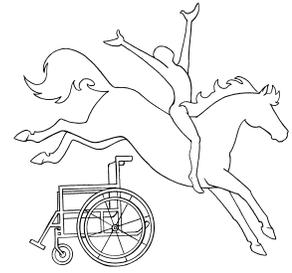


Ride On

Therapeutic Horsemanship



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June 1, 2020

Dear Ride On Volunteers

We wanted to give you a quick update on our reopening and when we expect to be able to welcome our wonderful volunteers back.

The Covid-19 pandemic poses many challenges for our riding program and has led to many, many changes everywhere and at Ride On too. All of our lesson operations ceased on March 12 and only last week, on May 26, did we reopen for a handful of independent riders at one of our locations. This week we will begin to serve another handful of independent riders in Chatsworth. Currently all horse care, grooming, tacking and barn chores are being taken care of by Ride On staff members to ensure safety and wellness for all.

Before the pandemic, Ride On served about 240 individuals with disabilities. Many of them require close assistance which, in the age of social distancing, is simply not safe for rider or volunteers. As we began to craft reopening plans we divided our riders in to six groups, Phase 1 – 6.

At this time we are in Phase 1 and are offering lessons for those students that are completely independent and need no physical assistance from their instructor or volunteers therefore ensuring that we are complying with social distancing requirements. Phase 1 also includes volunteers that were previously enrolled and taking lessons however those volunteers are leaving the facility as soon as their lesson is over.

Below we've laid out all the phases so you can see how we're approaching this. The first three phases involve independent riders – either completely independent or requiring only a few minutes of help and no volunteer assistance. We feel we can begin serving riders through Phase 3 in the coming weeks.

Phases 4, 5 and 6 are much more challenging. All require volunteer assistance and our job is to protect you. The problem is we can't serve these riders without volunteers and we know there will be some risk to volunteers to be within 6 feet for up to an hour. So far, we do not know how to safely resolve this dilemma so we do not have a time frame for starting to serve riders requiring leaders and sidewalkers.

We do feel we can bring back a limited number of volunteers to help with barn chores sometime this month. Even this adds some small risk so we will need to limit the number of volunteers on site at any one time. We will have more who want to volunteer than we will be able to accommodate. This, in turn, raises a fairness issue and we are working on a way to schedule available volunteers in a way that is fair to all. For example, we are looking at using Sign Up Genius – take a look at it.

As we begin to move through the phases we will be directed by facts and figures provided by the CDC and County officials. However therapeutic riding poses a mix of positive and negative risk factors: we are

outside and horseback riding is naturally socially distant (both good) but we require a lot of personal help to keep everything safe (a negative during a pandemic).

We want to keep everyone safe AND we want to welcome back our amazing volunteers. Please be patient as we work through our new COVID-19 policies, safety and sanitizing procedures – we can't wait to welcome you back but we need to be sure we are safe and healthy!

Below is how we have broken down our riders so you get an overview of our approach. Please don't hesitate to contact your instructor or Sara (sara@rideon.or) or Bryan (bryan@rideon.org) with any questions.

Phase I:

Completely independent riders. Meaning they mount and dismount horse alone, can adjust their stirrup length while on the horse by themselves.

Phase II:

Mostly Independent riders. Need hands-on assistance of no more than 5 minutes to mount and dismount, adjust stirrups and tighten girth. No volunteer involvement needed. All parties will wear masks while within 6 feet. Riders may unmask once settled and while riding.

Phase III:

Mostly Independent riders who might require hands-on assistance during lesson for any physical or behavioral considerations. May require instructor intervention for safety. All parties will wear masks while within 6 feet. Riders may unmask once settled and while riding.

Phase IV:

Riders who need a volunteer to lead the horse for the duration of their lesson. Can also apply to riders who use a "spotter"

Phase V:

Riders who need at least a two person assist. This means a leader for the horse and one sidewalker (or instructor) for safety.

Phase VI:

Riders who require maximum assistance. This means a leader and two sidewalkers (one can be the instructor). *Hippotherapy* falls into Phase VI. Patients will require a horse handler, sidewalker and therapist to conduct each session.