



# SARI Therapeutic Riding

## Program Volunteer Guidelines

Welcome to SARI! We are a charitable volunteer-based organization which has been providing therapeutic horseback riding lessons for children and adults with special needs since 1978. SARI Therapeutic Riding relies on the support of volunteers to assist both directly and indirectly with the facilitation of our programming. Due to the nature of our programming and the abilities of our riders, we have approximately one hundred volunteers to assist directly with the facilitation of therapeutic horseback riding lessons (here in known as program volunteers).

Program volunteers are defined as individuals who, under the direction and guidance of the instructor are responsible for: the preparation of the horse before the lesson, such as grooming, saddling; managing the horse during the lesson (here in known as leaders); physical and/or emotional support of the rider during the lesson (here in know as side walkers). More specifically, the leader's primary responsibility is the safe handling of the horse. This includes, but is not limited to: holding the lead rope; bringing the horse into the mounting area; encouraging the horse to walk on, trot on, and whoa; changing directions and following patterns under the guidance of the instructor. Whereas side walker's primary responsibility is the safe support of the rider. This includes, but is not limited to: assisting the instructor with mounting the rider; providing physical support of the rider using different holds; providing emotional support and encouragement to the rider; providing verbal and/or physical cues to the rider that support the instructor's directions.

Regardless of role, all new, returning and current program volunteers must...

- be 14 years of age or older
- provide a current Police Records Check and Vulnerable Position Screening (forms are available from the Coordinator of Volunteer Services at the SARI office)
- have reliable transportation to and from SARI
- attend a new volunteer training session
- abide by safety standards taught during the training session and ongoing instruction given by staff
- read and be familiar with all hints, safety tips and universal hygiene precautions
- not breach confidentiality with respect to all riders, staff and fellow volunteers and their information
- be available to volunteer on either a regular or fill in basis
- arrive 30 minutes before class to assist with grooming and tacking of the horses
- notify the office should you not be able to attend my volunteer shift well in advance
- be able walk and jog unaided across sand/loose dirt surfaces for up to 1 hour
- be highly attentive and responsive to their environment
- be able to work independently, or with limited supervision
- be able to follow written and verbal instructions

All interested individuals are encouraged to submit a completed volunteer application form. SARI staff and instructors may...

- conduct a telephone and or in person interview with each new volunteer applicant upon receipt of their completed volunteer application form
- assess the skills, abilities and limitations of each new volunteer applicant, as well as returning and current volunteers to determine appropriate placement in the program
- decline a new volunteer application if he/she is deemed unable to safely perform the responsibilities and duties outlined above
- ask a returning and/or current volunteer to withdraw his/her services if he/she is deemed unable to safely perform the responsibilities and duties outlined above