

STRENGTHENING BONDS: HELPING VOLUNTEERS BUILD CONFIDENCE



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INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.NAME
- 2.CENTER/ORGANIZATION
- 3.POSITION
- 4.FUN FACT



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QUICK POLL

HOW MANY OF YOU ALREADY RUN A FORMAL
GROUND BASED TRAINING?
(OUTSIDE OF YOUR VOLUNTEER TRAINING)



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REINS OF LIFE, INC.

**TWO
LOCATIONS**



PROGRAMS

- Therapeutic Riding
- Therapeutic Driving
- Interactive Vaulting
- Ground Lessons
- ROL Veterans Team
- K-12 School Programs
- Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy
- Equine Encounters
- Nuzzles & Snuggles
- Mini-horse Visits



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WHAT IS UNMOUNTED EQUINE SCHOOLING?

A hands-on, educational class designed specifically for our volunteers.

This unique program focuses on developing essential horsemanship skills in a calm, rider-free environment. Whether participants are brand new to horses or looking to sharpen their existing abilities, this class provides the perfect setting to grow.

All volunteers are welcome to come as many times as they want!



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WHAT IS UNMOUNTED EQUINE SCHOOLING? CONT.

During these one hour lessons, we focus on:

- Building trust
- Leading techniques
- Understanding Equine Body Language
- Terminology and expectations
- Side walking practice
- And more!



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STEP 1: GET TO KNOW YOUR VOLUNTEERS!

- Builds trust and rapport (helps to "break the ice")
- Helps to understand their abilities and strengths (each lesson is tailored to the attendees)
- Encourages discussion and collaboration

Some questions to ask...

1. What is your comfort levels with horses?
2. What kind of lessons have you volunteered in so far?
3. What is something that you want to practice or learn?

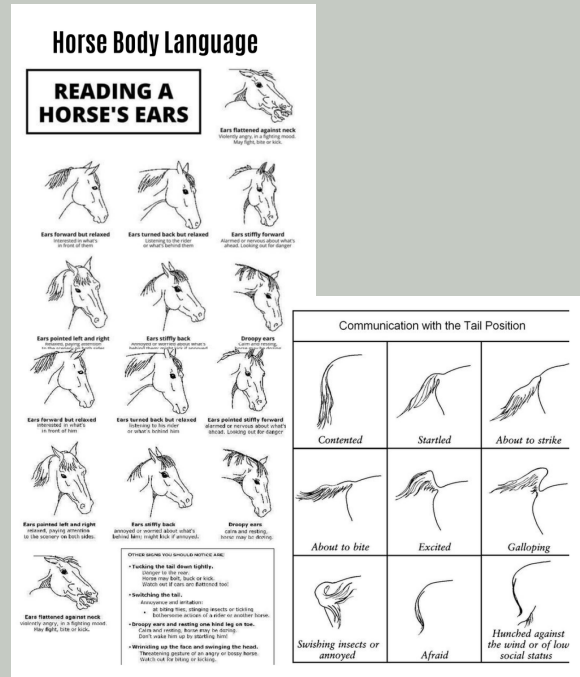


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UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOR AND BODY LANGUAGE

- Understanding how horses communicate helps humans understand the "why" for some behaviors.
- Learning this language helps alleviate some of the anxiety for new volunteers.
- Horse Temperaments (Green, Yellow, Red)
- Horses All have Different Personalities - Get to know them!

It's helpful to provide a visual (handout, poster, etc.)



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WHAT DOES AN UNMOUNTED EQUINE SCHOOLING LESSON LOOK LIKE?

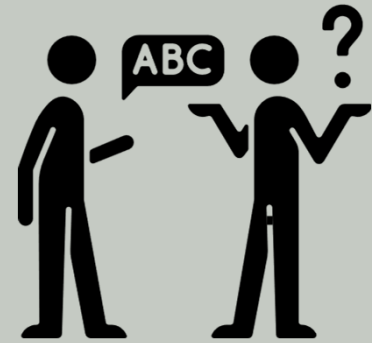
1. Catching/ haltering progression
2. Horse glasses - understanding the basics of a horse's vision
3. Herd observation - Lets Read Our Horses
4. How to pick horses
5. Grooming/brushing
6. Natural horsemanship skills



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KEY POINTS TO DISCUSS DURING A LESSON

1. Safety First - For Humans and Horses
2. Horses Respect Leadership
3. Mixed Signals Create Confusion
4. Build Trust Through Clarity
5. Promote a Positive Learning Environment
6. Set the Horse Up for Success with all Handlers
7. Respect the Horses' Intelligence



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TECHNIQUES TO TEACH

1. Breathwork for walk on/whoa
2. Body position
3. When and how to apply pressure
4. Step, Step
5. Eye gaze
6. Lead rope safety
7. Where to stand
8. Guide - not control



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THE BIG PICTURE



- The goal of unmounted equine schooling is to build a lesson that helps fill in any gaps that your volunteers might have.
- It's a mix of what volunteers want to learn and what instructors or volunteer coordinators are noticing that volunteers might need more practice with (a team approach).
- Remember, this training is in addition to your regular volunteer training.



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HOW TO BE FIRM WITH OUR EQUINE PARTNERS:

- Use a Calm, Confident Presence
- Set and Enforce Personal Space Boundaries
- Give Clear, Consistent Cues
- Correct Behavior Immediately
- Stay Neutral, Not Emotional
- Use Pressure and Release Wisely
- Practice Neutral Assertiveness



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COMMON FEARS OF VOLUNTEERS

- 1.They aren't going to kick me, right?
- 2.Picking hooves
- 3.Horse's not stopping when asked
- 4.Mouthy horses
- 5.Horse's lining themselves up
- 6.Catching horses in the paddock
- 7.Fast horses



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WHY TEACH UNMOUNTED EQUINE SCHOOLING?

- 1.Enhance Volunteer Confidence and Comfort Around Horses
- 2.Promote Effective Communication Between Volunteers and Horses
- 3.Foster Personal Growth and Empowerment for Volunteers
4. Teaches All Volunteers the Same Methods



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BENEFITS TO HORSES:

- Reduces Stress and Anxiety
- Builds Trust Through Predictability
- Prevents the Development of Unwanted Behaviors
- Keeps the Horse Mentally and Emotionally Balanced
- Honors the Horse's Intelligence and Dignity
- Improves the Quality of the Program and Organization
- Helps Our Horses Stay in the Program Long-Term



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BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEERS:

- Builds Confidence
- Teaches Leadership Without Force
- Strengthens Emotional Awareness and Regulation
- Encourages Patience and Consistency
- Provides a sense of purpose
- Fosters Mindfulness and Presence
- Teaches Problem Solving and Observation
- Gives the Opportunity to Ask Questions
- Helps Foster Relationships with Instructors
- Builds Community



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WHAT ARE OUR VOLUNTEERS SAYING?

Theresa S. | Reins of Life volunteer for over 30 years

“Attending Unmounted Equine Schooling has been so helpful! It helps me learn about each of the horses so that I am more equipped to work with them. It helps all of the volunteers get into a consistent routine so that we are all doing things the same way which is better for our horses and participants. I enjoy getting to know some of the newer volunteers and have some fun!”



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WHAT ARE OUR VOLUNTEERS SAYING?

Olivia | Reins of Life volunteer for one year

“I started attending unmounted equine schooling to build my confidence and get to know the horses better. I started attending consistently and really got to know other volunteers, made some friends, and learned so much about equine behavior. It’s low pressure and so much fun!”



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HOW DOES OFFERING UNMOUNTED EQUINE SCHOOLING BENEFIT THE CENTER?

- Volunteer Retention
- Stronger Relationships Among Volunteers and Staff
- Higher Quality Programming
- Happier Horses
- Improves the Overall Quality of the Organization



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POTENTIAL CHALLENGES OF OFFERING UNMOUNTED EQUINE SCHOOLING?

- Staff Availability
- Horse Availability
- Open Arena Space
- Flexibility of Volunteer Schedules
- Different Skill Levels of Volunteers in a Lesson



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If you don't already have an Unmounted Equine Schooling (or similar) program, do you feel like you have the tools to get one started?

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THANK YOU!

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