



# Volunteer Training Manual

## Welcome to Mane Stream!

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Thank you for interest in becoming a volunteer at Mane Stream. This manual will start you on the right path with the information and tools you will need to be an effective and productive volunteer. Our hope is that reading the manual and attending the orientation and training will provide you with a solid foundation that will enable you to become an important part of Mane Stream and that your time spent with us will be safe, fun and rewarding.

Mane Stream appreciates all of our volunteers. Without you and the gift of your time, energy and skills, we would not be able to offer these valuable services to our community.

*"Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."*

### Mane Stream History

Mane Stream was originally called Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center and was founded in the early 1970's by Octavia Brown on her farm in Bedminster, NJ. In 1994, twelve acres were purchased in Oldwick and SHHRC moved to its new home. In 1999, renovations began on the existing barn to include a fourteen stall barn, an indoor ring, offices and a classroom. In 2012 SHHRC's name was changed to Mane Stream.

### About PATH International (formerly known as NARHA)

Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, PATH's mission is *"ensuring excellence and changing lives through equine-assisted activities and therapies."* PATH ensures its standards are met through an accreditation process for centers and a certification process for instructors. Mane Stream is proud to be a PATH International Premier Accredited Center.

PATH (NARHA) was founded in 1969 and has nearly 800 member centers. More than 42,000 individuals with disabilities benefit from activities which include adaptive riding (therapeutic riding), equine assisted therapy (hippotherapy), equine assisted psychotherapy/learning, adaptive driving, interactive vaulting, and competition. For more information visit the PATH International website at [www.pathintl.org](http://www.pathintl.org)

### Mane Stream Riders

Mane Stream serves approximately 200 participants each year. The disabilities you may encounter include:

developmental delays	ADHD	traumatic brain injury
Learning disabilities	Autism/PDD	multiple sclerosis
cerebral palsy	Down syndrome	sight or hearing impairment
spinal cord injury	stroke/CVA	muscular dystrophy
spina bifida	arthrogryposis	angelmans syndrome
epilepsy	charge syndrome	speech and language delays
Prader Willi	paraplegia	Russell-Silver Syndrome
Noonans syndrome	Fragile X	Sensory integration dysfunction
Rett syndrome	Klippel-Feil	Static Encephalopathy

## **Instructors**

All Mane Stream Instructors are PATH certified therapeutic riding instructors and are certified in First Aid and CPR. Instructors are in charge of all lessons. All directions come from the instructor, including the assignment of participant to horse, volunteers to participant, method of mounting and the structure of the lesson. Unless notified otherwise, all volunteers must defer to the instructor's decisions. This is extremely important to ensure everyone's safety. During therapy sessions the instructor is there to ensure the safety of everyone involved including the client, volunteers, therapist and horse but the therapist directs the session. At various times there may be a Student Instructor teaching a class, but always under direct supervision of a Mane Stream Instructor. Several of Mane Stream's therapists are also PATH certified Instructors.

## **Programs at Mane Stream**

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**Adaptive riding**, also known as therapeutic riding, is a recreational program in which participants learn riding and horsemanship skills. Lessons are taught by a PATH certified Instructor with the assistance of trained volunteers. Participants may have physical or developmental disabilities.

**Equine Assisted therapy**, also known as Hippotherapy, is a medical treatment strategy conducted by a licensed occupational, physical, or speech therapist that is trained in the behavior and movement of the horse and how that movement can impact people with special needs. The therapists are assisted by trained volunteers.

**Equine Assisted Psychotherapy/Learning (EAP/L)** incorporates horses experientially for emotional growth and learning. The participants learn about themselves and others by participating in challenging ground activities with the horses and then process or discuss the feelings, behaviors and patterns they observed. The team may consist of the participant, the therapist, an Equine Specialist and the horse. Volunteers are generally not used because of confidentiality issues.

**Camp Cold Brook** is an inclusive equestrian day camp for children with disabilities and able-bodied children. The camp has attained full approval as a youth camp from both state and county health departments. In addition to daily riding lessons and learning horsemanship skills, campers participate in games, crafts, and other equine themed activities. Trained volunteers assist with all camp activities.

**Vaulting** is an interactive group session where participants learn gymnastics, games and social problem solving around and on the horse.

**Adaptive carriage driving** can offer a participant who may not be able to safely participate in adaptive riding lessons the opportunity to learn carriage driving skills. Lessons are taught by a PATH certified driving instructor assisted by volunteers.

## **Participants**

A participant is any person participating in a Mane Stream program. A participant in the equine assisted therapy program is generally called a client. Participants in the adaptive riding program are called riders. Participants involved in a school based program may be called students.

## Volunteering at Mane Stream

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### Commitment

Regardless of the service you perform it is your commitment that needs to be stressed. A program without strong commitment from its volunteers will not survive. If you have made a commitment to assist during lessons our participants and instructors rely on you to follow through. No one is more disappointed than a participant who comes for a lesson, only to find that he/she can't ride because of a lack of volunteers. Please keep in mind:

- Come each week on your assigned day
- Plan to arrive at the time listed on the registration form which allows time for grooming and tacking the horses before the lessons begin
- PLEASE **call** the office **and** mark the attendance sheets with a letter A (for absent) if you know you are going to be absent in advance. If you are going to be absent with less than 36 hours notice please call the office- do not email the volunteer coordinator unless it is several days in advance.
- Please give as much notice as possible when you know you are going to be absent to allow the volunteer coordinator time to find a substitute
- Remember that participants can be very disappointed when they are unable to ride due to a lack of volunteers.
- **Leave any messages about absences in mailbox #5 in the voice mail system, not in the instructor's or volunteer coordinator's voicemail**
- Lessons are held rain or shine- you can call the weather hotline (mailbox #4) in the event of inclement weather for weather-related cancellations

### Confidentiality

Mane Stream maintains a strict policy of confidentiality. All volunteers are asked to respect our participants' privacy in any setting away from lessons. This includes avoiding discussion of participants' by name or in any way that might disclose their identity or their disability. Mane Stream preserves the right of confidentiality for all individuals in its program.

### Physical Fitness

Volunteers assisting in our adaptive riding lessons or equine assisted therapy sessions need to be able to walk with and/or help support a rider for up to 45 minutes, and in many cases will be asked to run along slowly as the horse trots for a few minutes at a time. If you have physical limitations that prevent you from meeting these requirements, you should ask your instructor to find you a less strenuous job such as grooming and tacking up horses for the next lesson, or ask to rotate with another volunteer.

### Attire

Wear outdoor clothes suitable to the season, including comfortable waterproof footwear. Open toed shoes are prohibited. Because of temperature variations, layering of clothing is a reasonably sure way of being comfortable. High socks can offer some protection against ticks and overgrowth on the trails. Avoid wearing loose, baggy clothes and jewelry, which could get caught in the tack. Long hair should be pulled back. Avoid wearing any perfumes- this may irritate the horses, riders or other volunteers.

### Experience

Volunteers at Mane Stream come in all ages (14 years and older) and a variety of experience levels. Many volunteers have no horse experience, while others may have years of experience. We strive

for a TEAM approach to volunteering. Everyone's here to learn and to share his or her knowledge in order to make it a great experience for every volunteer and participant involved.

- We urge you to speak up if you are uncomfortable with any situation.
- This is a learn- by- doing position.
- Do not feel intimidated if you don't know something- just ask- we love questions!
- We ask all volunteers, even those with horse experience, to do things the "Mane Stream way" to maintain consistency for our horses and participants.

### **Volunteer Input**

Your comments about participants, instructors and/or horses are very valuable to us. If you have any observations, concerns, suggestions, or comments, please feel free to contact your instructor or the Volunteer Coordinator. All conversations will be held in confidence. We are grateful for your willingness to share insights and information regarding our participants and programs.

## **A Day in the Life of a Volunteer**

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### **Arriving at the barn**

- Check off your name on the attendance sheet in the Lesson Book.
- Put on a nametag- it helps the instructor, other volunteers and the participants learn your name.
- Check the tacking list for horses to groom.
- Prepare the horse with a thorough grooming on the cross ties either in the aisle or the wash stall.
- Set out the tack for each horse at their stall.
- Tack the horse according to tacking list in the lesson book. When girthing a horse, the girth should be done loosely at first, then tightened in stages; never pulled tight all at once. It will be tightened a final time by the instructor just before entering the mounting ramp. Also be aware of the long winter hair and try not to get it caught in the buckle!
- Don't talk about inappropriate subjects or use inappropriate language while working in the barn.

### **After the horse is tacked**

- Horse leaders should warm up their assigned horse in the indoor ring until the participants are ready to mount.
- The instructor or therapist will bring the participant(s) to the mounting area.
- Sidewalkers should wait with the participants on the benches.
- The instructor for group lessons will call the horses into the mounting area from the indoor ring one at a time to mount the participants. The therapist will lead the participant directly to the mounting ramp.

### **During the Participants warm up**

Volunteers may hold conversations until all of the participants are mounted, but are urged to:

- Remain aware of the participant's safety at all times
- Include the participant in the conversation
- Choose appropriate topics, keeping the participant's interests in mind

## During the Lesson

To avoid distracting or confusing the participant, volunteers are asked to talk only when necessary once the lesson starts. The Instructor will advise volunteers how to appropriately interact with the participants.

- Volunteers may need to prompt the participants and will be instructed as to the proper method to use.
- It is important to remember to give the participants time to process the request or command- some may need more time to process information and then respond. Do not automatically repeat the instructions- allow them to process and make their own decisions.
- It is very important that only one sidewalker interacts with the participant - people talking from both sides may only confuse the participant .
- The instructor cannot see everything that is going on. Relate pertinent observations to the instructor.
- Have fun!

We value the observations of the volunteers participating in lessons. Feel free to talk to the instructor before or after lessons if you have questions/comments about any participants progress.

Every effort should be made to keep the lessons running on schedule. Work as a team when making tack or horse changes for maximum efficiency.

## After lessons

- Return all tack to its proper place.
- During hot weather horses may need to be bathed.
- Brush or wash the saddle area if needed.
- Assist the instructor in turning out the horses
- Return your nametag.
- Record your hours in the Community Service book. If you would like to receive credit for community service hours, it is **YOUR** responsibility to fill out the appropriate form and have it signed by a Mane Stream staff member each time you volunteer.

## The Equines at Mane Stream

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All program horses are evaluated before being accepted into the program and are trained to accept new equipment and props they may encounter at Mane Stream. They receive regular schooling and conditioning, and are evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that they remain appropriate for the program.

Always remember horses are horses, with the nature and innate responses of a horse. Humans must learn to understand “herd mentality”. The horse should respect the human handler as if he or she were the lead horse. Leaders during lessons must learn to be the alpha horse to gain the respect of the horse they are working with. This must be done with confidence and without using force or aggression.

Horses are easy to handle if they are trained consistently and if you understand why they behave as they do. If you're not consistent with the horses they may become confused or unwilling. Mane Stream strives to keep all handling of the horses the same.

## “Horse Sense”

- 🐾 Horses are herd animals with a distinct pecking order
- 🐾 Horses, being a prey animal, react to danger by fleeing
- 🐾 Horses can't see directly in front of them or directly behind them
- 🐾 Horses are creatures of habit and learn best by repetition
- 🐾 Horses move away from pressure and resist force
- 🐾 Horses show their moods by their ears and by their body language
- 🐾 Horses are inclined to take cues from an identified leader, whether horse or human
- 🐾 Horses learn to trust and follow the lead of the one in the herd that has earned their respect
- 🐾 Horses are highly social animals
- 🐾 Horses not only respond to voice commands, they also respond to “tone of voice”
- 🐾 Horses instinctively know when another horse (or human) is their equal, their superior or one that can be dominated
- 🐾 To the horse, you are just another animal in the Mane Stream herd

## Body language

Horses communicate with each other using body language. Humans can also communicate with horses using body language. Horses learn to read humans quite easily. In a herd, horses will take their cue from the lead horse and react accordingly. In our situation, the person leading the horse should be the “lead horse”. A strong and confident leader will tell the horse that he or she should be following the cues of the human leader. Precise and consistent cues from the leader will keep the horse alert and responsive to what is being asked of them. There must be no confusion over who is in charge. It is not about physical size and strength, it's about confidence.

Humans ask for respect from horses, just as horses ask for respect from humans. It starts by respecting their space- don't always be in their face, don't reach into their stalls and don't groom them in their stalls unless absolutely necessary. Firm and consistent handling in the ring allows horses to respond in calm and respectful way. It is a mutual respect that provides the best relationships between horses and humans!

## Horse Lingo

A big part of being consistent with the horses is using the same language. If everyone uses the same words and terms during all handling the horses will better understand what is being asked of them.

**Walk on** is used to ask the horse to move forward at the walk

**Whoa** is used to stop the horse

**And...whoa** can be used to stop the horse but also give them time to “prepare” to stop

**Easy** is used when you want the horse to slow down

**Stand** is used when a horse is fidgety and not standing quietly

**Trot** is used to ask a horse to trot

Tone of voice is also very important. A quiet gentle, tone can be used to soothe a nervous horse. A firm and assertive tone can command a quick response from the horse. These words should be used while grooming and tacking, in the warm-up and during the lessons. Consistency is the key to success with this herd.

## **The Movement of the Horse**

The horse's movement is the key to what happens in equine assisted therapy at Mane Stream. The horse's walk provides sensory input through movement that is variable, rhythmic and repetitive. The horse's walk is also similar to the way a human pelvis moves while walking, allowing the movement of the horse (the horse's walk) to "teach" a human pelvis how to walk. The movement can be modified or adjusted for each client's specific needs. The horse's movement becomes a very valuable therapy tool.

It is the responsibility of the leader to create the highest quality movement with each horse. Quality movement is easy to attain if the leader handles the horses in a manner consistent with Mane Stream training.

## **Volunteer Job Descriptions**

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### **Leader**

Volunteers who come to our program with horse handling experience may be asked to be horse leaders. As a leader, the volunteer is responsible for handling the horse throughout tacking, the warm-up, the mounting procedure, the lesson and dismounting. Horses are extremely aware of and sensitive to the person leading them. A leader's manner of walking on briskly or just sauntering along can greatly affect how the horse will respond and how effective the rider's lesson will be.

### **Methods of Leading**

Active leading - The leader is totally responsible for all movements of the horse. The horse is getting all aids from the leader, not the participant. This type of leading is primarily used in equine assisted therapy, for participants doing exercises, or participants that are unable to control their horse. Program horses are trained to look to the leader for directions if none are coming from the participant.







Supportive leading - The horse is still on lead, but the leader is not actively giving the horse aids. The participant will be giving the horse aids for walk-on, halt and steering, but may not be proficient enough to be completely independent. In this way, the participant can practice skills while the leader makes sure the horse is following the cues given by the participant.

Passive leading on or off lead - The leader continues to stay by the horse's head, but virtually does nothing to control the horse. When the participant is ready the leadline will be removed. This is a big step for many participants. It's their first big move to independence yet the leader is still close by to help out when necessary.

Spotter - The leader is asked to take the horse off lead and stand in the center of the ring. Spotters watch one rider/horse at all times during the lesson. While it may seem a non-active job, spotters are extremely important to independent riders. They must be ready to assist instantly if the rider or instructor needs their help.





























The primary responsibility of the Leader is the horse, and:

-  Making sure the horse is groomed and tacked properly
-  Putting the bridle on
-  Warming up the horse in the ring before the lesson
-  To control and calm the horse in an emergency situation
-  **To help the horse follow the cues from the rider**
-  **In equine assisted therapy, to follow the directions of the therapist**

Most participants in the adaptive riding program who have leaders are unable to fully control their horses. It is the leader who must help in guiding, stopping and starting without making the participant feel that they are simply a passenger. The participant must be allowed to do as much as possible with the leader helping only when necessary.

## Do's and Don'ts of Leading

-  Do walk the horse actively in the ring before the participant mounts. This loosens up the horse's muscles and "wakes him up" so he will be ready to work when the participant gets on.
-  Do lead the horse as close to the mounting ramp as possible and help him to stand squarely. Stand in front of the horse to keep him still while the participant is mounted.
-  Stand in front of and facing the horse whenever the horse is asked to stand still for any period of time.
-  Don't ask the horse to walk before making sure the participant is ready to move and the instructor or therapist has given the o.k.
-  Don't give the horse a command before the participant has had a chance to try it himself, but...
-  Do encourage the horse to follow the participants command as soon as possible.
-  Do watch the participant and allow the horse to follow the participant's cues.
-  Do keep your focus on the horse, but be aware of the participant as well.
-  Don't wrap the extra lead rope around your hand, instead...
-  Hold the lead rope in two hands with the extra lead *folded* in your hand.
-  Don't have a "death grip" on the lead rope too close to the horse's head-hold the leadrope "softly".
-  Do allow the horses head to move in a natural rhythm.
-  Don't let the extra lead rope dangle where it might trip you or the horse.
-  Don't drag the horse behind you...
-  Do use short quick forward snaps of the lead to get the horse to move quicker.
-  Do lead from between the horse's head and shoulder, on the side of the horse nearest the center of the ring.
-  Don't lead the horse too close to the wall...this squashes your sidewalkers and makes them quite unhappy. Do use the entire ring... don't cut corners.
-  Do lead at an even, steady pace.
-  Don't stop suddenly.
-  Don't make sharp turns.
-  Always have one to two horse lengths between you and the horse in front of you.
-  Do get your horse in a brisk walk before asking him to trot.
-  Don't pick up balls, cones, poles etc. - remain focused on the horse during activities.
-  Do alert the instructor immediately if the horse is being difficult, making you uncomfortable, or if you see **ANY** unsafe situation.
-  **Don't pull against the horse** if they are scared and backing up in a panicked state. Instead follow them slowly and calmly while speaking to them in a calm voice until they stop.

 Do wait until all participants have left the ring, then lead your horse back into the barn. Check the list, then untack him and put him in his stall if he won't be used for the next lesson. If he will be used again, check the list to determine if a tack change is necessary. Horses that will be used for the next lesson should stay in the ring or return to the ring after tack changes.

## **Sidewalker**

Sidewalkers are volunteers who directly assist the participant during the lesson. A sidewalker's responsibility is the safety and well being of the participant at all times. Sidewalkers can be actively involved in maintaining the participants balance, reinforcing the instructor's directions or giving the participant moral support. Participants may be assigned 1 or 2 sidewalkers depending on their needs. Some participants do not require any sidewalkers. The sidewalker's attention must at all times be focused on the participant. Communication between sidewalkers should not interfere with the instructor's directions. Sidewalkers may communicate with the horse leader or each other in regard to the participant's needs. In an emergency situation, the sidewalker stays with the participant unless otherwise directed by the instructor.

## **Methods of Sidewalking**

Single Arm Armlock - the sidewalker places their forearm closest to the participant over the participant's thigh, grasping the front of the saddle, pad or surcingle with their fingertips.

Double Arm Armlock - The sidewalker places their forearm closest to the participant over the participant's thigh and the other hand holds the participant's ankle in place.

Ankle Hold - The sidewalker holds the participant's ankle to stabilize the participant's lower leg.

Passive Sidewalking - The sidewalker walks alongside the participant and is available for moral support, reinforcing directions or physical assistance when needed.

Spotter - The sidewalker is asked to spot the participant from the center of the ring.


























Safety belts- Waist belts are sometimes used for a participant that needs more trunk support. It is important to remember not to pull down on the belt as this may unbalance the participant.

Participants with two sidewalkers that are providing armlocks for the entire lesson may need to change sides to avoid tired arms. To do this: (a) ask the horse leader to halt in the middle of the ring, (b) sidewalker "one" walks to the opposite side and takes over that side, (c) *then* sidewalker "two" walks around to the other side, (d) riding resumes. The participant should never be without one sidewalker providing support while the other is moving to the opposite side.

If a participant has two sidewalkers and the instructor asks for his/her instructions to be reinforced to the participant, only one sidewalker should do the talking so the participant does not get confused.







When the instructor gives a direction, allow the participant plenty of time to process it. If the instructor says "Turn to the right ", and the participant seems confused gently tap the right hand and say "Right" to reinforce the command. You will get to know the participants and learn when they need help and when they're just not paying attention.












## Do's and Don'ts of Sidewalking

-  Do talk to your participant in the mounting area before he is mounted, and in the ring before lessons begin, but...
-  Don't talk about inappropriate subjects or use inappropriate language. Be mindful of making your conversations appropriate for the participant and to include the participant.
-  Do ask the instructor/therapist what type of hold the participant requires.
-  Don't change the hold because your participant tells you to, always check with the instructor first.
-  Don't use too much or too little pressure when performing an armlock; allow the weight of your arm to rest on the participant's leg
-  Do an immediate armlock on any participant if an unexpected situation arises.
-  Do let the instructor/therapist know if your arm is tired and you need to switch sides.
-  Do make sure both sidewalkers are doing the same hold.
-  Don't rest your arm on the horse's side or hindquarters or lean into the horse with your elbow.
-  Don't hit the horse or "tickle" it in the flank to get it to trot.
-  Stay next to your participant at all times.
-  Don't pull on clothing or waist belt of the participant as this unbalances him.
-  Don't talk to the participant or other volunteers during the lesson while the instructor is talking, but...
-  Do reinforce the instructor's directions if necessary, and do give appropriate praise to the participant.
-  Do redirect the participant's attention back to the instructor if they are not paying attention.
-  Do have only one sidewalker assist the participant verbally... too many people talking may just confuse or overwhelm the participant.
-  Give only as much support as the participant requires, both physically and cognitively!
-  Do allow the participants to attempt to perform each activity as independently as possible. Let them be challenged!
-  Do keep your focus on the participant at all times.
-  Don't stop to tie your shoelace without warning.
-  Do let the instructor know if the participant is becoming agitated or seems nervous.
-  Don't allow the participant to dismount until the instructor is at his side; and do not remove the participant's feet from the stirrups until the instructor has asked you to.
-  Do alert the instructor immediately if you see **ANY** unsafe situation with your participant or another rider.
-  After dismounting, do walk with your participant back to the lobby, help him put away his helmet, and find his parent/guardian before you leave him.
-  Don't reprimand a participant - bring any behaviors to the attention of the instructor.

## General Do's and Don'ts

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-  Do remove the lead rope after the horse is secure on the cross ties.
-  Don't put a horse in the stall with a bridle on.
-  Never attach cross-ties to the bit. Always attach to the halter.
-  Do approach any horse from the side or front, speaking to them to alert them to your presence. Never approach them from the rear.
-  Do put the bridle on last, and take it off first.
-  When working with a participant grooming or tacking the horse, always stay by the participant's side to reinforce safety rules.

-  Don't play with the horses' faces or mouths.
-  Do make tack changes as quickly as possible between lessons.
-  Do alert the instructor if you find a piece of tack that is broken or needs repair.
-  Don't change assignments without the instructor's approval.
-  Don't coach the participants- let the teacher teach the skills.
-  Don't talk about horse behaviors in front of the riders or comment in a negative way to others.
-  Do open the stall doors all the way when taking a horse through. And be sure to close and latch the door completely after putting the horse in.
-  Do allow the horses to have "quiet time" in their stalls. Groom and tack all horses on the cross ties whenever possible. Let their stalls be the place where they can relax and not be bothered by humans.
-  Do not change the bridle- if you have a concern with the way a bridle fits, bring it to the attention of the instructor.
-  Do use the 15 minute break between lessons to get a quick drink or use the bathroom.
-  Do feel free to make any suggestions/comments to the instructor or ask questions after the lesson, out of the presence of participants and their parents.

 **Do HAVE FUN!**

## **From the Therapy Horses Point of View**

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We, the hard-working therapy horses at Mane Stream, have a few thoughts we'd like to share with you. Not that we're complaining mind you, it's just that we'd like for you to try to understand our point of view.

We love our jobs! We enjoy people and are very proud that we can help so many of our participants accomplish so many things! To help us stay happy please keep the following in mind...

### **Groom on the cross-ties**

Our stalls are our sanctuary- it's where we can go to get away from everybody and relax. Just imagine having 3 or 4 people crowd into your space and invade your privacy or "quiet time". This is why we ask that you groom and tack us on cross-ties. Respect our privacy.

### **Leave my face alone!**

Please know that you may be invading my personal space when you constantly bother with my face. I may love having it brushed but please don't kiss, poke and prod me in the face constantly. When you fuss with my mouth I think you want to play with me because that's how I play with my other horse friends, but I'm afraid that I may get too rough and bite you or one of my participants!

### **Don't smother me when I am fidgeting**

Sometimes I get impatient and want to walk away or not stand quietly when I am supposed to. Please don't hang on my face to keep me standing quietly- I hate that and want to get away from you even more. Instead tell me to "stand" in a firm voice. DO NOT HIT ME- this only makes me more nervous and fidgety!

### **Don't cut off my air supply**

We would appreciate it if you would attach the girth just tight enough to keep the saddle on during the warm-up. And be careful when buckling the girth- I may have long winter hair and there's nothing worse than when it hurts to walk because my hair is pinched in the buckle!

### **Make sure my clothes fit**

Please make sure that the saddle pad you are using fits properly. It should extend 2-3" beyond the front and back of the saddle. If the pad is too short and ends under the saddle it rubs me and creates a really sore spot on my back!

### **Bridling**

Putting a bridle on is a skill that every person should know how to do properly. Jamming the bit against my teeth will not make me open my mouth, in fact, I will probably lift my head to get away from you! Slide your finger into the corner of my mouth and "tickle" my tongue to get me to open my mouth. Then gently slide the bit in while raising the bridle over my ears. Also be careful when taking the bridle off. Gently slide the bridle over my ears and let it slide down along my face so the bit drops gently out of my mouth. Bringing the bridle forward away from my face twists the bit in my mouth and hurts the roof of my mouth and my teeth.

### **"Whatever"**

Inconsistency is the biggest annoyance with us horses. We've got many different people doing the same thing many different ways- that's really hard for us! We thrive on consistency. We need to know what is expected of us and need to have our boundaries clearly defined. That's why the staff wants you to do things the Mane Stream way.

### **Respect**

Respect our space and we'll respect yours. Be aware of personal space at all times especially when leading.

### **Leading**

Leading is such an important job! It's important for you to understand what makes a good leader. A good leader is somebody who is very aware of me and what I am doing at all times. I admit that sometimes some of us are lazy... but constantly dragging us to make us go faster isn't going to work! I outweigh you by 1000 pounds- do you really think you're going to "pull" me faster? When you drag me my head goes up and my back hollows out- this really makes it uncomfortable for the participant and will eventually lead to a sore back for me. And remember the quality of the movement is what makes adaptive riding and equine assisted therapy work. Ask the instructor or a staff member how to make a lazy horse move along better. Use your voice as an aid and use your body language to let me know what I am supposed to be doing. Don't just slam on the brakes when the instructor says stop. Shift your weight back and apply several gentle downward tugs on the lead before asking me to halt. It's as if you need to give me a hint before you ask me to do or change something. Same thing when we are going to go faster- ask me to walk at a brisker pace and then glide into the trot- don't burst into the trot! When we halt respect my space and don't hang onto my head. If you stay calm and cool chances are I will too! The key to a good leader is communication between you and the horse. Think of it as the human leads, the horse follows. We prefer you to be as gentle as possible but as firm as necessary.

## **Sidewalking**

Again, respect my space! I know that sometimes you need to provide lots of support to your participant but don't forget about me! It's really, really, really uncomfortable for me when you jab me with your elbow or when you constantly bump into my side.

Horses find it much easier to do their job if you do yours properly and with consideration.

## **Understanding the Participants**

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In an effort to help volunteers understand why riding is so important to us, we would like to share some of our thoughts...

First of all you should know what riding a horse does for us. There is an extreme sense of accomplishment for us when the horse does what we ask. We are able to experience things on a horse that we cannot experience in our wheelchairs or walkers. Riding a large and powerful horse empowers us! When the horse does what we ask and goes where we direct him with our reins we feel such a thrill!

Riding a horse can be hard work and allows us to use many different muscles in different ways. The movement of the horse is the key to hippotherapy. There are so many physical benefits to riding a horse. The rhythmical and constant movement allows tight muscles to relax and weak muscles to strengthen. A horse's pelvis moves in the same way that a human pelvis moves, so by putting a human who has difficulty walking on a horse, the horse is able to "teach" the human pelvis how to move correctly. Posting correctly is hard work and helps me increase my leg strength. Sitting tall and proud on the horse works my core muscles and gets me a blue ribbon at the Mane Stream Annual Horse Show 😊

And then there are the cognitive benefits... The movement of the horse can help stimulate areas of our brains or even help us organize our thoughts better. And wow, the incredible power we feel when we make the horse do something all by ourselves! The sense of accomplishment when we learn a new riding skill is amazing for our confidence and our egos!

We can go on and on about all the good things riding does for us, but we need your help too! We depend on you for feeling safe even when we're nervous or scared. Sometimes if too many people are talking to us at once we'll just tune everybody out- our brains just can't handle it and we will not be able to process anything at all! It's much easier for us if just one person works with us and helps guide us. We might depend on you to help us learn a new skill, but remember, if you always do it for us we'll never be able to do it on our own and we really want to do it for our own satisfaction. Don't feel bad for us if we fail some times- it may take us a while to get something but when we do imagine how great we will feel! Oh, and be very careful when you are holding the waistbelt- sometimes it's all we can do to maintain our own balance without somebody accidentally pulling us to one side!

We all like to have fun and hope that you have fun too, but remember that we are here to do more than just ride a horse and learn riding skills: we are here to build muscles and coordination, learn skills that can carry over into our everyday lives, to be more independent and to be able to do things on our own! So please respect us and help us, but don't do everything for us... Celebrate our accomplishments with us!

## VOLUNTEERING FOR EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY

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### (HIPPO THERAPY)

Volunteering for Mane Stream's Equine Assisted Therapy program is a uniquely rewarding experience. EAT is provided by an occupational, physical or speech therapist in a private treatment session. The therapist works with the client (often young children) towards specific rehabilitative goals that have been set during an evaluation with the family and client. Volunteers for EAT must work in a team setting, keep all information about clients private and confidential and take direction well. In equine assisted therapy, the client is not learning how to ride the horse, but is receiving medical therapy that incorporates the movement of the horse.

**Speech Therapy** is designed for individuals who wish to improve speech and language communication through augmentative communication, sign language and/or verbal speaking. In Speech therapy sessions the horse's movement is utilized for its' benefit of improving posture, respiration and organizing the body. The horse is also a powerful motivator. When the client says "walk" or "go," or even utters a sound when prompted, the horse and horse handler reinforce the speech with the horse immediately walking. In this way the client learns that language is a way to communicate, a way to get what he/she wants and is intrinsically rewarding. Some research indicates that vocalization and speech production is more prevalent during therapy sessions incorporating equine movement. As a horse handler for a speech therapy session, you will take your cues from the therapist and often from the client directly. As a sidewalker, you may assist silently or in conversation with the client.

**Physical Therapy** is designed for individuals who wish to increase their balance, strength, endurance, and flexibility, and improve their gross motor and mobility skills. In Physical therapy sessions the therapist is utilizing the movement of the horse to improve the clients' posture, balance and mobility skills. The horse's movement helps move the client's body in ways that replicate normal walking. The physical therapist directs the client in a wide range of exercises to strengthen muscles and improve balance and coordination. The horse handler for a physical therapy session must be very skilled in achieving quality movement from the horse to maximize the clients' benefit. Sidewalkers for physical therapy sessions must be physically fit and able to assist the therapist with specialized handling techniques.

**Occupational Therapy** is designed for individuals who wish to improve motor control, coordination, balance, attention, sensory processing and performance in daily tasks. In Occupational therapy sessions the therapist is utilizing the movement of the horse for its' sensory and motor benefits. The movement of the horse provides a variety of sensory experiences including moving through space visually, movement of the client's body and head, and sounds and smells that are part of interacting with horses. The goals for occupational therapy include improving skills off the horse such as playing with others, sitting in a school chair and taking turns. The horse handler for occupational therapy must take direction well and have excellent skills in grading the horse's walk (slow down, lengthen the stride, etc). The sidewalker in an occupational therapy session may be required to physically assist the client in sitting, practice taking turns and allow the client to do as much as he/she is able to do without any help at all.

The rewards of this up close and personal teamwork are great. The clients' goal may take hard work to achieve, but once reached the feeling of a team effort is exhilarating.

## Emergency Procedures

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*In the event of an emergency during a lesson, all leaders must immediately stop horses and assume halt position in front of horse. Sidewalkers must assume the arm-lock position on all participants.*

### **If a participant loses his/her balance during a lesson:**

- ❖ Leader stops horse.
- ❖ Sidewalkers try to keep participant in the saddle by stabilizing participant with arm-locks over the participant's thighs.
- ❖ If possible gently push the participant back into the saddle.

### **If a participant must be removed from the horse (Emergency Dismount):**

- ❖ Leader should stop the horse and the participant will be dismounted to ground quickly and quietly. Designate which sidewalker will do the emergency dismount. This is most often the tallest/strongest or in some cases the volunteer who is on the side that the participant is already falling to.
- ❖ Participant's feet should be removed from the stirrups. 2<sup>nd</sup> sidewalker will assist participant's leg over the horse.
- ❖ If the horse will not stand quietly, the leader should circle the horse around him/herself as the inside sidewalker bear hugs the participant around the waist and slides the participant off and away from the horse.
- ❖ Once the participant has been dismounted, leader should circle the horse away from the participant (so hindquarters are NOT towards the participant) or back the horse away from the participant.

### **If a rider falls from the horse:**

- ❖ Sidewalkers should make sure both of participant's feet are out of the stirrups.
- ❖ Sidewalkers should try to catch or soften the participant's fall if possible.
- ❖ Leader should halt the horse and move the horse away from the fallen participant by either circling so that hindquarters are NOT towards participant, or backing the horse away.
- ❖ NEVER move a fallen participant - wait for the instructor or therapist.

### **Things to keep in mind:**

- ❖ Communicate with everyone involved in the emergency in a calm, concise manner.
- ❖ If a horse suddenly pulls backwards, DO NOT pull against him. Slowly and calmly follow the movement of the horse until he stops.
- ❖ All of those involved with an emergency situation should stay calm and do the best that they can to keep the rider as safe as possible.

## **IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

The safety and well being of all individuals is a priority. By following basic safety procedures most emergencies can be avoided. However, if an emergency does occur, please try to remain calm. Take a deep breath. In all emergencies, only a trained individual may apply first aid (a staff member who is certified in first aid and CPR is always on site during program activities). A volunteer may be called upon to assist.



## **Below is a general list of guidelines to follow during an emergency:**

1. Survey the scene for safety.
2. A staff member trained in First-Aid/CPR attends to the rider
3. A volunteer may be asked to retrieve the First Aid kit and the blanket from the box in the barn aisle or from the gazebo by the outdoor ring.
4. The horse leader attends to the horse, leading it far from the participant if there has been a fall. Talking to the horse in a soft, soothing tone may assist in calming it.
5. If other participants are present, they may be asked to stop what they are doing and leave the scene if possible. The instructor will decide on a plan of action.
6. If further assistance is needed, a designated person will be instructed to call 911 and tell the dispatcher what happened, the condition of the injured person, what help is being given, the location of the injured person and directions to Mane Stream (83 Old Turnpike Rd -just south of Hill & Dale Rd in Oldwick). Emergency information is posted near the barn phone and in the gazebo.
7. A designated person will retrieve the injured person's medical file so that it is available for emergency and medical personnel if necessary.
8. A person will be designated to open all gates to the accident site after all horses have been secured. This person will wait at the top of the driveway to tell EMS to turn off lights and sirens, and to direct them to the location of the injured person.
9. The Instructor will notify the parent/guardian.

## **What to do when there's a Loose Horse**

### **What to Expect from a Loose Horse**

- A single horse may want to remain with other horses
- A horse will have a tendency to remain near or return to the barn or pasture area
- If a group of horses are loose, try to identify the lead horse(s). If the lead horse is caught the rest of the horses may follow.

### **If a Horse is Loose**

- DO NOT CHASE IT!
- Walk slowly, approaching the horse from the side
- Talk in a low, soothing tone of voice
- It may help to look at the ground when approaching the horse, so you are not a "threat"
- A small amount of grain may encourage the horse to wait or come to you
- Put the lead rope over the horse's neck first, then put on the halter with the leadrope attached
- Do not lead the horse with just the halter and no leadrope. You could be injured if the horse bolts.

### **Loose Horse in the Ring while other horses are being ridden**

- Have all participants halt
- Horse leaders should attach leadropes, if not already, and stand in front of the horse's head
- Sidewalkers should remain with their participant and use an armlock and prepare to assist with dismounts if the instructor decides to do so.
- If necessary, horse leaders will be asked to lead horses from the ring. Sidewalkers or designated volunteers will be asked to assist the participants to a safe location.

## Loose Horse in the Barn

- If participants are in the barn an instructor, staff member or designated volunteers should lead them out of the barn to a safe location or into the tack room.
- Remove any horses from cross ties
- Close all barn doors leading to open areas
- Attempt to catch the loose horse or herd the loose the horse into an empty stall

## EXCITED HORSE PLAN

If any horse becomes excited during a lesson or therapy session the sidewalkers should place an armlock on the participant, but if the participant seems to be able to handle the situation and is stable they should remain on the horse. This puts sidewalkers in the best position for their own security, for the participants' safety and for keeping up with the horse. If necessary the Instructor may ask for an emergency dismount.

### In the Event of a Fire:

#### 1. Evacuate all participants

If a class is in session the Instructor will give directions and will take responsibility for evacuating participants. Volunteers may be assigned to help participants to a safe area.

#### 2. Instructors/staff will designate someone to call 911 (see chart next to phone for directions)

#### 3. A staff member will survey the scene to make sure it is safe to enter

A staff member or instructor may designate persons to begin evacuating horses when all participants are out of the barn.

Evacuate horses through the nearest door beginning with the horses closest to the fire.

Lead horses to the nearest paddock, if possible.

Frightened horses may not want to leave their stalls... talk to them in a reassuring tone of voice. It may be necessary to cover their eyes.

If a horse is unmanageable or refuses to leave stall, leave door open and move to the next horse.

Be aware of the possibility that once outside a horse may try to run back into the barn.

## IN THE EVENT OF THUNDERSTORMS or HIGH WIND

In the event of a ***rapidly approaching thunderstorm or extreme high winds*** during a lesson:

- Dismount all participants immediately under the direction of the instructor.
- Sidewalkers should take participants into the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors.
- When riding in the ***indoor ring***, Leaders should return horses to stalls and proceed to the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors.
- When riding in the ***outdoor ring***, Leaders should return horses to barn. If time does not permit this, untack horses in ring and turn out in pasture or ring, then proceed to the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors.

In the event of a ***rapidly approaching thunderstorm or extreme high winds*** and there are no lessons taking place:

- *If horses are outside, leave horses in pasture.* Close barn doors and take shelter in the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors.
- *If horses are inside, close barn doors* and proceed to the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors.

## **PREVENTING DISEASE TRANSMISSION**

The risk of getting a disease while working with or caring for a participant is extremely small. The following precautions should be taken to further reduce the risk:

- ◆ Before you begin your volunteer session, cover any cuts, scrapes or skin irritations you have in order to avoid contamination.
- ◆ Notify your instructor immediately if the participant you are working with has any sudden health issue, such as a bloody or runny nose.
- ◆ Avoid contact with blood and other body fluids.
- ◆ If contact is unavoidable, use protective equipment, such as disposable gloves.
- ◆ Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water immediately after giving care.
- ◆ Hands should also be thoroughly washed after working with each horse and participant, before working with another horse and participant.

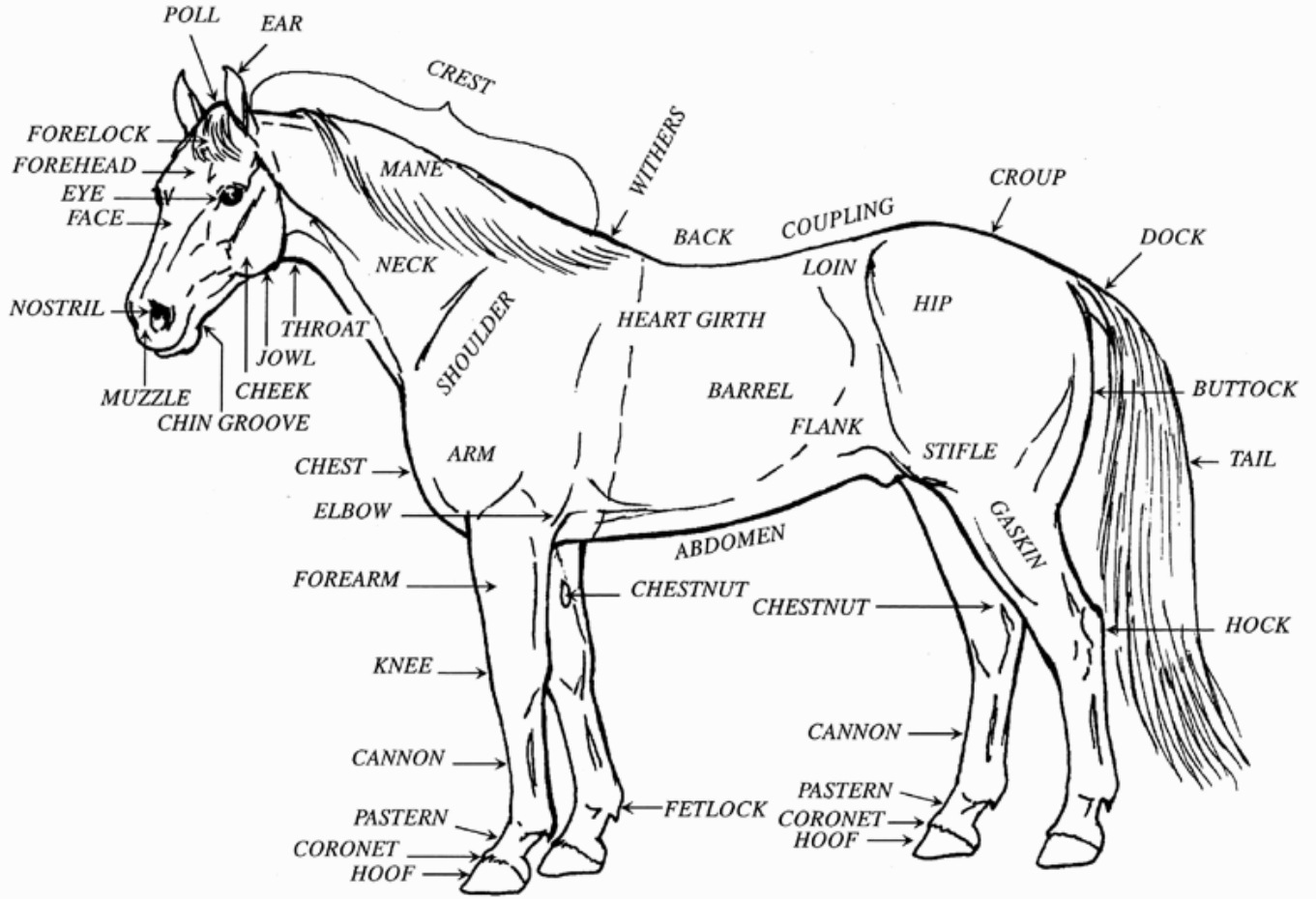
### **Just a few more things...**

Dogs are not permitted in or around the barn or ring. Dogs **MUST** stay in the car.

Drive slowly in all areas!

**NO SMOKING** in, or around, the entire facility.

# PARTS OF THE HORSE



## READING HIS EARS

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



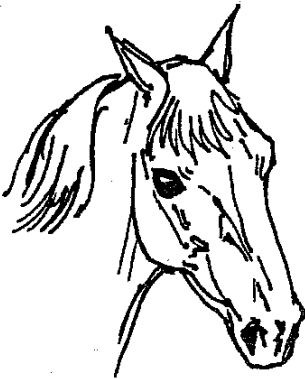
**Ears forward but relaxed**  
interested in what's  
in front of him.



**Ears turned back but relaxed**  
listening to his rider  
or what's behind him.



**Ears pointed stiffly forward**  
alarmed or nervous about what's  
ahead. Looking for danger.



**Ears pointed left and right**  
relaxed, paying attention  
to the scenery on both sides.



**Ears stiffly back**  
annoyed or worried about what's  
behind him; might kick if annoyed.



**Droopy ears**  
calm and resting,  
horse may be dozing.

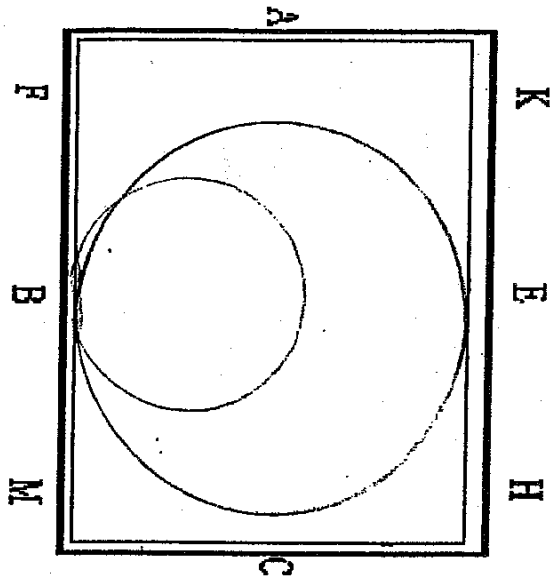


**Ears flattened against neck**  
violently angry, in a fighting mood.  
May fight, bite or kick.

### OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

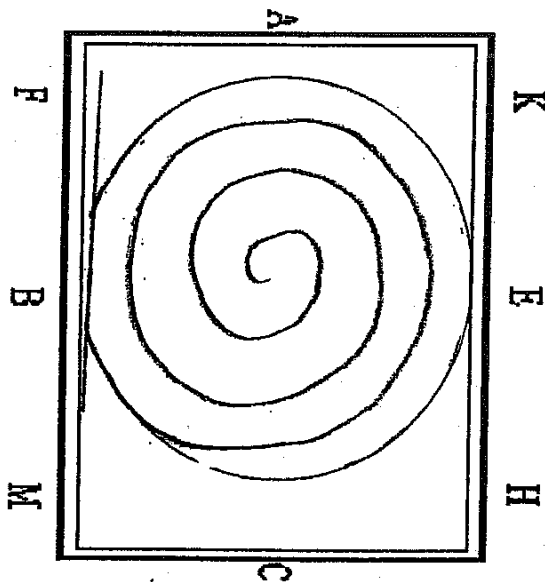
- **Tucking the tail down tightly.**  
Danger to the rear.  
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.  
Watch out if ears are flattened, too!
- **Switching the tail.**  
Annoyance and irritation:  
at biting flies, stinging insects or  
tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- **Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.**  
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.  
Don't wake him up by startling him!
- **Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.**  
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.  
Watch out for biting or kicking.

## School Figures

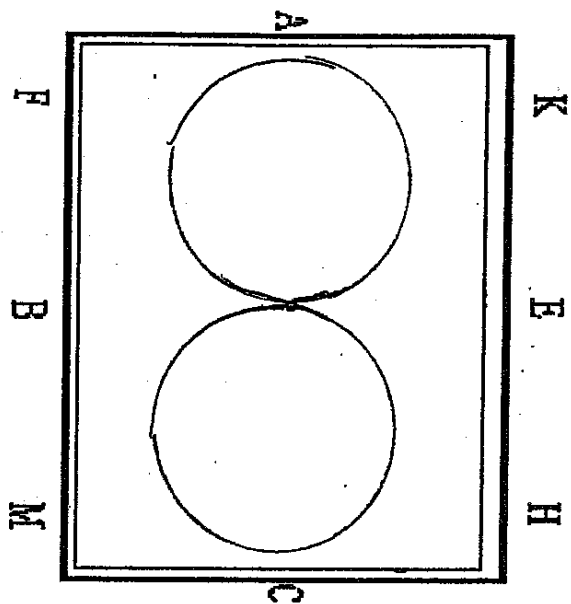


A large circle stretches from one side of the arena to the other, it requires consistent bend through the horses' neck and body. The leader should be sure not to pull the horses' head to the center of the circle.

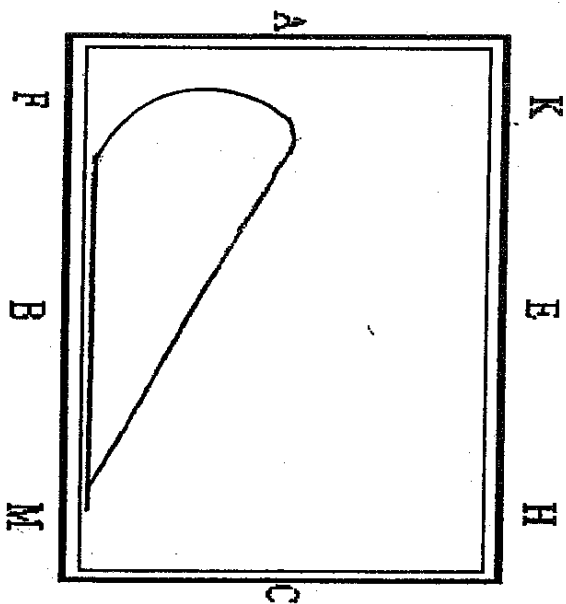
A small circle generally goes from the wall to the centerline. This requires a greater degree of bend from the horse.



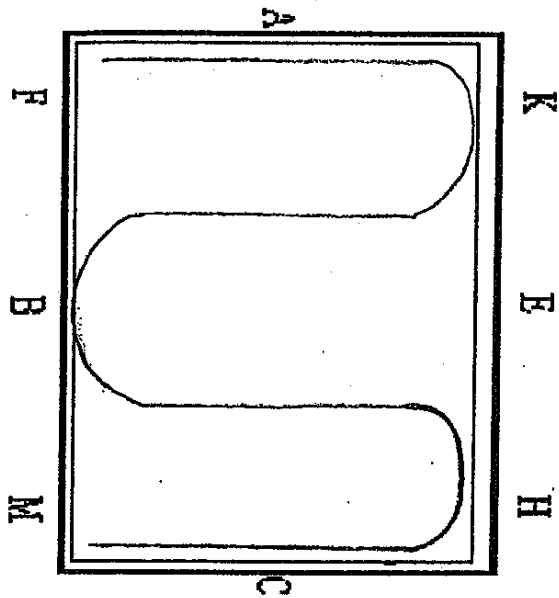
A spiral is a large circle that gradually tightens to a small circle. A spiral should have symmetrical turns from the largest to the smallest circle. The leader should be sure not to pull the horse into a tight turn that destroys the bend. The spiral should begin and end on a large circle.



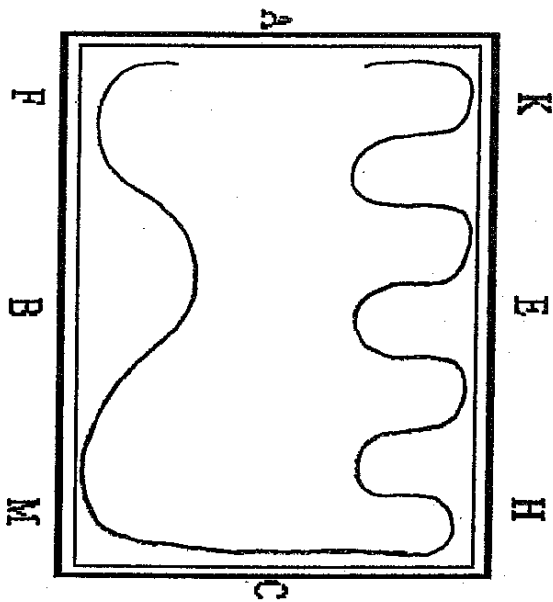
A figure eight is comprised of two equal circles in each direction. A figure eight has several straight strides before the change of direction. A figure eight can use the whole ring with the change of direction between B and E or the figure eight can be small with the change of direction on centerline.



A half circle is the customary way to change direction. It involves making a half circle or turn away from the arena wall and then making a diagonal line back towards the wall. This accomplishes a change of direction and incorporates a bend and straight line.

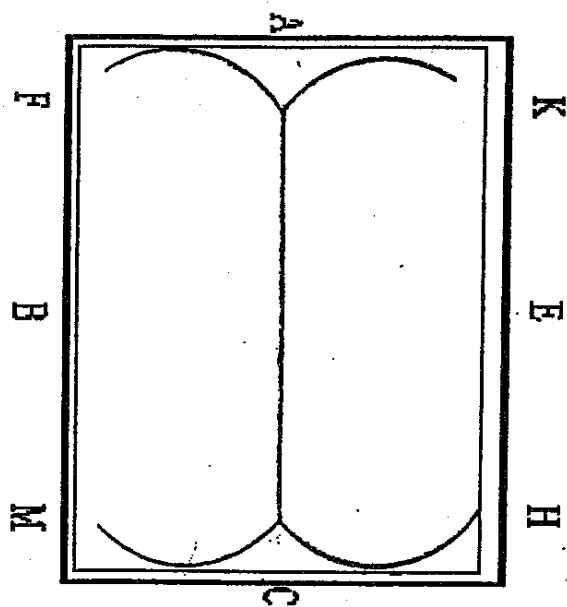


A serpentine involves three bends and three straight lines. A serpentine should have equal size bends and straight lines across the center of the arena. The leader should ensure equal bending and allow the horse to travel straight across the center of the ring. A serpentine has three loops, if more loops are desired it will be asked as a 5 loop serpentine, etc. Serpentine has two turns to one direction and one turn to the other direction.

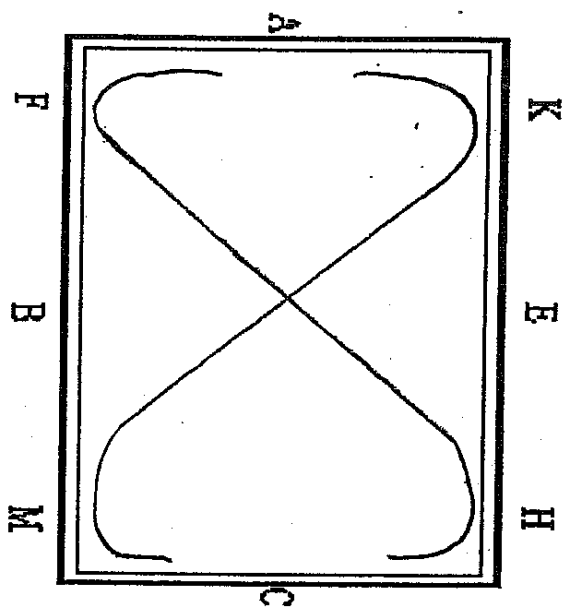


A weave is made of small tight turns along the straight side of the arena. Each turn should be symmetrical and lead into the next turn without abruptness. The weave is like turning through slalom poles. A weave can be very tight or loose turns with more space in between each turn.





Traveling down the centerline means traveling from A to C or C to A. This can be used to change direction or the direction may stay the same. When traveling down centerline ensure that the horse is moving straight and not bending or wavering.



Turn across the diagonal always changes direction. It involves traveling from K to M, M to K or F to H, H to F. You may turn across the diagonal at K or F from the letter A, but never from B or E. The turn across the diagonal involves a bending turn and long straight line before another bending turn. The leader should be sure to allow the horse to bend in each direction and travel straight on the diagonal line.

## Volunteer Manual Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with the following Horse Lingo
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ is said to ask the horse to walk forward
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ is used when the horse is fidgety or not standing quietly
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ is used to ask the horse to trot
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ is used to stop the horse
2. The primary responsibilities of the leader are:
  - a. Making sure the horse is groomed and tacked properly
  - b. Warm up the horse prior to the lesson
  - c. To control and calm the horse in an emergency situation
  - d. To help the horse follow the cues from the participant
  - e. All of the above
3. The primary responsibilities of the sidewalker are:
  - a. To provide physical and moral support to the participant
  - b. To secure the participant in an emergency situation
  - c. To assist with therapy activities
  - d. To help the participant guide the horse
  - e. To allow the participant to learn by their mistakes
  - f. All of the above
4. T or F: The leader should always stand in front of the horse when the horse is stopped or standing for any length of time.
5. T or F: Leave some slack in the leadrope and allow the horse to move his head while walking.
6. T or F: It is okay for the leader to pick up a fallen toy or ball and to hand props to the participant.
7. T or F: Call in as soon as possible when you are going to be absent to give the Volunteer Coordinator time to find a replacement.
8. T or F: Both sidewalkers should do the same hold unless directed otherwise by the therapist.
9. IT or F: It is okay to for a volunteer to dismount a participant at the end of a lesson
10. T or F: Tickle the horse in the flanks or hit the horse if it won't trot.
11. T or F: Do an emergency dismount any time a participant loses his/her balance.
12. T or F: Never allow the participant to make a mistake.
13. T or F: Volunteers with horse experience should teach riding skills during a lesson.

14. T or F: Always leave 1-2 horse lengths between horses.
15. T or F: It is okay to put a horse back into the stall with the bridle on.
16. Adaptive (therapeutic) riding is:
- A riding lesson for people with special needs.
  - A therapy session with a horse.
  - A fun activity for a person with a disability who likes horses
  - A and C
  - B and C
17. Equine assisted therapy (Hippotherapy) is:
- A riding lesson for people with special needs.
  - A therapy session with a horse.
  - A fun activity for a person with a disability who likes horses
  - A and C
  - A and B
18. If a participant falls from a horse:
- Move them out of harms way
  - Take off their helmet
  - Help them stand up
  - Do not move them and wait for the instructor
19. If you are going to be absent you should:
- Not worry about it- we have plenty of volunteers
  - Email Carol, Mane Stream's Volunteer Coordinator
  - Call and leave a message in voice mailbox #5 as soon as possible
  - Call and speak to a staff person to let them know you will be absent
  - c or d
20. Do an armlock if:
- The participant loses his balance
  - The horse spooks
  - The horse seems nervous or upset
  - Other horses in the ring are upset or nervous
  - All of the above
21. The order of evacuations for a fire is:
- Horses, staff, volunteers, participants
  - Participants, staff, volunteers and horses
  - Volunteers, participants, staff, horses
  - Participants and volunteers, staff and horses
22. To prevent disease transmission, you should:
- Cover cuts or scrapes you may have
  - Notify the instructor if the person you are working with has a runny nose
  - Wash your hands after touching every horse and every participant
  - All of the above
  - None of the above

23. If you want to know about a specific participants' disability:
- Just ask the participant
  - Ask another volunteer in the class
  - Avoid discussing disabilities
  - Ask the instructor but know that Mane Stream cannot tell you due to confidentiality, but will help you understand how to work with the participants
24. The horse's ears position will be:
- Pricked forward if he is alert
  - Flat back if he is angry
  - Back or to the sides if he is listening to you or the rider
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
25. You had a great experience at Mane Stream; you want to tell everyone about it! You should remember:
- to keep it to yourself, remember confidentiality
  - spread the word, tell everyone the good news that you are volunteering
  - tell only your close friends and family the story
  - tell others, but leave out details, such as names, age or any personal information
  - b and d

Please bring your completed quiz with you to the training. We will review these questions and answer any questions you may have at that time.

Feel free to ask any other questions you may have about the Volunteer Training Manual at the training as well.