

Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center



Volunteer Manual

Table of Contents

WELCOME!

Welcome Message	P. 1
Our Mission	P. 1
Your Volunteer Time is Important!	P. 1
History of Fieldstone	P. 1
Confidentiality Policy	P. 1
Students who benefit from Fieldstone Farm	P. 2
Volunteer Opportunities	P. 2
Gaitway School Affiliation	P. 2

POLICIES

Horse Discipline	P. 3
Volunteer Criteria Guidelines	P. 3
Baseline Criteria	
Teamwork Guidelines	
Physical Guidelines	
Driving Volunteers	P. 4
Rules & Reminders	P. 4
Barn Hygiene	P. 5
Dress Code	P. 5
Background Checks	P. 5
Volunteer Dismissal	P. 5
Volunteer Proficiency Level Summary	P. 6
Lead Volunteers	

PROCEDURES

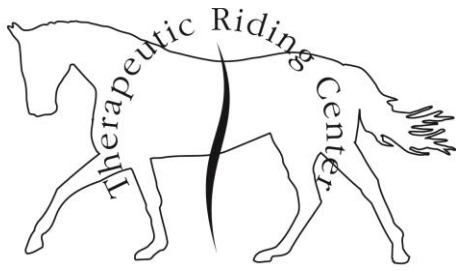
Arriving for your Volunteer Service	P. 7
Key Suggestions	P. 7
Lesson Procedures (In the ring)	P. 7
The Sidewalker	
The Leader	
Getting the Horse from Stall	P. 9
Entering Crossties	P. 10
Grooming	P. 10
Grooming Tools	P. 11
Picking Hooves	P. 11
Saddling	P. 12
Bridling/Bitless Bridles	P. 13
After the Lesson	P. 14
Hot Horses	
Back in the Tack Room	

REFERENCE INFORMATION

When You Meet a Person with a Disability	P. 15
Disability Overview	P. 15
Benefits of Therapeutic Riding	P. 17
Benefits of the ground Work	P. 17
Helpful Terminology	P. 18
Horse Anatomy	P. 19
Parts of the Saddle	P. 20
Understanding Horse Behavior	P. 21

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

First Aid Kits (Human and Horse)	P. 23
Fire Evacuation Plan	
Tornado Safety Plan	
Human Injury	



FIELDSTONE FARM

WELCOME to Fieldstone Farm!

As a non-profit organization, Fieldstone Farm relies heavily on the strength of more than 200 dedicated volunteers a week to assist our students and staff in a variety of different areas. This manual is to serve as a guide for any questions or concerns you might have regarding your job as a volunteer at Fieldstone Farm. Keep it in a safe place; it is a great reference tool! Because of the nature of our work and the people we serve, it is important that everyone be as knowledgeable and consistent as possible to uphold the highest quality and safety standards. Most of all, volunteering at Fieldstone Farm is a wonderful way for you to make new friends and help make a difference in the lives of some very special riders. However, if you ask any Fieldstone Farm volunteer they will tell you, "I get more back from our students than I could ever give."

Our Mission:

Fieldstone Farm engages the therapeutic power of our horses to discover and nurture the special abilities of individuals, families and communities.

Your Volunteer Time is Important!

We recognize that your time is valuable and that it is our responsibility to make sure that your volunteer time is spent in worthwhile and rewarding activities. There might be times when you arrive expecting to lead or sidewalk, and for some unusual reason we might have an abundance of volunteers and/or a shortage of riders. If your assistance is not needed in the ring for a class, there is a list of other volunteer activities with which Fieldstone Farm needs assistance. If you feel at any time that your volunteer time is not being utilized well, please talk to a staff member or leave a memo in the suggestion box.

Any time you spend volunteering with us is *GREATLY* appreciated. You are a very important part of the Fieldstone Farm team!
Thank you in advance for your time, effort and help!

IMPORTANT!

Please remember that it is very important you let your instructor know as soon as possible if you are unable to make a class for which you are volunteering (at the very least, one day prior to the class). Use the cancellation calendar in the tack room for extended or planned absences. For last-minute emergency cancellations, please call 440-708-0012. If the instructor does not have time to replace you, the student you work with may not be able to ride. Thank you for your cooperation.

History of Fieldstone Farm

Fieldstone Farm was founded in 1978 and was initially called Chagrin Valley Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc. Lessons began with eight students who rode once a week on borrowed horses, with the help of a handful of volunteers. The program opened in loaned facilities until moving into a leased location in the late 1980s. By 1992, Fieldstone Farm had dramatically expanded its staff and volunteers and was in operation six days a week, year round. A full-time Executive Director position was implemented in 1991. In November of 1997, Fieldstone Farm moved into a brand new, state-of-the-art facility, which includes a therapy room, classroom, indoor and outdoor arenas and ample workspace for an array of programming which allowed Fieldstone Farm to serve more clients annually.

Confidentiality Policy—Please read carefully

At Fieldstone Farm, we place great importance on protecting the confidential information of our clients, our staff and our volunteers. "Confidential Information" includes, but is not limited to, personally identifiable information such as name, nickname(s), telephone numbers, addresses, e-mails, etc., as well as the non-public business records of Fieldstone Farm. In particular, medical information about clients, and information about their disabilities or special needs, must be protected as Confidential Information.

Volunteers shall never disclose Confidential Information to anyone other than Fieldstone Farm staff. In addition, volunteers must seek staff permission that consent has been given before taking any pictures or videos. Any violation of the Confidentiality will result in disciplinary actions.

Students who benefit from Fieldstone Farm

Fieldstone Farm students are a diverse group representing all ages and backgrounds. All students have varying degrees of physical, cognitive, sensory, or psychosocial disabilities. Approximately 34% of the students ride as private individuals; the remaining 66% participate as part of the curriculum at their school or private sending institutions (private school, group home or workshop).

The recent attention paid to the needs of people with disabilities in the United States has led to the realization that opportunities, options and resources for this population are limited. Many parents of Fieldstone Farm students relate that their children spend the majority of their free time watching television or playing video games, and that riding is one of the few outside activities available to them and in which they are eager to participate.

Fieldstone Farm's commitment to making horseback riding affordable and accessible to as many people with disabilities as possible enables even the economically disadvantaged students the opportunity to participate. No participant is turned away due to his or her inability to pay. Not only is Fieldstone Farm's lesson fee minimal, but additional financial assistance (through Riderships) is also available to students who request help.

Volunteer Opportunities at Fieldstone Farm

Leaders/Sidewalkers - These volunteers may help in a variety of different areas such as leading and sidewalking, lead volunteer, grooming and tacking. Beginning with the basics, each job is outlined with the volunteers' responsibilities and briefly describes Fieldstone Farm safety procedures. We realize that there are as many ways to do things in the horse world as there are people who work with horses. For this reason, please follow these procedures closely. They were created to ensure everyone at Fieldstone Farm is safe and happy! **REMEMBER - SAFETY ALWAYS COMES FIRST!**

Ground Lesson Aide - Assists the ground lesson instructor in teaching ground lessons. Ground lessons generally take place on weekday mornings during the school year.

Special Event Volunteers - Volunteers assist Special Event Committee members with the coordination, set-up and cleanup of Fieldstone Farm's annual special fund-raising events.

Office Volunteer - Volunteers are needed to answer phones, assist with special projects and other general office work.

Horse Buddy - These volunteers are assigned a Fieldstone Farm horse that may need some extra TLC! Horse Buddies come in 2-3 hours per week to hand walk horses, feed a special treat, give their horse a thorough grooming, etc. Volunteers must accumulate at least 40 hours of volunteer time and maintain a one hour weekly volunteer commitment to participate in this program.

Lead Volunteer - These are experienced volunteers who have a thorough understanding of the Fieldstone Farm lesson program. They assist the instructor with pulling and putting together proper tack and overseeing other volunteers.

Carriage Driving - Volunteers learn carriage-driving techniques to assist with Fieldstone Farm's driving program.

Equine Management Team - Members learn about the maintaining the health of Fieldstone Farm's horses and participate in the training of prospective therapy horses. New team members will be accepted at the discretion of the Equine Director. Continued weekly volunteer service is required for participation.

*Volunteers who are interested in positions that involve working directly with horses, i.e. leader-sidewalker, mounting and dismounting or driving situations, must be able to physically react with agility and swiftness maximizing safety and control of the horse.

Gaitway School Affiliation

Volunteers that have current or previous relationships with Gaitway students, are not permitted to volunteer during school hours unless there has been prior approval by the Gaitway Staff.

Policy on Horse Discipline

Fieldstone Farm acknowledges the kind and generous spirit of the horse, respects the horse's unique physical and psychological needs, and strongly advocates the kind and humane treatment of the horse at all times. Without our partnership with the horse, we would be unable to offer therapeutic riding, or other related programs, to our students.

Fieldstone Farm volunteers, students and guests are prohibited from using physical discipline on program horses or trial horses. Physical discipline is defined as, and may include, but is not limited to, slapping horses using an open hand or closed fist, smacking, punching, pinching, kicking, biting, hard jerks using the lead line, bit, or cross tie, using any object to hit or strike the horse as a disciplinary measure or any other cruel behavior towards the animal. In addition, any training method, mounted or unmounted, that causes extreme or consistent fear, could potentially injure, is over the horse's ability level or is inappropriate to the therapeutic riding setting will not be tolerated. The use of chain lead lines or lunge lines is also prohibited. All issues regarding horse behavior or discipline are to be taken to the Facility and Equine Director, who will determine the appropriate course of action. This policy applies to any volunteer, student or guest participating at Fieldstone Farm in any capacity. Individuals found to be in violation of this policy will:

- Be stopped by any staff member observing such incident,
- Meet within 24 hours with the Facility and Equine Director, Program Director or Volunteer Director
- Be issued a written warning to be kept on file.

Fieldstone Farm reserves the right to immediately dismiss any individual who is caught using physical discipline on program or trial horses.

All horses are the responsibility of Fieldstone Farm and the staff of Fieldstone Farm makes all decisions regarding feeding, medical care, exercise and suitability for the program.

Volunteer Criteria Guidelines

Fieldstone Farm accepts volunteers regardless of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin and economic status. In the interest of maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety, volunteers of Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center will be assessed according to the criteria outlined below.

Baseline Criteria

All Fieldstone Farm volunteers **must**:

- commit to a regular schedule or be available to substitute
- inform their instructor when they are unable to attend
- be a minimum of 14 years of age and demonstrate mature, responsible and reliable behavior
- submit to a criminal background check if over 18 years of age
- abide by Fieldstone Farm barn rules and general facility procedures as well as the guidelines outlined in this manual

Teamwork Guidelines

All Fieldstone Farm volunteers **must**:

- demonstrate good judgment
- work with students, staff and fellow volunteers in a respectful, cooperative and positive manner
- take direction willingly from staff and Lead Volunteers
- communicate areas of concern to the instructor or Volunteer Director

Physical Guidelines

All Fieldstone Farm program volunteers should possess the willingness and ability to:

- thoroughly groom a muddy horse and tack up
- pick up a horse's hoof and balance it while picking it out or ask for assistance if uncomfortable
- react quickly and sensibly to an emergency situation in the barn aisles, stalls, crossties or surrounding areas
- lead or sidewalk for one full hour without leaning on or into the horse
- lead or sidewalk with a rider around the entire carriage trail
- lead or sidewalk at the trot one full lap around the ring while maintaining control of horse and/or rider
- handle the responsibility involved in working directly with student participants
- as a leader, be able to handle a misbehaving horse without jeopardizing the safety of the rider, horse, volunteer(s) or any other person
- react quickly and sensibly in an emergency lesson situation with or without mounted students

Volunteers that qualify as students will become volunteers at the discretion of the staff and shift availability.

Driving Volunteers

Student assistant - Understands the student's equipment and assists the student in mounting and dismounting the driving vehicle.

Spotter - Available to offer any additional assistance required.

Header - Works with only one turnout (horse and cart), stands at the horse's head with a lead rope attached while the vehicle is being mounted or dismounted and takes control of the horse when needed.

Able-Bodied Whip - Has a second set of reins and is always in the vehicle before the student mounts and after the student dismounts

All assist in the preparation of the horse and vehicle.

All driving volunteers must attend a Fieldstone Farm TRC general volunteer training as well as the training program specific to driving and be approved by the instructor.

Requirements for Ground Volunteers (Headers, Spotters and Assistants):

Must complete FFTRC Volunteer Orientation

Requirements for Able-Bodied Whip:

- Must be 18 years of age
- At least 50 hours of experience driving horses in varied settings
- Trained in the use of the second set of reins and assisting the student while driving if needed
- Pass a written and practical driving test which may include, but is not limited to:
 - Information listed under Ground Volunteers
 - Driving a cones course and/or dressage test as determined by the instructor
 - Must be competent driving a horse in the arena, in the outdoor arena, on the property roadway and be able to execute a full halt on command for 3 minutes in any area
 - Be able to evaluate a horse's manner, condition and readiness for driving in the program
 - Be able to long-line a horse
 - Know the parts of the harness and be able to evaluate its condition, fit and suitability for use.

Rules & Reminders

1. All volunteers must have a volunteer registration form on file. These forms must be updated annually. If you are under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must also sign the form.
2. There is absolutely **NO SMOKING** anywhere on the Fieldstone Farm property (except in your car).
3. Please leave personal pets at home. We do not allow dogs in the barn and leaving them in your car is unsafe for your pet.
4. Please refrain from giving the horses treats brought from home. We provide treats that meet the nutritional needs of our horses.
5. Fieldstone Farm's primary concern is safety! **ALL students must wear ASTM-SEI approved helmets when they are in the barn area. ALL volunteers must wear ASTM-SEI approved helmets when they are riding or driving.**
6. Remember, volunteers are asked to help in many ways. **Please speak up if you are asked to do anything you don't know how to do or are uncomfortable with.**
7. **Once volunteers have started to work with and around the horses and students, cellular phone use is prohibited.** If you have an emergency call or text, please inform your instructor so they may find a temporary replacement for your position.

It is very important to our instructors that you call prior to any class you are scheduled for and will not be able to attend. **The number for cancellations is 440-708-0012.** Please leave your first and last name and the time of the class you will be missing.

Barn Hygiene

Please read this information carefully. **These guidelines are especially important for those of you who are active in more than one barn.** We hope that you will understand that equine health, both at Fieldstone Farm as well as out in the community, is our top priority. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to direct them to any member of our program staff.

“The horse industry is very lax when it comes to personal hygiene as a means of preventing the spread of disease. To prevent the spread of disease, the swine and poultry industries require that their employees "shower in and shower out" of their facilities. **Horse people, however, commonly go from barn to barn and from a show to home without any concern for disease spread.**”

(http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/horses/facts/info_preventing_disease_spread.htm)

Fieldstone Farm takes every precaution to decrease and/or eliminate the spread of diseases among horses in our barn and the community.

1. Aerosol transmitted diseases are decreased because of the proper ventilation that was in mind when the facility was designed.
2. Cleaning automatic waterers and water troughs regularly and controlling the quality of feed and hay decreases contaminated areas that may cause orally transmitted diseases
3. Our policy is to require veterinary certification for all new horses to have been vaccinated for all contagious diseases three weeks prior to their arrival. We also have isolation stalls for horses who have become ill to help prevent the spread of disease by direct contact.
4. Fly spray is used in the summer months and vaccinations are given for all common insect transmitted diseases.
5. For diseases that can be carried in on inanimate object such as clothing and skin, we ask:

Clothing:

Dedicate boots and clothing for use only at Fieldstone Farm. If this is not possible, please make sure boots have been thoroughly cleaned in the anti-microbial footbaths at the barn entrances. Only freshly laundered clothing should be worn into the facility.

Hand washing:

WASH YOUR HANDS!!

Just as washing hands helps to reduce the spread of illness among humans, the same holds true for horse germs passed through human contact. We ask that anyone who enters our facility wash their hands, including fingernails, as well as skin underneath rings. **Please wash your hands before handling any horse in the barn.** There are also Hibistat hand sanitizers located throughout the facility. **Please use them.** It is recommended that you allow the sanitizer to dry on your hands for 15 seconds to benefit fully from the anti-microbial properties.

Dress code for Volunteering at Fieldstone Farm

Appropriate: Jeans, long pants or walking shorts. Boots are preferable but tennis shoes are acceptable. Remember to dress for the weather. Although the arena is equipped with heaters, they only maintain a temperature of about 40 degrees. Long hair should be pulled back neatly.

Inappropriate: Revealing clothing (halter/cropped/tank tops, short shorts), sandals or any open shoes. Large, dangly, pointy, or otherwise hazardous jewelry will not be permitted in the barn.

Background Checks

All volunteer applicants over the age of eighteen are subjected to a criminal background check before they begin their service to Fieldstone Farm. Fieldstone Farm reserves the right to reject applicants who have been convicted of crimes involving violence, alcohol, theft, and any other crime we feel poses a possible risk to our students, staff and/or horses. Likewise, Fieldstone Farm has the right to reject applicants who refuse to cooperate in a criminal records check. All records checks are completed through Asurint. Inquiries include Social Security number verification as well as information from the National Criminal File which includes state criminal records, prison parole and release files and sex offender registries. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers and/or guests who fail to comply with Fieldstone Farm policies and procedures, or who engage in disruptive, inappropriate or unsafe behaviors, may be dismissed from their volunteer position and asked to leave the premises.

Volunteer Proficiency Level Summary

To accommodate the growth and advancement of Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center volunteers, the following system has been designed to identify horse experience as well as experience working with disabilities through the designation on each person's name badge:

- All volunteers must meet the requirements set forth in the Volunteer Criteria Guidelines
- All volunteers must complete a New Volunteer Orientation regardless of previous horse handling experience
- All volunteer placements are made at the discretion of the Fieldstone Farm staff.

Green Badge/New Volunteer Badge

A volunteer who has completed volunteer training. This volunteer may assist an established volunteer with grooming and saddling program horses. The length of the introductory period is made at the discretion of Fieldstone Farm staff. . This volunteer may be potentially ready to sidewalk in the ring. All new volunteers must work with an established volunteer regardless of prior horse experience.

White Badge

This volunteer may assist an established volunteer with grooming and saddling program horses. This volunteer may be potentially ready to lead in the ring. The length of the introductory period is made at the discretion of Fieldstone Farm staff, but must volunteer at least 2 hours during a mounted class session before obtaining a white badge. This volunteer must understand Fieldstone Farm's rules and procedures.

Green Star

In addition to the above, this volunteer can properly place a halter and bitless bridle, can safely groom and pick hooves of green star level horses, and understands basic saddling techniques with minimal reminders. This volunteer has successfully led green star level horses in class and demonstrates proper hand and body placement when leading.

Red Star

In addition to the above, this volunteer demonstrates a thorough understanding of tacking and leading a therapeutic riding horse through experience or skill trainings. Has been a green star for at least 20 volunteer hours or has approval of 2 Management Team members, gives proper level of assistance to the student, works effectively with other team members, and is able to recognize behavioral changes in the horse. This volunteer is required to obtain Bridle Certification on designated horses from any Fieldstone Farm Instructor or designated staff person.

Purple Star

In addition to the above, this volunteer understands quality horse movement, and is able to positively influence tempo, rhythm and frame while leading horse in straight travel and correct bend. This volunteer can control energy and forward movement of more challenging purple star level horses. This volunteer recognizes changes in horse behavior and predicts the horse's response to stimuli and effectively de-escalates or redirects unsafe equine behavior, positively adjusts leading styles in reaction to situations, and possesses the physical fitness required to safely and effectively handle the physical demands of handling energetic or big-strided horses. This volunteer demonstrates proper leading techniques with purple star level horses and has spent time with an instructor or in skills trainings, or has worked extensively in class with at least 3 of the more challenging purple star level horses.

Blue Star

This volunteer meets all requirements of purple star volunteer, and demonstrates proper leading techniques with at least 2 of the blue star level horses. This volunteer consistently demonstrates how to handle a strong horse, a fussy horse in the mounting area, how to handle a horse that is misbehaving, and how to react appropriately in various emergencies involving either a horse or student. Blue star volunteers must attend at least one *Horse Handling* training each year to maintain their star level, and has had *Disabilities Overview* training. Blue star volunteers agree to serve as mentors to new or less experienced volunteers, accept authority, communicate clear and correct instructions, actively seek opportunities to educate and respect the boundaries of the blue star position. This level has to be approved by the Management Team.

Lead Volunteers

Lead Volunteers directly assist the instructor with lesson preparation and help keep lessons moving smoothly. These volunteers are chosen at the discretion of the instructional staff. This volunteer has a very thorough understanding of the program and is a role model in the barn for other volunteers. The volunteer has successfully completed the Mounting and Dismounting training as well as Horse Handling and Tacking Techniques. This volunteer is responsible for pulling and preparing tack, directing fellow volunteers, overseeing all grooming/tacking and assisting with lesson preparation as requested by the instructor. Lead Volunteers must meet all requirements outlined in the Lead Volunteer job description and handbook.

VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES

Arriving for your Volunteer Service

As you enter the facility, you will notice foot baths at each entrance. We ask that everyone who enters and exits the facility dip their shoes in the anti-microbial baths. This is for the safety of our horses as well as horses and other livestock at other facilities.

Your first stop is the tack room. Please put on your name badge and sign in using our computer time clock. It is very important that we keep an accurate record of all of the volunteer hours spent at Fieldstone Farm for our records as well as legal reasons. If you should forget to sign in or out, there are “OOPS!” sheets next to the computer. Fill one out and the Volunteer Director will enter your hours manually.

After you have signed in, find your instructor or Lead Volunteer who will have your assignment for the day. Our policy states that all new volunteers, regardless of previous horse experience must work with an established volunteer until the instructional staff is able to fully assess the volunteer’s skill and comfort levels. Once you know your horse assignment, you and another volunteer will prepare your designated horse for the lesson.

Key Suggestions

- Introduce yourself to your student and the other members of your volunteer team if you don’t already know them.
- Learn along with your student. Each lesson presents something new.
- Enjoy yourself. An anxious volunteer can cause tension for the horse and/or the student. Enthusiasm is contagious!
- Be empathetic. Try to understand your student and his or her challenges, and develop a rapport with him or her. However, avoid mothering, caretaking and over-sentimentality.
- The students are there to perform to the best of their ability, and we are there to foster their independence and encourage them to new heights.
- Be patient and sensitive. A considerable amount of patience may be needed to adjust to a student’s slow movements and rate of progression. Learn to work with your student’s pace of communicating and responding.

Lesson Procedures (In the ring)

There are two types of jobs for volunteers in the riding ring. They are **LEADER** and **SIDEWALKER**. The student should be the center of the volunteer's attention. Unrelated and unnecessary conversations between volunteers should not take place in the ring. However, you certainly should introduce yourselves to each other and to your student. Also, make sure your student knows the name of his or her horse.

The Sidewalker

Sidewalkers are the ones who normally get the most hands on duties in therapeutic riding. **They are directly responsible for the rider.** As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson. In the arena, the sidewalker should help the student focus their attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with the rider or other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone, and for some riders with perceptual problems, it can be overwhelming. If two sidewalkers are working with one student, one sidewalker should be the designated talker.



When the instructor gives a direction, allow your student plenty of time to process it. If the instructor says, “Turn to the right toward me” and the student seems confused, gently tap the student’s right hand and say “Right” to reinforce the command. You will get to know the riders and will learn when they need help and when they are just not paying attention. It is important to maintain a good position by the rider’s knee. Being too far forward or back will make it difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy.

The most commonly used way to hold a rider without interfering is the “arm over the thigh” hold. The sidewalker grips the front of the saddle (flap or pommel depending on the horse’s size) with the hand closest to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm gently rests on the rider’s thigh. Be careful not to dig your elbow into the rider’s leg or the horse’s side or pull back on the flap of the saddle. Avoid wrapping your arm around the rider’s waist. At times, this can pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the riders are to do the exercises and the sidewalkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to games. Don’t get so competitive that your rider doesn’t get to use his skills because you do it for him in an effort to win! The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider stretch and grow to reach his/her fullest potential. You are there right by his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability.

During mounting - Sidewalkers may or may not be asked to stand offside (on the right) of the horse in the mounting area. The instructor will provide direction.

At the walk and trot - The sidewalker will need to adjust his or her speed to match the speed of the horse in order to keep their student balanced and safe.

During dismounting - Sidewalkers are generally asked to stand by. **A student should not dismount without an instructor helping.** At the end of the lesson, sidewalkers very often accompany dismounted students back to their classroom or awaiting parent.

Falls - Falls are very rare, but they can and do happen. If another rider falls, or another horse gets loose, **your only concern is your student.** Remain with your student until the instructor approaches to assess the situation. Sidewalkers may be asked to call emergency services if necessary. There is a list of emergency numbers by each phone in the facility. Remember to stay calm at all times.

In weather or fire emergencies - Sidewalkers will accompany the students out of the facility in the case of fire to the northwest corner of the parking lot, or into a safe area within the facility in the case of a tornado.

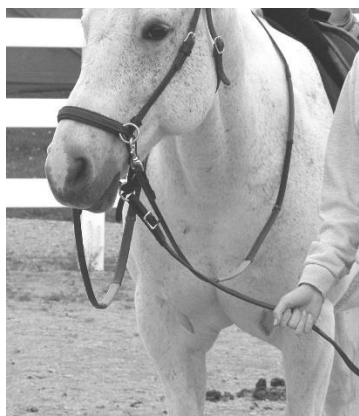
The Leader

As a leader, your first responsibility is the horse. If you are working without sidewalkers, you must be constantly aware of your student also. If a situation arises where you must choose between the student and the horse, the student always comes first. If you are working with sidewalkers, they will take care of the student. You must take care of the horse.



In the mounting area - While in the mounting area, pay close attention to the instructor. The instructor will tell you where to position the horse at the lift or block. Your responsibility is to keep the horse as quiet as possible while the student is mounting. Stand directly in front of the horse. If the horse is uneasy, rub the horse's neck and speak quietly to help calm it. After the student has mounted and before the stirrups are adjusted, you will be asked to move the horse forward into the center of the ring. The student will need to have his stirrups adjusted at this time.

Once your student has mounted, the instructor will tell you when to proceed and where to position your horse in the group. As the class begins, the instructor will give instructions by the student or horse's name. Be sure you know both.



How to lead your horse - The proper position for the leader is to walk about in line with the poll (about between the head and shoulder). Care must be taken that the horse maintains a natural head carriage. Lead from the near side (left side) of the horse. A good rule of thumb for holding the lead line is to hold it in your right hand approximately six to twelve inches away from the buckle. The excess lead line should be held in your left hand. **NEVER WRAP THE EXCESS LINE AROUND YOUR HAND.**

No matter how slow the horse you are leading is, the leader should not try to pull the horse forward nor should you stop the horse unless your student is unable to do it himself. The student is encouraged to do as much as possible on his own. The instructor will point out to you if the rider is in need of assistance. If the horse you are leading should balk or shy, with or without a rider, do not try to pull him. Wait until he relaxes, then move his head slowly to one side or the other and encourage him gently to go in a slightly different direction then straighten him out.

In order for the rider to have complete freedom to use the reins, care should be taken to ensure that the lead line does not interfere with the reins. The lead line should be hanging between the reins, not over the top of them.

None of our horses are known kickers, but all horses have the potential to kick if pressured by another horse positioned too closely to their hind legs. Give yourself enough room from the horse in front of you. If your student cannot maintain a safe distance, then help him to do so. Remember, many of our students have a poor sense of space orientation and do not realize when they are too close. Use common sense. If you see that your student is getting into trouble and is unable to follow the directions given by the instructor, you should give assistance.

At the halt - The leader should step in front of the horse, and act as a physical barrier, to keep it from moving.

At the walk - Be aware of your sidewalkers and give them enough room to walk behind you and still be at the student's side, and between the horse and the side wall of the arena.

At the trot - The instructor will give directions at this time for each student and horse. Start to jog and stay near the horse's head. *Do not* pull or hit the horse with the lead line or your hand. Say "TROT" if the student is unable.

During dismounting - Do the same as during mounting. A student should not dismount without an instructor's assistance.

Falls - Falls are very rare, but they can and do happen. If another rider falls, or another horse gets loose, your only concern is the horse you are leading. Stop your horse immediately. Go in front and hold your horse as you would at the halt. **NEVER** let go of your horse. Remember to stay calm at all times.

In fire or weather emergency situations - In fire situations, the leader is responsible for taking the horse to the nearest exit away from the barn. There are two large doors on the eastern wall and one on the northern wall that open directly to the outside.

In a weather emergency, once the student has been dismounted and all students have left the arena, the leader should remain with the horse until the instructor gives further directions. In more severe weather situations such as an impending tornado, the leader should remove the horse's bridle and turn it loose. At this point, the leader should seek shelter in one of the designated tornado shelter areas.

IF AT ANY TIME, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR JOB, YOU HAVE A QUESTION, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK FOR HELP. WE WOULD RATHER HAVE YOU ASK THE SAME QUESTION 100 TIMES THAN NOT BE SURE THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS CORRECT!

Getting the Horse From Stall

If you have a student with you, talk to him about the things you are doing and show him the equipment before you enter the stall to use it. If your student uses a wheelchair, leave him outside the stall while you are getting the horse from the stall and taking it to the cross ties. Always check with an instructor before you take any student into the stall.

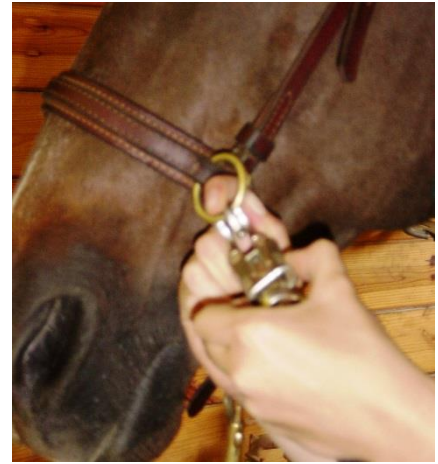
- 1.) Take your horse's bitless bridle from the wall at the aisle entryway. Remove the lead line from the green halter on the stall door and attach it to the ring at the bottom of the noseband. **Do this before you enter the stall.**
- 2.) When approaching the stall, talk to the horse so he knows you're there. (Remember that horses sometimes sleep standing up.) A horse may be easily startled if he doesn't know you are there.
- 3.) Before you open the stall door all the way, make sure that the horse's hind end is not facing the door. If it is, open the door slightly and call to the horse, using the horse's name.
- 4.) When he is in a position that you can easily approach his head, open the stall door just wide enough for you to slip through. Then quietly, but confidently approach the horse's head.
- 5.) With your right hand, hold the bitless bridle by the crown piece. With your left hand, guide the horse's nose through the nose hole. Attach the buckle of the throat latch under the horse's throat. This strap does not need to be tight. Do not unbuckle any other piece of the bitless bridle.

Please make sure the door is all the way open before taking the horse out.

CHECK THE AREA OUTSIDE THE STALL DOOR FOR STUDENTS OR OTHER HORSE TRAFFIC.

Lead the horse out of the stall, holding the lead line in your right hand near the horse's chin. Hold the remaining lead line in your left hand, folded neatly. **Never drag the end of the lead line or wrap the excess around your hand.** As you lead the horse, you should be positioned in front of the horse, looking **ahead**, not back at the horse.

Entering the Crossties



Take the horse into the cross tie area and turn him around so his head is centered between the cross ties. Attach the cross ties to either side of the bitless bridle to the outside rings at the nose end. Take off the lead line while the horse is in the crossties. Do not drape the lead over the horse's neck.

A student should not be left unattended in the crossties. This is potentially a very dangerous area. Students and/or volunteers should never walk behind a horse. Care should be taken when working near the horse's face that the ties are not where a student might be injured. Many students with poor balance will try to support themselves by holding on to the ties. This is not only uncomfortable for the horse, it is also dangerous to the student should the horse throw his head. Remember that the students will imitate the things you do, even if you tell them something different, therefore, no one should be leaning or holding on to the cross ties.

Grooming

Grooming, tacking and learning the parts of the horse all take place in the cross ties. We have set up the following guidelines for grooming and tacking the horse specific to Fieldstone Farm. **We hope that this will help to ensure that everyone is teaching the same thing to all students.**

If students are assisting you in the grooming process, use the time in the cross ties to teach the student about the various parts of the horse and tack. Included in this manual are pages with grooming tools, horse parts, and saddle parts. Please familiarize yourself with these terms.



Before a student starts to groom, he should walk up and greet his horse. Approach in a quiet and unhurried manner and speak to the horse quietly while using slow body movements. The student should greet the horse with a gentle pat on the side of the neck. Remember that it is our policy to not pet our horses on their faces.

All grooming equipment that you will need is located in the grooming boxes in each crosstie. Please be sure that all brushes are returned after they have been used, and be sure that the equipment is **CLEAN** when returned. This is especially important in the spring when horses shed out their winter coats.

Grooming Tools

1. Curry Comb

A round, rubber grooming tool. It is used first to loosen dirt in the horse's coat. It is used in circular motions. Always start near the poll (near the horse's ears) and work toward the tail. The curry comb is not used on the face, mane, legs or tail. Care must be taken when covering any bony protrusions such as the withers, backbone, shoulder, and flank areas. The curry comb is cleaned by tapping it on a hard surface.

2. Stiff (hard) Brush

A wooden or plastic handled, stiff bristled brush. It is used to remove the dirt brought to the surface by the curry comb. It is used in short, flicking strokes, moving over the hair in the same direction it grows. Start at the poll and work toward the tail. The stiff brush is not used on the face, mane or tail. The brush is cleaned by holding it in one hand with the bristles up, while the other hand moves across the surface from the far end to the near end flicking dirt from the brush or you may use another hard brush or a comb across the bristles to remove the dirt and hair.

3. Soft Brush

A wooden handled, soft-bristled brush. It is used to remove any dirt missed by the stiff brush, as well as to smooth and add shine to the horse's coat. It is used in long, smooth strokes with a flick at the end of each stroke, moving over the hair in the same direction it grows. Start at the poll and move toward the tail. It is not used on the mane or tail. It may be used on the face gently and with great care around the ears, eyes and nose. It is cleaned in the same manner as the stiff brush.

4. Mane & Tail Comb

A plastic handled brush with an end that looks like a curry comb with teeth. It is used to remove tangles from the horse's mane and tail. It is used on the mane, starting at the poll and working toward the withers, starting from the end and working in small sections toward the roots, much like the way a girl with long hair would comb her hair to prevent tangling. It is used on the tail by standing beside the horse's hindquarters, NEVER BEHIND THE HORSE. The tail should also be combed in small sections from the ends to the roots. The comb is cleaned as you would clean your own comb or brush, or by tapping it against a hard surface as with the currycomb.

5. Hoof Pick

It is a metal pick with a metal, rubber coated handle. The feet should be cleaned thoroughly as part of the grooming procedure. Students generally do not do this but they enjoy watching.

To properly pick out a horse's hooves:



Stand facing the back of the crossties starting with the front left hoof. Run your thumb and fingers down the sides of the horse's leg, between the knee and ankle, pressing firmly to make him pick his foot up. If he does not lift his foot, push against his shoulder with your shoulder. Hold his foot at the toe for leverage to prevent his jerking his foot away. Always stand up and lean over from the waist to do this. Do not squat down or kneel down to clean a hoof. You cannot move out of the way if the horse decides to move in some manner.



Using a hoof pick, clean the depressions at the sides of the frog, the spongy pad at the center rear of the foot; scrape the sole free of dirt. The indentation in a V shape is called the frog and should be clear when the hoof is clean. The angle of the V points to the toe and is shallow. The ends of the V are deeper and come out at the heel. Work from the heel to the toe with your hoof pick. Doing this in reverse could cause you an injury. Use no more force than is necessary to clear out all foreign matter, although it might take a little muscle to remove impacted dirt! Work with the left front foot first and then proceed to the left rear, the right front and then the right rear.

Many volunteers are uncomfortable picking out hooves at the beginning of their volunteer service. If you are uncomfortable doing this, please ask another volunteer or instructor to help you. Clean and healthy hooves are very important to the overall health of a horse!

Saddling



Be sure the horse is clean, especially in areas that will be covered by the tack. Therapy horses work hard and should be made as comfortable as possible. A clean girth area is especially important to prevent sores.

1. Place the saddle pad just in front of the horse's withers.



2. Place the horse's personal correction pad on top of the saddle pad with the fleecy roll towards the front.

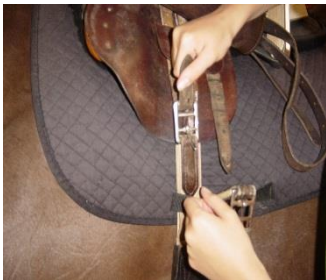
3. Add any additional therapy pads.

4. Place the saddle on top of the pads.



5. Slide girth through fleece girth cover.

6. Attach the non-elastic side of the girth to the off side, or right side of the saddle.



7. Attach the elastic end of the girth to the near side, or left side of the saddle. Only tighten the girth enough to keep it from slipping. You will have time to tighten the girth once more before your student mounts.

NOTE: ALWAYS double-check the TIGHTNESS of the girth as some horses hold their breath as it is tightened, thus swelling their chests. When they exhale, the girth will be too loose. Always check for tightness at the bottom of the girth, not the sides.

Once in the ring, walk the horse for at least 5 minutes before the class starts to warm him up and finish tightening the girth. The girth should be tightened one hole at a time, alternating walking for a few minutes and then tightening another hole. This is VERY important and keeps our horses from getting grouchy and developing sore backs.



Bridling/Bitless Bridles



Attaching the reins and leather lead line to the bitless bridle/bridle

If you are using a bitless bridle, hook the reins to the side rings. If you are using a traditional bridle, the reins fasten directly to the bit. The leather lead line attaches to the lower ring on the bitless bridle. On the traditional bridle, simply feed it through the bottom of the noseband. The bridle is put on just before the horse is to leave the cross ties.



Bridling is a certified skill. Only Red Star or higher volunteers (see page 14) may bridle horses. If you are working with a horse that needs a bridle and you are not certified, please find a certified volunteer or your instructor.

HORSES ARE NEVER TO BE TIED IN ANYWAY WITH A TRADITIONAL BRIDLE.

Once your horse is tacked, take him into the arena and walk him around to warm him up. Your student may or may not walk with you at this point.

When you enter the mounting area from the barn aisle or exit the mounting area to the barn aisle, please push the gate away from you to prevent injury to your horse.

After the Lesson

Once your student's lesson is completed, it's time to put away your horse and its equipment. If you are the leader, wait for all students to exit the arena before taking your horse back to the barn area.

Take the horse back to the cross ties and re-attach the ties to the side rings on the bitless bridle. If your horse is using a traditional bridle, please ask your instructor or a bridle-certified volunteer to remove it before you re-attach your horse to its halter. Remember, never attach a horse by its bit. This is very dangerous and will more than likely result in injury to the horse if it becomes startled.

Once the horse is reattached, start by removing the reins and lead line from the bitless bridle. Place these on the hook outside the cross tie. Next, unfasten the girth and pull the saddle and pads off of the horse from the left. Place the pads and saddle on the saddle rack outside the cross tie.

Hot Horses...

In the Winter: Your horse may need to be hand walked while wearing a woolen cooler. Your instructor will advise you in this case.

In the Summer: Your horse may need to be sponged off or hosed down. Check with your instructor to see if your horse can be hosed down.

When your horse is ready to be taken back to his stall, simply enter the stall, making sure the latch is pushed in fully and the door is open completely. Once in the stall, pull the door closed enough to prevent the horse from leaving. Unbuckle the throat latch on the bitless bridle and pull the crown piece over the horse's ears to remove it. Please do not unbuckle any other latch on the bridle. Close and latch the stall door. Reattach the green cotton lead line to the halter hanging on the outside of the horse's stall. It is very important for each halter to have a green lead line attached to it in case of fire or other emergency.

Back in the Tack Room...

Take all tack you have removed from your horse back to the tack room. We disassemble all tack after each lesson so you will need to make sure that each piece of equipment is returned to its proper location. If you are not sure of where to return your tack, please ask another volunteer to assist you. Wet saddle pads and girth covers should be placed on the washing machine in the corner. Do not return these to the tack boxes.



Sweeping

Please make sure that all cross ties are swept clean at the end of your shift. There is a broom, shovel and muck bucket in every cross tie. Sweep up all deposits, hair and dirt and place them in the bucket. Please place the shovel with the blade facing the wall when you return it to its hook.



Please assist our Lead Volunteers and maintenance staff by helping to sweep the aisles by using the aisle sweeper. Your assistance is greatly appreciated by those who close the barn at the end of the evening. You should also ask the Lead Volunteer on duty if there are any other tasks that need to be completed before you leave.

Once you have put away your horse, returned your tack and helped with any additional maintenance tasks, you have completed your volunteer service. Please log out at the time clock computer in the tack room.

REFERENCE INFORMATION

When You Meet a Person with a Disability

Be yourself when you meet a person who has a disability. Be a friend and treat him or her as an equal. At the same time, though, be aware of the disability. One of the hardest aspects of volunteering is standing back and letting the student do things for himself. Lend a hand if asked, or if you see a dangerous situation arising. Be patient. Also, try not to predetermine your student's abilities. They will always surprise you. Don't talk about the student in front of him/her. Talk to the student. Information about students and their disabilities is **CONFIDENTIAL**. Details are shared on a need-to-know basis. If you have a question about a student please ask your instructor.

Disability Overview

Hearing Impairment

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 may learn best by imitation and sign language, but miss out on verbal instruction.

Hints for Helpers

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

Visual Impairment

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. People with visual impairments might have difficulty moving about, rely on speech and non-speech sounds for judging distances and find echoes and traveling sounds to be of great value.

Hints for Helpers

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. Remember also that he is not deaf and you do not have to shout at him in normal conversation.

Learning Disability

This 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 Helpers

Learning disabled children may be easily distracted, sometimes hyperactive, impulsive, talkative, awkward, aggressive, socially immature and easily frustrated. They often need clear and simple explanations with practical demonstrations of the skills to be learned in the lesson.

Mental Disability

Mental Disability means that 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 disabled riders will have recognizable signs of a condition such as Down's Syndrome, but others will have no specific clinical conditions. Mentally disabled riders might behave as if they were younger, have limited speech and understanding of speech, may learn slowly and require much repetition. They may have limited awareness of danger and may need careful supervision.

Hints for Helpers

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, using speech and learning to win and lose. This rider will need encouragement and discipline that he can understand.

Emotional Disability

Many 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 family, friends, the world and himself. Frequently he is frustrated, unhappy and bad tempered. He might feel he is already a "loser" in society and therefore dislike competition and the feeling that he may lose yet again.

Hints for Helpers

The maladjusted child usually responds well to the horse and the opportunity to care for him, showing his capacity to love and care. Friendships with his peers might be difficult, but he may crave the company of his helpers and his 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

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 with cerebral palsy may have to make a great effort to do even the simplest movements, so that life is a struggle and the smallest skill is a great achievement.

Hints for Helpers

If a good position in the saddle can be maintained with the assistance of the helper, the rider's control of his head, arms and back muscles may be made easier. Foot position in the stirrup is important. In some cases, the helper may grasp the back of the ankle to help keep the heel down. The rider should be encouraged to look where he is going, as control of the head facilitates the use of the arms. Muscle control for riders with cerebral palsy is hard work, but worthwhile.

Multiple Sclerosis

This is a disease that generally affects adults. Nerve transmissions are interrupted on their way to muscles, which results in varying levels of disability. Chief among the many symptoms are difficulty in walking, weakness and clumsiness of the legs and arms and visual problems. Speech is often affected.

Hints for Helpers

It is important for the helper to understand the functional abilities of this rider. The instructor will be aware, on a lesson-by-lesson basis, of what the rider is able to do and with what he will need help. Unlike the rider with cerebral palsy, where every day is much the same, the rider with multiple sclerosis will have good days and no-so-good days. MS patients are mostly adults and can often offer valuable input as to their comfort level and the best way to assist them.

Infectious Diseases

Controlling the spread of viruses and infectious diseases is an important concern in any situation where the general public is dealt with. Infectious diseases such as Hepatitis B and the HIV/aids virus are transmitted when blood, semen and vaginal secretions of an infected person enter through the skin or mucus membrane of a non-infected person. Following simple safety precautions will help prevent the spread of these diseases.

Hints for Helpers

Hand washing is the most effective measure in the prevention of the spread of disease. Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently, especially after you leave the barn. Wash your hands again when you get home. Also follow these safety procedures: Ask the adult who has accompanied the student to the barn to take him/her to the bathroom facilities if the need arises. Ask the adult who is with the student or a Fieldstone Farm staff member to attend to any open wounds or bleeding that might occur while a student is at the barn. Make sure any open wounds that you may have are properly covered.

Autism

A broad spectrum of disorder ranging from mild to severe, which affects thought, perceptions and attention. Characteristics include: 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 the 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.

Most individuals on the spectrum are visual learners. Use a calm tone of voice; even in the midst of a behavioral outburst. If an individual has difficulty with communicating wants and needs or with requesting help, they may become frustrated or upset. Individuals need to be reinforced for specific positive behaviors. Instead of saying "nice job," say "nice job of sitting."

The Benefits of Therapeutic Riding

Physical

It is the horse's movement that 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. Underlying all therapeutic riding activities is the regular, rhythmic movement of the horse. Benefits can include normalization of tone, postural control, and improved balance and strength.

Sensorial

Interacting with horses on the ground or in the saddle puts a student in a sensory-rich environment with new sights, smells, sounds and tactile input. The movement of the horse also can help with a variety of sensory integration issues. A smooth-gaited horse with a consistent pace can provide the needed input to help a rider establish rhythm. A horse with a choppy gait or heavy footfalls may be able to provide a rider with stimulation to help organize and integrate sensory input. Movement exploration while on the horse can help improve overall body awareness.

Emotional

The success of overcoming fear and anxiety can help a rider realize self-worth and increase self-esteem. The ability to achieve a riding skill will also have a positive effect on a rider's self-perception. For many of our students, the companion-animal bonding and development of new skills are critical components to the success of the experience. The relationships that develop among students, volunteers, horses and staff are all integral to a positive emotional experience at Fieldstone Farm.

Cognitive

The horse provides many of our students with the motivation to learn new things. Educational goals such as letter recognition and sequencing can be incorporated into riding activities.

Social

Therapeutic riding provides many opportunities for students to interact with peers, staff, volunteers and horses. Riding requires the student to solve problems, stay on task, and follow through with new skills.

The Benefits of the Ground Work

Physical

Grooming incorporates large muscle groups as well as fine motor skills. The student is constantly stretching, bending and reaching, which requires balance and coordination. Activities around the farm encourage participants to be physically active and engaged in care of the horses.

Social/Relationships

Students have the chance to work together and help one another. They also have the opportunity to develop relationships with the volunteers, the instructors and the horses they care for.

Routine/Sequencing/Responsibility

Grooming has a specific order to it, which brings routine and sequencing into play. In addition, each student's work has a direct impact on the horse's health and well-being; with that comes a sense of responsibility and pride. Finally, when the student has finished grooming his or her horse, the work is reviewed, creating a standard the student should strive to achieve.

Awareness/Focus

Horses talk to us with body language. Learning to listen to a horse's body language is, in large part, what keeps us safe around these powerful animals. Students learn to be focused, present and "in the moment" when working with horses.

Calming

Horses respond favorably to a slow, quiet demeanor and a soft voice. As students become calmer and more soothing, they begin to notice the positive effect their behavior has on their horse.

Confidence/Empowerment

The development of the horse/human bond assists students in gaining respect, trust and leadership skills. Each success empowers them and builds self-esteem, which motivates them to try new things and take an active role in their own education.

Helpful Terminology

Terms related to equipment

Bitless bridle - A leather bridle specially designed for therapeutic riding purposes, which has no bit to go in the horse's mouth. Looks similar to a regular halter, but with specially placed rings.

Bareback Pad - A thick pad used in place of a saddle.

Devs or Devonshire Stirrups - A hooded stirrup with a closed platform that prevents the rider's foot from moving too far forward.

Girth - A leather strap that goes around the horse's belly to keep the saddle in place. The non-elastic end is attached to the right side of the saddle first.

Hand Hold - A leather strap attached to the front of the saddle that a rider can hold onto.

Peas or 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.

Polos - Wraps that go on the legs of some of the horses for extra protection or support.

Pulling tack - A term used for getting all riding equipment ready before a class.

Rainbow Reins - Multi-colored reins used to teach proper use of reins. The instructor can direct the 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.

Surcingle - A thick padded strap with a single center-positioned handle. Usually used over a bareback pad.

Tack - Equipment used for riding a horse (saddle, stirrups, bridle, etc.)

Terms related to Programming

EquiClub - This program is designed to enhance participants' personal growth in a positive social atmosphere. Programs are un-mounted, equine based and focused on providing social and experimental learning opportunities.

Ground Lessons - Students learn to take responsibility and improve daily life skills through hands-on experiences with horse care and stable management. This segment of the program supplements the mounted program and teaches participants how to groom, saddle, feed, and bathe a horse and to perform other appropriate activities that develop horse care skills.

HPOT or Hippo - Hippotherapy: Equine-facilitated therapy available for clients with specific and prescribed therapy goals. Conducted with a physician's prescription under the direction of a Physical or Occupational Therapist, a certified riding instructor and an appropriate number of volunteers performing the functions of leader and sidewalker.

Terms related to Horses

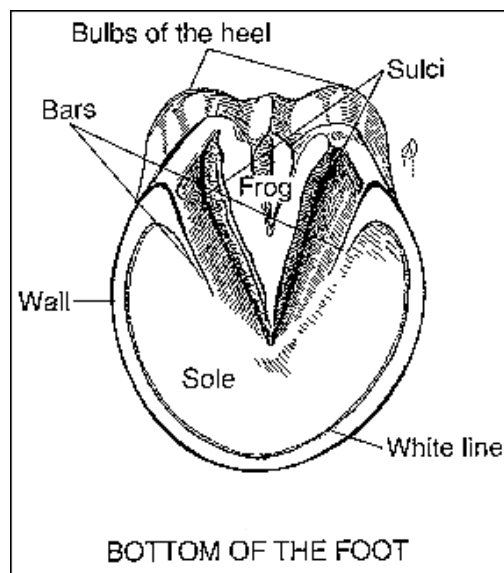
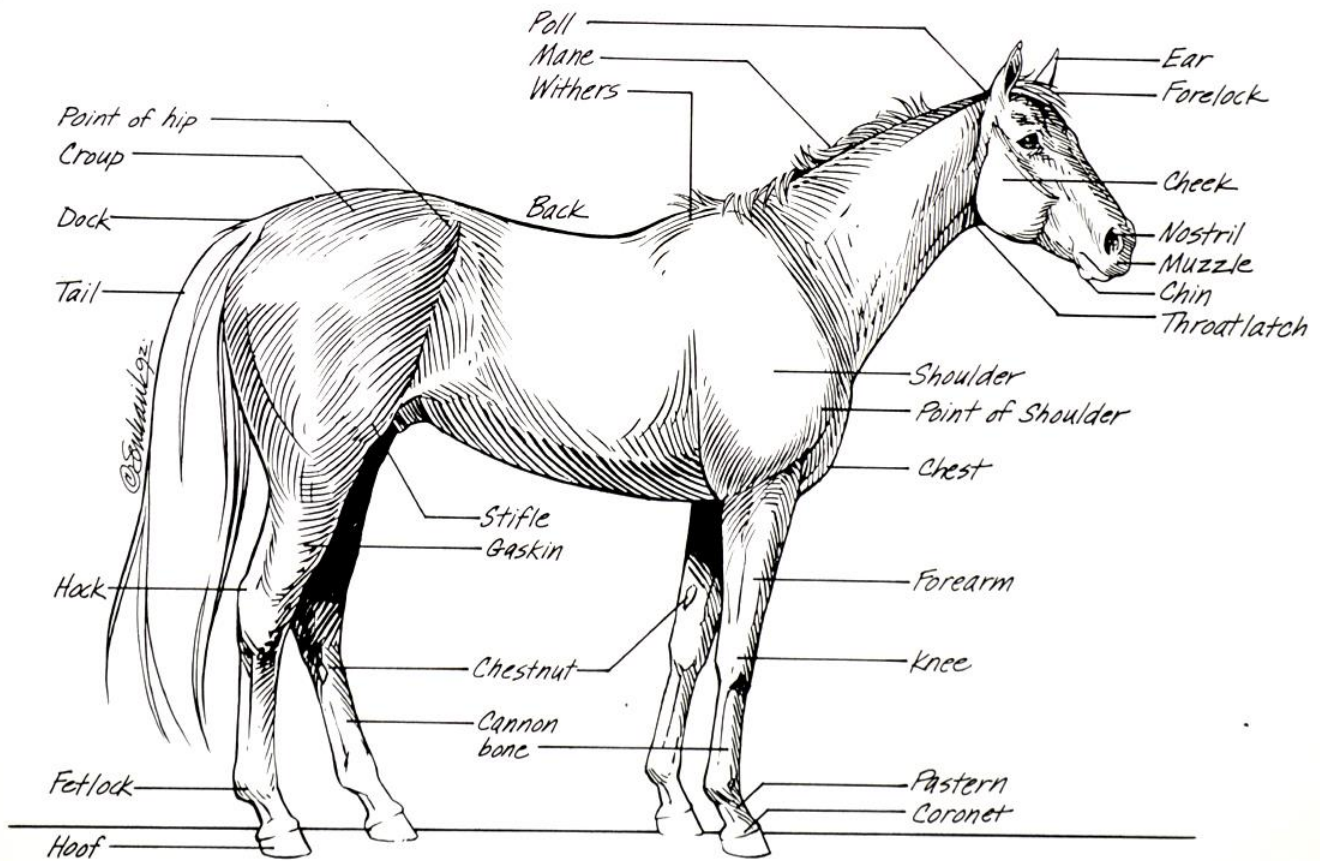
Gait - The way of going: walk, trot, canter

Haunches - The hindquarters of the horse

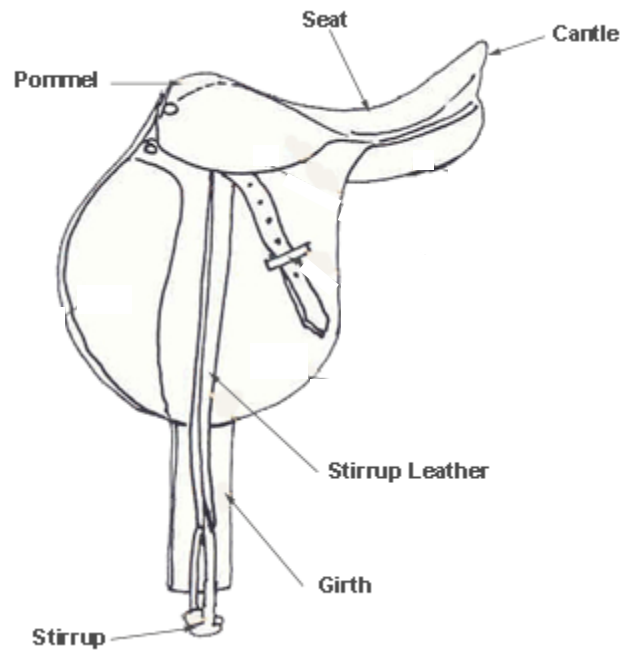
Near side - The left side of the horse

Off side - The right side of the horse

Horse Anatomy



PARTS OF THE SADDLE



Peacock Stirrup



Devonshire Stirrups



Girth

UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOR

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.

SMELL:

A horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables a horse to evaluate situations.

Implications:

- 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.
- Volunteers are discouraged from eating or having food in the arena.

HEARING:

A horse's sense of hearing is also thought to be very acute. A 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 fright/flight response. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears that are laid back often communicate that they are upset and/or showing aggression towards another horse or person.

Implications:

- Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse.
- Watch your horse's ears for increased communication. Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion, or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat, or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.

SIGHT:

A horse's eyes are set on either side of the head; there is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poor frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head. A 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 on whether or not horses see color.

Implications:

- A horse may notice if something in the arena or out on trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with.
- A horse has better peripheral vision; consider two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is to its shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. A horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when hand feeding.

TOUCH:

Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs.

Implications:

- Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly.
- Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas).
- Watch rider leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to reduce a "clothes pin" effect with their legs. Ask the instructor/therapist what is the best handling technique.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing over it.

TASTE:

Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps a horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

Implications:

- Taste is closely linked with smell and touch; therefore, a horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.

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 are having a difficult time relating or getting along with a particular horse.

THE HORSE’S LIFESTYLE:

In addition to understanding the horse’s sixth senses, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the horse’s lifestyle. This will assist us in responding appropriately to his reactions to situations.

FLIGHT AS A NATURAL INSTINCT:

Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it.

Implications:

- At a sudden movement or noise, a horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly.
- A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he’ll relax. Be sure not to stand directly behind the horse.
- 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 the stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working around the horse in a stall.
- If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful, it may be helpful to allow a calm horse to go in front, or more experienced leader to lead.
- Most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. A horse may look to you for reassurance. It is helpful if the volunteer remains calm and talks to the horse in a soothing voice.

HERD ANIMAL:

Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two horses dominant, with a pecking order amongst the rest.

Implications:

- Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of others while out 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 attempt to trot or canter, too.
- 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.

Being aware of horse behaviors is one of the best safety precautions that can be used in your facility. Knowing how to ready your horse can prevent an accident and increase the quality of your “mutual” relationship.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Human and Horse First Aid Kits

Both first aid for humans and horses can be found in the tack room underneath the lesson book area. Please do not treat a horse injury without the approval of a staff member.

FIRE EVACUATION PLAN

Dial 9-911 (we are located at 16497 Snyder Road)

ALL AREAS:

- Walk to the nearest exit—DO NOT RUN!
- Never use the elevator!
- Do not attempt to fight the fire!
- Cover your nose and mouth to prevent smoke inhalation
- Students (escorted by volunteers), Volunteers, Families and Staff should assemble in the northwest corner of the front parking lot (closest to Snyder Road)
- Staff should take a roll call as quickly as possible
- Staff may evacuate horses by leading

Arena:

- The instructor is in charge
- Students, horses and volunteers should exit through the nearest outside exit using caution as emergency vehicles may be approaching
- If still mounted, dismount at a safe distance from barn
- Horse handlers should take horses to the nearest outdoor fenced area, remove all tack and lead lines and turn horses loose. Then secure the gate so that the horses do not attempt to return to the barn.

TORNADO SAFETY PLAN

Be Alert to Signs of a Possible Tornado:

- Severe weather conditions: thunder, lightning and severe winds
- Coloration of the sky—gray orange hues with dark cloud formations
- High winds then stillness for about 2-3 minutes, then a roaring sound as if a train were approaching

Tornado Procedure:

- Instructors will stop all classes and dismount students
- Release horses outside the building, if time permits remove bridal/reins
- Quickly proceed to designated “Tornado Shelter” areas on the lowest level of the facility: in the barn in the ladies restroom, under desks in the Administrative Offices, or the locker room in the Gaitway Annex

*If out on trail: dismount, turn horses loose and lay flat (covering small children) in the lowest spot you can find (i.e. ditch, swale or behind amount of dirt).

HUMAN INJURY

In case of human injury, the person in attendance who is trained in first aid and CPR (all instructors are trained) should immediately take charge.

- Remain calm
- Stabilize the injured person; do not move them if possible
- Assess the injury—use primary/secondary survey following first aid procedures
- Send someone to dial 9-911 if warranted (we are located at 16497 Snyder Road)
- Staff person/Instructor will assign someone to remove the uninjured people from the area and to stay with them
- Volunteers may be asked to help the instructor complete an incident report while witnesses are still available, if possible.