



Partners
Therapeutic Horsemanship
LAKESIDE, CALIFORNIA

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION GUIDELINES

PARTNERS THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP

www.partnersth.org

Program: 15689 Mountain Valley Place, Lakeside, CA 92040,

Mailing: 8590 Sunrise Lane, La Mesa, CA 91941

Volunteers Make It Work



"The broadest and maybe the most meaningful definition of volunteering: Doing more than you have to because you want to, in a cause you consider good."

~ Ivan Scheier

Volunteers are the backbone of nonprofit organizations, and that is certainly the case with Partners Therapeutic Horsemanship. Some of our volunteers have been with us for many years, and others are just beginning. All generously give the gift of time to make contact, provide encouragement and perhaps humor to make someone's day a bit more rewarding. Volunteers participate for many reasons, but whatever it may be, they provide support, skills, talents and abilities to give our riders and their families hope and strength and the courage to face another day. They may never know the profound effect they make on someone's life.

Because of our volunteers, our horses are well cared for, our riders are safe, and our program continues to exist to help those with special needs. We genuinely appreciate and value your commitment to Partners. For this, we thank you.

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better. It's not."* ~ Dr. Seuss

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

Partners Therapeutic Horsemanship is very proud of the experiences and services that it provides our clients. We offer a wonderful facility, highly trained horses, certified instructors and a volunteer staff that is the center of our program. Without our dedicated, loyal volunteer staff we would be unable to continue our important work.

Thank you so much for your interest in Partners TH. As the core of our organization, our volunteers are required to make a firm personal commitment of day(s) and time(s) when Partners can expect your help. When you provide this information that means that the client, their parent or driver to the facility, horse, staff and instructor are counting on you. You are crucial to the success of the lesson, the rider's positive experience and our program!

Since we must plan in advance for the lessons, you are required to give 24 hour notice if you cannot attend at your time. To make this easy, you may let us know when you aren't available by either posting to our Facebook group page or by texting/calling one of the phone numbers we will provide.

We realize that over time, your schedule may change. If so, please communicate this to the Director and you will be accommodated. Thank you so much for your dedication and much needed assistance in making the Partners experience a reality! We look forward to working with you and changing lives together!

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Providing therapeutic horsemanship as a unique means to improve the quality of life for those with special needs, their families and the community.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING 101

1. PTH Overview and Introductions, Mission Statement

Who we serve, types of disabilities, days and times of lessons

2. Volunteer Job Description/Levels

Introduction to Staff /Instructors & Volunteers

3. Review Safety/Waivers/Attire/Sign-in procedures/Confidentiality

Appropriate interaction with riders and parents

4. Tour of Facilities, and brief description of the Horses

5. Intro to Basic Volunteer Duties:

Lesson timing & preparation:

Review lesson schedule chart for horse and tack assignments

(Introduce horse record chart)

Set out tack, grooming bucket.

Haltering

Handling - Basic do's and don'ts

Grooming – how, why

Arrival and Departure of Riders – Safety first

6. A Volunteer's role during lessons:

Side-walking - Duties including rider safety, encouraging participation but not to the point of distraction. Mounting Ramp.

Leading - Duties including mounting ramp, handling dos & don'ts, proper leading and horse awareness skills.

Only Instructors may mount or supervise mounting of riders

Misc. support in Barn & Stable area, i.e. Feeding, tack cleaning, gardening, raking & general clean up; organize tack, groom horses for the following lesson. (See included flyer)

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7. Role playing/practice lesson.

Teach and encourage safety checks & warm up exercises.

Basic Dos & Don'ts - i.e. Autism – Do be quiet, be patient, use simple requests, Don't be too chatty. Add physical help/reminder for legs to "kick", hand over hand-over-hand & arm for steering. Check foot position, stirrup length.

Do be encouraging.

Safety – Always speak up if you feel there is a safety issue. You are our eyes and ears in the arena and on the grounds. Please let an Instructor know if you hear anything that is unsafe or inappropriate.

Please do not take it personally if an instructor or staff member seems to "bark" an order. It may be a safety issue. As instructors & staff, we have developed a keen eye to observe among other things - the entire arena, the horses reactions and body language, riders, and activities outside the arena that may affect our lessons.

Initial Training will not include feeding, hotwalker/lunging, and arena set up but they will be mentioned as included duties, with training provided later. Additionally, specifics on each of the horses have been provided for you to review.

8. Q&A Session

Volunteer Requirements, Commitments, Communication (i.e. Facebook)

Estimated Time - 2 hours

Volunteering is the Most Valuable Job!

You will be surprised at what you will learn, and how much you will enjoy our great group of people. But the best part is the payment - the joy that comes from working from the heart!

Volunteer Training 102

1. Horse handling

Putting on a halter
Putting on a fly mask
Leading a horse out of corral
Locking the gate with the chain
Using the cross tie or hitching rail

2. Horse grooming

Pick Feet – hoof pick
Curry, hard/soft brush usage;
-check for scrapes, bumps, anything unusual, etc.
Comb/brush mane
Apply fly spray/wipe (Spray is for the body, wipe is for the face)
After lessons or turn out
-brush, give a sponge bath or rinse off with hose, recheck feet

3. Tacking a horse

Saddling - Bareback, English, Western
Bridling with ring, or halter with clip on reins. Note various rein lengths.
Horse Boots – splint, and bell boots
Cross-tie a horse with a bridle (Don't)

4. Horse tack

Saddles- *Review saddle list posted for saddle fit*
Dressage (D), Forward/Hunt (E)/AP, Western (W)
Pads- English cotton pad, English fleece pads, lift and spine pads.
Western Pads- various
Bareback Pads

5. Other equip:

Helmets, Half chaps, Riding crop, Dressage whip
Lunge line, Lunge whip

6. Working in the ring

Sidewalker

1. Responsibility for the student
2. Reinforce Instructors directions if necessary.
3. What to do if there is an incident in the ring
4. No excessive chit chat
5. Patience

Horse Leader

1. Responsibility for the horse – keep an eye on your horses head (ears/eyes)
2. Correct technique
3. Allow the rider to instruct the horse
4. What to do if there is an incident in the ring

Top 10 Reminders for Safety around Horses

While there are many things to be mindful of with and around horses, PTH promotes the following rules as the first and foremost of everything you will learn. Again, these do not include EVERYTHING that is required to be safe, but this is a good first step in your journey of partnering with horses.

IN CASE YOU'RE NOT SURE – PLEASE ASK!!

- 1) **Wear sturdy shoes or boots** that will protect your feet if the horse steps on them. No sandals or thin shoes!
- 2) **Be calm and quiet** (no running or yelling). Sudden moves can cause a horse to shy (jump sideways) or kick out.
- 3) **Treats are only put in the horse's feed bucket – never hand feed.** Horses can very quickly become greedy and mistake fingers for carrots.
- 4) **Do not pet horses on the face** – only their necks and shoulders. By touching their faces you are invading their personal space and encouraging them to bite in order to defend that space.
- 5) **Gates should be wide open when going through** so the horse doesn't bump either you or them self. The bump, or getting caught on the gate, could startle the horse and result in you being trampled or dragged. Always close the gate behind you or ask someone to do it.
- 6) **Leading a horse with lead rope.** Do not hook your fingers through the halter straps, rings or the bit. Never loop lead ropes, lounge lines, or reins around your hands or any other body part. If the horse pulls away, you could be dragged.
- 7) **If a horse gets loose – stop, stand still and out of the way, STAY CALM** and keep other horses quiet, calm, and, most preferably, contained. Wait for instructions or quietly get a halter and retrieve the horse.
- 8) **Never stand directly behind a horse.** When grooming the tail, stand to one side and pull the tail gently across to groom. The safest place to stand is beside the horse's shoulder where you can see each other, or about 10 or more feet away.
- 9) **Bend over when cleaning a horse's hooves** or putting on leg wraps, don't squat or kneel, that way if the horse moves you can quickly stand aside.
- 10) **When in doubt – ASK FOR HELP!**

GROOMING TIPS

Always keep an eye on the horse's eyes and ears

When grooming the flank belly or hind legs, keep free hand gently touching the loin area. You will be able to feel if he tenses up.

Groom systematically, starting at the same place with each tool and working over the body in the same order. Starting on the horse's left side. (The near side). By having all of us use the same method, we eliminate an area of potential stress for our horses.

Currying and brushing should be done vigorously and quickly as they are forms of massage, but pay attention to sensitive spots. You may use a curry in one hand and brush in the other, using the curry to clean you brush. Use a softer brush on the horses face, stiffer brush on the legs.

- 1. Pick feet - nudge weight to opposite foot and say “*pick it up*”.**
Start on horse's left front, to left rear, to right rear, finish with right front
- 2. Curry comb - circular motion followed by brushing**
- 3. Stiff brush - should be cleaned regularly with curry as you brush**
- 4. Soft brush - should be cleaned regularly with curry as you brush**
- 5. Wipe eyes and nostrils with a wet, clean rag**
- 6. Fly Spray or wipe if needed.**
- 7. You may brush the mane but please do not brush the tail. That is done occasionally when we bathe and condition, otherwise the fragile hairs tend to break and the tail become thin.**



General Guidelines for Working With Individuals on the Autism Spectrum (ASD)

- Show what you mean... provide visual cues or show what you want done.
- Teach in a one-to-one setting when teaching new skills.
- Divide and conquer – break the goal or objective down into smaller tasks and teach them in sequence to accomplish the larger goal.
- Decrease the distance between student and person or object to which he or she is to focus on.
- Pause after giving instructions, a directive, or when asking questions for delayed processing of information by these students.
- Simplify language when giving instructions or providing verbal information.
Don't talk too much.
- ***Avoid chatter and extra noises.*** Some students may be overwhelmed by too much sound/noise/talking and block out everything.
- Avoid asking questions. Show them what is expected.
- Provide preparatory versus corrective information.
- Well ahead of the new experience let the student know behavioral expectations and practice targeted skills and responses.
- It can be helpful not to touch children with autism spectrum but that varies with every student.
- Try not to transition a student too quickly from activity to activity.
- Keep in mind that children rely heavily on visual symbols and actions to understand expectations, to predict what will be happening and express wants and needs.