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THERAPEUTIC RIDING
INSTITUTE
EST 1973

Volunteer Handbook

Revised July 2019



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MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance lives by providing accredited therapeutic equine experiences in a safe, fun and compassionate environment.

VISION

An inclusive community where everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential.

VALUES

Every individual's unique abilities

The power of volunteers

A high standard of excellence

Community

The healing power of the horse

Staff and their contributions

Integrity and accountability

HISTORY

The Therapeutic Riding Institute (TRI) was founded in 1973 by Betty Lou Towley and Linden Moore to provide adults and children with disabilities the opportunity to experience Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT). A completely volunteer driven organization in 1973, today TRI relies upon a pool of over 200 highly qualified volunteers, professional staff, credentialed instructors and a herd of specially selected and trained horses.

ACCREDITATION

TRI is a Premier Accredited Center (PAC) with PATH Int'l (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International). As a PAC, TRI adheres to strict guidelines that underlie all policies and procedures which emphasize safety and professionalism. PATH Int'l is a voice for the EAAT industry. The professional membership organization advocates for EAAT and provides standards for safe and ethical equine interaction through education, communication, standards and research. All TRI instructors are certified through PATH Int'l.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

TRI students', staff and volunteers' personal information is highly confidential. No one is to disclose or distribute anyone else's information or documents including, but not limited to, its students, donors, supporters, volunteers or staff to anyone for whom the information is unauthorized or unnecessary. This includes non-custodial parents of minors. Collectively, this information is referred to as Confidential Information.

Confidential Information may not be discussed or disseminated without express written authorization by a person with the legal authority to grant such permission. As a volunteer, you will be provided only the information you need to safely and effectively assist your student. By attending an orientation and training session, you acknowledge an understanding of this policy.

DIVERSITY

TRI acknowledges and honors the fundamental value and integrity of all individuals, therefore employees and volunteers will work diligently to maintain an environment that is welcoming and respectful.

BEHAVIOR

As a volunteer, you are a representative of our organization. All volunteers are expected to behave in a manner that is conducive to the caring and efficient operation of the program, and to set a good example for our students. Inappropriate language, disruptive behavior or behavior which threatens the safety of others is not acceptable, nor will it be tolerated. After a first attempt to correct the behavior, offenders will be asked to leave the premises by a staff member and withdrawal from the program will be immediate.

If you are subject to any type of inappropriate behavior by a student or volunteer, please do not approach that individual. Notify a staff member immediately. If you feel that a TRI staff member acts inappropriately, please notify TRI's Executive Director, Jacki Mayer, at JMayer@TRIOhio.org.

ALCOHOL AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

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It is the policy of TRI not to tolerate the illegal possession, use, sale, dispensing or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs and narcotics on TRI premises or while representing TRI. TRI reserves the right to require a volunteer to leave the premises if they appear to be impaired.

SMOKING

Smoking on TRI premises or while representing TRI is not permitted.

WEAPONS

TRI prohibits the wearing, transporting, storage, possession, or use of dangerous weapons on TRI's property, regardless of whether or not the person is licensed to carry the weapon. This includes firearms, tasers, knives, crossbows, arrows, etc.

HOURS OF OPERATION

TRI's Hours of Operation vary throughout the year. If you have a reason to be at the farm outside of TRI's scheduled operational hours, please schedule the visit through TRI's Program Director, Michele Green, at MGreen@TRIOhio.org. Please do not visit the farm without prior approval.

BACKGROUND CHECK

For the safety of our students and your fellow volunteers, we run background checks on all new volunteers entering the program. Any concerns that may arise from these checks will be addressed between the volunteer and TRI's Volunteer Coordinator. The final decision to accept any volunteer into the program rests with TRI's staff.

DRESS CODE

Appropriate footwear and clothing must be worn at all times. Open-toed or open-heeled shoes, Crocs, clogs and sandals are not permitted at the barn. Volunteers working in classes will be

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provided with a TRI T-shirt, which should be worn in lessons. If you do not have access to a TRI shirt, please wear dark/navy blue, as this helps our students recognize who is with TRI. It is strongly recommended that jewelry and perfume not be worn at the barn. Hats that impede peripheral vision are inappropriate. Clothing that makes noise (swishy pants, etc) should not be worn in lessons.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency drills are conducted during the first week of every session. In the event of an emergency, please follow the direction of the instructor or other staff member in charge. In general, in the event of a fire in the barn, all staff, volunteers, students and families should congregate in the outdoor arena until released by the fire department. In the event of a tornado or violent storm, all staff, volunteers, students and families should congregate in the aisle way leading to the TRI indoor arena until the weather has passed.

PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

We use people first language to speak with and about individuals with disabilities. People first language emphasizes the person, not the disability. Some examples are:

- Person with a disability
- Person without a disability
- Person who is hard of hearing
- Person with a developmental disability

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Often a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge of others. Please take time to get to know your student and his/her family. Above all, please treat everyone with respect, being considerate and sensitive to their needs.

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When working with someone who uses a wheelchair, please recognize that the chair is an extension of his/her body space. Always ask if the individual would like assistance before you help him/her. Speak directly and be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversation. If a conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get on the same level as the person in the wheelchair.

When working with an individual with a visual impairment, please ask if help is needed. Keep in mind that each individual may have a specific way he/she prefers to be helped. Remember that they may only need verbal direction. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold your arm above the elbow as you walk one-half step ahead.

When working with an individual with hearing/language impairment, try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual as you talk. Speak clearly – avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words. Avoid long verbal instructions. Familiarize yourself with hand gestures the individual may be using to represent words or concepts.

