curry is not used on legs or face. It is important while grooming to check the horse for any signs of illness or injury (unsoundness).

Next use the Dandy (or hard brush) with a flicking motion to remove hair and dirt, brushing in the same direction as the hair, always working from the neck to the back of the horse. The Dandy brush may be used on the mane, tail and legs, but not the face. Use the Body (or soft brush), to remove fine dust from body, legs and face.

To pick hooves, begin by running your hand down the back of their leg below the knee, and ask the horse to "pick it up." Holding the hoof securely, pick from the heel forward, removing any caked dirt, cleaning well between the frog (V shape). Notify staff of any foul-smelling discharge, tenderness, or hoof cracks. Once the horse is groomed, please remove hair from brushes, place grooming tools back in their bucket and return it to the tack room.

**Tacking up the Horse:** A horse's assigned tack will be indicated on the schedule. If it is not, please see the instructor. Please saddle a horse first by placing the cotton saddle pad on the horses back, covering the withers. Place the saddle on top of the pad, leaving some space under the pommel so the pad will not rub on the horses withers. Then attach the non elastic side of the girth to the billet straps on the right side of the saddle.

**PLEASE LEAVE THE GIRTH COMFORTABLY LOOSE AT THIS POINT.** You should be able to fit your fingers between the side of the horse and the girth. The horse may then be brought into the arena approximately ten minutes prior to class. Please lead the horse once around the arena to stretch, then line up in the center of the arena facing the mounting ramp. The instructor will do a final tack check to assure proper fit prior to mounting the rider. Please bring any problems or concerns regarding horse or tack to the attention of the instructor.

### **HORSE LEADERS ALWAYS STAY WITH THEIR HORSE.**

Horse Leaders use a lead line, which is attached to the halter as directed by the instructor. Horses are typically led from the left side but the instructor may indicate otherwise. When leading, keep slightly behind the horse's head, but in front of the shoulder. For mounts, dismounts and extended halts, leaders position themselves in front of the horse, facing the horse's head. This is referred to as "Heading-off" your horse. Release of pressure is the horses' reward. Be careful not to continuously pull on the lead in class. Horse leaders should allow riders their independence as much as possible.

When a horse has finished a session, if it is not used in the next lesson, please bring the horse back to his pen and untack and pick the horse's hooves. Please return all tack and grooming tools neatly to their appropriate place.

**SIDEWALKERS** - Sidewalkers should arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of their session. The sidewalker's primary role is to walk alongside the rider and provide support as indicated by the instructor. It may be direct physical support, verbal support to reinforce the instructor's directions, or acting as spotters during sessions. One or two sidewalkers may be assigned to each rider depending on the rider's needs. Upon arrival, please check the daily schedule for the rider you will be working with. You may greet your rider, assist with their helmet, and wait with the rider until the instructor indicates it is time to mount. Please do not attempt to mount, dismount or bring a rider near horse without an instructor's permission. **SIDEWALKERS ALWAYS STAY WITH THEIR RIDERS.**

A variety of sidewalking techniques are used according to rider's needs. The instructor will indicate which type of support should be used. (Please use caution never to force movement or use excessive pressure when applying any of these techniques.)

### **Sidewalk support techniques include:**

- "Side-walk" The sidewalker walks beside the rider (lined up with the rider's shoulder), prepared for "hands on" when indicated by instructor.
- "Arm over thigh" The sidewalker places the arm closest to the rider over the rider's thigh and grasps the front edge of the saddle.
- "Ankle support" The sidewalker cups the riders ankle to stabilize the rider's lower leg.
- "Arm over thigh & ankle support" Occasionally, a rider needs support provided by doing both an arm over thigh, and cupping the ankle.

### **Additional Information for Sidewalkers**

- When a rider requires two sidewalkers, only one sidewalker should be communicating with the rider at a time as too much input can confuse a rider.
- If a rider has only one sidewalker, the leader and sidewalker should walk on opposite sides of the horse and refrain from unnecessary conversation.
- The role of the sidewalker varies greatly between riders. It is important to have an understanding of your rider's needs and knowledge of his or her goals. Please ask the instructor to provide this information to you.
- The sidewalker needs to be aware of the rider at all times. Even when the rider is not mounted, the sidewalker should be conscious of the rider's safety.
- Sidewalkers - Never place your hand or fingers in any of the saddle's rings or buckles while sidewalking.
- If a rider or a horse behaves inappropriately or in an unsafe manner, please notify staff immediately.

**Mounts & Dismounts.** To help save the horses' backs, riders mount from either a mounting block or ramp. Dismounts may be done from either the mounting ramp or the center of the arena, depending on the rider. The Horse Leader's primary role during mounts and dismounts is to prevent the horse from moving. Unless a rider is independent, please refrain from helping with stirrups. Sidewalkers may stay with the rider until the instructor indicates it is time for mounting. During the mount, sidewalkers assist the rider in safely bringing their leg over the back of the horse and are secure in the saddle as they leave the mounting area. For dismounts, when the instructor indicates it is time, help the rider remove their feet from the stirrups and bring their leg over the back of the horse. Never attempt to mount or dismount a rider without the instructor's knowledge.

**Barn & Facility Volunteers:** Primary responsibilities include the care and maintenance of the barn and facility. Barn & facility volunteers may be horse knowledgeable or not, but must be willing to learn and adhere to WindWalkers methods of handling and care to maintain a safe environment for our horses, staff, participants, and other volunteers. Working in the barn is a great way to see our horses in their environment, learn horse behaviors and enhance your skills as a program volunteer.

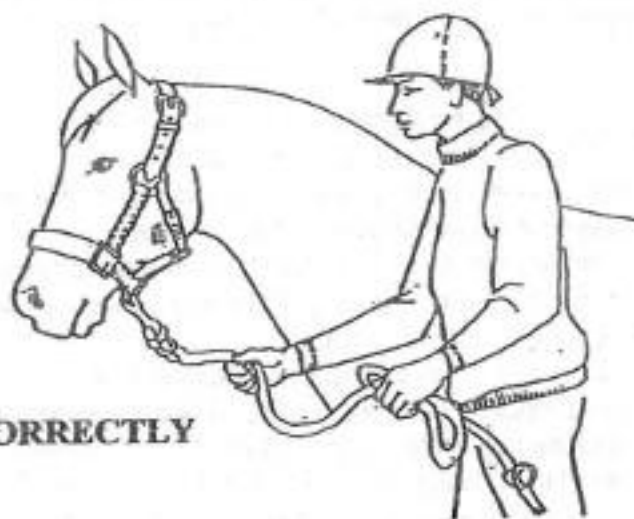
**Primary Responsibilities Include:**

- Cleaning the barn, sweeping, and other barn chores
- Paddock and pasture maintenance.
- Additional chores in the stable and grounds as outlined by staff.

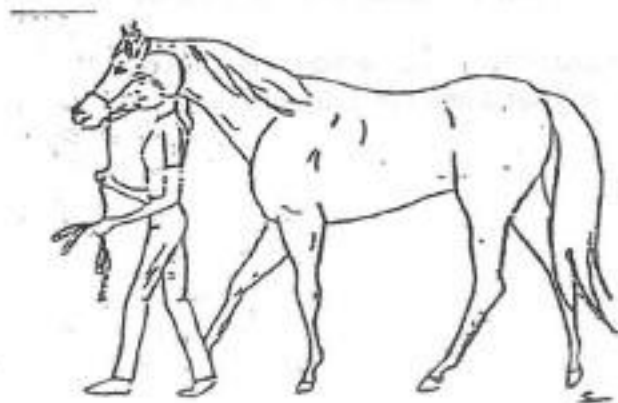
**Barn Volunteer Reminders:** Please be sure to sign in and out, and wear your name badge. Touch base with staff when you arrive and before you leave. Dress appropriately to weather and working around the horses and barn (study boots, gloves, etc.) Please communicate any concerns regarding horses, facility or your role to program staff.



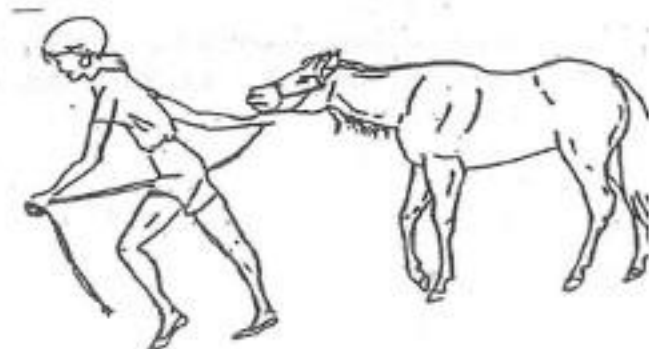
**SIDEWALKING TECHNIQUE – “ARM OVER THIGH”**



**HOLDING LEADLINE CORRECTLY**



**CORRECT LEADING**

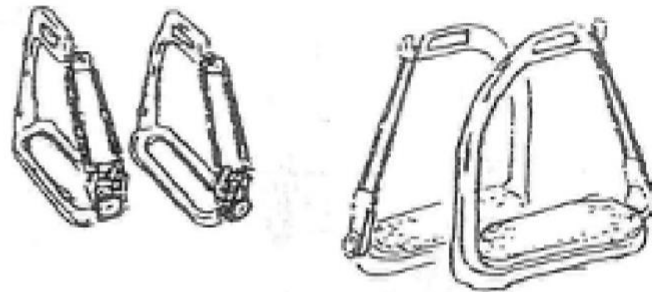


**INCORRECT LEADING**

## RIDING EQUIPMENT (TACK) FOR THERAPEUTIC RIDING

### PEACOCK STIRRUPS

Stirrups that have a quick-release rubber band on the side that will allow the rider's foot to come out in case of a fall. The safety feature should always face away from the horse when positioned on the rider's foot.



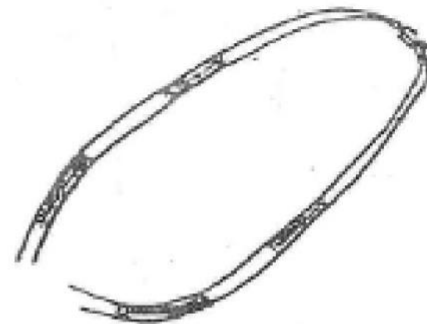
### "S" SHAPED STIRRUPS

Stirrups that have a safety feature of a curved outside bridge that will allow for the rider's foot to fall free from the stirrup if a fall should occur. The safety feature should be positioned on the outside of the riders

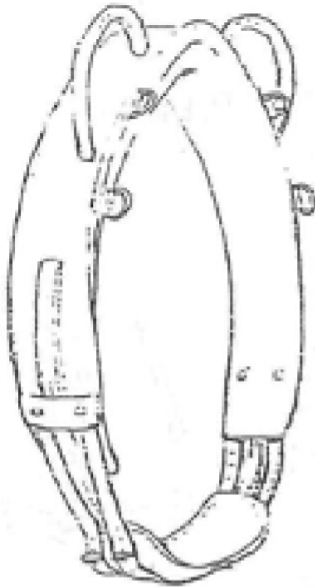


### RAINBOW REINS

To teach proper use of the reins, the instructor can direct a rider to "hold in the green" or "hold in the red". The rider can then feel an appropriate response to their aids and have a guide for proper positioning.





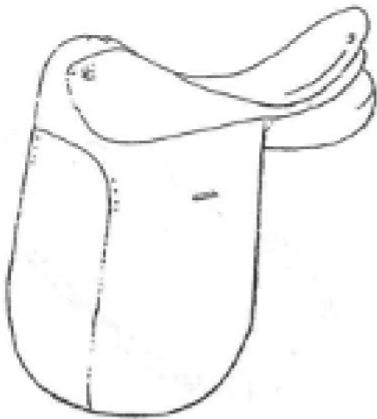
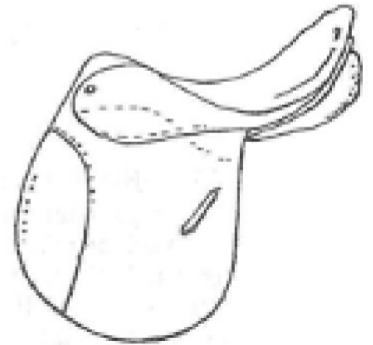


VAULTING SURCINGLE OR DOUBLE  
HANDLED SURCINGLE

Used over a bareback pad or over the pommel of an English saddle. This surcingle has two handles.

ALL PURPOSE JUMPING SADDLE

A saddle with a moderately deep seat and knee rolls. It will offer more support than a close contact saddle.

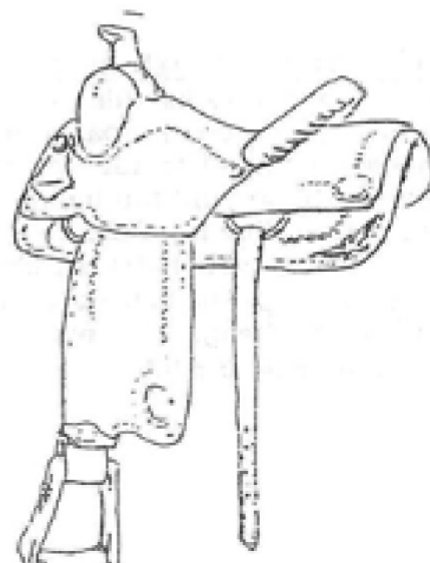


DRESSAGE SADDLE

With the long flap and deep seat, this saddle will encourage correct, balanced position and offer more support to the rider than a close contact jumping saddle.

WESTERN SADDLE

A western saddle can give a rider more support with the deep seat, cantle and fork. It may be difficult to mount some riders with high tone because of the horn.



# Basic tools and techniques

TOOL	FOR	HOW TO USE
Rubber curry comb 	Loosens dirt and dandruff while providing a massage.	Circular pattern with varying degrees of pressure. Tap on boot frequently to clean.
Body brush 	Lifts out debris loosened by the curry and distributes the natural coat oil.	Short, flicking motions. Frequently rub across curry comb to clean.
Finishing brush 	Removes any remaining dust and evenly distributes natural skin oil for shine.	Smooth, short flicks along the body.
Mane and tail brush 	Gently brushes mane and tail without damage.	Start at the bottom and gently brush small lengths. Do not force tangles as it will break the hair.
Shedding blade 	Serrated blade removes loose, shedding hair in the spring or thick caked mud; smooth side is for scraping sweat or water.	Long, sweeping motions.
Hoof pick 	Removes dirt, rock and manure from hoof.	Remove packed dirt and clean the spaces along the frog.



GROOMING • KEEP ONE HAND ON THE HORSE WHILE YOU WORK

**RISK MANAGEMENT** - Volunteers are responsible for knowing and following all safety rules, emergency policies and procedures as indicated, supporting all efforts to promote safe working conditions, making full use of safety equipment, reporting immediately any unsafe working conditions or behaviors, and knowing the location of first aid kits, fire extinguisher, and emergency plans.

**Emergency Policies & Procedures** - Hidden Acres intention is to provide a safe environment for all individuals involved with the program. Being prepared in the event of an emergency is part of providing a safe atmosphere. Please review the following policies and procedures on how to handle specific emergencies. It is important to remember in any emergency situation to remain calm, reassure riders, and take direction from Hidden Acres staff. Staff is responsible for managing the emergency and applying any first aid required. Volunteers may be called upon to assist.

**Medical Emergencies** - Please notify staff or instructors of any injury or medical emergency so they may manage the emergency including evaluating the scene, determining if additional medical assistance is required, and providing any first aid required. An occurrence report must be completed by staff and involved individuals for every incident.

**Calling for Emergency Medical Assistance** - In the event of an emergency, volunteers may be asked to call for emergency medical assistance. Emergency contact and call information is posted on the volunteer bulletin board in the stable.

**First Aid Kits Location & Universal Precautions** - Primary human and horse first-aid kits are located in the stable feed room in a marked cabinet. Universal Precautions: Prevent exposure to bodily fluids (blood, saliva, etc.) by assuming all blood and bodily fluids to be potentially infectious, and take appropriate protective measures. Disposable gloves are located in the first aid kits.

**Severe Weather** - In the event of severe thunder storms, high winds or threat of hurricane – program activities will be discontinued. Please take direction from the instructor regarding escorting participants to a designated safe meeting place and safe placement of horses.

**Fire** - The stable is equipped with fire extinguishers. If you see a fire or smoke, dial 911 and evacuate the stable.

Staff will assist with evacuation and do a head count based on the class schedule and volunteer sign in book. Unless otherwise indicated, the designated meeting place is the small outdoor arena. Staff will designate crew to assist in evacuating the horses.

**Cold Weather / Hypothermia Policy** –the stable is not heated. When temps fall below freezing, gloves and appropriate attire are required. Please watch participants and others for signs of hypothermia including – shivering, loss of coordination, pale or red skin, or slurred speech. Participants who are non verbal may display

signs of discomfort, cry or become sleepy. Assist staff in bringing individual into heated tack room and placing a blanket on them. Staff will determine if further medical attention may be needed.

**Heat Exhaustion** - Please bring a cold beverage during warmer months and dress appropriately. The stable refrigerator has cold water and ice packs if needed. Alert staff immediately if participants or others show signs of confusion, dizziness, headache, muscle or stomach cramps, nausea, pale skin, profuse sweating or rapid heartbeat. Assist staff in placing individual out of direct sun and providing with cooling measures such as cold fluids or cold cloths. Staff will evaluate to determine if further medical attention may be needed.

**Potential Hazards** – The program is located on private property. Not all areas are open to participants, volunteers or visitors. Please check with staff before going near areas not associated with activities including horse paddocks, trails or construction areas or equipment. Always avoid contact with non-domesticated animals and report any concerns or unusual behaviors to staff.

**“Emergency” Dismount** -During riding sessions, instructors perform rider mounts and dismounts. However, in certain situations, volunteers may be asked to perform an emergency dismount. When an instructor calls for an emergency dismount, horse leaders halt and head off their horse.

Sidewalker(s) inform rider of emergency dismount, make sure the rider has removed their feet from the stirrups, place your arms around the riders waist and gently guide rider to off towards your center of gravity (your waist), and safely away from the horse. Horse leaders move the horse a safe distance from rider and await further direction from the instructor.

**Spooked Horse** - Should a horse become frightened or overly anxious, sidewalkers apply “arm over thigh” support to the rider. The horse leader should attempt to calm the horse. The horse leader always stays with the horse – being aware that the horse may move quickly forward or side step in either direction. As the horse moves, sidewalkers need to continue their support to the rider, staying close to the horse’s side as it moves.

Follow directions from instructor.

**Loose Horse** -To retrieve a loose horse – only one person should approach horse from the side, use a quiet voice, place a lead rope around neck, then the halter. Do not chase the horse. If needed, a small amount of feed in a bucket can be used to encourage the horse to come to you.

Should a horse become loose in the arena while a session is in progress, all activity immediately stops. Horse leaders are to halt and head off their horses, sidewalkers should apply “arm over thigh” support, and await further direction from instructor. If a horse is loose in the barn, participants should be brought to a safe area, remove any horses from the aisle. Close the barn doors and attempt to herd the loose horse into empty stall.

**Fallen Rider or Medical Emergency:** Should a rider fall from a horse, become injured or have a medical emergency during a session, all activity will stop. The instructor is responsible for managing the incident including applying any first aid needed. Designated volunteers may be asked to assist by retrieving a first aid kit, calling for emergency medical assistance (911), and locating the rider’s emergency medical form (located in “rider” file drawer in the tack room / office). In the event of a fallen rider, the horse leader will move the rider’s horse away from the rider, then halt and head off the horse. All other horse leaders are to halt their horses and head them off. Sidewalkers of the fallen rider remain with the rider until directed otherwise. All other sidewalkers are to apply “arm over thigh” support and stay with their riders, waiting for further direction from the instructor. No one, including riders’ parents should enter or leave the arena without direction from the instructor.

## **DEFINITIONS**

- Aids** – signals used by a rider to communicate instructions to the horse. Aids may be natural – hands, legs, voice, seat, or artificial – crop, spurs.
- Bay** – color term for deep brown to blackish colored horse with black mane and tail.
- Bit** – used to control the horse and generally made of metal, bits attach to the bridle and are placed in the mouth.
- Bridle** – The complete outfit of headstall, reins, and bit used to guide the horse when riding.
- Canter** – A three beat gait of the horse, faster than a trot, a bit slower than a gallop.
- Cantle** – back of the saddle behind the seat.
- Chestnut** – color term used for horse with brownish yellow coat color. Mane & tail are usually the same color.
- Conformation** - structure and general make up of the horse.
- Farrier** – profession of trimming and shoeing horses.
- Gaits** – various movements of the horse at different speeds; e.g. walk, trot and canter.
- Gallop** – fastest of the horses gaits. A three beat gait.
- Gelding** – a male horse that has been castrated and incapable of breeding.
- Girth** – long strap with buckles on each end, attaches to saddle straps and holds saddle in place.
- Girth cover** – soft fabric tube that slides over girth to help prevent horse from getting girth sores.
- Gray** – color term used for horses with coat color from white to dark gray in color.
- Ground poles** – wooden pole placed in arena used to school horse and/or practice rider's two-point position.
- Grooming** – caring for horse's coat includes currying, brushing, and picking feet.
- Half Circle & Reverse** – change of direction by turning horse toward the center of the ring and back to the rail.
- Halter** – leather or nylon bitless headstall used to control the horse when leading in or out to the paddock.
- Half seat or Two Point Position** – rider places hands on horses neck and stands up in stirrups.
- Hand** – a standard unit of measure equal to four inches, used to determine the horse's height.
- Hoof or hooves** – horses feet.
- Lead line** – used to lead the horse, a cotton or nylon rope with snap on end which attaches to halter.
- Long line** – use of long reins which run from the bit through the sides of the saddle to steer the horse from behind.
- Long side** – the longer side of the arena
- Lunging** – exercising the horse by placing it on a long line, and having the horse go around in a circle.
- Mare** – female horse
- Mounting ramp** – area used to mount the rider on to the horse. Near side – refers to the left side of the horse.
- Off side** – refers to the right side of the horse.
- Off side barrier** – block or cone used to keep horse next to mounting ramp.
- Posting** – a rider moving up and down in rhythm with the horse at the trot.
- Rail** – the outside area of the arena along the fence line or wall.
- Reins** – long leather straps attached to the bit held by the rider to steer and control the horse.
- Saddle** – usually made of leather and placed on horses back for rider to sit on.
- Saddle pad** – cloth pad used under the saddle to protect the horse's back.
- Stirrups** – usually made of iron, they hang from the saddle and rider places feet in them.
- Tack** – term used to refer to riding equipment.
- Trot** – a two beat diagonal gait.
- Walk on** – command to have the horse move forward into a walk.
- Withers** – bony projection between on horse's back between the shoulders.
- Whoa** – command to stop the horse from any gait.

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for taking time to read this Volunteer Training Manual. Because our volunteers are the heart of WindWalkers' organization, your comments are important to us.

Please take the time to fill out the form below.

**I have read and understand the material in this manual \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO**

**Did you find this Volunteer Training Manual helpful? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Is there anything you think should be covered more thoroughly in the manual?**

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WindWalkers' policies have been developed to serve the best interests of the entire WindWalkers' community. Safety, confidentiality, respect for each other – human and equine – and the preservation of an optimal environment for beneficial equine assisted activities and therapies are the primary reasons for strict adherence to these rules. Individuals who are not able to perform their volunteer role, or maintain a reasonable level of commitment, or fail to observe the rules and procedures of the program will be given an opportunity to discuss any situation that is perceived to be a violation of WindWalkers' policies and may be provided with job re-assignment. However, WindWalkers' reserves the right to determine at its discretion that it may be in the best interest of the program to terminate a volunteer's involvement with the program.

***I agree to follow the rules set forth by WindWalkers for the safety of myself, the riders, horses, other program participants and staff***

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Please return this sheet to a WindWalkers' Instructor or Volunteer Coordinator before starting your volunteer responsibilities. Thank you!

## Dog Policy

As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment for all our patrons, we wanted to take a moment to give an update on our policy regarding dogs on the premises.

While we understand the joy and companionship that pets can bring, we kindly request that all visitors refrain from bringing their dogs onto the premises, with the exception of certified service animals.

This policy is in place to ensure the comfort and safety of all our employees, riders and families, including those who may have allergies or fears related to dogs.

Service animals, trained to assist individuals with disabilities, are of course welcome. We deeply respect the important role these animals play in the lives of their owners.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in adhering to this policy. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We're here to assist you in any way we can.

Thank you for helping us maintain a welcoming and inclusive environment for all!





