



# STUDENT HANDBOOK



Professional Association of Therapeutic  
Horsemanship International

Welcome to the Therapeutic Riding Institute,

Since 1973, TRI has been providing equine assisted services to the Greater Miami Valley. As a PATH International Premiere Accredited Center, we are the regions experts in equine assisted services. Our focus is to bring high quality programs to those with physical, cognitive, social and emotional challenges.

Our PATH International Certified instructors' partner with over 200 volunteers to allow our students to experience everything a horse has to offer. Our horses are specially selected and trained to provide our participants with a unique experience that often helps them in ways no one else can.

Horseback riding provides an opportunity for exercise that strengthens the entire body, but more than that, the way a horse connects with a human provides emotional connections and behavioral motivations that can be life changing.

We are proud of the community we have created at TRI. With the purchase of our own farm in 2019, we are growing and expanding. We hope to provide not only activities with our horses, but also opportunities for our participants, their families, and our volunteers to experience the wonders of a horse farm. We invite you to become a part of it all!



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## **TRI PROGRAMS**

### **HORSEBACK RIDING PROGRAMS**

*All TRI's horseback riding lessons are taught by PATH International Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors. Lessons are individually tailored for each participant. The instructors are trained in utilizing adaptive equipment and techniques to facilitate learning how to ride in a safe, effective manner. Our instructors work together to create a wide variety of lesson plans that may include riding skills, games and exercises on horseback designed to meet each student's needs. Students may have specially trained horse leaders and side helpers who work as an extension of the horse, rider, and instructor.*

**ADAPTIVE RIDING** is recreational horseback riding lessons for individuals with special physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges. Riders learn horsemanship and riding skills in an environment tailored to their individual needs and learning styles. We offer instruction to riders of all skill levels, from providing someone's first contact with a horse to advanced independent riders. Most of the individual goals for those in the adaptive riding program are riding-skill based, but the benefits of riding extend beyond these goals. These benefits include improvements in physical strength, balance, coordination, mobility, self-confidence, self-control, peer interaction, and social skills. Each 30–45-minute lesson may be semi-private or group (4 student maximum).

**THERAPEUTIC RIDING:** Therapeutic Riding is a form of Adaptive Riding for students with greater physical or cognitive challenges. Our Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors design activities for students while on horseback that may include equestrian skills, life skills and physical exercises. Students in our therapeutic riding program will have individual goals that focus on enhancing sensory processing and physical strength. These students will have a specially trained horse leader who manages the horse and 1 or 2 side helpers who work directly with the rider under the direction of the instructor. Each 20–40-minute lesson is private or semi-private.

**SUMMER CAMP:** Summer Camps will be offered in 1-week sessions. Summer Camp is a fun, enriching, horse-filled day camp experience focused on improving horsemanship skills. Adventurers enjoy outdoor nature and art activities, riding or liberty, horse care and themed activities. Summer camp enables students to participate in a more intense, hands-on equine experience. Campers will be grouped based on abilities. Campers will be required to toilet themselves or an attendant will be required.

## **REGISTRATION**

Participants are required to complete registration paperwork on an annual basis.

**A Physician's Release is required for every participant regardless of age or diagnosis.** New and current students will be required to complete an updated form annually. *Any participant with a new or changed diagnosis that may affect appropriateness of equine assisted services, must be brought to the attention of the Program Director immediately. Failure to disclose a new diagnosis may cause harm to the participant.*

A Physician's Release must be completed and submitted prior to participating in any mounted equine activities.

**Registration does NOT guarantee entry into a program or a specific day or time.**

Careful consideration goes into determining if a participant will benefit from a specific program. While TRI has a non-discrimination policy, there may be programs that are contraindicated or simply not safe for a specific student to participate in.

Our program staff spends a great deal of time placing a student in the best class or program based on their unique needs, the horses available, the instructor scheduled, the available volunteers and their peers in a class. Unfortunately, this may not always align with a student's requested day and time.

## **STUDENT EVALUATIONS:**

Anyone wishing to participate in mounted or unmounted equine assisted activities may be asked to attend an in person evaluation. This aids in determining the appropriateness of activity and adaptive equipment necessary.

**A New Student Application must be completed and submitted prior to the evaluations being scheduled.**

**RETURNING STUDENTS:** If it has been more than 12 months since participating or there has been a change in diagnosis, a returning student may be asked to participate in an in-person evaluation. These students will be contacted directly by the Program Director to set up an appointment.

**NEW STUDENTS:** All new students, whether participating in Mounted or Unmounted Lessons, will be required to complete an in-person evaluation. This evaluation will be scheduled once required paperwork has been received by the Program Director.

## **ELIGIBILITY POLICIES:**

Students must be at least 5 years of age to participate in any program. Some programs may have specific age requirements. Registration does not guarantee eligibility or acceptance into any programs. TRI does not discriminate based on age, race, nationality, color, gender, diagnosis, economic status, however, if it is unsafe or contraindicated for a person to participate, TRI reserves the right of refusal.

For mounted (horseback riding) programs, the rider must:

- be able to sit independently with little to no support
- be able to support and control head and neck
- be able to spread hips and legs wide enough to go around a horse
- be able to control self from bouncing, hitting, pinching, grabbing, screaming
- be able to understand basic self-safety parameters
- not be violent towards others or animals
- be free from seizures for 12 months

For mounted lessons, there are weight limits. These limits are put in place due to a multitude of reasons for rider and equine safety. Anyone weighing more than 175 pounds, must be evaluated by the Program Director due to body mechanics and horse or volunteer availability. At this time, those over 200 pounds are ineligible for mounted programs. Current availability of appropriate horse, as well as availability of volunteer and/or instructor support may limit eligibility for any given program regardless of weight.

For unmounted programs, the participant must:

- follow safety rules with assistance
- not be violent towards humans or animals
- have no history of starting fires

All eligibility policies are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of students, horses, volunteers, and staff, and are based upon PATH Int'l Standards. Every student is evaluated to ensure that TRI is a suitable provider for the student. TRI reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time if we feel it has been become unsafe or detrimental in any way. Eligibility policies are subject to change as PATH standards and TRI facilities require/allow.

## **PARTICIPANT DISMISSAL POLICY**

TRI reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time if we feel it has been become unsafe or detrimental in any way. Eligibility policies are subject to change as PATH standards and TRI facilities require/allow. This includes TRI having adequate staff, equines and equipment to accommodate a student.

Participants who develop conditions that are now deemed contraindicated to riding will be dismissed until such a time that these conditions no longer exist. A newly updated Physicians Release will be required in addition to a student evaluation conducted by the TRI Program Staff.

Dismissal from the program may happen without warning if it is unsafe for rider, volunteer, or equine. All unused fees will be refunded to participant or agency within 30 days. All outstanding fees for previously provided services will be expected to be paid to TRI within 30 days.

**EQUINE LIABILITY LAW** applies to everyone entering the Therapeutic Riding Institute Farm. According to Ohio House Bill 564 which became effective March 3, 1997: Equine (Horse) Activity Sponsor, Equine and/or Property Owner is not liable for any damages suffered during an equine activity on these premises. A horse or pony is a large animal and may be unpredictable and dangerous at times. Extreme caution should be taken in their presence. Participants assume the inherent risk of equine activities.

## PROGRAM POLICIES

**Absences:** Students are responsible for notifying Program Director 24 hours prior to absence unless emergent. Due to the nature of our scheduling process, no refunds or make up lessons can be offered for student absences. If a student has an unreasonable number of absences, they may be removed from their program.

**Attire:** All participants **MUST** wear ASTM-SEI approved riding helmet anytime they are riding horses. We ask participants to have their own, but if they are unable a helmet will be provided. The Tacky Horse in Beavercreek has a variety of helmets and will help with proper fitting. All students should wear long pants, nothing that is a slippery material, and either narrow gym shoes or boots. Boots with a 1-inch heel are the safest. Students with inappropriate clothing or shoes (including skirts, dresses, shorts, crocs, sandals, open-toed or open-heeled shoes) may be unable to participate in the day's activities or may be offered an alternative lesson.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to be at their registered lesson on time each week. An unexpected absence impacts our volunteers who have given up their time to help our students and to your peers who may have activities planned with you.

**Arriving Late:** Students arriving more than 15 minutes late for activities will not be able to join their class. Fees will not be refunded or credited. An alternate activity may be offered if appropriate staffing is available. If you are running late, please call your instructors cell phone to notify them.

**Cancellations:** If TRI cancels a lesson, notification will be posted on Facebook and students will be called; messages will be left at the telephone number given to us. A credit or refund will be issued. Credits must be used within 1 calendar year. Credits may be donated to the scholarship fund at the family's request.

**Confidentiality:** Student personal health information such as medical histories, diagnoses and related information are used by the Instructor to develop goal-oriented lesson plans. General information, as it relates to the success of the riding experience, is shared with volunteers on a need-to-know-basis. This information may be crucial to aiding the student while participating.

**Dismissal:** A participant or their guest may be asked to leave the TRI farm at any time as directed by a TRI staff member if there is a threat to self or to others. Everyone on the farm is expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does no harm and is not disruptive. Students may be dismissed from TRI activities if they pose a threat to themselves, other humans or our animals.

**Dogs and outside animals:** Only Certified Service dogs are permitted; dogs disruptive to activities will be asked to wait elsewhere.



**Facility:** No one is to enter the Administrative Building, Stables, Garages, Apartment or Pastures without permission of TRI Staff. This is for your own safety.

**Guests:** Due to the sensitive nature of our horses and our students, we must always maintain a calm and safe environment for safety purposes.

Students and their guests/families are to stay in designated areas while on site. No one is to go into the stables unless accompanied by a TRI Staff Member or Representative. The Clubhouse, Welcome Center and Garden Patio are available for you to enjoy. Please be aware of cars and horses. While lessons are going on in Arena, please keep noise down and stay away from doorways as not to spook horses or distract riders.

Children must be supervised at all times.

**Horse Selection:** An instructor may take into consideration a rider request for a specific horse; however, the horse is selected based on many criteria and is not easy to change. Horses are selected based on movement, size, temperament, workload, training, and student goals. However, horses may be unexpectedly changed due to an injury or illness.

**Hours of Operation:** TRI is a private facility. Visitors may enter the farm only when the gates are open. Please make an appointment prior to arriving. Visitors and Participants are not permitted in any area of the farm unless accompanied by a TRI Staff Member. During typical business hours, visitors may enter the Administration Building Only. Appointments may be made.

**Illness:** Please do not attend any function at TRI if you are ill or have been ill 24 hours prior. If a fever is present, you must be fever free without medication for at least 24 hours. Notify your instructor immediately if ill. All necessary precautions should be taken to ensure the health and wellbeing of all TRI students, volunteers, guests, and staff. Many of our students have compromised immune systems. Please be sensitive. If unsure, contact Program Director.

**Lesson Viewing:** Lessons are to be viewed from The Clubhouse or the benches outside of the outdoor arena. The Clubhouse is heated and air conditioned for your comfort. No one is to enter the Arena while a lesson is in progress. Lessons may not be viewed from doorway.

**Parking and Driveway:** Please use caution when driving on TRI Property. A 5mph speed limit is required. Students may park in the Handicap Parking spots in front of the Welcome Center or in the gravel spots directly across from there.

Please do not park or drive past the Indoor Arena while lessons are in session. This may startle a horse or student.

**Photography:** While we know it is wonderful to take pictures of your own student, please be respectful of other participants, volunteers, guests, and staff. Do not share or reproduce any images captured while at the TRI Farm without the expressed permission of every person in the photo or image. Photos of TRI are considered our property and may be shared if used in a positive fashion. Anything derogatory or negative images may be asked to be removed or returned to TRI.

**Program Withdrawal/Leave of Absence:** A two-week notification is required when a student plans to withdraw from any TRI program. After that time, any lesson fees previously paid will be refunded. Students who decide to return to riding after a withdrawal, receive priority on the waiting list.

**Refunds:** Payment will be refunded if student is unable to participate in appropriate class/activity and TRI is notified 2 weeks prior to the start of the session. *No refunds/credits are offered for temporary illness or unanticipated circumstances.* Refunds, less any fees, will be given if a student withdraws for the entire session due to medical necessity with written notification from the student's medical provider. We may also prorate your lesson fees for any dates you will be out of town, only if we are notified at the start of the session before invoicing occurs.

**Smoking:** TRI is a no smoking facility. This means smoking is not permitted in any area of the farm, including your own personal vehicle.

**Weather:** Attendance is expected unless TRI cancels lessons. You will be notified via phone or text. We will also post closings on our Facebook Page.

The health and safety of our students, volunteers, staff, and equines is paramount to us. The nature of our program requires us to be outside in buildings that are not temperature regulated. If at any time you do not feel comfortable due to the weather conditions, we understand. Please let us know as soon as possible if you will not be attending.

Remember the weather may be different at the farm than at your home. Please check the weather in Spring Valley, zip code 45370. If lessons or a function are cancelled TRI will post it on our Facebook page and notify you via text or telephone as soon as we can. If in doubt, please check your devices for a message.

A decision regarding cancelling lessons will be made at least 2 hours prior to their start time. All closings are at the discretion of the Program Director. TRI uses guidelines from the Department of Public Health to make these determinations.

**Temperature Extremes:** We look at both temperature and humidity level to determine the heat index. If the heat index is above 90 degrees, we will give students the option to have a barn lesson. If the heat index is above 95 degrees TRI will cancel programming. In addition, if the temperature is below 32 degrees in our riding arena, we will cancel programming.

**Thunderstorms/Rain:** TRI does have plenty of shelter in case of thunderstorms. Lessons will typically not be cancelled unless there is extreme wind and lightening expected. We will not ride when lightening is in the area.

**Tornados:** Issued Warnings in Spring Valley, Bellbrook, Waynesville, and Centerville will cancel programs.

**Snow & Ice:** TRI will follow the lead of Bellbrook School district in terms of delays or closings.

## **BILLING**

The tuition that Therapeutic Riding Institute charges its participants represents a fraction of the real cost of each service. Tuition is evaluated annually towards year-end for any changes that might be made to the coming year. Tuition varies according to the program.

All lesson fees are due prior to the session you are participating in. Sessions will all be 10 weeks long and will be billed for the full session upfront. If you are unable to afford the full amount at time of registration, you may contact the Program Director for payment options.

**30 -45 minute Weekly Therapeutic & Adaptive Riding Lessons:** \$45 x 10 weeks = \$450 per session

**\*60 Minute Horsemanship Lessons:** \$60 x 10 weeks = \$600 per session

**\*\*30 minute Private Lessons:** \$60 x 10 weeks = \$600 per session

\*\*Horsemanship and private lessons will be scheduled at the discretion of the TRI Program Staff.

**Medical Insurance:** TRI programs do not qualify for medical insurance coverage at this time.

**Vouchers:** All county boards of DD now require families to submit voucher requests directly to TRI. We then submit the vouchers after the program has been completed. Please contact your case manager to set up session vouchers or for special camps. Vouchers must be turned into the TRI prior to participating. Any fees not covered by the voucher will be the responsibility of the participant to pay directly to TRI.

**Third Party Scholarships:** TRI accepts scholarship payments from third party organizations. We will be happy to assist you with any required paperwork. Any fees not covered by the scholarship will be the responsibility of the participant to pay directly to TRI prior to lessons. We have listed some third-party resources on our website for potential funding sources.

### **Leg Up Scholarship:**

We have established a scholarship program to give a 'Leg Up' to assist those who are unable to pay the entire cost of their tuition. Because we must raise the funds from outside resources to cover these lessons, we ask that individuals pay as much of their tuition as possible. These scholarships are need based. Scholarships are available on a limited basis and are awarded and renewed annually. Applications require 30 days to process. The scholarship application may be downloaded from our website.

TRI reserves the rights to add to or alter any and all policies as they see fit. Updates will be made available on our website or upon request.

## CONTACTS

THERAPEUTIC RIDING INSTITUTE, 3960 Middle Run Road, Spring Valley, OH 45370

Main Telephone: (937) 317-4001

Website: WWW.TRIOhio.org

Ohio Non-Profit 501(c)3: 31-0840947

### Staff

Executive Director: Stephanie Llacuna

[SLlacuna@triohio.org](mailto:SLlacuna@triohio.org)

Program Director: Samantha Ingersoll

[SIngersoll@triohio.org](mailto:SIngersoll@triohio.org)

Development Director: Jessamyn Rice

[JRice@triohio.org](mailto:JRice@triohio.org)

Volunteer Manager: Stephanie Slepicka

[SSlepicka@triohio.org](mailto:SSlepicka@triohio.org)

Equine Manager: Makayla Barton

[MGrooms@triohio.org](mailto:MGrooms@triohio.org)

### Instructors

Samantha Ingersoll, CTRI & ESMHL

[SIngersoll@triohio.org](mailto:SIngersoll@triohio.org)

Jess Rice, CTRI

[JRice@triohio.org](mailto:JRice@triohio.org)

Raegan Eltzroth, CTRI

[REltzroth@triohio.org](mailto:REltzroth@triohio.org)

Debbie Francis, CTRI

[DFrancis@triohio.org](mailto:DFrancis@triohio.org)

Lora Melin, CTRI & ESMHL

[LMelin@triohio.org](mailto:LMelin@triohio.org)

Christine Pirot, CTRI

[CPirot@triohio.org](mailto:CPirot@triohio.org)

Stephanie Slepicka, CTRI & ESMHL

[SSlepicka@triohio.org](mailto:SSlepicka@triohio.org)

Susan Lewis, CTRI

[SLewis@triohio.org](mailto:SLewis@triohio.org)

Javonne Mullins, CTRI

[JMullins@triohio.org](mailto:JMullins@triohio.org)

Caroline Delaney, CTRI

[CDelaney@triohio.org](mailto:CDelaney@triohio.org)

Makayla Barton, CTRI In-Training

[MGrooms@triohio.org](mailto:MGrooms@triohio.org)

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