



Helping Hands Healing Hooves is a 501c3 non-profit therapeutic equine assisted riding program that encourages individuals of all ages with special needs to develop their full potential. We strive to create a unique environment where individuals can have the freedom to develop knowledge, trust, hope, and determination.

HHHH serves more than 50 clients each year ranging in age from 3 to 58. We service the needs of individual families with special needs as well as work with organizations like individuals with almost any cognitive physical and/or emotional disability can benefit from purposeful safe and supervised interaction with equines. We work with individual clients, whether challenged by cerebral palsy, spina bifida, sight and hearing deficit, paraplegia, autism or developmental and learning disabilities.

WHAT IS THERAPEUTIC RIDING? (ANIMAL ASSISTED ACTIVITIES)

Therapeutic Riding incorporates specialized horse-assisted activities that provide physical, mental and psychological benefits to individuals with special needs. It has been recognized as providing therapeutic benefits to people with disabilities.

Therapeutic Riding highly emphasizes the combination of learning a rewarding activity (horseback riding) while achieving the best physical and functional levels possible. This approach includes working toward goals in the areas of sport, recreation, education and communication.

At HHHH a PATH International trained and certified therapeutic riding instructor directs either a group lesson or a private lesson depending on the needs and goals of the client. These clients begin as young as 3 years of age. The weight limit typically is 200 pounds for safety of horse, rider, leader and side-walker(s). It is important that specific procedures & standards are followed by each therapeutic riding program to ensure the optimum safety of all participants & to achieve desired program goals.

WHAT IS HIPPOThERAPY? (EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY)

The Greek word "Hippos" means horse. "Hippotherapy" is defined as therapy with the use of a horse. At HHHH a physical therapist, occupational therapist or speech-language pathologist uses the horse as a tool for treatment to achieve therapy goals.

Hippotherapy sessions are directed and performed only by one or more of the following licensed therapists: Physical, Occupational and/or Speech-Language Pathologists. The horse's training and handling is overseen by an expert trainer and horse handler. The Hippotherapy sessions are based on individual goals determined by the therapist for each client. These clients begin as young as 3 years old. The weight limit typically is 200 pounds for safety of horse, rider, leader and side-walker(s). The therapist and trainer choose each horse according to its size, movement, and gait pattern.

Emphasis is placed on achieving therapy goals, rather than on achieving horseback riding, educational or social skills. Special equipment and various developmental positions are used to help the client reach these therapy goals.

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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HIPPO THERAPY and THERAPEUTIC RIDING?

The three-dimensional pelvic movement of the horse, which closely simulates the pelvic movement of the human while walking, is a unique and valuable tool for treatment to achieve the therapy goals. This consistent, rhythmical movement, along with the warmth generated from the horse, promotes many benefits, such as, increased circulation, increased trunk and pelvic mobility, improved balance/coordination, improved postural control, improved sensory processing and improved communication and vocalization.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HHHH...

1. *Is the program an approved operating center through the (PATH International) or American Hippotherapy Association (AHA)?*

Yes, HHHH is a PATH member center.

2. *What are the qualifications of each therapist/riding instructor?*

All HHHH therapeutic riding instructors are PATH certified and experienced in working with horses as well as individuals with disabilities of all ages. Maggie Aschenbrener, OTR is a Magna Cum Laude OT grad from UWM and has a Masters in OT. She has been practicing school based OT and hippotherapy since graduation. She works at Lakeland School, a school for students with significant disabilities, and during the summer at HHHH.

3. *Are the instructors familiar with the contraindications associated with Hippotherapy / Therapeutic Riding?*

Yes, HHHH instructors are required to do annual continuing education.

4. *Does the Hippotherapy/TR program require a physician's prescription and/or release for participation or treatment?*

Yes, this is a required part of our admission paperwork. Applications are available on the HHHH website.

5. *How are clients assisted through the lesson?*

HHHH clients are assisted with a horse handler & therapeutic riding instructor or therapist. Depending on need clients may also be assisted by one or two volunteer side-walkers.

6. *Are the clients seen one at a time or in a group?*

Most of our clients are taught one on one. Based on client, we offer a few small group sessions of 2 to 4 clients.

7. *What type of activities do therapeutic riding Instructors do before/after the session?*

HHHH clients participate in a one-hour lesson weekly that includes: grooming, tacking the horse with saddle and bridle, riding the horse (with assistance) participating in activities (such as spelling, phonics, math, colors, shapes etc.) while on horse and unsaddling the horse & providing well-deserved treats at the end of the lesson. Every rider takes pride in the care & love they provide to the horse each week. Our instructors focus on their personal strengths while physical, mental and emotional disabilities are offset through the association with our horse.

8. What type of activities does the therapist do before/after the session?

All activities target fine motor skills, heavy work & self-help skills. Before each session, riders help brush the horse, carry the saddle and reigns, and put the saddle. Activities to increase range of motion or comfort of the rider around the horse, & sensory or practice functional activities on land may be used. The rider puts the horse's saddle & reigns away & gives the horse a treat.

9. Do they have safe, indoor / outdoor arenas accessible to people with disabilities? HHHH is located at Black Star Farms, & has both Indoor (50x90) & outdoor (100x200) arenas, fully accessible.

10. Do you use appropriate safety equipment?

We require & provide ASTM-SEI approved helmets, safety stirrups, & utilize gait belts/handholds as needed.

11. Is the program equipped with a PATH International approved ramp and mounting block?

Yes, we have both, a ramp, additional separate mounting block.

12. Do parents need to participate in the lessons?

No, parents do not participate in their children's lessons at HHHH. They may stay during the lesson to observe but aren't required to.

13. Is the staff trained in FIRST AID / CPR?

Yes, all HHHH instructors, and our OT keep their First aid/CPR certifications up to date, and are trained to handle emergency situations.

14. What is the equine background of the horse handler?

Our equine handlers are carefully screened by our staff, for experience, training and handling techniques. They are given additional training on how to work with therapeutic riding and hippotherapy clients.

15. Are staff and volunteers' background checked?

Yes, HHHH volunteers and staff are thoroughly screened, trained & background checked.

16. What are the roles of the volunteers and do they receive special training?

Our HHHH volunteers fill many special roles, we review each application individually, and review each volunteer on a regular basis. We match the volunteer (& the horses as well) with each HHHH client's needs.

Resources

PATH International www.pathintl.org 1-800-369-7433

American Hippotherapy Association
www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org 1-888-851-4592