



PATH International Premier Accredited Center

Volunteer Handbook



Professional Association of Therapeutic
Horsemanship International

EQUI-LIBRIUM THERAPY CENTER

Mission Statement

To provide exceptional accredited equine-assisted therapy services, improving the quality of life for those in the Ozarks.

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of all of our program's supporters.

Equi-Librium Therapy Center (ETC) Contact Information

Equi-Librium Therapy Center
1148 South Courtney Ln.
Rogersville, MO 65742

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Staff Contact Information

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Welcome to the Equi-Librium Therapy Center

Thank you for serving as a volunteer; this program would not be possible without your assistance. This informational booklet, along with the training sessions, should answer many questions. However, always feel free to ask for clarification from the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) Certified Instructors (CTRI) or the ETC Director.

For some of you, this will be your first time around horses, individuals with disabilities, or both. PATH Intl. has established many guidelines and standards to improve the safety and comfort of clients, volunteers, and horses. These guidelines and standards must be followed.

About the Equi-Librium Therapy Center

The Equi-Librium Therapy Center (ETC) enjoys support from a number of organizations in the region. We provide equine-assisted therapy services to clients aged two years old and older with various disabilities through our Therapeutic Riding, Hippotherapy, and Equine-Facilitated Learning programs.

The movement of the horse promotes the three-dimensional movements of the human body, thus improving balance and coordination, as well as increasing muscle strength and muscle tone. Equine-assisted activities also enhance physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills and increase confidence. Clients benefit from the friendships developed with the horses, peers, and the volunteers who make these programs possible.

Sessions are held during the spring, summer, and fall semesters. During each lesson or session, clients will spend approximately 45 minutes to one hour doing mounted riding and groundwork with a horse.

Lessons are located at 1148 South Courtney Ln., Rogersville, MO 65472.

To find the center with a GPS, use the following address instead: 8710 E. State Hwy AD.

ETC follows Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) safety standards and admission requirements.

PATH Intl. Membership

You can take an active role in and learn more about therapeutic riding by becoming a PATH Intl. member. There are several types of memberships available, each with different benefits; two options are listed below:

Individual Membership

PATH Intl. Individual Members include riding instructors, therapists, physicians, administrators, and individuals who wish to support therapeutic riding activities. Becoming a PATH Intl. Individual Member is a great way to receive access to informational resources and to learn more about this growing industry. The membership dues are paid annually or paid as a one-time fee for a lifetime membership.

Professional Membership

All PATH Intl. Individual Members will have the opportunity to upgrade their PATH Intl. Individual Membership to a PATH Intl. Professional Membership. This new category enhances your membership by including membership in one of six special interest sections.

For information on becoming a PATH Intl. member, additional membership options, and special interest membership opportunities, please visit the PATH Intl. website at www.pathintl.org.

ETC Volunteer Job Descriptions

All volunteers, whether experienced or not, are trained by the ETC staff. **New volunteers are required to complete volunteer training.** All volunteers must complete the ETC Volunteer Forms Packet supplied by ETC at the end of this handbook. Volunteers must also complete volunteer training before being allowed to volunteer during equine-assisted activities. Volunteer forms must be renewed annually. Volunteers are assigned to tasks after initial volunteer training and evaluation of their skills. Volunteers can be assigned various roles or be removed from the program if deemed necessary by PATH Intl. CRI and the Program Director.

Horse Handlers (must be approved by ETC PATH Intl. Instructors)

A Horse Handler's first responsibility is to focus on the horse and the horse's comfort level, but also must maintain an awareness of the rider, instructor, sidewalkers, and environment. This is an important component of horse handling. The handler will follow the ETC PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor's (CTRI) directions and guide the horse. The ETC PATH Intl. CTRI has control of the arena at all times. If an incident occurs, and an emergency dismount is completed, it is the handler's responsibility to stay with the horse and not the client.

Horse Handlers are assigned based on their ability, awareness, knowledge of handling practices and maturity as seen by ETC Director, Program Assistant, and/or ETC PATH Intl. CTRI.

Sidewalkers

The Sidewalker works directly with the clients by walking alongside the horse and rider during the session. Sidewalkers offer the client extra support if needed, a feeling of security, peer interaction, and assistance if deemed necessary by the ETC PATH Intl. CTRI. A Sidewalker's first priority is the safety of the client; therefore, the Sidewalker never leaves the client unattended. The Sidewalker will need some endurance and physical strength as sessions are an hour and will require walking or some slight jogging alongside the rider. Sidewalkers greet clients as they enter the center and assist them with putting their helmet on and preparing for the lesson. All riders must have helmets on before entering the arena. Sidewalkers stay with the client until the ETC PATH Intl. CTRI calls for them to enter the mounting area, and they return the client to his or her parents and/or guardians once the lesson is complete. In the instance of an emergency dismount, the Sidewalker's responsibility is to maintain contact with the client and to remove the client safely from the situation.

Sidewalkers are assigned to riders and equine partners based on their abilities and size in relation to their ability to secure the rider and assist in the case of an emergency dismount. Sidewalkers are also assigned based upon their skills and experience, such as the ability to communicate through sign language with a rider or past experience volunteering with a specific rider.

Rules for All Volunteers

The following guidelines are not debatable:

- All volunteers must complete the volunteer training process and complete the volunteer forms packet.
- The ETC PATH Intl. instructors are in absolute control of the ring.
- Helmets must be worn and secured at all times while mounted. All safety regulations must be followed.
- Any injury or incident must be reported immediately to the instructor and an incident report completed.
- All volunteers are required to start out as Sidewalkers unless authorized by ETC Path Intl. instructors.

Safe and appropriate clothing must be worn at all times. For example, closed-toed shoes must be worn at all times when around horses. No overly exposed tank tops, clothes with holes, long earrings, etc. Cell phones are not allowed and must remain outside of the arena and turned off or in silent mode.

If volunteers or guests become disruptive to the activities, clients, or other volunteers, they will be asked to stop the behavior immediately by the ETC Director, Program Assistant, or PATH Intl. CRI. If the behavior continues or is a threat to program participants (volunteers or equine), they will be asked to leave the premises. If necessary, authorities will be notified and emergency procedures followed.

When You Meet an Individual with a Disability

1. Relax and treat him or her like any other person.
2. Talk about the same things you would discuss with anyone else.
3. Treat the individual as an equal.
4. Do not expect less from a person with a disability. You may be surprised at how wrong you are when judging his or her interests and abilities.
5. Enjoy your friendship.
6. It is against confidentiality rules to ask the clients about their disabilities. If they do talk about it, or if you hear medical information during the session, remember it is private and protected under ETC, PATH Intl., and HIPAA regulations.
7. If the individual is in a wheelchair or using crutches, walkers, or other specialized equipment, do not separate them from that equipment. This is not a volunteer's responsibility. All transferring during ETC activities will be done by the PATH Intl. Certified Instructor.
8. Do not make up your mind about the person with a disability before getting to know him or her.

Basic Horse Safety Rules

1. Never approach a horse directly from the rear. Even in a stall, the horse should turn to face you.
2. Approach your horse at his shoulder, talking in a calm voice. **REMEMBER:** Horses are creatures of **REACTION** (fight or flight), so always let the horse know where you are.
3. **REMEMBER**, horses cannot see your hand when you pat their noses, and this may cause them to jerk their heads up. Keep your head in a protected position when handling a horse.
4. Use a lead rope and both hands when leading. The excess lead rope should be folded (**NEVER WRAPPED OR LOOPED**) and held in the hand farthest from the horse.
5. Do not allow the lead rope or reins to drag on or near the ground.
6. Always lead the horse between the throatlatch and the shoulder.
7. Do not pull down on the lead rope because this causes pressure on the horse's head and can make him irritable.
8. If the horse will not move, try turning his head away from you.
9. Always walk **AROUND** the horse, preferably in front, unless he is tied to the rail.
10. **NEVER** duck under or step over the lead rope.
11. **ALWAYS** tie the horse with a lead rope (**NEVER** the reins) at wither height to a strong pole.
12. If walking behind your horse, either walk **BODY TO BODY** with your hand on the horse's rump, or at least 15 feet away.
13. When releasing a horse, always turn him to face you, stand at his side, and pat him quietly before removing the halter.
14. Never yell and try to make the horse run from you. In turning, he may kick out or knock you down. Make sure you have room to move away quickly if necessary.
15. Make sure all gates and doors are always closed and secured. If it is open, close it.
16. Keep tack and equipment off the ground and in their proper places. Do not leave things where people or horses could damage or be hurt by them.
17. **NEVER** squat, sit, or kneel near a horse.
18. **THINK SAFETY!** The student will be more likely to do as you do.

Signing up for Volunteer Times

Sign-up sheets for each separate lesson time and date will be available during the duration of the ETC session through our **Facebook** group. If volunteers do not have a Facebook account, they may schedule their volunteer times via e-mail with the current Volunteer Coordinator. (Volunteers will receive this information at the volunteer training.) To sign up for a volunteer time on Facebook, follow these steps:

1. Access the Google Docs schedule on the ETC Facebook group.
2. Find the dates and times you can participate.
3. Add your name to the schedule.
4. Be sure to sign up for each separate lesson time you are available.
5. Session sign-up sheet will be posted one month at a time.
6. Try to be consistent each week. The clients and their families appreciate this and it allows for relationship building.
7. The Volunteer Coordinator will record all volunteer hours as they are completed.

We will count on your participation if your name is on the sign-up sheet!

All volunteers are expected to be on time when scheduled. If you are unable to attend the scheduled session, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator so arrangements can be made for a replacement. **Twenty-four hour notice** needs to be given if you are unable to attend a scheduled session. After 3 consecutive cancellations or 2 no shows, the Volunteer Coordinator will contact you to see if ETC is the best place for you to volunteer. Volunteers who are unable to complete their responsibilities or disrupt the sessions may be asked to leave the facility.

Sessions are made possible because of you! The clients love and appreciate you!

Be courteous. Show up. Be on time.

THANK YOU!

ETC Emergency Procedures

In the case of any emergency during ETC services, the ETC PATH Intl. CTRI and/or the ETC Director will determine the type of emergency and the action needed. They then will direct and supervise the action response. No one, parents included, is allowed in the arena unless summoned by the instructor.

The emergency action plan includes the following steps:

1. Horse Handlers halt and take control of all horses.
2. Sidewalkers stabilize all riders, even those not involved in the incident or emergency.
3. If riders need to dismount, they will do so as directed and assisted by the ETC PATH Intl. CTRI.
4. Sidewalkers will then lead riders out of the arena. Horses will be removed once the riders are out of danger.
5. Incident forms will be completed by ETC PATH Intl. CTRI, other volunteers, and staff members involved in the incident and returned to the ETC Director or Program Assistant for documentation. Copies of completed incident forms are kept for three years from the date signed. Blank incident forms are kept with ETC paperwork at the barn.

This is a 911 area. 911 is the number to call if fire, police, or medical assistance is needed. Provide the following information to the 911 dispatcher:

Equi-Librium Therapy Center
1148 South Courtney Ln. Rogersville, MO 65742

GPS – 8710 E. State Hwy AD

Facility phone number is: 417-830-1409

Fire

ETC PATH Intl. CTRI will direct volunteers and dismount riders. Volunteers will stay with riders and follow ETC PATH Intl. CTRI instructions to exit arena at the nearest exit and meet in the parking lot, safely away from the building, trees, or bushes. Depending on the fire location and severity, horses will be removed from harm by ETC staff according to policies.

Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are provided and maintained by ETC. ETC personnel are informed of fire extinguisher locations during the orientation and training process.

Tornado

ETC PATH Intl. CTRI will direct volunteers and dismount riders. Volunteers will stay with riders. The tornado shelter is the hallway of the resident's house. Once the riders are out of the arena, horses will be released into the arena (after all lead ropes and bridles taken off). Horse Handlers and staff will then join the rest of the group in the shelter.

Facility Operations

ETC policy is to be followed regarding all issues related to the facility. ETC PATH Intl. CTRI will give volunteers instructions.

First Aid Kits

Both human and equine first aid kits are kept at the barn. The human first aid kit is kept with ETC paperwork and materials at the sign-in table, and the equine first aid kit is kept in a designated spot in the ETC tack room. All ETC staff members are informed of the location of each kit during the orientation and training process. If you need a first aid kit, notify the ETC Director, Program Assistant, or ETC PATH Intl. CTRI.

Volunteer Forms Packet

Volunteer packets are also available on ETC's website at www.etctherapy.org. The packets can also be requested at any time from the Volunteer Coordinator by new volunteers as well as by returning volunteers who need to update information and waivers. All forms must be completed prior to volunteer training and becoming an active ETC volunteer. All volunteer forms must be renewed annually.

The following forms must be completed by each volunteer:

- Volunteer Information
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Consent/Non-Consent Plan
- Liability Release
- Photo Release

Equi-Librium Therapy Center

Volunteer Information

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

DOB: _____ Height: _____

How did you learn about ETC? _____

Check the areas you are interested in as a volunteer:

All volunteers will start out as Sidewalkers unless authorized by ETC instructors.

- Sidewalker**
- Horse Handler** (must be trained/approved by ETC Instructors)
- Arena, Stable, and Tack Preparation**
- Fundraising/Marketing**

Student Internship Opportunities (for students who need many hours for internship requirements)

- Volunteer Recruitment**
- Administrative**
- Photography/Video**
- Other Opportunities to Volunteer for ETC**

Equi-Librium Therapy Center

Confidentiality Agreement

I understand that all information (written and verbal) about participants at this PATH Intl. member center is confidential and will not be shared with anyone without the express written consent of the participant and the parent or legal guardian in case of a minor.

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____
(Parent or Legal Guardian if under 18)

Equi-Librium Therapy Center

AUTHORIZATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

Participant Volunteer Staff
(Please Circle One)

Printed Name _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Address _____

Emergency Contact _____

Relationship _____ Phone _____

Physician _____ Phone _____

Preferred Medical Facility _____

Health Insurance Co. _____

Policy Number _____

List any Medical Conditions You Currently Have _____

Current Medications _____

Medication Allergies _____

Other Allergies _____

In the event emergency medical aid/treatment is required, I give permission to Equi-Librium Therapy Center to secure medical treatment and transportation if needed and to release records upon request to the authorized individual or agency involved in the medical emergency treatment.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

(Parent or Legal Guardian if under 18)

Equi-Librium Therapy Center

Participant Volunteer Staff
(Please Circle One)

Consent Plan

I give my consent for emergency medical treatment/aid in the case of illness or injury during the process of providing services or while being on the property of the agency. This authorization includes x-ray, surgery, hospitalization, medication, and any treatment procedure deemed “lifesaving” by the physician. This provision will only be invoked if the Emergency Contacts cannot be reached.

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

(Parent or Legal Guardian if under 18)

Non-Consent Plan

I do not give my consent for emergency medical treatment/aid in the case of illness or injury during the process of providing services or while being on the property of the agency. In the event emergency treatment/aid is required, I wish the following procedures to take place:

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

(Parent or Legal Guardian if under 18)

Equi-Librium Therapy Center

Liability Release

WARNING

Under Missouri law, an equine professional is not liable for an injury to or death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities pursuant to the Revised Statutes of Missouri. Section A Chapter 537.325

As a participant/volunteer/staff member of Equi-Librium Therapy Center, I have been informed and acknowledge the risks and potential risks of a horseback riding program. However, I feel that the possible benefits are greater than the risks assumed. I hereby, intending to be legally bound, for myself, my heirs and assigns, executors or administrators, waive and release forever all claims for damages against Equi-Librium Therapy Center, its Board of Directors, Instructors, Therapists, Volunteers and/or Employees for any and all injuries and/or losses I may sustain while participating in Equi-Librium Therapy Center.

I declare that I will take all necessary and/or recommended precautions to insure my own person against physical and/or mental injury and property loss or damage. This includes, but is not limited to, following printed or verbal instructions given by the activity leaders.

I further declare that I participated in this activity of my own free will and assume responsibility for my actions or behaviors that may conflict with accepted standards, Equi-Librium Therapy Center requirements for participation, common sense, or the instructions I receive from activity leaders either before or during said activity. I do hereby affirm that I am covered under my guardian's medical policy or otherwise have adequate medical insurance.

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

(Parent or Legal Guardian if under 18)

Equi-Librium Therapy Center

Photo Release

I **do/do not** (circle one) consent to and authorize the use and reproduction by Equi-Librium Therapy Center of any and all photographs and any other audiovisual materials taken of me for promotional material, educational activities, exhibitions, or for any other use for the benefit of the program.

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____
(Parent or Legal Guardian if under 18)