



Windrush Farm
Therapeutic Equitation, Inc.

“WFTE”

*Volunteer Training
Manual*

“If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else”.

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Dear Volunteers,

In this manual you will find information pertinent to your work as a volunteer at Windrush Farm. This is meant to be a guide to your work as a volunteer for our therapeutic riding program and a supplement to orientation and training, not a substitute. The techniques were developed over time and are, to date, the most effective for our purposes.

The most important element we have learned over the years is that volunteers are the strength of our program. Our goal is to have a core group of experienced volunteers to which we can add new individuals. We are thus able to share the therapeutic riding world with the broader community while maintaining stability and consistency for the students.

Please take a moment to look through this manual and join us in our efforts to evolve as a premier riding facility as we continue to educate the community at large. We greatly appreciate your interest and time. We couldn't do it without you.

Thank You

Mission Statement

Windrush Farm Therapeutic Equitation, Inc. is a non-profit working horse farm of therapeutic challenge and reward for the disabled. Our mission is to use the horse to expand the personal, emotional, and physical boundaries of all who ride and work with us.

A Little History and Background

Windrush Farm Therapeutic Equitation Inc. “WFTE” was founded in 1964 by Marjorie Kittredge and has been teaching individuals with physical, mental and emotional disabilities to cope positively with today’s society. Since its inception, Windrush students have been growing in leaps and bounds.

Therapeutic horseback riding began in Europe over 50 years ago. It has grown from the intuitive knowledge of a few dedicated equestrians to a successful treatment methodology recognized and supported by medical, psychiatric and social service professionals. Therapeutic riding gained wide attention during the 1952 Olympic Games in Finland when Lisa Hartel, stricken by polio and wheel chair bound, won the silver medal in dressage. Her victory was the catalyst for the formation of therapeutic riding centers throughout Europe, particularly in Great Britain. Marj Kittredge began using her horses at Windrush Farm to promote therapeutic riding for a group of at risk youth in 1964 and the first facility created specifically as a therapeutic riding center in the United States was begun in 1970.

With the guidance of well trained instructors, horses can effectively help students to cope with new situations by relearning to make decisions, deal with fears, frustrations and recognize success. Medical documentation has confirmed the improvements this can make on listening skills, eye/hand coordination, gross and fine motor skills, balance, and muscle tone. Physically, it is the horse’s movement which has a dynamic effect on the rider’s body. The horse stimulates the rider’s pelvis and trunk in a manner that closely resembles the normal gait of a human. The result is a dramatic improvement in the physical and emotional outlook and an enhancement of the quality of life to many students.

The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) was established in 1969. NARHA is an investigative, advisory, training and regulatory organization that helps promote safety in the field by setting standards for well run horseback riding programs for disabled persons. WFTE, Inc. is a NARHA “Premier Accredited Facility.” Our instructors are all NARHA certified as well as licensed by the state of Massachusetts.

The goals for therapeutic riding vary with each rider. The general purpose is to provide for people with physical and emotional disabilities of all ages, an enjoyable experience while riding a horse. The more dynamic purpose for the program is the development of balance, coordination, and strength, which benefit the rider both physically and psychologically. Therapeutic riding also builds self awareness, emotional control and independence. And, it does all this while being fun!

Our Programs

At the center of “WFTE” are our Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy programs. We serve 150 riders each week or approximately 350 riders annually through our many outreach endeavors. Windrush clients come from neighboring communities and school systems. Our riding program runs in three sessions, (fall, winter and spring) while summer is reserved for our various summer clinics. Our able-bodied clinic offers one week sessions to riders from beginner to advanced. In addition we run an At-Risk Clinic for children from local inner cities. Our Horsemanship Program is a non-riding program for children ages 6-12 who would like to learn how to handle a horse from the ground.

Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9:00 am-6:00pm. We are closed for weekends, major holidays, and public school vacations.

We follow the town of North Andover Public School inclement weather cancellation schedule. Please listen to local stations for cancellation announcements.

Volunteering at Windrush Farm

To ensure the safety of all who ride and who volunteer with us we aim to provide the safest environment possible. New volunteers are required to attend a Volunteer Orientation session to educate them to the many aspects of their role with us. They will be shown a short video presentation of the program in action, followed by an orientation to the facility, therapeutic riding and the population the program serves, as well as hands on training in their volunteer roles and responsibilities. Volunteers make a therapeutic riding program possible. They assist in every phase of the program from recruitment, fundraising, publicity and teaching, to the most visible part of the program; that of the helping individuals to ride. Volunteers assure the well being and safety of the student rider. They bring new ideas and insight to the program and frequently enlist their friends! Their knowledge, skills, and experience are essential to a viable program.

Without the volunteers’ time, dedication, and enthusiasm, the therapeutic riding program could not operate. Most volunteers readily agree that they gain as much (or more) than they give. The volunteers share the rides’ enthusiasm as they confidently maneuver their horses forward around the arena and through any obstacles presented.

Each volunteer must fill out forms which are kept on file in the office. The Volunteer Coordinator or Instructor will notify volunteers of educational opportunities when they are available and appropriate.

Who Is a Volunteer?

Volunteers are people who give their time and services and who assume the obligations of the program of their own free will. Some bring skills in horsemanship, while others have leadership skills. Some merely bring understanding and acceptance, seeking fuller and more satisfying lives for themselves. Volunteers are people who reach out to others and help them improve their quality of life.

Volunteers are indispensable at all levels of the organization. They may be instructors, assistant instructors, leaders, sidewalkers, grooms, tack cleaners, office support, recruiters, fund-raisers, etc. All volunteers need not be equine oriented.

Opportunities

Whether you are able to devote one hour or ten hours per week, your time and energy will always be greatly appreciated. Assistance is needed in all aspects of our program.

Lesson Volunteers assist in preparing horses for lessons (grooming and tacking), leading horses or sidewalking riders during class.

Barn Volunteers assist the barn manager in turn out and turn in, basic barn chores (sweeping, haying, etc), grooming and tacking horses for class, overseeing and assisting in training of new volunteers, and the schooling of horses.

Facility Volunteers help with general maintenance, repairs, and improvements of the farm and facility.

Office Volunteers provide support by assisting with the phone inquiries, data entry, filing, mailings and other general office duties.

Special Events & Fundraising Volunteers assist with the coordination and planning of various special events such as Farm Day, Special Olympics, and the Windrush Gala/Auction.

Policies and Procedures

Arrival and Sign In

We ask class volunteers to arrive at least **15 minutes BEFORE** the start of class if you are a sidewalker and **30 minutes BEFORE** if you are a horse handler. Please plan to stay 15 minutes after the end of class. Upon arrival, volunteers are required to sign in and before leaving they are asked to sign out as well as record number of hours they worked and the duties they performed. A log is kept in the volunteer center.

Cancellations

As a volunteer, your role is critical to the success of our program and ultimately our riders. **As part of the commitment we ask that your reserve cancellations for emergencies.** Your service is extremely important to the safety of our clients and if you must cancel please contact WFTE as soon as possible so that a replacement can be found. In the event that your rider has canceled with us, we will do everything we can to contact you in advance via phone and email. It is important that we have all your contact information on file.

Dress Code

Appropriate footwear and clothing should be worn at all times. Volunteers should not wear open-toed shoes or sandals when working near horses. It is suggested that volunteers wear shoes or boots that offer foot protection. Dangling jewelry may be unsafe to wear with some participants. Perfumes can attract bees and other biting insects. Dress must be appropriate for the weather.

Smoking & Alcohol Policy

W.F.T.E., Inc. is a smoke-free environment.

There is a no-tolerance policy with regards to alcohol. Staff reserves the right to ask a volunteer to leave the premises if alcohol consumption is suspected.

Commitment and Availability

Adequate support is critical in safely serving our clients. We therefore request that volunteers directly involved with our riding program (horse handlers and sidewalkers) be willing to commit a minimum of one and a half (1 ½) hours each week on the same day and time for the length of a session.

Please make every effort to keep **cancellations to emergencies only.**

Volunteers must understand and respect the fact that the instructor is in charge of the class environment. As a volunteer you accept feedback from instructors regarding your work. In addition it is important that you understand that the instructor's goal is to offer the best riding experience for each student. At WFTE, we are always trying to strengthen the relationships between the volunteers and the organization. We believe it is important to develop and maintain a relationship of mutual respect with our volunteers. WFTE would not exist without our volunteers

Communication & Confidentiality Policy

All volunteers must respect the confidence placed in us by our clients and/or parents and/or staff. The professional relationship between W.F.T.E., Inc. and our clients requires there be no disclosure of any information about an individual client, without proper authorization. Out of respect for the students who ride at W.F.T.E., we require that you keep all information confidential.

Conduct and Behavior

All volunteers are expected to set a good example for the students. Inappropriate language or behavior is not acceptable. As volunteers, you are representatives of our organization. If you are subject to any type of inappropriate behavior by a student, please do not approach the individual. Notify staff immediately. Please inform staff immediately of any concerns regarding the behavior of program horses such as biting, kicking, etc.

Safety

Safety must always be taken into consideration when working with horses and students with disabilities. Volunteers are taught emergency procedures and accident prevention. We will teach you to understand a horse's body language, how to handle horses in different situations (such as shying or kicking) and proper safety procedures.

Some safety tips for Volunteers:

1. Wear sturdy boots or shoes when working with a horse.
2. Approach a horse at his shoulder so as not to surprise him. Speak to him when approaching.
3. Never run, make sudden movements, shout or scream around horses.
4. Always cross tie a horse in the stall.
5. Never tie a horse to a movable object (i.e. a stall door, chair, etc.).
6. Never wrap the lead rope or reins around your hand, wrist or body.
7. Never walk under a tied horse. Never walk under or over a lead shank that is securing a horse's head.
8. Never kneel down on the ground when grooming the legs of a horse.
9. Never tie a horse by the reins or the bit.
10. Always check the tack for safety and fit before tacking the horse.
11. Always recheck the girth for tightness before a rider mounts. Only instructors

mount riders.

12. Never leave a saddle on a horse without a girth.
13. Always tie a tacked horse by putting a halter over the bridle.
14. Never leave the reins hanging on the ground for the horse to step on.
15. Riders always wear property fitted ASTM, SEI regulation helmets on or around horses.
16. Never hand feed the Windrush horses. Treats may be added to their feed buckets. See the barn manager for diet restrictions.
17. Windrush Farm is a smoke free environment. NO SMOKING!
18. Please refrain from entering areas marked “**authorized persons only**” unless directed to do so.
19. **Always ask when in doubt about anything. No question is unimportant or mundane.**

Any health condition which may affect your ability to assist others should be noted in your volunteer emergency medical form. (i.e. limited mobility, hearing loss etc.)

Accidents & Mounted Emergencies

If you are **leading** a horse other than the horse involved in the emergency, halt (stop) your horse and stand in front of it while facing it, if it appears to be safe to do so. With an overly frightened horse modifications to this procedure may be necessary to ensure safety. You may have to quietly move away from the scene of the emergency to a safe area as long as you, the rider and attending sidewalkers are able. You should stop and wait for instructions. If you are **sidewalking** a horse other than the horse involved in the emergency, apply the “arm over thigh” hold, monitor your horse, and communicate quietly the rider’s needs to the leader and/or the other sidewalkers. Try to keep the rider calm.

If you are **leading** a horse that becomes involved in an emergency, try to stop the horse. Often, if the horse is not moving at great speed, it helps to turn into an area wall or a fence, provided the fence is tall and strong. It is not safe to do this with wire fencing. Once the horse has been stopped, stand in front and face the horse, if it is safe to do so. Otherwise, modify your position for safety.

If you are **sidewalking** a horse that becomes involved in an emergency, try to stabilize the rider using the “arm over the thigh” hold. If the rider slides toward you try to push him/her back to midline, but avoid pushing at the pelvis. If the rider slides away from you encourage the other sidewalkers to push the rider back toward you. *Try not to pull the rider back into midline.*

If an **emergency dismount** becomes necessary the leader should hold the horse at a halt until the rider is fully clear of the horse and equipment. The sidewalker that the rider is falling away from should remove the stirrup and reins from the rider. The sidewalker toward whom the rider is falling should remove the stirrup then hug the rider around the waist or trunk under the arms, and pull

the rider off and away from the horse. If the sidewalker feels she cannot bear the full weight of the descending rider, a controlled fall can be initiated, taking care to protect the rider's and sidewalker's heads and to roll with the fall as much as possible. It is important that the sidewalker breaks the rider's fall. Once the rider has dismounted, the leader should move the horse away to a safe distance, then halt and await instructions.

Spooked Horse

Should a horse become frightened or overly nervous, sidewalkers are to apply "arm over thigh" support to the rider. The horse leader should attempt to halt the horse and head it off. The horse leader must always stay with the horse and be aware that the horse may move quickly forward or side step in either direction. As the horse moves, sidewalkers need to continue their support of the rider, staying close to the horse's side as it moves. Follow directions from the instructor.

Loose Horse

It may be necessary at times to retrieve a loose horse from the arena, the stable, or the facility grounds. Only one person at a time should attempt to retrieve the loose horse. To do so please use a quiet voice to speak to the horse as you approach it from the side. Then, when you are sufficiently close, place a lead rope around the horse's neck and halter it. Do not chase the horse. If needed, a small amount of feed in a bucket may be used to encourage the horse to come to you.

Should a horse become loose in the arena while a lesson is in progress, all activity must immediately stop. Horse leaders should halt and move their horses to an area where the loose horse can move past you freely, while sidewalkers should apply "arm over thigh" support. Everyone must then await further direction from the instructor. If a horse is loose in the barn, students should be brought to a safe area, all horses should be removed from cross ties, and all doors should be closed. Then attempt to herd the loose horse into an empty stall.

Fallen Rider or Medical Emergency

Should a rider fall from a horse, become injured or have a medical emergency during a session, all activity should stop. The instructor is responsible for managing the incident including applying any necessary first aid. Designated volunteers may be asked to assist by retrieving a first aid kit, calling for emergency medical assistance (911), or locating the rider's emergency medical form (located in the rider file drawer in the office). In the event of a fallen rider, the horse leader will move the horse away from the rider, then halt. All other horse leaders should halt their horses and head them off. Sidewalkers of the fallen rider should remain with the rider until directed otherwise. All other sidewalkers are to apply "arm over thigh" support and stay with their riders, awaiting further direction from the instructor. No one should enter or leave the arena without specific direction from the instructor.

Working with A Special Needs Population

Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take time to get to know your participant and direct any questions you may have to the instructors. Physical or mental impairments may be present at birth or may be due to injury, disease, or aging. Often a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others. Above all, please treat individuals with respect, being considerate and sensitive to their needs.

Wheelchair Etiquette

Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind. Always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before you help. Be respectful – people's wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Don't hang or lean on a wheel chair unless you have permission. Speak directly and be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If a conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get on the same level as the person in the wheelchair.

Escorting an Individual with a Visual Impairment

If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may only need verbal direction. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to be assisted. Verbalize information that may be posted. If you're uncertain of what to do, ask the instructor how you can be of further assistance.

General Guidelines for Working with Individuals with Hearing/Language Impairment

Try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking to him/her. Speak clearly and avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words. Also avoid long verbal instructions. Become familiar with hand gestures that the participant may be using to represent words or concepts.

Glossary of Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter in a therapeutic riding setting. This is not intended to be a comprehensive explanation of specific disabilities. Rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how therapeutic riding can be beneficial.

ARTHRITIS: Inflammatory disease of the joints. Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid. Characteristics: Pain, lack of mobility, loss of strength.

Benefits of therapeutic riding: Gentle rhythmic movements to promote joint mobility and to relieve pain: increase strength.

AUTISM & PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENT DISORDER (PDD): A broad spectrum of disorders ranging from mild to severe, which affects thought, perceptions and attention. Characteristics: Impairments in social interaction and communication, restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities, impairments in the use of nonverbal behaviors such as eye to eye gaze and facial expressions, lack of social or emotional reciprocity, delays in or lack of the development of spoken language, impairments in ability to initiate or sustain conversations with others abnormal responses to senses such as sight, hearing, touch, balance, smell taste, reaction to pain, deficits in gross and fine motor skills.

Benefits: Provides sensory input and promotes sensory integration. Promotes communication skills (expressive and receptive). Develops strength, coordination, muscle tone and gross and fine motor skills. Promotes socialization.

CEREBRAL PALSY: Brain damage occurring before, at or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder. Types and characteristics: Spastic, increased muscle tone, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes. Athetoid: Extensor muscle tension, involuntary movements, difficulty maintaining upright posture. Ataxic: weakened muscles, poor balance, and difficulty with quick, fine movements.

Benefits: Normalization of muscle tone, muscle strengthening, development of posture, balance and motor coordination, opportunity for promotion expressive skills, socialization and confidence.

CEREBRAL VASCULAR ACCIDENT (CVA) – STROKE: Brain hemorrhage or brain emboli, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.

Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of the body. May impair thought, speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength.

Benefits: Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech, socialization and confidence.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DD): A diverse group of physical, cognitive, psychological, sensory and speech impairments that begin anytime during development up to 18 years of age. Characteristics: Varied, but can include processing delays, and delays in physical, motor and social development.

Benefits: Increase confidence and self-esteem, stimulates processing, speech and body awareness, provides opportunity for sport and recreation, promotes socialization.

DOWN SYNDROME: A genetic disorder in which a person is born with an extra chromosome (chromosome 21). Characteristics: Mild to severe learning disabilities, low muscle tone, speech impairments.

Benefits: Promotes expressive and receptive language skills. Increases gross and fine motor skills, balance, and coordination, posture and muscle tone. Promotes social skills. Increases confidence and self esteem.

EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES: Social, emotional or behavioral functioning which is not age appropriate and affects a child's academics, social relationships and self-care. Characteristics: Difficulty coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations, inappropriate affect or behavior responses, depression, anxiety, physical symptoms, difficulty learning, withdrawal, and aggressiveness.

Benefits: Increase confidence and self-esteem, provide opportunities for accomplishments, promotes positive socialization.

HEARING IMPAIRMENT: Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound. Characteristics; Difficulties in communication or communication through sign language, lip reading or finger spelling.

Benefits: Increases confidence, self-esteem and sense of accomplishment. Provides recreational activity with opportunity for socialization, stimulates balance, posture and coordination.

LEARNING DISABILITIES: Neurological disorders that interfere with a persons' ability to store, process or produce information. Characteristics: Difficulties with reading, writing, speech, computing math. May affect development and social skills.

Benefits: Promotes processing, language skills and attending skills, increases confidence and self-esteem, provides opportunity for success, increases balance, coordination and posture, provides opportunity for socialization.

MENTAL IMPAIRMENT OR MENTAL RETARDATION (MR): A disorder in which a persons overall intellectual functioning is below average with an IQ of 70 or less. Impaired ability to cope with common life demands and daily living skills. Characteristics: Impairments in learning, communication, social interactions, self-care.

Benefits: Increases balance, coordination, strength and posture, improves gross and fine motor skills, promotes socialization, increases confidence, reinforce life and vocational skills.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS): Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation. Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity.

Benefits: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles, maintains balance, increases confidence and self-esteem.

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY (MD): Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males. Characteristics: Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes.

Benefits: Provides opportunity for recreational, physical, and social activity. May help slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, allows for movement free of assistive devices.

SCOLIOSIS: Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S shape with rotary component. Characteristics: Shoulder, trunk and waistline asymmetry. May have back pain and postural fatigue.

Benefits: Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles.

SPINA BIFIDA: congenital failure of vertebral arch closure which results in spinal cord damage. Characteristics: Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss. May also be associated with hydrocephalus, scoliosis and hip dislocations. Riding benefits: Stimulates posture and balance,

increases strength, balance and coordination, promotes confidence and self-esteem.

SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI): Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function. Characteristic: Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores.

Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, and provides opportunity for recreational and social activity.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI): Accidental injury to the head resulting in impairment of cognitive, emotional and/or physical functioning.

Characteristics: May include deficits in gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination and strength. May have deficits in language, communication, processing, memory and perceptual skills. Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, coordination, and gross and fine motor skill. Stimulates speech and perceptual skills. Increases confidence.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT – MODERATE TO TOTAL LOSS OF SIGHT:

Characteristic: May include insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity and fearfulness.

Benefits: Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture, balance and coordination. Provides opportunity for socialization, structured risk-taking and freedom of movement.

Our Horses

The horses at W.F.T.E. come from a variety of backgrounds. Some of them have had careers as champion show horses, while others were used for dressage or trail riding. Some are on loan, some are donated, and others are purchased. Each has his or her own unique personality and needs, and all must be able to work in every aspect of our program.

Many factors are considered when choosing the horses for our program. They must meet a basic set of criteria including: an exceptional level of tolerance, a gentle and well mannered temperament, good general health, and sound rhythmic movement, as this is important to therapeutic riding.

Horses that meet the criteria are accepted on a two month trial basis, and placed in an extensive training program to introduce them to their role in the program and the activities to which they will be exposed. Horses are gradually introduced to classes as instructors continue to evaluate their progress.

Our horses receive the very best care. Each horse is on a schedule to assure good overall health. This includes veterinary care, hoof care, tooth care and a de-worming program. In addition, each horse's work schedule is tracked and recorded in compliance with NARHA standards and guidelines.

Volunteers play a critical role in preparing horses for classes and assisting with their daily care. We encourage volunteers to spend time working with the Windrush horses when their schedule permits it.

Horse Sense!

When working with horses communication is key. Horses communicate through body language, vocalization, smell, taste, and touch. Understanding THEIR language is the key to predicting behaviors, managing risks, and building a positive relationship.

HEARING: The horse's sense of hearing is very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of the fright/flight response. When working with horses, note the position of the horse's ears. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate

anger, threat or fear. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet, calm and reassuring voice. Watch your horse's ears for signs of his/her mood.

SIGHT: Horses' eyes are geared to finding danger. They don't have very accurate vision close-up, but they can detect tiny movement at a distance. The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head. As a result, there is good peripheral (lateral) vision but poorer frontal vision. The lens of the horse's eye doesn't change shape as a human's does. Instead, a horse focuses on objects by changing its head position and raising and lowering its head. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. The horse may notice if something is different in the arena or out on a trail. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with. Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider its two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is at his shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when hand feeding. This is one reason why we do not hand feed the horses at WFTE.

TOUCH: The horses' sense of touch is very sensitive. They can detect very light touch or pressure. Each horse has sensitive areas (i.e. flank and belly areas) and it is important to be familiar with them. Touch is used as a communication tool between horses and between horses and people. Horses may also use touch to examine strange objects. They look at, sniff, and feel an object with their muzzles. The tongue, lips, and bars of the mouth are especially sensitive places, and we need to use caution when a horse has a bit in his mouth. Horses are trained by applying and removing pressure and may be sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs. Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly. Riders may need assistance to reduce the amount of pressure they use with their legs. Ask the instructor/therapist for the best handling technique.

SMELL: The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations. Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment through smell. It is recommended that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may go after them.

TASTE: Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects. A horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.

SIXTH SENSE: A horse does have a "sixth sense" when evaluating the disposition of those around him. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict

between handlers and horses. It is important to let the instructor/therapist know if you're having a difficult time relating to or getting along with a particular horse.

FLIGHT AS NATURAL INSTINCT: Most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. However, if frightened, horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it. At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly. A frightened horse being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like a stall. If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (note the position of the horse's ears), alert program staff.

HERD ANIMAL: Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with an established pecking order and one or two horses as the dominant individuals. Horses like to stay together in a herd or a group with one or two horses being dominant, and a pecking order amongst the rest. Some horses may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride. Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter. If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected. For safety, it is recommended that you keep at least one horse's length between horses when riding or leading within a group. This maintains respect of the horse's space and pecking order.

Volunteer Procedures for Tacking up and Mounting

- 1. Cross tie your horse:** The student takes the halter and lead rope into the stall. Place rope around horse's neck and turn horse to door. The student should stand at the horse's head on the left and puts the halter on the horse and attach to cross ties. (Ties in stall).
- 2. Clean feet with hoof pick.** This is done before grooming so you can evaluate if a shoe is missing or loose before you have spent time grooming. Face the back of the horse. Begin with front foot and proceed to rear foot on same side. Each student will be responsible for two feet on the same side (one front, one hind). **Watch how the foot is held so that when it is placed down it is not on anyone's foot!**
- 3. Brushing:** Work from front to back, starting at the neck. Each student cleans one side beginning with the **curry comb**. Remind students that this brush is used in circular a motion on the neck, shoulder, barrel, and rump. **No bony parts!** Next is the **hard brush**. Follow the direction of hair in **short quick strokes**, flicking off loosened dirt. **Do not use on face!** Be sure to gently brush out tail and remove burrs, bedding and knots.

Soft brush is the third brush in sequence. Use in **long smooth strokes** in direction of hair, **including face and head and legs.**

4. Saddling: Be sure you have all of the tack out or that the student has retrieved all of the correct tack from the tack room. (Saddle pad, foam pad, girth, girth cover if needed, saddle, breast-plate if needed, bridle, and jumping strap)

Place the saddle pad in the correct direction with straps on top. They should be by the withers. A foam pad is next, resting on the larger saddle pad. **Be sure the foam pad follows the shape of the saddle. The round portion is under the back of the saddle to protect the horse's back.**

Gently place the saddle on top of the pads. Attach pad straps to first or second billet on each side. If a breast plate is used, this should be placed over the horse's head and attached to the D rings in the front of the saddle by the pommel. **The girth is attached elastic side first to the left side of the saddle on the first and third billet.** The breast plate is attached to the girth under the horse. The girth is gently tightened to the first and third billet on the right side of the horse. At this point check to see that the girth is attached higher up on the billet on the right side than the left.

5. Bridling: Stand on left side. Place the reins over horse's head. Take off the halter. Reach around the horse's head with right hand and grasp the top of the bridle holding the horse's head and bridle together. (Note, some students cannot reach so assistance is necessary.) With left hand slide thumb into horse's mouth and guide bit into mouth while lifting up with right hand. Once over the ears, check the placement of bit then begin buckling loose straps.

Halter needs to be placed back on horse. Take the reins over the horse's head; run them through the nose piece of the halter. Slip the halter over the bridled horse and buckle the halter in place. You may have to make some adjustments to the bridle/halter configuration.

A jumping strap is placed on last, at the widest part of the horse's neck. Buckle strap and run strap back through buckle to secure it.

6. Leaving the horse in the stall: Place the reins over the neck and place one half of the reins under the stirrup on one side of the saddle. Then cross tie horse again to the side halter rings. **NEVER TIE THE HORSE TO THE BIT!**

7. Leading Out: When leading out, the rider, holds the reins and stands on the horse's left side. Second student holds the lead rope on the right side. The volunteer may stand on either side with the lead line, however with a capable student it is easier to stand on the horse's right side. It is up to your discretion

where you stand **as long as it is a safe situation for the student, leader and horse**. Also, you may wish to place yourself between the horse and student to accommodate a safe situation when needed.

8. To Mount: Line up side by side six feet to eight feet apart, all facing the letter H with horses lined up down the center of the arena. Assist the riders in “four steps” or perform the four steps if directed by the instructor.

Four Steps

1. Tighten girth, after checking placement of pads and repositioning of the saddle.
2. Stretch front legs forward.
3. Pull stirrups down on both sides.
4. Put the reins over the horses head.

When ready to mount, wait for the Instructor unless otherwise directed.

Definitions

AIDS – signals used by a rider to communicate instructions to the horse. Aids may be natural (hands, legs, voice, seat), or artificial (crop, spurs).

BAY – color term for deep brown to blackish colored horse with black mane and tail.

BILLET STRAPS – straps under the flap of a saddle to which the girth is attached.

BIT – used to control the horse and generally made of metal; bits attach to the bridle and are placed in the mouth.

BRIDLE – the complete outfit of headstall, reins, and bit used to guide the horse when riding.

CANTER – a three beat gait of the horse; faster than a trot, but a bit slower than a gallop.

CANTLE – the back of the saddle behind the seat.

CHESTNUT – color term used for horses with brownish red coat color. Mane and tail are usually the same color.

CONFORMATION – structure and general make up of the horse.

FARRIER – profession of trimming and shoeing horses.

GAITS – various movements of the horse at different speeds: e.g. walk, trot, canter.

GALLOP – a three beat gait; this is the horses fastest gait.

GELDING – a male horse that has been castrated and incapable of breeding.

GIRTH – long strap with buckles on each end; attaches to billet straps and holds saddle in place.

GRAY – color term used for horses with coat color from white to dark gray.

GROUND POLES – wooden pole placed in arena that is used to school horse and/or practice rider’s two-point position.

GROOMING – caring for horse's coat includes currying, brushing, and picking feet.

HALTER – leather or nylon bitless headstall used to control the horse when leading in or out to the paddock. Used over the bridle to lead horses in class.

HALF SEAT OR TWO POINT POSITION – rider places hands on the horse's neck and jumping strap and stands up in stirrups.

HAND – a standard unit of measure equal to our inches; used in determining the horse's height from the ground to the point of the withers.

HOOF OR HOOVES – horses feet.

JUMPING STRAP – a leather strap placed around the horse's neck to support riders in half seat.

LEAD LINE – a cotton or nylon rope with snap on end that attaches to the halter and is used to lead the horse.

LONG LINE – use of long reins which run from the bit, through the sides of the saddle or surcingle, to steer the horse from behind.

LONG SIDE – the long side of the arena.

LONGEING – exercising the horse by placing it on a long line, and having the horse go around in a circle.

MARE – female horse.

MOUNTING RAMP – area used to mount the rider on to the horse.

NEAR SIDE – refers to the left side of the horse.

OFF SIDE – refers to the right side of the horse.

POSTING – a rider moving up and down in rhythm with the horse at the trot.

RAIL – the outside area of the arena along the fence line or wall.

REINS – long leather straps attached to the bit and held by the rider to steer and control the horse.

SADDLE – usually made of leather and placed on horse's back for rider to sit on.

SADDLE PAD – cloth pad used under the saddle to protect the horse's back; can be made of cotton, fleece, gel or foam.

STIRRUPS – made of iron; they hang from the saddle and rider places feet in them.

TACK – term used referring to riding equipment.

WALK ON - command to have the horse move forward into a walk.

WITHERS – bony projection on the horse's back between the shoulders

WHOA – command to stop the horse from any gait.

