



www.purplepony.org

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Dear Therapeutic Riding Volunteer,

When you decided to volunteer with Purple Pony Therapeutic Horsemanship, Inc. you became a very important part of a team. Purple Pony could not operate without the assistance of dedicated volunteers. There are many opportunities; as a leader or side walker during lessons; helping with fund raising, public relations and special events; assisting around the barn; office assistance such as helping with newsletters or phone calls.

As part of the team, you help provide our riders with the many benefits of therapeutic horsemanship. You make a difference in the lives of persons with diverse needs.

All new volunteers are required to attend an introductory two-hour training session before helping with a riding lesson. Returning volunteers must attend a brief "refresher" course at the beginning of each year. Individual sessions will be arranged to learn more about grooming and tacking. Additional training is available for individuals who would like to learn more or take on additional responsibilities. This handbook outlines what is expected of volunteers as well as general information concerning the program. In order to help you perform your job, please read and study the information in the handbook.

Welcome! Thank you for your participation. It is greatly appreciated.

Gail Ehmann
Volunteer Coordinator
Phone: 585.721-9080

Table of Contents:

- Mission Statement
- History of Purple Pony
- What is PATH Int'l?
- Benefits of Equine Activities
- Safety FIRST
 - Safety Protocols
 - Horses and Safety
 - Blind Spots
 - Emergency Procedures
- General Volunteer Information
 - Confidentiality
 - Qualifications
 - Policies and Procedures
 - Specific Duties
 - Lesson Prep
 - Grooming
 - Tacking
 - Mounting
 - Leading and Side Walking
 - Dismounting
- When you meet a person with Special Needs
- Emergency Situation Action Plans
- Disability Overview

MISSION STATEMENT OF PURPLE PONY THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP, INC.

Purple Pony Therapeutic Horsemanship exists to utilize the benefits of equine assisted activities, to improve the spiritual, intellectual and physical well-being of individuals with special needs.

HISTORY OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING AND PURPLE PONY

Therapeutic riding has been in existence for centuries. Beginning in 300 BC horses were used as a form of therapy to injured warriors.

In 1952, Liz Hartell, who had been disabled by polio, won a silver medal for her dressage test at the Helsinki Olympics. The event established therapeutic horsemanship as being of prominent value to handicapped individuals internationally.

In 1965, the Riding for the Disabled Association was formed in Coventry, England. This organization promoted wide acceptance for therapeutic riding throughout Europe. Today, there are more than 200 programs in England with more than 5,000 students.

In 1968, the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) was formed in Ashburn, Virginia. The organizations' goals are to train individuals to formulate and operate therapeutic riding programs. This was the start of a growing trend. In 2011, NARHA changed its name to the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Int'l). Today, PATH's headquarters are in Denver, Colorado. Their mission remains the same. Over the years industry standards and policies have been developed to form guidelines and safety measures which help to foster consistent and successful programs. There are nearly 700 facilities operating in the United States, including Purple Pony.

Organized in spring of 2005 Purple Pony was founded by Lee Morgan and Lorrie Renker. Summer programming was offered at Lee's Farm, located at 785 Whittier Road, Spencerport. Lessons continued to grow to approximately 30 riders throughout the 2005 and 2006 season. In August of 2006, final approval of the 501(c) 3 non-profit status was received. Shortly after, in November 2006, a decision was made by Lorrie and Lee to cease their partnership and move their commitments in other directions. The Board of Directors made a decision at that time to postpone programming for the summer of 2007. Much work was done over the next year to re-organize and understand the requirements of maintaining a program in this area. A successful class was provided in October of 2007 with more planned for the future. Lessons continued at the Spencerport location, even with the change of leadership and a change of farm owners.

In Summer 2010, to accommodate changing needs as well as the availability of enhanced facilities, the decision was made to move the program to High Quest Acres Farm in Churchville, NY where the program was run for three years.

In November 2013, Purple Pony made our most recent move to The Double G Ranch in Bergen, NY. We continue our efforts in teaching barn and equine safety, the anatomy of the horse, proper care of the horse, including sequencing and method of handling for mounted lessons, mounting and riding the horse. Through the use of games and mounted exercises, the goal is to contribute to the improvement of an individual's confidence, social interaction, self-esteem, muscle tone, and cognitive development. Purple Pony is a member center of PATH Int'l.

WHAT IS PATH INTERNATIONAL?

PATH International is a federal, non-profit organization that promotes equine assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. Certified instructors and trained volunteers assist children and adults with physical, mental, and emotional challenges to find strength and independence through the power of the horse. PATH International was formerly known as NAHRA, the National Association for Handicapped Riding Association. PATH stands for Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship. To learn more visit www.PathIntl.org.

Benefits of Equine Activities

In therapeutic riding, the horse is used as a tool to improve the mental and physical well-being of the disabled person. Therapeutic riding is recognized by the American Occupational Therapy Association and the American Physical Therapy Association. The benefits are available to individuals with just about any disability, including but not limited to:

- Muscular Dystrophy
- Mental Retardation
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Emotional Disability
- Spinal Cord Injuries
- Stroke
- Cerebral Palsy
- Down Syndrome
- Autism
- Spinal Bifida
- Brain Injuries
- Amputations
- Learning Disabilities
- Visual/Hearing Impairments

Physical Benefits: Horseback riding gently and rhythmically moves the body (pelvis and trunk more specifically) and internal organs in a manner similar to that of the human walking gait. Students develop and strengthen muscles by working specific muscle groups that are not worked in everyday life. For example, horseback riding also helps to normalize muscle tone, improve posture and build up the cardiovascular system.

Psychological Benefits: Exercise in the fresh air, away from hospitals, doctor's offices, therapy rooms or home help is refreshing change for the riders. Confidence is gained by mastering a skill normally performed by able-bodied riders. The ability to control an animal much larger and stronger than oneself is a great confidence builder.

Riding increases interest in what is happening around the rider, as the rider explores the world from the back of a horse. The excitement of riding and experiences involved stimulate riders and encourage the riders to speak and communicate about it.

The riders start to learn that an "out of control" rider means an "out of control" horse. Shouting, crying, and emotional outbursts upset the horse which in turn frightens the horse. Riders are highly motivated, therefore, to learn how to control their emotions and how to appropriately express them.

Safety is our **FIRST** priority.



Phones: There is a cell phone for emergencies carried by an instructor and board members present at all times. Emergency numbers to call are posted in the tack room on the back of the clipboard hanging on the cabinet door where helmets are kept.

Fire Extinguisher: We have a fire extinguisher in the tack room on the wall to the right of the door going out to the arena.

To operate a **fire extinguisher** remember “**Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep.**”

- PULL the pin
- AIM the nozzle towards the base of the fire
- SQUEEZE the handle
- SWEEP back and forth across the width of the fire

First Aid Kits:

The First Aid kit for humans is in the tack room to the right of the helmet cabinet. A kit with Equine First Aid Supplies is located in the helmet cabinet in the tack room.

Safety Protocols

People who are knowledgeable about horses find that there are many different ways to do things. As part of our safety program we want to avoid any confusion regarding different methods used by different organizations. For this reason, we often identify “The Purple Pony Way” as the way we will do things at this program.

We ask your cooperation to follow “The Purple Pony Way” in order to maximize safety for all our horses, riders, staff, and volunteers. Thank You!

Safety is everyone’s responsibility. If you notice an unsafe condition or act, please speak up – notify a staff member immediately.

Sometimes people forget and do things that are not the Purple Pony Way. If you see this, please gently and kindly remind that person, that it’s important for all of us to do our part to maintain the highest possible safety and consistent horse handling at all times.

Horses and Safety

Working with and around horses carries with it inherent risks! Both horses and humans can be injured or die from these risks.

Think of a horse as having a 6-foot “danger zone” surrounding it. In this “zone” a horse can kick, buck, bite, or rear. No student should ever be near this “zone” without supervision from an approved volunteer or instructor.

Volunteers must be approved before working anywhere in the vicinity of the horses.

Riders must wear a helmet at all time when around the horses. They should have their helmet on before they exit the tack room.

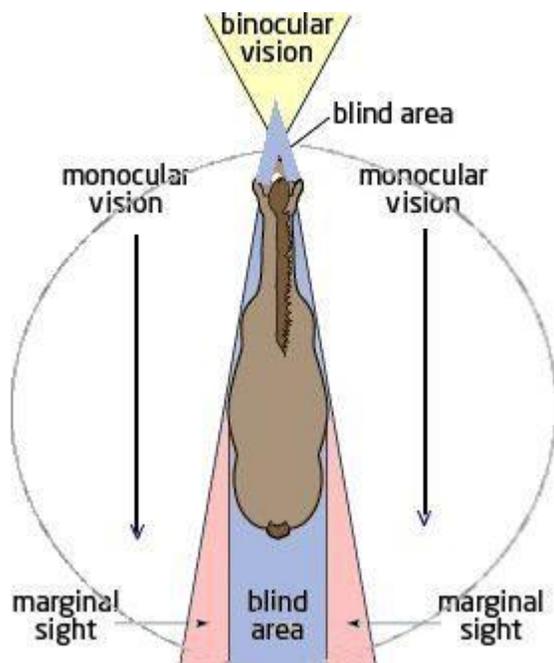
Parents and /or aides are not automatically “an approved supervisor”: therefore, such participants also need supervision from an approved volunteer or instructor when near the horses.

Horse Vision and Blind Spots

Horses have a large peripheral vision and three blind spots to be aware of. They are on the forehead, directly below the nose and directly behind them.

It's important to be aware of the blind spots because it may startle a horse if you approach it from one of those areas.

Never approach a horse from its blind spot. (Study the horse vision chart to learn where their blind spots are.)



- Never walk under a horse's neck
- **Do not hand-feed the horses.** They might mistake your fingers for a treat.
- We don't have students feed horses treats unless in a treat bucket.
- Keep horses away from each other
- **NEVER LET HORSES SNIFF EACH OTHER!!!!!!**
- **Do not tie a horse to the fence or rails.** Either hold them by the lead line or put them back into the cross ties.
- Put a lead on when removing horse from the cross ties for a lesson. Do not leave reins on a horse while standing in the cross ties.

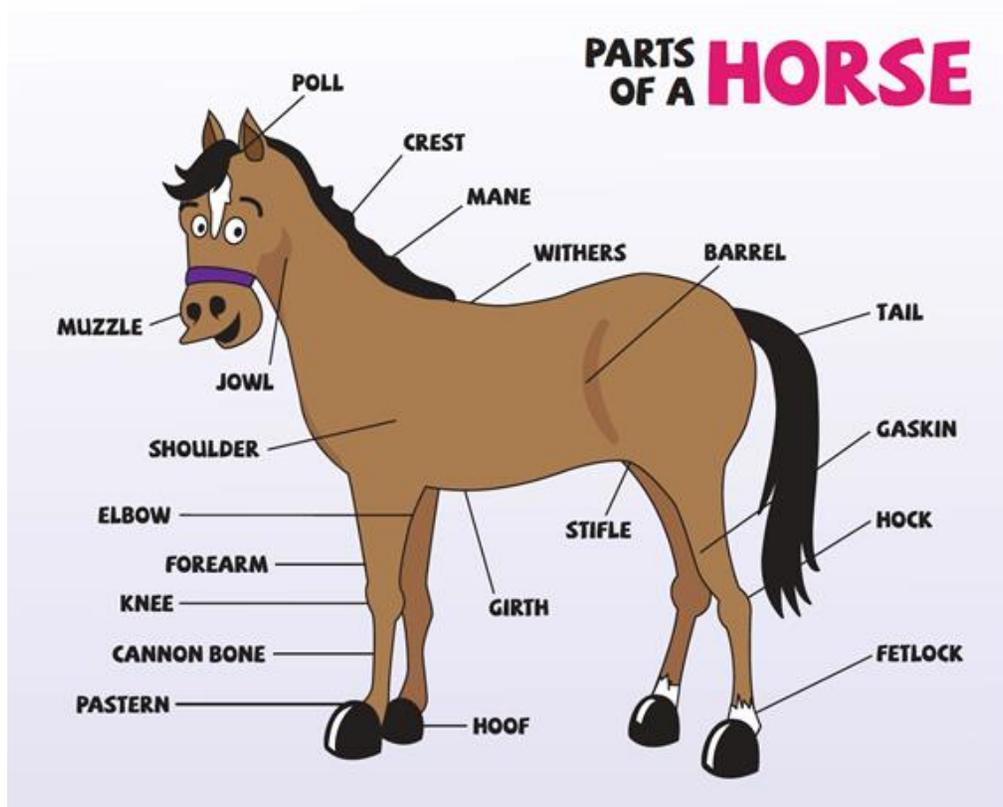
Emergency Procedures

EMERGENCIES DURING A LESSON: Emergencies that occur during lessons are handled under the supervision of the staff. The handling of horses and students in the event of an emergency during lessons is demonstrated in our volunteer training DVD and during mock lessons.

REMEMBER, in the event of an emergency during a lesson, the Leader is responsible for the **horse** and the Side Walkers are responsible for the **student**. Volunteers should not attempt to respond to emergencies independently of the staff.

Learning Horse Language

Foal	A baby horse that is still with his/her mother
Weanling	A young horse that has just been taken away from its mother
Yearling	A horse that has just turned 1 year old
Colt	A male horse under 4 years
Filly	A female horse under 4 years
Mare	A female horse over four years old
Gelding	A male horse that has been castrated
Stallion	A male horse used for breeding
Pony	A mare or gelding less than 14.2 hands (58")
Green	An untrained or inexperienced horse
Off side	The right side of the horse
On side	The left side of the horse (you always lead on the left)
hands	Unit of measurement. One hand = 4 inches
tack	Saddles, bridles, and any other equipment worn by the horse



Confidentiality

Every PATH International-accredited therapeutic riding center is required to have a confidentiality policy for its staff and volunteers in order to maintain the privacy of social, personal, and financial information. Please respect the privacy of our riders and their families.

If volunteers are curious about a rider's diagnosis, please wait until the end of a lesson, or better yet the end of the day to PRIVATELY ask the instructor. Use discretion whenever discussing a student.

Volunteering at Purple Pony

Lesson Volunteer Positions

- ❖ Leader
- ❖ Side Walker
- ❖ Tack Supervisor
- ❖ Grooming

Supervisors

- ❖ Instructors
- ❖ Director of Volunteers
- ❖ Board Members

Qualifications

1. **Dependable:** Volunteers are asked to review their schedule and select a day/time once a week to commit to.
2. **Flexible:** Sometimes help is needed in areas other than lesson volunteering. Schedules can change in the spur of the moment if a rider cancels.
3. **Safety:** Purple Pony follows all PATH safety regulations. Volunteers are to be aware of the rules and help to enforce them.
4. **Attitude:** Though Purple Pony is a recreational setting, we are still providing therapy. Volunteers need to be able to stay calm, patient, understanding and tactful as well as upbeat and supportive.
5. **Proactive:** Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions, take initiative and contribute in whatever ways possible. Other volunteer opportunities include participation in annual events, fundraising, newsletter, writing grants, office/computer work, or joining a committee.
6. **Physically Fit:** All volunteers who work with the riders as leaders and side walkers must be physically fit to walk approximately one hour and jog occasionally.

Training:

1. Facility tour/orientation, training DVD
2. Volunteer Handbook
3. Mock lessons
4. "Arena re-refreshers"
5. Mandatory annual volunteer training

Specific Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Sign in and out each day you volunteer.
2. Turn off or silence cell phones while at the program facilities to avoid distractions.
3. Check the daily lesson roster
4. Assist with barn chores (mucking, cleaning stalls, returning tack and grooming tools)
5. Groom and tack horses before and after lessons.
6. Work as assigned during lessons (as a leader or a side walker).
7. There is always something that needs to be done. Volunteers may be asked to help with cleaning or returning materials to their proper places.

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Attendance: It is **very** important to the program to have consistent volunteers. Of course things come up and if you can't make it please call the Director of Volunteers and attempt to find a substitute.

Arrival/Departure procedure: For the first lesson of the day, volunteers need to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to that lesson in order to have enough time to prep the horse.

Weather: Lessons will be cancelled in certain weather conditions – extreme heat or cold are not safe for horses or riders. You will be contacted when lessons are cancelled. Check for emails and texts.

What to wear:

1. Comfortable closed-toe shoes such as athletic shoes, hiking boots, or riding boots. **ABSOLUTELY** no open-toed shoes or sandals, long necklaces, or dangling earrings.
2. Long pants, preferably jeans or riding leggings.
3. Wear your Purple Pony shirt or any purple shirt as this gives a professional and unified impression.

Asking questions: Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions and learn more about therapeutic riding and our students. Please wait until after the lesson is over to ask the instructor any questions that do not immediately deal with the lesson at hand.

Gates: All gates to the horse paddocks or the arena are to be **CLOSED** and **LOCKED** except when going through them. The gate is to be **CLOSED** and **SECURED** anytime a horse and rider are inside the arena.

Specific Volunteer Duties

Grooming: All of the horses require grooming before and after lessons. This includes picking their feet, brushing their coat (especially the saddle area), combing their mane and tail, and applying fly spray.

Tacking: Tack refers to the horse's saddle and bridle. We utilize both Western and English saddles. Some horses or riders require special pads, reins, or other gear to improve their comfort or performance. All of this will be indicated on the daily lesson

roster. The horse should be ready at least 5 minutes prior to the next lesson. Reins should be changed and stirrups should be adjusted for the next rider between lessons, based on the line-up instructions.

Horse Leading / Horse Handler

While leading a horse in a lesson, volunteers are responsible primarily for the **horse**. Leaders need to be focused and alert for the duration of the class and must be able to safely control the horse at a walk or a trot. To ensure consistency and the well-being of the horses, volunteers must be open to handling the horses as directed by our staff. Horse Leaders must demonstrate their ability to lead a therapy horse and be approved by the Program Director, Certified Instructor, and or Director of Volunteers.

Side Walker

Some students require a side walker while riding to ensure their optimal safety and comfort. This entails walking or jogging alongside the horse and rider for the duration of the class. A side walker's sole responsibility is for the safety of the rider, and to provide physical, verbal and emotional support for them at the direction of the instructor. It is critical that side walkers keep from conversing with the student after the lesson begins. **Some verbal prompting and encouraging is appropriate.**

Lesson Prep

Check lesson roster for tack assignments. The daily lesson roster informs the volunteers of what horse and tack are to be used and at what time. Read every column and pay close attention to see if there are special notes about the tack (for example: helmet size, reins on halter, etc.), or if the stirrups need to be changed.

Volunteers assigned as leader are responsible to prepare the horse for the lesson. If for some reason they are unable to do so, another qualified volunteer may be asked to do so.

When bringing a horse in from the paddock or returning a horse to the paddock, close and lock the gate. Be sure that it latches. Always check the gate.



GROOMING – The Purple Pony Way

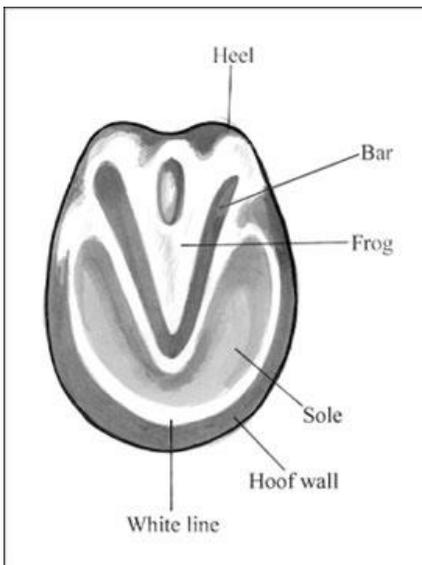
In addition to helping to keep the horses clean, grooming gives volunteers the chance to look the horse's body over for any cuts/swelling/etc. If you notice any cuts or swelling you will need to inform the Instructor, Program Director, or Director of Volunteers.

Horses should be groomed on **cross ties** or **tied** with a break away knot in the stall.

1. **Bring out the grooming bucket.** Each horse has their own grooming bucket with their name on it. This is to help prevent spreading skin irritations / diseases around the herd. Place the bucket next to the cross tie poles so people and horses won't trip over it. Each grooming bucket should contain:

- hoof pick
- rubber curry comb
- metal shedding blade
- hard body brush
- soft face brush
- mane and tail comb or brush

2. **Pick Hooves.** See the hoof diagram below. Start with the left foreleg. Facing the horse's tail, run your hand down the leg while leaning into the horse slightly to get them to shift their weight. Pick up the foot, supporting it at the top of the hoof. Please lift our horses' hooves minimally –



no cranking them up high. Clean out all clefts (called frog) in the hoof, make sure no rocks or packed dirt/mud remains. Put the hoof down gently.

3. **Curry** with metal curry/shedding blade if there is dried mud. Otherwise use rubber curry comb in circular motion. **NOTE: a curry/shedding blade is only to be used only on the body and rump of the horse, not on legs or the face.**

4. **Hard Body Brush** in the direction of hair growth, starting behind the ear and working towards the tail on both sides, paying special attention to where the saddle and girth go. Brushing the area where the saddle and bridle will be placed is very important because dirt/mud will rub and cause discomfort to the horse. It is important that you give the horse's belly a thorough brushing too, especially where the girth will go.

5. **Soft Face Brush** use on face only. **NOTE: The Hard Body brush to be used only on body, not on face.**

6. **Wipe eyes, nose and ears** if needed with clean cloth.

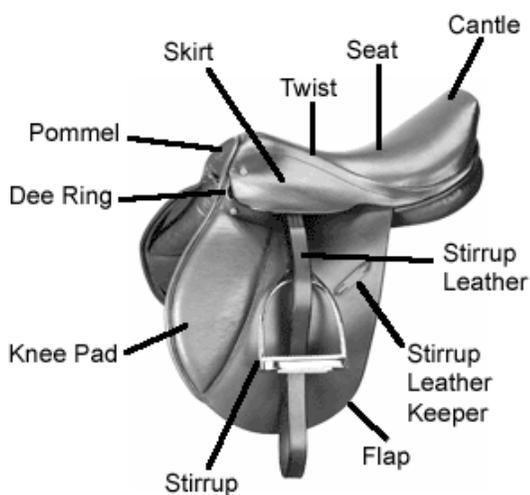
7. **Apply fly spray** on legs and belly of horse and if needed spray some onto a cloth and wipe on the horse's face.

8. **Comb out mane and tail** with a Mane and Tail Brush or Comb.

PLEASE NO CLIPPING OR CUTTING MANES, TAILS, WHISKERS.



TACKING:



NOTE: it is the volunteer's responsibility to make sure that the correct tack is on the horse. It is the instructor's responsibility to perform a final check of the tack before each rider gets on.

English tack

BEFORE PLACING THE PAD ON THE HORSE HAVE THE SADDLE CLOSE BY TO PUT ON. NEVER LEAVE AND WALK AWAY WITH JUST THE PAD ON THE HORSE.

1. Place the English pad on first. Note: in some cases the pad is already attached to the saddle; if so step 1 and 2 are combined into one step.
2. Place the saddle onto the pad.
3. After the saddle is on, pull up on the saddle pad at the wither to give space between the horse and saddle
4. **SIZING** girth. On the **RIGHT** side of the saddle, attach girth and let it hang. The bottom of the girth should reach the horse's ankle.
5. **DO NOT** tighten the girth completely until asked to. **ALWAYS SECURE THE GIRTH, NEVER LEAVING IT HANGING FROM THE SADDLE.**

Western tack:



BEFORE PLACING THE PAD ON THE HORSE HAVE THE SADDLE CLOSE BY TO PUT ON. NEVER LEAVE AND WALK AWAY WITH JUST THE PAD ON THE HORSE.

1. Place the western pad on the horse's back. The front of the pad should be far enough forward to "cut" the horse's shoulder in half. Pull up and create a space with the pad over the horse's withers.
2. Gently place the western saddle on the horse
3. SIZING the girth: Tie a latigo knot.

Mounting Riders

During mounts and dismounts, there is an increased risk of injury/danger. It is VERY IMPORTANT to let the Director of Volunteers or the Instructor know if you become uncomfortable for any reason while helping the rider.

ONLY CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS OR TRAINED AND APPROVED VOLUNTEERS MAY MOUNT A RIDER.

Remember, the instructor may have a rider do a different mount/dismount week to week due to their disability/horse behavior.

Mounting

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADERS DURING MOUNTING

- The instructor will announce that we are ready to mount. Horses should already be lined up according to the "Lesson Line Up" called out by the instructor.
- The instructor is responsible to thoroughly check the tack, especially tightening the girth.
- Then the instructor will call the HORSE to come towards the mounting ramp.
- Always wait for the instructor to call the horse in. The rider needs to be on the ramp first.
- When reaching the ramp, turn around at the off-mount steps to walk backwards.
- Lead the horse as close as possible to the ramp.
- Keep the horse as still as possible by standing in front of the horse. It is very dangerous for a rider to mount while the horse is moving.
- Wait for the instructor/rider to say "walk on." Lead the horse out of the ramp completely and into the arena stopping in open space, away from the gate, so the instructor can make stirrup adjustments.
- Stand facing the horse while at the halt.
- Instructor will adjust stirrups and check cinch/girth (you may be asked to stand sideways so instructor can see to check stirrups).
- Wait for rider and/or instructor to tell you to walk-on.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SIDE-WALKERS DURING MOUNTING

- Wait on off-side mounting steps for horse to enter, (if 2 side walkers, one will wait at the gate and open it for the rider and assume place at rider's side.)
- Your job is to spot the rider at the mount.
- Instructor will tell you if you need to do anything specific for the rider.
- Walk alongside horse (going down steps) until ramp is cleared into arena.
- Instructor may have you switch sides while stirrups are adjusted.

Following the Leader

Leading – As a volunteer, one of the most challenging duties is the position of leader. A Leader's FIRST responsibility is the **horse**, but must also always be aware of the Rider, the instructor's directions, and any potential hazards in or around the arena. In addition, a leader needs to consider the side walkers by making sure there is enough room along the wall and around obstacles for them to pass. Here are some tips for leading:

- Never wrap the lead line around your hand. If a horse was to bolt you might get tangled up and possibly get injured.
- Once the lesson begins, only instructors give instructions to the rider.
- Allow the rider some time to process the verbal instructions to them from the instructor. ***Be patient; do not execute an instruction for the rider before he/she has time to process the information and make an effort to comply on their own.***
- An effective leader pays close attention to the rider's needs as well as to where the horse is going. This reinforces the rider's attempts to control the horse.
- Social conversation is encouraged during the warm-up laps. Once the lesson begins, we ask volunteers to refrain from talking to the student and other volunteers as we want the riders' attention and focus to be on their instructor and their horse.
- Talk to the horse to lead, if the horse is not responding to the student. Most of the horses know "walk on," "whoa," and "trot."
- Therapy horses are to be lead with slack (6 to 12 inches) in the lead line. **Do not hang onto the halter or lead line clip.** Following these techniques will promote proper horse head position.
- Use short tugs instead of continuous pull to keep a lazy horse moving - they respond better to a tug or a "cluck".
- Do not walk backwards (*except when taking a few steps backwards to line the horse up for at the mounting ramp*).
- When you are at a halt for longer than a few seconds, stand in front of the horse or slightly to the side facing them to discourage them from taking a step forward.
- If there is an emergency or the rider falls off, **STAY WITH YOUR HORSE AND KEEP THEM CALM!!!**
- **NEVER ALLOW HORSES TO SNIFF EACH OTHER!!!**
- **ALWAYS STAY 2 HORSE LENGTHS BACK FROM THE HORSE IN FRONT OF YOU.**

We encourage the student to say the command first!

***To trot** - the leader shall say, "trot," cluck, give a quick tug on the lead line, and begin to jog without looking back at the horse. Wait for the rider or instructor to say walk, then the leader says walk, slight tug back and walk.

***To halt** - say, "whoa," pull back, and stop walking. If the halt will last more than 15 seconds, face the horse or slightly to the side facing them. In an emergency situation you, the leader, are responsible for calming the horse.



**CORRECT POSITION
FOR LEADING**

**INCORRECT POSITION
FOR LEADING**



Side Walking

Side Walkers are the volunteers that tend to get more “hands-on” duties in therapeutic riding. A Side Walker’s main responsibility is the **rider**.

- Help the rider to pay attention to the instructor. Avoid unnecessary talking with the rider and/or other volunteers. *Too much input can be confusing for the rider.*
- Be sure to give the rider time to process the instructor’s direction. If the rider seems confused, go ahead and give some help. For example, if the instructor says, “turn right,” help the rider by taking their right hand.

THE INSTRUCTOR WILL TELL YOU WHICH LEG HOLD TO USE IF NEEDED.

- It is important to maintain position at the rider’s knee. Being too far back or too far forward will make it difficult to assist the rider.
- The Side Walker should position themselves next to rider’s leg about 6 inches away from the horse. They should stay between the horse’s shoulder and rider’s leg at all times. They may also be required to assist in cueing the horse to move forward by applying pressure next to the rider’s leg.
- If there is an emergency or the rider falls off **STAY WITH THE RIDER!!!**

INCORRECT SIDE WALKING



Note that the side walker is also doing the hold incorrectly, due to being too far behind the rider.

Do not play with the horses while you are a side walker!

Pay attention! Your responsibility is the rider!

Be sure that you do not get too far behind the rider.

Side walkers are no longer helpful when they are not in correct position relative to the rider.

Side Walking Terminology

Passive Side Walking- Side walkers doing passive side walking are responsible for keeping an eye on the body position of their riders. They may also be responsible in assisting to communicate commands to the rider from the instructor either by tactile or verbal commands. Side walkers can offer verbal support and encouragement.

In an emergency situation, side walkers are responsible for keeping hold of the rider.

Active Side Walking- Side walkers doing active side walking are responsible for physically keeping a rider centered or balanced on the horse, for the entire lesson, using a variety of holds. The active side walker's position relative to the student and horse is the same as the passive side walker.

Side walkers are not allowed to remove their hold for any reason unless the instructor tells them to do so. If an active side walker becomes tired or fatigued they must speak up and ask for a rest or to switch sides.

Support Holds

The instructor will direct you on the type of holds depending on the rider. The two holds that are most frequently used are the "arm over thigh" and "ankle" holds.

ARM OVER THIGH This position provides support for the rider without interfering with the rider's trunk control, allowing the rider to build up strong trunk support. The side walker grips the front of the saddle with the hand closest to the rider. Then the forearm rests gently on the rider's thigh. Be careful that the elbow doesn't accidentally dig into the rider's thigh or the horse.

ANKLE SUPPORT This is the least restrictive form of support, allowing the rider to use all muscles to provide his or her own support. If a rider slips, a light "tug" will bring the rider back into alignment with the saddle. **DO NOT** yank on the ankle, and **DO NOT** keep constant pressure. In an emergency situation the side walkers are responsible for keeping hold of the rider. The side walker on the left may be required to do an emergency dismount if the instructor cannot reach the student in time.



SIDE WALKING HOLDS

CORRECT: arm over thigh, holding saddle



INCORRECT HOLD: arm is not over thigh or holding saddle.

CORRECT: ankle hold



INCORRECT: ankle hold



In the Arena

- Turn off or silence cell phones at all lesson times.
- The gate is to be CLOSED and LOCKED anytime a horse and rider are inside.
- Be sure to look around at all times so horses don't run into each other.
- All horses should be going the same direction, unless specified by the instructor.
- Always keep at least 2 horse lengths between horses.
- NEVER lead a horse past another horse. Instead, make a circle: If you begin approaching a horse too closely from behind, turn towards the center of the arena and make a large circle to establish and maintain adequate distance between the horses.
- NEVER hit/scold/"school" a horse. If a horse is misbehaving, inform the instructor.
- If a rider falls off or if a horse gets loose – stay calm and stay with the horse (if you're the leader) or rider (if you're a side walker).
- No Yelling

Arena Talk

Outside leg/hand	The leg or hand that is closest to the arena wall
Inside leg/hand	The leg or hand that is on the opposite side of the wall. Near center.
Offside mount	The person standing on the steps helping to get the rider on the horse
Half circle	Turning the horse to the inside to change directions
Trot	A "jog" for the horse. It is a 2 beat movement.
Canter	A "run" for the horse. It is a 3 beat movement.
Un-hook	Un-hooking the lead line from the horses' bridle/halter to allow the student to ride independently.
"Whoa"	A verbal cue to the horse to slow down or halt
"Walk on"	A verbal cue to the horse to walk forward
Spook	When a horse gets startled

DISMOUNTING

- Dismounting is always done under the supervision of A CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR OR A TRAINED AND APPROVED LEAD VOLUNTEER.
- Dismounting takes place in one of these locations:

Center of arena

Ramp

- Leader stands in front facing the horse to discourage the horse from taking a step forward. The leader is responsible to keep the horse still and calm.
- Always make sure the reins are out of the way.

- Side walkers must be aware that the rider may need assistance getting their foot out of the stirrup or their leg over the saddle or the horse's back or neck depending on THE TYPE OF DISMOUNT.
- Once the rider has dismounted, give him/her a chance to say "thank you" and "goodbye" to the horse and a pat on the neck. Remember: no face/nose touching.
- Run up stirrups on English saddles.
- Treats are given in treat bowls.
- The rider must keep his/her helmet on when walking or grooming a horse.

AFTER LESSONS

UNTACKING –

- Tie the horse to ring in arena with a break away knot.
- Remove saddles and pad from left side by **lifting off** the horses back. Do not slide off as this can hurt the horse's back.
- After the lesson, all pieces of tack need to be put back to the proper place.

POST-RIDE GROOMING –

- Groom the horse removing all sweat and saddles marks.

PUTTING THE HORSE AWAY–

After removing the tack and properly grooming your horse:

- Hook lead rope to ring underneath horses head.
- Unhook crossties/tie and take horse into the paddock.
- Don't forget to CLOSE and latch the gate.
- Walk horse to middle of pen and turn around to face the gate.
- Remove the halter leaving lead rope attached.
- With an eye still on the horse, walk out and CLOSE AND LOCK the gate.
- Hang the halter/lead rope in tack room.

WHEN YOU MEET A PERSON WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- Have fun! Talk about the same things you would with any person. A disability does not limit or dampen a person's sense of humor.
- Remember that a person with a disability is a person with energy, emotion, and the need to be loved. They may have special requirements due to their disability.
- Be genuine; try not to be "syrup" sweet. Realize that pity or charity does not come across as necessarily being genuine. Foster respect by a friendly, encouraging, optimistic conversation.
- Be careful not to judge the person before you know them. You will be surprised with their individual and delightful personalities.

- Avoid asking embarrassing questions. If a rider wants to tell you about his or her disability, they will bring up the subject. **Do however, ask, and communicate** with them before you need to touch or lift them to avoid a surprise.
- Help them only if requested by the riders. When in doubt ask “May I help you?” Self-satisfaction is important for the rider. Allow the rider to accomplish tasks by himself if possible. Occasionally time constraints do require us to “usher” along a process, but consider how you will manage that so the rider can come away with a sense of satisfaction.
- Be patient and let the rider set his or her own pace in walking and talking.
- Ask questions to gauge the rider’s comprehension. For example, “Where are your legs supposed to be? Or “Which strap should you put with this buckle?”
- **Safety, Safety, Safety** – do not let a situation get out of control that will jeopardize the safety of a rider, volunteer or horse.
- **Keep in mind that our rider’s health condition and confidential information should be respected and kept confidential within the barn. Take extra care not to act in a manner amongst yourselves that belittles or destroys our bond with their trust. We have an ethical and legal responsibility to treat this information with the highest regard. This applies to parents and care providers. If you must ask questions or have concerns about a rider, please do so in private and under proper discretion with the instructor.**

The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to grow and meet his/her full potential. The side walker’s job is to be by their side to provide safety and to help the instructor challenge the student to be there best. Reinforce and assist, but do not do for them what they should doing for themselves.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS: POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

The following is meant to act as a guideline for you to follow in case of an emergency. Please remember, as a volunteer you will never be expected to perform a task outside of your level of knowledge or experience. Since emergency situations are by nature generally unexpected and unplanned, always refer to the instructor to provide direction based upon the circumstance.

General Mounted Activity Emergency Action Plan:

- All horses within the riding arena will come to a halt with the horse handler facing the mounts.
- If a rider has fallen, keep the rider down where he is and still until the instructor can check him/her for signs of injury.
- Signs of serious injury may include:
 - Unconsciousness (even for a moment)
 - Bleeding or fluid draining from the nose, mouth or ears.
 - Serious bleeding from any part of the body
 - Limb at an unnatural angle, or pain upon pressure or movement.
 - Pupils contracted unevenly.

- Signs of shock (paleness, mottled color, sweating, nausea, fainting)

- The instructor will determine if the rider is able to remount and finish the lesson
- When the rider remounts, give him/her time to rebuild his/her confidence.
- Other mounted riders should remain at a halt until directed by the instructor. Side walkers and horse handlers should refrain from excessive talking or noise.
- No one, including parents, is permitted in the arena or working area if an accident happens. Only those summoned by the instructor are allowed to enter the area quietly.
- The type of accident or results on any mishap will determine whether the instructor will dismiss or continue with the class.
- If circumstances call for the arena to be evacuated, other mounted riders will be dismounted either by the instructor or under the supervision of the instructor
- The side walker will escort the rider out first and then handlers will then escort the horses to the stalls or ties as designated by the instructor.

Rider Falls or Jumps off Horse:

- If the rider appears off balance and falling, or about to jump off – inform the horse handler to stop and call for the instructor immediately.
- All other horses in arena must halt; volunteers will remain with their riders and horses
- Horse handler must move the horse away from the fallen rider
- Side walkers are to remain with the fallen student until the instructor comes over, DO NOT move the student once he/she is on the ground.

Rider Removes Helmet while Mounted:

- Immediately halt the horse and inform the instructor
- The instructor will dismount the rider
- The rider must put his/her helmet back on or be removed from the arena
- Based on behavior, the rider may or may not be allowed to remount to finish the lesson

Runaway Horse:

- IN ARENA – Be aware of the loose horse. Horse handlers must keep their horses calm while side walkers offer assurance to the rider to remain calm. Inform the instructor if your horse becomes difficult to control and the rider needs to be dismounted.
- OUT OF ARENA – Be aware of the loose horse and do not run after it, this may cause the horse to continue running and create more lack of control with the remaining horses. An instructor or other staff member will tend to the loose horse but may ask for assistance from other volunteers if available.

Horse Steps on a Person's Foot:

- Lean into the horse and *push* to get the horse's weight off the foot. Pulling at your foot can make the horse step into it harder.
- Remove shoe and check foot for signs of injury.
- The instructor will attend to the needs of the injury.

Fire in the Barn:

- Emergency services should be contacted immediately – call 911. If fire extinguishers can be used safely, they are located across from the tack room door. The instructor will advise as to how horses should be evacuated and by which volunteers. All remaining volunteers, riders and family members should congregate, as quickly as possible, outside the facility at a safe distance from the barn.

DISABILITY OVERVIEW

- **Hearing Loss**

Loss of hearing might be profound, partial or intermittent. It may have been present at birth or acquired during life. Deafness is one of the greatest handicaps because it is not instantly recognized by others, and therefore does not immediately arouse sympathy or understanding. A lack of hearing means failure to understand what is going on in the world. Deaf students might be overactive, noisy and frustrated. They learn by imitation, but miss out on verbal instruction.

Hints for helper - Encourage the deaf rider to copy all he can. Let him/her watch others, but do not stop talking to them, as they may hear and understand some of what you are saying. Turn your head toward the rider. He might be able to lip-read. However, keep in mind he may understand parts of word, resulting in confusion. Constant and clear repetition of words will help.

- **Visually Impaired**

Blindness may be present at birth or result later from disease or accident. Loss of sight might be gradual or sudden with no time to readjust. Visual loss may be partial or complete. When it is partial, it may be restricted by blurring; by being adequate for short distances only; by constant eye movement so the world is constantly moving; by loss of vision to the left or right; by tunnel vision when only objects straight ahead can be seen; or by loss of central vision, when only objects on the periphery can be seen. Blind people might have difficulty moving about, rely on speech and non-speech sounds for judging distances, and find echoes and traveling sounds to be great value.

Hints for Helper – Use your voice and speak even when moving. Describe where you are so that new sounds can be identified (for example, the sounds horses' hooves make on different surfaces or at different gaits). Increased mobility and independence are the main area of achievement. Help the student count the horse's paces down one side of the arena so they can learn when a corner is near. Remember that a blind rider cannot learn by visual example. He must find out for himself with verbal guidance and touch. Also remember that he is not deaf and you do not have to shout or speak slowly for them to understand. Normal conversation is adequate.

- **Learning Disability**

The term describes problems in the areas of speech, language, spelling, writing or arithmetic, which occur in children with average or above-average intelligence. These learning problems are not a result of visual, auditory or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbance or environmental disadvantage.

Hints for Helper – Learning disabled children are easily distracted, sometimes hyperactive, impulsive, talkative, awkward, aggressive, socially immature and easily frustrated. They will need clear and simple explanations with practical demonstrations of the skills to be learned in the lesson. Increased patience may be necessary when working with this type of student.

- **Mentally Impaired**

A mental handicap is when intelligence is reduced because of an abnormality of or damage to the brain. There are often additional handicaps such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy and speech disorders. Some mentally handicapped riders will have recognizable signs of a condition such as Down's syndrome, but others will have no specific clinical conditions. Mentally handicapped riders will behave as if they were younger, have limited speech and understanding of speech, will learn slowly and require much repetition. They will have limited awareness of danger and will need careful supervision. They will enjoy the excitement and achievement that riding brings. People with mental retardation are frequently left out of competitive and sporting activities, and may go through life with a sense of failure and frustration. Riding can provide a chance to compete and succeed, and develop a relationship with the horse that does not depend on speech or verbal communication to happen.

Hints for helper – A pleasant and understanding approach to the mentally handicapped rider will be beneficial. Riding provides a social occasion and opportunities for practicing good manners, learning to take turns, obeying instructions, and using speech and learning to win and lose. This rider will need encouragement and discipline that can be understood.

- **Emotionally Disturbed**

Inappropriate behavior usually takes place in a normal school. Consequently, most of these students attend special schools and are taught by specially trained staff. The maladjusted child may have normal, low or high intelligence. He may have a behavior disturbance, which means that he is at odds with his/her family, friends, the work and himself. Frequently he is frustrated, unhappy, and bad tempered. This is a term used to describe students whose behavior makes for difficulties during education. He may be rough with others. He might feel he is already a loser in society and therefore dislike competition and the feeling that he may lose again.

Hints for the helper – The maladjusted child usually responds well to the horse and the opportunity to care for it, showing his/her capacity to love and care. Friendships with his/her peers might be difficult, but he may crave the company of his/her helpers and his/her horse. Maladjusted children will respond to a challenge, provided they are given the confidence by support and friendship. Stable work will provide an opportunity to join the team at work, and the enjoyment of a task well done.

- **Cerebral Palsy (CP)**

This is a medical term denoting brain damage, so that messages for movement from the brain to the limbs are imperfect or misdirected, and therefore the limbs may be weak, stiff, clumsy, constantly moving, floppy or more than one of these abnormalities. Muscles involving speech, eye movement, swallowing and so forth may also be involved. Intelligence may or may not be impaired, but whatever the intelligence, communication is likely to present difficulties. The rider who has cerebral palsy has to make a great effort to make even the simplest movements, so life is a struggle and the smallest skill is a great achievement.

Hints for Helper – If a good position in the saddle can be maintained, with the assistance of the helper, the rider's control of he/her head, arms and back muscles may be made easier. Foot position in the stirrup is important. In some cases, the helper may hold the back of the ankle to help keep the heel down. The rider should be encouraged to look where he is going, as a control of the head will facilitate the use of the arms. Muscle control for people who have cerebral palsy is hard work, but worthwhile when the purpose is riding. When he has fun, he will cooperate and enjoy his/her riding exercises.



- **Non-Horsey Volunteer Opportunities**

- Please contact our Executive Director if you are interested in any of these areas
- **Fundraising/Special Events:**
- Interested individuals are welcome to join the fundraising committee and help the program to meet financial needs. The fundraising committee plans and executes the many events done each year by contacting clubs that are interested in offering financial assistance, getting donations, contacting vendors and so on.
- **Office/Computer Help:**
- We can use help in the office with filing, thank you notes, data entry, etc. Please contact our Executive Director if you are interested.
- **Grant Writing:**
- Experienced grant writers are needed to help identify foundations or grants with a potential for donating to the program, and to assist to write these grants. Please contact our Executive Director if you are interested.
- **Public Relations/Marketing:**
- Submit periodic press releases as directed. Work to obtain more media coverage so Purple Pony can have higher community awareness. Help to update the website and periodically take pictures of new horses or special events. Please contact our Executive Director if you are interested in helping here – each of these duties must be pre- approved and authorized.

Purple Pony Staff

Board Members

- Dan Kilker Chairman of the Board 585-303-6495
- Gail Ehmann Volunteer Coordinator 585-721-9080
- Terry Greenwood Treasurer
- Lynnette Short Equine Care 585-755-8450
- Patricia Famiglietti Equine Care
- Dot Gulardo Associate

Instructors

- Karen Reeverts 585-880-1096
- Lynnette Short 585-755-8450

Program Location

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Adapted from the Santa Ynez Valley Therapeutic Riding Program Volunteer Handbook