



BLUE SKY

Therapeutic Riding & Respite

www.blueskytexas.org

WELCOME TO BLUE SKY!

Thank you for volunteering at Blue Sky Therapeutic Riding and Respite. Volunteers are vital to the success of this program!

During your time at Blue Sky you will hear three little words over and over again:

SAFE* HAPPY * HEALTHY

These three words are our overall goal here at Blue Sky. Safe, happy and healthy are not words only for our riders, but for our rider's families, our horses, our staff and our valuable volunteers.

We hope your experience at Blue Sky will bring you satisfaction, personal growth and fulfillment. Your spirit of volunteerism is a valuable asset and "thank you" is just not enough to express our appreciation for your time and talents.

BLUE SKY MISSION

To provide a safe, happy and healthy therapeutic community that empowers and propels our special needs citizens and their families to their fullest potential. We serve our valued clients by providing therapeutic horseback riding and respite, vocational and entrepreneurial opportunities.

BLUE SKY VISION

- To grow our therapeutic horsemanship program not only in number of instructors, but also in our level of certification and quality of facilities which will allow us to serve a larger portion of our special needs community and our current riders at the highest level.
- By providing our citizens and their families hope and security for their future, it will allow them the opportunity to flourish and find their voice they so dearly deserve.
- To grow our PURPOSE program and develop vocational & entrepreneurial opportunities in a structured environment...each component allowing the other to thrive and succeed.

BLUE SKY BACKGROUND

Blue Sky Therapeutic Riding and Respite was founded in 2010 by a group of people devoted to developing a comprehensive program to help those living with disabilities. This includes, not only individuals with autism, physical, cognitive or emotional disabilities, but also their siblings, parents and caretakers.

Blue Sky's therapeutic riding center has helped many special needs individuals gain confidence and improve motor skills, cognitive ability and gain valuable life skills. Blue Sky offers the opportunity for riders of all abilities, including siblings of special needs individuals, to ride and compete in special events. We are creating an environment to teach life skills, offer the ability to participate in events such as Special Olympics and offer referrals to community resources and assist and offer support and respite to all members of a family with special needs children. Our plans for future programs include a resource center for families to access quality help and programs and a respite day camp

for individuals of all abilities. We want Blue Sky to become a place of respite, strength and resources for families living the day-to-day challenges of raising a special needs child.

Our goal is to serve this growing need in our community with these programs at minimal or low cost to our families. In addition, we will look to positive and proactive fundraising events and donations to help this community resource continue to expand and serve a vital need. We value the dedication, love and countless hours of work our founder, Julie Coady, put in to making this organization what it is today.

WHAT IS THERAPEUTIC HORSEBACK RIDING?

Therapeutic riding lessons are equestrian skill-based lessons for children and adults with disabilities. The focus of these lessons is horsemanship skill development and progression, while also improving the rider's physical, cognitive and emotional and/or social skills.

These lessons are taught by a certified therapeutic riding instructor, with the assistance of quality volunteer aids. As much as possible, riders participate in pre-mounted and post-mounted horse care. Below are some of the benefits these lessons provide:

Physical Benefits:

- Strengthen muscles
- Improve muscle coordination and motor skills
- Improve balance
- Improve posture
- Increase endurance

Social and Emotional Benefits:

- Self-esteem
- Self-confidence
- Social and Communication Skills
- Relationship Building

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- Overcoming Fear and Anxiety

Cognitive Benefits:

- Following Multi-Step Directions
- Staying on Task
- Horsemanship Skills
- Valuable Life Skills

WHAT IS HIPPO THERAPY?

Hippotherapy is a form of therapy that uses the horse's movement as a means to achieve therapy goals. The movement promotes active responses in the rider and facilitates activation of postural control, balance, and motor and sensory systems. The sessions are conducted by licensed Physical, Occupational or Speech therapists and assisted by a certified therapeutic riding instructor and quality volunteer aids. Although during these lessons, the focus is not on horsemanship skill development, the rider will often times participate in therapeutic riding as well. Examples of some issues that can be addressed during a hippotherapy session are listed below:

- Abnormal muscle tone
- Postural Asymmetry
- Abnormal Reflexes
- Impaired Balance
- Decreased Coordination
- Impaired Sensorimotor Function
- Decreased Trunk Mobility
- Abnormal Limb Function

THE BLUE SKY ENVIRONMENT

There are many things that set us apart from other therapeutic riding centers. We believe in serving the entire family and not just the special needs citizens. Many times the siblings of special needs children get overlooked when in fact they are in need of special attention as well. We want them to feel included in all that we do.

In order to keep a positive and happy environment for all, we need to make sure that we are all using the proper terminology when referring to our riders. Many clients are over the age of 18; referring to them as kids and children is demeaning to them. We should refer to all of Blue Sky's clients as either riders or citizens.

Blue Sky is a family...and we are well aware that families do not always get along and agree with each other. To keep disagreements to a minimum, we ask that you speak directly to the person you are having an issue with before going to someone else. Let's all be open to having healthy conversations rather than making quick judgments. It's important that everyone is heard and they know their thoughts and opinions are valued.

We value and welcome you as a member of the Blue Sky team! We welcome your opinions and ideas on how our volunteer program can be an enriching experience for you. We respectfully ask that everyone remember the three words SAFE * HAPPY * HEALTHY and direct all concerns directly with a Blue Sky staff or board member.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT BLUE SKY

At Blue Sky we have developed 3 different levels of volunteer opportunities. No one level is more important than the other...all 3 are vital to the success of Blue Sky. The only difference in the 3 levels is the amount of training that has taken place in order to do specific jobs and the level of horse knowledge.

The Blue Sky volunteer coordinator will let you know which level for which you qualify. There is some level of training you will be required to do to move to different levels unless otherwise decided by the volunteer coordinator.

Level A Opportunities: (requires no horse knowledge in order to volunteer)

- Barn Maintenance (which includes, lawn upkeep, manure pick up in pastures, cleaning of tack, barn clean up etc)
- PURPOSE Volunteer (being available to take direction from the PURPOSE coordinator, help riders with crafts, gardening, healthy snacks and other PURPOSE activities)
- Administrative (word processing, data entry, writing of thank you notes and other day to day responsibilities that a coordinating a non-profit requires)
- Special Events (serve on event committees and assist with various fundraising activities throughout the year)
- Special Skills (Many volunteers come with special skills such as photography, computer and social media expertise, and grant writing for example. We encourage you to share those talents with us and help us find a special spot for your talents.

Level B Opportunities: (requires minimal to basic horse knowledge)

- Helping with morning and evening feedings of the horses (this requires a feeding course before moving forward)
- Side Walkers (walk beside the horse in lessons and provide physical and/or emotional support to the rider. Side walkers help the rider to successfully reach their lesson goals, as well as ensure rider safety before, during and after the lesson.)
- Horse Helpers (work with the Blue Sky staff to assist with horse care, grooming, feeding and cleaning stalls and paddocks. While these are not glamorous jobs, it is vital for the care of our very important horses)

Level C Opportunities: (requires considerable to advanced horse knowledge)

- Horse Handler/Leader
- Behind the scenes team at horse shows
- Help with transportation of horses.
- Administer medication to horses
- Move horses from pasture to pasture

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS/GENERAL GUIDELINES

Background Check

We are required to run background checks on all people who volunteer at Blue Sky. In order to keep our cost down and make sure we are not spending money on someone who is not planning on volunteering for long, we ask that each new volunteer donate \$25 to Blue Sky in order to cover the cost of their background check. We will keep track of your start date and after 6 months of volunteering you will be reimbursed your \$25.

Sign-In and Recording Hours

Every volunteer will need to sign-in/clock-in to keep track of attendance and hours volunteered. Nametags with first and last names will also be required for each volunteer to wear during their time spent at Blue Sky. You can pick up and put back nametags at the same location where you sign in.

Attendance and Arrival Time

We ask that you arrive 20 minutes prior to the lesson for which you are assisting. This will allow time to sign-in and to assist in having the horse brought to the barn and any last minute instructions or adjustments to tack.

If you are sick or planning to miss a scheduled volunteer opportunity we ask that you give the volunteer coordinator plenty of notice in order to contact someone to take your place. We completely understand that last minute emergencies happen, just please be respectful of the time others have committed to making the lesson take place.

Dogs & Other Pets:

Please leave pets at home for the safety of our horses and riders. Certified Therapy Canines are allowed on leash at all times. Please see staff for permission. Pets are not allowed in the paddocks with the horses.

Confidentiality Policy

Any information in regards to the participants of Blue Sky Therapeutic Riding & Respite including: participants, volunteers, and personnel shall remain privileged and confidential. This information may include but is not limited to any medical, social, personal, and/or financial information. Information concerning riders will be shared with volunteers on a need to know basis. Disclosure of any confidential information shall not be released to anyone not associated with BSTR&R. Volunteers must seek staff permission prior to taking any pictures or videos.

Conduct and Behavior

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a cooperative and appropriate manner at all times. Examples of inappropriate behavior include: any form of harassment, aggressive or abusive behavior to self or others, including horses. Please notify staff immediately if you are subject to any inappropriate behavior. Individuals

exhibiting inappropriate behavior will be requested to leave the property immediately and additional assistance may be called if deemed needed. Inappropriate behavior may result in dismissal from the program. Please notify staff immediately of any concerns regarding the behavior of program horses such as biting, kicking, etc.

Volunteer Dress Code

Volunteers should dress appropriately for the weather, and in clothing that does not restrict movement or vision. All volunteers must wear protective footwear; a leather boot is recommended or another close-toed shoe that will not hold sand from the arena.

Please respect the following guidelines:

- No open-toed shoes of any style
- No dangling jewelry
- No perfume (attracts bugs/some participants may have allergies)
- No halter tops/tube tops
- Modest shorts are permitted, but not recommended due to biting insects
- No obscene logos

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

VOLUNTEER FORMS

At the back of this book you will find all of our volunteer forms that must be signed and turned in to the Blue Sky office prior to volunteering.

- Medical Form
- Release of Liability
- Background Check

GENERAL HORSE KNOWLEDGE, SAFETY AND GUIDELINES

Some Do's and Don'ts

- ❑ Prior to approaching our horses, speak to them so as not to startle them. Always approach from the side; never walk directly at them or behind them. Never run up to them, or chase after them.
- ❑ When speaking to our horses pay attention to your tone; use a cool, calm/soothing voice, or when necessary a firm, assertive voice.
- ❑ Although it is preferred that you try to only walk around the front of a horse when moving from one side to the other, if the horse is tied to a wall, trailer, fence etc. walk around the back of the horse. Please do not duck under the neck and/or tied rope, or step over a lead rope. When walking around the back of a horse, always keep one hand on its rump while speaking to it as you come around. This is so that the horse, which cannot see directly behind itself, will always be aware of your location.
- ❑ Always be aware of where your feet are and where the horse's feet are. In the event a horse does step on your foot, reposition the horse to move off of it, versus trying to pull your foot out from under it's hoof.
- ❑ With the exception of certain mounting procedures and handling exercises, avoid standing directly in front of the horse. If and when they are startled, they may jump forward.
- ❑ Please avoid petting and playing with our horses noses and faces. Both are very sensitive for them and over handling of these areas can cause bad habits such as biting and nipping. If you would like to pet them, please stroke or lightly pat along the neck or shoulder. Heavy patting or slapping is also undesirable when showing affection.
- ❑ Treat feeding is allowed, but **ONLY WITH THE INSTRUCTOR'S PERMISSION**. If you bring treats with you, please avoid allowing the horse to see them, smell them or hear the bag you brought them in, prior to asking the instructor if feeding is ok. Focus is a big part of their job as therapy horses, and if they are busy looking for treats, they are not paying attention to their riders or surroundings.
- ❑ If at any time you see something about a horse that does not look normal to you, please find an instructor or staff member immediately to take a closer look.

Parts of the Horse

When working around horses there are some special words and terms that you will need to know. Some parts of the horse are shown here.

BASIC HORSE TERMINOLOGY

Aids - signals used by a rider to communicate instructions to the horse. Aids may be natural – hands, legs, voice, seat, or artificial – crop, spurs.

Bay - color term for deep brown to blackish colored horse with black mane and tail.

Bit - used to control the horse and generally made of metal, bits attach to the bridle and are placed in the mouth.

Bridle - the complete outfit of headstall, reins, and bit used to guide the horse when riding.

Canter - a three beat gait of the horse, faster than a trot, a bit slower than a gallop.

Cantle - back part of the saddle, behind the seat.

Chestnut - color term used for horse with brownish yellow coat color, mane & tail are usually the same color.

Conformation - structure and general make up of the horse.

Dressage Pad - the largest of the cotton pads which goes under the saddle.

Farrier - profession of trimming and shoeing horses.

Gaits - various movements of the horse at different speeds; e.g. walk, trot and canter.

Gallop - fastest of the horse's gaits. A three beat gait.

Gelding - a male horse that has been castrated and incapable of breeding.

Girth - long strap with buckles on each end, attaches to saddle straps and holds saddle in place.

Girth Cover - soft fabric tube that slides over girth to help prevent horse from getting girth sores.

Grey - color term used for horses with coat color from white to dark grey in color.

Ground poles - wooden pole placed in arena used to school horse and/or practice rider's two-point position.

Grooming - caring for horse's coat includes currying, brushing, and picking feet.

Half Circle & Reverse – change of direction by turning horse toward the center of the ring and back to the rail.

Halter – the leather or nylon bitless headstall used to control the horse when leading in or out to the paddock

Half seat or Two Point Position – rider places hands on horses neck and stands up in stirrups

Hand - a standard unit of measure equal to four inches, in determining the horse's height from the ground to point of the withers.

Hoof or hooves - horses feet.

Lead line - used to lead the horse, a cotton or nylon rope with snap on end, which attaches to halter

Long line - use of long reins which run from the bit, through the sides of the saddle or surcingle, to steer the horse from behind.

Long side - the longer side of the arena

Lunging - exercising the horse by placing it on a long line, and having the horse go around in a circle.

Mare - female horse

Mounting ramp – area used to mount the rider on to the horse.

Near side – refers to the left side of the horse.

Off side - refers to the right side of the horse.

Posting - a rider moving up and down in rhythm with the horse at the trot.

Rail - the outside area of the arena along the fence line or wall.

Reins - long leather straps attached to the bit held by the rider to steer and control the horse.

Saddle - usually made of leather and placed on horses back for rider to sit on.

Saddle pad - cloth pad used under the saddle to protect the horse's back.

Sidepull - Bridle without a bit

Stirrups - items made of iron, they hang from the saddle and rider places feet in them.

Tack - term used to refer to riding equipment.

Trot - a two beat diagonal gait.

Walk on - command to have the horse move forward into a walk.

Withers - bony projection on horse's back between the shoulders.

Whoa - command to stop the horse from any gait.

GROOMING

When grooming a horse, start at the top of his neck and work your way to his rear, then switch sides and repeat.

1. Start with the rubber curry. The rubber curry should be used in a circular motion to loosen dirt that has settled under the horse's hair. Avoid bone areas such as the knees, fetlocks, hocks and face.
2. Next, use the hard brush. The motion for this brush is like the same motion you would use when sweeping a floor. You 'flick' the brush away and up from the coat so that the dirt comes off of his coat. Unless your horse is already extremely clean, you should see a slight cloud of dust with each stroke. If you don't, you need more "flicking" action with this brush. If you don't use this "flicking" motion, the dirt will just get pushed back under the hair, potentially causing irritation to the horse.
3. Then, you use the soft brush. The body brush is meant to smooth down the hair and to get rid of any traces of leftover dirt after you have thoroughly used the hard brush. With the soft brush, you do not use a 'flicking' motion; instead, you smooth it flat over the horse's coat to flatten the hair. This brush often gives the horse a shiny, clean appearance (but only when the brushes are used in this order!)
4. Picking out the hooves is important to help remove any excess mud that may cause/keep too much moisture in the hooves, which may cause a bacterial infection known as thrush. It is also important to check for any debris, such as sticks and rocks that may be stuck and causing discomfort. However, we ask that you only pick out horses hooves if an instructor is near and you have been taught properly and given the go ahead to do so.
5. A hair brush or comb is used to remove tangles and debris from the mane and tail. We prefer that some kind of leave in conditioner be used prior to help work through any

tangles. Always start at the bottom and work your way up; never drag a brush or comb through a tangled mane or tail from the top. Frequent brushing or combing of manes and tails will over thin them and is only done when absolutely necessary, it is not part of the daily routine.

TACKING/UNTACKING

1. Saddle pad
2. Saddle- (never place a saddle on a horse without first tightening the cinch/girth. When standing tied, the cinch/girth should only be tight enough to keep the saddle from just falling off if the horse moves; it should not be tight enough to ride.)
3. Cinch/girth- (Cinch is the western term, Girth is the english term)
4. Bridle- (Only trained volunteers or an instructor will put this on, riders/students may assist, but are not to do it on their own).

When untacking the horse, remove the bridle first before tying the horse. Never tie a horse up with a lead rope or cross ties attached to the bridle. After the bridle is off and the horse tied, remove the saddle and saddle pad. Re-groom as necessary and follow instructor directions about placing the horse.

MOUNTING/DISMOUNTING

- All riders must be mounted/dismounted by the instructor or under the instructor's direct supervision.
- When a rider is being mounted/dismounted from the ground/with a block, the horse leader is to stay at the head of the horse, but turn and face the rider being mounted/dismounted. It is safest and most common that a second volunteer stand on the off side of horse while the instructor mounts/dismounts the rider, to help hold the saddle steady and aid the rider if necessary.
- When mounting/dismounting from a ramp, the horse leader with back into the ramp leading the horse and watching to make sure it does not bump into the ramp. The leader will then remain facing and in front of the horse to "block" it from stepping forward, until rider is mounted/dismounted.
- In both cases, it is important that the leader stops the horse standing square, so that he/she is as balanced as possible while the rider is getting on/off.

IN THE ARENA

- Horse leaders are to lead from the left side of the horse, staying even with the hroatlatch. Two hands on the lead rope at all times; the right hand should be 4-6 inches below the snap and controlling the head, and the left hand should hold the folded, NOT coiled, end of the lead rope. The lead rope should never drag on the ground, or be held so loosely that it loops down in front of the horse. Do not throw it over your shoulder or wrap it around your body in any way.
- Horse leaders make sure to not get the horse to close to the fence and always avoid sharp turns or stops. Inform the rider before changing directions or speeds, but allow the rider the time to initiate commands and as much control as possible.

- During group lessons, riders and their horses should maintain at least 2 horse lengths between one another, while moving and standing. When the need to pass is necessary always do so on the inside, never get between the fence and another horse.
- Try to stay as attentive as possible to hear what the instructor is saying, so as to better aid the rider during the lesson.
- If a horse or rider is misbehaving, becoming nervous or agitated, or at any time you are uncomfortable with the horse or rider you are working with, tell the instructor immediately.
- If a horse is running away (with or without a rider), always remain CALM, do not yell at the horse or start running towards it. If another rider has a problem or a fall, do not rush to assist them. Stay with your horse and rider at all times and wait for instructions. The rider you are assisting is always your FIRST PRIORITY.
- If your rider falls, the horse leader must stay with the horse. A loose horse is a danger to everyone in the arena. Stop the horse, get it away from the fallen rider call the instructor. If the rider has a sidewalker, he/she will stay with the rider until the instructor arrives, then follows directions from the instructor.

SIDEWALKER BASICS

The role of the sidewalker during lessons, is to be a safety net, as well as to encourage the rider to stretch themselves; to grow and develop to their fullest potential while providing a safe environment. Sidewalkers walk next to the rider's leg, helping to support the rider's balance, or to reinforce directions. Sidewalkers never leave the rider's side without the direction of the instructor. Some riders may require a support hold, below are three different holds to know:

1. Thigh Guard Hold- This position provides support for the rider without interfering with the rider's trunk control, allowing the rider to build up strong trunk support. Facing toward the rider's head, the hand closest to the horse holds the front of the saddle, with the arm resting lightly across the rider's thigh. In the event that the rider slips, a gentle downward pressure with that arm will support the rider in place.
2. Ankle Support- This is a more minimal form of support, allowing the rider to use all muscles to provide their own support. Facing the front of the horse, the hand closest to the horse encircles the rider's ankle lightly. In the event that the rider slips, a light tug will bring the rider back into alignment with the saddle. If the rider loses balance forward, gently moving the leg forward with counterbalance the rider. If the rider loses balance backwards, gently moving the leg backward will also counterbalance the rider.
3. Cuff Hold- This is a very mild form of support. It is very similar to the ankle support, however instead of supporting the ankle, the sidewalker will for a cuff with the bottom of the riders jean by folding them up over the sidewalkers fingers. If the rider loses balance, gently pull down on the cuff.

Effective Sidewalking

By Susan Tucker and Molly Lingua, R.P.T.

Sidewalkers normally get the most hands-on duties in therapeutic riding. They are directly responsible for the rider. As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson. In the arena, the sidewalker should help the student focus his/her attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with either the rider or other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone, and to riders who already have perceptual problems, it can be overwhelming. If two sidewalkers are working with one student, one should be the "designated talker" to avoid this situation.

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

It's important to maintain a position by the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back will make it very difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy.

Avoid wrapping an arm around the rider's waist. It is tempting, especially when walking beside a pony with a young or small rider, but it can offer uneven support. At times, it can even pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult.

Encourage your students to use their own trunk muscles to the best of their abilities. During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the riders are to do the exercises and the sidewalkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to games. Don't get so competitive that your rider doesn't get to use his skills because you do it for him in an effort to win.

The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch and grow to be as normal as he can possibly be. You are right at his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability.

HORSE LEADER BASICS

The role of leaders during lessons is to take the horse from the grooming bays to the mounting area, attend to the horse during mounting, lead the horse as directed by the instructor during class, and return the horse to the grooming bays after class.

During the class, the leader ensures the horse is under control, while still allowing the rider to be as independent as possible. Pay attention to the instructor at all times; it is important not to engage in conversation when leading.

The Role of the Leader

By Susan F. Tucker

One of the most challenging duties that can be assigned to a volunteer is that of a leader. A leader's first responsibility is the horse but he must also consider the sidewalkers, making sure there is enough room along the fence and around obstacles for them to pass.

An effective leader pays close attention to the rider's needs as well as to where the horse is going. This reinforces the rider's attempts to control the horse. However, you should not execute an instruction for the rider before he has time to process the information and make effort to comply. Sometimes it may be appropriate to walk into the corner and stand until the student figures out what to do. Avoid the temptation to talk to the rider or sidewalkers, a rider may get confused by too much input and not know who's in charge. (Instructors often make terrible leaders because they can't keep their mouths shut!).

Talk to the horse; most of them know whoa, walk and trot, or can learn the words. Watch where you're going and what's happening around you. Do not walk backward to look at the rider. It's dangerous for everyone and the horse isn't eager to follow someone who can't see where he is going.

WEATHER POLICY

Heat:

Blue Sky Therapeutic Riding and Respite makes every effort to hold lessons. However, while riders are riding for 30 to 60 minutes at a time the horses and instructor are exposed to heat 3-6 hours per day.

We look at many factors, including temperature. If the "real feel" temperature is 90-100 degrees, the parent/guardian and instructor may decide that it is too hot. Instructors have the flexibility to cancel one lesson at a time; e.g. hold morning lessons, but cancel afternoon lessons as temperature rises.

Please note, in addition to the accuweather.com readings, we also check the temperature in the arena. If the temperature is over 100 degrees, lessons will be canceled.

Rain:

If there is light or intermittent rain lessons will continue. If there is thunder/lightning the arena and barn area must be cleared immediately. Do not wait under structure overhangs. There is metal in the barns. Go to your car. If there is no thunder for 30 continuous minutes, lessons may continue.

Cold Weather:

Blue Sky will close if it is 45 degrees or below. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

Wind:

Lessons are cancelled if there is a sustained wind of 15 miles per hour or if the National Weather Service issues a wind advisory.

Other: For extreme weather conditions –floods tornadoes, etc. lessons are cancelled. If you are unsure, call your instructor directly.

BASIC BARN CHORES

MUCKING STALLS/RUNS/PADDOCKS:

If your horse lives in a stall for any part of his day, you'll have to keep it clean. Unclean stalls attract insects and could encourage hoof problems like thrush. Breathing ammonia from urine-saturated bedding can be harmful to your horse or pony's sensitive lungs.

- 1.** Take your horse out of the stall/run or paddock. A good time to muck is when your horse is in his pasture. If you can't put him out, put him in an empty stall.
- 2.** Get your cleaning tools and park your wheelbarrow or cart close to the stall door facing in the direction you'll want to go when the barrow is full. It's easier to maneuver an empty wheelbarrow than a full one.
- 3.** If the stall is bedded with straw use a pitchfork to remove manure and wet or soiled bedding. If shavings or sawdust have been used, use the shavings fork to remove manure and wet bedding. Fork the manure into the wheelbarrow or cart. Sometimes it's easier to pick up wet bedding with a shovel.
- 4.** Wheel the filled barrow and dump out the contents in the assigned area (the manure pile in the big pasture with the pond). It's tempting to fill the wheelbarrow really high, but this can make it hard to push and easy to tip. It's frustrating having to clean up manure a second time because you've tipped over the wheelbarrow!
- 5.** After you've finished cleaning and bedding the stall, use the broom to sweep up spilled manure, straw or shavings in alleys and doorways. Scoop up the sweepings into the hovel and toss them into the manure pile. Manure, chaff and bedding pushed out a doorway will turn into a muddy mess in wet weather.
- 6.** Put all the tools away where you got them from so they won't cause a tripping hazard.

CLEANING WATER TROUGHS:

- 1.** Find a scrub brush (located in the first room of the main barn). You may also need a pitchfork to retrieve soggy hay from the trough
- 2.** If there is soggy hay in the trough remove it from the trough.
- 3.** Use the scrub brush to scrub the sides of the trough/water tub. Make sure all green algae has been scrubbed thoroughly.
- 4.** Empty the trough and spray down the sides of the trough.

5. Remove the excess dirty water.
6. Fill the trough with clean fresh water.
7. **MAKE SURE THE WATER IS TURNED OFF.**

Thanks again for your help making Blue Sky Safe/Happy/Healthy!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the staff:

INSTRUCTORS:

Jennifer Mathis 469-682-9723

BOARD MEMBERS

Amy Gayhart 469-450-9594

Kristen Kromer 940-367-1888

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