



Policy Manual

2022

Riding with HEART
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The mission of Riding with HEART is to improve the quality of life for physically, and challenged adults, children and their families and to provide opportunities for youth development through our diverse equine-assisted programs.



Welcome to Riding with HEART's

Equine-Assisted Recreation and Therapy Program. Our goal is to provide you with an individualized equine program that fits your needs. Whether you are enrolled in the adaptive therapeutic riding program or therapy this booklet is designed to familiarize you with Riding with HEART's policies and procedures.

Therapeutic riding is an equine-assisted activity and/or therapy aiming for a positive contribution to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of individuals with special needs. The multidimensional gait of the horse is very therapeutic.

Please read this booklet carefully as it will answer your questions and assure your participation in the Riding with HEART program is a safe, therapeutic and enjoyable experience.

You are welcome to call or email to schedule a meeting with a staff member.



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ABOUT RIDING WITH HEART

Our Mission

The mission of Riding with HEART is to improve the quality of life of physically and cognitively challenged adults, children and their families and to provide youth development through our diversified equine assisted programs.

Riding with HEART is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Established in 2006 as Dreams Come True Therapeutic Riding and in 2011 have been doing business as doing business as Riding with HEART.

The Riding with HEART facility is located on 30 Green Acres Preserved Farmland and has between 10-12 therapy horses. The beautiful tree-lined grounds offer a large outdoor riding ring, a sensory path with playground, 30 stall barn with office, handicapped accessible bathroom and a wash stall with hot and cold water.

Riding with HEART is a Real-Life Choices (RLC) provider through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).

PATH Intl.



Riding with HEART is a Premier Accredited Center of Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH). PATH Intl. is the equine assisted activities and therapies leader, promoting program excellence and member education. Riding with HEART's instructors are PATH certified therapeutic riding instructors and/or Equine Specialists in Mental Health and Learning. Instructors are required to pursue 20 hours of continuing education annually and be CPR and First Aid certified in order to maintain PATH certification.

All activities at Riding with HEART are conducted according to PATH standards. This booklet is meant to familiarize you with our operating guidelines to ensure a safe and beneficial program.



RIDING WITH HEART PROGRAMS

Adaptive Therapeutic Horseback Riding

Adaptive therapeutic horseback riding, or commonly referred to as therapeutic riding, is a recreational sport that provides therapeutic benefits. While horseback riding and horsemanship skills are the goal of a therapeutic riding lesson the rider receives many physical benefits. The multi-dimensional movement of the horse provides weight bearing through the limbs and joints, rotation of the pelvis, sensory stimulation and muscle strengthening all while participating in a fun and rewarding activity.

Your riding instructor will meet with each rider to assess the rider's goals, objectives and physical strengths prior to the first lesson. Please inform the instructor of any concerns or issues that may affect the riding lesson. Educational and IEP goals and may be worked into a therapeutic lesson. RWH offers private, semi-private and group lessons. Benefits of Therapeutic Equine-Assisted Therapies include:

- 🐾 Balance
- 🐾 Coordination
- 🐾 Problem Solving
- 🐾 Muscle Strength
- 🐾 Sensory Integration
- 🐾 Communication
- 🐾 Self-Confidence

Social Skills for Children on the Autism Spectrum

Riding with HEART's Social Skills Group provides individuals on the autism spectrum a unique and fun way to learn and practice the skills necessary to form and maintain friendships and interact with peers. Group interaction is necessary for this group, so participants are requested to attend all scheduled sessions.



Hippotherapy

'Hippo' is the Greek word for horse. Hippotherapy is a therapy session conducted by a licensed therapist using the horse as a dynamic partner to meet the participant's therapy goals. Ground activities with a horse may be part of the therapy plan. RWH has a certified occupational therapist that provides hippotherapy at RWH.

Therapy is the goal of Hippotherapy not equestrian skills. The horse and its movement are used as a therapy partner to enhance therapy outcomes. Riding with HEART does not accept insurance payments, however, our therapists may supply you with the necessary paperwork that you may submit to your insurance company for reimbursement. Hippotherapy is considered occupational therapy.

Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL)

This equine therapy is an experiential intervention, which uses the horse as a partner for learning and growth. EAL may use more horsemanship skills as the process for growth and learning.

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP)

EAP is a therapeutic modality in which a licensed clinical professional uses the horse in the therapy session. EAL/EAP is indicated for therapeutic growth including:

- Leadership Development
- Dealing with Bullying
- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Assertiveness
- Self Esteem
- Body Image Issues
- Anxiety

Summer Programs

Our inclusive summer programs bring together children with and without disabilities in unique camps designed to promote tolerance, acceptance and fun through equine-related activities. Campers can choose from one of our unique specialty camps or our inclusive horseback riding camp, Camp NEIGH'bor. All campers will participate in daily horseback riding lessons, arts and crafts and horsemanship activities along with activities designed for each specific camp.



Peer Lessons

Riding with HEART offers riding lessons to RWH participant's family members, including parents and siblings, friends and volunteers.

Volunteering

Riding with HEART has a large volunteer staff from age 12 to adult. All volunteers are required to attend a Volunteer Program Orientation and a Hands-on-Training Session prior to becoming lesson volunteers regardless of their horse experience. All volunteers are trained for safe practices in the barn, horse handling, and rider safety. Volunteers are retrained annually, and if 18 years or older must complete a background check.

PARTICIPANT AND LESSON POLICIES

Participant Acceptance Eligibility and/or Dismissal from Program Riding with HEART is a Member of PATH, Intl. and adheres closely to the Professional Standards, and Precautions and Contraindications as recommended by the Medical Committee of PATH Intl. Due to the nature of horseback riding and other equine-related activities, there are individuals for whom Riding with HEART's equine assisted activities and therapies may be deemed unsafe or contraindicated.

Riding with HEART's professional staff will determine if an individual is eligible to participate in equine-assisted activities. Staff will assess the individual's ability to participate safely and productively with the required resources are available, including but not limited to: A PATH certified riding instructor, horse, volunteers and class availability meeting everyone's needs.

The following are examples of non-acceptance into or dismissal from the program:

- The participant's medical, physical, cognitive or emotional condition makes horseback riding unsafe or inappropriate or the participant's condition is exacerbated by riding.
- When the participant's ability to maintain head, neck or back control when sitting on the horses presents a safety concern.
- Uncontrolled or inappropriate behavior (which includes history of fire setting or abuse towards animals or people) that constitutes a safety risk to the participant, staff, volunteers and horses.
- When the participants weight exceeds that which can be safely managed by the staff, volunteers and/or horses.

- Failure to cancel in advance for more than three lessons in a session.

Participant Forms

All program participants are required to have completed, signed and dated forms, which includes Application, Liability Release, Photo/Media release, Health & Medical History, Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment, and Physician's form annually. Forms and full payment must be provided RWH *prior* to the first scheduled lesson. A rider with incomplete forms and owing/or all or a portion of fees cannot ride, and any paid lessons will be forfeited until paperwork and complete payment is received. **RWH WILL NOT ACCEPT FORMS OR PAYMENT ON THE FIRST DAY OF LESSONS**

Lesson Registration

Contact Riding with HEART's office at (908) 735-5912 to schedule lessons. *Lessons are scheduled on a first come first served basis.* You may discuss with RWH personnel which program best suits your needs.

- Private 30-minute lesson - \$60.00 per lesson
- Groups (EAL) One hour- \$150.00 per hour
- Social Skills One hour \$60.00 per lesson
- ANNUAL Ins. Fee \$50.00 per year

Riding with HEART schedules riding lessons and hippotherapy from March through November. EAL/P may run all year. Spring Session runs April through June, Summer Session July through August, and Fall Session September through November.

Rider Evaluation - Meet & Greet

A new rider must meet with an instructor prior to the first lesson so the instructor can assess each rider's skills, size/weight and other needs to assign the proper equipment and horse. At this time a rider's goals will be discussed. It is helpful to the instructor if you share any IEP and/or IEP details so those goals and objectives can be part of the therapeutic riding lessons.

Payments

Payments are due in full **before** the day of the first lesson of each session. Invoices will be emailed prior to each session. Instructors **will not** accept payments day of lessons.

Annual Insurance Fee

There is an annual \$50.00 insurance fee paid by all riders before the first session taken in the calendar year.

Department of Developmental Disabilities & Second Party Payees Participants are personally responsible for payment for all lessons as well as the \$50 annual insurance fee.

Participants (or legal guardian) may submit RWH invoices to DDD/Public Partnerships.

Please make sure your Public Partnerships support coordinator is aware of the dates of each lesson.

Confidentiality

All riders, volunteers, family members and visitors must adhere to the Riding with HEART Confidentiality Policy. All persons on the Riding with HEART grounds must respect the privacy of the riders and their families while on and off the premises. All medical, social, referral, personal, and financial information regarding any person involved with Riding with HEART shall remain confidential.

On Lesson Days

Please arrive 10 minutes **before** the scheduled lesson time. This gives the rider enough time to be included in the grooming process and help with tacking up. It also allows time for the rider to use the facilities and put their helmet on. The instructors are scheduled back to back therefore if you arrive late your lesson will be shortened accordingly.

Riding Attire

All riders are **required** to wear ASTM-SEI approved helmets while mounted on a horse. RWH has helmets available for use. Your instructor will provide a helmet that fits properly. RWH helmets must be sprayed with disinfectant after each use and put away in proper cubby. Riders with open skin rashes or head lice are prohibited from wearing a RWH helmet and the lesson will be forfeited.

Riders must wear hard-soled riding boots or shoes with a heel. Long pants are encouraged to avoid saddle rubs on legs.

If you would like to purchase your own equipment, Horseman's Outlet at 37 Molasses Hill Rd, Lebanon, NJ 08833 has been a great supporter of Riding with HEART.

Horse and Tack Assignments

Riding with HEART's instructors understand individuals fall in love with a particular horse, however, horses are chosen for each participant by certified staff. The staff member will choose one of our horses and proper tack based on safety, physical ability, goals, horse suitability and availability.

RWH reserves the right to change a rider's mount at any time due to horse health, rider's goals, and lesson plans.

Cancellation Policy

The Riding with HEART staff monitors the weather and makes every effort not to cancel lessons and will cancel only if it necessary. They reserve the right to hold ground lessons to avoid cancellation. If the forecast is changing, staff will wait until 2:00 p.m. to cancel lessons. If lessons are cancelled due to inclement weather RWH will contact you on the number you provide. If the weather looks questionable, feel free to call the office to check if lessons are cancelled or check the Riding with HEART Facebook Page.

Only lessons cancelled by Riding with HEART may be made up.

We understand that missed lessons are unavoidable at times. Please call the office to report absences before 2:00 P.M. so staff will not have your horse tacked up, ready and waiting for your arrival.

Group lessons cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice and no-shows will be billed for the entire cost of the lesson.

Make Up Lessons

There are make-up lessons scheduled at the conclusion of every session for lessons cancelled by RWH staff. All make-ups must be taken at this time. Make-ups will not be carried over into subsequent sessions and make-ups will not be credited to future session payments. Make ups are scheduled the same day of the week as and time as your regular lesson the week during the make-up period.

Late Arrivals

Riders arriving 5-10 minutes late for lessons will be mounted and join the lesson. The lesson will end at its regularly scheduled time. Riders that arrive 15 minutes or later will forfeit the riding lesson.

Ground Lessons

Every rider will receive one ground lesson per session. A ground lesson is a lesson conducted in the barn and teaches the rider about horsemanship skills. Learning about grooming, tacking up, horse behavior and safety around horses has secondary therapeutic benefit in working towards the goals of the rider. Ground lessons strengthens the horse and rider bond and helps the rider understand the horse from a different perspective. The instructor will substitute a ground lesson for an inclement weather day.

Waiting Areas

Parents may wait on the bench beside office or in lawn chairs on the front lawn beside the barn or on the park bench beside located in the playground area. The mounting ramp is reserved for instructor and riders use. Parents are asked to keep the asphalt area between the barn and ring clear for horses. Siblings and other young children must follow the same safety rules on the farm as the riders.

FACILITY POLICIES AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Riding with HEART Rules

Riding with HEART asks all visitors adhere to the following to ensure the safety of humans and animals.

- NO SMOKING OR VAPING on RWH Property
- Service animals only
- Adhere to 10 MPH on driveway and park on asphalt parking area
- No running in the barn
- Children/ siblings must always be supervised by parents
- Do not allow children to chase or pick up the barn cats (they have claws)
- Respect others privacy
- Do not enter or open stalls
- Only RWH staff permitted to mount rider on horses
- Close car windows while parked and check your car for cats (Max) before leaving.

Emergencies

In case of an emergency listen for instructions from RWH personnel.

Exit the barn through the nearest door (see map next page) – do not re-enter the barn. Head to emergency meeting location (see map with star next page).

The designated emergency meeting place in case of a barn evacuation is at the white star painted on the sidewalk beside the riding ring.

If there is an emergency and 911 needs to be called, please wait for instructor to assign someone to call. Too many people calling 911 on cell phones clogs the system and causes a delay in help arriving.

In case of an injury alert a RWH staff member immediately and fill out an Occurrence Form.

Riding with HEART reserves the right to ask an individual (s) to leave RWH property if it is deemed that there is behavior or actions that place participant, family, staff or animals at risk. If safety guidelines are not adhered to, individual(s) will be asked to leave the premises.

**EMERGENCY EXITS AND MEETING LOCATION ARE CLEARLY MARKED
MEETING LOCATION IS INDICATED BY A WHITE STAR ON THE WALKING PATH**

FUNDRAISING & OTHER WAYS TO HELP RIDING WITH HEART

Fundraising

Fundraising is an important part of RWH. The fees charged for lessons covers 49% of the cost of caring for the horses and running the program. RWH has many fundraising opportunities throughout the year.

Fundraisers:

- In-house Horse Show Tack Sales
- Fall fundraiser
- Spring fundraiser
- Company employee donation match

Riding with Heart hopes this manual has been helpful and informative. Our goal is to provide the best riding, ground lesson and/or Equine-Assisted session possible.

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

Winston Churchill

RIDER POLICY AND PROCEDURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please sign and Return to Riding with HEART

X _____