



GREAT!

Gainesville Riding through Equine Assisted Activities &
Therapy Volunteer Handbook

GREAAT! VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Table of Contents:

Welcome.....	2
Equine Assisted Activities.....	3
Volunteer Opportunities.....	5
Horse Leader/Handler, Sidewalker, Observer	
General Guidelines & Safety Guidelines.....	7
Emergency Procedures.....	9
Forms to be completed.....	11-12

MISSION STATEMENT

To help challenged individuals improve their physical abilities and independence through a variety of equine assisted activities and therapies

VALUES

- Offer equine assisted activities in a manner that challenges individuals with disabilities
- Value our donors by the work we produce.
- Recognize that our volunteers are our most important resource.
- Provide a safe environment for all.
- Maintain excellence in the care and management of horses

• Welcome to the GREAAAT! Team

Thank you for volunteering at Gainesville Riding through Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy. Being a GREAAAT! Volunteer is an important job and your commitment counts! GREAAAT! is always grateful for your time and endless energies. Volunteers form special bonds with the people they serve and the horses they care for. We want your experience to be safe, rewarding and fun. It is essential for our participants and horses that we uphold consistency in GREAAAT! activities, policies and procedures. The how's and why's will be explained during orientation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

GREAAAT! operates under the policies and guidelines of PATH International (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) founded in 1969 as North American Riding for the Handicapped Association and American Hippotherapy Association, Inc, initially a section of NARHA (now PATH Intl).

How do I report an absentee or tardy?

- If you are assigned to a commitment before 12:00pm, please call by 3:00pm the day prior. If you are assigned to a commitment after 12:00pm, please call by 9:00am the same day.
- If you must miss a commitment or are running late, please call instructor of session.

Therapeutic Riding: Brooke Lucas (352) 317-3206

brookelucaslmt@aol.com

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies

GREAAT! is continually seeking to expand the services offered to our community. The following is a brief description of the activities offered by GREAAT!

Therapeutic Riding- is mounted activities including traditional riding disciplines or adaptive riding activities conducted by a PATH Intl. certified instructor. These activities are taught in private and group lessons. Mounted activities are designed to meet each participant's individual needs with the intent for the participant to progress in equestrian skills while improving their cognitive, emotional, social, and /or behavioral skills. Secondary skills include fine and gross motor skills, balance, strength, coordination, tactile senses, team work and much more.

Hippotherapy- is a physical, occupational or speech-language therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement as a part of integrated intervention program to achieve functional outcomes. Equine movement provides multidimensional movement, which is a variable, rhythmic and repetitive. The horse provides a dynamic base of support, making it an excellent tool for increasing trunk strength and control, balance, building overall postural strength and endurance, addressing weight bearing, and motor planning. Equine movement offers well-modulated sensory input to vestibular, proprioceptive, tactile and visual channels. During gait transitions, the patient must perform subtle adjustments in the trunk to maintain a stable position. When a patient is sitting astride the horse, the horse's walking gait imparts movement responses remarkably similar to the normal human gait. The effects of equine movement on postural control, sensory systems, and motor planning can be used to facilitate coordination and timing, grading of responses, respiratory control, sensory integration skills and attentional skills. Equine movement can be used to facilitate the neurophysiologic systems that support all our functional daily living skills.

Additional helpful terminology:

AHA- American Hippotherapy Association, Inc- Mission is to educate and promote excellence in the field of Equine Assisted Therapy. AHA is recognized as a part of the international community that provides education, facilities, research and promotes Equine Assisted Therapy as an effective treatment strategy that improves the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org

AHCB Certified Therapist in Hippotherapy or Clinical Specialist- These therapists have successfully passed either exam provided administered by Professional Testing Corporation and overseen by AHCB- American Hippotherapy Certification Board.

Equine Assisted Activities- incorporates equine activities and/or the equine environment. Rehabilitative goals are related to the patient's needs and medical professional's standards of practice.

PATH Intl.- Professional Associational of Therapeutic Horsemanship. PATH Intl. is a global authority, resource and advocate for equine-assisted activities and therapies and the equines in this work inspire and enrich the human spirit. www.pathintl.org

PATH Intl. Certified Instructor- An instructor of therapeutic horsemanship who is certified by PATH Intl. at the Registered, Advanced, or Master level. At GREAAAT!, certified instructors have completed specialized educational training to ensure competency in areas of disabilities, therapeutic activities, instructional abilities, horsemanship and equine safety.

Therapeutic- An activity is therapeutic if a participant derives benefit, shows improvement or feels better once engaged. In general, Equine Assisted Activities may be described as therapeutic, but they are not therapy or are not considered treatment without fulfilling specific requirements. (See Therapy, defined below)

Therapy- Claims of providing therapy or treatment, or billing a third party, may be done only by a licensed / credentialed professional such as PT, OT, SLP, psychologist social worker, MD, among others.

VOLUNTEER OPPERTUNITIES

Commitment and Requirements:

Reliable attendance is key, as we strive to build a team of horse, participant, horse leader and sidewalkers. All lesson volunteers are required to attend volunteer orientation, specific to their volunteer position, prior to participating.

General Duties:

- a. Assist with tacking following specific specifications for each session
- b. Assist with untacking and returning tack to appropriate location
- c. Groom equine- with focus always being upon first/next needed equine.
- d. Assist with monitoring participant while unmounted, ie waiting for session
- e. Clean tack
- f. Maintain organization of tack/grooming supplies in designated areas
- g. Clean stalls as needed
- h. Sweep feed/tack rooms
- i. Always make sure doors and gates are closed
- j. Water/hay equines and other chores as necessary

Horse Handler/Leader- The horse leader’s responsibility is the horse. A leader pays close attention to the horse and all that is happening around the horse before, during and after the lesson. A horse leader focuses on safety and maintains control of the horse while allowing the participant to execute aids and cues asked for by the instructor during a lesson

Sidewalker- The sidewalker’s primary responsibility is the participant. A sidewalker walks or jogs along-side a mounted participant and acts as a “bridge” between instructor and participant. Sidewalker’s are there to assist are there to assist the person when needed to help ensure their safety. Encourage participants to be as independent as possible!.

Barn Help- Barn helpers keep facility organized, clean, and safe. Duties will vary. Training will be on individual basis.

Observation- Checking the participant’s alignment from a distance.

*All positions will be explained in specific detail during training/orientation. Take home handouts included.

Special Event Volunteers

Commitment and requirements:

Special event are fundraisers for GREAAAT! Each event will have it’s own specific needs and time commitments for volunteers. Orientations are not a required.

GREAAAT! special events may include:

Tack Sale, Trail Ride, 5k Run, Poker Run, Grand Opening or Gala.

Administrative Volunteers

Commitment and requirements: Administration volunteers fulfill ongoing needs within the categories below. Volunteer orientations are not required.

Tour Guide

Fund Raising

Photography

Data Entry

Newsletter

Office Assistant

GENERAL GUIDELINES

What should I wear?

You will be walking around horses and in a barn environment

- Dress appropriately for the forecasted weather
- In general, acceptable attire is comfortable outdoor sportswear, specifically clothing you don't mind getting dirty or stained. Jeans or light weight long pants and shorts are acceptable. When selecting your attire, please consider clothing that is appropriate for child and family environment.
- It is typically windier than in town, so may be colder. Bring an extra layer if needed.
- Wearing appropriate shoes is a must. You will be doing a good deal of walking and shoes need to be comfortable and safe. Hiking boots, riding boots, tennis shoes etc. are acceptable footwear. Please **No sandals, open toe, open heel, high heel shoes.**
- If you wear a hat make certain that the hat fits securely on your head and the brim is not too large that it interferes with your vision or responsibilities as a leader or sidewalker, or distracting the participant or the horse.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent is recommended. Minimize the perfume. Heavy perfume can attract bees and other insects and may be a sensory overload to some of the participants.
- Leave jewelry at home. If wearing a necklace, tuck under shirt. Remove hoop/dangling earrings. They can be caught in equipment, or grasped by participants.
- Bring filled water bottle and stay hydrated.

Safety First:

ALL persons on property must sign a professional equine liability release form, an emergency release form, a photo release form and a confidentiality form.

- **Never talk on the phone while volunteering in a lesson.** Cell phone use could create a dangerous situation. If possible, leave phone in car or place phone on silent while you are participating in lessons.
- Always make sure gates and stall doors are closed and latched.
- No children (participants or siblings) are allowed to be unattended while in the barn area at any time.
- Never approach an equine directly from the rear. Equines cannot see directly behind them, therefore, approach from the side, preferably toward the shoulder, while talking in a low, calm voice.
- Loud noises, running or general “horseplay” must be avoided. This is especially dangerous around equines, as well as an unbecoming behavior.
- When working around the equine, i.e. grooming or tacking, stand with your feet well back, cleared from the equine’s feet, to avoid being stepped upon.
- When walking around the back of an equine, keep our hand gently but firmly in contact with the equine, while talking to the equine.
- When cleaning the equine’s hooves, or working low, always keep both feet flat on the ground, in case you need to move quickly.
- After applying tack (saddle or bareback pad) always check and adjust as necessary, before a participant mounts, to prevent slipping.
- There is a human first aid kit located in a marked area of the shelves in the barn office/tack room, clearly marked and easily accessible to all staff during hours of operation.

EMERGENCY RELEASE TREATMENT FORM

GREAT! Gainesville Riding through Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy

VOLUNTEER'S NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

HOME PHONE _____ **WORK/DAYTIME PHONE** _____

E-MAIL _____ **DATE OF BIRTH** _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN(S) CONTACT INFORMATION (under 21)

PHYSICIAN'S NAME _____ **PHONE** _____

HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY & POLICY # _____

Person who is authorized to give temporary assistance or care in absence of parent or guardian:

Name	Phone	Relationship
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Describe any medical condition requiring precautions or treatment and any medications and dosage:

In case of Emergency, the undersigned authorizes provision of such medical assistance as is determined to be necessary. The undersigned authorizes any licensed physician and/or medical facility to provide any medical/surgical care and/or hospitalization for the volunteer, including anesthetic, which they determine necessary or advisable.

SIGNATURE _____

PHOTO RELEASE FORM

For valuable consideration given and which is hereby acknowledged, the undersigned hereby grant to GREAAAT!, permission to take or have taken, still and moving photographs and film including television pictures of ourselves/son/daughter/ and consent and authorize GREAAAT! news media and any other persons interested in GREAAAT! and it's work, to use and reproduce the photographs, films and pictures to circulate and publicize the same by all means including without limiting the generality of the foregoing newspapers, television media, brochures, pamphlets, instructional materials, books, and clinical materials.

With request to the foregoing material, no inducements or promises have been made to me/us to secure my/our signature(s) to this release other than the intention of GREAAAT! to use or have used such photographs, films, and pictures for the purposes of education and promoting and aiding GREAAAT! and its work.

Signature Date

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The right of confidentiality shall be preserved for all individuals involved at GREAAAT!. The staff, volunteers, or service providers shall keep confidential all medical, social, referral, personal, and financial information regarding a person and his/her family. Breach of confidentiality will result in dismissal.

I, _____ (PRINT NAME), understand and will observe the confidentiality policy of GREAAAT!

Signature Date

