



EQUIGRACE

Volunteer Handbook & Guidelines 2017

Welcome

Welcome to the EquiGrace team. We are delighted you want to assist us in our work with helping children and adults with special challenges!

Please take a moment to thoroughly read through this handbook. It is designed to help you with your orientation and to be used as a reference guide for the many roles you may be asked you participate in during your time volunteering. This handbook cannot possibly cover all you will learn here at EquiGrace, so as you become more familiar with the center, its equestrians and personnel. Please feel free to ask questions if you have them.

About EquiGrace

At EquiGrace, we focus on the equestrian's individual needs and goals while riding and working and a safe and fun environment. Under the supervision of PATH Intl. certified riding instructors as well as volunteers and horses trained to assist equestrians, we can create opportunities through weekly horseback riding sessions and equine facilitated activities. Equestrians can find improvement in flexibility, balance, coordination, muscle strength, concentration, task completion, patience, social skills as well as gain a sense of accomplishment and increased confidence.

Our objectives are to enable equestrians to learn, grow, heal and develop life changing skills and connections in a safe, fun and positive environment.

The Riders

Our riders will have a variety of challenges that may need any level of assistance from someone to lead the horse to those who will require help completing tasks or even with balance. We encourage you to learn about each disability and challenge and please feel free to ask an instructor if you have any questions, concerns and of course any suggestions you may have.

Volunteer Orientation

Each new volunteer will be required to participate in an orientation with EquiGrace before being placed on the volunteer schedule. This class will help those who may have little horse or therapeutic riding experience with basic safety skills and procedures related to therapeutic riding as well as allow EquiGrace to evaluate your skills and strengths so we can place you in a role you will enjoy as you learn more about therapeutic riding.

Throughout the year EquiGrace will also offer skills classes and evaluations and private sessions for those who wish to advance their skills and responsibilities. Levels are assigned for your safety and the safety of everyone at EquiGrace. Please do not take on a job you are not authorized to do or do not feel comfortable doing.

Participation

Our program uses volunteers in many different rolls and cannot offer our services without them. Regardless of the service you perform, you, the volunteer, are the heart of our success and an essential part of the team and we can't do it without you.

If you decide to help us in lessons with the riders, we do require that you commit to a weekly schedule to provide a consistent environment for each equestrian and ensure that each equestrian can ride at their scheduled time. If you find that you will not be able to be there on a certain day, please contact EquiGrace at your earliest knowledge of your absence to give us time to find a substitute volunteer for that time.

When you arrive:

- Please check in with the volunteer coordinator and find out what your duties are for the day.
- Be sure you are dressed appropriately, on time and ready for the day.
- If you will be here for the day, please be sure to bring plenty of water and snacks if needed.
- Please leave your cell phone and other valuables in a secure place or at home. If you need to leave it with us while you are here, we can place it in the lock box and it will not be available until you leave for the day.

When you leave:

- Please make sure the tasks you were assigned for the day are completed and everything is put away neatly.
- Please let the volunteer coordinator know you are leaving.
- If you are a minor and someone other than your parent/guardian comes to pick you up, they will be required to provide a password in order for you to leave with them.

Scheduling and Logging Volunteer Hours

We use an online scheduling system called Sign Up Genius to sign up for the days that you can volunteer. It helps everyone to see when a volunteer is needed and if there are spots available. We also use a time tracking system to log volunteer hours called "Track it Forward". This allows us to log and keep track of your hours that qualify for volunteer rewards like t-shirts, EquiGrace gear, riding time and appreciation days. Both are easy to use and confidential. Only authorized persons will see your information. You can also access this through our website at www.equigrace.com under the link Team EquiGrace.

Volunteer Roles at EquiGrace

Volunteer Coordinator – The volunteer coordinator is your link to the riding center and your direct supervisor. This person is responsible for recruiting volunteers, orientation, scheduling and management of volunteers. If you have any questions, comments or need help resolving concerns and/or complaints, please see the volunteer coordinator.

Riding Instructors – Riding instructors help equestrians with their goals through lesson planning, instruction and games. All instructors must be PATH Intl. certified or actively working towards their certification. Instructor responsibilities include, but are not limited to the selections and preparation of the horses and equipment to be used for the riders, lesson plans and evaluations. During lessons, the instructor is in charge.

Instructors In Training – Experienced volunteers may wish to become instructors and are teamed up with a certified instructor. Responsibilities may include teaching part of a lesson, lesson planning and

evaluations under the guidance of an instructor. Instructors in training are encouraged to seek PATH Intl. Certification. Some financial assistance may be offered through EquiGrace.

Leaders – A leader is the guide for the horse and rider and is responsible for safely leading the horse through the lesson. A leader's first responsibility is to the horse, but you must also be constantly aware of the rider, instructor and any potential hazards in or around the arena.

Leader Guidelines:

- The instructor is in charge of the lesson; please listen for directions from the instructor.
- If you hear Whoa/stop from the rider, always stop. Sometimes you are the only way they have to stop or control their horse and you become essential to building the trust between the horse and rider.
- We focus on rider independence, so please do not execute an instruction for the rider before giving them enough time to process and perform the task.
- Your lead rope should be held with the right hand 6-12 inches from the snap, allowing free motion of the horse's head. The tail end of the lead rope should be looped in a figure eight to avoid you or the horse tripping over it. NEVER coil the rope around your hand.
- Walk alongside the horse, about even with his eye. Do not walk too far in front of the horse. If you find your horse is being lazy, do not drag him; instead use gentle tugs to encourage him to move on. And do not walk too far behind, which lessens the control you have and may interfere with the rider or sidewalker. Do not walk backwards.
- When you halt for more than a few seconds, stand facing your horse with your hands ready to hold the horse's halter or reins or otherwise control them if necessary. Do not put your fingers through the bit or halter rings.
- Consider the sidewalkers, making sure there is enough room along the arena fence and around obstacles for them to safely walk.
- Please avoid the temptation to talk to the rider, instructor, sidewalker or other volunteers unless you have a question, comment or concern directly related to the lesson.
- Please avoid showing affection to your horse during the lesson. There will be plenty of time after the lesson to share your love and give them treats.
- Let the instructor know if you are getting tired or need to take a short break.
- If you are uncomfortable in any situation handling the horse or lesson you are assigned to, please let the instructor know so we can address the issue.
- Please avoid putting your free hand in your pocket; you never know when you might need it.
- If there is an accident, stay calm and listen for the instructor's instructions. Your primary responsibility is to stay with the horse.
- Chain lead lines are never used during EquiGrace activities.

Sidewalkers – Sidewalkers safely assist the riders during the lesson by walking alongside the rider at the knee and are directly responsible for the rider. Remember you are there for support, either physically or cognitively, Encourage your rider to use their own abilities during the lesson.

Sidewalker Guidelines

- The instructor is in charge of the lesson; listen for directions from the instructor.
- During the lesson, your responsibility is to pay attention to your rider and assisting when needed. Help the rider focus on the task or instructor and give them plenty of time to reach their goal. Please do not execute an instruction for the rider before giving them enough time to process and perform the task.
- It is important to maintain a position by the rider's knee. There are 2 common ways to support the rider. The most common is the arm lock (arm over the thigh) and also the ankle hold. Be alert to the rider's position, needs and balance and alert the instructor if you need to help the rider adjust their position or if there is a problem.

- Please avoid the temptation to talk to the rider, instructor, leader or other volunteers unless you have a question, comment or concern directly related to the lesson.
- Let the instructor know if you are getting tired, need to switch sides or if you need to take a short break. Avoid walking behind the horse unless it is your only option.
- Please avoid putting your free hand in your pocket; you never know when you might need it.
- If there is an accident, stay calm and listen for the instructors directions. Your primary responsibility is to stay with the rider.

Barn Assistants – Knowledgeable volunteers may be asked to assist in the barn. Barn assistants help groom and tack the horses, lead them to or from the lesson and may be responsible for cooling down the horses before returning them to their stall. Barn assistants may also be asked to help with cleaning stalls, the arenas and turn out.

Barn Assistant Guidelines:

- The instructor is in charge of the lesson; please listen for directions from the instructor.
- Plan to be here 30 minutes before the lesson to give yourself and the horse time to get ready for the lesson.
- Place horses securely in cross ties for grooming and tacking.
- Avoid walking behind a horse.
- Be sure to return all tack and grooming tools to their proper place and clean up after yourself and the horse.
- Do not feed horses treats from your hands. This may encourage nipping and unwanted behavior. Instead, when appropriate, place treats in the horses feed bin or use the “official treat device”.
- Horses must be removed from stalls before cleaning the stall
- Please notify the instructor immediately if there is a problem with the horse or equipment.

Attire

We ask that all volunteers dress professionally and appropriately. Long sleeve shirts, T-shirts, long pants, closed toed shoes and weather appropriate attire are required. No flip flops, sandals, or inappropriate shoes allowed. Clothing with inappropriate images or words, or excessive exposed skin are also not allowed. We recommend leaving at home any clothing or jewelry that can get caught, broken or lost easily. Any volunteer who is not appropriately dressed will be asked to correct their attire or they may be asked to go home and change.

Whispering Pines Ranch

EquiGrace has the privilege of operating at Whispering Pines Ranch, which is a private facility and EquiGrace expects all of our volunteers to handle themselves with respect towards all persons and property associated with Whispering Pines Ranch. We are authorized to operate in specific locations around the property, please be sure to stay in authorized areas only. If you have any concerns or are unsure of any guidelines as they relate to EquiGrace and Whispering Pines Ranch, please be sure to ask the Volunteer Coordinator.

Safety Regulations and Guidelines

- No smoking or vaping of any kind in the barn or on the property
- No hand feeding the horses.
- No running in the barn, near the arena or around the horses
- No yelling or loud noises
- No cell phone use when working around horses.
- Close and latch all doors and gates behind you
- Know the horse “danger zones” and avoid them

- Always use a lead rope to lead your horse
- Closed toed shoes must be worn at all times time.
- Treat all riders, volunteers, staff and animals with dignity and respect.
- Approved helmets must be worn at all times when riding
- Only authorized volunteers and personnel are allowed in the barn, pastures and stalls and authorized EquiGrace areas
- Please respect Whispering Pines Ranch authorized only areas
- No one is allow to ride without an instructor present and without permission from an instructor
- Bring water, bug spray and sunscreen when needed
- Only take a job you are trained for and feel comfortable doing
- Avoid having conversations near or in the lesson area while a lesson is in session

Emergency Procedures

EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND PROCEEDURES AND ARE LOCATED ON THE TACK ROOM WALL JUST INSIDE THE DOOR. HUMAN FIRST AID BOX AND HORSE FIRST AID BOX ARE LOCATED IN THE TACK ROOM NEXT TO THE WHITE DESK. FIRE EXTINGUISHER IS JUST INSIDE THE DOOR.

Falls – In the even a rider should fall from a horse; the instructor is in charge of the situation. All horses must come to a halt. If there is someone available to do so safely, they will contain and restrain the loose horse. All riders capable of dismounting to the ground should immediately dismount. Any riders not capable of dismounting shall be led out of the arena if the instructor deems it safe to do so. Volunteers should remain in control of the horse they are leading and riders and volunteers may be asked to leave the ring at the discretion of the instructor. Instructor will follow First Aid procedures and call 911 if appropriate. Emergency information is located on the wall just inside the tack room. Following the safety and welfare of the injured and involved parties, the instructor will file an incident report and notify EquiGrace as soon as possible regarding the event.

Loose Horse – If at any time a horse should get loose, the instructor will halt the lesson and have volunteers hold lesson horses while the loose horse is caught. Once the horse is caught and contained, the lesson may continue.

Kick, Bite or Stepped on – In the event a horse injures a person, the instructor or lead volunteer is in charge of the situation. If the incident occurs during a lesson, all horses must come to a halt. Riders may be asked to leave at the discretion of the instructor. If the incident occurs in the barn, all horses are to be secured either in stalls or crossties. Instructor will follow First Aid procedures and call 911 if appropriate. Emergency information is located on the wall just inside the tack room. Following the safety and welfare of the injured and involved parties, the instructor will file an incident report and notify EquiGrace as soon as possible regarding the event.

Human Injury/Emergency - In the even a rider, volunteer or staff member is injured or has a medical emergency, instructor or volunteer coordinator will follow First Aid procedures and call 911 if necessary. The instructor or volunteer coordinator is in charge of the situation and volunteers are to follow all directions. Emergency information is located on the on the wall just inside the tack room. Following the safety and welfare of the injured and involved parties, the instructor will file an incident report and notify EquiGrace as soon as possible regarding the event.

Horse Injury/Emergency - In the event a horse is injured or has a medical situation or emergency, the instructor is in charge. Follow instructor directions, if necessary, follow first aid procedures for horses and contact the vet. Emergency information is located on the on the wall just inside the tack room. Following the safety and welfare of the injured and involved parties, the instructor will file an incident report and notify EquiGrace as soon as possible regarding the event.

Hazards on the Property

Dogs and Cats – There are a few dogs live on the premise and although they are friendly, do not pick them up or pet them. Enjoy them on their own terms. No outside pets are permitted.

Livestock and Livestock Barns – Whispering Pines Ranch has a variety of livestock on the property housed in areas which are not authorized for clients, volunteers or staff. Please do not enter these areas without an authorized representative of Whispering Pines Ranch present.

Trailer and Out Buildings – Restricted to authorized personnel only.

Horse Pastures - Restricted to authorized volunteers and instructors.

Riding Arenas - Restricted to authorized volunteers, instructors, personnel and clients under the care of an instructor.

Confidentiality

EquiGrace makes every effort to maintain confidentiality regarding individual participants and their personal information. This can be difficult, since we are a small close community and many participants are very open about their disability, medical history or personal challenges. During riding lessons, you may also be told information about participants in order to safely and effectively assist a person. Any information about a rider, either written, verbal or electronic, is confidential and not to be shared outside of EquiGrace. Volunteers are prohibited to take pictures of equestrians and their families while at EquiGrace. The personal use of photographic materials is strictly prohibited. This includes personal internet pages such as but not limited to Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, personal blogs, etc.

Conduct of personnel and Participants

We expect nothing less than respect, professionalism and courtesy from all of our participants, volunteers and staff but sometimes we are only human and incidents may arise where we may need to resolve a problem. We will look at all sides of the issue and try to resolve the situation in the best way possible.

If you see or hear any staff, volunteer or other personnel acting inappropriately at EquiGrace, and you wish to do so in confidence, you can report it to the volunteer coordinator, an instructor, or Cindi Winner. We will be happy to listen to your concerns in a private and confidential setting and discuss appropriate solutions to the issue.

Inappropriate Behavior of a Rider – If necessary, the rider will be removed by the instructor from the horse or the area of disruption. A volunteer will remove the horse from the situation and volunteers will lead other horses and equestrians to a safe place until the situation is rectified. The instructor will assist the rider to an appropriate area to discuss the situation or return the rider to his or her parent or guardian. An incident report will be filed by the instructor and EquiGrace will be notified. A follow-up conversation to discuss options with the parent or guardian will be required.

Inappropriate Behavior of a volunteer – Inappropriate behavior will be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator and to the center. The volunteer will be contacted to discuss the situation and solution to the problem. If an immediate response is needed, the instructor will take the volunteer aside and quietly discuss the situation. If needed in the case of a minor, a parent or guardian may be required to pick up the volunteer if the situation requires the volunteer leave early. An incident report must be filed and EquiGrace will be notified. A follow-up conversation to discuss options with the volunteer, parent or guardian will be required.

Inappropriate Behavior of an Instructor or Staff - Inappropriate behavior will be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator, appropriate supervisor and to the center. The instructor or staff member will be

contacted to discuss the situation and solution to the problem. A follow-up conversation will be required with the reporting party and/or parent or guardian if necessary. An incident report must be filed and EquiGrace will be notified.

Grounds for Disciplinary action - At EquiGrace, safety is our first priority, respect is our second priority and we take it very seriously. Any unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated and may result in restriction of job duties, written reprimand or termination. EquiGrace does not tolerate:

- Physical or verbal abuse of equestrians, volunteers, staff, family or horses
- Disregard for safety rules and established guidelines
- Inappropriate behavior of an offensive nature
- Excessive tardiness, absences or no-shows
- Breach of confidentiality, including posting pictures to social media or otherwise
- Smoking, vaping, drinking or under the influence while on the premises

Contact Information

EquiGrace, Main number – 303-838-7122

Cindi Winner, Program Director – 303.838.7122

Emergency Numbers:

Cindi Winner: 720-439-0400

David Winner: 303-319-5002

Debbie McAnaugha:720-83-83-1319

Mailing – PO Box 268, Shawnee, CO 80475

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