



# Horse Leader & Sidewalker On The Job Training

## Upon Arrival:

- Confirm Volunteer forms are completed and turned in by all participants
- Participant Introductions- make name tags

## Tour of the Facility:

- Building –volunteer sign in – name tags
- Tour Barn, Feed Room, Tack Room, Cart Room
- Full emergency site training tour
- Review evacuation location -Practice Fire Drill to evacuation site

## Barn:

- Grooming and tacking
- Getting to know the horses
- Horse leader & sidewalker responsibilities

## Arena:

- Practice leading techniques
- Practice leading horses to and from the mounting block
- Review sidewalker position and role

## Any Questions?

**THANK YOU!**

## **Volunteer Qualifications:**

- ☐ Ability to follow directions of program staff and/or instructors at all times.
- ☐ Ability to become familiar with horses and riding equipment used in program.
- ☐ Ability to communicate diplomatically and enthusiastically with others.
- ☐ Commit to a defined period of time to fulfill lesson and event responsibilities.
- ☐ Willingness and cooperation to learn necessary safeguards of program.
- ☐ Non-Smoker (at facility), alcohol and drug free due to youth environment.
- ☐ Able to physically meet the qualification for the sidewalker position including walking for 1 hour and jogging for short distances or able to make reasonable accommodations to meet requirements.

## **General Rules for Bakas Volunteers**

- Volunteers must be at least 12 years old; volunteers under 12 years old must be accompanied by a chaperone.
- No smoking or drinking of alcohol beverages will be allowed at the facility
- No Dogs allowed!
- Do not feed the horses, each has their own special diets. Do NOT hand feed the horses. If you have treats to give the horses, please place them in their feed troughs in their stalls or their feed buckets.
- Gates must remain closed at all times, if you open it you are responsible for closing it.
- Proper attire is to be worn at all times. Jeans, long pants, or modest clothing, and closed toed shoes. Sandals and flip flops are not permitted. Dangling jewelry should be avoided.
- Classes are held rain or shine. During inclement weather, it will be determined if lessons can be safely held in the arena or if there will be a barn lesson.
- Please arrive 30 to 45 minutes prior to the start time of the lesson. Assistance is needed to groom and tack horses before each lesson. If you are unable to come out early please try to be at the ring 15 minutes prior to class.
- Remember that riders with disabling conditions are just as active as everyone else. Close supervision is a must at all times while the riders are around the

horses and ponies. All riders must wear helmets when riding the horses. If you will be away for a length of time, please find a volunteer to assist your student until your return during the lesson.

- Although quite rare, falls from the horse occasionally do occur, if this happens, STOP! Remain as calm as possible. The horse leader is responsible for holding the horse while the sidewalkers are responsible for the rider. The instructor will take charge immediately and tell you what is to be done next.
- Volunteers are never to dismount a rider. Dismounting must be done by a PATH Certified Riding Instructor.
- Do not lead or handle horse until you and the staff feel comfortable with your ability to lead or handle horses.
- Please do not take photos or videos of the Bakas riders without prior permission. Do not place any photos of riders or other volunteers on public sites such as Facebook. This is to ensure the privacy of our participants.
- Bakas Equestrian Center reserves the right to dismiss volunteers from their duties. In this regard, any person who violates any incident that negatively affects the program can be asked to leave.



## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Due to the nature of therapeutic horseback riding, it is the policy of the Bakas Equestrian Center that any and all information pertaining to our participants, families, caregivers, staff and volunteers shall remain privileged and confidential. This information may include, but not be limited to, any medical, social, referral, personal and/or financial information that may be disclosed as a result of participation in this program.

Disclosure of any confidential information shall not be released to anyone not associated with Bakas Equestrian Center. Discussions involving any participant shall be limited to progress reports, appropriate mounted and unmounted safety guidelines and any other guidelines the instructor may deem appropriate in each situation. Volunteers will be given information concerning participants on a "need to know" basis and in keeping with the confidential nature of our clients' records. Each participant shall be assured of record confidentiality and as such, only authorized staff will have access to a secured records location.

Because our intentions are to safeguard information about our participants, this policy is designed to ensure that the privacy of our participants, their families and caregivers, staff and volunteers is protected. Sensitive medical, psychiatric, psychological and/or personal information may be detrimental if released to those outside of the Bakas Equestrian Center organization. Such a breach of confidentiality may also constitute grounds for legal action.

Failure to adhere to the Bakas Equestrian Center confidentiality policy by any staff or volunteer could result in their termination of employment or service.

## **When You Meet A Bakas Rider**

- First, remember that a person with a disability is a person. They are like everyone else, except for the special limitations of his or her disability.
- A disability need not be ignored or denied between friends, but until your relationship is one of friendship, show interest in them as a person only.
- Be yourself when you meet a person with a disabling condition.
- Talk about the same things as you would with anyone else.
- Help the person **ONLY** when they make a request. When a person with a disability falls, they may wish to get up by themselves, just as some people with visual impairments prefer to get along without assistance (clear emergency situations are the exception).
- Be patient, let the person set his or her own pace walking or talking.
- Don't be afraid to **LAUGH WITH THE RIDER!**
- Don't stop and stare when you see a person with a disability. They deserve the same respect any person should receive.
- Don't ask embarrassing questions. If the person wants to tell you about their disability, they will bring up the subject themselves.
- Don't separate the person with a disability from his wheelchair or crutches unless they ask you to remove them. They may want them close by.
- Don't make up your mind about a person with a disability ahead of time. You may be surprised at how wrong you are in judging their interest or ability.
- **ENJOY** yourself and your friendship with the person. Their philosophy and good humor may give you inspiration.
- **SMILE!**

## **SAFETY INFORMATION**

- ❑ First Aid Kits are available in the front room on the wall next to the rider information and sign in table. Will review the sites on the site tour.
- ❑ Fire Safety Regulations – we will discuss further when we walk through a practice “Fire Drill”. We will review the R.A.C.E fire plan.
- ❑ Incident Loss Report requirements review. Incident Loss Reports in the file holder on the wall next to the Human First Aid Kit in the reception area of the office building.

## **FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS**

**In the event of a fire emergency, your responsibility as a Volunteer is to R.A.C.E**

- R- RESCUE:** This means only HUMAN BEINGS who are in the immediate danger of being injured by the fire as you are LEAVING for safety.\*\* Absolutely no attempt should ever be made to ENTER into a burning building to rescue anyone, anything or any ANIMAL! Volunteers and riders will assemble at the designated area (shown on tour) in the northwest gate of the property. Do not go to the parking lot, this will enable a clear path for rescue vehicles. \*\* ONLY STAFF MEMBERS are authorized to attempt to rescue animals. Special procedures have been developed to ensure fire evacuations of the barn.
- A- ALARM:** Ring fire bell continuously, located in the barn aisle and near the arena. Call 911. Continue to “sound the alarm” and alert everyone of the fire – activate all emergency response systems or make sure someone responsible has made the call to proper authorities. Familiarize yourself with the locations of all available telephones (administration and barn locations). Emergency #'s are posted by each on site phone.
- C- CONTAIN:** If possible to safely smother the fire with water, sand, fire extinguishers, etc. BEFORE it becomes out of control, do so as you leave. NEVER continue to try to extinguish any fire that is rapidly developing – REMOVE yourself from the danger immediately! Remember – HAY and WOODEN structures can ignite in seconds! SAVE YOURSELF and others– the barns can be rebuilt YOU CANNOT BE REPLACED! Familiarize yourself with the locations of all fire extinguishers on the property (both ends of the barn, in the building, in the kitchen, and near the mounting ramp). Fire escape routes are clearly marked in the building. Review how to safely “operate” at fire extinguisher – point at base of fire, pull lock, aim and squeeze – gently move from side to side to cover base of fire. REMEMBER – STOP-DROP and ROLL in the event that anyone actually catches on fire (clothes, etc). Water hoses are also located at both ends of the barn and near each pasture.
- E- EVACUATE:** Again, as a volunteer this means only assist in evacuating **PEOPLE** (not horses or other animals). Staff are responsible to implement animal fire evacuation only. Direct all people to meet at the designated area by the northwest gate of the property. Instructor will take roll call to ensure safety of all volunteers and riders for that day. (One reason it is important to sign in each time you are on property.)

## Emergency Drill Practice

The following guidelines will help you understand what will occur and your part during the drill. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation with these drills.

### For riders, volunteers, staff and families:

If you are in the barn:

- Leave what you are doing immediately.
- All volunteers/personnel to meet at the **Northwest Gate** of the property.
- If possible and there is no risk – the certified riding instructors will collect the volunteer sign in book for roll.
- Bakas Staff along with the Emergency First Responders (if called) will evaluate the situation as to the safety of returning to the barn.

If you are in an arena:

- Instructor will move all riders to the Northwest Gate of the property.
- If the instructor deems it necessary, all riders will be dismounted and horse leaders will remain with the horses.
- Instructor will move riders and sidewalkers to a safe area away from the horses.
- Once the situation has been deemed safe, Instructor may resume with the lesson as deemed appropriate.



## INCIDENT LOSS REPORT REVIEW

It is the policy of Bakas Equestrian Center to report and document incidents that occur, regardless if the incident is large or small, or a 'near miss', in a timely manner to the appropriate staff member. They should be aware of such incidents; including accidents or injuries or adverse behaviors that have occurred involving participants, parents, volunteers, guests, employees or animal behaviors.

All participants, parents, volunteers, guests and/or employees involved must complete an Incident/Loss Report as soon as possible after the incident/loss occurred. This report shall include, but not be limited to:

NAME

AGE

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

DATE/TIME OF INCIDENT/LOSS

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT/LOSS

EQUINE INVOLVED (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PERSON INJURED (if applicable)

WITNESS VERIFICATION

Follow up information may include:

- Telephone calls to injured party and/or parent/guardian/caretaker by the Program Director.
- Telephone call to the Insurance Company to determine if incident requires incident/loss documentation/reporting.
- Final disposition of the incident/loss.



## **General Grooming and Tacking Rules**

Do not go into a horse's stall without being told to groom the horse or asking first.

Always put the halter and lead line on the horse while in the stall and walk the horse to the crossties in the barn aisle.

Grooming buckets are located on the wall in the barn aisle. Each horse has their own bucket with all of the necessary grooming tools.

If you notice anything unusual about the horse while grooming please alert the instructor on site.

Always remain cautious when working around the horses. Pay attention to what you are doing and how the horse is responding.

Be calm around the horses when grooming them. They will respond more favorably to a calm environment than a rushed chaotic environment.

Ask questions. This is your time to learn and practice. Your help during lessons by grooming and tacking is really appreciated.

Remember - Safety is most important for everyone involved.

Report any injuries (no matter how small) to the barn manager or instructor on site.

Thanks for taking the time to learn and practice your skills!

## Grooming Tools

**Grooming - the process of cleaning and caring for a horse's skin, coat, and hooves including currying, brushing and cleaning their hoofs.**

- **Grooming Bucket** - each horse has their own bucket of grooming tools.
- **Curry Comb** - a round or oval rubber utensil used in a circular motion to remove caked-on mud and improve circulation.
- **Hard Brush** - a large oval shaped brush with a hand support strip which is used to remove dirt, dust and dandruff from the horses coat; the length of the bristles determines the stiffness of the brush.
- **Soft Brush** - a brush with short, stiff bristles used after the hard brush.
- **Mane and Tail Comb or Brush** - used to comb tangles out of the mane and tail.
- **Hoof Pick** - metal pick used to remove debris from the bottom of the hoof.

## Grooming Procedures

When grooming a horse, start at the top of his neck and work your way to his rear, then switch sides and repeat.

1. Start with the **curry comb**. The rubber curry should be used in a circular motion to loosen dirt that has settled under the horse's hair. NOTE: Be very careful and gentle around the bony areas of your horse's body (such as his back). Don't use the curry on your horse's legs unless you can be extremely gentle with it. Never use the curry or any stiff brush on your horse's face.

2. Next, use the **hard brush**. The motion for this brush is like the same motion you would use when sweeping a floor. You "flick" the brush away and up from the coat so that the dirt comes off his coat. Unless your horse is already extremely clean, you should see a slight cloud of dust with each stroke. If you don't use this "flicking" motion, the dirt will just get pushed back under the hair, potentially causing irritation to the horse.

3. Then, you use the **soft brush**. The body brush is meant to smooth down the hair and to get rid of any traces of left-over dirt after you have thoroughly used the stiff brush. With the body brush, you do not use the flicking motion, instead, you smooth it flat over the horse's coat to flatten the hair. This brush often gives the horse a shiny, clean appearance.

4. Next, use the mane and tail **comb or brush** to gently comb the horse's mane and tail. You can also use the stiff brush for the tail. Start from the bottom of the tail and gently work your way up removing tangles and debris.

5. Now, on to the hooves! This can be done by running your hand down your horse's leg, then gently squeezing his fetlock (ankle). When you use the **hoof pick**, always scrape away from you, just as you would if you were using a carrot peeler. It is important to thoroughly clean out the hollow areas of both sides of the frog, and around the sole of the foot. The frog is the most sensitive part of the horse's hoof. When done gently lower the hoof to the ground, do not drop it. Watch the positioning of your feet so that you are not in the same area where he will be dropping his hoof.

## Tack & Equipment Used



### **Peacock Safety Stirrups:**

Peacock stirrups are similar to a regular stirrup iron. The inner side is the regular stirrup iron but the outer side is designed with a heavy rubber band attaching to the top & bottom of the stirrup. Used as a precaution for the rider should the rider fall or the foot slide forward in the stirrup. The heavy rubber band will release the foot so that the foot is kept from being caught in the stirrup.



### **Helmets:**

The riding helmet/ hard hat or a type of lightweight helmet will protect the rider's head and is required for all riders whenever riding or working with or near the horses. It should have a full chin strap harness.



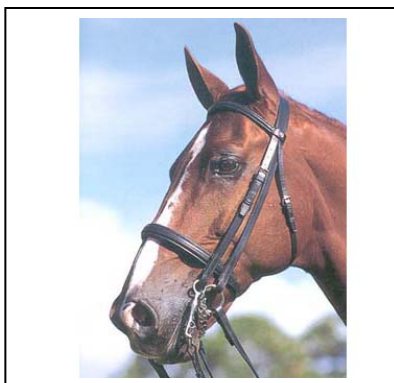
### **Saddle:**

Bakas Equestrian Center uses both English and Western Saddles for our riders.



### **Bareback Pads:**

The bareback pad can be a fabric saddle or soft felt material. Certified riding instructors may backride with the participant using a bareback pad.



### **Bridle:**

The bridle is a head harness which holds the bit for guiding a horse while riding.

**Halter:**

The halter is used for leading, grooming, and riding with clip-on reins.

**Lead Rope, Lead Line:**

A rope with a snap on one end used to attach to the halter for leading or tying a horse.

**Mounting Ramp:**

An essential piece of equipment, the mounting ramp aids the rider to mount and dismount the horse with the help of the instructor.

## Bakas Equestrian Center Volunteering in the Lesson Volunteer Ability Guidelines



Due to the inherent risks associated with volunteering at a therapeutic horseback riding program, and for the safety of our riders and volunteers, we offer the following guidelines to prospective volunteers in order to acquaint you with the variety of tasks associated with the weekly mounted lessons.

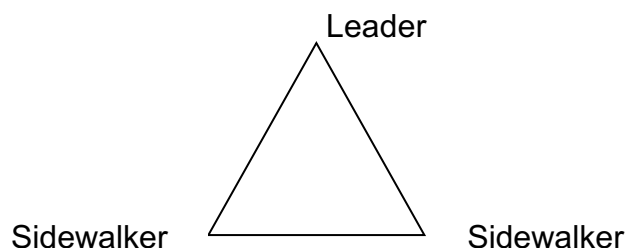
**SIDEWALKERS** - Responsible for the rider during the lesson session. If two Sidewalkers are required, one will assist as a “buddy”, responsible for the rider upon arrival for lessons and sees to it that the rider is safely back with parents/guardians after the lesson. Sidewalkers are positioned at each side of the rider in order to assist with balance issues.

1. Ability to walk with arms in a supporting position for a minimum of thirty minutes. The supporting holds can be different for each rider. Some holds can be tiring on the volunteer and volunteers are encouraged to change sides to assist with the volunteer's comfort. Proper change guidelines are required to maintain safety guidelines for your rider.
2. Ability to walk/jog along side horse and rider as spotter for thirty minutes. Spotting at the trot requires some jogging but is limited to short distances. Volunteers can request to stand in during the trot if needed.
3. Ability to relate to children and adults in an encouraging and humorous manner.
4. Ability to reassure frightened/nervous riders.
5. Responsible for the safety of the rider while mounted.
6. Ability to assist riding instructor with the proper mounting and/or dismounting of a rider if needed.

**HORSE LEADERS** - Responsible for the control of the horse or pony from the time the animal leaves the stall, throughout the lesson session, and upon return of the animal to the stall or pasture area.

1. Ability to control a large animal (horse, pony, draft or miniature)
2. Calm and gentle nature with animals
3. Knowledge of the proper leading position
4. Ability to walk for a minimum of fifty minutes and jog for short distances.

### The Lesson Volunteer Team



## SIDEWALKER VOLUNTEER POSITION INFORMATION

**Sidewalker location and positioning:** Sidewalkers are positioned at the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back will make it very difficult to assist with instructions or provide security to the rider if needed. It is also a safe place to be positioned for your safety around the horse.

**Balance:** The job of the sidewalker is to maintain the balance of the rider when they cannot sustain it themselves. Some students have a definite balance problem on the horse as well as off. Depending on the ability of the student, there will be either one or two sidewalkers assigned to each rider. The instructors will inform you as to the requirement of each participant during the mounting time.

**Changing positions or sides:** Since the student with less muscle tone requires the volunteer to exert enormous physical energies, you may need to change sides throughout the lessons. To do so, notify the instructor and horse leader that you need to "switch" sides. Come to the center of the ring and change with the other sidewalker **one at a time**. The student must never be totally left alone during a change over since falling could occur.

**Correct rider position:** Do not grab at the student if he/she starts to slip, gently guide them back into the correct position. Sidewalkers are very important, as they need to be constantly aware of the student at all times and what they are doing. The safety of the riders depends on you!

**Communication:** Since the sidewalker is always close to the rider, you will find they will want to talk to you a great deal. Do not ignore direct questions but do try to get your rider to focus their attention on the instructor. If your student is not paying attention or does not hear the instructor, you can help reinforce the directions of the instructor by repeating instructions or prompting the action requested by the instructor. One of the greatest distractions during lessons can be the excessive talking in the ring by volunteers. Please limit your conversations with the students during lesson time to what is absolutely necessary. Conversations between the volunteers and riders are encouraged and can take place during warmups, cool downs, and trail rides.

**Assisting the rider with instructions:** When an instructor gives a direction, allow your student plenty of time to process before responding. If the instructor says "turn to the right toward me", and the student seems confused, gently tap the right hand and say, "right" to reinforce the command. You will get to know the riders and learn when they need help and when they're not paying attention. Sometimes volunteers forget that the riders are to do the exercises. The same applies to games: don't get so competitive that you start to take over for the rider because you want them to win. The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch and grow to be as independent as possible. You are there to support and help challenge the rider to be the best of their ability.

**Attention:** The sidewalker will need to observe the rider at all times. Never become so relaxed that you are not totally aware of the rider, the horse and leader, the instructor or other activities around you. Be aware of your position near the horse. Do not lean on the horse as this can agitate the horse, throw the horse off balance, and interfere with the communication between horse and rider.

**Anticipate:** Sidewalkers will learn from experience how to anticipate difficulties from the horse or rider which might create accidents. Be as prepared as possible for the unexpected. Use your judgment as necessary. The horse does not always act in a predictable manner or "according to procedure". Always be alert to your surroundings. We have unique situations at Bakas Equestrian Center that come from our environment such as low flying jets and stray animals.

## **The Horse Leader Position**

The job of the leader is to control the horse or pony from the time the animal leaves the stall, throughout the lesson session, and upon return of the animal to the stall or pasture area.

The proper position for the leader is to walk just back of the horse's or pony's head. DO NOT GET IN FRONT or TOO FAR BEHIND. The lead should never be used to pull the mount forward. Care must be taken to ensure the horse's head is not merely pushed up in the air since that may throw the rider off-balance. Also, do not let the horse's head get too low to the ground as this may pull the rider forward. Keep your hands away from the horse's mouth. A good rule of thumb is to hold the lead in your right hand approximately six to eight inches away from the ring or buckle and hold the extra length of lead in your left hand but NEVER wrap it around your hand.

Remember: just as the size of horses varies, so do their steps. With some animals you will be able to walk faster than with others. Adjust your step to that of the horse so that you are not pulling him forward or holding him back.

No matter how slow is the pony or horse you are leading, the leader should not try and take the place of the rider either by pulling the mount forward or turning or stopping the horse. It is the rider's responsibility to do as much as they can. The instructor will point out to you when the rider needs assistance and as you work with riders you will start to get a feel of when to step-in.

In order for the rider to have complete freedom to use the reins correctly, care should be taken to ensure that the lead line does not run over the rider's reins; the lead line must be hanging between the rider's rein not over the top.

### **AT THE MOUNTING BLOCK or RAMP**

If you are going to lead a rider that has to be mounted from the ramp, pay close attention to the instructor because they will tell you where to position the horse in the mounting area. You will want to place the horse as close as possible to the side of the ramp on which the rider will be mounting. Most mounting and dismounting is done on the left side of the horse. It is your responsibility to keep the horse as quiet as possible while the rider mounts, (rubbing the horse's neck is very reassuring and calming).

Stand slightly to the side but turn your body in towards the head facing the horse with one hand on the lead and the other on the reins or side of halter. Do not hold the halter too tight as it may cause the horse to throw its head and back up. Do not hold the halter on both sides of the horse's head. Our horses and ponies love to be talked to and petted while being mounted, however use care and be alert to each mounting situation.

At this time you should face forward and assume your position at the head of the horse. Be sure to listen to the instructor, follow their instructions.

### **MOUNTING IN THE RING**

If your rider will be mounting in the ring, the instructor will give you the specific directions. The rider may lead the horse to the ring with or without your assistance or you may be asked to lead the horse to the center of the ring and the rider will come to you. PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOUNT THE STUDENT.

During this type of mounting, stand near the front but slightly to the side of the horse's head. If your rider is standing with you please be careful that the rider does not go behind the horse. The rider should stand quietly beside you.

### **LEADER IN THE RING**

Once the rider is mounted, the instructor will tell you where to stand with the horse. Be sure you are a safe distance from the horse in front of you, (a horse's length between is a good gauge). As the class begins all instruction will be given to the student by name. All volunteers on the team should be familiar with the rider and also give them the opportunity to learn your name. Please wear your name tag at all times.

It is tempting to turn around to talk with or assist your rider but your responsibility is to pay attention to the horse and where you are going. Listen to the rider and sidewalkers for instructions or whether or not assistance is needed for a certain maneuver.

### **AT THE HALT**

While it seems unnatural, we ask you to pivot yourself from the side of the horse to slightly in front of the horse at the halt. This will keep the horse from moving forward. This is especially important while the riders are doing their exercises. The halt is also used as a "breather" for the horses and you should not hold their heads too tight. Allow the horse freedom to move its head around. If the horse is getting too restless, rub the neck; this is a good way to calm them down. Occasionally the horse will need to walk around but the instructor will alert you to those situations.

### **AT THE WALK**

Many leaders forget that the riders may also have sidewalkers. Be aware not to get too close to the side of the ring, jumps or other obstacles or you will not have room to fit your sidewalkers through safely. **GIVE YOURSELF ROOM FROM THE HORSE IN FRONT OF YOU.** Although none of our animals are known to be kickers, all horses can kick if they feel pressured by a horse following too closely behind them. If your rider cannot maintain a safe distance, it is your job to do so. If you have to make a turn suddenly for safety reasons verbalize your intentions to your team (the sidewalkers and rider), because a sudden turn can throw off a rider's balance and sidewalkers need to be well aware of the imminent risk.

Do not assist in making turns unless directed by the instructor. Use common sense: if you see that your rider is getting into trouble and is unable to follow directions given by the instructor, it is your job to help. The sidewalker(s) should be prompting to keep students "tuned into" their instructor's directions.

### **AT THE TROT**

Often during a lesson the students will be asked to trot. Since trotting is faster than walking, the leader has to be more alert to the horse, rider and surroundings. The instructor will come over, if necessary, to give specific instructions to the student and to you. Before starting the trot, be sure the rider and sidewalkers are ready.

If a horse is reluctant to trot, start to walk a little faster and say "trot". Most of our horses are good with voice commands however, some horses will need a little additional prodding. **DO NOT PULL ON THE LEAD.**



Do not run in front of your horse and immediately “walk” or “stop” (“whoa”) when the instructor gives the command. This must be done on a straight in order to keep the rider balanced. Make the transitions smooth, with no sudden stops or starts, and make sure the team is ready.

### **DURING THE GAMES**

Games are an important part of every lesson. They may be as simple as “Simon Says” or “Red Light, Green Light,” or a more complicated game such as “Musical Stalls”. The leader is an important part of all games. The instructor will give the riders and volunteers the rules of the games to be played. The sidewalker will need to watch the rider to see if they understand the directions. However, if there is no sidewalker, you will need to talk to the rider and pep them up and get them ready for the games. Your enthusiasm is contagious, but remember it is the rider playing not you. Allow the student to do as much as possible by themselves. During the games everyone can get excited and lose focus on safety. Make sure the horses remain at a safe distance apart from each other.

### **FALLS DO HAPPEN**

Though falls are very rare, they can and do happen. If your rider falls, your only concern is the horse you are leading. The instructor will take care of the student. If another rider falls and the horse gets loose, then **STOP IMMEDIATELY** in front of your horse and hold the horse as you would while mounting. **NEVER LET GO OF YOUR HORSE** if possible. Do not panic if there is a fall. A fall off a horse is really not any worse than any other type of fall. Your job is to stop and hold the horse. If the rider falls close to the horse and the horse stops, walk the horse a safe distance away from the rider to allow the rider to be attended.

### **LOOSE HORSE**

If a horse gets loose **DO NOT CHASE THE HORSE**. If they feel they are being chased they may run faster. They are prey animals and they use flight as a defense. All other horses need to be stopped where they are. When horses are scared they will seek comfort and may go to another horse. Wait for further instructions from the Instructor.

### **DISMOUNTING**

Unless otherwise specified, the instructor will dismount the student. You will receive specific instructions as to whether to bring your student to the ramp or remain in the center of the ring. Once again, keep your mount quiet by standing slightly to the front and turned in to the horse’s head while your rider dismounts.

### Leading reminders:

- ✧ Keep attention on the horse
- ✧ Follow instructor's instructions; listen to sidewalkers/leaders if assistance is needed
- ✧ Improper leading can change the movement of the horse affecting their physical health and affects what the rider is feeling.
- ✧ Horses have two blind spots: directly in front of and directly behind the body
- ✧ Horses are protective of their personal space, do not lead too close behind or beside another horse
- ✧ Horses are able to sense what you are feeling so it is important to stay calm
- ✧ You are not always doing the steering during lessons, you are a "fixture" at the horse's head for safety

### Leading "Dos":

- ✧ Use voice commands
- ✧ Walk beside the horse (about an arm's length away) in the area between head and shoulder
- ✧ Look up and where you are going at all times
- ✧ Allow the horse to have free head and neck movement
- ✧ Maintain distance between other horses in the lesson
- ✧ Tune in to the horse's body language so you are able to know when something is going wrong

### Leading "Don'ts"

- ✧ Walk in front of and pull the horse to move faster
- ✧ Turn suddenly or sharply, it will knock horse and rider off balance
- ✧ Assume that the rider is unable to control the horse, many of them can
- ✧ Look down at ground, stare at horse, let eyes wander in a 'day dream'
- ✧ Wrap the lead line around your hand or let it hang low to the ground

Bottom line - **always remain cautious around the horses.** While your skills and confidence may increase while working with them, a healthy respect for their size and ability to act out of their typical behavior will help you greatly. If you follow the safety procedures and remain alert to your surroundings and environment you will be able to reduce the risks associated with working around horses.

Please ask questions. If you are not comfortable completing a task - DON'T DO IT. Instead ask someone to help you until you are comfortable. Your safety, the rider's safety, and the horse's safety are the utmost importance to us.

## Emergency Information

### ***If there is an emergency while a lesson is in session:***

1. All horses will be halted.
2. All leaders will position themselves in front of the horse. The leaders are responsible **ONLY** for the horse, not the riders.
3. All sidewalkers will stabilize their riders (arm over leg support). The sidewalkers are responsible **ONLY** for the rider, not the horse.
4. The instructor will supervise the dismounting, either verbally or personally.
5. In the event that a rider must be removed from the horse quickly, as in a seizure or a spooked horse, the sidewalker on the left is responsible for dismounting the rider. Both sidewalkers should immediately remove the rider's feet from the stirrups.
6. If circumstances call for the arena to be evacuated the riders will be escorted out first by their volunteers (if used) and the horses will be removed by their leaders to an appropriate place after the riders are out of danger. We will gather at our evacuation meeting site at the northwest gate of the property.
7. The instructor will determine if medical personnel are required and will request assistance in contacting specific personnel.

### ***Spooked Horse***

Should a horse become frightened, sidewalkers are to apply the arm over thigh support hold to their rider. The horse leader should attempt to halt and calm the horse. The horse leader must always try to stay with the horse. The sidewalkers should attempt to stay with their rider and maintain the supportive hold. Listen for directions from the instructor and follow directions.

### ***Loose Horse***

If a horse should become loose in the barn or while in the ring - **DO NOT** chase after the horse. If they feel you are a threat they will run more. Keep calm. The horse will eventually stop. One person will be designated to approach the horse to "catch" them. The instructor will give the instructions and who is to be designated to get the horse. If you are in a lesson with another team as a sidewalker calm your rider. If horse becomes loose in the barn - do not chase - but do alarm by announcing - "**Loose Horse**" to alert others in barn. Just get to a safe area out of the horse's path until the horse stops.

### ***Universal Precautions***

Universal precautions are used to minimize contact with blood and body fluids by taking steps that may prevent non-intact skin exposures of individuals to specific organisms such as Hepatitis B and Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS). When you follow universal precautions, you assume that all persons are potentially infected with blood-borne pathogens.

-Wear disposable latex or vinyl gloves when it is likely that hands will be in contact with bodily fluids. Always change gloves between clients.

-Protect clothing with an impervious material when it is likely that clothing will be soiled with bodily fluids.

-Wear masks and/or eye protection when it is likely that eye and/or mucus membranes will be splashed with bodily fluids.

-Wash hands often, before and after client care, paying particular attention to around and under fingernails and between the fingers, even if gloves are worn. If unanticipated contact with these body substances occurs, washing is done as soon as possible.

-Resuscitation masks should be used for CPR.

## **Glossary of Disabilities and Terms**

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** – Attention span can be disrupted by brain damage of various kinds. The individual may have difficulty focusing on instructions. Attention may drift or be diverted to something else. Attention span may be shortened due to a language related disorder or poor stress tolerance.

**Autism** - Autism is a neurological disorder which can produce some of the following characteristics: self-preoccupations, communication dysfunction, repetitive movements, the individual may appear deaf or blind, although is not and his/her function can vary from hour to hour and day to day.

**Cerebral Palsy (CP)** – CP is caused by damage to the motor (movement) area of the brain. CP is an injury, not a disease, characterized by a lack of ability to control the body. The disorder can vary mild or severe, resulting in minimal to extreme movement and coordination difficulties with various body parts moving in unison.

**Developmental Delay** – Individuals with Down Syndrome, a birth defect, can have any of the following characteristics: Intellectual function can be low normal to severely retarded, muscles tend to be soft and floppy, joints tend to be loose and almost disjointed. Other areas affected can include heart conditions, breathing problems, ear infections, hearing, speech, and vision problems.

**Emotional Disabilities** – A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies.

**Learning Disability (LD)** – is a dysfunction of the brain caused by interference with the normal process of storing, processing and producing information.

**Intellectual Disability (ID)** is a disorder due to brain damage, under-developed of the brain or genetic disorder. Difficulties that result can be seen in mobility, vision, hearing, speech, understanding, judgment and behavior.

**Multiple Sclerosis (MS)** – is a disease which begins in young adults. There are lesions in the myelin sheaths or nerves in the brain and spinal cord which cause “short outs”.

**Muscular Dystrophy (MD)** - is a disorder occurring in several forms involving weakening of certain muscle groups and have a genetic basis.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** – Accidental injury to the head resulting in intra-cranial bleeding with death of brain cells. Gross and fine motor skill deficits.

**On behalf of BAKAS, THANK YOU for your interest in volunteering at our facility.**

**Without you our program could not exist. We thank you and hope that you will find an experience here that allows you to be the best you can be!**

**Please contact us at anytime if you have questions.**

**Contact Information:**

**813-264-3890**

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**THANK YOU FOR MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR RIDERS TO BENEFIT FROM  
EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES!!!**

Bakas Equestrian Center is a Premier Accredited Center through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International.

