



CKRH
Central Kentucky Riding for Hope
Horses Helping People

OPERATIONS MANUAL



Ability....Not Disability

Updated January 2018

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MISSION STATEMENT

CKRH is dedicated to enriching the community by improving the quality of life and the health of children and adults with special physical, cognitive, emotional and social needs through therapeutic activities with the horse.

VALUES

- Offer equine assisted activities in a manner that challenges individuals with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.
- Maintain excellence in the care and management of our therapeutic horse herd.
- Value our donors by the work we produce.
- Recognize that our volunteers are our most important resource.
- Provide a safe environment for all.
- Encourage diversity in all aspects of our program.



HOW DO I CONTACT STAFF?



Office: (859) 231-7066

website: www.ckrh.org

Absentee Voicemail: (859) 231-7066 press 1 or ask to be transferred to the absentee voicemail

CKRH STAFF:

Executive Director	Pat Kline	pat@ckrh.org	Ext.26
Program Director	Denise Spittler	denise@ckrh.org	Ext. 24
Development Director	Jessica Byassee	jessica@ckrh.org	Ext. 29
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Equine Manager	Lisa Swanson	lisas@ckrh.org	Ext. 37
Volunteer Coordinator	Vickie Palmer	volunteers@ckrh.org	Ext. 22
STABLES Instructor	Josh McElroy	joshm@ckrh.org	Ext. 21
Instructor	Anna Montero	annam@ckrh.org	Ext. ??
Instructor	Erica Bischoff	ericab@ckrh.org	Ext. ??
Instructor	Katherine Jensen	katherinej@ckrh.org	Ext. ??
Data Administrator/Instructor	Alli Rushing	alli@ckrh.org	Ext. 31
Equine Care & Lesson Assistant	JJ Silman		

CKRH OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

Central Kentucky Riding for Hope began in 1981 as a collaboration between Dr. Peter Bosomworth, who at the time served as Chancellor of the University of Kentucky Medical Center, and a collection of area horse enthusiasts. The team initially borrowed horses to assist four participants.

The original objective was to offer an alternative to traditional machine-based/table-top therapies by using the three-dimensional movement of the horse, which is more comparable to a human's natural stride. The pilot program proved so successful that we were given use of a converted tobacco barn at the newly established Kentucky Horse Park. Continuing to grow as a seasonal program running May-October, we became accredited through the Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) in 1987 and achieved the Premier Accredited Center status by 1998.

During this time, programming developed rapidly, and interest in our therapeutic activities grew beyond what a seasonal program could maintain. The CKRH Board of Directors saw the need to provide year-round services and undertook a \$4 million capital campaign in 2005. Our in-door facility was completed in 2011 enabling us to provide programming without limitations from weather or time of day.

Community partnerships have been key to the evolution of our programs. In addition to providing Hippotherapy with the renowned Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital since 2002, CKRH has been an alternative learning location for the Fayette County Public Schools system since 2014.

We serve active military and veterans through various partnerships, including the Kentucky National Guard and the Kentucky Veterans Treatment Court. We also collaborate with the Bluegrass Care, Navigators, Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center, Easter Seal Cardinal Hill and KVC Kentucky to provide Equine Facilitated Mental Health activities.

Other programming includes our core curricula in Therapeutic Riding and Therapeutic Horsemanship. CKRH remains the only PATH Intl. Premier Accredited program serving the 10 counties of Central Kentucky.

Since 1981, CKRH has served thousands of people living with disabilities. Thanks to the generous support of so many, we continually bring the healing power of the horse to people living in a world focused on what *they cannot do* so that they have activities that *they can do*.

EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES

“There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.”

Participant Opportunities

We are improving the quality of life and health for people living with mental, physical, social, cognitive and behavioral disorders. Our highly trained horses, volunteers and staff enable us to maintain Premier Accreditation through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International (PATH, Intl.).

Diverse programs are designed to serve and meet the needs of people in our community. Many programs at CKRH are provided through partnerships with other community organizations.

If you are an individual or group not affiliated with one of our partnership organizations, please contact our program director Denise Spittler to learn more about our services.

CKRH offers the following programs:

Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship for individuals with special medical needs, physical and cognitive disabilities are adaptive riding and horsemanship activities conducted by a PATH Intl. certified instructor for individuals with special needs. Activities are designed to meet each participant’s individual needs and the intent is for participants to progress in equestrian skills while improving their cognitive, emotional, social and/or behavioral skills. Secondary benefits include improved fine and gross motor skills, balance, strength, coordination, proprioception, tactile senses, team work, problem solving, self-image/confidence, communication, memory retention and much more.

Delivery of Service: Private and group lessons are available Monday-Thursday from 1 pm – 7:30 pm and Saturday 10 am – 4 pm.

Eligibility: Individuals four years of age and up with a medical diagnosis, are under weight limits and meet precautions and contraindications guidelines set by PATH, Intl. and CKRH. Common diagnoses include: Autism, developmental delay/disability, ADD/ADHD, Dyspraxia, Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, head trauma/brain injury, hearing and vision impairment, genetic conditions/disorders, Multiple Sclerosis, intellectual disability, stroke, Muscular Dystrophy, Spina Bifida and orthopedic disorder.

Cost: \$30 per lesson. *Lesson fees must be paid in advance.*

Length of lesson: Minimum of 30 min. and maximum of 1 hr. determined by participant need.

How to enroll: Individuals contact CKRH program director. Go to www.ckrh.org for detailed registration information.

Community Partners: Neuro Restorative

Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship for individuals with mental health diagnosis are traditional and adaptive riding and horsemanship activities conducted by a PATH Intl. certified instructor. Participants have a wide range of mental health conditions and activities are designed

to meet individual needs. The intent is for participants to progress in equestrian skills while improving their emotional, social and behavioral skills. Secondary benefits include improved problem-solving skills, emotional awareness and regulation, tolerance for stress, connection with others, optimism, empathy and self-actualization.

Delivery of Service: Private and group lessons are available Monday-Thursday from 1 pm – 7:30 pm and Saturday 10 am – 4 pm.

Cost: \$30 per lesson. *Lesson fees must be paid in advance.*

Length of lesson: 1 hr.

Eligibility: Individuals four years of age and up with a diagnosed mental illness, are under weight limits and meet precautions and contraindications guidelines set by PATH, Intl. and CKRH. Common diagnoses include: depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress, eating disorders and addictive behaviors.

How to enroll: Individuals contact CKRH program director. Go to www.ckrh.org for detailed registration information.

Community Partners: KVC Kentucky

Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship for individuals with learning disabilities are traditional and adaptive riding and horsemanship activities conducted by a PATH Intl. certified instructor for individuals with a wide range of learning disabilities. Activities are designed to meet each participant's individual needs and the intent is for participants to progress in equestrian skills while improving academic skills including ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. Secondary benefits include improved self-esteem and confidence, self-regulation, self-actualization, problem-solving skills, sequencing skills, organizing skills and memory retention.

Delivery of Service: Private and group lessons are available Monday-Thursday from 1 pm – 7:30 pm and Saturday 10 am – 4 pm.

Eligibility: Individuals six years of age and up with a diagnosed learning disability, are under weight limits and meet precautions and contraindications guidelines set by PATH, Intl. and CKRH. Common diagnoses include: auditory processing disorder, language processing disorder, dyslexia, executive functioning disorder and memory deficits.

Cost: \$30 per lesson. *Lesson fees must be paid in advance.*

Length of lesson: 1 hr.

How to enroll: Individuals contact CKRH program director. Go to www.ckrh.org for detailed registration information.

Vocational Skills Training teaches individuals with mild disabilities skills needed for employment. Activities are led by CKRH staff and volunteers with the intent for participants to gain employment skills in the areas of horsemanship, facilities/farm maintenance, administration/clerical, janitorial as well as interpersonal skills. Secondary benefits include improved self-esteem and confidence, self-regulation, self-actualization, problem-solving skills, sequencing skills, organizing skills and memory retention.

Delivery of Service: Private and group lessons are available Monday-Thursday from 9 am – 6 pm.

Eligibility: Individuals 17 years of age and up diagnosed with a mild disability and meet precautions and contraindications guidelines set by PATH, Intl. and CKRH. Common diagnoses include: Autism, brain injury, stroke, intellectual disability, learning disability and executive functioning disorder.

Cost: \$30 per lesson. *Lesson fees must be paid in advance.*

Length of lesson: minimum of 1 hr. maximum of 2 hrs.

How to enroll: Individuals contact CKRH program director. Go to www.ckrh.org for detailed registration information.

Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship for Veterans and Military Service Members is designed to meet the unique needs of military veterans. PATH, Intl. certified instructors teach the 2-stage program which focuses on horsemanship and riding skills. During the first stage, lasting 8 weeks, participants learn unmounted and mounted equestrian skills. During the second 8-week stage, participants continue to develop horsemanship skills while mentoring new stage 1 participants. Once both stages are completed, program graduates may continue as a volunteer at CKRH or volunteer at other community organizations. Through this mentorship model, participants solidify horsemanship skills, interact with other veterans, and give back to the program. The group schedule and activities are designed to meet veteran's needs with the intent for participants to progress in equestrian skills while improving their emotional, social, and behavioral skills. Secondary benefits include improved communication, decision-making skills, emotional awareness and regulation, tolerance for stress and novel situations, connecting with others, optimism, empathy, and community integration.

Delivery of Service: This program is offered Wednesday evenings from 6-8pm.

Cost: \$60 per lesson; lesson fees must be paid in advance

Length of lesson: 2 hours

Eligibility: Military veterans with referral from mental health professional, are under weight limits, and meet precautions and contraindications guidelines set by PATH, Intl. and CKRH.

How to enroll: Individuals contact CKRH program director. Go to www.ckrh.org for detailed registration information.

The STABLES is an Alternate Education Program as defined by Kentucky state regulations 704 KAR 19:002. This 'Opportunity School' is a community partnership providing a unique learning opportunity for students in grades 7-12 who thrive in a nontraditional school setting. Designed with academics in mind, The STABLES also provides opportunities to gain work competencies and vocational skills. Through project-based learning and work experiences, students assume greater responsibility for their education and are inspired to be continual lifelong learners.

In addition to classroom instruction, the teenagers are engaged in activities that focus on life skills such as problem solving, communication, team building and development of positive relationships. Students may participate in the Equine-Assisted Interpersonal Skills class and shadow professionals in multiple areas of the work force. While learning about and caring for the horses, our students develop an appreciation for hard work and responsibility while building their

confidence and self-esteem. Our mission is to create a collaborative community that ensures all students achieve at high levels and graduate prepared to excel in a global society.

Delivery of Service: The Stables follows the Fayette County Public School calendar.

Eligibility: Enrollment is limited due to the uniqueness of the program, and placement of students is voluntary. Students and parents are asked to sign contracts upon enrollment, identifying their investment in becoming successful and contributing members of The Stables community.

How to enroll: Contact Brian McIntyre, dean of students at 859-381-4236. Registration information may be found through Fayette County Public Schools

Community Partners: Fayette County Public Schools

Charlotte Hiler Easley LCSW, ESMHL

Charlotte is a licensed clinical social worker with a private practice working with women and women's issues. Her office is located on the grounds of CKRH. She provides individual and group traditional and equine assisted sessions, consulting on trauma informed equine assisted work and programming. She is a certified EAGALA and PATH, Int Equine Specialist in mental Health and Learning. She is trained in EMDR and Brainspotting and is certified Equine Assisted EMDR. Charlotte and CKRH have partnered in providing non-mounted equine assisted learning and psychotherapy services for over 6 years.

Delivery of Service: Monday-Wednesday from 8 am-5 pm

Cost: Varies

Eligibility: Go to www.charlotteeasley.com

How to contact: Go to www.charlotteeasley.com

HorseAbility is a specialized summer program providing children with special needs the opportunity to have summer fun. The program focus is enriched learning experiences with horses under the supervision of staff who are trained and specialize in teaching children with disabilities. Summer fun activities will include: therapeutic riding, horse games, grooming, arts & crafts, water games, literacy, gardening and music

Delivery of Service: Monday-Friday from 8 am-5 pm during June and July

Cost: \$250 per week with a \$50 assessment fee

Eligibility: HorseAbility is open to school age children with disabilities.

How to enroll: Contact CKRH program director. Go to www.ckrh.org for detailed registration information.

Community Partners: Easter Seals Cardinal Hill

I Ride (Investing in myself, Reasoning and Resiliency, Initiating positive change, Determining my path, Evolving and succeeding) is an equine program to redirect at-risk youth and provide them the opportunity to have fun while learning to ride and care for horses. All staff are trained and specialize in teaching children affected by the many outcomes associated with families in poverty and addiction.

Delivery of Service: Monday-Thursday from 9 am – 4 pm during June and July; 10 am – 3 pm on designated Saturdays throughout the year.

Length of Lesson: Each participant attends multiple full days per week.

Cost: No charge to the family. This program is fully supported through grant funding.

Eligibility: School age children identified as being less likely to transition into adulthood successfully, low family income, under weight limits and meet precautions and contraindications guidelines set by PATH, Intl. and CKRH.

How to enroll: Individuals contact CKRH program director. Go to www.ckrh.org for detailed registration information.

Hippotherapy refers to how occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech-language pathology professionals use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement to engage sensory, neuromotor and cognitive systems to achieve functional outcomes. In conjunction with the affordances of the equine environment and other treatment strategies, hippotherapy is part of a patient's integrated plan of care.

Delivery of Service: Tuesday-Friday from 9 am – 6 pm

Cost: Varies per session paid to Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital and \$30 per session paid to Central Kentucky Riding for Hope

Eligibility: Individuals two years of age and up with a medical diagnosis, are under weight limits and meet precautions and contraindications guidelines set by PATH, Intl. and CKRH.

How to enroll: Contact Cardinal Hill out patient services

Community Partners: Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital (859) 367-7125

EASTT (Equine Assisted Survivors of Trauma Therapy) combines psychoeducation and equine assisted activities to address symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, depression and relationship issues common for survivors of sexual trauma. This a non-mounted group; participants do not need any prior horse experience. The environment and the horse partnership framework allow participants to practice and learn new life skills while promoting self-awareness and relationship building. The goal is to create a safe, nonjudgmental, non-critical environment with in-the-moment experience that improves participants' coping and relationship skills and enhances overall quality of life.

Delivery of Service: 4:00pm to 6:30pm on six consecutive Saturdays in the Spring and six consecutive Saturday in the Fall.

Cost: No charge to the individual. Fully funded through grants generated by Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center and Central Kentucky Riding for Hope.

Eligibility: Meet precautions and contraindications guidelines set by PATH, Intl. and CKRH. Contact Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center for further information.

How to enroll: Call Chelsea at Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center at 859-253-2615.

Community Partners: Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center www.bluegrassrapecrisis.org and Charlotte Hiler Easley LCSW www.charlotteeasley.com

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

“I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

All volunteers will be under the direct supervision of a CKRH staff person. Direct supervision is defined as “at the activity site and responsible for activities”.

Lesson Volunteers

Commitment and Requirements:

Lesson volunteers are asked to commit two hours per week, for consecutive weeks of a class session. Sessions usually run 10 to 15 weeks. Lessons are held year-round with a short break between sessions. Reliable attendance is *key*, as we strive to build a team of horse, participant, horse leader and sidewalkers. It is important to keep this team consistent throughout the entire class session. Barn Assistants are also asked to commit to a complete session to keep the handling of our horses and lesson flow consistent and safe. **All lesson volunteers are required to attend volunteer orientations, specific to their volunteer position, prior to participating.** Current volunteers are asked to participate in continued volunteer education and training provided by CKRH.

Lesson volunteer positions are:

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. Sidewalkers are there to assist the person when needed and to help ensure their safety. Encourage participants to be as independent as possible!

Qualifications and Responsibilities:

- Attendance at CKRH orientation
- Completion of skills assessment
- Previous horse experience not required
- Minimum age of 17
- Commitment to attend class each week for the length of the session
- Adequate vision and hearing to ensure safety of participant
- Walk/jog alongside the horse for duration of the lesson, occasionally on uneven surfaces
- Ability to hold your arm slightly raised and out to the side for up to 30 minutes thus providing support for the person if necessary
- Comfortable working in physical contact with horses and children/adults with disabilities and special needs
- Ability to adapt to change
- Display patience
- Ability to perform emergency dismount
- Meet and greet participants. Remain with your participant ensuring their safety at all times.
- Assist with helmets
- Assist the participant during lesson, mounting and dismounting processes

- Act as the “bridge” between instructor and participant. Repeat directions, redirect attention and assist the person with tasks as needed or directed.

Horse Leader: The horse leader’s primary responsibility is the horse. A leader pays close attention to the horse and all that is happening around the horse before, during and after a lesson. A 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.

Qualifications and Responsibilities:

- Previous horse experience is required
- Minimum age of 17 (may be younger with program director approval)
- Completion of skills assessment
- Commitment to attend class each week for the length of the session
- Adequate vision and hearing to ensure safety of horses and participants
- Walk/jog with the horse for duration of the lesson time
- Ability to read a horse and to calmly prevent/avoid unsafe situations
- Demonstrate patience
- Ability to adapt to change
- Ensure horse is groomed, tacked, and warming up 10 minutes prior to lesson start time
- Primary responsibility is horse safety
- Listen and respond to the instructor’s directions
- Lead horse during lesson and maintain safe spacing between horses
- Help horse follow the participant’s cues
- Remove tack and ensure horse is properly cared for after lesson

Barn Assistants: The Barn Assistants help our lessons run smoothly and on time by having horses in their stalls and groomed before lessons begin. Barn Assistants are also important in maintaining barn safety and cleanliness throughout the lesson activities. At the end of the day, Barn Assistants ensure that our equine therapists are properly cared for, all equipment and tack is put away, and the barn is clean and ready for the next day’s activities.

Qualifications and Responsibilities: Previous horse experience is helpful

- Minimum age of 16
- Successful completion of CKRH orientation
- Successful completion of CKRH training for assigned tasks
- Completion of skills assessment
- Commitment to attend class each week for the length of the session
- Understand horse safety concerns
- Ability to read a horse and to calmly prevent/avoid unsafe situations
- Lead horses to and from the pastures
- Groom/bathe horses before/after lessons.
- Clean and organize tack.
- Clean stalls
- Maintain general barn cleanliness
- Ability to adapt to change

Equine Care Volunteers

Commitment and Requirements:

All equine care volunteers are under the supervision of our equine manager. The responsibilities of equine care positions require that volunteers are able to commit to a consistent schedule, with defined days and hours, over a significant period of time. Qualifications and responsibilities vary according to volunteer position. **All equine care volunteers are required to attend volunteer orientations. A volunteer training specific to the equine care volunteer position is also required. This training may be completed in a group or as an individual.**

Equine care volunteer positions are:

Junior Volunteers: Junior volunteers are 12 to 16 years of age and work under the direct supervision of the equine manager or a volunteer mentor. They do not participate directly in lessons. Junior volunteers must be accompanied by a parent or another adult until they have demonstrated that their maturity and skills are at the level where a staff person determines an adult is no longer necessary. Junior volunteers must demonstrate the ability to act responsibly in the barn area, complete task, and follow barn rules and guidelines.

Qualifications and Responsibilities:

- Attendance at CKRH volunteer orientation
- Previous horse experience is preferred
- Successful completion of CKRH junior volunteer training
- Completion of skills assessment
- Basic horse skills are required such as picking hooves, grooming, safe leading techniques and leading horses through pasture gates with other horses which are loose
- Assist CKRH barn crew with getting horses ready for lessons
- Assist CKRH barn crew with caring for horses after lessons
- Set up and take down lesson rings
- Prepare stalls for horses coming in
- Clean stalls, feed tubs, water buckets
- Clean tack

Haycrew: Haycrew is the team of volunteers who feed and care for our horses. Haycrew volunteers are year-round and are able to commit on a monthly basis, to a weekly designated time slot. A CKRH staff member will be on site during all haycrew shifts.

Qualifications and Responsibilities:

- Attendance at CKRH volunteer orientation
- Previous horse experience is required
- Successful completion of haycrew training
- Ability to have reliable on time attendance
- Ability to identify & differentiate between horses
- Feed hay, grain, and supplements
- Clean automatic waterers
- Clean and fill troughs and buckets

- Check horses for illness or injury
- Bring horses in and out of the barn as needed
- Prepare stalls for horses coming in
- Clean stalls
- Put on or take off muzzles, blankets and fly masks as needed
- Clean and put away feed pans, buckets, rakes, muck tubs and other tools used
- Clean mini pen
- Blow barn aisle and assist in maintaining an obstacle-free, clean barn area
- Assist in maintaining a clean feed area

Ground Work Assistants: Ground work assistants work under the direction of the equine manager to improve the ground manners, suppleness and physical fitness of our therapy horses and insure that each horse feels comfortable in lessons. The result of this work is a more enjoyable and safe lesson environment for all horses, participants, and volunteers. A CKRH staff member will be present during all ground work activities and all work must be approved by the equine manager.

****Ground Work Plans are detailed in SalesForce and no adjustments should be made unless approved by the equine manager.***

Qualifications and Responsibilities:

- Attendance at CKRH volunteer orientation
- Intermediate to advanced previous horse experience
- Pass a ground work skills assessment
- Groom, bathe, administer hoof treatments
- Tack horses
- Liberty work in a small herd or with a single horse
- Lunge/natural horsemanship line work
- Walk/trot in hand through a pattern or obstacle course
- Work with lesson objects (balls, noisemakers, other toys, cones, barrels, mounting blocks, etc.) to desensitize the horse
- Work with a partner or two to accustom the horse to sidewalkers
- Clean stalls or grooming bays used during your session
- Clean and condition tack used during your session

Mounted Conditioning Assistants: Mounted conditioning assistants work under the direction of the equine manager exercising horses to keep them supple, physically fit, and more responsive to their riders. Responsibilities include those listed below, as well as any of those listed under ‘ground work assistants.’ A CKRH staff member will be present during all activities and all work must be approved by the equine manager.

****Training & Conditioning Plans are detailed in SalesForce and no adjustments should be made unless approved by the equine manager.***

Level I

Qualifications and Responsibilities:

- Attendance at CKRH volunteer orientation
- Intermediate to advanced previous horse experience
- Pass a ground work and riding assessment given by the equine manager
- May only ride while a staff member is present at CKRH
- Free lunge in the round pen
- Lunge
- Train and condition horses under saddle, including warm up and cool down periods
- Groom horse before and after session
- Clean stalls or grooming bays used during your session
- Clean and condition tack used during your session

Special Event Volunteers

Commitment and requirements:

Special events are annual fundraisers for CKRH. Each event has its own specific needs and time commitments for volunteers. Attendance of CKRH new volunteer orientation is not required. A volunteer application or liability release form must be on file at CKRH.

CKRH special events include:

Paul Frazer Memorial Horse Show -	March
LandRover Three Day Event -	April
Night of the Stars -	June
Tack Sale and Trail Ride -	October

Administration Volunteers

Commitment and Requirements: Administration volunteers fulfill ongoing needs within the categories below. Attendance of CKRH new volunteer orientation is required. A volunteer application or liability release form must be on file at CKRH.

Tour Guide	Fund Raising
Receptionist	Newsletter
Data Entry	Photography
Mass Mailing	Videography
Staff Assistant	Office help

If you have other talents you would like to share with CKRH, please let us know!

GENERAL GUIDELINES

“In riding a horse we borrow freedom”

The following guidelines are for the safety and wellbeing of our participants, volunteers, staff and our much-loved therapy horses.

How do I know if participant services are cancelled?

- Snow days – CKRH follows the same schedule as Fayette & Scott County. If EITHER Fayette or Scott Counties are closed due to weather then CKRH will be closed as well. On Saturday, we will post a snow closure on all three major television channels.
- Closures will be posted on social media. Please follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.
- If your services are not needed due to a participant cancelation, the volunteer coordinator will contact you by the best method contact listed on your volunteer application.

Carrying of concealed weapons is prohibited.

How do I report an absentee or tardy?

- Volunteers can easily cancel an upcoming shift through their online Personal Dashboard, which will alert the Volunteer Coordinator. There is also a participant absence calendar in the family room, check periodically to see if your participant has canceled any future lessons.
- If you must cancel a shift the day of, or you are running late, please **call CKRH at (859) 231-7066** and let the staff know your full name and the shift time.
- If you are scheduled for a commitment before 12:00pm, please call by 3:00pm the day prior. If you are scheduled for a commitment after 12:00pm, please call by 9:00am the same day.

Three Strikes No Show Policy:

Any time a participant or volunteer does not call ahead and does not report to a scheduled class or commitment; it is considered a “no show” situation. After three (3) consecutive occurrences within a 6 month period, the participant/volunteer is removed from the current schedule. In each case of a participant/volunteer not showing up for a scheduled class or commitment, the appropriate staff member will document the no show. After the second no-show occurrence, CKRH staff will remind the participant/volunteer of the policy by phone or email. After the third and final no-show occurrence CKRH staff will contact the participant/volunteer by phone or in person. The participant/volunteer will be ask to take some time away from the program or change responsibilities. The participant/volunteer will be encouraged to return when they are better able to fit the program into their schedule. If the participant/volunteer returns at a later time, their record begins at zero no-shows.

Background Check Policy:

Central Kentucky Riding for Hope, Inc. (CKRH) is committed to the protection of all persons who are associated with CKRH including members, staff, volunteers and guests. CKRH shall conduct criminal background checks of all employees and volunteers who have direct repetitive contact with children participating in our programs. CKRH will carry out this requirement in a fair, consistent and non-discriminatory manner, complying with applicable state and federal laws and guidelines, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act and the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

CKRH utilizes name-based systems to obtain data for individual background checks, at a minimum each individual background check shall include:

(a) verification of the individual's identity and legal aliases, (b) a national search of sex offender registries and (c) a national search of criminal records. Background checks shall be conducted prior to employment or volunteer service and renewed every five (5) years. Other data may also be obtained, based on individual employee or volunteer duties or responsibilities.

Background check findings shall be reviewed in a fair, impartial and confidential manner. Because CKRH's priority is the safety of the members, staff, volunteers and guests, certain actions and convictions for certain crimes serve to automatically disqualify applicants for employment or volunteer service at CKRH in any position that involves working with children. A person will be ineligible for employment or volunteer service if the person:

- (1) refuses to consent to a criminal background check,
- (2) makes a false statement in connection with such criminal background check,
- (3) is registered, or required to be registered on any sex offender registry,
- (4) has been convicted of a felony,
- (5) or has been convicted within the past 5 years of a misdemeanor involving:
 - (a) physical assault or battery,
 - (b) drugs or controlled substances, or
 - (c) cruelty to animals.

With respect to convictions for crimes not listed above, any applicant with such a conviction shall be evaluated on an individual basis to determine whether they should be excluded from consideration based on the conviction. In so doing, CKRH shall consider the following factors:

- the nature and gravity of the offense;
- the time that has passed since the offense or completion of sentence; the nature of the job sought or held;
- the facts and circumstances surrounding the offense or conduct;
- the number of offenses for which the individual was convicted; the age of the individual
- at the time of conviction or release;

- evidence that the individual performed the same type of work, post-conviction, with the same or a different employer with no known incidents of criminal conduct;
- the length and consistency of employment history before and after the offense or conduct; rehabilitation efforts, e.g. education and/or training;
- employment or character references and any other information regarding fitness for the particular position; and
- whether the individual is bonded under a federal, state, or local bonding program.

CKRH shall alert the applicant to the possibility of his or her exclusion due to past criminal conduct and provide the applicant an opportunity to submit an explanation. All personal data, background check data and adverse action letters shall be treated as confidential and maintained in a secure location.

A standard background check, costing up to \$20.00, will be purchased for every CKRH staff and volunteer. If an individual has lived outside the state of Kentucky within the past five (5) years, there may be additional costs incurred for a background check. CKRH will ask the staff or volunteer to pay any amount over \$20.00.

All Terrain / Utility Vehicle and Tractor Policy

All farm equipment including vehicles and tractors must be operated professionally for the purpose of completing farm task. No recreational use of equipment is allowed. The driver must have valid driver's license and be a staff or haycrew member. All riders under the age of 18 must wear a helmet.

Safety First:

All persons on CKRH property must sign appropriate release forms.

Do not talk or text during lessons or while working with horses. If at all possible, leave your phone in your car or place your phone on silent while you are participating in lessons.

- A CKRH safety coordinator will oversee all activities and take charge in the event of an emergency.
- Know CKRH emergency procedures and the location of emergency exits.
- Stay calm in the event of an emergency.
- Be aware of your surroundings and others.
- All children **MUST** be supervised at all times.
- For the benefit of our horses and participants, please be calm and tranquil in the barn.
- Do not run around the barn or horses. Horses can be startled by fast movements.
- Please do not pet horses through the stall screens or while they are in the grooming stalls or wash racks. Please respect their quiet time while they are stalled. Our therapy horses are “at work” during lesson activities and should not be distracted.
- Do not feed the horses and do not allow participants to feed the horses.
- Participants should not enter stalls or paddocks unless supervised by an instructor.
- Do not allow children to climb on fences or gates.
- Do not allow a participant to walk up onto the mounting block until the instructor is present at the mounting block and directs the participant to do so.
- No pets are allowed at CKRH.
- **Smoking** is not allowed while public school is in session. When school is not in session smoking is only allowed in the front parking area and the patio.

Volunteer and Participant Interaction Guidelines:

When interacting with participants it is important to use appropriate language and interaction. Our desire at CKRH is to create an environment where participants, volunteers and staff feel welcome, safe and respected.

- CKRH is a program that celebrates diversity and sees value in all individuals. Respect and cordiality toward everyone is expected.
- **Never be alone with a participant!** Always stay in a group area. Never take a participant to the bathroom. If necessary, send the participant with a caregiver or staff member.
- Confidentiality is an important component of your relationship with CKRH participants. You will be provided with participant information that will help you help them succeed in their lessons. All information is to be kept strictly confidential.
- Photos or video of participants should not be taken without permission from parents or CKRH staff.
- Be yourself. Use your normal voice and give support, but try not to over praise.
- Do not sensationalize the accomplishments of individuals with disabilities. While these accomplishments should be recognized and applauded, people in the disability rights movement have publicized that excessive recognition and praise has a negative impact.
- Use appropriate terminology. A person has a disability, rather than suffering from, afflicted with, or a victim of a disability. A person uses a wheel chair rather than is confined or restricted to a wheelchair.
- Use person-first language: This means that you should not define a person by their disability. For example, you do not say “the autistic person”, but instead would say “the person with autism” using person first-language.
- Use age appropriate language: For example, do not talk with an adult participant the same way that you would talk to a child or younger participant. They are adults and deserve to be treated as such.
- Do not discuss inappropriate personal issues or topics with a participant.
- Remember, even if a participant is non-verbal, they still listen and want to be a part of the conversation. Many times people think that just because a person cannot talk, they cannot hear. Make sure to respect the participant and talk to them, not about them.
- Encourage autonomy! Do not do something for a participant just because it will go faster or you don't think that they can do it. Allow our participants to use their abilities to complete a task and be there if they need you. It is a good idea to ask first before helping.
- When giving directions to a participant, be polite, direct and firm. Keep directions simple and positive. Avoid the use of the word don't.
- Many of our participants have disabilities that include sensory processing difficulties. Keep distractions and non-essential conversation to a minimum.

What do I do when I arrive?

- Please obey all speed limits posted at the Kentucky Horse Park and CKRH. Horses and people have the right of way. Drive slowly and safely.
- You will receive an automated shift reminder. Please arrive on time or call to let us know if you are running late.

- Park in the front parking lot.
- When you arrive, please go to volunteer check-in.
- Check the lesson schedule for your assignment and highlight your name to indicate that you are on site and ready to participate in lessons.
- Special Event volunteers check in at designated location if off site event.
- Wear your nametag.
- Check for new notices posted on the volunteer bulletin board.
- Check in with your instructor.
- Find your horse or your participant.
- Volunteer hours are rolled up automatically each day. If you work an unscheduled shift, log your hours using your Personal Dashboard.

What should I wear?

You will be working around horses and in a barn environment.

- Dress appropriately for the forecasted weather.
- In general, acceptable attire is comfortable outdoor sportswear, specifically clothing that you do not mind getting dirty or stained. Jeans or light weight long pants and shorts are acceptable. When selecting your attire, please consider clothing appropriate for a child and family environment.
- Wearing appropriate shoes is a must. You will be doing a good deal of walking and shoes need to be comfortable and safe. Tennis shoes, hiking boots, riding boots, etc. are all acceptable footwear. Please, no **sandals, open toe, open heel or high heel shoes.**
- If you wear a hat make certain that the hat fits securely on your head and that the brim is not too large that it interferes with your vision or responsibilities as a leader or side-walker, or is distracting to the participant or horse.
- Sunscreen or insect repellent is strongly recommended. Minimize the perfume. Heavy perfume can attract bees and other insects and may be a sensory overload for some of our participants.
- To minimize the sound and distraction of keys for horse and participant, please keep your keys in your pocket or in the volunteer lounge.
- Please do not wear dangling or excessive jewelry, as this may be distracting to some participants and become unsafe.

Dismissal Procedures:

Level 1: Verbal Warning

- Not following CKRH guidelines will result in a verbal warning from the executive director or the program director.
- The warning will be documented.

Level 2: Written Warning

- Not following the safety guidelines for a second incident will be followed by a discussion with and written warning from the executive director and/or the program director and the written warning will be documented.
- Steps will be outlined to prevent future infractions.
- Actions that will be taken if a further infraction occurs will be outlined.

Level 3: Dismissal from the Organization

- Anyone facing dismissal from the organization will be informed by a written notice and a discussion with the executive director and/or the program director. The following infractions are grounds for immediate dismissal from the organization.
 - Theft
 - Inappropriate use of the facilities, mailing lists or monies
 - Abuse of the animals or properties
 - Repeated disregard of the organization's policies and procedures
 - Harassment of, or inappropriate behavior toward any staff member, volunteer or participant
 - Use of alcohol or drugs while working with or near the participants as an employee or a volunteer

CKRH will take appropriate measures up to and including calling the local police department if a staff person suspects that a parent, participant or volunteer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

“He knows when you are happy. He knows when you are comfortable. He knows when you are confident. And he always knows when you have carrots.”

Horse Safety:

Think of the horse as having a 6-foot personal space zone surrounding it. Enter their personal space with respect.

- Don't yell, run or make sudden movements near a horse. Be slow and gentle.
- Speak softly as you approach a horse to let them know that you are coming. Like people, horses do not like being surprised by loud noises or unexpected encounters.
- Approach a horse from the side, never from the rear or directly in front of a horse. A horse cannot see what is directly in front or behind them.
- When standing next to a horse, stand very close. If the horse kicks, he can't kick very hard if you are close.
- If you must walk behind a horse, approach from the side, speak softly and gently touch the horse on the shoulder. Keep your hand on the horse and stay close as you move.
- Never walk under a horse's neck. Never walk under a horse. You might not be that short, but some children are.
- It's easy to get your feet stepped on, so be aware of where your feet are in relation to all four of the horse's hooves.
- Hand feeding is an invitation to have your fingers bitten. Please keep your hands away from the horse's mouth. We do not want to encourage nibbling.
- Maintain safe spacing between horses. In general safe spacing is considered to be the one horse length.

Horse Behavior:

It is important to understand how horses think, use their senses and interact in their environment. To be safe around horses, we must understand horse behavior. Our therapy horses are kind and well trained, but do not let your guard down. They are horses, and have instinctual behaviors that you must anticipate and react to in a calm and confident manner.

- Horses are herd animals. They like to stay in a group and establish a pecking order among the herd. Horses look to the dominant leader for confidence and guidance.
- Horses have a flight or fight instinct. They would much rather flee a perceived danger. If flight is not possible, then a horse will fight for survival by kicking, rearing, charging, striking and biting.
- Horses use all their senses to interact with their environment.

Horses and humans perform best when they know what is expected of them and have consistent routines. It is to that end that CKRH has documented the following procedures. Always ask yourself, is the horses' behavior safe if a participant were present? If the answer is no, then the behavior should not be allowed to continue.

Daily notes are placed on the magnetic board in the barn aisle across from the grooming bays. These notes include the daily schedule, horse information, tack sheets and other important information. Read them frequently as you are completing tasks!!!

Horse Care:

CKRH horses are privileged to be surrounded by the highest quality professionals in the industry providing for their needs. The team of professionals that support our horse herd include: veterinarians, dentist, blacksmith, nutritionist, veterinarians providing acupuncture and chiropractors. Volunteers should never perform stretches, massages or other procedures on the CKRH horses. Volunteers should never administer medicine or other health care needs without the direction of CKRH staff. We greatly appreciate your concern and talents. It is best if we all serve in our assigned areas.

Horse treats & snacks between meals:

Many CKRH horses become very pushy and disrespectful about food. This is a negative behavior which can escalate to a level becoming unsafe for participants and volunteers. CKRH horses are provided hay & food throughout the day. Their diets are closely monitored. Please do not give extra hay or snacks in between meals.

- We do not encourage participants or volunteers to bring treats for horses as rewards. Instead, they may give them hugs, kisses and thankyou.
- We should not give treats after /between lessons as a reward. If a participant does bring a treat for their horse, place it in the feed room.
- Haycrew may place carrots or apples in feed pans during normal feeding times with staff approval.
- NEVER feed treats while walking in the field. This trains horses to seek food from people. Remember, many participants enter the field as well as volunteers during their lessons.

It is everyone's job to keep the facility clean:

- Stalls –Always be willing to help!!
- Grooming bays – pick up your tack and sweep every time a grooming bay is used.
- Barn aisle – debris is blown from the barn either early AM or late PM daily when no horses are in stalls. If the barn aisle is cluttered with hay and shaving, please be willing to sweep.
- Indoor & outdoor arena – always ask your instructor how you can help clear the area.
- Return horses to their proper location – check the map on the board to determine if your horse should stay in the stall or go to their pasture.
- Look around. Most likely a walkway needs sweeping or laundry needs folding! Thanks!

Grooming Bay:

- Enter the grooming bay on the right side and turn the horse left, around your body.
- The horse should stand and remain standing in the center of the grooming bay. This is very important for the safety of CKRH participants. Imagine a rectangle in the middle of the grooming bay and expect the horse to stand inside the rectangle. If the horse steps outside the rectangle simply ask him to move back into the rectangle by applying pressure to his body with your hand or using the halter and lead rope. IT IS IMPORTANT YOU ARE CONSISTENT! Ask the horse to step back into the rectangle EVERY time he moves out. This may be time consuming but after a few attempts he will stand quietly. If the horse continues to move ask a staff member for assistance.
- Cross ties should be attached to a leather halter only, never to a bridle. If a horse is waiting after the bridle is applied then a person should hold the horse. Cross ties may be attached to a grooming halter only if a person is with the horse in the grooming bay.
- Do not leave horses unattended in the grooming bays.
- Lead ropes should remain attached to the halter and placed over the horse's neck while in crossties.
- When changing head gear, cross ties should be removed, place halter around horse's neck, ask horse to lower his head and apply new head gear.
- Never more than two people in the grooming bay with a horse at one time. Preferably, only one person at a time.
- Do not allow people walking by to pet the horses head. Politely give the example of how it feels for someone to pet you on the nose. Just like most people do not like to be touched on the nose, most horses do not like it either. They would prefer appropriate space.

Grooming:

- Grooming techniques as taught by CHA and US Pony Club should be implemented.
- Grooming should be done in the grooming bays. On mornings when horses need to eat their hay prior to beginning lessons, it is acceptable for approved volunteers to groom horses in their stall.
- If feet are muddy, rinse and pick at the wash rack. Clean wash rack when finished.
- If tails are muddy, rinse or comb through with your hands to detangle. Please do not pull tail hair out. Please do not use mane comb on the tail.
- Wipe faces with wash cloth or soft brush.

Tacking & Untacking:

- Tacking techniques as taught by CHA and US Pony Club should be implemented.
- Tacking should be done in the grooming bay by staff and approved volunteers.
- Retrieve tack from tack room and place at grooming bay BEFORE placing horse in grooming bay.
- Always fasten the girth very slowly, moving up one hole at a time. Elastic end of the girth should be on the horse's left side. Girth should be snug but not tight for horse to begin warm-up in hand. Make sure to leave empty holes on the left side for tightening later. After walking for a few minutes, the instructor will tighten the girth as necessary in preparation for mount.
- Check snugness of the girth at the horse's sternum NOT at the elastic on the side.

Haltering & Bridling (including side pull):

- Before haltering, place lead rope around horse's neck.
- Before bridling a horse, place the leather halter around the horse's neck.
- Always ask the horse to lower his head by applying pressure at the poll.
- Stand close to the horse's neck on his left side, facing the same direction as the horse.
- Halter – hold halter in both hands by placing left and right crown piece rings in their respective hands. Slide over horse's nose and flip crown piece over top of neck and buckle.
- Bridle - Place your right hand over his poll, between his ears with crown of the bridle in that hand. Hold the bit with an open faced left hand and gently slide into mouth.
- Sidepull – Same as bridle only no bit. Slide nose piece over horse's nose with side straps placed appropriately on each side.

Leading:

- Never wrap the lead rope around your hand.
- Keep two hands on the rope. Right hand should be about 8 to 15 inches away from the snap. In front of your right pocket is a good place to keep your hand.
- Visualize a rectangle space about 2 feet away from your side. That rectangle should be your horse's space
- Your shoulder should be slightly behind the horse's cheek. The horse should move with you, not in front or behind. **All horses should be respectful of their leader's space.** If a horse is walking too fast, pull and release on the lead rope every other stride to encourage them to slow down. Remember the horse will always win a pulling match! If you need help getting a horse to walk up, please ask the instructor or another staff member.
- Be respectful of the horse's space. Do not nuzzle or play with their head and nose. Do not use them as a leaning post.
- Look up and plan where you are going. By planning ahead, you will be able to give the horse clear preparatory commands.
- Through pasture gates –
 - Always make sure loose horses are at least 10 yards away from the gate and standing quietly before catching a loose horse and leading through a gate.
 - Horses should always be led through a gate and never allowed to walk/run through it freely.

- Keep one hand on the lead and one hand on the gate. The horse's head should remain close to your body. They should never be allowed to eat grass.
- In & Out of Stalls –
 - When entering a stall, ask the horse to stop and relax for about 3 seconds at the stall door opening before continuing into the stall. This will prevent horses from developing a bad habit of rushing into the stall.
 - Walk the horse straight through the door to prevent them from hitting their hip bones.
 - Once in the stall, turn the horse to the left and once facing the door unclip the lead rope. Never allow the horse to walk straight for hay or food before being unclipped. The halter should remain on the horse.
 - Leave the lead rope on the stall hook!
- To/from pasture –
 - Never allow a horse to eat grass while being led. It is ok to have “grazing time” with a horse but never while being led in or out from the field or on trail-rides.
 - Do not lead horses through pastures where they do not live.
- Lesson –
 - The lead rope should hang between the reins, not over the reins.
 - Maintain an engaged walk. It is the quality of movement that provides the most benefit to participants.
 - Keep the horse's body in a straight line. The horse's head should not be pulled toward the leader. This keeps the horse and participant off balance.
 - Make turns and circles large and sweeping, as sharp turns can unseat a participant.
 - Keep the horse attentive and engaged in his work. A horse that is dozing or not paying attention may unintentionally startle.
 - Keep at least 2 horse lengths between you and another horse on all sides.
 - If the horse is nibbling, check your space. Make sure he remains in his space and you remain in yours. A space invasion starts with a simple nudge with the muzzle. Remember, sometimes the HORSE is not in your space YOU are in his.

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How to prevent a horse from eating grass:

- **PLAN AHEAD!** Many CKRH horses are limited in the amount of grass they are allowed to consume to prevent a health condition called founder/laminitis. Horses that do not have access to grass will always seek grass aggressively when given the opportunity.
- The horse should remain in his rectangle space about 2 feet beside you and his nose above your knee.
- If he moves out of that space correct him and put him back into that space. If his nose gets close to your knee bring his head up.
- For the horse that is already eating grass and cannot be deterred, get him to move his hind feet. Ask for staff assistance in demonstrating some techniques if needed.

Mounting & Dismounting:

There are different techniques used to mount and dismount a participant depending upon their ability. Each participant will mount and dismount in the most independent way they can, with safety being the most important consideration. Our horses are trained and schooled for many types of assisted mounting and dismounting procedures. The mounting and dismounting procedure should be executed in a timely manner. We do not want horses standing in the mounting area for extended periods of time.

Mounting should always be done using one of the following:

- a portable mounting block
- a permanent mounting block or platform
- the Surehands Lift

Only independent riders riding out into the park will learn to mount from the ground. This will not be standard procedure rather a learning objective in case of an emergency while riding away from the facility.

Mounting and dismounting techniques:

- Leg over the croup
- Leg over the crest.
- Total assistance
- Partial assistance
- Independent

CKRH has a three-step mounting procedure:

1. After the final tack check away from any mounting block, the leader halts horse a short distance from mounting block in preparation for mounting. (Final tack check completed by instructor if TR lesson.)
 2. The horse is lead to the mounting block, halted and squared. The participant mounts with the necessary instruction and assistance.
 3. The appropriate person (participant, instructor, leader) cues the horse to walk on and the horse walks a short distance away and is halted.
- In a TR lesson:
 - the instructor checks the participant's position and balance as well as the adjustment of the girth. Stirrup leather lengths may be adjusted by the instructor at this time or this duty may be handed over to an assistant instructor or sidewalker while the instructor goes on to mount the next participant.
 - leaders will warm up the horses in the ring 10 minutes prior to mounting.
 - volunteers will be briefed by the instructor as to what type of assistance is needed from the sidewalker.

The Tack Room

The tack room is the room where we store saddles, bridles, reins and other horse-related equipment, collectively known as “tack”. A well- organized tack room makes the job easier for everyone. Knowing your way around the tack room and keeping things in order is vital to the smooth running of the program.

Rules for the tack room:

- Many of our tack items such as rope halters, reins, stirrup irons and stirrup leathers are sized and color coded. Green for x-large, red for large, yellow for medium and blue for small. Girths will be marked with a number indicating length in inches.
- All saddles are numbered, as are the saddle racks. Saddles are to be stored on the same-numbered rack. They are placed on the rack facing the wall, with the rear of the saddle facing you.
- Girths, stirrups and stirrup leathers should be removed from the saddle after use and hung in appropriate location.
- Saddle pads are hung on the saddle pad racks to dry out and only dry saddle pads should be put on a horse. Dirty saddle pads can be put in the laundry basket just outside the tack room door.
- Extra stirrup leathers are organized by length and hang on the tower in the center of the tack room.
- Small, large and additional medium sized stirrup irons are stored in the bottom of the drying rack along with extra rubber bands and leather tabs for our safety stirrups.
- Each horse has its own bridle combination and bit. They are stored on bridle racks on the wall. Each rack has a horse’s name above it. Bridles have the horse’s name on them. Please be careful to put the bridles away under the correct name.
- Bit clips and rein extenders hang on the center tower.
- Reins are organized and stored by size on their own bridle rack. Do not leave them attached to the halter or bridle.
- Each horse will have their own grooming box and grooming tools stored in the cubby next to the grooming stalls. There should be a rubber curry, a hard brush, a soft brush, a mane comb and hoof pick in each box. Please help us keep these boxes and tools clean and organized.
- Leather halters are stored on the back of the cubby by the grooming stalls. Lead ropes will be hanging on the post by the cubby.
- Before putting tack away, please clean and wipe girths off if they are sweaty or have loose hair or dirt. This will prevent girth sores. Bits can be rinsed off with water if needed.

Being a Sidewalker

Performing the duties of a sidewalker is a very important job. Sidewalkers are directly responsible for the participant and as such get the most hands-on experience. In the arena, the sidewalker should help the student focus his attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with either the participant or other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing for anyone. If two sidewalkers are working with one student, one should be the designated talker. It is important that sidewalkers stay with their participant at all times, especially during an emergency situation. **Participants can never be left alone!**

When the instructor gives a direction, allow your student plenty of time to process it. If the instructor says “Turn to the right, toward me,” and the student seems confused, gently tap the right hand and say, “Right” to reinforce the command. You will get to know the participants and learn when they need help and when they’re just not paying attention.

During exercises, pay attention to the student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the participants are to do the exercises and the sidewalkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to games. Be careful not to get so competitive that your participant doesn’t get to use his skills because you do it for him in an effort to win. The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the participant to stretch and grow. You are right at his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability.

It is important to maintain a position by the participant’s knee. Being too far forward or back will make it very difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy. Also, it is important for both sidewalkers to do the same hold if there are two sidewalkers with a participant. This insures proper balance and support for the participant. In addition, do not lean on the horse. This will keep you from accidentally digging an elbow into the horse’s side or causing the horse’s balance to shift. Sidewalkers work together with the leader as a team, but sidewalkers should not help lead the horse. Do not grab the reins, lead rope or halter or push the horse in any way. Sidewalkers should communicate effectively with the leader if the sidewalker is being pushed too close to an object or gate. Since a leader does not have rearview mirrors, communication is the key!

Participant Safety

Safety of the participant is a sidewalker’s first priority!

- Always observe the participant’s physical condition
- Be alert for seizures
- Be aware of the participant’s balance and position on the horse
- Communicate with other team members

Communication with the instructor and among team members is key!

Alert the instructor and ask the leader to stop the horse if:

- The participant is off balance and cannot readjust while the horse is moving.
- The saddle pad had slipped
- The girth is loose
- The stirrups need adjusting
- The participant’s helmet needs to be adjusted
- The participant is fatigued or in pain
- Sidewalkers need to change sides.

Strategies for Sidewalkers

Sidewalkers are the “bridge” from the instructor to the participant. All lessons are planned and have goals and objectives. Instructors will utilize a variety of teaching techniques to effectively communicate instructions to a participant. Sidewalkers can assist the instructor by reinforcing instructions using the following strategies. Be confident and reassuring. Always remember to encourage autonomy!

- Consider response time - allow the participant time to process instructions
- Repetition - instructions may need to be repeated
- Cueing - allow participant to make corrections
- Prompting - participant may need physical assistance such as hand over hand
- Approximations - recognize the attempt
- Giving participants choices – let the participant make decisions
- Using analogies - some participants are visual learners
- Task analysis - a step-by-step breakdown of the task.

Helmet Fit

CKRH encourages all participants to purchase their own helmet. CKRH will provide helmets for those participants who do not wish to purchase a helmet. Sometimes helmets get left at home and a participant will need to borrow one. The instructor is responsible for checking the fit of the helmet before a participant mounts. Sidewalkers can assist in this process by checking the fit of the helmet while the participant is waiting to be called to the mounting area.

Ask the parent if putting on a helmet is an issue for the participant. Helmets can be a sensory issue, so ask permission from the participant before you begin to adjust their helmet. Timing can be important also. Do not ask the participant to put on their helmet too far in advance of their mounting time.

The helmet should be snug so that it cannot slide around on the participant’s head. It should not be so tight that it creates pressure and becomes uncomfortable. It should sit squarely on the participant’s head, not twisted or leaning to the side. The front part of the helmet should rest one inch above the eyebrows. If the helmet sits too high on the head it is too small. If the helmet comes down too low on the head it is too big. It is important that the helmet fits correctly to provide adequate protection. Sometimes padding may be added to aid in obtaining the proper fit.

Basic Sidewalking Holds

Participants may need varying amounts of assistance and support from the sidewalker during the lesson. The instructor will guide you as to the type of assistance a participant needs. This may change through-out the lesson, depending on the skill of the participant and the activities of the lesson. If there are two sidewalkers, both sidewalkers should be using the same amount of assistance, in order to maintain the balance of the participant. If an emergency situation has or is about to arise, sidewalkers automatically go to the most supportive hold which is the arm over thigh hold.

Following are the handholds used in Therapeutic Riding:

- **Arm over Thigh Hold:** The sidewalkers grip the front of the saddle (flap or pommel depending on the horse’s size) with the hand closest to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm rests gently on the rider’s thigh. Be careful that the elbow doesn’t accidentally dig into the rider’s leg or horse’s side.
- **Waist/Shoulder Hold:** If walking on the left side of the horse, sidewalkers will place their left hand on the rider’s waist and right hand on the rider’s shoulder. If

- walking on the right side, sidewalkers will place their right hand on the rider's waist and left hand on the rider's shoulder.
- **Waist/Knee Hold:** If walking on the left side of the horse, sidewalkers will place their left hand on the rider's knee and right hand on the rider's hip with their thumb in front. If walking on the right side, sidewalkers will place their right hand on the rider's knee and left hand on the rider's hip with their thumb in front.
 - **Heel Hold:** Sidewalkers maintain placement by rider's knee and gently hold the rider's heel. This allows for rider support with minimal pressure on the rider's muscles. It is important to only hold for support and to not tug on the rider's leg or pull to one side.
 - **Saddle/Pad Hold:** If walking on the left side of the horse, sidewalkers will place their left hand on the front of the saddle/pad and right hand on the back of the saddle/pad. If walking on the right side, sidewalkers will place their right hand on the front of the saddle and left hand on the back of the saddle/pad.
 - **Spotters Hold:** Sidewalkers maintain placement by rider's knee but do not hold on to the rider in any way. The sidewalker simply walks beside the rider and is prepared to hold if necessary.