

# STARS AND STRIDES STABLES



## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

*"Empowering our Stars to reach great Strides in life"*

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## WELCOME

The Staff and Board of Directors at Stars and Strides Stables would like to welcome you to our therapeutic riding program. We feel volunteers are the backbone of any riding program for the disabled. Most of our students cannot ride without the physical, emotional and psychological support of their volunteers. An instructor and team of three volunteers may be needed for one disabled person to ride safely. The expense for two or three additional people, as well as the cost of the lesson itself, would put this type of therapy out of reach for all but a very few if we did not have your help. While the volunteer brings enthusiasm and dedication to the purpose of a therapeutic riding program, it is the volunteer's understanding, observation and spirit of cooperation that assists in bringing the team together.

We hope to provide a volunteer team for each rider so that both the riders and volunteers can benefit from continuity and establish a lasting relationship of trust with one another. As a volunteer, you will be part of a professional team. We not only have fun, but therapeutic riding done in a professional manner brings feelings of boundless joy and accomplishment for all those involved.

This Handbook is designed as a study guide during your training and as a reference after your orientation to our program. Volunteer duties, safety information, tips on working with horses and challenged individuals and specific information about Stars and Strides Stables are included. Whether you are attending a formal orientation or joining up after the session has begun, we ask that you carefully read through and study this Handbook and that you refer back to it throughout your stay with us.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*"Empowering our **Stars** to reach great **Strides** in life"*

This is done through giving our clients a place to learn to become effective and competitive riders to the best of their ability. These skills translate into their everyday lives through confidence, self-esteem, and success.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THERAPEUTIC HORSEBACK RIDING

Horseback riding helps mentally and physically challenged people achieve a quality of life that is improved, enhanced and enriched. Based on input from doctors, therapists, teachers and parents, the student's individual goals are designed to compliment ongoing therapy and education. The benefits of horseback riding are threefold:

- Physical – The three-dimensional motion of the horse provides the rider with hip and back action that stimulates natural walking. Riding relaxes and strengthens muscles and improves body tone, posture, balance, joint mobility and coordination.
- Emotional – Contact with horses and horsemanship training provides a non-competitive setting for learning. New abilities, self-discipline and improved concentration build self-confidence.
- Social – Horseback riding nurtures a positive self-image. Riders benefit from interaction with both the other riders and their volunteers and may, for the first time in their lives, experience some independence and sense of being part of a team.

Stars and Strides Stables serves children and adults with a variety of mental, physical or emotional disabilities. Instructors design and monitor individualized treatment plans for each student to address their physical, emotional and social needs while they learn skills of horseback riding. Individual and class goals encourage each rider to be the best he or she can be, on or off the horse.

## **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

### **SOME REQUIREMENTS OF A GOOD VOLUNTEER**

**Reliability** – Regular attendance provides the rider with a consistent treatment program

**Punctuality** – Late arrive can be very frustrating to a student who has looked forward to his weekly ride – show up 30 minutes before your scheduled class. Call as soon as possible if you cannot make a class.

**Physical Fitness** – Volunteering in a therapeutic riding program definitely enhances physical fitness, but please be sure you are physically capable of walking for one hour, in sand, and up and down hills.

**Alertness** – Despite your outward relaxation, always anticipate an unexpected emergency. Notice unsafe conditions and tell a staff member.

**Empathy** – It is important to have empathy and genuine regard towards the riders, avoid false sentimentality

**Horse Knowledge** – Knowledge of horses is helpful, but many excellent volunteers have little previous experience. Horse Basics and Horse Handling and Leader workshops will be offered for those volunteer who desire to learn more.

**Patience** - Endless patience is necessary to adjust to the often delayed or slow movements and reactions of a challenged individual

**Sensible and Comfortable clothing** - Dress for the task and the day!

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Several opportunities are available for those volunteers wishing to do more than (or instead of) volunteering in the barn. If volunteering at the riding center doesn't appeal to you, but you want to promote our cause, consider volunteering for one of the "non-horsey" projects. All volunteers are encouraged to spread the word about Stars and Strides Stables programs to friends, clubs and organizations who might be interested in providing financial support, volunteers or riders. If you have a contact you would like us to follow up on, tell a staff member and they will get you in touch with the right person.

### **HORSE RELATED OPPORTUNITIES**

**LEADER-** A leader uses a halter and lead rope to lead the horse during a class. The leader is a person familiar with horses and their behavior and has gone through our leader workshops. A leader is responsible ONLY for the horse. If an incident occurs with the horse during a class, the leader NEVER lets go of the lead rope – a leader is a lifeline for a mounted challenged rider. Eligibility would include: attending Volunteer Orientation, Horse Handling, have a good knowledge of horses and horse behaviors, have a good knowledge of Stars and Strides's way of grooming, handling and tacking horses, able-bodied and in good physical condition, minimum of 14 years of age.

**SIDEWALKER** – Side walkers are used during class to assist the rider with their balance and reining. Assistance may vary from merely walking beside the rider to fully supporting the rider on the horse. They may be asked by the instructor to use different types of handholds for support. If an incident occurs with the horse, the side walkers are responsible for scooping the rider off the horse. A side walker is responsible ONLY for the rider. Eligibility would include: attending Volunteer Orientation, possibly Horse Handling, able-bodied and in good physical condition, good knowledge of horse and horse behavior, knowledge of different handholds to use on therapy riders, minimum of 14 years of age

**SCHOOLER** – A schooler is a volunteer that has been asked to help train and exercise the therapy horses. They will pass a Schooling rider evaluation given by the Program Director that shows that the schooler is capable of riding with good posture, balanced seat, sensitive hands, and is also capable of correcting a horse when needed. Each schooler should be able to correctly lunge a horse and work with problem horses as asked. They should be experienced riders that are capable of performing elementary movements (leg yield, turn on the forehand, etc.), getting the horse in a round frame and bending through turns, smooth gait transitions and have knowledge of stress related problems that therapy horses endure.

**UNIFIED RIDER** –A unified rider is chosen by instructors from volunteers that express an interest in volunteering actively during class. Their responsibilities include: leading or riding drag as horses ride out on the trail (2) acting as an assistant to the instructor during class (3) helping to prepare the horses for class (4) verbally encouraging the challenged riders and creating a peer group for them (5) competing in eligible unified events at shows. Prerequisites: A unified rider must be 14 years of age, have good working knowledge of the Stars and Strides way to tack and groom, knowledgeable about working around horses, compassionate, and hard working.

## **NON-HORSEY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

If you have a special interest or ability in any of the following, please contact the Program Director.

- **FUND RAISING** – Interested individuals are welcome to join any of the following committees active in meeting the financial needs of Stars and Strides's riding program. We always need volunteers to chair and staff special event committees such as Run for the Riders, Ride for the Riders, Christmas Party, In-house Horse Show, Pecan Festival, etc.
- **CORPORATE CAMPAIGN** – Identify and solicit corporations and small businesses for general contributions and assist in follow-up and recognition of corporate donors.
- **RECRUITMENT DRIVE** – Identify new personal contacts for Stars and Strides's volunteer membership drives.

- **FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS** – Help identify foundations and/or grants with a potential for donation to Stars and Strides Stables.
- **GIFTS IN KIND** – Contact vendors to donate needed items, thereby reducing Stars and Strides's program expenses
- **PUBLIC RELATIONS/MARKETING** – Submit periodic press releases as needed. Obtain media coverage, striving for higher community visibility (at least 4 times per year). Assist in writing proposals and other written materials.
- **ASSORTED SERVICES/PROJECTS** – Tack cleaning and repair, carpentry, painting, electrical or plumbing services, poster design, and helping keep our office clean are just some of the opportunities currently available. Workdays are held periodically, generally prior to a special event or before a session begins to give the riding center and horses a major "sprucing up".

## **GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

### **WHAT TO WEAR**

For safety as well as comfort, volunteers should dress in close-fitting (but not tight) clothing. Loose, floppy clothing can get tangled with equipment. Dress in layers that you can shed as you exercise, especially during cooler months. Bring a jacket and/or gloves; it is always cooler at the barn than at your home. During summer, dress in light clothing and you can wear a hat that will not fly off. Shorts may be worn, but we still recommend socks that at least cover the ankle and mid calf area because we walk through pastures. We ask that you not wear suggestive or provocative clothing (bare midriffs, extremely low necklines, sleeveless "muscle" shirts) or shirts with questionable pictures or wording. Sunglasses are a big plus in the sunny months and sunscreen is recommended. You will be doing a lot of walking and jogging on uneven terrain, so comfortable shoes are a must. It hurts when a horse steps on your foot, so make sure your footwear is sturdy (preferably hard-toed shoes) – no sandals. Last, but not least, avoid perfume that attracts bees and dangly earrings and bracelets than can hamper your movements, get pulled off by a rider or distract a horse.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

We will occasionally have to cancel classes due to weather conditions. Those conditions include rain, sleet, snow, and extreme temperatures hot or cold. Every effort will be made to contact the riders and volunteers of any cancellations. Volunteers may be asked to assist in the notification to the riders.

### **SUBSTITUTES**

If it is necessary for you to miss your scheduled class, please call the office as soon as possible and let the Program Director know the date and time that you will be missing so that a replacement can be found. Volunteers that have available time and could come on short notice are needed to fill in when the scheduled volunteers are absent. If your schedule allows last minute changes, please let us know and we'll add your name to our substitute list.

## **MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT**

No one under the age of 14 is allowed to work directly with the horse and rider during a class (as a leader or side walker) due to our safety standards and insurance requirements. However, youth aged 13 are welcome and will be trained as "Wranglers" to clean tack, sweep the stable, groom horses, empty trash, pick up manure, move horses back and forth to pasture, and help with games during class.

## **SIGN IN PROCEDURES AND RECORDING HOURS**

Your volunteer time is important to us for funding purposes and recognizing outstanding volunteers at the end of the year. Sign in sheets are kept in the office. Please be sure to record your hours each time you come. Include your drive time and round off your hours to the nearest quarter hour. If you work more than one class per day, record your total hours.

## **HORSE HANDLERS**

Horse Handlers are volunteers that have gone through the required number of Horse Handling/leader workshops. These workshops help the horse handler to become aware of special problems or issues that arise with certain horses during the year along with new safety procedures. Also, the accepted way of tacking, correcting and leading a therapy horse will be addressed. Horse behavior is emphasized and horse handlers are encouraged to study non-resistance training.

## **SAFETY RULES**

- smoking and/or tobacco use is **NOT** allowed on the premises at any time
- all children below the age of 14 must be supervised by an adult when on the premises
- instructors and volunteers should **NOT** bring children or animals into the class arena
- all riders and volunteers must wear approved safety helmets when mounted
- only authorized personnel (instructors, volunteers with current signed releases and staff) are allowed in the arena
- Volunteer must pay attention to their horse and rider at all times. Do not leave your position when assigned a horse and/or rider
- Only authorized personnel are allowed in restricted areas. These areas include, but are not limited to, surrounding pastures, pond area, equipment shed, hay barn, stalls, all areas fenced for horses, and, storage rooms.
- Cell phones and/or pages **ARE NOT** allowed in the arena area. Please go outside of the arena to use your phones
- Observe and obey all safety signs posted

## **DO VOLUNTEERS EVER GET TO RIDE?**

This is a question many volunteers ask! Because we focus on the needs of our challenged riders and providing a meaningful experience for them, offering lessons or riding time to our many volunteers would be a strain on the horses and staff. The staff will try to offer periodic

horseback riding lessons for volunteers throughout the year. However, experienced volunteers willing to donate their expertise and ability are eligible for schooling horses.

## **INCIDENT REPORTS**

Incident reports must be filled out each time an incident occurs that could involve the safety of a participant, staff, personnel or equine during the course of a therapeutic riding class or daily routine. It is the responsibility of the staff present to determine the severity of the occurrence and if it needs to be recorded. Forms are available in the office.

## **GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER CONDUCT**

- Volunteers are to assist the riders with the appropriate services in a way that does not compromise or endanger the rider's physical or emotional health. If a threat to a rider's health is observed, the volunteer should contact a Stars and Strides staff member immediately.
- Volunteers are to keep all rider information confidential and not discuss or make any written reports without the prior approval of the Program Director. Volunteers are not to use the last name of the rider at any time.
- Volunteers are to abide by the volunteer policies, conduct and procedures as outlined in this Handbook, cooperate fully with the Staff and be open to their guidance.
- Volunteers are to represent Stars and Strides in a positive manner to the larger community and not represent the agency in any capacity while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Volunteers are not to sexually harass riders, staff or other volunteers. This includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including comments or jokes of an "off color" nature. Be aware of who you may offend and set a good example for others.

## **THE THERAPY RIDING LESSON**

### **PREPARING FOR CLASS**

It is important to arrive 30 minutes prior class time to groom and tack the horses. Some of our riders come early to help out with your assistance, and it is especially important that you are timely.

- Record your arrival time in the Volunteer sign-in book and get your nametag
- Check the Daily Schedule on the tack room door for horses and tack to be used
- Get the appropriate halter and lead rope and get the horse from their stall or paddocks then tie it with the cross ties in the barn breezeway.
- Do not kneel by the horse, it is too hard to get out of the way quickly if the horse gets startled



## **GROOMING**

Grooming keeps the horse's coat clean and healthy, eliminates dirt, dried sweat and loose hair that can irritate the horse under the tack. Grooming also stimulates nerve endings of the skin and helps to relax and warm up the muscles. Also, this is a good chance to check the horse for any injuries before the ride. Please alert the staff if you notice any injuries.

- The rubber currycomb is used, if needed, in a circular Motion on neck and body to loosen dried mud and/or dirt and stimulates skin. DO NOT use on face or on areas where bone can be felt.
- The body brushes (stiff or soft) are used in long, sweeping strokes on neck, body and legs. Stroke the direction that the hair grows. Use the stiff brush first to remove loosened debris, then follow with the soft brush to polish coat with short strokes.
- Stand to one side when grooming tail to avoid getting kicked. Start at the bottom and work up. Brush tail carefully to avoid pulling out long hairs. A detangler can be used to detangle the hair.
- The hoof pick is used to remove any debris or stones embedded between the sole or shoe and the frog (the sensitive V-shaped pad in the center of the foot)

## **CLEANING THE HOOF**

Always clean the hooves in the same order – (1) the left fore, (2) the left rear, (3) the right rear and finally (4) the right fore. To lift the horse's foot, run your hand from the elbow down his leg to just above the hoof and squeeze slightly. The horse will usually lift his hoof. While holding the hoof, run the pick from the heel toward the toe. Place hoof back on the ground instead of just dropping it. If you are uncomfortable cleaning the hoof, please ask for assistance from the instructor or a Volunteer Captain.

## **SADDLING THE HORSE**

- Check the Daily Schedule to see what tack the horse needs.
- Position the pad on the horse, and then lift and position the saddle gently onto the horse's back
- Go to the offside and check to make sure none of the saddle is twisted underneath and let the girth down and size it
- Go to the nearside again and facing the back of the horse, reach under and get the girth
- Run the long latigo through the loop of the girth and loop on the saddle until 2 fingers can fit snugly under the girth at the lowest part of the barrel. Leave your left hand under the loop/girth as you tighten with your right hand to avoid hair/skin becoming pinched with the leather. This is the first tightening of the girth.
- Pull the bridle and reins asked for on the Daily Schedule and hang them over the horn
- Bridles and reins are never put on the horse when tied to the wall

## **BRIDLING THE HORSE**

After the leader is asked to get their horse and lead to the middle of the arena, call for a staff person to bridle (with a bit) the horse. If the horse is wearing a side-pull, it is okay to go ahead and put that on. Put the crown piece in your right hand and with your left hand spread the cavesson piece apart. Putting your right hand above the ears, lower the bridle and put the muzzle in the lower part by pulling up slightly. Put the right ear in first and then the left in the crown/brow band area. Go ahead and put on the reins also.

## **CLASS TIME**

### **LEADER GUIDELINES**

- When asked, lead your horse to the middle of the arena
- Check tack and re-tighten the girth if needed (Phase II).
- Lead to the mounting area when asked, and position the horse as closely to the block, ramp as possible
- Hold the lead rope about 12 inches from the snap to allow for the natural motion of the horse's head. Hold extra rope in left hand, doubling the excess back and forth across your palm. Never wrap it around your hand.
- Lead on the left side of the horse, just behind the horse's head.
- Please watch your distance between horses when on the rail, try to maintain two horse lengths between horses
- Make turns softly and avoid sudden moves. Allow space for side walkers when next to a fence or obstacle.
- When the horse is stopped, turn and face the horse's head. Allow the horse to move his head and stretch, but keep him quiet and calm by petting him or softly speaking to him.
- To halt, say "whoa" and give the horse time to respond before pulling the lead rope. If the horse does not respond, pull back slightly on the lead and then release. Do not stand in front of the horse and try to stop him with your body.
- Students are urged to control their horses to the maximum of their abilities. A horse leader must never take the place of the student, but should be there to assist as directed to keep the horse in control. Check with the instructor before the lesson regarding your rider's level of ability in controlling his mount.
- When the rider is able to rein, allow a little more slack in the lead so that you will not influence the horse unless this becomes necessary for safety reasons.
- When changing pace, have the horse follow your pace rather than you following the horse's pace. Move from a walk to a fast walk into a trot and then down from a trot to a fast walk to a walk. This will make the transition smooth and will not throw the rider off balance.
- Never discipline a horse while a rider is mounted. Do not constantly say "NO" and "stop that!" It will make your rider feel that you do not have control. You need to learn a subtle and firm way of controlling your horse.
- If the horse should suddenly shy or pull, release the lead in your right hand, but maintain contact with your left hand on the end of the lead rope to control your horse. When a rider is mounted on the horse, never totally let go of the lead under any circumstance.

- When the lesson is finished and the rider dismounts, take the bridle and reins off and hang on the horn. Then take the horse to the appropriate wall and tie with a safety knot. Take the tack off, put up in the tack room, and take the horse back to his stall or paddock.

## **SIDEWALKER GUIDELINES**

The side walker(s) help the rider with balance and reinforce instructions during the lesson. If there are two side walkers, whoever is on the inside of the ring should clarify the instructions. Too many people talking at once it is confusing.

- Check to see that your rider is prepared to ride. If he doesn't have on a helmet, help him fit one to his head or let the instructor know.
- There are different methods of support for each rider, and the instructor will let you know what to do at mounting – over the thigh, holding onto the gait belt, holding onto the heel of the boot or stirrup, spotting, etc.
- If a rider has a leader and one side walker, the side walker should walk on the offside.
- Observe the rider with your front or side vision at all times. Never become so relaxed that you are not totally aware of the rider, horse, leader, instructor and activities around you.
- Be sure not to lean on the horse or rider (elbows in the horse's loin area, leaning on the horse when halted, leaning on the rider's leg, etc) as this can unbalance the rider or irritate the horse.
- Don't pet the horse or touch in any way during a class
- Listen to the instructor's directions so you can be ready to reinforce when necessary, but allow the rider plenty of time to process the information before you begin to assist. For example, if the instructor says, "Pull the right rein towards me", and the rider seems confused, after a few seconds simply tap the right hand and say "Right".
- If the rider is unable to rein by themselves, take the hand holding the rein and help the rider do the correct rein.
- Talking to the rider while having a lesson is not recommended since it interferes with the communication between the rider and the instructor. Many disabled riders have difficulty focusing on instruction, so all talking should be kept to a minimum.
- Refrain from talking to the other side walker or leader during a lesson unless it has to do with the rider or rider's position. Any unnecessary talking distracts the rider, shows disrespect for the riding lesson and diverts the attention of the team.

## **MOUNTING PROCEDURES**

During mounting, leaders hold horses in the middle of the arena, while side walkers stay with the riders. Extra volunteers can make sure the rider's helmet fits correctly, then wait (in designated rider area) to be called into the arena by an instructor. The instructor conducts mounting, volunteers assist as directed.

## **There are three types of mounting:**

**Ramp mount** – used for riders using wheelchairs or otherwise not able to climb.

**Block mount** – used for the majority of our riders. Allows riders higher access to the stirrup, and it is an easier mount on the horse.

**Ground mount** – Our least used mount. We prefer to use the block or ramp because it is easier on the horse's back.

When using the mounting ramp or block, the leader should:

1. Approach ramp or block in the direction requested by the instructor, stop before entering ramp or block area until instructed to walk on, and then enter while turning to face the horse upon entering mounting area. The instructor will check the girth before positioning the horse. This is the second tightening of the girth.
2. Position horse close to the side from which mounting takes place
3. Do not put pressure on the lead rope; this may cause the horse to back up. If the horse should back up, DO NOT PULL, simply release pressure on the lead and go with him – he will stop
4. Allow the horse to relax, holding him quietly and not restricting his head
5. Once the rider is mounted and the cue is given by the instructor AND rider to "walk on", guide the horse out and along the mounting ramp slowly and quietly while still facing him. Once the horse is clear of the ramp or block, the instructor will give the command "whoa" for final adjustments. Side walkers join the rider so that support can be given while instructor adjusts stirrups. The instructor will check the girth and tighten. This is the third tightening of the girth.
6. Lead the horse slowly and quietly from the mounting area once the rider and/or instructor has said "walk on".

When using the mounting block, ramp or ground, the side walker(s) should:

1. Position yourself on the offside of the horse.
2. Push down on stirrup to offset the weight of the rider, and assist with bringing rider's right leg over the saddle if needed. Instructor will tell you what handhold or support the rider needs.

***MOUNTING IS ONLY DONE BY THE INSTRUCTOR OR BY SOMEONE SPECIFICALLY TRAINED IN APPROVED MOUNTING PROCEDURES.***

## **Protocol During Sessions**

- Leaders and side walkers should work together as a team. Keep conversation very minimal so that the rider can listen to the instructor's directions.
- Side walkers should aid the rider as directed by the instructor, and walk beside the rider's stirrup (not behind or in front of).
- Keep a safe distance from other horses. Maintain a safe distance between your horse and the horse in front of you. You can pass, circle or cut across arena to get more distance.

- Side walkers should always stay with their rider. If you need to be excused, let instructor know so that they can find another side walker.
- Leaders should stand in the correct position for:
  - Halt – on the side and facing the horse’s jaw area. Don’t hold the horse too tight, this is
    - a good time for the horse to relax
  - Walk On – Facing forward
  - Back – face toward the back of the horse when asking a horse to back
- Leader should avoid quick movements:
- Circles – large circles to avoid throwing rider off balance
- Transitions – Smooth transitions to avoid throwing rider forward or back

***Ask the leader to stop and call the instructor if:***

- The rider is off balance and cannot regain it while horse is moving
- The saddle pad has slipped or the girth is loose
- The stirrups need adjusting
- The rider’s helmet needs to be adjusted
- The rider is fatigued, in pain or needs to stop for other reasons
- You need to change sides or are having some difficulty and cannot carry out your job in comfort. When changing sides, have one volunteer change sides at a time so that you never leave the rider unsupported
- Be patient with your riders; give them time to respond, to try, and to do the task. The rewards, no matter how small or large, make your volunteer work very worthwhile. Without volunteers, we would have a tough time making this program a reality.

**RIDER COMING OFF THE HORSE**

Falls off a horse are rare, but they can happen. Don’t panic! The leader of that horse should hold the horse quietly. If the rider is near the horse’s legs, don’t allow the horse to move forward until the instructor removes the rider. After the rider is clear, the leader should walk the horse slightly away and halt. The instructor will assess the rider and will call for help if needed. If there are side walkers, please avoid tending to the rider until the instructor has assessed the rider. The other leaders and side walkers in the class will walk to the other side of the arena and continue walking and tending to their own rider and assuring them that everything is alright. If the rider is able, the instructor will remount the rider and finish the class.

**AFTER CLASS**

The leader or rider may lead the horse back to the cross ties in the barn. If the rider leads the horse, the leader should assist as instructed by the instructor.

**Leader responsibilities**

1. Remove bridle and reins after rider dismounts or have instructor remove
2. Return the horse to the appropriate place and tie lead rope with a safety knot or use cross ties

3. If the horse is not to be used with same tack again, remove saddle, brush the saddle area (or rinse in hot weather) and pick out hooves
4. Return equipment to the tack room. Bridles and saddles are to be put back in the appropriate place
5. If the horse is not to be used again, take him to the appropriate stall or paddock
6. Be sure to record the time that you leave

#### **Side walker responsibilities:**

1. After dismounting, take your rider back to the helmet area to put away the helmet
2. Return rider to parents or guardians and help put up any tack they may have
3. Assist in untacking and grooming the horse
4. Be sure to record the time when you leave

## **GETTING TO KNOW THE CHALLENGED RIDER**

### **GENERAL APPROACH AND INTERACTION**

It is important to remember that every child or adult is an individual and wants to be treated with that understanding regardless of having a disability or not. Each has his own learning rate, style of learning, unique personality and temperament. One must always look beyond the disability into the person and provide them an enriched experience with warmth and a favorable environment in which to learn and grow. All people disabled or not, want to feel that they are not different from the rest of their fellow man.

### **HOW TO RELATE TO THE CHALLENGED PERSON**

Being around challenged people may be a new experience for you. You may be overwhelmed at first with things you have never seen or do not understand. This is natural for most people, and allow yourself time to get used to being around a person who is disabled. At first, you may want to do jobs which are not in direct contact with the riders. Feel free to talk with a staff member about this. This is a common problem, and if working directly with the riders is a hardship for you, consider helping Stars and Strides in some other way.

### **SUGGESTIONS TO HELP YOU RELATE TO A PERSON WITH DISABILITIES**

- Relax. Let the rider put you at ease if you do not know what to say
- Explore mutual interests in a friendly way. If the rider is verbal, ask about their horse and find out how verbal they are
- Speak directly to the person with the disability. Your attention should be to them and not to someone around him
- Children and adults will be glad to talk about themselves – TV shows, movies, sports, food, etc
- Offer assistance when asked or when the situation obviously requires it. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist up on helping when they are managing alone.

- Do not hinder the rider's ability to expand their skills and independence even when their movements may appear awkward to you
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to accomplish something or respond to something. Be patient
- Do not be afraid to say to a child or adult, "I am sorry I cannot understand you, please say it again".
- Talk to each rider on his own level. Avoid the tendency to talk differently than you normally do (child-like talk, too sternly, too slowly or loudly). Even though a rider may appear very challenged physically, they may be very sharp mentally. Don't talk down to a rider or baby talk them. Use your normal tone of voice as if you were talking to any other able bodied person that age.

## **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**

**PEACOCK STIRRUPS** – Safety stirrups are used for some of our riders. The rubber bands face toward the front when saddling and to the outside when the rider is mounted.

**WESTERN STIRRUPS** -Western stirrups may be used as long as they are 2" wide and hard soled shoes or boots are worn with a heel

**SURCINGLE**-The anti cast provides a solid handhold for riders who are riding only with a blanket. It is used with one blanket and positioned over the withers.

**BREASTCOLLAR**-This piece of equipment is sometimes used to keep the saddle in position and from slipping back. An instructor will help you properly fit and place the breast collar.

**BAREBACK PAD**-This pad is used primarily with the anti cast. An additional western type saddle pad should be used beneath the bareback pad for extra protection.

**HALTER**-The halter is used under the bridle for our riders. We keep a halter under the bridle for safety and so that the leader's commands are less likely to interfere with the rider's instruction.

**HANDHOLD**-A leather strap that is attached to the front of the saddle and is used by the rider as an aid for balance

**HELMET**-Necessary to ride. All helmets are ASTM approved.

**MOUNTING RAMP**-Used by wheelchair riders and/or other riders to get to a level where the transfer from the chair to the saddle is much easier. Riders unable to climb stairs also use the ramp.

**MOUNTING BLOCK**-Used by riders that are able to climb stairs. The block puts a rider at a level that is much easier to put their foot in the stirrup for mounting.

**SAFETY KNOT**-Horses must be tied to the wall with a safety knot. Please check with staff or a Volunteer Captain if you need assistance.

**GAIT BELT**-This is a wide belt worn around the rider's waist. The side walkers can help the rider maintain balance by supporting at the waist and/or lower back.

**PILLOW**-Usually a "u" shaped pillow that is used to help the rider maintain a certain position on the horse. There are various sizes.

**RAINBOW REINS**-Multi colored reins that our riders use to assist them in learning where to hold the reins and how tight to hold the reins

**RUBBER BANDS**-Large rubber bands that are used to sometimes band a rider's foot into the stirrup. They easily release if the rider must be pulled off for any reason.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES PLAN 1 (Major Injury)**

- The instructor appoints someone to:
  - Telephone the emergency number and read directions to the center using Emergency Info by phone
  - Remain at the barn area entrance to direct emergency vehicle
  - Get the Rider/Volunteer's Emergency Medical Release form from the Medical Authorization Notebook located in the office
- The instructor will appoint a volunteer to:
  - Go to the road and wait for the emergency vehicle to arrive
  - Stop the driver and have lights and sirens turned off so the horses will not be frightened
  - Tell the driver where the accident is and how to get there
- Instructor will decide who will remain with the grounded rider and who will take the class to safest confined area away from the accident
- The class will continue in an orderly manner or return to barn

## **PLAN 2 (Minor Injury)**

- A First Aid kit is located in the hallway by the restroom and another is located in the office. Each kit contains the following items:
  - Antiseptic spray Antiseptic ointment
  - Band Aids Finger tip bandages
  - Eye and skin neutralizer Instant ice packs
  - Scissors Hydrogen peroxide
  - Alcohol swabs Gauze bandages
  - Non-stick sterile pads
  - Triangular bandages
  - Caladryl
  - Aloe Vera Gel
  - Sterile multi-trauma compresses
  - Disposable emergency blanket Compress dressing

***PLEASE REPORT ANY SHORTAGES IN THE FIRST AID KIT TO THE STAFF***



# **RISK MANAGEMENT**

## **NATURAL HAZARDS SPECIFIC TO SITE**

1. Ants – Periodically apply granules to mounds in the pasture or in the feed room as needed
2. Mice – Barn cats monitor the feed room and barn during the evening hours. Mice bait is put in the attic to prevent infestation. Report any problems to the Staff
3. Flies – Fly spray is mixed as needed and always available to spray on horses at grooming
4. Snakes – Occasional sighting. Dog, cat and roadrunner population help dispose of snakes in the area. Report sightings to Staff and they will dispose of any in the barn area.
5. Poisonous Plants – Staff keeps watchful eye in the pasture and removes bothersome or poisonous plants (stinging nettle, poison ivy, poison oak, etc). If you come in contact with any of the above, wash and get help.
6. Wasps/Bees – During warmer months, wasp and bee nests are sprayed to destroy eggs. Wasp/bee spray is kept in feed room and office. Please report sightings of nests to Staff.
7. Wild animals – Wild animals are occasionally sighted or heard during the night (coyotes, skunks, etc). There have been no problems with coyotes or other wildlife attacking horses in the pasture. If a wild animal is observed, please inform the Staff.
8. Trees/branches down – Volunteers and staff have periodic work days to fell dead trees and branches that are susceptible to high winds and dispose of them.

## **MAN-MADE HAZARDS SPECIFIC TO SITE**

1. Fencing – Fencing is maintained by the staff and crew hired by Stars and Strides.
2. Roads through center – Roads are graded and ruts filled in by volunteers and staff of both Stars and Strides.
3. Preparing and maintaining arena- sand is watered as needed and disked afterwards or as needed by Stars and Strides staff.

## **OPERATION OF FACILITIES AND/OR EQUIPMENT**

1. Tractor and other Farm Equipment – Stars and Strides staff and Miller Ranch are responsible for maintaining farm equipment, and only authorized people are allowed to drive the farm equipment
2. Tack – Staff is responsible for periodic tack checks, usually between each semester. If you observe any broken or worn tack please bring it to the attention of the staff. Cleaning of tack is done at least quarterly or as needed.
3. Loss of electricity – Flashlights are located in main aisle. They are plugged in to plugs and if electricity goes out, they are easily visible as they have a small light on them.
4. Loss of water – If the water company was contacted and there was to be a prolonged delay in repairing water line, stock can be watered at the tank located on the property.

## **DISASTERS**

1. Fire – (1) Call 911 for Fire Department. Look for signs at nearest phone, and give directions and address posted next to the phone, (2) Fire exits are marked; in the event of fire inside the facility, go to the nearest marked exit (4) Everyone is to meet at the arena located on the north side of the barn for head count – dismount therapy riders (sit

- or stand in sand) and take release the horses. (5) Assign a person to man the gate to the facility to assist fire trucks and to ask them to turn off their sirens to avoid frightening the horses (6) Staff may approach barn to let loose any stalled horses, and if possible, halter and lead them to pasture.
2. Flood – (1) Move all horses to upper ground (arena), or arrange transport to somewhere else (2) Call and cancel classes. If a flash flood occurs during class time (1) if any riders are mounted, remove the rider and take to higher ground (inside barn) and volunteers and other personnel are to accompany riders (2) if there is no imminent danger remove tack and leave horses in barn.
  3. Tornado – Preferred shelter is in Miller Ranch House. (1) if classes are in session – remove riders from horses and walk/carry to one of the shelter rooms (2) rider families, volunteers and staff are to accompany riders (3)volunteers are to leave horses (still tacked) outdoors, (4) instructors will take bridle off and, if time, the rest of the tack. (4) Afterwards, staff will check for loose electric lines before people leave shelter area.
  4. Hurricane – Usually, there are no hurricane effects this far North, we have adequate time to prepare (1) prepare for shortages of potable water or feed for the horses (2) if high winds or storms are forecast, cancel classes (3) Tie down all loose material that may harm either people or horses
  5. Earthquake – If classes are in session (1) remove mounted riders from horse and walk/carry them to arena for head count (2) Volunteers, families and other personnel are to accompany riders (3) Staff may untack horses and put them to pasture (4) Send a volunteer to close the main gate to avoid horses having access to street.

## **HAZARDS SPECIFIC TO USE OF EQUINES**

- Human First Aid Kit - Clearly marked with cross in foyer between Bathroom and Store Room. Use as necessary for bites, scratches, etc. Ice packs are in freezer of refrigerator in Volunteer room – use as needed for bites or foot getting stepped on. Fill out Incident Report.
- Horse First Aid Kit – Red box with cross on it behind Ranch Manager’s desk in office. If a horse is injured (cut, laceration or bite from another horse), inform instructors or Ranch Manager so that they can treat the wound or call the vet. That horse may need to be removed from the Daily Schedule for that day and replaced with another – inform other instructors.
- Rider Coming off Horse – Volunteers and staff should be aware of correct Emergency Medical Procedures. If necessary, the instructor will ask someone to call 911. The sign near the phone is clearly marked with address and directions to center along with: a. phone numbers for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Phone number of veterinarian
- Phone numbers of any other pertinent emergency response people
- Loose horses – Staff and/or volunteers maintain control of any riders that are mounted during a class. Allow other staff or volunteers not being used in class to corner and catch the horse. If possible, radio or send someone to alert other staff to help catch the horse.

## **LOSS OF ELECTRICITY OR WATER**

1. If the electricity goes off during evening classes, there are small flashlights along the aisle by the stalls to use as guides to find your way to the office or out of the arena. Larger flashlights are located in the office area.

2. If the water is cut off or if the pipes freeze, water can be carted from the interiors bathrooms to water the livestock.

## **RIDER SELECTION AND DISMISSAL**

### **Guidelines for Admission:**

Some guidelines for accepting riders into the program are:

- Age (riders must be 2 years of age to begin)
- Registrations are received in a timely manner
- Rider has either a physical, mental or emotional disability and the disability is not contraindicated (precautions should be noted and studied)
- There must be staff and volunteers adequate for class
- An appropriate horse must be available
- Appropriate tack/equipment/helmet must be available
- Current paperwork on each rider and a current physician signed medical form

### **Conduct for dismissal or reprimand**

Some reasons for dismissal from the program or dismissal for behavior modifications may be:

- Unruly behavior (flailing arms, hitting, cursing, talking back, etc)
- Abusive behavior to personnel (hitting, biting, spitting, etc.)
- Abusive behavior to horse (hitting, pulling hair, pinching, kicking, etc) which could cause the horse to react in such a way that could cause bodily harm to the rider or volunteers
- Inappropriate behavior or contact (if the rider is constantly trying to touch volunteers or staff inappropriately)
- Disruptive to class (constantly screaming or crying and a private class is not available)
- Frequent absence or tardiness (Therapeutic Riding is not effective if not done consistently, and if a rider is more than 15 minutes late 2 or more times per session, it holds up the class and affects the other rider's class time. Also, volunteers come in to help, and the rider does not show)
- When the benefit of therapeutic riding does not outweigh the risk
- When physical limitations of the rider outweigh the strength of the volunteer force, etc.

### **Grievance Process**

- If the Program Director receives a written grievance due to unruly behavior or abusive behavior on one of the therapeutic riders at Stars and Strides (verified and witnessed by staff), the Program Director will then:
  - Give a verbal warning to the rider and their family, including suggestions for specific steps for improvement. The written grievance will be placed in the riders file
  - If the issue is not resolved, the Program Director will issue a written warning to the rider and their family, including additional steps for corrective measures. A copy of the warning should be placed in the riders file.
  - If verbal and written warnings fail to correct the issues, the rider may be dismissed.
  - Stars and Strides Stables reserves the right to dismiss a rider without verbal or written warnings if it is deemed appropriate.

## How to deal with unruly behavior

- The instructor will be responsible for deciding how unruly conduct will be addressed in their class, and the instructor may call additional staff for assistance if the rider is showing violent behavior if dismounting is necessary. The following methods may be used:
  - Timeouts
  - Remove rider from horse and/or class
  - Place rider in private class
  - Remove rider from class until unruly behavior is modified (support may be asked of guardians or staff)
  - Grievance Process: If a rider receives a written grievance and is given a verbal and written warning without improvement, they may be dismissed from program.

The Program Director would be responsible for evaluating these reports and making the decision to dismiss a rider. A letter would be sent to the rider and their family to explain the dismissal and/or reasons why the rider can no longer ride. At times, the behavior can be addressed at home or school and the rider may be able to return to therapeutic riding classes after a specified period of time.

## **VOLUNTEER, PERSONNEL AND GUEST DISMISSAL**

### **Conduct for Dismissal**

Some of the reasons people may be dismissed from a therapeutic riding program are: Inappropriate behavior (intoxication, inappropriate touching of riders or other volunteers, loud and unruly behavior, abusive behavior to rider, horses or other volunteers, or lack of knowledge of horses which could result in bodily injury, etc).

In the event of misconduct by a person at Stars and Strides, the following process will be followed by the Program Director in order to provide the opportunity for corrective action:

- a. a verbal warning will be given to the person, including specific steps for improvement. If the person is a volunteer, documentation of the warning will be placed in the volunteers file
- b. if the situation does not improve, a written warning will be given to the person, including additional steps for corrective measures. If a volunteer, a copy of the warning will again be placed in the volunteers file.
- c. If verbal or written warnings fail to correct performance, the person will be dismissed from premises
- d. Stars and Strides reserves the right to discharge a person without verbal or written warnings if it is deemed appropriate given the serious nature of the violation.

### **Guest Dismissal**

If a guest's behavior is disruptive, loud, inconsiderate or distracting, or deemed to be causing a safety issue for classes, the following process will be followed by the Program Director:

- a. a verbal warning will be given to the guest asking to refrain from such behavior
- b. if the conduct continues, the guest will be asked to leave the premises
- c. if the guest refuses to leave the premises, the Parker County Sheriff's Office will be called to assist in removing the guest from the premises at 817-594-8845.

## **POLICY ON ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Although we do not anticipate problems with abuse or neglect of our riders, agencies that fund our riders are requiring that our staff and volunteers be trained and demonstrate competency on the safe management of verbal and physical abuse or neglect. For that reason, we are including the following information on the various forms (or classes) of abuse and neglect and the resulting disciplinary action.

## **CLASS I**

Any act of failure to act done knowingly, recklessly, or intentionally, including incitement to act, which caused or may have caused serious injury to a rider or volunteer. Without regard to injury, any sexual activity between a volunteer, employee or an affiliate/agent and a client will result in immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

## **CLASS II**

Any act or failure to act done knowingly, recklessly, or intentionally, including incitement to act, which caused or may have caused non-serious physical injury to a rider or volunteer will result in a review and first warning. A second warning will result in dismissal.

## **CLASS III**

The use of verbal or other communication to curse, vilify, or degrade a rider, or threaten a rider with physical or emotional harm, or any act, which vilifies or degrades a rider, or threatens a rider with physical or emotional harm, will result in dismissal.

## **NEGLECT**

Any negligence which caused or may have caused physical or emotional injury to a rider, including failure to carry out a rider's program/treatment plan, or failure to provide a safe environment will result in a review and further training.

It is the responsibility of each volunteer to report any concern, suspicion or incident of rider abuse or neglect to a class instructor or staff member. If you suspect rider abuse or neglect, stay calm. Let the person who is committing the act know that you are present. Usually, the presence of another volunteer will help the volunteer regain control. If you are in a class, let the class instructor know of the problem. If you are not in a class, ensure the rider is no longer in danger of harm and see that he/she receives needed attention. You are then required to report the incident to a class instructor or staff member so that they may take the appropriate steps to correct the incident.

Any incident of abuse can result in disciplinary action and/or criminal charges.

## GLOSSARY OF PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter at Stars and Strides Stables and the beneficial outcome equine assisted activities can have. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of specific disabilities. Rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how equine assisted activities can be beneficial.

### Arthritis

Inflammatory disease of the joints

- **Types:**
  - Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid
- **Characteristics:**
  - Pain; lack of mobility; deformity; loss of strength
- **Benefits:** Gentle rhythmic movement to promote joint mobility and relieve pain

### Autism

A self-centered mental state from which reality tends to be excluded

- **Characteristics:** Unresponsiveness to the presence of others; withdrawal from physical contact; severely delayed and disordered language; self-stimulating behaviors; unusual or special fears; insensitivity to pain; unawareness of real dangers; hyperactive ; passive; unusual behaviors such as smelling/tasting/licking/mouthing all objects; ritualistic behaviors; developmentally delayed unusual response to sounds; clumsiness; social withdrawal; resistance to change.
- **Benefits:** Interaction in a group setting stimulates interest away from self and toward others and the horses. Postural and verbal stimulation

### Cerebral Palsy

Brain damage occurring before, at, or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.

#### Types and Characteristics:

- **Spastic** – hypertonicity with hyperactive stretch reflexes, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes.
- **Athetoid** – extensor muscle tension, worm-like movements, abnormal posturing and slow and deliberate speech
- **Ataxic** – poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements and are often described as having a “rag doll” appearance
  - **Benefits:** Normalization of tone, stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination
  - **Associated problems:** Seizures, hearing defects, visual defects; general sensory impairment; perceptual problems, communication problems; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; learning disabilities.

### Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA)

Hemorrhage in brain, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment

- **Characteristics:** Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of body. May impair mentation, speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength
- **Benefits:** Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech and socialization



### **Developmental Disabilities (DD)**

A general term applied to children functioning two or more years below grade level.

- **Characteristics:** Varied, but can include slow physical, motor and social development
- **Benefits:** Provides arena for success, opportunity for sport and recreation, stimulates body awareness.

**Down Syndrome** Condition in which a person born with an extra chromosome, resulting in mental retardation and developmental delay

- **Characteristics:** Broad flat face, slanted eyes, neck and hands are often broad and short. Usually hypotonic, have hypermobile joints and tend to be short and slightly overweight. Prone to respiratory infections
- **Benefits:** Riding improves expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, muscle tone and coordination

### **Emotional Disabilities**

A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies

- **Characteristics:** Trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia or schizophrenia may be exhibited
- **Benefits:** Increases feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provides appropriate social outlet.

### **Epilepsy**

Abnormal electrical activity of the brain marked by seizures with altered consciousness

Types and Characteristics:

- **Petit Mal** – Brief loss of Consciousness with loss of postural tone. May have jerky movements, blank expression
- **Grand Mal** – Loss of consciousness and postural tone. Usually preceded by an aura (Note: an active seizure disorder is a contraindication for horseback riding).

### **Hearing Impairment**

Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound

- **Characteristics:** Communication difficulties - may use lip reading, finger spelling (manual alphabet) or sign language. Often “phase out” and have attention deficits
- **Benefits:** Stimulates self-confidence, balance, posture and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interactions

### **Learning Disabilities (LD)**

Catch-all phrase for individuals who have problems processing sequencing and problem solving, but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills

- **Characteristics:** Short attention span, easily frustrated, immature
- **Benefits:** Effects depend upon the particular disorder. Stimulates attention span, group skills, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination

### **Mental Retardation (MR)**

Lack of ability to learn and perform within normal and acceptable levels. Degree of retardation is referred to as educable, trainable, severe or profoundly retarded.

- **Characteristics:** Developmentally delayed in all areas. Short attention span

- **Benefits:** Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. Provides a structured learning environment

### **Multiple Sclerosis (MS)**

Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation

- **Characteristics:** Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Fatigues easily. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity
- **Benefits:** Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for emotional therapy.
- **Associated problems:** Visual impairment, emotional ability, and impaired bowel and bladder function

### **Muscular Dystrophy (MD)**

Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males.

- **Characteristics:** Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes
- **Benefits:** Provides opportunity for group activity, may slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, and allows movement free of assistive devices
- **Associated Problems:** Lordosis, respiratory infection

### **Polio**

Infectious virus disease

- **Characteristics:** Flaccid paralysis, atrophy of skeletal muscle, often with deformity
- **Benefits:** Strengthens non-paralyzed muscles, stimulates posture

### **Scoliosis**

Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S curve with rotary component

- **Characteristics:** Postural asymmetry. May wear scoliosis jacket or have had stabilization surgery
- **Benefits:** Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles (Note: severe scoliosis is a contraindication for therapeutic riding).

### **Spina Bifida**

Congenital failure of vertebral arch closure with resultant damage to spinal cord

- **Characteristics:** Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss
- **Problems:** Infection, lordosis, scoliosis, and hip dislocations
- **Benefits:** Stimulates posture and balance, improves muscle strength and self-image.
- **Associated problems:** Hydrocephalus, incontinence, urinary tract infections, lordosis, scoliosis, and hip dislocations

### **Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)**

Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function

- **Characteristics:** Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores

- **Benefits:** Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, is an option for sports participation and recreation

### **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**

Accidental injury to the head resulting in intra-cranial bleeding with death of brain cells

- **Characteristics:** Gross and fine motor skills deficits. Often have impaired memory, speech, balance and/or vision. May have psychological effects
- **Benefits:** Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills

### **Visual Impairment**

Moderate to total loss of sight

- **Characteristics:** Insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity, fearfulness and developmental delay
- **Benefits:** Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture and coordination. Provides social outlet, structured risk-taking and freedom of movement

# Stars and Strides Staff Directory

**Program Director:** Teresa Miller  
228 Sandpiper Drive  
Weatherford, Texas 76088  
817-929-0020 (cell)  
817-596-5605 (home)  
Email: [teresa@starsandstrides.org](mailto:teresa@starsandstrides.org)