

**VOLUNTEER**



**TRIPLE R  
RANCH**

Special Equestrians

**HANDBOOK**

TRIPLE R RANCH

SPECIAL EQUESTRIANS

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To Our Volunteers,

The service commitment we are asking from you cannot be matched with money. It is an unequalled valuable pledge of time and effort that can best be appreciated by those who participate in our program. I personally want to thank you for your interest and support, and sincerely hope the experience you receive is educational, positive, and meaningful.

This Handbook is a reference tool which contains helpful information designed to explain some of the aspects of our riding program. Please review it carefully: it is important for the safety of the riders, as well as, your own.

As with any volunteer program, any suggestions and/or comments you have concerning the operation of the Triple R Ranch Special Equestrians Riding Program will be greatly appreciated. New ideas are always welcomed and encouraged since the aim of this program is to offer the best possible services to the community.

Thank you once again for your interest in this worthwhile program. Our program would not exist without dedicated volunteers such as you.

Sincerely,

Kim Monroe



## THE FOURTEEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt notify the program coordinator in advance if you are unable to attend any of the riding classes.
2. Thou shalt call the Ranch for recorded instructions after 4:00 p.m. or the program coordinator if bad weather is forecasted.
3. Thou shalt arrive at least 15 minutes before class begins.
4. Thou shalt dress appropriately. Dress in layers: they are easy to add to or subtract from.
  - No dangle jewelry.
  - Long pants or jeans--no shorts.
  - Shoes - a hard sole shoe with a heel, such as a boot, is ideal. However, a lace up shoe is o.k.  
“Duck” shoes or Muck boots are great when the ring is muddy.
5. Thou shalt remember that bug spray or Avon’s Skin-So-Soft are popularly used items at the Ranch.
6. Thou shalt not eat, drink, or smoke during class time.
7. Thou shalt not mount or dismount riders unless otherwise instructed.
8. Thou shalt not talk to other volunteers while the instructor is teaching. It is very hard to hear - your team might miss instructions.
9. Thou shalt be an aid to the instructor by focusing the rider’s attention on performing his/her riding skills.
10. Thou shalt *encourage* the rider to attempt the skill before assisting them with it.
11. Thou shalt not encourage riders to wave to observers outside the ring - this distracts all of us.
12. Thou shalt be enthusiastic when playing a game.
13. Thou shalt stay with your assigned rider during class time.
14. Thou shalt above all, have fun!!!

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

There are many riders who need assistance in riding their horses or ponies. This is when the volunteer takes an active part in making the program work. Many of the disabled riders need volunteers to assist them, and there may be as many as three volunteers with each rider, especially in the beginning stages of riding.

The following paragraphs will explain, in more detail, what the responsibilities are for the different volunteer positions, namely, the Leader, the Buddy, and the Sidewalker.

### **THE LEADER**

#### **LEADING AND APPROACHING THE HORSE:**

When approaching a horse, always consider the horse's limited field of vision. A horse cannot see directly behind or in front of him without moving his head.

Always approach your horse at the shoulder or as near the neck as possible so that the horse can see you. Speak softly and call the horse's name as you approach so you don't startle him. Extend your hand and pat him on the shoulder and never on the head or muzzle.

The proper position for leading the horse is on the left or "near" side and between the horse's head and shoulder. **DO NOT GET IN FRONT** or too far behind. Lead the horse with the lead rope which is clipped to the horse's halter. Hold the lead rope in your right hand, approximately six to eight inches from the ring it is clipped to. Hold the extra rope in your left hand, but **NEVER WRAP THE LEAD ROPE AROUND YOUR HAND**, just loop and hold lightly. Keep your hands away from the horse's mouth.

Take care to ensure the horse's head is not pushed too high in the air since this may throw your rider off balance. Also, do not let the horse's head get too low to the ground, as that may pull the rider forward.

Remember, just as the sizes of the horses vary, so do their steps. With some horses you will be able to walk faster than with others. Adjust your step to that of the horse so that you are not pulling him forward or holding him back.

No matter how lazy the horse you are leading is, the leader should not try to take the place of the rider, either by pulling the horse forward or turning or stopping the horse.

The instructor will point out to you when the rider does need assistance.

In order for the rider to have complete freedom to use the reins correctly, care should be taken to ensure that the lead rope does not run over the reins on the near side, which would tend to put

pressure on the reins, causing the horse to lean in that direction. The lead rope must be hanging between the reins, not over the top of them.

### SAFETY TACK CHECK

It is the leader's responsibility to make sure that the tack is properly adjusted and safe to use. To do a safety check, start on the off (right) side of the horse. Check the fit of the saddle and check to make sure that the blanket is straight: notice that the cinch or girth is properly fastened on that side. At the horse's head, check the right side of the bridle to see that the bit is properly fitted, the curb chain is straight and adjusted correctly and that all buckles are fastened. On the left side, run your eye over the bridle, and then repeat the saddle check. This is the time to tighten the cinch if it needs it. You are now ready for your rider to mount. If you have any questions or if you are not sure if there is a problem then ask for help. It is always better to be safe than sorry. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE SAFETY CHECK IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT! A good safety check can mean the difference between a safe ride and an accident waiting to happen!

### AT THE MOUNTING RAMP

If you are going to lead a rider that has to be mounted from the ramp, pay close attention to the instructor, because she will tell you where to position your horse in the mounting ramp. You will want to place the horse as close as possible to the side of the ramp on which the rider will be mounting. Your responsibility, while the rider is mounting, is to keep the horse as quiet as possible. Stand directly in front of the horse holding the lead rope or by gently holding the horse's halter. Remember; do not hold too tightly, as it may cause the horse to throw his head. After the mounting has taken place, and before the stirrups are adjusted, you will be asked to move your horse forward just a little. Don't turn around, but walk backwards a short distance and stop when told to by the instructor.

After the feet are adjusted in the stirrups, the instructor will then ask you to lead the student to the ring. At this time, a position between the horse's head and shoulder should be taken.

Turn in the direction you will be walking and walk to where you are asked to be in the ring. After this, wait for further instructions.

### MOUNTING IN THE RING

If your rider will be mounting in the ring, the instructor will give you the instruction. The rider may lead his horse to the ring with your assistance, or you may be asked to lead the horse to the center of the ring and your rider will come to you. PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOUNT THE RIDER. The instructor will do all mounting unless the rider is instructed to go ahead without help. During this type of mounting, once again, stand with your position in front of the horse's head. If your rider is standing with you waiting to be mounted, PLEASE be careful that the rider doesn't go behind the horse, but stands quietly beside you.

## LEADER IN THE RING

Once you have entered the ring with your mounted rider, the instructor will tell you where she wants you to position your horse. Be sure you are a safe distance (one horse length) from the horse in front of you. As the class begins, all instruction will be given to the rider by name, so be sure you know the name of your rider.

## AT THE HALT

One of the most important tasks the leader has to do, particularly with the disabled rider, is at the time they are standing still, when they should step in front of the horse to keep him from moving. This is especially true while the riders are doing their exercises. This is, however, used as a breather for the horse and you should not hold their heads unduly tight. Allow them the freedom to move around. If they are getting too restless, as a good way to calm them down, rub their necks. **DO NOT TOUCH OR RUB THEIR HEADS OR NOSES.**

## AT THE WALK

Many leaders forget they have sidewalkers, possibly on both sides, and get too close to the sidewalls of the arena. Please be aware of your sidewalkers at all times. It is also important to know that although none of our horses are known kickers, all horses will kick if pressured by a horse being too close to their hind legs. **GIVE YOU AND YOUR HORSE ROOM FROM THE HORSE IN FRONT OF YOU.** If your rider cannot maintain a safe distance, then you may always help him do so. Remember, many of our riders have no space orientation so, consequently, do not realize when they are too close to the horse in front of them. If this is the case with the rider you are leading, then be careful to watch for them. If asked to turn for your rider, you will know the rider needs assistance in making turns. Don't assist unless asked by the instructor to do so. **USE COMMON SENSE**, if you see your rider is getting into trouble and is not able to follow directions given by the instructor, you certainly may help.

## AT THE TROT

Often, during a lesson, the riders will be asked to trot. Trotting is faster than walking, so the leader has to be more alert. The instructor will come over, if necessary, to give instructions to the rider and to you. Make sure the student is positioned squarely in the saddle and that the sidewalkers have made sure they are holding their handhold or saddle horn.

If the horse is reluctant to trot and you have a sidewalker, with the instructor's permission, ask your sidewalker to give the horse a light nudge in the flank. The flank is located behind the saddle and low on the side. This will, in most cases, start the horse right off.

**DON'T PULL ON THE LEAD. THIS ONLY MAKES THE HORSE MAD AND HE WILL FIGHT IT.**

Start your gait a little faster and say trot. Most of our horses are good on voice commands though you can always run into one that is lazy that day and just doesn't want to do more than a walk.

This type of horse does need the extra prodding. Don't jog or run in front of your horse and immediately, when the command is given to walk or stop, do so in a straight line so as not to unseat the rider.

## DISMOUNTING

Unless otherwise specified, the instructor will dismount the rider. You will receive specific instructions as to whether or not to bring your rider to the ramp or remain in the ring. Once again, keep your horse quiet by standing in front while dismounting is taking place.

## SECOND THOUGHTS

Falls are very rare, but can and do happen. If your rider falls, your only concern is in the horse you are leading. The instructor will take care of the student. If another rider falls and the horse gets loose, then stop immediately in front of your horse and hold him as you would in the ramp. **NEVER LET GO OF THE HORSE.** A loose horse can cause untold trouble. **DO NOT PANIC IF THERE IS A FALL.** You have to remember these riders fall frequently in all types of situations. The fall off the horse is really not any worse than any they could have at home. **BE CALM.** The instructor is trained to handle any situation. That is their job, so please just keep your horse under control and allow the instructor to do her job.

## **THE BUDDY** **(Primary Sidewalker)**

The job of the buddy is a very important one since the buddy is responsible for the safety of the rider from the time the rider arrives at the facility until the rider leaves with his parent or guardian. The buddy will greet the rider upon arrival and immediately fit the rider with a safety helmet and a safety belt. The buddy will then await instructions to bring the rider to the mounting ramp. The buddy may need to physically assist or guide the rider to the mounting ramp depending on the rider's disability. Always be aware of the distance between the rider and the horse. It is always good practice to **KEEP YOURSELF BETWEEN THE RIDER AND THE HORSE.**

The buddy may be asked to help mount the rider, if not, remain close by so that you will be ready to be the primary sidewalker to your rider. As the buddy, it is your responsibility to make sure the rider understands the instructions given by the instructor and do most of the communicating with the rider. The buddy may need to help the rider better understand what is being asked. The buddy will also follow all of the rules of a sidewalker. There may be times in the ring that the secondary sidewalker can better hear the instructor and will temporarily act as the primary sidewalker or buddy. However, this is temporary until the buddy can once again assume his/her responsibilities. When class is over and the rider has dismounted, the buddy will escort the rider safely back to the area where the helmets are stored. Once the parent or guardian is ready to leave with the rider, then you may assist or ask your rider to remove the safety helmet.

Your job is over once the rider is safely on his way to the car with his parent or guardian.

## THE SIDEWALKER

The job of the sidewalker is to give the rider encouragement to perform the task at hand, make sure the rider understands and follows directions from the instructor, and above all, ensure the rider's safety. It is also the job of the sidewalker to maintain the balance of the rider when they cannot maintain it for himself. Some riders, especially in the beginning stages, have a definite balance problem, off the horse as well as on.

Depending on the degree of disability, there will be either one or two sidewalkers assigned to the rider. The instructor will inform you as to the requirements of the particular rider. For example, some riders will require more hands on assistance than others, in which case, you would support them by means of a safety belt that is secured around their waist, or by using your arm to support their upper leg. When using the safety belt, make sure you do not pull on the handhold or lean against the horse, and if the rider starts to slip, push him gently back into the correct position.

Sidewalkers are very important, as they are constantly aware of the rider and what he/she is doing, and **THE SAFETY OF THE RIDER DEPENDS ON THEM.**

### SIDEWALKER DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

- Responsibilities start when horse and rider clear mounting area. Buddy becomes side walker.
  - Second sidewalker, if necessary, joins up.
- Safety, Safety, Safety - Number one responsibility is safety of rider.

Other responsibilities include:

- Maintaining Balance
- Understanding and Following Directions
- Encouraging rider
- Keeping team informed of any problems or concerns.

Since the sidewalker is always close to the rider, you will find they will want to talk to you a great deal. Do not ignore direct questions, but do try to get your rider to pay attention to the instructor in the ring or the Buddy. If your rider is not paying attention, or doesn't hear the instructor, you can help by reinforcing the directions.

**“Sometimes the best thing for us to do is to “get them out there” and let the horse takeover!”**

## **HOW TO RELATE TO A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY**

It is important to remember that every child or adult is an individual and wants to be treated with that understanding regardless of having a disability or not. Each has his own learning rate, style of learning, unique personality and temperament. One must always look beyond the disability into the person. Identify their individual needs. All people, regardless if disabled or not, want to feel that they are not different from the rest of their fellow men. Here are a few suggestions to assist your relationship with the disabled person.

1. Remember that the person with a disability is a person. He/She is like everyone else, except for the special limitations of his handicap.
2. A disability need not be ignored or denied between friends, but until your relationship is one of friendship, show friendly interest in him as a person only.
3. Be yourself.
4. Talk about the same things as you would anyone else. Explore mutual interests in a friendly way. For starters, talk about the horse, and whether the person has ever ridden before.
5. Help the rider only when they request it. When a person with a disability falls down, they may wish to get up by himself, just as many blind persons prefer to get along without assistance.
6. Be patient. Let the disabled person set his own pace walking or talking.
7. Appreciate what the rider can do. Remember that the difficulties the person may be facing could stem from society's attitudes and barriers rather than from the disability itself. Disabled people generally do not view themselves to be as handicapped as society perceives them to be.
8. Do not be afraid to say to either the child or adult, "I am sorry I cannot understand you. Please say it again!"
9. Remember that we all have some sort of disability but it may not always show.
  - Neurological disorders for example are not always physically obvious and not all disabilities are physical.
10. Do not show pity or charity. The disabled person wants to be treated as an equal in all things. They want the chance to prove themselves.
11. Do not separate the disabled person from their wheelchair or crutches unless they ask you to remove them. They may want them close by.
12. When talking to a person in a wheelchair, and the conversation lasts for more than a few minutes, consider sitting down or kneeling to get yourself on the same eye-level.
  - Children also like to be at eye-level with an adult.

13. Be aware of or learn the wheelchair user's capabilities. Some users can walk or walk with aid, and use the wheelchair mainly to conserve energy or move quickly. Some wheelchair users have difficulty walking on uneven surfaces such as gravel, grass or dirt and thus use their chairs to help safely negotiate obstacles.

14. Don't make up your mind about a person with a disability ahead of time. You may be surprised at how wrong you are in judging his interest or ability.

15. ENJOY YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH THE DISABLED PERSON.

HIS PHILOSOPHY AND GOOD HUMOR WILL GIVE YOU INSPIRATION.

### **SAFETY:**

- **Emergency Dismount:**
  - Horses are mounted/dismounted on the left or near side. Use this side unless it is safer to use far side.
  - Normally the buddy is the sidewalker on the near side but consider switching sides if the other sidewalker is taller, stronger etc. Make sure the team discusses this the first night.
  - Tell rider to prepare for dismount, wrap arms around rider's waist.
  - Tell rider to clear feet from stirrups. Verify that feet are clear with far side sidewalker or leader.
  - Lift and turn rider towards back of saddle. Turn your back to horse. Move away from horse to safe place and wait for directions from instructor. [DEMONSTRATE DISMOUNT]
- **Falls:**
  - If rider falls and/or gets kicked have rider stay on ground (if it's safe to do so). Try to position yourself between horse and rider.
  - Notify instructor who will complete five-point test to determine rider's condition.
  - Instructor will determine if rider can continue, should leave the ring or needs further assistance.
- **Threatening Weather:**
  - Instructor will determine if rider should be dismounted and escorted to nearest shelter.

### **MAINTAINING BALANCE:**

- Depending on rider's abilities and experience there may be one or two sidewalkers.
- Riders requiring more hands on assistance will be wearing a white safety belt. Be sure not to pull on belt or lean on horse. [DEMONSTRATE BELT]
- Riders requiring less "hands on" assistance should be supported by bracing the upper leg.
  - This method of assistance is also used when trotting. [DEMONSTRATE UPPER LEG SUPPORT]. Sidewalkers should consider switching sides often as this can become tiring, especially with a tall horse.

**UNDERSTANDING AND FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS:**

- Sidewalker on inside of ring (nearest instructor) is responsible for relaying directions and assisting rider in carrying out directions.
- Repeat directions to rider if necessary; get rider excited about playing. Help rider focus on task at hand and avoid distractions.

**ENCOURAGING RIDER:**

- Encourage rider to try and do all movements without assistance.
- Praise rider often.
- Respond to direct questions from rider but don't let them lose focus on the task at hand.

**KEEPING TEAM INFORMED:**

- To function effectively there must be good communications among all team members (buddy, leader and sidewalker).
- Although each has specific responsibilities jointly they are responsible for the safety and enjoyment of the rider. Therefore, they must not hesitate to communicate any concerns or questions.

## **DURING THE GAMES**

Games are important in every lesson. The games may be simple, such as “Simon Says”, or “Red Light/Green Light”, or more complex, like “Musical Circles”. The sidewalker plays an important part in every game. The instructor will give the rules for the game to be played. It is your job to make sure that your rider understands the directions and to get the rider excited about playing. Allow the rider to do as much as possible by their self.

Their real accomplishment comes when they do it their self, and they know that they have.

By the way, make sure you praise your rider often when they do well - they'll work even harder the next time.



**“God, grant me serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.”**

## **DEFINITION OF DISABILITIES**

All team members working with people who have disabilities should know what is involved with each disability and its special considerations as much as it is possible. When team members have this knowledge and understanding, a safer ride can be provided for the disabled person.

### **ATTENTION-DEFICIT HYPERACTIVE/HYPOACTIVE DISORDERS (ADHD)**

This diagnosis is frequently associated with learning disabilities and has gone through a multitude of redefinitions. At different times, attention-deficit or hyperactivity/hypoactivity were considered entirely separate diagnoses. Usually onset of ADHD is during pre-pubescence or early childhood. It might be most appropriate to view this diagnosis as a multiple handicap. Strategic reinforcement and consequences for behavior are important for the student to learn. Appropriate and inappropriate behaviors need to be addressed immediately and in the same consistent manner. Persons with ADHD generally have poor insight into their behaviors and frequently avoid accepting responsibility of their actions.

Riding may help increase group activity skills, cooperation, and their ability to follow instructions, as well as, focus their attention. It may decrease hyperactivity and help calm them down.

### **AUTISM**

Autism is a neurological disorder which produces the following characteristics in those affected:

1. Self-preoccupation--may not relate to people; avoids eye contact; has delayed or no social smile.
2. Communication dysfunction--lack of speech or unusual speech patterns; may repeat what you say ("parrot-like"); difficulty in expressing wishes.
3. Basically normal physical development with abnormal repetitive movement actions, such as moving the fingers continuously.
4. Tends to get "stuck" in an action or obsessed with something such as a possession, spinning an object, rocking or perseverance of an idea, and may be fearful of new things.
5. May appear deaf or blind although they or she can hear and see.
6. May be smart in specific skills. Generally has excellent memory. Autism may be very mild with near normal functioning to very severe with functional retardation.
7. Function can vary from hour to hour or day to day; for instance a skill can be performed at one time but not at the next. Autism can exist in combination with other problems created by organic brain disorders.

The benefits of therapeutic riding for Autistic riders, is the human-animal bonding and the constant physical stimulation which helps with sensory processing.

## VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Most people with vision disorders have low to partial vision. Normal vision is considered 20/20. A person who is legally blind has 20/200 vision or worse with corrective glasses. This means that a legally blind person can see at 20 feet what a normal eye sees at 200 feet. A legally blind person may see a finger in front of his face and general hand movements, and may be able to tell where light comes from or to see light but not know it's source.

Blind people need to learn their other senses such as touching, hearing, and smelling to get around. They might also carry a cane so that they can feel their surroundings. A person may be blind from birth or it can occur at any time in a person's life.

People will cope with their blindness in many ways. You can help by telling the rider what is around them. Another way you can help is by reminding the rider to pay attention and listen for the instructor's directions.

Riding may help to orient them to body parts and their body in space, and improves balance, posture, coordination and relaxation.

## CEREBRAL PALSY

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is caused by damage to the motor area of the brain. It is an injury and not a disease, characterized by a lack of ability to control the body. The injury can occur before birth, during birth or during the infant development years. CP can be in combination with other brain disorders such as seizures, mental retardation, vision and hearing problems or learning disabilities. All motor abilities of the body can be affected.

CP can be very mild or severe which results in minimal to extreme movement and coordination difficulties. In CP, the body tends to move in unity. If you ask the rider to raise the head, the chest and arms may rise. When bending the arm, the legs will bend. These actions are not under the rider's control. Types of CP include the following:

1. Spasticity is abnormally high tone (stiff arms, legs) which makes movement difficult. It feels as if your arms were grasping a 70 pound boulder when picking up the reins. A person with severe spasticity cannot regulate the amount of movement or tension the arm produces. The rider will also have difficulty with balance and staying upright.
2. Hypotonicity is the lack of solidity to a muscle, or the lack of "tone". Muscles controlling the joints are weak. A person with Hypotonicity generally moves more slowly than the average person, may be heavier, has difficulty with balance, has trouble keeping the back straight and has poor endurance. They may have a problem feeling or holding their arms and legs as instructed since they may not "feel" their position.

3. Athetosis is excessive and seemingly purposeless erratic movement. It is as though the limb cannot decide if it will reach or retreat. The muscles alternate between normal and low tone. Posture lacks stability. The body and limbs tend to move at the same time. Speech is usually affected.

4. Ataxia is the opposite of spastic. Loss of balance resulting in muscles that are very loose or “rag- doll” like. Very poor balance. The whole body is usually involved.

5. Rigidity refers to extreme stiffness. There is constant excessive muscle tightness with little ability to move or bend.

6. Mixed symptoms, such as spasticity and athetosis, are present in the majority of those with CP. Some people may have spasms in addition to other problem. Spasms are sudden involuntary muscle contractions which cannot be relaxed at will. They usually will last only a brief time, then relax. Spasms are like a “Charlie horse” and may be painful.

The general aim of riding for cerebral palsy conditions are to improve posture, increase relaxation, and decrease muscle stiffness while providing an enjoyable exercise and teaching a new skill.

### CVA (STROKE)

A cerebrovascular accident (CVA) is caused by a disturbance of the blood supply generally to one side of the brain which causes motor impairment (loss of speech or arm and leg movement) to the opposite side of the body. Incidence of stroke rises with age but can occur in infants as well as older people. A CVA can cause mild to severe neurological damage or death. The dysfunction can improve over time, from months to years, or the individual may heal completely. Some individuals may continue to have mild to severe problems. A child will usually recover more quickly than an adult.

Riding may help to improve balance, posture, coordination and helps to strengthen weak muscles.

### HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Impaired hearing or loss of hearing can be caused by problems with the ear structure, by nerve damage, or both. Hearing loss can be of varying levels. A hearing impaired person uses the other senses for communication: vision, vibrations and feeling. The rider will need to use his eyes much more to be aware of his surroundings.

Riding helps to increase self-esteem, balance, posture and coordination. When working with a hearing impaired person it is important that you do not chew gum and please speak slowly and distinctly.

## DOWNS SYNDROME

Individuals with Down's syndrome, a birth defect, can have any of the following characteristics which can affect their ability to ride. Intellectual function can be near normal to severely retarded. Muscles tend to be soft and floppy. The joints tend to be loose and almost disjointed. Hands and fingers may be small. Their limbs are out of proportion to their trunk. There may be a poor ability to feel or control movements.

Balance may be poor. Persons with Down's syndrome tend to act younger than their real age but they are usually pleasant and affectionate people who love to ride and to please.

Riding helps to improve balance, posture and coordination. It also provides the rider with enjoyment and a new skill.

## MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Muscular dystrophy (MD) has a higher incidence in males than in females. It is a progressive disease of normal muscle tissue in which the muscle tissue is replaced by fat tissue, resulting in stiff joints and extreme fatigue. The disease occurs in the first five years of life. The disease usually starts in the hip. Children with MD usually tire and get cold very easily.

Riding may help to maintain posture, balance and coordination as long as possible. Riding also helps to prolong the use of arms and legs.

## MENTAL RETARDATION

Mental retardation (MR) is a disorder due to brain damage, underdevelopment of the brain or genetic disorders. Difficulties that result can be seen in mobility, vision, hearing, speech, understanding, judgment, and behavior. The level of retardation is based on comparison of the level of functioning to the average child or adult of the same age. The mild or educable mentally retarded (E.M.R.) person is an individual who has an I.Q. below 70 points. This individual can learn basic reading and math, understand social skills and functions independently in self-care skills.

The moderate or trainable mentally retarded (T.M.R.) individual functions at 50% of the average ability and is considered "trainable". This means that the individual can usually function independently within the home but needs supervision outside the home due to difficulties with judgment and immaturity in handling social activities.

A severely or profound mentally retarded (P.M.R.) person may seem less retarded as a child than as an adult. The mildly and moderately retarded persons generally do very well with basic riding. The severely retarded person can gain from exercise and the unique stimulus of riding.

Riding aids posture, balance, and coordination. It also helps provide a recreational activity and teaches them a new sporting skill. It encourages them to be independent and may help them to follow directions.

## MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a disease which begins in young adults. There are lesions in the myelin sheath of the nerves which cause “short out”. These can be scattered throughout and part of the nervous system. There may be inflammation, pain, destruction of tissue, weakness, or there may be distorted sensation, contractures, unsteadiness, double vision or loss of vision, dizziness, and mixed emotional states. Memory and attention can be affected. Intelligence is usually normal. The rider will be sensitive to extreme hot and cold weather which may increase his symptoms. There can be acute and good periods. Some people plateau for years. Riding may help the person to exercise enjoyably which is very important in this case.

## SEIZURES

Seizures are a symptom, not a disease. They represent abnormal electrical brain activity. Seizures can be inherited or be due to injury. There are four types of seizures. They are classified according to the duration of the abnormal activity. When a child has a seizure he/she will look like they are going to pass out. They may lose their balance. If a rider that you are helping begins to have a seizure, notify the instructor and stay calm.

## SPINA BIFIDA

Spina bifida is a disorder caused by a birth defect to a part of the spinal cord. There is damage to the nerves of the body below the site of cord damage; the degree of dysfunction depends on the extent to the spinal cord. Partial or total paralysis usually occurs below the point of disclosure. Due to paralysis, people with SB have orthopedic problems. They may use a wheel chair.

**“The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man.”**



## **A Safety Angel**

By: Kim Sella

Morning dew is glistening,  
the day begins anew,  
With it comes the knowledge  
of innumerable tasks to do.

And yet, in spite of everything,  
there are those who find a way,  
to put a smile on someone's face  
to make somebody's day.

It takes a special person  
to put everything aside.  
To take that time and spend it  
helping people learn to ride.

A child sits astride his horse,  
and yet he feels no fear,  
He's safe within the knowledge,  
that you are walking near.

The day progresses onward,  
Different students come to ride,  
Different faces, different horses-  
Different angels at their side.

Many thanks to those of you  
who take the time each day,  
to be that "safety angel"  
Helping others find their way.

Each of you is precious,  
Unique in your own right  
Filling someone else's day  
With love and joy and light.

Kim Sella is a volunteer at Windridge Therapeutic Equestrian Center of East Texas,  
Longview, TX.

*Triple R Ranch Special Equestrians would like to dedicate this poem to all of our special  
"safety angels"*

## **TRIPLE R RANCH SPECIAL EQUESTRIANS EMERGENCY PROCEDURE**

If the horse becomes overexcited, but the rider seems able to handle the situation, the sidewalkers should each place an arm across the rider's thigh and grip the front of the saddle securely. Then the sidewalkers will be in the best position for their own security, for keeping up with the horse, and for the rider's safety even though the horse may be moving erratically. The instructor or leader may prefer to ask for an emergency dismount. The near sidewalker handles this and tells the rider he/she is going to dismount.

While the sidewalker wraps his arms around the rider's waist, asks the rider to clear his feet from the stirrups. Then the rider is pulled off the horse and moved to a safe place. The second sidewalker, if present, should help with the stirrups. The leader should make every effort to hold the horse. Should the horse get loose, every leader in the ring must halt and stand in front of his horse. All sidewalkers should be alert as the loose horse may run into a group.

If a rider falls off or gets kicked, DO NOT let him get up right away, have him stay on the ground for a minute or so while the instructor completes the FIVE POINT TEST. If there is no dizziness or pain, assist him slowly to a standing position. If there is ANY dizziness or pain, DO NOT let him get back up on the horse, but have him sit down again. If there is no dizziness or pain, the instructor may remount the rider at his/her discretion.

In case of injury to a fallen rider, the instructor may ask all others in the ring to leave quietly or go to the end of the ring placing one person, such as the assistant instructor, in charge. The instructor will instruct a sidewalker to call 911, if required, while he/she remains with the rider.



## **IN THE EVENT OF A LOOSE HORSE**

### **RETRIEVING THE LOOSE HORSE(S):**

- Carry a halter with lead rope over your shoulder.
- A small amount of gram in a can/bucket may encourage the horse to come to you.
- Do not chase the horse.
- Approach horse from the side, walk slowly and talk in a low soothing voice.
- Put lead rope over horse's neck first, then put halter on with lead rope attached.

### **LOOSE HORSE IN THE ARENA:**

- Have riders halt on the rail.
- Horse leaders should stand in front of their horses.
- Sidewalkers remain with assigned rider and prepare to assist with dismount upon request from the instructor.
- If necessary the leaders will be asked to lead horses out of the arena to the hitching area, sidewalkers and buddies will exit with riders to the wagon shed area.

### **LOOSE HORSE IN THE BARN:**

- If participants are in the barn, a staff member or designated volunteer should lead them out of the barn.
- Close any barn doors leading to open areas.
- Herd loose horse into empty stall.

## **IF A HORSE STEPS ON YOUR FOOT**

### **Prevention:**

- When leading a horse always look in the direction you are going in.
- When turning the horse, turn the horse away from you and not towards you if at all possible. If it is not possible, extend your right hand out to touch the horse's neck while holding the lead rope in your left hand. By doing this, you are keeping the horse at an arms distance away from you and your feet.
- Protect riders from getting stepped on by placing yourself or your leg/foot between the horse and the rider while doing ground work, mounting and dismounting.

### **What To Do If The Horse Steps On Your Foot:**

- Try to count to 10 before you react so as not to spook the horse or scare the rider.
- If horse is moving, he will move off your foot automatically.
- If horse is standing still, put your body weight against the horse's shoulder to unbalance him so he will lift his hoof.
  
- If your foot is painful, stop the horse and alert the instructor so that someone may take your place.

- Take off your show and assess the injury.
- Follow first aid instructions for care.
- Fill out an accident/incident report as soon as possible.

## **HORSE BITING**

### **Prevention:**

- Never feed horses from your hand. Your fingers may be mistaken for carrots and the horse may get in the habit of nibbling and biting at you for treats. Always feed from a bucket.
- Do not pet the horse on the nose. Always pet the horse on the neck.

### **What To Do In The Event The Horse Bites You:**

#### **Volunteer**

- If there is no rider on the horse's back, take corrective action immediately (within 3 seconds) so the horse knows what he is being reprimanded for. A hard slap on the neck should be sufficient. Never hit a horse on the face or head.
- If a rider is mounted, do not slap the horse since it might cause your rider to come unseated.
- Alert the instructor.
- Get first aid if needed.
- Fill our accident/incident report as soon as possible.

#### **Rider**

- If your rider gets bitten, move rider away from the horse as quickly as possible to avoid any other incidents.
- Alert the instructor immediately.
- Instructor will initiate first aid if needed.
- Volunteer and Rider should fill out accident/incident report as soon as possible.

#### **Corrective Action for Horse**

- Take corrective action within 3 minutes of bite.
- After incident is reported to the instructor, the instructor after examining the situation will decide whether or not the horse will be used for the rest of the lesson.
- The instructor may decide to eliminate the horse from the program until further training has been done to correct the biting.

## KICKING

### Prevention

- Always approach the horse from the shoulder and not from behind. Speak to the horse as you approach to let him know you are there.
- When walking around the horse, either walk out of kicking range or walk up close to the horse's rump with your hand on him so that you can feel if he is going to kick and can push yourself away.
- When leading or riding a horse, always keep a safe distance from the horse in front of you. Horses will kick if they feel another horse is getting too close behind.
- If you are a leader and your rider cannot stop the horse before he gets too close to the horse in front, take control and either slow or stop the horse for your rider.

### In Case Of A Kick

- Instructor will assign a volunteer to call 911 if needed.
- The Instructor will attend to the victim while the assistant instructor may ask the other riders to dismount.
- Instructor will perform the 5 point test if needed.
- Follow First Aid instructions until help comes.
- Fill out an accident/incident report as soon as possible



# **IN CASE OF HIGH WINDS**

## **PREPARATIONS AND EVACUATION**

### **Participants**

The decision to cancel class upon inclement weather is made by the program coordinator in consultation with other staff members. All participants and staff are notified prior to scheduled class time.

If sudden inclement weather occurs during class activities the instructor has the ultimate responsibility for the participants, personnel and horses. All staff will support evacuation and safety relocation.

The designated area recommended is between two strong structures. The designated area at Triple R Ranch is the Cafe behind the main office.

## **LIGHTING SAFETY**

Lightning is dangerous because it random and unpredictable. Be prepared to act quickly.

1. Know the “Flash-to-Bang” measurement of lighting distance. This is the time from SEEING THE STROKE to HEARING THE THUNDER. For each 5 second count, lightning is 1 mile away. So, 25 seconds = 5 miles away. At a count of 15 seconds (3 miles) take immediate defensive actions.
2. IF OUTDOORS: Avoid water. Avoid metal objects such as gates, fences, machinery, etc. Avoid open spaces such as open fields. Stay away from tall, isolated objects like trees, or posts. Find shelter in a building (the Cafe) or in a car, truck, or van with windows completely shut.
3. If lightning is striking nearby, you should:
  - A. Remove all metal objects.
  - B. Avoid direct contact with other people.
  - C. Crouch down, grab your ankles, and bend forward, in a position where your head is not the highest part of your body and where your head does not touch the ground. DO NOT lie flat on the ground.
4. IF INDOORS: Avoid water. Stay away from open doors and windows. Do not use the telephone or any electrical appliance. Remain inside until the storm has passed.
5. If a person is injured from lightning, initiate CPR. Call 911 immediately.

## **IN CASE OF LIGHTNING**

### In The Event of Lightning:

#### **Participants**

- If lightning occurs during class time, the instructor has the ultimate responsibility for the participants, personnel, and horses.
- At the first sign of lightning instructors will dismount all riders as quickly and calmly as possible.
- All staff will support evacuation and safety relocation.
- Buddies and sidewalkers will assist their riders over to the Café if the class is outside.
- Buddies and sidewalkers will assist their riders to their parents if they are seated in the indoor arena. Otherwise, they will remain with their riders in the observation/bleacher area of the indoor arena.
- Everyone will remain in the designated location and follow all lightning safety rules until the storm has passed.

#### **Horses**

- If the class is outside, all Leaders with the assistance of the assistant instructor will take the horses into the barn and put them in their tie stalls. If there is time, approved barn personnel will remove the horses' bridles and hang them up in tie stall but leave the saddles on.
- If it is safe after all horses have been secured, the assistant instructor and leaders will take appropriate cover.

## **IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE**

### **In The Event of a Fire:**

#### **EVACUATE ALL PARTICIPANTS!!**

- If a Barn Class is in session the Head Instructor will give directions and will take responsibility of evacuating participants.
- Buddies will walk riders out to the nearest accessible door to designated area (Wagon Shed).
- Once all riders have left the barn, horse handlers will walk horses out to the nearest paddock.

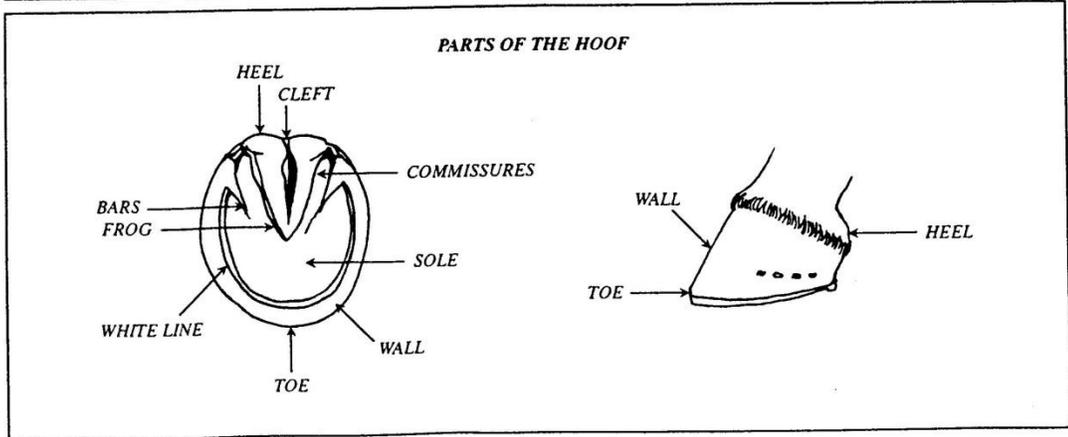
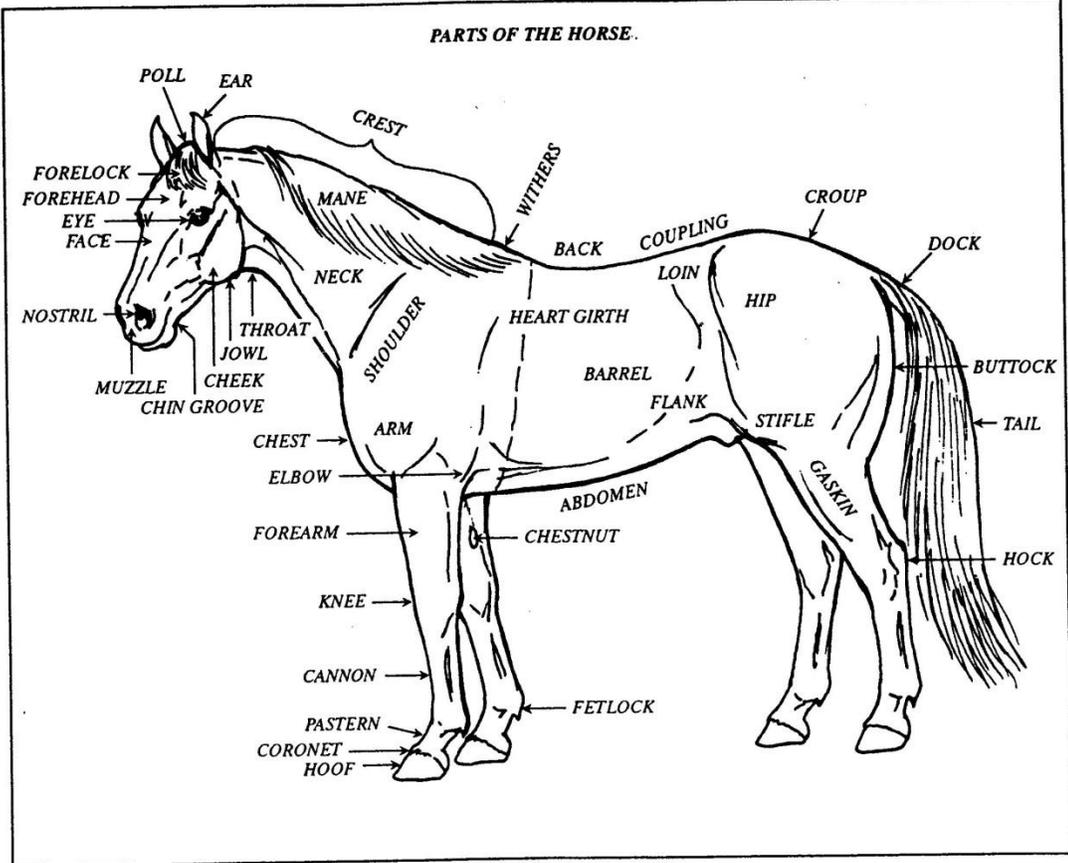
#### **CALL 911**

- Emergency information/procedures with emergency numbers and directions to the site should be posted at each phone (small tack room, barn office and main office).

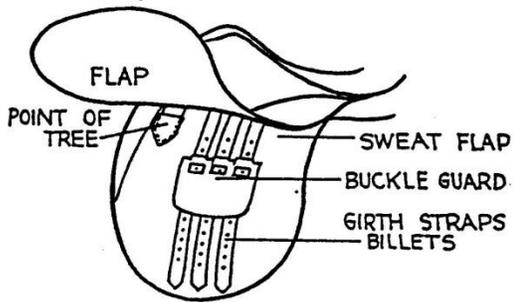
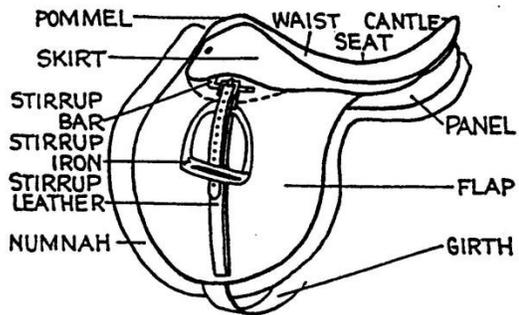
## **HORSE EVACUATION**

- Begin evacuating horses when all participants are out of the barn.
- Survey scene to make sure it is safe to enter structure.
- Evacuate horses through the nearest door.
- Begin with the horses closest to the fire.
- If at all possible, horses should be lead to the nearest paddock.
- If not lead horses out nearest accessible door. See diagram on reverse side of this page.
- Frightened horses may not want to leave their stalls or the barn, talk to them in a reassuring tone of voice. It may be necessary to cover their eyes.
- Do not turn loose in barn unless the horse is unmanageable or refuses to leave barn, make sure horse is free and move on to the next horse.
- Once outside a horse may try to run back into the barn, be aware of that possibility.

**PARTS OF THE HORSE AND FOOT**



**PARTS OF THE ENGLISH SADDLE**



CURRY COMB



STIFF OR DANDY BRUSH



SOFT BRUSH

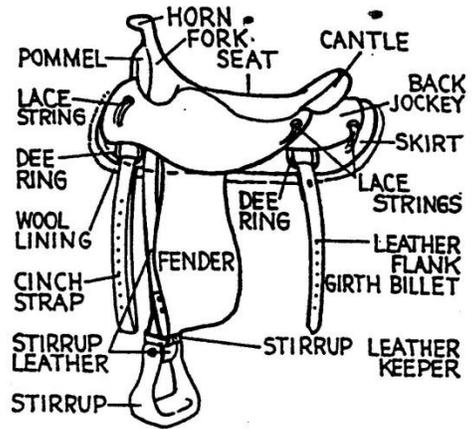


TAIL AND MANE COMB



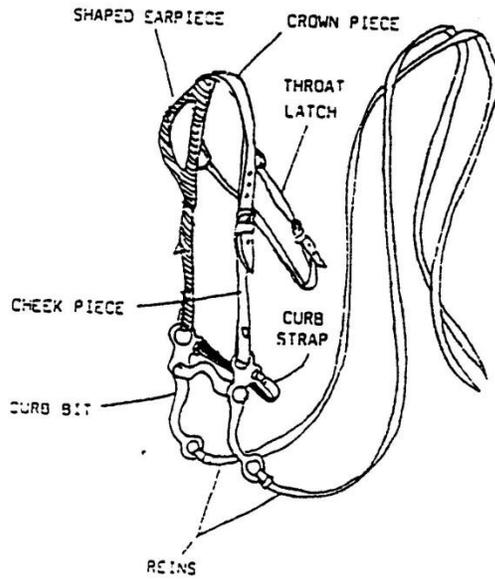
HOOF PICK

**PARTS OF THE WESTERN SADDLE**



SHAPED EARPIECE

CROWN PIECE



TRIPLE R RANCH SPECIAL EQUESTRIANS

VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTION REVIEW

1. When is a rider required to wear a safety helmet? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Give 3 reasons for providing horseback riding to the disabled. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. When should you pity the disabled? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. How should you treat a handicapped person? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. When is it alright to remove crutches, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, etc. from their presence?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Give 2 reasons why volunteers should wear sturdy shoes or boots. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the correct way to approach a horse?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. How should you correctly hold the lead rope when holding or leading a horse?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Normally what side of the horse do you lead from?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. When leading a horse, particularly a slow one, what should you not do?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Why is it important that we perform a tack check before the rider mounts?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What are the rider precautions to take when tightening the girth (English saddle) or the cinch (Western saddle)?

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13. What is the leader's major responsibility? Explain.

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14. What is the sidewalker's responsibility? Explain.

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15. Give 2 responsibilities of the buddy.

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16. What do you do if your rider falls?

- As the leader:

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- As the buddy/sidewalker:

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17. When holding a rider's safety belt, what do you have to be careful NOT to do?

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18. What side of the horse does the rider normally mount/dismount from? \_\_\_\_\_

19. When should you help a rider mount/dismount?

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20. After dismounting, when can a rider return to the Wagon Shed by themselves?

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21. What are some possible responses you might give if a rider insists on talking to you during the lesson?

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22. What should you do as a leader or sidewalker if there is a loose horse in the arena?

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23. How should you protect riders from getting stepped on by a horse while they are doing ground work, mounting or dismounting?

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24. Why is it not appropriate to feed horses from your hand or pet them on their noses?

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25. Where is the designated evacuation area in the event of high winds, lighting, etc.?

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26. When is it okay to discuss confidential information outside of this program?

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### Demonstration

1. Point out the following parts of the horse:

Forehead Neck Withers Shoulder Chest Back Rump

2. Point out the following parts of the saddle and bridle (tack):

Cantle Seat Pommel Leathers/Fender Stirrups Girth/Cinch

Horn Reins Bit

Please demonstrate the following:

- Fitting a belt and helmet properly to a rider.
- How to check and tighten the girth/cinch.
- How to approach and lead a horse up to the mounting ramp.
- Two leader positions.
- Two sidewalking positions.
- Two ways of bracing/supporting the lower leg.
- Showing a rider how to hold the reins.

TRIPLE R RANCH SPECIAL EQUESTRIANS  
VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

If student, name of school: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about our program? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special talents or skills that could benefit the program? Creative work, media, photography, video, fund raising, grant writing, carpentry, electrical, organizational, O.T., P.T., etc.?

If so please list, we need you!!!

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you had any experience with horses? (If so, describe)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you had any experience with handicapped persons? (If so, describe)

\_\_\_\_\_

Other experience which might be helpful?

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you walk for 45 minutes and jog for short distances? \_\_\_\_\_

Given a chance to change sides frequently, can you hold your arm above shoulder height and support a modest weight? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any health conditions such as high blood pressure, allergies, heart condition, knee injuries and/or shoulder or arm weakness that could prevent you from physically assisting a rider during riding lessons and/or in an emergency situation?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please check which classes you will be able to volunteer for:

Class a 6:00-7:00 P.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Class B 7:00 - 8:00 P.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the dates of any classes you may have to miss:

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### **Photo Release**

I hereby (please check) consent\_\_\_ do not consent\_\_\_ to the use and reproduction by Triple R Ranch of any and all photographs and or audiovisual materials made of me/my son/my daughter/my ward for promotional printed material or for any other use for the benefit of the program.

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Confidentiality**

I understand the confidential nature of all records maintained by Triple R Ranch Special Equestrians Riding Program. I agree not to disclose or divulge any information contained in these records.

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Liability Release**

As a volunteer at the Triple R Ranch Special Equestrians Riding Program, I acknowledge the risks of a horseback riding program. However, I feel that the possible benefits to myself and the clients I work with are greater than the risk assumed. I hereby, intending to be legally bound, for myself, my heirs and assigns, executors or administrators, waive and release forever all claims for damages against Triple R Ranch, it's board, instructors, therapists, volunteers and/or employees for any and all injuries and/or losses I may sustain while participating in the Triple R Ranch Special Equestrians Riding Program.

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**In Case Of Emergency**

In the event emergency medical aid/treatment is required due to illness or injury while volunteering, I authorize Triple R Ranch to secure and retain medical treatment (including x-ray, surgery, hospitalization, and medication) and transportation if needed.

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (if under 18): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency:

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H): \_\_\_\_\_ (C): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H): \_\_\_\_\_ (C): \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Medical Facility \_\_\_\_\_

Health Insurance Co. \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_

**Non-Consent Plan**

I do/do not give my consent for emergency medical treatment/aid in the case of illness or injury during the process of rendering services or while on the property of Triple R Ranch. In the event emergency/aid is required, I wish the following procedures to take place:

Non-Consent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer, Parent/Guardian

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_