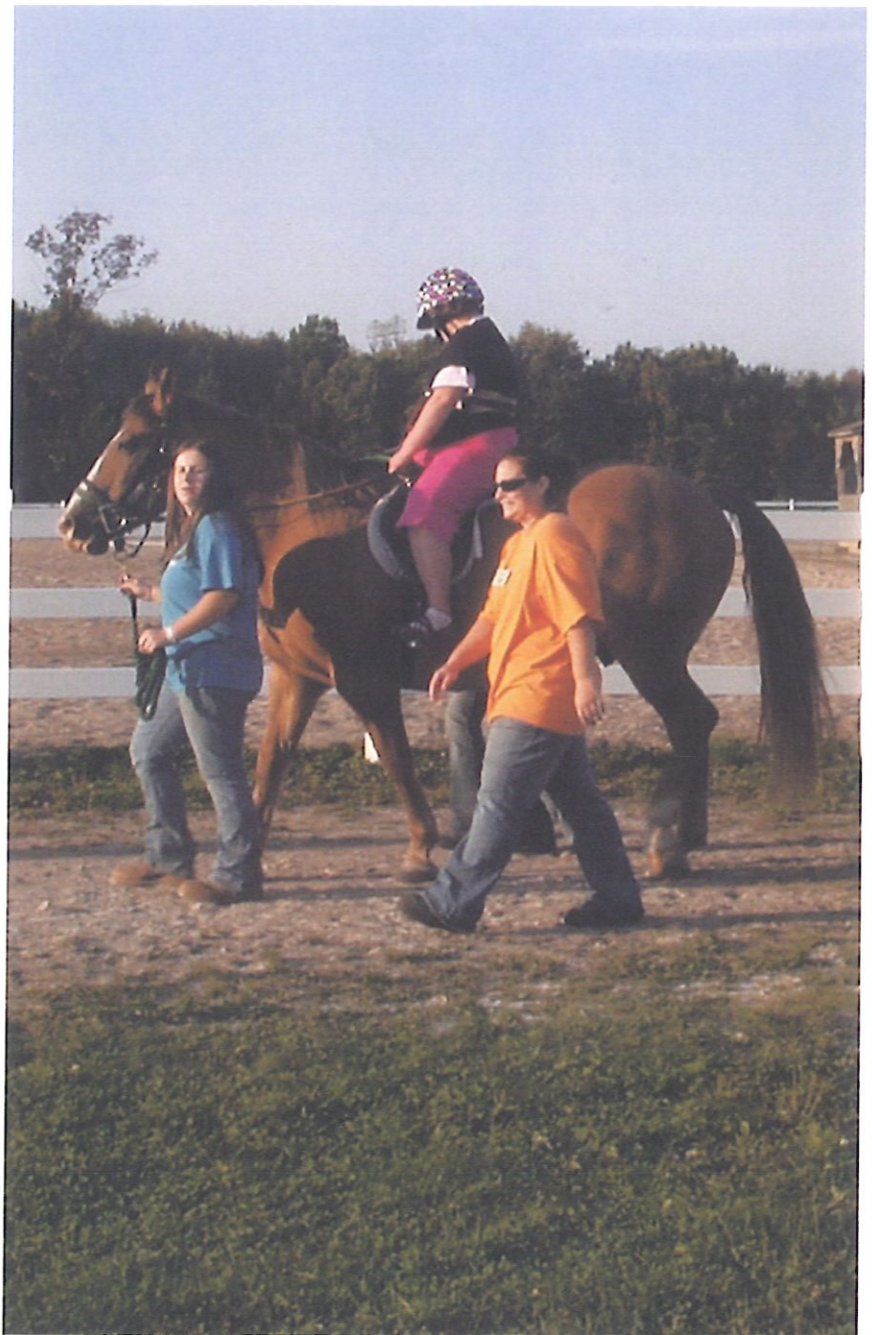


MISSION STATEMENT

TREC is dedicated
to enhancing the
physical, mental,
emotional and social
well being of
individuals with
special needs
through safe equine
assisted activities.



Thank you for volunteering with TREC. Please take a few moments to read this handbook so that you will have a safe and pleasant experience with TREC.



General information

1. A volunteer must be at least 14 years old and physically fit to walk approximately one hour.
2. A waiver must be signed before you can volunteer. If you are under 18 years of age, your parent or guardian must sign it.
3. All volunteers are to maintain and respect the confidentiality of all students and volunteers.
4. We ask volunteers to please sign the logbook when starting and exiting each session. You will find this logbook in the Volunteer Lounge.
5. Every volunteer is covered by insurance while on the stable premises. Please inform us of any accidents, no matter how minor it may seem to you.
6. Proper footwear is necessary for safety. Boots are preferred, but sneakers are OK. No sandals allowed.
7. Do not wear loose fitting or dangling jewelry.
8. Avoid wearing perfumes or colognes. These can cause allergies or attract insects.
9. Please turn off your cell phones.

When you meet our students

1. First of all remember that our students are people like everyone else, except for the special limitation of their particular handicap.
2. Be yourself when you meet them.
3. Help them only when they request it. When individuals with special needs fall down, they may wish to get up by themselves.
4. Be patient, let the students set their own pace in walking or talking.
5. Please don't ask embarrassing questions. If the students want to tell you what their disabilities are, they will bring up the subject themselves.
6. Don't remove wheelchairs or crutches from the person unless they ask you to. They may want them close by.

How you can help

1. Learn to tack the horses
2. Help with rider's equipment
3. Become a leader or sidewalker
4. Help train new volunteers
5. Become a mounting assistant
6. Become a PATH International registered instructor
7. Help with fundraising



YOU MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE

TREC VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Please use the information below to assist you in adhering to TREC policies, procedures and practices as a TREC Volunteer, whether leading, assisting at the mounting block, assisting with the dismount or sidewalking.

In addition to TREC policies, procedures and practices, this handbook contains a comprehensive list of duties that your TREC Instructor may (or may not) assign to you. **Only those duties agreed upon between you and your particular TREC Instructor are your responsibility.** Each TREC Instructor has different expectations of their volunteers. Please pay careful attention to your Instructor's directions during class.

If you feel ready to learn a new skill and assume more responsibility or if you have other questions or concerns, the Instructor is your "go-to" person. If your concern is not sufficiently addressed by the Instructor, please speak with TREC's Volunteer Coordinator or Program Director.

HORSE HANDLING ESSENTIALS

How to lead a horse

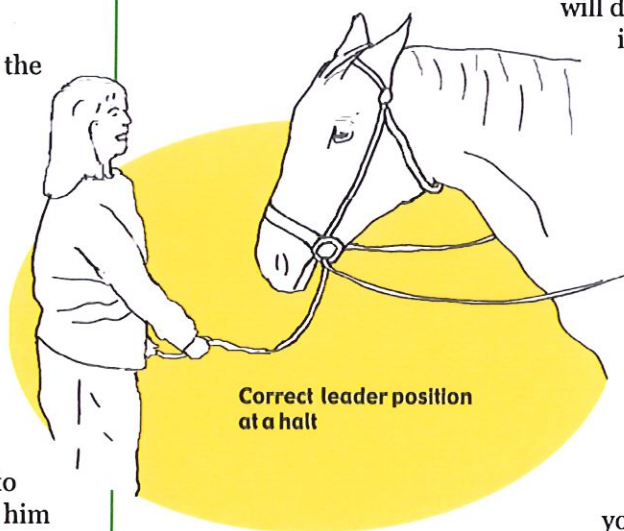
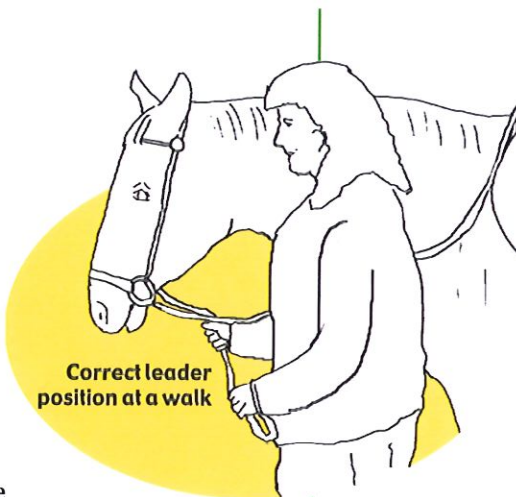
The leader's primary responsibility is the horse.

The proper position for the leader is to walk just back of the horse's head. Do not get in front or too far behind. The lead line, which is attached to the halter, should never be used to pull the horse forward. Care must be taken to ensure that the horse's head is not being pushed up in the air since that may throw the rider off balance. Also, do not let the horse's head get too low to the ground as that may pull the rider forward.

Keep your hands away from the animal's mouth as they do sometimes bite. A good rule of thumb is to hold the lead line in your right hand approximately 6 to 8 inches away from the ring or buckle. Hold the extra in your left hand but NEVER wrap it around your hand, just fold and hold lightly.

Remember, just as the size of the horse varies, so does its stride. Adjust your pace to that of the horse so that you are not pulling him forward or holding him back.

The riders are to be encouraged to do as much on their own as possible. The instructor will alert you when the rider needs assistance.



At the mounting block

Leaders: Pay close attention to the instructor (or mounting assistant) because he/she will tell you where to position your horse at the mounting block. You will want to place the horse as close as possible to the side of the block on which the rider will be mounting. Your responsibility while the rider is mounting is to keep the horse standing as calmly as possible. Stand directly in front of the horse. After the rider's feet have been adjusted in the stirrups, the instructor will ask the rider to tell the horse to "walk on."

Sidewalkers: Please do not attempt to put the rider on the horse. The instructor will do this unless the client is instructed to go ahead without help. If the client is standing with you waiting to mount, please be careful that the client does not go behind the horse but stands quietly beside you.

In the arena

Once you have entered the ring with your mounted rider, the instructor will tell you where

he/she wants you to position the horse. As the class begins, all instruction will be given to the rider by his/her name, so be sure to know the name of your rider.

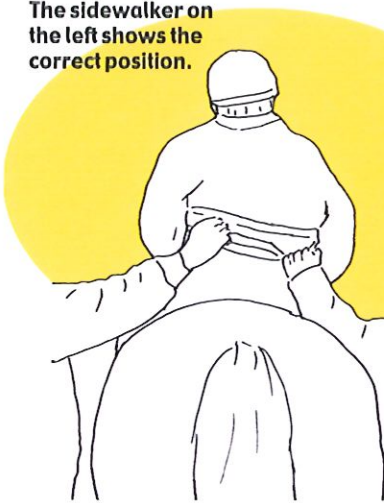
IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT!

Due to the fact that all of our riders have varying conditions, it is requested that volunteers do not handle the riders unless directed to do so by the instructor. Handling a rider without knowledge of his/her disability could be very harmful.

SIDEWALKER ESSENTIALS

The job of the sidewalker is to maintain the safety of the rider. Some riders, especially in the beginning stages have a balance problem. Depending on the degree of difficulty, there will be either one or two sidewalkers assigned to the rider. The instructor will inform you of the requirements for a particular rider. For example, some riders will not have to be held, but just need to have someone walking beside them in case of emergency. Others will need to be supported with the over the thigh hold, or by means of a safety belt attached around their waist.

The sidewalker on the left shows the correct position.



The sidewalker on the right is pulling down on the belt. This will either cause the rider to fall to one side, or overcompensate by leaning to the left.

Be very careful not to pull down or push up on the belt. It is important that you do not use the safety belt for your own support. As your arm tires, it's hard to avoid this, so rather than gripping the handle firmly, touch your thumb and finger together around the side loop. This way you are in position to assist the rider if needed, but you will not give unneeded support or pull them off balance. If your arm gets tired, ask the leader to move into the center. Trade sides, one at a time if there are two sidewalkers, making sure to walk in front of the horse. If there is only one sidewalker, the instructor will find a substitute. Avoid resting your elbow on the horse's back. This is where the kidneys are located and will cause discomfort.

Because it is very important that the rider does not fall, be prepared at all times. Never walk with your hands in your pockets. Do not grab if the rider starts to slip, gently push them back into the right position. Sidewalkers are very important, as they are constantly aware of the rider and what they are doing. The safety of the rider depends on them. Please stay within arm's length of the horse and rider at all times.

In the arena, the sidewalker should help focus the rider's attention on the

instructor. Too many people assisting from too many directions can be very confusing. If two sidewalkers are working with a rider, only one sidewalker should be the "designated talker." This person will remind the rider about "lazy hands," focusing or shortening the reins, among other things.

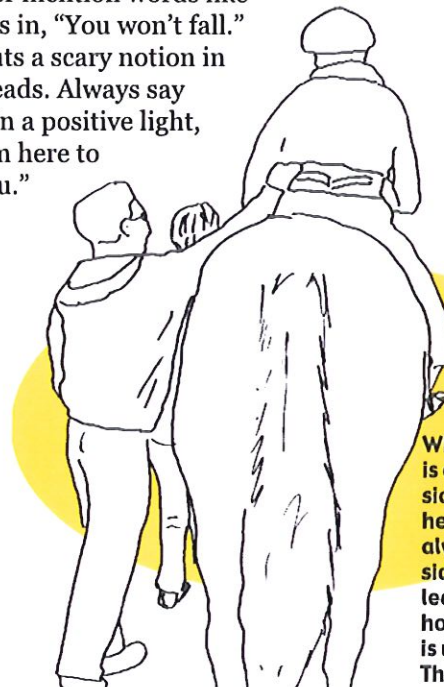
Riders must keep their helmets on while in the arena. Sidewalkers must watch that the belt and helmets are properly worn. If there is a problem, move to the center of the ring and call the instructor. This would also apply if the stirrups need to be readjusted.

The sidewalkers must also watch for problems such as seizures, dizziness or sometimes, falling asleep. Also be aware if the rider shows any signs of discomfort. In any of these situations, inform the instructor.

Since the rider is always close to the sidewalker, you may find they want to talk to you. Do not ignore direct questions, but encourage your rider to pay attention to the instructor in the ring and reinforce the instructor's directions if necessary.

One of the worst distractions in the ring is excessive talking. Please limit your conversations with the riders, and other team members, to what is absolutely necessary. Save your conversations with others until the class is over.

Never mention words like "fall," as in, "You won't fall." That puts a scary notion in their heads. Always say things in a positive light, like "I'm here to help you."



Whenever there is only one sidewalker, he/she must always be on the side opposite the leader. Notice how the right side is unprotected. The sidewalker must move to the right side.

THE HORSE IN ACTION



At the halt

Leader: Any time the horse is stopped, stand in front of the horse to keep him from moving forward. This is especially true while the riders are doing their exercises. This is also, however, used as a breather for the horse and you should not hold its head unduly tight. Allow it the freedom of moving its head if it is getting too restless. The leader should refrain from touching the horse's head or face. And never let the horse use you for a scratching post. The leader is responsible for the horse. By turning and instructing the rider, his/her full attention is not on the horse, which is a potential safety hazard.

Sidewalker: The sidewalker's main focus is on the rider to assist and reinforce the instructor's directions as needed.

At the walk

Leaders: Always leave at least one horse's length between you and the horse in front or beside you. If your rider cannot maintain the safe distance, then you may help them to do so in the way you maneuver the horse as you lead. Remember, many of our riders have difficulties with space orientation, consequently they do not realize they are too close to the horse in front of them. Also be careful not to run your sidewalkers into the wall or other obstacle.

At the trot

Often during a lesson the client will be asked to trot. Trotting is faster than walking so the leader has to be more alert. The instructor will approach, if necessary, to give instructions to the client and to you, while the sidewalkers make sure the rider is holding the handhold.

Leader: Don't pull the lead; the horse will try to fight it. Wait for the rider to say "TROT." Most of our horses are good with voice commands, although you can always run into one that is unmotivated that day and just doesn't want to do more than walk. This type of horse may need extra prodding. Your instructor can provide tips on this. Don't jog in front of your horse, stay even with its neck.

During the games

Games are important to the lesson. They may be simple, such as Simon Says and Red Light - Green Light, or more complex like musical cones. The volunteers play an important part in every game. The instructor will give the rules for the game to be played. Watch your rider to see if they understand the directions and encourage enthusiasm to prepare the rider to play. It helps a lot if the volunteer is excited too, but not so much so that the volunteer plays the game exclusive of the rider. Allow the rider to do as much as possible on their own. A sense of accomplishment comes when they do it themselves.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

Falls are very rare, but can and do happen. If your rider is thrown off or falls, the leader must stay with the horse and control the animal. Never let go of the horse. A loose horse can cause untold trouble. Do not panic and stay calm. The Instructor will

assess the situation and act accordingly. Sidewalkers will help as directed by the instructor. If someone else's rider falls, all other horses in the arena must be moved away from the accident and then stopped. The leaders must stand in

front of their horses and hold them still. The instructors are trained to handle any situation, so please just keep your horse under control and allow the instructors to do their job. One of the sidewalkers may be sent to call for help.

FOR HELP IN AN EMERGENCY CALL: 911

Give them our location:

THERAPEUTIC RIDING EQUESTRIAN CENTER

8342 Platz Road, Fairview, PA

Located at the intersection of Platz and Sterrettania Road

814-474-5276