



Sojourn Therapeutic Riding Center Client Handbook

Feb 2013

Riding Center

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Peotone, IL 60468

Mailing Address/Office

9139 S. Springfield Ave
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Phone 708-539-3078

www.sojourntherapeuticridingcenter.com

**Sojourn Therapeutic Riding Center, NFP
is a PATH Intl Accredited Center**



Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International

Mission Statement

We, at Sojourn Therapeutic Riding Center, use equine assisted activities to contribute proactively to an individual's cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well being.

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International
Formerly North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA)

PATH Intl is a non-profit organization that promotes and supports equine-facilitated activities for individuals with special needs. NARHA sets all safety guidelines and teaching standards for the industry.

www.pathintl.org

Executive Director

Barbara Mulry, ABD
(LBS1; ISBE Provider)

Advisory Board of Directors

Anthony Baker
Carol Karps
Timothy Mulry

Anthony Talley
Daina Tricou
Ken Tsui

Instructors

All Sojourn instructors are certified by NARHA and classified as Registered Instructors.

Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in the therapeutic riding lessons and the success of the program. Volunteers assist the instructors in various capacities such as horse handling or side walking with mounted clients. For non-riding clients, volunteers assist with activities relating to working with a horse from the ground that may include grooming and longeing a horse. Volunteers may also perform other non-horse related functions for the organization.

Equines

The horses that provide the backbone of our therapeutic riding activities are selected for their temperament, confirmation, and trainability. Sojourn's horses are extremely well cared for and are highly trained. The horses are consistently exercised and schooled in dressage to ensure that students receive the safest and most secure experiences possible.

Sojourn's Background

Sojourn was borne out of a marriage between a love for children with special needs and a love for horses. Sojourn's founder and executive director, Barbara Mulry, knows the needs of families with children with special needs first hand. She continues to be an advocate for her brother who has autism and who lives in a group home. She is his legal guardian, along with her sister, and together they are partners in ensuring that his life remains rewarding for him.

Mrs. Mulry is a special education teacher and has worked with many children and their families in areas that include students on the autism spectrum, students with sensory integration challenges, students with severe conduct disorders, opposition defiant disorder, emotional/social challenges, anxiety, students with Down syndrome, and students with various low incidence handicaps or multiple challenge students. In addition to her passion for supporting ALL children, Mrs. Mulry found her own form of therapy with volunteering at a local center where she was introduced to the idea of equines supporting individuals with special needs. Five years and five horses later, she decided to begin the task of opening a center.

Finding a facility is no easy task. It is Sojourn's good fortune that one of Mrs. Mulry's colleagues, a junior high school math teacher, owns a beautiful barn on her property and allowed Sojourn to open its doors. We are most grateful to have this opportunity as we continue to grow and work toward finding a permanent home.

Program Goals

Sojourn Therapeutic Riding Center's program goals are as follows:

1. To continue to review the literature pertaining to equine assisted activities and their impact on individuals with special needs.
2. To continue to develop as an equine therapeutic riding center and apply proven strategies to assist clients with special needs.
3. To provide services that allow for students to maximize their potential to the greatest extent possible.
4. To follow PATH International standards to ensure that clients receive a multi-sensory experience in a safe environment with trained professionals, volunteers, and equines.

Methodology

Sojourn assesses each student's baseline level of competency in the areas of control, balance, coordination, and perceptual and cognitive skills. A lesson plan is developed, and reviewed every 6 weeks, to determine the extent to which a client has progressed, and whether to implement new goals.

Additionally, parents are welcome to share their child's Individual Education Program (IEP) and will find that many aspects of the IEP are easily subsumed in therapeutic riding. The IEP will be kept in the client's file, and will be reviewed to determine how to integrate certain goals within the therapeutic riding program. Again, this is open to parents who wish to utilize this service.

Guidelines for Participation

Students will be accepted into the Sojourn Therapeutic Riding Center program based on the following criteria:

1. Evaluation – Each new application will be reviewed by an instructor who will determine that the applicant is appropriate for Sojourn with the presence of no contraindications.
2. Challenges – Sojourn is open to individuals with challenges including, but not limited to, specific learning differences (SLD), neurological impairments, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, multiple sclerosis. *Sojourn may also service individuals without special needs, but priority is given to special needs clients.*
3. Ages – students are accepted at age 2 and up.
4. Weight limit – Any new student must weigh no more than 200 pounds. Any current student weighing more than 200 pounds will be reevaluated each session.
5. Height Limit – Any new student must be less than 6 feet tall. Any current student who is more than 6 feet tall will be reevaluated each session.
6. Priority – Students are accepted on a first come, first served basis, in the order of their application, as spaces are available, assuming they meet the indicated criteria.
7. Availability and expertise – An applicant will only be accepted if the staff has the expertise to develop a safe therapeutic program for that individual. This is based on the availability of appropriate horses, equipment, volunteers, instructors, and schedule.
8. Paperwork – All forms and applications are valid for one year from the signature date. Students will be notified as it becomes necessary to update their paperwork, including their Medical History, Physician's Statement, and Returning Student Update. All forms can be downloaded from the Sojourn website or requested from the office. Only students whose paperwork is current will be scheduled for a given session.

Student/Family Guidelines

ATTENDANCE

As consistency is extremely important to a rider's progress, it is expected that each rider will maintain regular attendance.

In the event of an anticipated absence, please notify the instructor as far in advance as possible. If the absence is occurring close to the start of the lesson time, please call Sojourn at 708.539.3078. Messages may be left on the voice mail.

Please indicate the following:

1. Name of student
2. Date and time of lesson (that will be missed)

PLEASE NOTE: MAKE-UPS FOR MISSED LESSONS MAY BE PROVIDED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WITHIN THE SESSION BLOCK, SCHEDULE AND VOLUNTEER RESOURCES PERMITTING. MAKE UP LESSONS CANNOT BE GUARANTEED.

REFUNDS WILL BE PROVIDED FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES OR ILLNESS ONLY AT THE DISCRETION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. REQUESTS FOR REFUNDS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A NOTE FROM A PHYSICIAN.

CANCELLATION BY INSTRUCTOR

Lessons are held rain or shine.

PLEASE NOTE: School closings do not reflect a closing of the riding center

If the instructor needs to cancel a lesson, the student will be notified as far in advance as possible. If inclement weather makes it difficult or dangerous to travel or if any other circumstances make it necessary for Sojourn to be closed, students will be notified by phone. To find out whether lessons are being held, please call Sojourn at 708.539.3078.

If Sojourn closes or the instructor cancels a lesson, makeup sessions may be offered, resources and mutual scheduling permitting. If this is not feasible, the class fee will be refunded for the cancelled lesson.

ARRIVAL TIMES

A late arrival means that the rider will not receive his/her full allotted time.

Students should arrive 10 to 15 minutes before their lesson, which allows for pre-lesson sign-in and preparation without creating stress for the rider. Too early an arrival time can create adjustment problems for a rider who has difficulty waiting for the activity to begin.

Students should wait for their instructor near the entrance of the barn unless otherwise directed by volunteers or staff. If there are open stall doors or horses in the aisle, please wait for direction from the instructor or trained volunteer before entering the aisle.

LESSON FORMATS

All lessons run for 30 minutes. Lesson time includes mounting, riding, and dismounting. Helmet fitting and/or belt fitting should be done prior to the lesson with a trained volunteer.

Not all lessons are riding lessons depending on the needs of the client. These ground lessons may include grooming or tacking. Each lesson is designed according to the student's specific needs. Lesson structure and activities may be changed or modified if deemed necessary to maintain safety and quality standards.

SIGN-IN PROCEDURE

Before of each lesson, students are signed in using the lesson block cards located on the viewing deck. This is in keeping with the PATH International regulations and insurance risk management requirements.

STUDENT ATTIRE

The stable and riding arena are not climate controlled. Please dress appropriately for the outdoor temperature. Layers are highly recommended. Students are required to wear long pants and close-toed shoes, preferably with ties.

Students riding in a saddle are required by PATH International standards to wear shoes or boots with a small heel. This prevents the rider's foot from sliding through the stirrup. Students riding with vaulting surcingles may wear sneakers or other closed-toed shoes.

Riders need to wear long pants even in the hottest weather. Friction from pads and saddles on bare skin can cause skin rashes and topical injury. (If the participant is prone to skin breakdown, avoid triple seam jeans that will cause irritation along the seams).

HELMETS

Students must wear an ASTM/SEI certified riding helmet while working on or around the horses. Helmets are provided on the viewing deck. Participants wishing to wear their own helmet must show proof of ASTM/SEI certification. Bicycle or other helmets are not permitted.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Families are invited to become actively involved in the development of their student's individualized lesson plan and in providing information and feedback as the program progresses (See Methodology). We have found that for both safety and the accomplishment of the riding lesson objectives, family involvement during the actual riding time should be kept to a minimum. The student's attention to the movement of the horse, his or her balance, control and behaviors are essential to both safety and progress. The instructor will consult with the family during the lesson if necessary, and if appropriate within the context of the lesson plan. If a family member wishes to become a volunteer, training will be provided and the family member may volunteer at the discretion of the head instructor.

If families wish to view the riding lesson, they are asked to remain on the viewing deck or behind the arena gate provided no horses are in the aisle.

DISCHARGE CRITERIA

Students may be discharged from Sojourn's program for any of the following reasons:

1. The student does not show documented progress over the course of a session with the existence of no extenuating circumstances.
2. The student exhibits behavior that is considered inappropriate and/or unsafe during program session.
3. The student has three inexcusable absences in a session when no prior notification was given to program staff.
4. The student develops a medical contraindication to riding.

FACILITY PROTOCOL

Families are asked to observe any posted facility rules.

If there are open stall doors or horses in the aisle, please wait for the direction from the instructor or a trained volunteer before entering the aisle.

Students, families, or visitors may not enter stalls, paddocks, pastures, or tack room without direction from the instructor.

Siblings or accompanying friends must be kept under adult supervision and behave appropriately.

Feeding of horses may only be done under the supervision of instructors or trained volunteers. Donations of treats are always welcome.

For the comfort of our students, we request that cell phones be turned off or on vibrate. If you must use a cell phone, please text only.

Visiting dogs must remain in their owner's vehicles. Please make staff aware of any service animals.

The barn is located on private property not owned by Sojourn Therapeutic Riding Center, NFP. Unless expressly told to do otherwise, please remain in the barn or on the asphalt parking area near the barn. Keep children away from the electrified fences, dumpster, trampolines, pool, and any areas outside of the barn proper.