



Volunteer Handbook

2019

Healing Reins Therapeutic Riding Center

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Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

To *heal with horses* by improving the wellness of Central Oregonians through nationally accredited, affordable, horse-centered therapies and activities.

Purpose

To be the standard of excellence in our industry by providing the highest quality experience to children, teens, adults, and families who experience physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral special needs.

Values

To our community, our referring partner agencies, our program participants, and their families and caregivers, our volunteers, and the remarkable horses that make it all possible, we pledge:

- Safety
- Respect
- Compassion
- Excellence
- Honesty



History and Accomplishments

Healing Reins Therapeutic Riding Center (HRTRC) was founded in 1999 by accomplished Central Oregon equestrians, Pamela Addington and Penny Campbell. Horse Butte Equestrian Center donated the use of its barn and arena one day per week and the program began with 4 youth riders and 12 volunteers. Awareness of Healing Reins services quickly grew, and a facility of its own became necessary.

Healing Reins relocated to Faith Run Farms, a beautiful 20-acre parcel in southeast Bend in 2001. At the new location, which offers both an ADA-approved indoor facility and an outdoor arena with beautiful views of the Oregon Cascades, Healing Reins Therapeutic Riding Center has been able to expand, and today serves more than 165 special needs and at-risk riders per week. Healing Reins utilizes more than 160 volunteers each week. We continue to rely heavily on the community for support not only in the arena, but in the many other areas of daily operations.

In addition to providing volunteer assistance, the Central Oregon community contributes generously to Healing Reins through grant support, annual giving, and donations to our annual fundraiser, *Diamonds & Dust*.

Healing Reins Therapeutic Riding Center is a 501 © 3 non-profit organization, and in 2001 earned its distinguished status as a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH) Premier Accredited Center. As a PATH Premier Center, Healing Reins is nationally recognized for its excellence in providing professional therapeutic riding instruction.



Programs Offered

Therapeutic Horsemanship (TH): A specially trained (certified) Instructor teaches horsemanship and riding skills to participants with cognitive, physical and/or mental health needs or disabilities. The primary goal is to improve horsemanship skills with secondary therapeutic goals of gaining strength, improving balance and coordination, gross and fine motor skills, self-confidence, and more. Participant ages range from four years through adult.

Hippotherapy (Physical, Occupational and Speech and Language Therapy): A treatment approach that uses the movement of the horse to enhance neuromotor function and sensory processing. A licensed physical therapist directs the movement of the horse, analyses the client's response and adjusts the treatment accordingly. The horse is handled by a certified therapeutic riding Instructor, while the therapist and a volunteer support the client. Client ages range from two years through adult.

Equine Assisted Learning (EAL): Participants learn relationship skills to promote human growth and development in a context that includes various activities with equines. Learning horsemanship skills is the secondary goal that allows us to teach better interpersonal skills. Various offerings in session format are available. Tuition rates vary by program. Participant ages from six years through adult.

Veteran's Horsemanship: Veterans, active duty military personnel, and families partner with horses to overcome the effects of PTSD, TBI, amputation, and other combat-related injuries by learning riding and handling skills for improved mental health, physical rehabilitation, and social integration.

Equine-Assisted Mental Health (EAMH) Services: Horses are included in psychotherapy, counseling, and social work provided by licensed mental health professionals. EAMH is emerging as an effective experiential treatment technique that gets clients "outside of four walls" and introduces them to horses and the natural world to address their mental health needs. Horses are ideal partners in mental health as they are relational animals by nature, and highly communicative. Through interactions with horses, clients have abundant opportunities to increase self-awareness and self-insight, and build new skills. An EAMH session is not a riding lesson where the client learns specific horsemanship skills - rather it is a safe, confidential space for the client and therapist to engage in activities with horses and the natural world that help process feelings, thoughts, and reactions.

General Information for Volunteers

Volunteers are critical to the success of Healing Reins' programs. The organization, participants, horses, and staff depend upon volunteers to donate time and talent to help us facilitate the extraordinary experiences we are known for in the community. It is because of the giving nature of volunteers that Healing Reins is able to serve so many individuals and groups each week. The following information will provide you with basic knowledge of the policies and processes to ensure your safety and success while volunteering at Healing Reins.

Available Volunteer Jobs

- Administrative – assist staff with various office functions
- Lesson Volunteer – assist participants to prepare for and participate in weekly classes
- Volunteer Lesson Assistant – for ages 12-14 to assist in Hippotherapy sessions as well as facility work
- Facility Worker – grounds keeping, paddock and arena cleaning, general repairs
- Horse Schooler – weekly exercise rides to ensure equine fitness
- Horse Buddy – special weekly care and handling to ensure equine happiness
- Special Events – various duties related to developing and hosting fundraisers
- Outreach – assist staff in attending informational events to inform public about programs.

Clothing

For safety as well as comfort, volunteers should dress in close-fitting clothing. Loose, floppy clothing can get caught and tangled with equipment. Dress in layers that you can shed as you exercise, especially during cooler months. During the summer, dress for the varying weather. Sunglasses, sunscreen and a secure hat are recommended when our lessons are outside. You will be doing lot of walking and jogging on uneven terrain, so comfortable, sturdy footwear are important while working around horses. Avoid jewelry that might hamper your movements, get pulled off by a rider, or distract the horse. Please use discretion - avoid tank tops, short shorts and any items of clothing that may be offensive or present a specific ideology.

Weather

Healing Reins is fortunate to have an indoor arena and classes will operate in almost all types of weather conditions; however, if temperatures are below 20 degrees or above 100, classes are cancelled. When Bend-La Pine schools are cancelled either for the day or are running 2 hours late due to snow or ice, Healing Reins' classes are cancelled.

Minimum age requirements

Lesson Volunteers must be at least 14 years old and Volunteer Lesson Assistants are 12-14; however, youth under the age of 12 are welcome to clean tack, sweep the stable area, etc. under the supervision of an adult. Because working with horses can involve risk, we ask parents or guardians of all prospective volunteers under the age of 18 to sign a liability release.

Do volunteers ride Healing Reins horses?

Healing Reins offers lessons for able-bodied volunteers as our schedule allows. Experienced volunteer riders willing to donate their expertise and time may apply to the Schooler or Horse Buddy program. Demonstration of horse-handling and/or riding abilities is required.

Volunteer Recognition

The HRTRC staff recognizes that we could not possibly do what we do without our incredible volunteer corps. Your dedication, energy and selfless commitment allows us to serve our community by offering one-of-a-kind, professional programs for people in our community who are challenged by physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral special needs. You make a significant difference and we thank you for helping us *to heal with horses!*

Each month our staff nominates a volunteer that exemplifies excellence in service and unwavering dedication to advancing the HRTRC mission.

Volunteer Appreciation Weeks are hosted two times/year and our participant families are always excited to participate. The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner takes place in the barn and is our staff's opportunity to thank you for all you do.





Volunteer Job Description Lesson Volunteer

Objective:

To safely and effectively support the needs of the lesson participant as a member of the therapeutic riding lesson team.

Qualifications Required:

- Minimum age of fourteen (14).
- Physically capable of performing assigned tasks; standing, walking, jogging, arm extensions. Able to lift up to 35 pounds (tack/lesson equipment) above the head.
- Willing to learn and follow Healing Reins procedures.
- Able to receive and accept constructive feedback.
- Willing to communicate with other volunteers and staff via various methods.
- Horse knowledge and experience helpful but not required.
- Ability to follow the directions of the Instructor and support his/her leadership role.
- Able to commit to a consistent volunteer schedule or be willing to substitute.
- Able to hear, speak and understand instructions in English.
- Have adequate vision and hearing to ensure safety of horses and participants.
- Ability to be flexible and adapt to changes.
- Ability to attend training and enrichment courses periodically throughout the year.
- Ability to perform emergency dismounts.

Responsibilities:

- Arrive 15-30 minutes before scheduled volunteer time, appropriately attired and ready to work.
- Sign in and out at Volunteer computer station to help us track annual volunteer hours.
- Assist Instructors and therapists by serving as a lesson Leader or Sidewalker (as trained and applicable).
- Assist with general work area maintenance at the end of the day and/or lesson.
- Perform miscellaneous tasks assigned by staff.
- Attend continuing education opportunities whenever possible.



Volunteer Job Descriptions Sidewalker

Objective:

To have primary responsibility for the participant prior to, during and after lessons.

Qualifications Required:

- Ability to be a Lesson Volunteer
- Horse knowledge and experience helpful but not required.
 - Ability to communicate with a wide variety of people with special needs.

Responsibilities:

- Assist participant with grooming and tacking of horse, if needed.
- Communicate with participant and therapeutic riding lesson team regarding the needs of the participant.
- Assist participant with mount and dismount as necessary.
- Assist participant with lesson activities as directed by the Instructor. Verbal communication must be minimal so the participant can focus on tasks and Instructor directions.
- Assist with activities required at the end of the day and/or lesson.
- Perform miscellaneous tasks assigned by staff.



Getting to Know the Rider with Special Needs

General Approach and Interaction

It is important to remember that every child, teen or adult participant at Healing Reins is an individual who wants to be understood and valued. Each has his/her own learning rate and style, unique personality, and temperament. The Healing Reins team includes our trained volunteers. Together, our goal is to provide all participants with the opportunity to learn and grow in our safe and supportive environment.

Relating to People with Disabilities

Being around people with disabilities may be a new experience for you. You may be overwhelmed at first with things you have never seen or do not understand. This is natural for most people. Allow yourself time to get used to being with the person who is disabled. Do not give up on being a part of the program without a fair try, for your experience can be very rewarding. At first you may want to do jobs which are not in direct contact with the riders. Feel free to talk with a staff member about this. This is common. If working directly with our riders is a hardship for you, consider helping Healing Reins in some other way and indicate other areas that you would like to be helpful on your Volunteer Information Form.

Choosing Words with Dignity

When talking about a person with a disability, make reference to the person first, not the disability.

<i>Avoid</i>	<i>Use Instead</i>
Afflicted with blindness	Person who is visually impaired
Crippled	Person with physical disabilities, person who is physically challenged.
Stricken with	Person who has
Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, crutches, etc.	Person who uses wheelchair, crutches, etc.

The preferred terms focus attention on the uniqueness and worth of the individual rather than emphasizing the disabling condition. The connotation of "disability" is very important to avoid. Words such as defective, deformed, invalid, lame, maimed, spastic, and crippled imply pity, infirmity, and a general lack of competence. People are neither invalid nor defective. People aren't spastic, muscles are. By choosing words carefully, positive images can be conveyed about persons who experience disabilities. Each of us has to learn

how to relate to others, especially if it requires new skills. Here are a few suggestions to assist you in your relationship with our participants.

- Relax and be yourself
- Explore mutual interests in a friendly way. For starters, talk about the horse and whether the person has ridden or been around horses before.
- Speak directly to the person you are working with. Your attention should be to them and not to the person escorting them. Find yourself a chair or crouch down at a comfortable distance so that you can converse on the same level as appropriate.
- If a person has difficulty speaking, allow them to finish their sentence. If you don't understand what they are saying, tell them so. Don't pretend you understood if you didn't. Don't be afraid to say, "I'm sorry I cannot understand you. Please say it again."
- Offer assistance when asked or when the situation requires it. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist upon helping when they are managing alone. When a person is trying to increase their physical ability or learn new skills, effort on their part is necessary.
- Do not hinder the participant's ability to expand their skills and independence, even when their movements may appear difficult or their efforts seem awkward to you. It's important to give the participant the space and time they need to succeed.
- Respect the person's right to independence and their request for the kind of assistance that they feel they do or do not require.
- Be guided by the wishes of the person you are working with. Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, but don't pry.
- Appreciate what the participant can do. Remember that the difficulties the person may be facing could stem from society's attitudes and barriers rather than from the disability itself. People with disabilities generally do not view themselves to be as handicapped as society perceives them to be.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to accomplish something or respond to something. Be patient.

The Horse's Lifestyle

In addition to understanding the horse's sixth sense, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the horse's lifestyle. This will assist us in responding appropriately in various situations

Flight as a Natural Instinct

Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it.

Implications

- A sudden movement or noise can startle a horse.
- A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. Be sure not to stand directly in front of or behind the horse.
- If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like the stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working around the horse in a stall.
- If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (note the position of the horse's ears in pictures on next pages), it may be helpful to allow a more experienced horse to lead or handler to work with the horse.
- Most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. The horse may look to you for reassurance and it is helpful if the volunteer remains calm and talks to the horse in a soothing voice.

Herd Animal

Horses like to stay together in a herd or group. One or two horses will be dominant and a *pecking order will be established amongst the rest.*

Implications

- Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving a paddock or the arena or if a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride.
- Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter.
- If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse's length between horses when riding within a group to respect the horse's space and pecking order.

** Being aware of horse behaviors is one of the best safety precautions for any therapeutic riding center. Knowing how to read your horse can prevent an accident and increase the quality of your "mutual" relationship.*

Problem Solving and Grievance Procedures

Healing Reins wants to assist in solving problems and settling grievances quickly and fairly. We believe the best way to settle a disagreement or problem is to discuss the issue and find a way to reach mutually agreeable solutions. The grievance procedure can be used if you believe you have been discriminated against due to race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, or if you feel that your rights as a volunteer have been violated.

Procedure

Complaints involving another volunteer, staff member or the program should first be addressed by the persons involved. If this does not resolve the situation, the issue should be taken to the Volunteer Coordinator (VC). Depending on the situation, the VC may talk with you and the other party/parties to gather facts to help reach an agreement. If a solution cannot be reached, the next step is to take the issue to the Program Director. If a resolution cannot be reached, the Executive Director will initiate an investigation. A determination will be made by the Executive Director regarding an appropriate solution.

Conduct and Dismissal of Volunteers and Guests from Healing Reins

Healing Reins Therapeutic Riding Center relies greatly on volunteers as important members of the team that provides services to our clients. We also recognize the extreme importance of the safety and well-being of our clients, volunteers, staff, guests, and animals. All volunteers and guests are expected to follow HRTRC's rules and policies and may not engage in disruptive, unsafe, or inappropriate behavior. In the event a volunteer or guest does not comply, the following actions may be taken.

No-Show Policy

Healing Reins is always grateful for your time and endless energies. Without your diligent work, care for the riders and the horses, and committed time, we would not have a successful program. Healing Reins and the riders depend on you. We trust that you will follow through on the scheduled time to which you agreed. When a volunteer does not show up for their scheduled class, it creates problems and can force us to cancel a rider. Any time a volunteer does not call ahead and does not report to a scheduled class or commitment it is considered a no-show situation.

Three Strikes Policy

After three (3) consecutive occurrences within a 6-month period, the volunteer is removed from the current schedule and sub list. In each case of a volunteer not showing up for a scheduled class or commitment, the appropriate staff member will fill out a Volunteer No-Show form and turn the form in to the Volunteer Coordinator. After the second no-show occurrence, the Volunteer Coordinator will remind the volunteer of the policy by phone or email. After the third and final no-show occurrence the volunteer will be contacted by phone or in person. The volunteer will be asked to take some time from the program to get things in order. The volunteer will be encouraged to return when they are better able to fit the program into their schedule. If the volunteer returns at a later time, their record begins at zero no-shows.

Level 1 Verbal warning

Breaking of HRTRC's rules and/or policies and procedures may be followed by a verbal warning from the Program Director, Instructor or Volunteer Coordinator to be documented in the occurrence report file and volunteer file.

Level 2 Written warning

Breaking of HRTRC rules and/or policies and procedures for a second time will be followed by a meeting for discussion regarding the infraction (with Volunteer Coordinator, Instructor and Program Director). The purpose of the meeting is to determine the exact reason the infraction occurred for a second time and discuss with the volunteer/guest how to avoid the circumstance ever occurring again. This meeting will be documented and placed in the occurrence file and volunteer file.

Level 3 Dismissal from the Organization

Immediate dismissal from the property and the organization will occur for:

- Repeated infraction of rules and/or policies and procedures
- Endangering the safety of others
- Inappropriate use of the facilities, mailing lists or monies
- Disruptive or abusive behavior to the animals or people at HRTRC
- Repeated disregard of the organization's rules, policies and procedures.
- Possession of a weapon
- Persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Emergency Policies

Risk Management procedures are posted in the barn and available for review. Some general information is below:

General

- There is to be NO SMOKING anywhere on the property. Signs are posted.
- Off limit areas to all but staff are posted. Areas are irrigation pond, feed room, hay shed and equipment storage.
- Do not touch the electrical fence unless you are sure it is off.
- Off limit areas to all but staff are posted. Areas are irrigation pond, feed room, hay shed and equipment storage.
- Never place items in front of wall heaters.
- Watch for traffic while in parking lot. Speed limit is posted at 10 mph.
- In the event of an incident or emergency in the arena, participants, guests and parents/guardians must stay calm and follow the Instructor's directions. Instructors are CPR/First Aid-certified and trained in emergency procedures.
- Emergency procedures will be reviewed and practiced annually with mandatory attendance for staff and team captains (see attached). Voluntary attendance offered to current participants, caregivers and volunteers.

Hazards specific to the use of equines

- Do not work horses alone if it can be avoided.
- Do not let horses trap you without a means of escape.
- Never wrap the lead rope around your hand. Always fold the excess.
- Do not stand directly behind a horse.
- Maintain a safe distance between horses of 2 horse lengths.
- Volunteers and staff are made aware of the possibility of wildlife on the sensory trail course.
- When leading horses through paddock gates; open gate toward paddock, lead horse through with one hand while closing gate behind horse's tail with other.

Horse behavioral-related emergency procedure

- Stop all horses.
- If Sidewalker is present and a dismount is necessary, Instructor directs the Sidewalker to perform emergency dismount (see Emergency Dismount Procedure following this text).
- If there is a Leader only, Leader will regain control of horse.

- If rider is independent, Instructor will call a loud simple instructions in a confident tone.
- Remember to stay calm and use soothing voice.
- Reassure horses that are nervous or scared.
- In case of fighting horses, quickly move the horses apart.
- Recognize symptoms of imminent rolling, including pawing, lowering of head, bending of knees; dismount rider as trained during volunteer orientation. Move away from the horse quickly.
- In case of a loose horse, all horses will be stopped immediately and loose horse caught. If necessary, the Instructor will ask for all riders to be dismounted from their horses.
- In the case of a stepped-on foot, call out instructions and help move horse from person's foot; injury will be treated as needed.
- If a horse pulls back when tied, clear away from the horse until it stops struggling and try calming the horse with your voice; all tie areas are equipped with emergency release clips.
- Instructor will file Horse Report on behavior and training issues are addressed by Healing Reins Staff.

Injuries in the arena:

If a rider, volunteer, staff member or spectator is injured and needs immediate care:

- Stop all riders if injury is near class.
- If serious, Instructor will designate a volunteer to call 911; emergency information posted by phone by tack room door.
- Instructor assigns a staff member or volunteer in the ring to reassure and dismount riders, or move mounted riders to far end of the arena.
- If the rider is down, leave the rider down.
- Follow first-aid procedures as trained.

Farm and Safety Rules

Here at the farm there are some very important safety rules that must be followed at all times:

- No smoking anywhere on the property.
- No weapons allowed on the property.
- No alcohol or illegal substances allowed on the property.
- Off limit areas are posted and must be avoided.
- No running, pushing, yelling, climbing the rails, stairs or ramp.
- Do not go into fields, barns, or stalls without supervision unless you are supervised by a staff member, volunteer, or your therapist.
- Keep all gates closed all the time.
- Driveway speed limit is posted at 5 mph. This speed limit is strictly enforced.
- No pets allowed on the premises. Please leave dogs at home.
- Non-participants must remain in either the outdoor waiting area or the indoor viewing room at all times. Non-participants may visit the small animal enclosure or the playground near the parking lot but are not allowed to come into the barn, near the mounting area, or by the arenas and horse paddocks.
- Non-participants are also asked to be respectful of the students and clients who take part in Healing Reins services, remembering that sessions are private and confidential. This means PLEASE DON'T APPROACH areas where services are clearly taking place.
- All non-participating minors must be supervised at all time.
- Chasing, teasing, taunting, harassing, or purposely annoying, scaring, or irritating the animals at the farm is strictly prohibited.
- Treat animals with respect. Use kind, even if direct, words with the animals. Anyone not being kind will be asked to leave the immediate area where the animals are.
- Do not give the animals any food or treats without permission from staff (despite what the animals may tell you!).
- Picture taking is not allowed without permission from the Healing Reins staff.
- Participants must wear appropriate clothing and footwear to be allowed near the horses.
- Helmets are required while around horses for those under 18 years of age or those with physical conditions that necessitate additional protection, and are required at all times regardless of age when doing mounted activities.
- Listen to the Healing Reins staff, volunteers, and therapists at all times, and follow these safety rules.
- And, the most important rule: BE SAFE AND HAVE FUN!!!