

Riding with HEART Policy Manual



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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 diverse equine assisted programs.

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

Riding with HEART has a BraveHEARTs Equine-Assisted Learning Program, which serves members of all branches of the military, veteran and active-duty members as well as all law enforcement and first responders and their families.

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 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 has a broad range of therapeutic advantages. While horseback riding and horsemanship skills are part of the lesson, the goal is that the rider receives a wide variety of 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 may be worked into a therapeutic lesson. RWH offers private, semi-private and group lessons. Of the many benefits of Therapeutic Equine-Assisted Therapies include, just a few are:

- 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; however, participants may be able to get reimbursement from their health insurer.

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. All campers will enjoy daily horseback riding lessons, arts and crafts and horsemanship activities along with activities designed for each specific camp.

PARTICIPANT AND LESSON POLICIES

Acceptance Eligibility 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 with the required resources are available. Lessons are comprised of 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, inappropriate, and/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, including 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 payment not received by the due date cannot ride, until paperwork and complete payment is received. **RWH WILL NOT ACCEPT FORMS OR PAYMENT ON THE FIRST DAY OF LESSONS.** There are absolutely no exceptions to this rule.

Lesson Registration

Contact Riding with HEART's office at (908)735-5912 or programs@ridingwithheart.org to schedule lessons. *Lessons are scheduled on a first come first served basis.*

Riding lessons and hippotherapy run from March through November. EAL/P may run all year. Sessions run April through June, Summer Sessions May, June, and July.

Therapeutic Riding	30-minute lesson - \$60.00
Groups (EAL) One hour	\$150.00 (\$15.00 per individual if more than 10 participants)
Social Skills	One hour \$40.00 per lesson
ANNUAL Ins.	\$50.00 per year

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 on the first 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.

DDD & 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. Should PPL (or other) not pay prior to the lessons begin, the parent, guardian or other agent must pay before lessons begin. Once Riding with HEART is compensated for services, the personal payment is refunded, or credited to the next session if desired.

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 15 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 lessons 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 instructors. The instructor will choose one of our horses and proper tack based on safety, physical ability, goals, horse suitability, health, 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 is necessary. If the forecast changes, 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.

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-up lessons 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 and time as your regular lessons **Only lessons cancelled by Riding with HEART will be made up.** 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.

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 strengthen the horse and rider bond and help 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 the 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 rider 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 and be supervised at all times.

Instructor Substitute

In the event the regular instructor is unavailable (either planned, or last minute), a substitute Riding with HEART instructor will conduct the lesson. Should the rider or guardian have concerns about this substitution, the rider or guardian has the right to choose to skip the lesson. However, there will be no refund or makeup for that lesson.

Volunteering

Riding with HEART has a large volunteer staff from age 14 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.

SAFETY POLICIES /EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Riding with HEART Policies

Riding with HEART participants and visitors must adhere to the following to ensure the safety of humans and animals.

- NO SMOKING, DRINKING, VAPING, OR DRUG USE is permitted on RWH property.
- Only service animals are allowed at the facility.
- 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.
- No children may chase or pick up the cats – they are barn cats will scratch and bite.
- Respect others privacy.
- Do not enter or open stalls, pastures, or the arena.
- Only RWH staff permitted to mount rider on horses.
- Close car windows while parking and check your car for cats before leaving.
- Please do not linger on the property or in the barn before or after your lesson.

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.



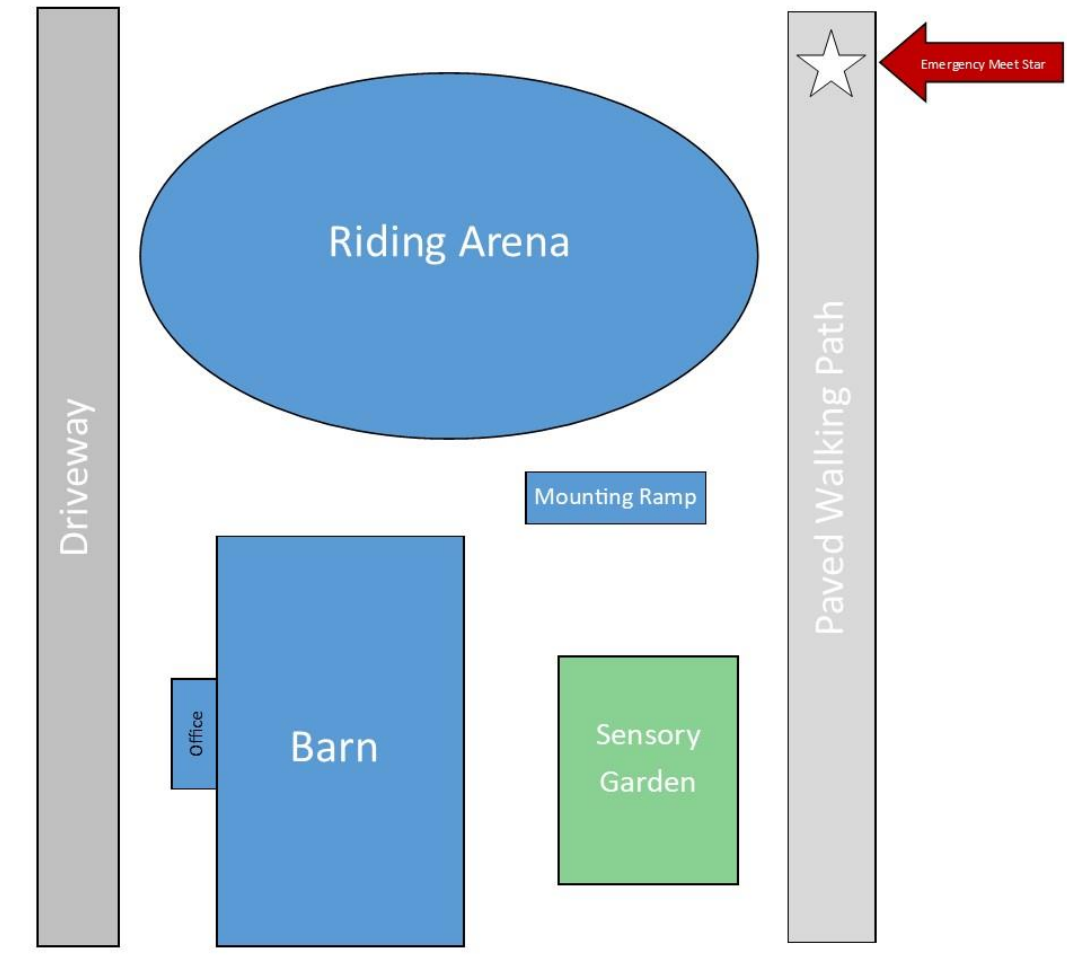
If there is an emergency and 911 needs to be called, please wait for instructor to assign someone to call. Too many people calling 911 on cell phones will overwhelm the system and cause a delay in help arriving.

In case of an injury, alert a RWH staff member immediately and an Occurrence form will be completed.

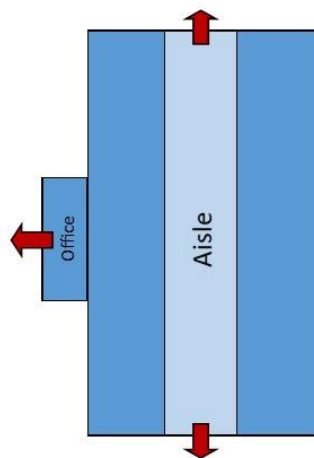
Riding with HEART has a zero-tolerance policy and reserves the right to ask an individual(s) to leave RWH's property if it is deemed that there is behavior or actions that place participant, family, staff, volunteers, or animals at risk.

If safety guidelines are not adhered to, individual(s) will be asked to leave the premises.

Emergency Exits and Gathering Location for Participants



Barn Exits





Terms and Conditions Agreements

I have read and understand the best-practices procedures set forth in this manual. I agree to adhere to the policies and procedures created to assure the safest, most beneficial equine-assisted lessons and activities.

I agree to the terms and conditions as set out by the user agreement:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

*Please return this signed page with the Participant paperwork.