

Safety Is Our Number One Priority.



Franklin County 4-H Therapeutic Riding Center
Handbook

A Must Read For a Successful Farm Experience!

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Therapeutic Riding Center

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Our Mission

To provide recreation and therapy through horsemanship to persons with special needs.

How did we begin and who are we today?

A committee of volunteers from the Franklin County Easter Seals and Penn State Cooperative Extension of Franklin County established the Franklin County 4-H Therapeutic Riding Center in 1980. Originally they called the program, *Horsemanship for the Handicapped*. The committee explored several options and finally requested support from the Franklin County Commissioners who leased the group land on the county owned Farm. Funds were raised to construct a stable and ring in 1981, and the facility opened in 1982 with three horses and five riders.

Currently we have three paid staff members, (1 full and 2 part-time) and over 70 volunteers who make this therapeutic horsemanship program possible for the special needs community of our county. The Franklin County 4-H Therapeutic Riding Center is a member agency of Franklin County United Way. It is supported by tax-deductible contributions, fundraising events and client fees.

Since its inception, the facility has grown and improvements were made, but we still are unable to meet the ever-growing demand. We do have a waiting list, but we continue to aspire to grow so that we can service every person who wishes to participate and meets the criteria to join. Today we have 10 horses, 3 arenas, and programs to meet the special needs of autism (ages 3 to 25), our general therapeutic riding program and our carriage driving program. We are vibrant, resourceful and look toward the future as we hold onto the essence of what makes this place welcoming, safe, and therapeutic.

Our Vision for the Future

Our goal is to expand our services to the special needs population of Franklin County who want and qualify to experience this special therapy. To do so, we continue to work towards developing and growing our staff, volunteers and facilities to support our expansion while always maintaining financial stability.

The Council & Committees

The Council of Franklin County 4-H Therapeutic Riding Center is composed of the director, instructors, volunteers, parents/participants and interested members from the community. The Council is supported by the following committees:

Operations Committee

Responsible for the day-to-day operations of the stable and riding program.

Finance Committee

Responsible for securing funds necessary for the operations of the program.

Maintenance Committee

Responsible for the maintenance and repair of the facility including buildings, arenas and pastures.

Volunteer Committee

Responsible for volunteer recruitment and other issues pertaining to volunteers, such as incentives and training.

Parent/Participant Committee

Responsible for providing food at shows, organizing social events, supporting fund raising efforts and providing input to the Operations Committee concerning the wants and needs of the participants.

Publicity Committee

To promote the Farm and the Events held to raise money and awareness.

To join our team of volunteers

All committees are open to participants, parents and community members. If you are interested in joining our team of volunteers please inquire. We always welcome more working hands.

The Volunteer Coordinator will help you complete the paperwork, training and/or find the committee that fits your talent and interest.

Attendance

Regular attendance is critical for the participant to receive the benefits of equine facilitated activities. Consistency allows the development of relationships between the participant, the volunteers, the instructor and the horse. It will also assure that tasks can be repeated and skills built versus a continual re-introduction to the program.

Program Fees

We understand most participants will have paid their fees before starting the program. However, if you have arranged a payment schedule with the Director, we will expect payment by the dates specified or your lessons may be suspended. Those who are attending on a full or partial scholarship may have other requirements, which will be outlined when the financial situation is reviewed. Again failure to keep the agreement may cause a suspension of lessons. Please keep us informed of your situation because we want this experience to be successful for all involved.

Program Information and Updates

We are a team -- families, volunteers, and staff -- in order to keep every one informed and updated, we will post information on the Bulletin Board located outside of the tack room as well as on our website and Facebook page. We will list dates of the Horse Shows, share important events, development of new programs, fundraisers and our current needs. We will also place a copy of our latest newsletter on the Board for your review. We hope you will take part and help us keep it updated. If you have something that should be added, please let the Instructor or Barn Manager know, and they will give the information to the Director. Moreover, if you have suggestions to improve our program, there will be a box soliciting your thoughts, suggestions, concerns and hopefully heartwarming stories.

Program Attendance & Program Policies

Because we must schedule many volunteers for our activities, it is important that the instructor knows when a participant will be absent. The following policies have been accepted by the Operations Committee:

Participants should **arrive 15 minutes before** their lesson time.

- ✓ Participants should **arrive 15 minutes before** their lesson time.
- ✓ The participant must give the instructor **at least 24 hours (1 week if possible)** notice that he/she will be absent. Last minute emergencies are exempt.
- ✓ Failure to appear without proper notification will result in forfeiture of fee.
- ✓ Two unapproved absences will result in dismissal from the program.
- ✓ Late arrival will result in a shortened or cancelled lesson with no refund.
- ✓ Chronic late arrivals may result in dismissal from the program.
- ✓ There are no refund or make-up lessons available for any reason other than the instructor missing a class. In that instance, every effort will be made by the instructor to make up the class.
- ✓ Unapproved absences and chronic late arrivals will be reviewed by the Operations Committee for recommendation.

Safety is Number One Priority!

Safety is always the first concern with equine activities. Because the horse is a living animal and not a machine, there is always a degree of unpredictability. **No matter how well trained, the horse may react to unusual or sudden circumstances. You assume the risk of equine activities pursuant to Pennsylvania Law.**

Safety – Horse and Human!

The safety and welfare of our horses is crucial. Thus we must set limits on the weight carried and the amount of work each horse is expected to do based on the horse's age and physical ability.

Safety during the lesson is the responsibility of not only the instructors, volunteers and participants but also the spectators. **Guidelines for conduct and attire in and around the barn are as follows:**

- ✓ Do not wear sandals or open toed/heeled shoes when in the barn, mounting area or riding arenas.
- ✓ Nonparticipating children should be provided with quiet activities while lessons are in progress. Running, especially up and down mounting ramps is not allowed.
- ✓ Be aware of horses in the arenas and be sure the horse can see you when walking near the fence. Unexpected noises or movement can startle the horse.

Anyone riding or driving on the FCTRC facility is required to wear an **ASTM-SEI approved helmet**. Guidelines for proper fit, use and care of helmets are available at the barn.

Guidelines for safe riding attire:

- ✓ Riding boots are ideal but not required. High-top work boots with a heel are acceptable.
- ✓ Riding breeches are ideal but not required. Riders should wear form-fitting long pants made of non-slippery material.
- ✓ Shirts should be well fitting with tails tucked in or tight. Do not wear jackets or sweatshirts with strings.
- ✓ Do not wear loose or dangly jewelry.
- ✓ Do not chew gum.

A limited supply of used riding breeches and boots is available at the barn. Donations of riding clothes are accepted.

Safety of the Facilities and Inclement Weather

For the health of the workers, participants and spectators the Buildings on the FCTRC facility are smoke free. Moreover, the Barn and the pastures are highly flammable; no fire of any kind is tolerated

The following situations are safety concerns and may cause last minute cancellation of lessons:

- ✓ Threatening weather
- ✓ Lack of volunteers to perform duties for safety of the participant
- ✓ Lack of appropriate horses available for the session.

Horse Shows

Twice a year, we host a Horse Show where the students will perform the skills they have learned. At the end of their competition ride, they will receive a score and all participants will receive a ribbon.

The Participant, Parent or Caregiver will be told when the show will be held and given a number to call the night before the event to know when to arrive at the barn. We always hope that all riders will participate. We also ask for the Participant, Parent or Caregiver to help our organizer and/or the Participant/Family Committee bring food, drinks and whatever else is needed to make the event successful.

Graduation

When the participant has met all the goals established for his/her treatment or it is apparent he/she is no longer in need of our services at FCTRC, the operations committee will review the file. If they concur with the instructor, they will set up a date for graduation and provide via the mail or in person the individual with a graduation certificate.

Grievance Process

Our goal is to always facilitate communication. Please tell us what we are doing right, we want to know. However, if you have questions or problems not addressed, we want you to talk to your instructor immediately so we can clear up any questions. If the issue continues to be unaddressed then please contact as soon as possible the Program Director at 717-263-0443 or info@horseridingtherapy.org. We want this to be a good experience for everyone involved!

Non-Discrimination Clause

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.

After reading the Handbook, please sign and date the appropriate section of this page and return it in the packet with the other forms included.

If the participant is over the age of eighteen and not under guardianship

I _____ have read, understand, and will act in accordance with the policies and procedures listed in the Franklin County 4-H Therapeutic Riding Center Handbook.

If I/we have questions, I will take the responsibility to ask the Barn Manager, Program Director or Instructor to resolve my questions.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

If participant is under the age of 18 and/or under guardianship

I _____ have read, understand, and will act in accordance with the policies and procedures listed in the Franklin Country 4-H Therapeutic Riding Center Handbook.

I will also take responsibility that the participant and those members of their care giving team will also abide by the outlined policies and procedures listed in the Franklin County 4-H Therapeutic Riding Center Handbook.

If I/we have questions, I will take the responsibility to ask the Barn Manager, Program Director or Instructor.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Thank you