



the
RIDING
THERAPY
CENTER
of VICTORIA

Donum Dei Inc. (Gift of God)
PATH Intl Premier Accredited Center

Volunteer Packet

**THE RIDING THERAPY CENTER
VOLUNTEER PACKET (Read and Keep)**

Mission Statement

Donum Dei (Latin for “Gift from God”) Incorporated, doing business as The Riding Therapy Center, was created in response to God’s love. The purpose of *Donum Dei, Inc.* is to offer Hippotherapy, therapeutic riding and equestrian activities in an attitude to serve God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit in the most Holy Trinity. All our work will be done with respect and dignity to each person.



WELCOME TO THE RIDING THERAPY CENTER!

We are excited and appreciative of the time and talents you will be giving to help us as every task is vital to the function of the Center. Volunteer work is available in and around the stables, arena, and office and occasionally involves repetitious activities. Since all our work is executed fully, performed with dignity and Our Lord is aware of it all, every duty is significant and never demeaning.

What is Therapeutic Riding?

Therapeutic Riding uses equine-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities. Therapeutic Riding provides benefits in the areas of therapy, education, sport and recreation and leisure.

Work Needs:

1. Horse Care
2. Stable Help
3. Tack/Helmet/Equipment Maintenance
4. Tack Room Maintenance
5. Facility/Arena/Trail Maintenance
6. Restroom Maintenance
7. Side Walking ** (Must be 14+ y.o.)
8. Horse Handling ** (Must be 14+ y.o)
9. Activity Helper (any age)
10. Office Help
11. Fundraising

Please refer to the following job descriptions for more details on each job. We welcome your suggestions and observations.

Thank you for caring and God bless you!

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS A4

1. **Horse Care:** Care for the horses requires a general knowledge of horses' behavior, needs and safety procedures.
Before each therapy lesson,
 - horses are to be caught (per chart of which will be used for the lessons),
 - brought to the tacking area and cross-tied or tied with a quick release knot
 - groomed (brushing, picking out the hooves, application of fly spray when needed)
 - put on the appropriate tack for the scheduled rider
 - check the tack for safety.**After** the horse is used for lessons,
 - the tack is removed and neatly put away
 - the horse should be brushed down.**After Lessons** are completely finished, horses are led back to their pastures and their gates securely closed.
 - ***Always keep horses a safe distance from each other and from clients and their families.**
 - *** Report any horse's unusual or dangerous behavior to the Riding Instructor immediately.**

2. **Stable Help:** Vital to the health of the horses as well as to general sanitary conditions of the Center, stable work requires removing horse manure from sheds, stalls, arena and anywhere it accumulates. Use a stable rake to remove the manure by raking it into piles, scooping it up and placing into a cart/wheelbarrow. When finished, the manure is to be disposed in the manure compost area.

3. **Tack, Helmets and Equipment:**
 - **Tack:** Tack and grooming tools will be used per instruction of the Riding Instructor, and kept clean and placed in an orderly manner in the assigned place. All leather items must be regularly cleaned and oiled. Please pay close attention to the leather parts, especially the strap and buckle areas. **Notify the Riding Instructor if any repairs are needed.**
 - **Helmets: All riders (participants & volunteers) at The RTC are required to wear ASTM-SEI certified equestrian helmets when mounted. (A32)**
Helmets are to be brought to the front per instruction of the Riding Instructor. After use, the interior of the helmet must be sprayed with Rid-X. The chinstrap and the interior again need to be sprayed with Lysol or another disinfectant (Please spray the disinfectants outside the Tack Room) and stored on the shelf in the Tack Room in numerical order. Inform the Riding Instructor of any damages to the equipment.
 - **Toys:** The toys are used during the riding lessons. The Riding Instructor will indicate which toys and equipment will be used during the lesson and need to be returned to the Volunteer Room after use, cleaned regularly and kept organized.
 - Gloves are available when working with any harsh cleaners to clean toys or equipment. Be careful not to get bleach solution on your clothes as it will discolor it. Keep all tack and other items in the Tack Room in their assigned places.

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4. Tack and Feed Room Maintenance:
 - **Tack Room** is to be cleaned, swept and organized at all times.
 - **Feed Room** – Containers are kept closed and the feed sacks neatly stacked. The feed buckets need to be kept clean and neatly stored and the floor should be swept several times a week. All horse medications and cleaning agents should be kept high on the shelves away from children. Please notify the Facility Manager if you notice any indication of mice, ants or other vermin in any areas. Remove any soda cans, candy wrappers, food, etc. to avoid attracting ants, cockroaches and mice.

5. Facility Maintenance: Keeping The Center neat is very important to its function.
 - **Water Troughs:** Need to be drained/cleaned/filled regularly or as needed.
 - **Grounds/Arena/Trails:** Please inspect fences monthly and document any needed repair(s) or ask for help. The grass needs to be cut with the riding lawn mower, push mower, or tractor and weed eaten as needed. Please clean the equipment after each use. Report and/or fill any holes. Clean up debris. Ant mounds and wasp nests are to be treated and removed. Manure is to be removed regularly and placed in the manure pile.
 - **Machinery:** Please clean/oil/grease, etc. as needed and document any maintenance performed. Tools and equipment are costly and must be properly maintained and stored when not in immediate use. All tools need to be returned to their designated storage location.

6. Restroom Maintenance:

Use disposable gloves when cleaning the restrooms and when emptying the trash. Clean the sinks and mirrors before the toilets. The toilet and floor are to be cleaned with a bleach solution. **Avoid cross contamination.** Do **not** use the same gloved hand to touch the door, faucets, etc. after cleaning the toilet seats, toilet, floor, etc.

7. Side Walking: (see additional handout) **Must be trained and at least 14 years of age.** Must be physically able to walk or jog next to the horse with arm extended up against the leg of the rider for at least 30 minutes to help stabilize the rider. Sidewalkers must also be able to assist the rider in mounts and dismounts. This job is extremely important and demands continual vigilance of the horse and rider. Sidewalkers must be alert and prepared to prevent the rider from losing their balance and falling, follow the direction of the Riding Instructor without repeating the directions, nor doing the task for the rider and **keep conversation minimal so as to not cause a distraction to lesson.**

8. Horse Handling: (see handout) **Must be trained and at least 14 years of age.** Horse handlers **must have** a working knowledge and experience with horses and be able to lead and demonstrate control over the horses in all situations. Must be physically able to walk and lead a horse for at least 45 minutes. Duties include getting the horse from their pasture, evaluating the horse's condition, grooming, tacking and supervising volunteer help. The Horse Handler must work with each horse at a walk and trot before a rider mounts and check all tack before use. Any tack in poor condition will not be used, tagged for repair and notice given to the Riding Instructor. (continued)

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The Horse Handler should be familiar with the various moods and reactions of horses and be able to immediately communicate the horse's change in attitude or behavior to the Riding Instructor or Sidewalker. In case of an emergency, the Horse Handler will maintain control of the horse and move the horse away from the rider as quickly and safely as possible. After the ride, the Horse Handler will secure the horse in the assigned area with a quick release knot. As soon as the tack is removed, it should be cleaned and properly stored with all the bits washed prior to storage.

9. Activity Helper:

Follow directions of the Riding Instructor. Set out baskets of toys in designated areas, help groom the horses, help the rider and Instructor with playing catch, retrieving toys from baskets, opening and closing gates. As needed, will also help clean tack, pick up various areas and dispose of horse manure.

10. Office Help:

Working in the office will give access to confidential information, which must be respected. **You may not speak to anyone concerning the diagnosis, prognosis or condition of any rider.** Helping in the office will be under the supervision and the request of the Office Manager or Program Coordinator. Duties may include making copies, putting together Rider or Volunteer Packets, filing, organizing, cleaning (dusting, sweeping, clean refrigerator inside and out, and organize). As needed, check closets to make sure they are neat.

11. Fundraising:

This job is crucial to the Riding Center's existence as the client's fees generated from receiving therapy lessons only contribute a small portion to the budget. Your creative ideas and commitment are very important and appreciated. Please contact the Program Coordinator, a Board Member, or Chairperson for specifics of each event. Grants are another source of revenue; however, it is the policy of The Riding Therapy Center to never accept any government funds. Any assistance with obtaining funding from Private Foundations is always appreciated. In all activities, please remember that you are representing The Riding Therapy Center.

READING THEIR EARS

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



Ears forward but relaxed
interested in what's
in front of him.



Ears turned back but relaxed
listening to his rider
or what's behind him.



Ears pointed stiffly forward
alarmed or nervous about what's
ahead. Looking for danger.



Ears pointed left and right
relaxed, paying attention
to the scenery on both sides.



Ears stiffly back
annoyed or worried about what's
behind him: might kick if annoyed.



Droopy ears
calm and resting,
horse may be dozing.



Ears flattened against neck
violently angry, in a fighting mood.
May fight, bite or kick.

OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

- Tucking the tail down tightly.
Danger to the rear.
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.
Watch out if ears are flattened, too!
- Switching the tail.
Annoyance and irritation:
at biting flies, stinging insects or
tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.
Don't wake him up by startling him!
- Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.
Watch out for biting or kicking.

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Working with Riders with Behavior Problems

The following behaviors are common with children and adults with behavior related problems:

1. Hyperactive; Over-active or extreme passivity.
2. Lack of structure.
3. Difficulty with transitions; Impulsive.
4. Inappropriate seeking of attention; Inappropriate laughing and giggling.
5. Forgetfulness; Blanking out with any difficult task that requires memory.
6. Hypersensitivity to touch; Not affectionate.
7. Invades personal space, often interrupts, intrudes on others.
8. Apparent inattention; Avoids eye contact; Difficulty sustaining attention in task or play.
9. Frequent excessive talking, refusal to speak, and/or mimics others' words.
10. Difficulty understanding spoken words; Does not seem to listen; Speech and learning delays.
11. Fidgets, squirms, restlessness; Difficult remaining seated when required.
12. Agitation under pressure and competition.
13. Difficulty waiting their turn in games; Difficulty in socializing with other children.
14. Risks physical danger without considering possible consequences; No fear of real dangers.
15. Poor adult interactions and difficulty following instructions; Resists normal teaching methods.
16. Difficulty using unstructured time; Poor use of time; Difficulty playing quietly; Sustained odd play.
17. Difficulty sequencing and completing steps to accomplish tasks; Refuses to leave previous tasks.
18. Quits one task to start another without closure; Shifts from one unfinished activity to another.
19. Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities or inappropriately attached to objects.
20. Poor problem solving skills; Problems with reasoning and judgment.
21. Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli.
22. Indicates needs by gestures.
23. Crying tantrums; Extreme distress for no discernible reason.
24. Uneven gross or fine motor skills.

Autism:

Various forms of autism exist, as well as there being great differences among people with autism. Intelligence levels vary and about two-thirds of the people with autism have some degree of mental retardation. Approximately 20% have a seizure disorder at some point in their life.

Some people with autism may never learn to speak or understand the spoken word. Many individuals who do develop language skills remain seriously limited in speech, repeating the phrases of others because of a lack of understanding of the rules of communication that make it possible to create personal statements. Problems of understanding and/or communicating may result in extreme confusion and frustration for the person with autism. The person may appear withdrawn or indifferent, not understanding how to express affection or respond to the gestures of other people.

For some people with autism, changes in the environment can be frightening and confusing. To the casual observer, such reactions may be interpreted as stubbornness, or a resistance to anything new or different that personally threatens expected routines.

In some instances, people with autism may exhibit serious problems with reasoning and understanding cause and effect relationships. As a result, some people with autism may fail to recognize basic dangers in the environment such as traffic patterns, fire hazards or heights. Surprisingly, people with autism have good memory skills yet cannot understand the flow of events or why things occur sequentially.

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General Procedures for Handling Body Fluids/Injuries/First Aid

The following guidelines are meant to provide simple and effective precautions against the transmission of disease for all persons potentially exposed to the blood or body fluids of any other person(s).

Good hygiene practices should be used when handling body fluids or blood to prevent the spread of disease and infectious agents. All situations, no matter what bacteria or virus is present, should be treated equally.

Contact with body fluids presents a low risk of infection with a variety of germs. In general, however, the risk is very low and dependent on a variety of factors, including the type of fluid with which contact is made and the type of contact made with it. Use disposable equipment whenever possible.

- Ensure that your First Aid kit is accessible during program activity hours.
- Direct skin contact with body fluids should be avoided. **Disposable gloves are recommended when direct contact with body fluid is anticipated.**
- Hands should be washed as soon as possible after any body fluid contact is made, with or without gloves. Hands should be washed for a minimum of 15-20 seconds with soap and warm water. Antiseptic towelettes should be used in the absence of running water.
- Encourage the person to self manage their own injury whenever possible through the use of paper towels and/or pressure to bleeding wounds or bloody noses.
- Place soiled towels or towelettes in a lined waste container. Urge the rider to do as much of this as possible. (This may not always be a practical solution.)
- If practical, remove soiled clothing and place in a closed plastic bag for laundering.
- If you have an open wound on your hand, use gloves to handle or clean blood or body fluids. Wash your hands when you are finished.
- All persons with oozing lesions or weeping dermatitis should refrain from direct contact with others until the condition resolves.
- A disinfectant should be used to clean surfaces contaminated with body fluids. The U.S. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) should register the disinfectant for use as a disinfectant. Bleach water in a ratio of 10 parts water to 1 part chlorine bleach may be used in an emergency in the absence of a registered disinfectant.

**** The term body fluid may include blood, semen, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomit, respiratory secretions (i.e. runny nose) and saliva.**

Adapted in part from the American Federation of Teachers and MacNeil Environmental, Inc.

- In the case of an emergency in the arena the RIDING INSTRUCTOR is in charge.
- In the case of an emergency outside of the arena, the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR is in charge.
- If the Instructor should become incapacitated the Executive Director will be in charge. If the Executive Director is incapacitated the Instructor will be in charge.

NATURAL HAZARDS (A7-1)

BEE SWARMS: Be alert to the possibility of bee swarms. If a swarm is sighted, note the direction and alert the riding instructor. The Riding Instructor will stop the lesson and evaluate the situation. If a dismount is necessary, side walkers will assist with the dismount and accompany riders to shelter. The horse handler will move the horse away from the approaching swarm and horse handler and horse will take shelter.

FIRE ANTS: Mark the ant mound location and tell the facility manager of the problem. If bitten, remove all ants and immediately wash the area of the ant bites. If allergic to ants, ask for help from others to contact a physician and follow medical advice.

LIGHTNING/THUNDERSTORMS: If determined to be close and a dismount is necessary, side walkers will assist with dismount and accompany riders to shelter. The horse handler and horse will take shelter. Everyone will move indoors or to a shelter that is grounded.

POISON IVY/OAK: Personnel will be cautioned that poison ivy/oak may be present in certain locations. Therefore, people need to look at the area before weeding, mowing or walking through and check for it.

SNAKES: Alert appropriate people to the location of a snake if one is seen and keep everyone away from the area until the snake is removed or killed. Everyone should be instructed to use caution when in the hay storage areas, tall vegetation, feed room and all areas where reptiles may hide. Never reach into an area which is obstructed. If anyone is bitten, they should be transported to the emergency room immediately or call 911.

SPIDERS: The same cautionary procedures apply as with snakes. The area that poisonous spiders are seen must be sprayed to ensure their demise.

WASP NESTS: Direct everyone away from the area until the nest is removed or effectively sprayed.

WILD ANIMALS: Notify the riding instructor immediately when the animal is spotted. Halt the lesson and await instructions from the instructor. Side walkers should remain with the rider and horse handler keep the horse calm.

MANMADE HAZARDS (A7-2)

UNDERGROUND GAS PIPE LINES: Never dig deeper than one foot without first contacting the gas company and other utilities as required by law. Heavy trucks and equipment should not be driven directly over underground gas lines. The locations of the lines are indicated by yellow and/or white paint on the boundary fences.

OPERATION OF FACILITIES AND/OR EQUIPMENT (A7-3)

BUILDING COLLAPSE: All measures shall be taken to prevent any building collapsing. If the situation should occur the area shall be marked off with signs/fencing to keep the area clear of undesigned personnel. If injury occurs from the building occurs, 911 should immediately be called and emergency contacts notified. Follow directions from trained professionals to secure the situation and stabilize any injured persons.

ELECTROCUTION: If electrocution occurs, immediately call 911 and clear the area. Follow instructions from the 911 dispatcher and keep calm.

EQUIPMENT USE/INJURY: Safety is the highest priority. The use of all motorized equipment, including but not limited to items such as the tractor, lawn mower, weed eater, shall be operated only with specific permission and direction of the facility manager or person designated by the facility manager. The facility manager will determine the ability and responsibility of each person to operate equipment. The operator will comply with the equipment use policy and be well instructed in its safe use. Every effort should be made to use equipment only when someone else is on the premises, in case help is needed. If no one else is present, the operator should tell family the estimated time of returning home, so that if they do not return home by that time, a safety check will be made. In the case of any injury, check the severity of the injury, administer First Aid, call 911 if necessary and consult emergency medical information before the arrival of EMS.

EXPLOSION: If an explosion of any kind occurs, any persons involved will be assessed for injuries and 911 and emergency contacts notified if needed. The area will be safely inspected and secured by designated personnel and/or trained professionals.

LOSS OF POWER: In the case of loss of power, flashlights are strategically placed in the office, volunteer room and tack room. Designated personnel shall make the appropriate contacts when needed to the electric company to resolve the situation. .

LOSS OF WATER: In the case of loss of water, emergency storage of water shall be tapped into. The horses may need to be moved to appropriate pastures in order to better access the emergency storage of water. Designated personnel shall make the appropriate contacts to resolve the situation.

NATURAL DISASTERS (A7-4)

EARTHQUAKE: In the case of an earthquake all people should find safety in the restrooms, under secure doorways or at minimum free from unstable structures. It is important to remain calm. If injuries occur, immediately call 911 and/or emergency contacts.

FIRE: Remove all occupants from structures. Lead all people to the front of the property as 911 is called. If possible, use fire extinguishers to stop the fire without putting self in danger. Move horses to a safe location. Move all vehicles that may hinder fire personnel's access or that may be near to or in path of fire. Ensure that no one re-enters the area that has been on fire until fire personnel give the okay.

If a fire is observed on or near the property, when no personnel or riders are present, the following fire procedures should be implemented:

1. Call 911 (phone is located in the office on top of the refrigerator); the physical address is on "Emergency Information" on the wall by the phone.
2. Assess the immediate danger.
If a building is involved, evaluate if an adjoining structure is threatened. If so, determine if removal of essential items can be safely done without threat to people involved. If adjoining building can be safely entered, remove only KEY items such as:
Office – clients and volunteer records (tan cabinet on opposite wall from door), business/deed records (tall black cabinet by window), and computer.
Tack Room – saddles and harness equipment.
Implement Room – anything combustible.
3. Call appropriate members of Center to assist with fire procedures, record/equipment removal, horse evacuation, etc.

FLOOD: The Center is on a higher, well drained area, so that flood waters will not reach our property. Be alert for the possibility of snakes, skunks and other wildlife seeking shelter from flooded areas. An inventory of feed and supplies should be taken when a flood warning is given in case roads become inaccessible. The roads coming to and from the Center may flood, so use utmost safety and do not take risks coming or leaving the Center.

TORNADO: All confined animals should be turned out. People should take shelter in the bathrooms which are of better construction than the portable office and tack room.

HURRICANE: Bring in all chairs, plants, manure carts, signs, buckets and maintenance equipment. Remove computer, client/volunteer files in tan cabinet by window, business/deed records in tall black cabinet by window from office and take to a safer location. Allow all horses to be free in pastures away from structures that may collapse or roofs that may blow off. Assign personnel to arrive soon after hurricane passes to check on health and safety of horses, evaluate structural damage, document damage for insurance and repair plans.

EQUINE HAZARDS (A7-5)

DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR: Dangerous equine activity, such as kicking or biting, shall be reported to the Riding Instructor immediately. The horse will be removed from the program for an evaluation.

INJURED HORSE: The Riding Instructor should be notified for advice and/or management of injury. If they cannot be contacted, call the Veterinarian listed on the Emergency list located next to the office phone and in equine first aid kit.

INJURY TO PERSON BY EQUINE: The injury shall be evaluated and receive appropriate medical attention. An incident report form shall be completed. Horse(s) will be evaluated for continued use in the program.

LOOSE HORSE: Stop all riding activities until loose horse is secured. The roadway gate will be closed until all horses are secured.

RIDER FALL: Move the horse away from the rider and secure it. The rider shall be evaluated for injury. If injury is suspected, the rider will not be moved. Emergency medical assistance should be obtained immediately and First Aid administered on site by a trained person. Meanwhile, all other riders should be stopped and horse handlers

SECURING HORSES: All horses shall be tied with a quick release knot or a quick release snap to a strong secure structure with the horse's head unable to reach the ground for grazing, etc. Horses are to be secured in designated areas away from any riders and/or visitors.

CONDUCT OF PERSONNEL, PARTICIPANTS & GUESTS (A7-6)

Everyone will be treated with the utmost respect. Any allegations of inappropriate and/or abusive behavior toward others, failure to follow established safety procedures, incidents due to the use of drugs or alcohol, and allegations of mistreatment/abuse of equines and other animals on the site will be investigated. If allegations are found to be legitimate, the individual will be removed from the program and the property.

EMERGENCY PLAN

HORSE HANDLERS: The horse handlers are to control the horse, removing it as safely and as soon as possible and returning the horse to its stall or pasture. The horse handler shall then check with the Riding Instructor to determine if needed to report to the report to direct EMS personnel.

SIDEWALKERS (see additional handout): Before each ride, the Riding Instructor will designate one side walker (SIDEWALKER 1) to be responsible for removal of the rider from the horse during an emergency while the other (SIDEWALKER 2) will be assigned to assist Sidewalker 1. If extra help is needed Sidewalker 2 will summon that help. If help is summoned by phone, clear, precise directions will be given. Sidewalker 2 will remain on the phone until EMS has given instructions that you may leave the phone. Sidewalker 1 must remain with the rider.

THERAPIST/RIDING INSTRUCTOR: The therapist or Riding Instructor conducting the class will administer First Aid and determine if EMS is needed. The therapist or Riding Instructor shall be responsible for contacting the referring doctor, completing incident report forms and contacting the insurance company.

The therapist or Riding Instructor shall either delegate or him/herself shall obtain all emergency release and general information from the Center files for accurate referral.

Refer to previous pages and A7 instructions for additional and specific information pertaining to hazards, operations, disasters and conduct. This information is given to each volunteer and to participants at the Riding Therapy Center upon initial contact. This information is also given during training.

Fire and Hazard Drills are discussed and practiced periodically.

Manuals for equipment are kept in the black short file cabinet. No one is allowed to use equipment without clear directions or previous knowledge.

FIRE DRILLS:

Alert all parents in advance if a fire drill is scheduled during or in between classes.

Advise all horse handlers to move horses to a safe area out of the arena. All sidewalkers should become even more vigilant. The Riding Instructor shall direct all those trained and listed to assist with dismounts. Everyone shall move away from all structures near the fire. The Riding Instructor shall appoint someone to supervise and direct all non-riders into safe areas. All vehicles shall be moved away from the building and from any area that would hamper the access of a fire vehicle.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

The Director or Riding Instructor in charge will designate a person during the time of an emergency and/or occurrence to call the appropriate emergency contacts or emergency personnel. All emergency information is located next to the phone in the office on the wall, on the bulletin board in the volunteer room and in the equine first aid kit in the tack room.