



## PARTICIPANT MANUAL

Updated 3.26.25

"Our mission is to stir up hope in our participants and help them reach their goals in a healing environment through compassionate instruction, prayers, and a hands-on partnership with horses."

We warmly welcome you to Stir-n-Up Hope! We are providing you with this information to help you have a safe and informed experience while you or your children participate in one of Stir-n-Up Hope's Equine Assisted Activities or Equine Assisted Learning classes.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

To ensure that everyone can enjoy this facility please do not leave food, drinks or dirty diapers/pull ups in trash cans to help prevent rodent problems. If you have a young child that uses our restroom, please check after they are done to ensure that they did not leave a mess on/in the toilet or elsewhere in the bathroom. If needed, cleaning supplies are under the kitchen sink and a broom is hanging in the observation room and in the kitchen to clean up accidents.

The area in front of the helmet cabinet is a safe contained area for participants with elopement impulses or who need to express their excitement in loud verbal expressions until the instructor is ready.

If you sit on our prayer bench, located under the Observation Room window, please remain quiet to not disturb the lessons

## **SCHEDULING**

The Program Director will interview participants and/or their families to determine the participant's needs and ability. The participant will then be assigned to a program and will be assigned to the next session for that program that has an opening. If there is more than one session for that program available, the Program Director will provide optional dates and times for the participant and/or their family to choose which one they will attend.

NOTE: Please inform the Program Director if you or your participant is interested in riding more than one session if another session later in the year has an opening.

## **Cancellations**

### **❖ Participant Cancellations**

Please let the instructor know as soon as possible if your participant cannot attend so they can notify volunteers that have been scheduled to assist that day in a timely manner. Every effort will be made to accommodate the first cancellation. Additional reschedule dates and schedule changes generally cannot be accommodated, but exceptions may be made at the discretion of the instructor and availability of facility, horses, and volunteers.

*NOTE: Not attending a class for any reason will NOT result in a refund for not attending. The fee for each ride is paid to maintain your participant's place in the class, as well as horse, volunteer and instructor availability. Make-up classes are not a guarantee and are at the discretion of the availability of the instructor, volunteers and horses. **A participant receiving funding from grants or scholarships must attend all classes. If they cannot attend all classes, they will be required to pay the normal class rate per missed session after missing the first one.***

### **❖ Weather Cancellation**

Classes will sometimes be canceled due to extreme weather conditions. If the class is canceled, you will receive a call as soon as the decision is made to cancel the class. We try very hard to make this decision at least one hour before your participant's assigned class. A make-up date will be provided

by the instructor at the next class. If the last class of the session is canceled due to weather, the instructor will call with a date and time for the make-up class.

Weather conditions that could cause the class to be canceled are:

- Severe storms with high wind, hail or tornado potential
- High heat index of over 100 degrees
- Snow/ice storm warnings

## ❖ Instructor Cancellation

On rare occasions, it may be necessary for an instructor to cancel a class due to illness or other issues. We make every effort to schedule a substitute instructor but sometimes there is no one available. If this happens you will receive a call as soon as the decision is made to cancel the class. A make-up date will be provided by the instructor at the next class. If the last class of the session is canceled, the instructor will call with a date and time for the make-up class.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

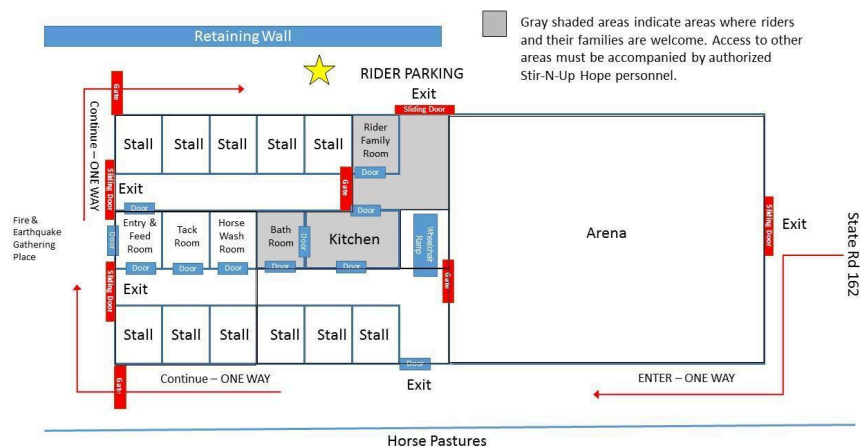
If it is necessary to call 911, our address is posted above the light switch in the observation room, kitchen and by each fire extinguisher.

In case of:

- Tornado – assemble in the bathroom.
- Fire – take the closest exit and go to the parking area at the far end of the barn past the stalls. Gather together so that everyone can be accounted for, and please notify the instructor right away if someone is missing. NOTE: *There are fire extinguishers in each aisle way and one in the arena area.*
- Earthquake – go to the parking area at the far end of the barn away from powerlines and trees.
- Chemical warfare - return home.
- Active shooter -
  - o RUN - if you determine that you can reach an escape path or safer area. Quickly create as much distance between you and the shooter as possible.
  - o HIDE - if you cannot evacuate. Silence phones, turn off lights, and create barriers. Be quiet. Hide behind a large object in a secure area as far from the threat as possible.
  - o FIGHT - if you cannot run or hide any longer. Be aggressive and commit to your actions. Survive by any means necessary.

## **BARN SAFETY**

To help ensure participants and their families are as safe as possible during their time at our barn, please follow these safety rules to keep yourselves and your family members safe while you are here. The responsible party is required to remain on-site throughout the duration of the class. Participants and family members are free to go anywhere in the barn NOT SHADED IN GRAY in the picture below. If someone wishes to see other parts of the barn, please make arrangements with a staff member.



The driveway is ONE WAY around the barn with participant and visitor parking on the East side of the barn. Please follow signs to the Participant Parking area.

**NOTE:** *There are doors on all sides of the barn. Drive slowly and USE CAUTION. People and horses could be moving in and around the barn on any side.*

For your own and other's safety please observe the following rules while in the barn.

❖ Please DO NOT:

- Climb or go above the retaining wall.
- Touch horses without permission and supervision by a Stir-n-Up Hope representative
- Scream, run or make loud noises that may scare the horse or participants.
- Sit, climb or play on the wheelchair ramp.
- Lean, sit or climb on the arena wall.
- Smoke on the premises. This includes vaping.
- Bring animals other than service animals on the premises. Service animals must be leashed.

❖ Participant Attire

- Participants **MUST** wear closed toe shoes such as sneakers or boots.
- Participants should wear non-slick pants.
- Participants may wear shorts during hot weather.
- Participants must select a helmet that fits with two fingers between the eyebrows and the brim with the chin strap against the chin.

❖ Weight Restrictions

For the participant's and horse's safety, each of our horses have a maximum weight limit they are allowed to carry on their backs as recommended by our veterinarian. In the event that a participant's weight has exceeded the maximum weight limit for all our available horses, un-mounted activities are available as an alternative if desired.

## **GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL**

If a participant or family member has reached grounds for removal from the program, the participant or participant's family will be notified by staff that they are no longer able to participate in Stir-n-Up Hope's classes. There will be no refund of sponsorship or lesson money.

Below is a list of possible grounds for removal. The list is not exhaustive:

- Aggressive physical or verbal abuse towards, instructor, volunteer(s) or horse.
- Repeated unsafe behavior such as not following the barn safety rules that continues after having been made aware of the unsafe behavior by verbal or written warning.
- Missing two classes without notifying the instructor that the participant is not coming.
- Damaging Stir-n-Up Hope's property.
- Stealing property or money from Stir-n-Up Hope.

## **HORSE-RIDER RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT**

- I am aware and understand that before a horse can like me, he/she needs to RESPECT and TRUST me.
- It is important that I show CARING behaviors so that the horse knows I mean him/her no harm.
- I cannot force RESPECT or TRUST - it must be earned.
- I can earn the horse's RESPECT and TRUST by following the Instructor's guidance while working together with the horse. My actions with and around the horse are to be with honest, sincere, clear communication and with good intentions at all times.
- Because the horse is very sensitive to my "inside feelings", my "outside feelings" must match. I will be AWARE of my actions and the horse's body language as we grow and work on our partnership/relationship. I will choose to use a calm soft voice, calm energy to not scare them, and have a gentle CARING touch.
- If I get frustrated, mad, confused, struggle with a task I am trying, before I quit I will----stop, take a deep breath, look, think, ask for help and try again when I am calm.
- If I am having a bad day and do not feel like choosing to honor this contract, I will be RESPONSIBLE and will not work with the horse until I have chosen to uphold the contract. I can watch others participate until I am ready to participate according to this contract.