

Participant Handbook



Full Circle Farm Therapeutic Horsemanship

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Welcome to Full Circle Farm Therapeutic Horsemanship!

We are pleased to offer this program and hope it will prove to be a beneficial and rewarding experience.

An Introduction to Therapeutic Horsemanship

Therapeutic horseback riding began in Europe over 60 years ago. It has grown from the intuitive knowledge of a few dedicated equestrians to a successful treatment method recognized and supported by medical, psychiatric, and social service professionals. Therapeutic riding gained worldwide attention during the 1952 Olympic Games in Finland when Lis Hartel, stricken with polio and wheelchair bound, won the silver medal in dressage. Her victory was the catalyst for the formation of therapeutic riding centers throughout Europe, particularly Great Britain. The first therapeutic riding center in the United States began in 1969.

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) was established in 1969. PATH is an investigative, advisory, training and regulatory organization which helps promote safety by setting standards for well-run horse related programs for disabled persons. There are now hundreds of PATH Intl. affiliated centers and thousands of people involved in Equine Assisted Services (EAS)

These amazing, sensitive and compassionate animals, our horses, are our highly valued and appreciated equine partners. They contribute to the Physical, Social and/or Cognitive benefits of Therapeutic Horsemanship and EAS.

Their gentle rhythmical movements stimulate the muscles of the Rider that would be used in walking, making riding especially beneficial for non-ambulatory individuals. Riding has the potential to improve the Participant's balance, posture, coordination, strength, flexibility and mobility. It stimulates the respiratory system benefitting speech and vocalization.

As the Participant acquires basic equestrian skills, there is sense of accomplishment along with increased confidence, patience, trust, and self-esteem. Cognitive advantages include improved ability to focus and follow simple and multitask directions. Participants' communication skills improve through interaction with the Instructor, Volunteers and horse.

The Instructor sets goals for each Participant for each lesson, recording observations and results, which are then utilized in preparation for the next lesson to assure progress for our Participants. Our lessons may include both mounted and unmounted activities. Participants often groom and help prepare their horse to ride. Games are utilized to develop skills and attain various benefits for the Participant. Riders learn to guide and control the horse through patterns, over obstacles and at various gaits.

The horsemanship skills that are developed provide them with the opportunity to increase physical strength and stamina, improve balance and coordination, and improve general health. This is also an opportunity, while focusing on achieving the physical, social, and cognitive benefits, to simply put some fun, excitement and enjoyment into their lives. Many find this to be the highlight of their week.

FCFTH Statement of participant eligibility or discontinuance – FCFTH offers services to individuals with special needs. Prior to participation, an assessment is conducted by a certified Equine Assisted Services (EAS) instructor. Eligibility for participation in programs is based on an individual's ability to participate meaningfully and safely, provided the necessary resources are available. These include an instructor, volunteers, and a class available that meets an individual's needs.

FCFTH adheres to precautions and contraindications as recommended by the PATH medical committee, as well as professional standards. Due to the nature of EAS, there are individuals for whom FCFTH programs are deemed inappropriate during the evaluation process, not accepted for enrollment, or able to continue in programs. This determination is made on the basis of physical, behavioral, and other limitations. Individuals accepted into FCFTH programs are required to follow FCFTH rules and procedures and take part in periodic reviews. During these reviews, or as a result of unusual circumstances during a program session, the FCFTH staff may find that continuance in the program for a given individual is inappropriate. For this reason, FCFTH reserves the right to discontinue participation of an individual in its programs when it is deemed that discontinuance is in the best interest of the individual concerned.

Fee Schedule

1 hour group lesson - \$50
½ hour private lesson - \$50

Payment is due at the time of the lesson. If you need help with these classes please ask for a scholarship application. (Ex: Prepayment of 10 lessons is \$500.00)

If for any reason you are unable to continue lessons and you have paid for a block of four, eight or ten lessons we will help you get in as many as you can to use the pre-payment up. We are open to you or your child riding twice or more a week. If you know that you are here for a short period of time, please pay by the lesson or however many weeks you are available to avoid any lessons left over. If you or your child are too ill to participate, please let us know and you can finish using the pre-payment when you return.

Policies and Procedures

Attire and footwear – All participants must wear an ASTM/SEI approved helmet with chin strap secured while with, around, or on horses. Full Circle Farm Therapeutic Horsemanship (FCFTH) provides these helmets. FCFTH saddles are equipped with safety stirrups and it is suggested that participants wear a sturdy hard soled shoe or boot with a heel.

Weight limit – For the safety of our participants, volunteers, and horses, our weight limit is 180 pounds.

Participant records – Participants are required to update their paperwork each calendar year by January 15. This is required in order to maintain standards set by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International (PATH). Participants are not allowed to ride or engage with horses without the required paperwork.

Change of health or medication – Participants must inform FCFTH in writing of any changes in health status, conditions, and medications. This includes changes in weight, medications and dosages, revised dosages, medical interventions and surgeries.

Confidentiality – Any information pertaining to the participants at FCFTH must be held in strict confidentiality. It is critical that we respect each individual.

New Hampshire Statute - NH law provides that an equine activity sponsor, an equine professional, or any other person engaged in an equine activity, shall not be liable for an injury or the death of a Participant resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities.

Non-Discrimination

Full Circle Farm Therapeutic Horsemanship does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, the appointment to and termination from its Board of Directors, hiring and firing of staff or contractors, selection of volunteers, selection of vendors, and providing of services.

Conflict resolution – Problems should be handled immediately, confidentially, and directly between the parties involved and FCFTH staff. Parents and caregivers who feel that their concerns are not being addressed may contact the Program Director.

Safety and conduct – Working with horses is a high-risk activity, so the following rules must be adhered to:

- Participants are required to use gentle hands and feet while near or on any horse.
- Running, yelling, abusive or aggressive actions are not allowed.
- Never walk behind a horse, under the horse's body or neck.
- Hand feeding the horses is not allowed.
- Photography or videos are not allowed without specific permission.
- Please do not tap on the windows of the viewing room.
- Children must be supervised at all times.
- Parents may view lessons from the viewing room or in the observation area in the arena. If lessons are outside, parents or caregivers may observe outside the fence.
- No pets allowed on the grounds.
- Smoking or alcohol is not allowed on the grounds.
- Visitors wishing to tour the grounds or barn must be escorted by a staff member.
- As you arrive or leave, please drive slowly for the safety of all.
- Please respect any posted 'Authorized Personnel' signs.
- Please respect 10 mile an hour posted speed limit signs while driving on the property for your safety as well as all pedestrians, dogs and horses.

Equine code of ethics – FCFTH will support EAS while providing the horses in its care with the highest ethical consideration. Horses working in programs at FCFTH are selected by professional staff. Once a horse is in residence at FCFTH it becomes a reflection of the program. The care of each horse is given with professional expertise and management. The FCFTH staff considers the comfort and well-being of each rider and horse their highest priority.

Horses are scheduled to work in a manner consistent with their physical ability. The needs of each horse are met with regard to workload, feeding and general care. Prior to each use, horses are inspected for injury, illness or discomfort. The horses are not asked to work when uncomfortable or unfit. Horses are limited to no more than 3 rides a day but we try to stay at 2 rides a day for their mental and physical wellbeing.

Cancellation Policy – Full Circle Farm Therapeutic Horsemanship (FCFTH) expects consistent attendance by all participants. If you need to cancel a therapeutic session, and we fully recognize that in some cases this may be unavoidable, you are requested to notify FCFTH as soon as possible, so that our volunteers, instructors, and horses are not prepared and waiting needlessly.

Full payment will be due for sessions cancelled without appropriate notice.

FCFTH maintains a waitlist for EAS lessons. If a participant cancels more than once a month without proper notice their lesson time/slot could be forfeited.

This policy is necessary and intended to recognize the considerable time, resources, scheduling and volunteer efforts that are devoted to these sessions and the preparations for them.

Make-ups will be available if FCFTH cancels for weather or sickness of the instructor.

Holiday Schedule:

Lessons are not conducted on the following holidays:

New Year's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving
Christmas

If you need to contact us, you can call Full Circle Farm at 603-863-2952; e-mail us at info@fcftherapeutic.org.