



**Together ... People & Horses
Challenge ♦ Strengthen ♦ Inspire**

Where people of all ages with special needs participate in therapeutic horseback riding and other horse-related activities.

Serving individuals in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Countries.
www.tecfarm.org • (269) 429-0671

Rider Handbook

PO Box 1250 • Niles, MI 49120
Located at Stockbridge Equestrian Center • 615 N. M-140, Watervliet, MI 49098





Dear Rider,

The Therapeutic Equestrian Center would like to thank you for choosing to ride with us. In the following pages, we have provided informative guidelines to help answer questions that you and your family might ask.

We would like to acknowledge the Proud Equestrian Handbook and the Colorado Riding Center for the research and expertise which we have resourced for many of our procedures and practices.

If you find that you have a question that this handbook does not address, feel free to ask your Instructor or any member of our TEC Staff.

Again, we would like extend our heartfelt thanks and sincere welcome to Therapeutic Equestrian Center!



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About TEC

TEC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with special needs through horse-related activities. TEC is a place for people of all ages with special needs can participate in therapeutic horseback riding and other equine-related activities. TEC serves individuals in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties.

The TEC barn is located at:

Stockbridge Equestrian Center
615 N. M-140
Watervliet, MI 49098

TEC Mailing Address:

PO Box 1250
Niles, MI 49120

Rider Coordinator:

Lisa Mearing
Phone: (269) 806-6892
E-mail: meariment@aol.com

Volunteer Coordinator:

Beth Drollinger
Phone: (269) 932-5005
E-mail: beth.drollinger@gmail.com

PATH-Certified Riding Instructors:

Samie Ledyard: (269) 449-4353
Kelly Jimmerson: (517) 775-5071
Autumn Zick: (269) 921-4610
Colleen McNamara: (954) 461-5444

General TEC Info & Board Contact:

Autumn Zick, TEC Board President & PATH Riding Instructor
Phone: (269) 429-0671
E-mail: info@tecfarm.org



Therapeutic Equestrian Center Mission Statement

Our mission is to engage the power of horses to challenge people with special needs to build stronger bodies, minds, and spirits.

Therapeutic Equestrian Center Vision Statement

To make a positive difference in the quality of life of our riders and those who serve them.

To promote community awareness, involvement, and support.

To accomplish TEC's Core Values, which are to:

- *Provide a healing environment for individuals with special needs*
- *Support a humane partnership with our equine counterparts*
- *Achieve the highest standard in safety for our students, volunteers, staff and horses*
- *Encourage development of independence in our participants*
- *Provide goal-oriented equine-assisted activities to include educational, physical, recreational, and mental health goals*
- *Promote opportunities for continuing education and development of staff, volunteers and students*
- *Provide accessible, affordable lessons*
- *Operate a fiscally sound nonprofit organization*

Core Value Trigger Words

- Integrity and Accountability Excellence*
- Innovation*
- Cooperation and Collaboration*
- Respect*



Basic Lesson Information

Group Lessons: These sessions are 1 hour and 15 minutes in duration with up to 4 riders at a lesson. The cost to participate is \$25 per lesson/week. A \$25 deposit is required with the application to reserve your spot for the lessons. This application deposit is non-refundable and will be applied to the cost of lessons.

Grooming and Ground Lessons: These sessions are 30 minutes in duration. The cost to participate is \$15 per lesson/week. A \$15 deposit is required with the application to reserve your spot for the lessons. This application deposit is non-refundable and will be applied to the cost of lessons.

Semi-Private Lessons: These sessions are 45 minutes in duration with only 2 riders. The cost to participate is \$35 per lesson/week. A \$35 deposit is required with the application to reserve your spot for the lessons. This application deposit is non-refundable and will be applied to the cost of lessons.

Private Lessons: These sessions are 30 minutes in duration with only 1 rider. The cost to participate is \$30 per lesson/week. A \$30 deposit is required with the application to reserve your spot for the lessons. This application deposit is non-refundable and will be applied to the cost of lessons.

Full payment is preferred at the first lesson. We do allow for half payment at the first lesson with full payment due by end of the session period. Unfortunately, we are not able to except weekly payments at this time.



TEC's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Through the generosity of those who value the benefits of equine-assisted activities, the Therapeutic Equestrian Center (TEC) is able to offer the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to its participants.

TAP is awarded based on financial need, need for service and staff recommendations. All lessons require a minimum payment. Eligibility and TAP award amounts are determined on a case by case basis by the TAP Committee.

It is recommended that the recipient of any tuition assistance (or their parent/guardian/family member/designated individual) participate in at least one volunteer activity at TEC within 6 months of tuition assistance award. Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to: helping with lessons, barn chores, special projects, fundraisers, and serving on committees.

If you would like to apply for TAP at TEC, please complete the TAP Application Form and return it to TEC, along with all required documentation.

Your application cannot be considered until all required documentation has been received. All information submitted is kept confidential.

TEC's mailing address is:
Therapeutic Equestrian Center
PO Box 1250
Niles, MI 49120

Participants who receive tuition assistance are required to pay the minimum payment amount each week, regardless if they attend or if they cancel. If TEC cancels a class, participants receiving TAP will still have to pay the minimum payment amount due for that week. This amount can be credited to the next riding session.

If you have questions, please call (269) 429-0671 or e-mail info@tecfarm.org.



Before You Begin

All application forms can be found at www.tecfarm.org or a rider application packet will be issued to you by mail. In it, you will find:

- Registration & Schedule Request
- Participant Application & Health History
- Medical History and Physician's Statement
- Authorization for Emergency Treatment
- Participant Releases & Liability Waiver
- Liability Waiver - Minor or Adult - for Stockbridge Equestrian Center
- Dr. Brenda Churchill Scholarship Application
- Code of Conduct

These forms must be filled out and signed by you or your parents or guardian. The physician form must be completed and signed by your doctor. We ask that you update these forms with any changes to your physical or medical situation, medication etc. You will be periodically asked to initial and date or renew them yearly to indicate that the information remains the same.

All new riders are required to attend a 20 – 30-minute evaluation with one of our certified instructors. Contact the Therapeutic Equestrian Center office to schedule an appointment.

Please note: The completion of the rider evaluation does not guarantee placement in the program as class availability, safety and lesson structure must be determined in order to provide a safe positive experience for all involved.

Safety Equipment:

TEC provides all therapeutic riding equipment however, for health and sanitary reasons, **TEC recommends that all riders purchase their own safety helmet.** For more information, talk to your instructor.



Attendance, Cancellation and Refund Policies

If you are unable to attend a class due for any reason other than an immediate emergency, you must inform the office at least 24 hours before your scheduled class time. Our volunteers give of their time and their gas money so that you can ride. As a courtesy to them and the instructors, communication is critical. If you miss two lessons within a session without contacting TEC staff you will forfeit the remaining lessons for the session with no refund.

TEC does not offer a refund or reduced rate for missed classes.

If TEC must cancel a class due to weather extremes, you will be contacted as soon as possible. In most cases, inclement weather will not cancel a class. We ride rain or shine unless severe weather threatens (example: tornado warning.) Also, if in the summer time, the heat index reaches 89 degrees or higher, we will cancel lessons. If in the winter the temperature reaches 15 degrees or lower, we will cancel lessons. These are the only instances when a makeup class would be offered.

Cancellation calls Every effort will be made to contact you if TEC must cancel a class. We will try all numbers you have provided for us. If there is no answer, we will leave a message on any voice mail system you have.

If Therapeutic Equestrian Center cancels a class for any reason, the rider will be credited for the class in the following session. We will hold that credit for up to two sessions.

This information may be amended at the discretion of the Therapeutic Equestrian Center without advance notice.



What to Expect at Your Lesson

Proper Attire - Professional & Safe

- Every student rider **MUST** wear a helmet from the time that they arrive and until the time that they leave the premises.
- Wear sturdy shoes - no sandals, open toe or open back shoes.
- Dress in layers appropriate for each season - no shorts, spaghetti straps, or bare midriffs and bellies.
- Full length pants are required for riding. No shorts, cut-offs or Capri type pants are permissible.
- Wear no loose jewelry.
- Long hair must be worn away from the face preferably in a ponytail or braid.

When You Arrive At TEC

- Use the North drive of Stockbridge Equestrian Center
- Park in the area in front of the North Barn
- Make sure to put on your name tag
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early - you need to prepare for your lesson
- Caregivers please sign in for our attendance records
- Put on your helmet.
- Check announcement board
- Wait patiently and quietly until your volunteer indicates to begin
- Once ready, you and your volunteer may get your tack and enter the stable area to groom and tack the assigned horse.

In the Arena

- Stay with your assigned sidewalker while waiting to mount
- Listen for directions from your instructor and your sidewalker
- Only give the horse the commands that your instructor or sidewalker tell you to

After the Lesson

- As you are leaving the arena stay with your sidewalker
- Wait for directions from your instructor before helping to un-tack and groom.
- Put your name tag back on the board and remove your helmet only when you are leaving the premises



Family Members, Visitors and Observers

- Please refrain from sideline coaching and watch quietly. Allow your rider to take instruction from the PATH-certified instructors.
- The grooming area is off limits to anyone other than TEC personnel and riders until the riders and staff are in the arena and the lessons have begun.
- Please turn your cell phones off or to "vibrate" only when in the barn or in the arena.
- All accompanying children must be under your immediate supervision and should be kept with you at all times. It is suggested that you provide a quiet activity for siblings who do not ride.
- For security reasons, all visitors and observers must sign in.
- No smoking is allowed on the premises. Chewing gum or hard candy is not allowed in the arena.
- Please dispose of refuse in the proper recycle or trash receptacle. Help us keep our facility clean.
- Pets are not allowed on the premises.

Respect for the Facility Owners

Because our facility owners live on the premises, we request that you respect their property and that you show consideration to the privacy of their home and do not trespass. Please honor this right to privacy and personal space by recognizing boundaries, staying within close proximity of the North Barn where TEC is housed.

Respect the Instructors: Our Instructors have had extensive training and have privately evaluated the capabilities of the Riders. Caregivers, we ask that you defer to their judgment and do not contradict their directives, particularly in front of the Rider. Their authority must not be undermined. **Your feedback, questions and concerns are welcome, but should be addressed privately after lessons.** If you feel that the Instructor is not attentive to your concerns, please contact a member of our Board of Directors. We have a grievance procedure in place which is outlined in this handbook.

Substitute Instructors: Occasionally, we need to use substitute Instructors. Please work with each sub as you would your usual Instructor. Don't be concerned, each one is trained using PATH guidelines and has been given information concerning your rider, but each may have their own individual approach. So, be prepared – watch and listen for any changes or differences as carefully as you did during your first experience in the arena.



Informal Problem Solving & Formal Grievance Policy

Purpose:

To establish a process for resolving issues that may come up between staff, riders, volunteers and/or participants.

Policy:

If there is an issue, concern or complaint with another person involved with the Therapeutic Equestrian Center, the first step is to talk to that person regarding the concern. If that is not possible, or the problem isn't settled, then discuss the concern with that person's instructor or supervisor. If you do not agree with the supervisor's decision, you can talk to a member of the Board of Directors. This person will gather information and make a decision about how to settle the problem. If the problem is not settled by the discussion process, a formal grievance may be filed.

Forms are available from the Board of Directors. If the issue, concern or complaint involves a board member, you may file a formal grievance with the President of the Board of Directors.

If you need assistance in filling out the form for a Formal Grievance Procedure, you may ask a staff member or someone not participating in TEC programs to assist you.

Steps:

Informal Problem Solving

- Talk to the person about the issue, concern or complaint. If the problem is not settled or it is not possible to talk to the person, discuss the problem with that person's instructor or supervisor.
- If the problem is still not settled or you disagree with the decision, talk to a board member by calling (269) 429-0671.
- The board member will gather information and make a decision about how to resolve the problem.
- If the problem is not settled by the discussion process, a formal grievance may be filed.



Formal Grievance

- Submit a written grievance to the Board of Directors.
- Include the names of people involved, the date(s) of the incident, the facts of the incident and other information that can help the Board of Directors gather all of the facts needed to make a decision.
- The grievance must be filed within 30 days of the incident.
- The Board of Directors will investigate the incident and will respond in writing within 7 days.
- The Board of Directors decision is final.
- Time limits set forth in the preceding steps may be extended only by mutual written consent of the all parties to the grievance.
- No one will be penalized for proper use of the Grievance Procedure.
- Final decisions on Grievance Procedures are not precedent setting or binding on future grievances.
- All matters under this policy are treated as confidential.
- If the grievance is about a member of the board, the Chair of the Board will follow the same steps as listed above.



Therapeutic Equestrian Center Code of Conduct

Therapeutic Equestrian Center Staff Agree to:

- « *Provide the rider with appropriate policies and procedures.*
- « *Provide orientation about rider roles and the organization*
- « *Provide PATH-certified instructors*
- « *Provide assistance, program support and encouragement*
- « *Track hours ridden at Therapeutic Equestrian Center*

Riders Agree to:

- « *Meet TEC requirements, complete all paperwork and read the rider handbook.*
- « *Commit to and keep all appointments, contacting the office with any schedule conflict as soon as possible*
- « *Support the Therapeutic Equestrian Center vision and mission*
- « *Follow the policies, philosophy and procedures defined by staff and the appropriate committees.*
- « *Be supportive of the Therapeutic Equestrian Center program and its activities at all levels.*
- « *Abide by the Therapeutic Equestrian Center Code of Conduct*
- « *Supply the Therapeutic Equestrian Center with any changes in the rider's status as they occur: medical condition, medication, insurance, guardianship*
- « *Affirm that the Therapeutic Equestrian Center program actively seeks members from every race, ethnic religious and socioeconomic group*



Therapeutic Equestrian Center Barn Rules

Please observe the following Barn Rules, which are designed to ensure a safe and pleasant experience for everyone while at Therapeutic Equestrian Center at Stockbridge. Instructors, employees, personnel and volunteers have the authority to take any and all appropriate action to enforce the Barn Rules. Thank you for your cooperation.

- No Smoking on the Stockbridge property. Chewing gum and hard candy are prohibited in the arena. Children under the age of 14 must be supervised and accompanied by an adult at all times. All
- participant siblings must remain with their parent at all times.
- All visitors, participants families & friends will remain within the appropriated observation area and will remain within the North barn property.
- Park in designated parking areas only at the North Barn.
- No one is allowed to enter any pasture or stall when horses are present without the permission or under the supervision of TEC personnel.
- No one is allowed to enter the tack storage area without the permission or under the supervision of
- TEC personnel.
- No one is allowed in or around the machinery or equipment and in or around the trailers unless accompanied by TEC personnel.
- Dispose of trash and garbage in trash receptacles and keep command central, port-a-john area clean. Only participants, instructors, volunteers, and TEC personnel are permitted in the stall area during
- tacking and grooming of horses, and in the arena during riding sessions. However, a participant's
- family member or friend may assist the participant with the approval of the instructor.
- During riding sessions visitors must remain quiet. Cell phones must be silenced and set to vibrate. All participants must wear certified and approved helmets upon arrival and until they leave the
- premises.
- Any person mounted on a horse must wear a certified and approved helmet while riding horses. Volunteers are responsible for removing manure from the arena, aisle, and stall after any riding
- session.
- After use, tools and equipment must be returned to the proper storage area.
- Pets are not allowed on TEC premises.



Therapeutic Rules for Working Around Horses

Always speak to a horse or pony when approaching it and before touching it. Never approach a horse or pony directly from the rear.

Pet a horse with your hand on its shoulder or neck. Do not pet its face, nose or mouth.

To avoid being accidentally bitten, place all treats in a pan when offering it to a horse.

Never be loud or rowdy around horses. They are apt to become frightened by loud noises and unexpected movements.

Never lose your temper with a horse or pony or mistreat it. An animal will respond best when you are kind and gently but firm with it.

Always tie a horse a wither height or higher when grooming or saddling it. Use a halter and lead rope when tying. Do not tie with the reins.

Use a quick release knot when tying a horse. Leave a short length of rope between the knot and halter.

Always tie the horse to a solid object such as a post or tree. Do not tie the animal to a wire fence or to the planks of a board fence.

Always walk around a horse or pony that is tied. When going from one side to the other, do not walk under or step over the tie rope.

Wear sturdy shoes or boots when working with a horse. Keep your feet in the stirrups. To avoid being stepped on, watch what the horse is doing.

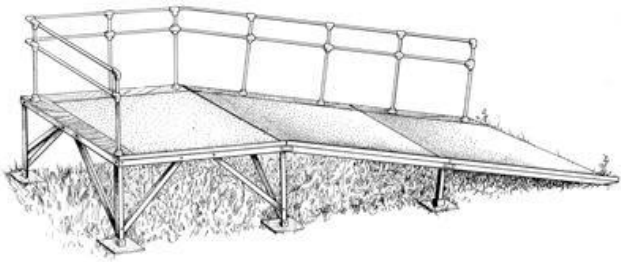
When you are leading, walk next to rather than in front of or behind the horse or pony on its left side. Make all the turns to the right, turning the horse away from you.

Never wrap the lead line around your hand or body.

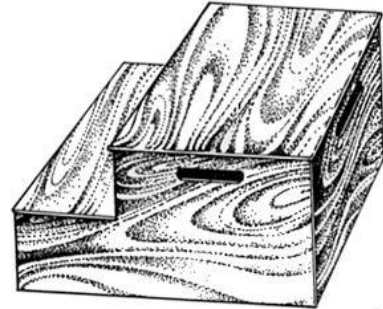
Keep at least one-horse length between animals at all time.

When leading a horse or pony into a box stall or paddock to release it, be sure to close the door or gate leaving enough space for you, but not enough for the horse to get out. Turn the horse so that it faces the door or gate before releasing it.

Equipment



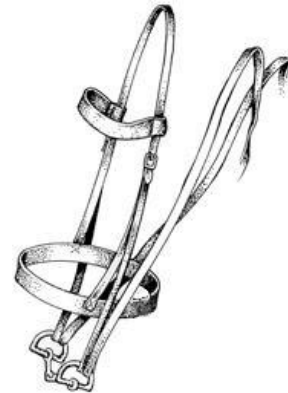
Mounting Ramp



Mounting Block



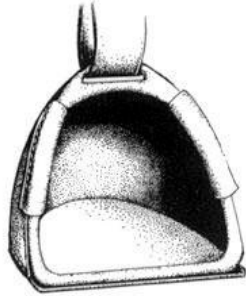
Safety Helmet



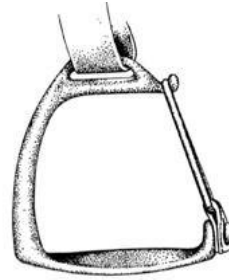
English Bridle



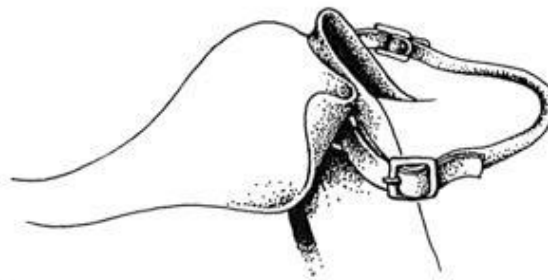
Ladder & Web Reins



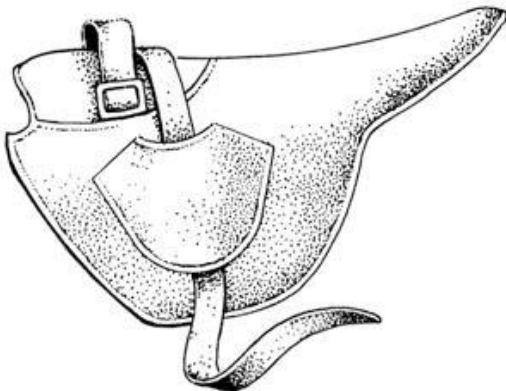
Stirrups: Devonshire



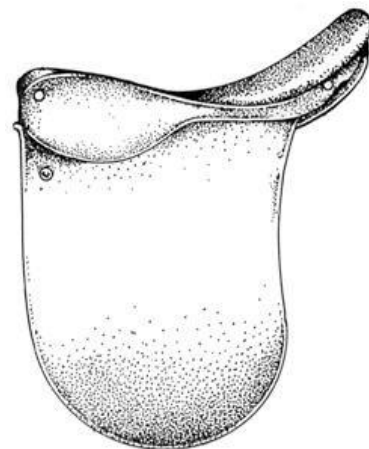
Peacock



Handhold



Bareback Pad



All Purpose English Saddle



Let Me Teach You

*When you are tense, let me teach you to relax.
When you are short tempered, let me teach you to be patient.
When you are short sighted, let me teach you to see.
When you are quick to react, let me teach you to be thoughtful.
When you are angry, let me teach you to be serene.
When you feel superior, let me teach you to be respectful.
When you are self-absorbed, let me teach you to think of greater things.
When you are arrogant, let me teach you humility.
When you are lonely, let me be your companion.
When you are tired, let me carry the load.
When you need to learn, let me teach you
After all, I am your horse*

--William Lamm

We Play No Favorites

*Blessed are you who take time to listen to difficult speech,
For your help we persevere until we are understood.
Blessed are you who walk with us in public places and ignore the stares of others,
For we find havens of relaxation in your companionship.
Blessed are you who never bid us to "hurry up" and more blessed
Are you who do not snatch our tasks from our hands to do them for us,
for often we need time rather than help.
Blessed are you who stand beside us as we enter new and untried ventures,
For the delight we feel when we surprise you outweighs all the frustrating failures.
Blessed are you who ask for our help for our greatest need is to be needed.*

--author unknown, from Imaging the Word



Michigan Equine Activity Liability Act

The Michigan Equine Activity Liability Act reads:

***WARNING!** Under the Michigan Equine Activity Liability Act, an equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in an equine activity resulting from an inherent risk of the equine activity.*

Emergency Procedures

Heat Index/Wind Chill Factor

If the heat index reaches 89 degrees or higher, or if the wind chill reaches 15 degrees or less, for the safety of our riders, volunteers and horses, all lessons will be cancelled. If you are scheduled volunteer, you will be contacted by phone as far in advance as possible.

Tornado

In the event of a tornado, all horses are to be put in their stalls and all students, staff and volunteers are to go carefully to a place of safety.

Fire

In the event of a fire, all horses are to be turned out into a designated pasture. Students, staff, and volunteers are to all meet at a specified location outside of the outdoor arena for a head count. Depending upon the severity of the fire, it may be necessary to move farther away after everyone is accounted for.

Accident/Injury

In the event that a student falls from a horse, the leader must immediately move the horse away from the area. The instructor will attend to the student, if there are volunteers available with additional medical training, they may be asked to assist, otherwise, all volunteers will stay with their assigned student. If there is a serious injury, the instructor or instructor assistant will dismount the remaining students. If you sustain any injury while volunteering, please notify your instructor or another staff member.

First Aid and CPR

There is always American Red Cross certified person on site during riding lessons. The First Aid Kit for humans and for horses will be kept in the feed room. Emergency information for riders and volunteers will be kept in the observation room. Rubber gloves are also available. Emergency contact numbers, medical releases and emergency procedures are kept in a locked file in the tack room.

Classes in First Aid and CPR are periodically offered at TEC at a minimal cost to benefit both volunteers and riders.

Insurance

All participants at TEC are covered by Markel Insurance while they are participating in Center activities.



Volunteering at TEC

Whether you are applying for a scholarship or are paying full tuition, the Therapeutic Equestrian Center is a cooperative therapeutic riding center which is 100% volunteer based. In order for TEC to be a success and to keep our lesson costs reasonable, we require community involvement as well as the commitment of service from our riders and their families or caregivers. Opportunities range from working directly with the riding program to office and administrative work to facility and horse care to help with special events and fund raising. Please consider the importance and pleasure derived from taking ownership of an organization like TEC. Choose to be a part of the big picture!

Visit our website at www.tecfarm.org where all volunteer forms are conveniently available for download. Fill them out and return them to Therapeutic Equestrian Center, P.O. Box 1250, Niles, Michigan 49120 as soon as possible in order to join the next volunteer orientation.

On the following pages, please find some suggested volunteer activities for riders, parents or caregivers.



Therapeutic Equestrian Center General Volunteer Information

Volunteer Rider Assistant Job Descriptions

- Ability to walk 45+ minutes in a sand arena and jog for short distances
- May possibly be asked to assist riders weighing up to 200 pounds
- Be willing to be outdoors in many weather extremes
- Be able to follow direction from a direct supervisor in a fast-paced setting.
- Commit to a full riding session or make timely arrangements otherwise.
- Complete volunteer training and read volunteer handbook and barn rules
- Be 14 years or older
- Fully complete application with all required forms and provide references

Responsibilities and Duties:

- Program Volunteers work under the direct supervision of a PATH certified Instructor
- Arrive *at least 15 minutes prior to class start time*
- Prepare, groom and tack horses for scheduled lesson
- Dress safely and appropriately
- Inform TEC in a timely manner of absences or schedule changes
- Follow all agency policies and procedures
- Communicate questions, grievances, feedback, or concerns to the Instructor
- Follow safety rules and regulations
- Read handbook

Program Volunteer (general)

- Bring horse to the stall, groom and tack horse for lesson
- Promote Rider independence and success
- Alert the Instructor of any safety concerns
- Assist Instructor in maintaining a safe environment and assist in emergency
- Become familiar with the safety precautions to be observed in the program
- Notify the Director of Volunteer Services if you are unable to keep your appointment.
- Help keep the barn area clean

Sidewalker A

- Assist Instructor during mounting and dismounting as requested
- Communicate with Rider when appropriate, including verbal/non-verbal prompts
- Provide physical assistance and stabilization to the Rider when directed or necessary
- Remain focused on assisting the Rider



Sidewalker B

- Provide physical assistance and stabilization to the rider when directed or necessary
- Remain focused on assisting the rider
- Give quiet support to the rider and Sidewalker A

Horse Leader

- Responsible for leading horse, walking alongside horse without a lead, or may be stationed in the arena for spotting
- Focus remains on working with the horse
- Communicate with instructor regarding any horse related questions or concerns

Ring Assistant

- Gives support to the Instructor

Instructor in Training

- Apprentice to the Instructor
- May be student teaching under the guidance of an Instructor

Horse Exercise Rider

- Meet requirements listed below for exercising horses

Facility Support

- Cleaning the barn & tack
- Various barn chores

Office Support

- Fundraising
- Special events
- General office work
- Mailings
- • Barn reception

Training Provided:

- Volunteer orientation
- Horse leader training
- On the job training
- Continuing education classes
- Written description of responsibilities