

# Beyond Limits Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

## Volunteer Manual

2017

### **Our Mission Statement:**

*To provide therapeutic horseback riding and other services for children and adults that promote and enrich their physical, developmental, psychological, and social well-being to encourage them to reach beyond limits.*

Physical Address: Watkins Farm  
281 Cass-White Road  
Cartersville, GA 30121

Phone: 770-907-5737

Email: [info@beyondlimitsriding.org](mailto:info@beyondlimitsriding.org)

Website: [www.beyondlimitsriding.org](http://www.beyondlimitsriding.org)

## Volunteers are Vitally Important

A volunteer is an individual who gives the gift of his/her time for the benefit of others. The volunteer plays a crucial role and takes an active part in making the program work. Many riders, especially in the beginning stages of riding, simply could not ride without the assistance of volunteers. Some of the riders need as many as three volunteers all working together, so you can begin to understand how valuable your volunteer time is.

You are in good company! Most of our volunteers:

- Love and admire horses
- Enjoy working with people with disabilities or special needs and/or
- Have a strong desire to help others

It is very exciting to watch students develop their riding skills and become physically stronger over time, while achieving improved self-esteem and confidence. We hope your experience at Beyond Limits will bring you satisfaction, personal growth and fulfillment.

Safety is our first priority!

A Volunteer ...

- Is required to attend a volunteer training or be trained on the job in certain situations.
- Must fill out and sign all paperwork, if under 18 needs to be signed by a parent/guardian. Paperwork must be reviewed and updated annually.
- Must have proof of current health insurance.
- May be asked to have a background check performed
- Any volunteers with community service are required to attend volunteer training and a set amount of session for volunteering. \* We reserve the right to not accept community service individuals.
- Is the SAFETY MONITOR and the extra set of hands for the instructor or therapist.
- Should be attentive to surroundings at all times.
- Should know the responsibilities and expectations of a leader and a side walker.
- Should be familiar with all Emergency Procedures.
- Should try to volunteer on a regular basis in order to experience the benefits of the program. One of these benefits is the special bond made with riders and other volunteers.
- Must be physically fit to walk approximately one hour and jog occasionally. Must be able to hold arms up at shoulder height to support a rider when necessary.
- Should NOT HANDLE THE RIDERS unless given specific instructions by the instructor or therapist. Handling a rider without knowledge of his/her disability could be harmful to the rider.
- Should be prompt and dependable.

## What We Do

### Hippotherapy:

“Hippotherapy is a physical, occupational, and speech-language therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement as part of an integrated intervention program to achieve functional outcomes. Equine movement provides multidimensional movement, which is variable, rhythmic and repetitive. The horse provides a dynamic base of support, making it an excellent tool for increasing trunk strength and control, balance, building overall postural strength and endurance, addressing weight bearing, and motor planning. Equine movement offers well-modulated sensory input to vestibular, proprioceptive, tactile and visual channels. During gait transitions, the patient must perform subtle adjustments in the trunk to maintain a stable position. When a patient is sitting forward astride the horse, the horse’s walking gait imparts movement responses remarkably similar to normal human gait. The effects of equine movement on postural control, sensory systems, and motor planning can be used to facilitate coordination and timing, grading of responses, respiratory control, sensory integration skills and attention skills. Equine movement can be used to facilitate the neurophysiologic systems that support all of our functional daily living skills.” -<http://www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org>

### Therapeutic Riding:

“Therapeutic riding uses equine-assisted activities for the purpose of contributing positively to cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities. Therapeutic riding provides benefits in the areas of health, education, sport and recreation & leisure. Throughout the world, there are thousands of individuals with special needs who experience the rewarding benefits of horseback riding. A disability does not have to limit a person from riding horses. In fact, experiencing the motion of a horse can be very therapeutic. Because horseback riding rhythmically moves the rider’s body in a manner similar to a human gait, riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance and muscle strength. In addition to the therapeutic benefits, horseback riding also provides recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors.” - <http://www.pathintl.org>

### Fundraising:

Fundraising is an important part of Beyond Limits Therapeutic Riding, Inc. This allows the program to run smoothly and be able to reach more people. It is very important to have volunteer help in planning, running and cleaning up after fundraisers.

## ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

You should arrive at least 15 minutes before the class is scheduled to start. Upon arrival each time you come to volunteer, you will want to do the following:

- Bring horse in and tack according to therapist request.
- Let therapist know you have arrived.
- Check the posted volunteer schedule to see what rider you will be working with. NOTE: This can change with rider cancellations or at the instructor's discretion.
- Following riding classes, put up tack and supplies used. Untack and turn horse out.
- On the "Volunteer Hours" sheet, posted outside the Barn Lounge, record the time (in hours/minutes) you volunteer on that day.

## SCHEDULING PROCEDURES

ALL scheduling of volunteers is done through the Volunteer Coordinator.

If you have a last-minute emergency and cannot make it for your scheduled time, please call Beyond Limits at 678-907-1843. If there is no answer, please leave a voicemail message.

If you need to make a change in your schedule that is NOT last minute, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

If you are going to be late for your scheduled class, please notify Beyond Limits and let us know your estimated time of arrival.

In the event that any or all classes are canceled at Beyond Limits, a staff member will notify the Volunteer Coordinator, and the VC will call volunteers as quickly as possible. Please make sure we have a contact number where you can be reached at the last minute. If you have not heard from us and have questions about weather conditions, please call Beyond Limits.

## SAFETY POLICIES

**SMOKING AND ALCOHOL:** Are not allowed within any structure on Beyond Limit's property. Volunteers are asked not to consume alcohol immediately prior to coming.

**PARKING:** Only park in designated parking areas, leaving close spaces for the Beyond Limit Riders/Clients.

**CELLULAR PHONES:** Are not permitted during a session, in the riding arenas or on the trails.

**REFRESHMENTS:** Refrain from chewing gum or candy at the barn, in front of riders.

**PETS:** With the exception of service animals, please leave pets at home.

**FAMILY AND FRIENDS:** Only certified personnel and trained volunteers are allowed in the barn. All visitors should remain in the parking area and designated viewing areas. An adult must attend children of volunteers while volunteers are in classes or working in the barn.

**NO ONE PERSON WITH ONE RIDER:** All volunteers are asked to never be alone with a rider. Should you be asked to take a rider somewhere, make sure you are in a group situation at all times.

**EQUIPMENT:** Must be put in its designated place after each lesson. Please notify a staff member if you see a safety hazard or wear/tear in equipment

**FEEDING HORSES:** Do not feed the horses prior to a session. Treats may be given after, only if approved. Do not feed the horses unless you are asked to do so or it is your assigned time to. Many horses are on strict diets or may colic. Please never feed a horse or give a treat without prior permission as it could make the horse sick.

**LISTEN TO THE INSTRUCTOR:** At all times. You must be aware of your rider's instructions.

**RIDER:** Make sure your rider is wearing proper attire before taking him/her into the barn, long pants, sturdy shoes(no open toes or flip flops), and helmet.

**VOLUNTEER ATTIRE: DRESS FOR THE WEATHER!!**

All volunteers must wear protective footwear, a leather boot is recommended or another close-toed shoe that will not hold sand from the arena. Any type of sandal or open-toed shoe is not permitted!

Please respect the following guidelines:

- No open-toed shoes of any style
- Beyond Limits T-shirt is suggested
- No dangling jewelry
- No perfume (attracts bugs/some participants may have allergies)
- No "skimpy" tops (ex. halter tops/tube tops)
- Modest shorts are permitted.
- No obscene logos

Please keep in mind Beyond Limits is a professional organization and may often have unannounced visits or media opportunities. Please dress comfortably yet sensibly.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Horse Leader**

The leader is responsible for maintaining control of the horse, but also needs to stay tuned in to the rest of the TEAM. Pay attention to safety at all times.

Position:

- Walk on the left hand side of the horse's head- between the horse's head & shoulder unless otherwise asked.
- Lay the loose end of the lead rope across the palm of your hand

- Hold the rope lightly with your right hand about 10 inches from snap- **leave slack in the rope.**
- Allow the horse to move head freely up and down as they walk- **DO NOT HANG ON THE LEAD ROPE.** This rhythmical movement starts at the head and moves all the way down the horse's spine- this movement is what makes horseback riding therapeutic. If the leader interferes with the horse's head the body stiffens up and there is no benefit from the horse's movement. Also, if you continuously constrict the movement of the horse's head they may become increasingly annoyed.
- Keep your attention focused ahead of you
- Do not attempt to drag the horse, don't look him right in the eye – look forward in the direction of your movement.
- Use your voice "walk-on" or "whoa" instead of pulling on the lead rope
- During times a horse must stand still, remain relaxed and in front of them. Avoid clamping down on their head, this will cause tension and they may react by backing away from you.
- If there is ever a problem with the horse you are working with, please bring it to our attention.

### **Side-Walkers**

The responsibility of the side-walker is to help ensure safety of the rider throughout the lesson. You may be asked to provide physical support, as well as assist them in completing tasks when they need assistance.

The side-walker will:

- Walk right beside the rider's lower leg, close enough to provide stability when needed.
- Never leave your position next to the rider. If you need to stop for any reason the whole team stops with you.
- Inform the instructor if you cannot continue your role of sidewalker for any reason.
- Reinforce what the instructor says and make sure the rider hears and understands what the instructor is asking.
- You may need to encourage, calm, reassure or divert the rider's attention to the instructor, be helpful but do not interfere.
- **DO NOT LEAN ON THE HORSE OR PONY OR POKE HIM WITH YOUR ELBOW.**
- Walk or run in position to provide physical support as necessary
- Be constantly alert to the possible need of instantaneous help
- Remind instructor if you need to change sides in case your arms get tired
- Keep your eyes on the rider and in the direction you are going.
- **DO NOT** interfere with the horse by petting, poking, leaning or bumping. Allow the leader to do the job of moving the horse forward.
- When a rider requires only one side-walker, walk on the right unless otherwise directed. This puts a volunteer on either side of the horse for security.

### **Thigh-Hold**

This is the most common support for riders who need stabilizing support, the side-walkers may be asked to use a thigh-hold. With the arm that is nearest the rider, reach up and grip the front edge or flap of the saddle in a spot that will put your lower arm across the rider's thigh, apply light pressure to provide stability but not enough pressure to cause discomfort. Some riders who do not need the thigh-hold during the walk may need it at the trot. The instructor will let you

know when to use it. If your rider is tactilely defensive, you should say, "I am going to put my arm on your leg." The instructor will let you know if this is called for.

### **Combined Leader/Side-Walker**

If your rider has good balance and has reached a certain level of riding competence, they may be assigned only one volunteer, a leader. Your responsibilities now include both the horse and rider. As the rider approaches independence on the horse, your job is to be reinforcement and a security resource.

### **Mounting and Dismounting**

**All mounting and dismounting is completed by the instructor**, volunteer assistance will be called upon when necessary. As a leader, you will need to be aware of how to lead a horse into the ramp and to the block. Sidewalkers are often needed to stand on the off side of the mount to help the rider bring the leg over the saddle or simply be an additional safety as they mount. During a dismount, leaders must stabilize the horse while the sidewalkers may be needed to help position the rider for a safe dismount. As always, follow the directions given by the instructor.

If the rider you are working with requires an emergency dismount, get the attention of the instructor and proceed with dismounting quickly and as safely as possible.

### **FALLS OFF THE HORSE**

Although we do everything we can to prevent a fall, they do sometimes happen. If this should happen, the horse-leader immediately moves the horse away from the fallen rider. This will prevent the horse from accidentally stepping on the rider. The side-walker opposite the falling rider moves quickly away, allowing the horse an escape. The side-walker on the side of the fall may be able to assist the rider to the ground, however we realize that this is not possible at all times, please do not do anything that may cause additional injury to the rider or to yourself. The instructor will attend to the fallen rider.

When a problem arises, all other horses should halt where they are. Facing the other horses toward the accident will help them stay calm. Volunteers wait for instructions from the instructor.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Be Calm, Be Alert, Be in Charge**

#### **IN AN EMERGENCY**

1. In case of an emergency or of potential problems, remain calm and at your appropriate position. This means that the **leader** is responsible for the horse and must stay at the horse's head. The **sidewalker(s)** place an arm across the rider's thigh. **Any other riders in the arena shall halt** and wait for instruction from the instructor.
2. If asked for a **safety dismount** by the instructor: for a light rider, the **sidewalker** will ask the rider to free their feet from the stirrups or manually free the rider's feet from the stirrups and check to make sure they are free; they will wrap their arms around the rider's waist and pull the rider off the horse, moving the rider to a safe position. A heavy rider on a larger horse may require assistance from other **sidewalker(s)**.

3. In case of a fall, the **instructor** will take care of the rider.
4. As a **leader**, if a rider falls, your only concern is the horse you are leading. **Never let go of your horse**. As a **sidewalker**, do not leap at or grab at the rider, it may startle the horse.
5. If only a **leader** is present, they will first secure the horse in and then proceed to call **911** if requested by the **instructor**, or further assist the instructor. The **instructor** will stay with the fallen rider.
6. In the case of an injury, the uninjured rider will be dismounted if necessary, and secure their horses and return to their parent or caregiver, or will be accompanied by a **volunteer** to an appropriate place to wait.
7. If **emergency aid** is required and the rider is an adult without a parent or guardian, someone will be instructed to obtain the emergency forms in the file cabinet
8. In the case of a **fall or injury**, the **instructor** will fill out an incident report after everything is taken care of.
9. In case of a natural disaster or disruption, all riders will be dismounted, horses secured or turned out and all participants, personnel and others will gather on the back deck for further instructions.

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

911: Police, Fire, Injury

**Farm Address: 281 Cass-White Road Cartersville, GA 30121**

Carol's Cell: 770-286-6639

Kristen's Cell: 678-485-9564

Kimberly's Cell: 678-907-1843

- STAY CALM
  - BE ACCURATE
  - LOCATION OF EMERGENCY
  - TELEPHONE NUMBER OF PHONE BEING USED
  - NUMBER OF VICTIMS
  - VICTIM'S CONDITION
  - THE HELP BEING GIVEN
  - THE CALLER'S NAME
  - WHAT HAPPENED
  - ASK EMS TO TURN OFF SIRENS WHEN THEY REACH THE FARM
- REMEMBER: DO NOT HANG UP FIRST - DISPATCHER MAY NEED MORE INFORMATION

## **GENERAL BARN RULES**

**In addition to the posted Barn Rules, Volunteers must follow these:**

1. Volunteers should always follow the direction of the supervising barn staff member.
2. Excessive noise or commotion in or around the stable or riding arena is not permitted.
3. All children must be kept under the supervision of an adult at all times. Volunteer must never be alone with a rider in a private area.
4. All riders, volunteers, & guests must sign a release of liability.
5. Appropriate footwear should be worn around the horses and farm. Sandals/open toed shoes not permitted.



6. The barn and grounds should be kept neat & orderly at all times. Unused equipment must be kept in its proper place. Aisle-ways should be kept clear of wheelbarrows, pitchforks, etc.
7. Manure should be removed from aisle way or around the stable immediately.
8. No photos, videos, or media of any kind without permission of all involved.
9. Respect the boarders and students at Watkins Farm
10. Keep all gates closed and latched unless otherwise specified.
11. Hay loft, pastures, stalls and farm equipment are out of bounds unless accompanied or invited by a staff member. Volunteers should follow the direction of the supervising barn staff member.

## **HORSE RULES**

1. No changes to horse's equipment, appearance, feeding or exercise program without the direct approval of the staff.
2. NO TREATS ARE PERMITTED TO BE GIVEN TO ANY HORSE AT ANY TIME without permission from staff.
3. If you see any injury or abnormality on any horse, please notify staff member immediately.
4. Do not enter stall or fields that contain horses unless you have been asked to do so by a member of the staff.
5. Speak respectfully about and to the horses.
6. Not all horses belong to Beyond Limits, do not mess with any horse unless you have permission to do so.

## **HONORING CONFIDENTIALITY**

Details of volunteers and rider's condition and/or progress should not be discussed with any individual outside of the program

## **DISMISSAL POLICY**

While on the property all personnel, staff, volunteers, riders, families, and guests are expected to abide by the rules and policies. Personnel problems will be addressed by the Executive Director (ED) or Instructor (if ED is not available). If any individual exhibits behavior deemed unacceptable, the staff member present will dismiss the individual for the remainder of the day and the issue will be taken with the ED. Beyond Limits maintains the right to ask any individual to discontinue their service to the program or to dismiss any individual from our program who is not following rules and policies.

- Disruption of a class
- Unacceptable or unsafe behavior
- Inappropriate sexual comments or sexual misconduct in any form
- Inappropriate relationship or contact with a rider, volunteer, staff member or guest.
- Showing any form of disrespect to instructors, riders, or other volunteers or animals
- Carrying out unsafe actions that put an individual at risk
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or any other illegal substances on the property
- Failure to adhere to program policies
- Inattentiveness to tasks is unacceptable
- Swearing or inappropriate language
- Rough-housing and inattentive socializing
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness
- Breach of confidentiality

## **VOLUNTEER COMMUNICATION**

Volunteers should maintain open and respectful communication with one another and staff so to ensure a safe and happy working environment. If a resolution between volunteers cannot be reached by discussing the issues at hand, volunteers should arrange a meeting with the instructors. If the concern, problem, or issue is not properly addressed, volunteers should contact the Executive Director in person, phone or by email. Any information discussed in an open communication meeting is considered to be confidential to the fullest extent possible. Retaliation against any volunteer for inappropriate usage of open communication channels is unacceptable.

It is our hope that this handbook will serve as a useful reference for both new and continuing volunteers. And, as always, if you have any questions, just ask.

## 2017 Volunteer Manual

I have read and understood the Volunteer Manual in its entirety. I agree to abide by all rules and guidelines set forth and understand that I may be dismissed at any time if I fail to follow such.

I \_\_\_\_\_, understand that horseback riding is a high-risk sport and I am participating at my own risk. I hereby assume this risk and further more hereby release, and hold harmless Beyond Limits Therapeutic Riding Inc., its employees, volunteers, and the owners of any property on which I will ride and or volunteer, from all liability for negligence resulting in accidents, damage, injury, illness, or death to myself or my property, including the horse(s) which I will ride at this stable.

### Warning

**Under Georgia law, an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for any injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from, the inherent risks of equine activities, pursuant to chapter 12 of Title 4 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.**

Volunteer Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Volunteer**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parent/Guardian if volunteer is under 18 years of age (If volunteer is under 18 years of age, both signatures are required)**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Beyond Limits Riding Therapy, INC.

**CONTACT INFORMATION FOR BEYOND LIMITS THERAPEUTIC RIDING, INC.**

**Carol Garcia-Vicens, Volunteer Coordinator**

**Cell: 770- 286-6639**

**[carol@beyondlimitsriding.org](mailto:carol@beyondlimitsriding.org)**

**Kimberly Oviedo, Executive Director, Beyond Limits**

**Cell : 678-907-1843**

**Home: 678-354-6786**

**[Kimberly@beyondlimitsriding.org](mailto:Kimberly@beyondlimitsriding.org)**

**Kristen Moreland, PATH Certified Instructor, Beyond Limits**

**Cell: 678-485-9564**

**Home: 678-402-5795**

**[kris@beyondlimitsriding.org](mailto:kris@beyondlimitsriding.org)**

**Howard Oviedo, Additional Emergency Contact Beyond Limits**

**Cell: 678-907-1791**

**[howie@beyondlimitsriding.org](mailto:howie@beyondlimitsriding.org)**

**VETS:**

**Sue Hamilton 770-547-4650**

**Kirk Underwood 770-447-3927**

**Dentist/Vet: Marcus Hardin 706-202-5476**

**Farrier:**

**Johnathan Watkins 678-848-5480**