

*Dream a Dream
Therapeutic Horsemanship*



*Volunteer
Manual*

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Part 1: About Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for our program. It could not be possible without you. Everyone plays an intricate part in making riding possible for our friends. I am the most lucky person in the world because I receive smiles, hugs and whinnies each day. I can't imagine doing anything else. I hope you will feel this way too after volunteering with our wonderful horses and riders.

Our Vision

Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship is a NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association) Member Center devoted to the special needs population in Leander, Liberty Hill, Cedar Park, Lake Travis and surrounding areas in Central Texas. In partnership with the horse, Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship offers hope and healing, and an improved quality of life through the development of self-confidence and independent living skills.

Our Mission

Partnering with our equine friends to provide love, hope and therapy for children and adults with physical, mental and emotional disabilities.

Our Philosophy

At Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship, we partner with our equine friends to provide love, hope, courage and strength. The learning environment at D.A.D.T.H. nurtures acceptance, self-esteem and confidence. We believe that every student who comes here is able. We all have our disabilities. We should not dwell on our weaknesses, but instead we should strengthen our ability to overcome them. In the words of Will Rogers, “The best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse”.

Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization created to provide students in Travis, Williamson and surrounding counties with therapeutic riding, horsemanship skills and equine-assisted activities. Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship works with local medical, educational and social agencies and professionals to help students gain independent living skills and a better quality of life.

Part 2: Program Information

The History of DADT H and Deer Shadow Farm

Brenda McCall is a life long horsewoman and began riding with her grandfather's guidance at age 3. She began instructing in 1981 in El Paso, TX. In July 1996, Brenda and Michael McCall bought the former Whiting's Neck Equestrian Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia, and renamed it Deer Shadow Farm. In 2004, Brenda became a USDF 'L' graduate for judging and they moved their equestrian operation to Leander, Texas. Deer Shadow Farm provides dressage instruction, training and is also the home of DADT H which serves riders with special needs.

Brenda has been involved with horses for over 35 years and has experience in many areas including riding instruction with varied populations, dressage training and schooling, national and international dressage competition and judging. She is a United States Dressage Foundation Certified Instructor, and "L" graduate. Being an "L" graduate means Brenda is licensed to officiate at dressage schooling shows. She is also a Certified Instructor for NARHA, The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association and a certified instructor of the SpiritHorse methodology.

Michael has been actively involved with horses for over 15 years and has experience in many areas as well. He oversees the stable management, grounds and facilities at Deer Shadow Farm.

Therapeutic Riding Defined

The physical and psychological benefits of horseback riding have been documented for hundreds of years. However, it was not until the 1960's that the medical profession began to consider the horse as a legitimate therapeutic tool. The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) was established in 1969, creating a new therapy option for individuals with special needs.

The mechanics of horseback riding are complicated, yet rhythmic. A horse moves in six directions - forward and backward, side to side and up and down. The human body moves in a similar fashion while horseback riding or walking. While on horseback, this motion simulates a student's natural walking gait and provides an opportunity for the student to react to the horse's movement. Improved balance, flexibility, and muscle strength and control are encouraged. In addition, mastering commands and control of the horse positively impact a student's self-confidence and esteem, independence and self-regulation, and sense of accomplishment, promoting the development of patience and self-control. Every aspect of the therapeutic riding experience can be a catalyst for growth, creating a better quality of life for the student. Beneficial experiences may include:

- ✓ Relationship development between the student, instructor and volunteers.*

- ✓ *Opportunity for bonding with the horse.*
- ✓ *Exposure to sensory stimuli in the barn including visual experiences, smells of the barn, hay and horses, the feel of the horse and its warm body, soft coat and coarse mane. These sights, sounds and smells all increase sensory stimulation.*

Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship is one of over 700 therapy riding centers in the United States that is affiliated with NARHA and utilizes a NARHA Certified Instructor for therapy services. DADTH is also a licensee of the SpiritHorse program and applies specific methodology of that program to facilitate riders on the ASD spectrum. Strict industry standards in the areas of safety, program facility and administration are met through NARHA requirements and guidelines.

Our Students

Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship serves children, adolescents and adults, ages 30 months and older, with physical, emotional or mental challenges. These challenges may include, but are not limited to, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Cerebral Vascular Accident (stroke), Down's Syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Sensory Processing Impairment or Visual/Hearing/Impairment.

Therapy Services

Therapy services at Dream a Dream include therapeutic riding, horsemanship skills, equine-assisted learning activities and hippotherapy. DADT has chosen the difficult path of providing equine-assisted healthcare to provide the maximum benefit to their riders.

Therapeutic riding utilizes the horse and student to achieve physical, emotional, social, cognitive and communication goals and objectives, and is a form of physical and recreational activity. Benefits may include:

- ✓ Improved gross and fine motor coordination.*
- ✓ Increased muscle tone and range of motion.*
- ✓ Enhanced posture and balance.*
- ✓ Improved motor planning and sequencing skills.*
- ✓ Stimulation of the cardiovascular system.*
- ✓ Improved self-awareness and self-regulation.*
- ✓ Increased concentration and attention span.*
- ✓ Improved judgment and reasoning.*
- ✓ Development of self-confidence, independence and self-advocacy skills.*
- ✓ Opportunity to experience the three-dimensional movement of the horse that provides hip and back action and stimulates an individual's natural walking gait.*

Horsemanship skills are based on individual need and site limitations. Students may develop skills such as:

- ✓ Horse handling/groundwork skills*

- ✓ *Reining*
- ✓ *Posting to trot*
- ✓ *Cantering*
- ✓ *Vaulting*

Equine-assisted learning activities are used to achieve educational goals. The horse can be a strong motivator for accomplishing student goals and objectives that may include:

- ✓ *Equine anatomy and healthcare*
- ✓ *Grooming tools and procedures*
- ✓ *Tack and tacking procedures*
- ✓ *Stable management*
- ✓ *Safety and emergency procedures*

Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship also offers participation opportunities for students that may include:

- ✓ *Weekend/holiday horse camps and play days*
- ✓ *Top Hands Horse Show*
- ✓ *Special Olympics*

** In order to provide the best therapeutic benefit and the safest environment for our students, D.A.D.T.H. has established some specific guidelines for consideration. It is preferred that students be at least 3 years of age. Dream a Dream will serve students as young as 30 months if the student exhibits head control and emerging trunk control. In addition, students who*

ride independently must not weigh more than 200 lbs. A student who requires a back rider must not weigh more than 75 lbs.

Therapy Team Members

Riding lessons utilize a team of people and horses working in partnership to accomplish therapeutic riding goals and objectives. Each member of the team has an important role during the lesson. The therapy team includes:

- ✓ The rider – Student with a disability who is receiving therapy services from D.A.D.T.H.*
- ✓ The horse – Equine whose responsibility is to carry the student safely, smoothly and obediently. The horse and student must be well-matched to achieve significant progress. The desired temperament and movement of the horse is dependent upon the needs of the student.*
- ✓ The instructor – Individual who evaluates a student on personal need and ability when therapy services are initiated. The instructor will design and implement an individualized treatment plan for the student, addressing physical, emotional, social, cognitive and communication goals and objectives, and horsemanship skills. During a lesson, the instructor will communicate the intent of the lesson and instruct the student, horse leader/handler and side walker. The instructor's focus typically rests on the student, and communication with the horse leader/handler and side walker*

is achieved through direct communication with the student. The student is provided with assistance in achieving goals and objectives in a safe, effective and progressive manner.

The instructor is also responsible for selecting the appropriate horse and tack for each lesson. Student progress is monitored and reported to parents or caregivers at the close of the lesson. Individual and class goals encourage the student to be the best he or she can be, on and off the horse.

- ✓ *The horse walker/handler – Individual who maintains constant awareness and control of the horse, but at the same time, focuses on the actions of the student and the directions from the instructor. For more independent students, the horse leader/handler may be directed to allow the student complete control of the horse, but remain vigilant and prepared to regain control of the horse at any time.*
- ✓ *The side walker – Individual who provides physical and motivational interaction and support to the student, and maintains constant safety awareness. The side walker checks to see that the student is prepared to ride by ensuring helmet and safety belt fit. During the lesson, the side walker will assist the student with maintaining balance. One or two side walkers may be assigned according to the student's needs. Some students may need a side walker to help them understand and follow the instructor's directions.*

Part 3: Volunteer Information

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Respect All Persons. Refrain from abusive, suggestive or inappropriate actions or language.

Respect All Animals. Refrain from loud, abrupt noises, actions or behaviors which may startle the horses or other animals. Refrain from abusive actions or language toward the horses or other animals.

Respect All Property. Refrain from inappropriate use of D.A.D.T.H. facilities, equipment or land. The same applies when at our satellite location, Bee Creek Stables.

Valuable Volunteer Qualities

Volunteer horse leaders/handlers and side walkers should maintain these valuable qualities:

- ✓ *Be dependable and able to make a time commitment of at least one class hour per week during a specific lesson.*
- ✓ *Have a reliable means of transportation.*
- ✓ *Be in good health and able to walk or (occasionally) jog during a 45-50 minute lesson.*
- ✓ *Be able to work around horses in a calm demeanor.*
- ✓ *Exercise patience and respect while working with individuals with disabilities.*

Volunteer Training

Volunteer horse leaders/handlers and side walkers should:

- ✓ *Attend volunteer orientation and become familiar with the Volunteer Handbook.*
- ✓ *Practice emergency procedures with the instructor.*

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteer horse leaders/handlers and side walkers have the following responsibilities and should:

- ✓ *Sign a variety of forms prior to participation at D.A.D.T.H. including:*
 - 1) *Volunteer Information Form and Health History*
 - 2) *Photo Release*
 - 3) *Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment*

4) Liability Release

5) Confidentiality Statement

- ✓ *Be at least 14 years of age and be physically able to walk or jog (for short distances) during a 45-50 minute lesson. A parent or designated adult must be on the premises and supervise any volunteer under the age of 14.*
- ✓ *Make prior arrangements for child care and refrain from bring unsupervised children.*
- ✓ *Avoid bringing cell phones in the arena during lessons. Cell phone service is not available at D.A.D.T.H.*
- ✓ *Request permission prior to taking photographs or videos.*
- ✓ *Leave personal belongings in your car. D.A.D.T.H. is not responsible for lost or stolen items.*
- ✓ *Leave pets at home, with the exception of service dogs.*
- ✓ *Follow school district policies for cancellation of classes due to inclement weather. In the event of school district closures due to bad weather, D.A.D.T.H. will also be closed. If there are last-minute cancellations, every effort will be made to contact volunteers for that day.*
- ✓ *Maintain regular attendance. D.A.D.T.H. appreciates every single hour volunteers can give. It is helpful for volunteers to commit to a full lesson and set times, and to keep track of personal volunteer days and times.*
- ✓ *Notify D.A.D.T.H. as soon as possible regarding absences or tardiness. Please record any anticipated absences in the D.A.D.T.H. Volunteer Calendar or call and leave a message.*
- ✓ *Check the assignment board in the tack area for daily class schedules and volunteer assignments.*

- ✓ *Be familiar with phone and Emergency Plan procedures. A phone and copy of the D.A.D.T.H. Emergency Plan is located at the Leander location, inside the barn, on the rail, in front of Bullwinkle's stall. At Bee Creek Stables the phone is located in the barn across from the feed room.*
- ✓ *Be familiar with fire extinguisher locations. Fire extinguishers can be found at the Leander location at both ends of the barn and at Bee Creek Stables, in the tack room and in the barn near the phone.*
- ✓ *Discuss any personal medical conditions (that may affect your ability to safely perform your volunteer service) with the instructor prior to working with students. This includes medications that may cause drowsiness or interfere with reaction time.*
- ✓ *Stay hydrated. It is very important, especially during the summer months, to drink plenty of fluids prior to and during lessons. Notify the instructor if you are feeling ill.*
- ✓ *Secure permission from the instructor if you would like to reward a horse with a treat and use designated treat containers.*
- ✓ *Refrain from smoking or consuming alcoholic beverages on the premises.*
- ✓ *Respect and closely guard student and volunteer privacy. Many parents are willing to discuss their child's challenges, but some feel it is a private matter. Please discuss a student's condition with their family or caregiver **ONLY** if the information is offered, and ask the instructor privately if you have any questions or concerns regarding a particular*

student. All student and volunteer records are considered confidential.

✓ *Follow the Volunteer Dress Code:*

Dress appropriately for equine activities around students. Wear comfortable, safe shoes for walking in sand (no sandals or open-toe shoes).

Wear weather-appropriate clothing for physical activity (wear layers).

Refrain from wearing tank tops, spaghetti straps, midriffs or halter tops.

Refrain from wearing dangling jewelry that can get caught or tangled on straps, or grabbed by the student's hands.

Refrain from wearing strong perfumes or scented lotions – they attract bees and other insects.

✓ *Be aware of the following law that was enacted by the state of Texas in September, 1995: Texas Law (Chapter 87, Civil Practice and Remedies Code) An equine professional is not liable for the injury or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risk of equine activities.*

Grooming Procedures

Volunteers are responsible for the following grooming procedures and should:

- ✓ *Rubber curry comb – Use in a circular motion on the neck and body to loosen dirt and stimulate skin. Do not use on the face or legs.*

- ✓ *Stiff body brush – Use long, sweeping strokes on the neck and body and legs to remove loosened dirt*
- ✓ *Soft body brush – Use short strokes to polish the coat on the body, legs and face.*
- ✓ *Mane and tail brush or comb – Start at the bottom of the mane or tail and work up. Stand to the side when brushing the tail to avoid being kicked.*
- ✓ *Hoof pick – Clean dirt from the hooves, especially in the grooves.*

Tacking Procedures

Volunteers sometimes are responsible for the following tacking procedures, depending on the rider and their disability. Please check with the instructor and the lesson plan for that rider. If volunteers do tack, then you should observe the following:

- ✓ *Saddle pad – Place over the withers and slide back into place.*
- ✓ *Saddle – Position over the pad and adjust to fit properly.*
- ✓ *Girth for the English saddle – Attach non-elastic end to the right side of the saddle. Walk around to the other side and tighten only to the point of keeping the saddle in place.
***Girth should be re-tightened just before the lesson begins.*
- ✓ *Cinch for the Western saddle – Tighten only to the point of keeping the saddle in place. Check the girth so the center of the girth is in the center of the horse's belly.*
- ✓ ****Girth or cinch should be re-tightened just before the lesson begins.*

- ✓ *Call for the instructor to bridle the horse.*
- ✓ ****Bridling and unbridling should be done by authorized personnel only.*

Mounting Procedures

Volunteer horse leaders/handlers are responsible for the following mounting procedures and should:

- ✓ *Remain in front of the horse during mounting, stirrup adjustments, or any other time the horse stops for more than a minute. Stay alert during mounting and listen to the instructor talking to the student.*
- ✓ *While guiding the horse, approach the ramp or mounting block from the downhill position, walking slowly backward between the ramps. Position the horse close to the side from which mounting will take place, keeping the horse quiet and still.*
- ✓ *Face the front of the horse's head.*
- ✓ *Refrain from putting pressure on the lead rope; this may cause the horse to back up. If this happens, do not pull on the lead rope – simply release pressure on the lead rope and go with the horse – it will stop.*
- ✓ *Allow the horse to relax. Hold the lead rope quietly and try not to restrict its head.*
- ✓ *After the student is mounted and the cue is given by the instructor for the student to “walk on”, guide the horse out of the ramp slowly and quietly, while still facing the horse.*

Once the horse is clear of the ramp, stop and wait for the instructor to adjust the stirrups and check the girth.

- ✓ *Take the position on the left side of the horse after the equipment check is completed and the student has told the horse to “walk on”.*

Volunteer side walkers are responsible for the following mounting procedures and should:

- ✓ *Stand on the ramp or mounting block opposite the student while mounting is taking place.*
- ✓ *Follow the instructor’s directions regarding assistance, ie., helping the student’s leg over the neck of the horse, etc...*
- ✓ *Keep the rider’s feet forward and up – this prevents injuries if the horse steps to the side. As the horse walks out of the ramp, gradually lower the legs.*
- ✓ *Take the position at the student’s side and hold the safety belt, assisting the student with balance while the stirrups and girth are adjusted.*
- ✓ *After the student has cleared the ramp or mounting block, support the student as directed by the instructor.*

Lesson Procedures

Volunteer horse leaders/handlers and side walkers are responsible for the following lesson procedures and should:

- ✓ *Arrive 15-30 minutes before scheduled lessons.*
- ✓ *Report to the stable upon arrival, sign in and wear nametag.*

- ✓ *Assist the instructor in grooming and tacking horses before class, and in grooming and removing tack after class. (Instructors will bridle and unbridle horses).*
- ✓ *Assist the rider with class preparation.*
- ✓ *Assist the instructor with mounting and dismounting procedures and lesson implementation as needed.*
- ✓ *Make arrangements with the instructor for early departure, if necessary.*
- ✓ *Sign out and return nametag to designated place.*

Procedures at the Halt, Walk, & Trot

Volunteers are responsible for the following procedures @ the Halt and should:

- ✓ *Horse leader/handler - Step in front and face the horse to keep him from moving. This is one of the most important jobs of the leader, especially during mounting and exercises. Refrain from holding the horse's head too tight – this is a good time for the horse to relax.*
- ✓ *Side walker - Remain at the student's side.*

Volunteers are responsible for the following procedures @ the Walk and should:

- ✓ *Horse leader/handler - Adjust rhythm to the horse's walk. Stay attentive to the instructor and horse. Allow enough room for side walkers on both sides of the horse. Keep a*

- safe distance, 3-4 horse lengths from the horse in front. If you are getting too close and the student is unable to slow down, you may stop or slow the horse, or make a large circle. Make sure the student and side walkers know beforehand. A quick turn or circle may unseat the student.*
- ✓ *Side walker - Adjust rhythm to the horse's walk. Stay next to the student's side. A side walker should never leave the student unless requested to do so by the instructor. Stay by the student's thigh, especially on corners. Know appropriate ankle hold for advancing the student, when prompted by instructor.*

Volunteers are responsible for the following procedures @ the Trot and should:

- ✓ *Horse leader/handler – Make sure the student is prepared to trot according to the instructor's directions. At the student's command (may use voice or recorders if pre-verbal), begin a slow and steady trot, looking up and straight ahead. After trotting, allow the student to bring the horse to a walk unless they have two hands on the handhold. In that case, bring the horse to a walk smoothly while remaining in a straight line.*
- ✓ *Side walker – Make sure the student is positioned squarely in the saddle. Make sure the student is prepared to trot according to the instructor's directions. If directed, support the student by placing your arm across the student's thigh*

and grasping the front of the saddle. In some cases, the instructor may ask you to hold the safety belt. Stay next to the student's leg as the horse is trotting and try not to drop behind. Communicate to the horse leader/handler if problems arise. Stop the horse and make adjustments if necessary.

Procedures During Exercises & Games

Volunteers are responsible for the following procedures during exercises and should:

- ✓ Horse leader/handler – Face the front of the horse. Pay close attention to the instructor, student and horse. Allow the horse to relax.*
- ✓ Side walker – Remain attentive to the safety and balance of the student. Reinforce directions only if needed.*

Volunteers are responsible for the following procedures during games and should:

- ✓ Horse leader/handler – Remain attentive to the safety of the student and the horse. Control the horse only when needed to provide safety to the student. Allow the student to use acquired skills to execute games and to provide problem solving opportunities.*
- ✓ Side walker – Remain attentive to the safety and balance of the student. Reinforce and praise all students with applause and/or positive reinforcement.*

Horse Walker/Handler Procedures & Tips

Volunteer Horse Walker/Handlers are responsible for the following procedures and should:

- ✓ Assist the student's control of the horse as necessary.*
- ✓ Hold the lead rope 4-6" from the clasp to allow for the natural motion of the horse's head as it moves.*
- ✓ Hold the extra rope in the left hand. Refrain from wrapping the rope around your hand or placing your hand within the circle of rope.*
- ✓ Make sure the lead rope is between the reins, not over them.*
- ✓ Stay even with the horse's head, not behind or in front.*
- ✓ Wait until the student initiates action before proceeding, i.e., allow the student time to use a voice aid to tell the horse to begin walking, rather than you initiating the action.*
- ✓ Look up and ahead of you while leading the horse. Glance occasionally at the student to make sure they are safe and remaining balanced. Keep a minimum of 3-4 horse lengths between horses. Assist the horse in holding his head up. A horse that holds its head too close to the ground may upset the student's balance.*
- ✓ Adjust your steps to the horse. Be careful not to get too far ahead, behind or far away.*
- ✓ Short tugs work better than a steady pull when guiding a slow horse.*

- ✓ *Make wide turns. Allow room for sidewalkers when next to a fence or other obstacle.*
- ✓ *Allow the side walker to give any necessary verbal cues.*
- ✓ *Only one volunteer should give instructions to avoid confusing the student.*
- ✓ *If the horse stops or is hard to move, guide the lead rope to the left or the right under the horse's neck, instead of pulling straight ahead. When the horse begins walking again, direct it back into the original path.*

Side Walker Procedures & Tips

Volunteers who are side walkers should:

- ✓ *Focus the student's attention on the instructor.*
- ✓ *If requested by the instructor, use a thigh hold to keep the student in a secure position. During a thigh hold, place the arm closest to the student over their thigh and grasp the front edge of the saddle.*
- ✓ *Hold the student's safety belt to assist with balance. This is done while supporting the legs.*
- ✓ *Walk beside the student's leg to assist when needed (i.e., at the trot or to reinforce directions).*
- ✓ *If a student has a horse leader/handler and one side walker, walk on the opposite side of the horse.*
- ✓ *If a student has a horse leader/handler and two side walkers, designate only one side walker to reinforce directions verbally. Too much input can confuse a student.*

- ✓ *Refrain from giving a student any more support than is needed.*
- ✓ *Reinforce the instructor's directions after giving the student "wait time" to process the directions, i.e., if the instructor says "turn right" and the student seems confused or does not react, gently tap the right hand and say "right".*
- ✓ *If verbal cues are not working, use little strokes or tickles on a student's shoulder or back to encourage good posture.*
- ✓ *Refrain from resting your elbow on the horse's back since this is painful for the horse.*
- ✓ *If you tire and need to switch sides, notify the instructor. If necessary, stop the horse and switch one volunteer at a time, so the student is not left without physical support.*
- ✓ *Refrain from dropping behind the student's thigh on corners, creating an unsafe position.*
- ✓ *Conversations between volunteers should take place before or after the lesson.*

Part 4: Emergency/Safety Information

Emergency Plan & Emergency Information

In case of emergency, volunteers are responsible for the following procedures and should:

- ✓ *Follow any and all directions from the instructor.*
- ✓ *If requested to call 911 –
Stay calm.*

Be accurate.

Provide identification and location information and directions including:

Your name

*Dream a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship
23650 Round Mountain Circle, Leander, TX
Phone: 512-260-5957*

Driving Directions – From 183, take 2243 west for 6 miles, turn right on Round Mountain Rd., go 2.78 miles and turn left on Great Oaks Blvd., at the stop sign, turn left onto Round Mountain Circle and go to 23650. Location on left.

*For our Satellite Location at Bee Creek Stables,
4918 Bee Creek Rd., Spicewood, TX
Phone: 512-264-0307*

Driving directions - from the intersection of RR 620 and Hwy. 71, go north on 71 for 6 miles and turn right onto Bee Creek Rd., go 1/2 mile to 4918 Bee Creek Rd. Location on left.

- ✓ *Provide information pertaining to the emergency including the nature of the emergency, number of victims and their conditions and the help being given.*
- ✓ *Stay on the line – DO NOT HANG UP.*
- ✓ *Remember that horses spook easily. Ask that sirens be silenced prior to arrival.*

Major Illness or Injury Procedures

In case of major illness or injury, volunteers are responsible for the following procedures:

- ✓ The instructor will appoint a volunteer to get the First Aid Kit.*
- ✓ The instructor will appoint a volunteer to call 911 and give directions to the arena or location of the injured or ill individual, following the Emergency Plan above.*
- ✓ The instructor will appoint a volunteer to get the injured person's Emergency Medical Release Form from the files and give it to the instructor.*
- ✓ The instructor will appoint a volunteer to go to the road and wait for the emergency vehicles. The volunteer will stop the driver and have the lights and sirens turned off, and direct the medical attendant to the individual needing medical attention.*
- ✓ The instructor will appoint a volunteer to stay with the injured individual once they have been stabilized.*
- ✓ The instructor will direct the horse leader/handler and side walkers to remove the other riders to a safe area for dismounting, and remove the horses and riders from the arena.*

Minor Illness or Injury

In case of minor illness or injury, volunteers are responsible for the following procedures:

- ✓ *The instructor will ensure that the needs of the individual are met; i.e... bandages, ice, removal to a comfortable area.*
- ✓ *The instructor will make arrangements to transport the individual to a hospital or doctor's office if medical attention is required.*
- ✓ *The instructor will determine if the other students may safely continue the lesson, or if the lesson should be terminated, and appropriate action be taken.*

Equine Injury or Illness

In case of equine injury or illness, volunteers are responsible for the following procedures and should:

- ✓ *Notify the instructor immediately, giving details of the suspected injury or illness.*
- ✓ *Assist the instructor in dismounting the student and removing him or her from the arena. Observing the horse closely can prevent the necessity for an emergency dismount.*
- ✓ *Maintain control of the horse until the instructor takes responsibility.*

Never put yourself at risk for a horse.

Fire or Other Natural Disaster

In case of fire or other natural disaster, volunteers are responsible for the following procedures and should:

- ✓ *Evacuate all students and families to a safe location before assisting horses. (Horses should be evacuated only under the direction of the instructor or qualified volunteer).*
- ✓ *Close the front gate and wait for the fire department.*
- ✓ *Open stall doors and gates to release the horses.*

In the event of a tornado warning, evacuate all students and families to the lowest point or base of hill available and tuck down and cover hands over your head.

Move all horses to arena or round pen and let loose.

Student Safety

Student safety is the most important aspect of therapeutic riding. While working with a student, volunteers should refrain from:

- ✓ *Leaving the student for any reason.*

- ✓ *Switching sides during a lesson unless asked to do so by the instructor.*
- ✓ *Switching sides before telling the instructor what you are going to do.*
- ✓ *Allowing a student to mount or dismount without the instructor.*
- ✓ *Having conversations with other volunteers during a lesson.*
- ✓ *Visiting with a student during a lesson.*
- ✓ *Pulling on the horse's head while doing exercises, mounting or dismounting.*
- ✓ *Reprimanding a horse while a student is mounted.*

Equine Safety

Therapy horses at D.A.D.T.H. are well trained, obedient, docile and affectionate. However, it is important to remember that the survival instincts of the horse have allowed it to survive since prehistoric times. Volunteers should always keep these considerations in mind:

- ✓ *Horses are unpredictable by nature and have minds of their own. They are very heavy, weighing between 500-1300 pounds, and deserve the utmost RESPECT.*
- ✓ *Horses are flight animals. When a horse feels angry, frightened or threatened, they may jump forward or sideways, or run away.*
- ✓ *Horses kick. When a horse feels threatened or frightened, it may kick straight back, sideways in either direction, or even kick forward with great force.*

- ✓ *Horses buck. If a horse feels a threat from above, it may hunch its back and buck in a way that could throw a student.*
- ✓ *Horses rear and bite. If a horse is frightened or feels a threat from in front, it may naturally react by rearing up with its front legs, strike with one or both front legs, bite or throw its head up or from side to side. It may run directly over whatever it fears in front of it.*
- ✓ *Provocation. Loud noises, sudden unexpected movements, falling objects, approaching vehicles, other animals or people, ill-fitting equipment or physical pain can provoke a horse to react according to its natural protective instincts.*
- ✓ *Signs of danger. The first signs of danger or fear in a horse are the sudden tensing of the muscles in the body, laying of the ears flat back against the head, quickly tossing or raising the head, or sudden snorting through the nostrils, along with at least one other warning sign. Common sources of equine accidents include carelessness and overconfidence; lack of understanding of the horse; failure to anticipate and plan for emergencies; Inadequate personnel training; inadequate equine training; equipment failure; outside disturbances; inattentiveness.*

Working Around Horses

Volunteers at D.A.D.T.H. should consider the following suggestions/tips while working around horses:

- ✓ *Talking to a horse – always speak to a horse in a calm, soothing and/or assertive voice. Refrain from yelling or raising your voice.*
- ✓ *Approaching a horse – Speak to the horse before approaching it to avoid sudden surprise. Always approach a horse from the side so it can see you coming. Avoid running up to or after a horse.*
- ✓ *Walking around a horse – unless the horse is tied to a fence or post, always walk around the front of the horse so it can see you clearly. When the horse is tied, always walk around the back. Walk closely and place your hand on the horse's rump, talking in a soothing voice, OR walk at least one horse length from the back of the horse. Refrain from walking under or over the tied lead rope.*
- ✓ *Petting a horse – pet a horse by placing your hand on its shoulder or neck. Refrain from touching the horse's nose or face since these are very sensitive areas.*
- ✓ *Standing near a horse – watch your feet. While a horse is very sure-footed by nature, it may accidentally step on a person's foot when balancing itself or turning around. If a horse steps on your foot, refrain from trying to pull your foot out from under the horse's foot. Rather, reposition the horse so it steps away and off your foot.*

Part 5: Support Information

Getting to Know Students with Special Needs

Being around a student with special needs may be a new experience. You may be overwhelmed at first by situations you do not understand or have never seen before. This is a natural reaction for most people. Give yourself time to get to know the students you work with. Look past their weaknesses and try to focus on the qualities that make them unique. Validate their efforts and celebrate their successes. Remember that most students do not look upon themselves with pity or sadness and do not want others to, either. One of their greatest desires is to be recognized for their abilities (within their disabilities).

The time you spend at D.A.D.T.H. can be rewarding and inspiring. Take time to experience the joy that comes from knowing and working with a student with special needs. Some students will have difficulty expressing their thanks for your friendship, but without you, they wouldn't be able to ride. Thank you for sharing your time with D.A.D.T.H. students, and for helping them to experience faith, hope and love.

Working with Students with Special Needs

Disability is natural. Each of us at one time or another will have a disability, either from illness, injury or old age. A disability is

nothing more than a body part, such as an arm, leg, organ or brain, which does not work properly or does not work at all. Students with disabilities do not want to be treated any differently than anyone else. Friendship, respect and acceptance are of paramount importance, and describe qualities that students seek from others around them. When working with students with disabilities, remember and follow the GOLDEN RULE: Treat other people the way you want to be treated.

- ✓ *Be friendly and accepting. Students with disabilities are people first.*
- ✓ *Be respectful. Many students face unimaginable hardships. Their courage and strength should be admired, not pitied.*
- ✓ *Choose words with dignity. Think of students in terms of their personality or interests, rather than their weaknesses.*
- ✓ *Be patient. Give students time to process different learning environments. Learn to listen with your eyes and instincts as well as your ears.*
- ✓ *Refrain from overwhelming students with help. They are striving for independence and want to achieve goals on their own, as much as possible.*
- ✓ *Speak directly to the student. No one likes to be referred to in the third person. Focus attention on the student, not the people around them. If the student is unable to answer you directly, their caregiver or instructor will know this and help facilitate your communication with the student.*

Glossary of Disabilities/Special Needs

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of students that might be encountered in a therapeutic riding setting. These descriptions are not intended as a comprehensive explanation of specific disabilities, but rather as a general overview. Therapeutic riding benefit is also included.

ADHD: *A persistent state of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity.*

Benefit: *Movement of the horse helps stimulate postural control and focus; horse is a strong motivator to stay on task and practice self-control; improved self-esteem and independence.*

Autism/PDD/PDDNOS: *Impairment of social and communicative skills, behavioral dysfunctions, inattention, hyperactivity or impulsivity, and cognitive dysfunction. Accompanying conditions may include speech impairment, sensory processing disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder or seizures.*

Benefit: *Relationship with horse and therapy team build social skills, independence and greater self-worth; horse provides strong motivation for behavior modification of the rider and movement of the horse helps postural and verbal stimulation.*

Cerebral Palsy: *Non-progressive motor disorder; brain damage occurring before, at or shortly after birth. Types and characteristics include:*

Spastic – hyper tonicity with hyperactive stretch reflexes, muscle imbalances and equilibrium; increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes.

Athetoid – extensor muscle tension, worm-like movements, abnormal posturing and slow and deliberate speech.

Ataxic – poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements and often described as having a “rag doll” appearance. Associated conditions include cognitive dysfunction, seizures, communication problems, emotional disturbance and learning disabilities.

Benefit: *Normalization of muscle tone; stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination; improved self-esteem and independence.*

Cerebral Vascular Accident (stroke): *Hemorrhage in the brain which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.*

Benefit: *Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture motor planning, speech and socialization.*

Downs Syndrome: *A genetic disability caused by an hereditary chromosomal abnormality or mutation; developmental or cognitive disability, speech delays, poor muscle tone, altered physical appearance.*

Benefit: *Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills; provides a structured learning environment; builds self-esteem, confidence and independence.*

Multiple Sclerosis (MS): Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation and eventual loss of function; periods of exacerbation and remission; easily fatigued; weakness, visual impairment, loss of coordination; emotional sensitivity; impaired bowel and bladder function.

Benefit: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for emotional therapy.

Muscular Dystrophy: Hereditary disease that mainly affects males; deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle.

Benefit: Provides opportunity for group activity, may slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, and allows movement free of assistive devices.

Sensory Processing Disorder: Hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity to one or more senses, i.e., touch, smell, hearing, vision, taste, movement or position.

Benefit: Provides input to all the sensory systems, particularly movement and position awareness; movement of the horse helps regulate processing of stimuli; improves focus and decreases sensitivity; improves self-regulation and independence.

Visual/Hearing Impairment: Partial or total loss of vision or hearing; impairment of spatial awareness, movement and postural problems; communication challenges; limited social opportunities.

Benefit: Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance and posture; provides a structured learning environment; builds self-esteem, confidence and independence.