



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Hello and welcome to Healing Reins!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Healing Reins Equine Assisted Services. We are excited to guide you through the process of becoming a volunteer in our program! Our mission, *"to heal with horses"*, means improving the wellness of Central Oregonians through nationally accredited, affordable horse-centered therapies and programs. We have been providing equine assisted activities and therapies to children, teens and adults in the Central Oregon area since 1999.

Facility Location

Healing Reins is located on a 20-acre farm in Southeast Bend. From 27th Street, travel 1.5 miles east from 27th street on Rickard Road, turn right (south) on Billadeau Road, travel .5 miles to see our sign and driveway on the right. Our address is 60575 Billadeau Road, Bend, OR 97702.

Accreditation

The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) International is the national association that promotes and supports equine-facilitated activities for individuals with disabilities. PATH International sets the safety guidelines and teaching standards for the industry. Healing Reins is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and a Premier Accredited member of PATH International, which is the highest possible accreditation standard. All Healing Reins' instructors are professionally certified by PATH International.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Healing Reins accepts students regardless of race, color, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin or economic status.

Our Services

Adaptive Horsemanship

Adaptive horsemanship service teaches horse-handling and riding skills using activities tailored to meet the physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral needs of the individual participant. Children, teens and adults with a wide array of challenges are active in this service. Participant ages range from four years to adult. Weekly lessons are one hour in length and taught by PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) International certified instructors. Lesson plans take into account the participant's physical, emotional, and mental strengths and limitations. Activities may include horse care (such as grooming and tacking), exercises, games and riding the trail. Healing Reins calls this service a lesson.

Equine Assisted Learning

Equine-assisted learning (EAL) is an experiential learning approach that promotes the development of life skills for educational, professional, and personal goals through equine-assisted activities. Working with horses provides opportunities to teach critical life skills such as trust, respect, honesty, and communication. Horses use mostly non-vocal communication, relying on body language and social cues, and are in-tune with human behavior. This can help participants to better understand and learn how non-verbal communication might be impacting or influencing others in their lives. Healing Reins calls this service a lesson.

Hippotherapy (Physical, Occupational Therapy utilizing equine movement as a treatment tool)

Through a collaborative effort with Treehouse Therapies and Trudi Trygg, PT, Healing Reins partners in providing both pediatric and adult physical therapy that includes horses and the farm setting. Healing Reins calls this service a session. Clients spend 30 minutes on the horse before going to the clinic for the second 30-minute half of their session.

Physical therapists use the walking patterns of the horse as part of their integrated plan of care to help their clients to improve core strength, postural stability, balance and coordination, joint mobility, endurance, gait, sensory integration, and to increase overall function. The movement of the horse is multi-dimensional and stimulates what a normal walking pattern should feel like: it is rhythmic, consistent, and predictable.

Equine Assisted Mental Health (EAMH)

EAMH is a holistic, experiential and highly specialized form of therapy that involves working in collaboration with a horse, a therapist, and an equine specialist. This groundbreaking model is being used globally as a dynamic, powerful tool in mental health therapy.

Including horses in mental health counseling, psychotherapy, or social work is emerging as an effective experiential treatment technique. Clients get “outside of four walls” and experience the connection between themselves, horses, and the natural world.

Horses are uniquely suited to this kind of therapy because they are intuitive and will physically react to behavior patterns and cues that people often miss. This creates a place for the therapist and client to connect on a deeper level and address issues that might otherwise go unnoticed in a traditional office setting.

The horse's sensitivity to subtle changes in their environment makes them perfect partners for those seeking to improve their mental health. Due to their sensitivity, horses react and respond to people differently based upon the person's emotional state, providing the client and the mental health professional with information regarding the client's moods and changes within those moods. If a client arrives anxious the horse will act and respond one way. If the client is able to reduce his or her anxiety, the horse's behaviors will also change. This provides a plethora of information and skill building opportunities for both the client and the mental health professional. Healing Reins calls this service a session.

EAMH at Healing Reins

At Healing Reins, mental health professionals use equine-assisted mental health and farm-based activities as therapeutic techniques to address a wide range of goals and client needs. Clients that can benefit from this type of counseling include adults, teens, children, families, veterans, service members and more.

- Specifically targets ages 6 and up with mental and emotional health matters, stemming from traumatic life events, chemical imbalances, cognitive disorders, and a wide range of additional mental and emotional health distresses.
- Creates a safe space Outside the 4-walls of a traditional clinical therapy setting for the client and therapist to interact with one another by engaging in activity with a horse during their therapy session.
- The therapist partners with the horse to help the individual process their emotions, thoughts and reactions.

Volunteering at Healing Reins

Volunteers are critical to the success of Healing Reins' programs. The organization, participants, horses, and staff depend upon volunteers to donate time and talent to help us facilitate the extraordinary experiences we are known for in the community. It is because of the giving nature of volunteers that Healing Reins is able to serve so many individuals and groups each week. The following information will provide you with basic knowledge of the policies and processes to ensure your safety and success while volunteering at Healing Reins.

Available Volunteer Jobs

- **Administrative** – assist staff with various office functions.
- **Sidewalker** – assist participants to prepare for and participate in weekly lessons.
- **Leader**- is responsible for preparing the horses for their weekly lessons/sessions.
- **Volunteer Lesson Assistant (VLA)** – for ages 12-14 to assist in Hippotherapy sessions as well as facility work.
- **Facility Worker** – grounds keeping, paddock and arena cleaning, general repairs.
- **Horse Schooler** – weekly exercise rides to ensure equine fitness.
- **Special Events** – various duties related to developing and hosting fundraisers.
- **Outreach** – assist staff in attending informational events

Clothing

This is a very unique role and so we recommend the following:

- Please tie your hair back.
- Avoid dangling jewelry, participants may want to grab them.
- Please keep jackets and vests zipped up during the lesson/session.
- Please dress in layers that you can shed as you participate in lessons/sessions.
- You will be doing a lot of walking and jogging on uneven terrain, so comfortable, sturdy closed-toed footwear while working around horses.
- Please use discretion - avoid tank tops, short shorts and any items of clothing that may be offensive or present a specific ideology.

Weather

Healing Reins is fortunate to have an indoor arena and lessons/sessions will operate in almost all types of weather conditions; however, **if temperatures are below 20 degrees or above 95 degrees, classes are canceled.** When Bend-La Pine schools are canceled either for the day, Healing Reins' lessons are canceled. When schools announce a 2-hour delay, Healing Reins will typically operate.

Minimum age requirements

Lesson Volunteers must be at least 14 years old and Volunteer Lesson Assistants are 12-14; however, youth under the age of 12 are welcome to clean tack, sweep the stable area, etc. under the supervision of an adult. Because working with horses can involve risk, we ask parents or guardians of all prospective volunteers under the age of 18 to sign a liability release.

Do volunteers ride Healing Reins horses?

Healing Reins offers lessons for volunteers as our schedule allows. Experienced volunteer participants willing to donate their expertise and time may apply to the Schooling or Equine Partner programs. Demonstration of horse-handling and/or riding abilities is required.

Volunteer Recognition

The Healing Reins staff recognizes that we could not possibly do what we do without our incredible volunteer corps. Your dedication, energy and selfless commitment allows us to serve our community by offering one-of-a-kind, professional programs for people in our community who are challenged by physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral special needs. You make a significant difference and we thank you for helping us *to heal with horses!*

Each month our staff nominates a volunteer that exemplifies excellence in service and unwavering dedication to advancing the Healing Reins mission.

Volunteer Appreciation Weeks are hosted two times/year and our participant families are always excited to participate.



Volunteer Job Descriptions

Lesson Volunteer

Objective:

To safely and effectively support the needs of the lesson participant as a member of the equine-assisted lesson team.

Qualifications Required:

- Minimum age of fourteen (14) to be a lesson volunteer.
- 12-14 years old to be a volunteer lesson assistant.
- Physically capable of performing assigned tasks; standing, walking, jogging, arm extensions. Able to lift up to 35 pounds (tack/lesson equipment) above the head.
- Willing to learn and follow Healing Reins procedures.
- Able to receive and accept constructive feedback.
- Willing to communicate with other volunteers and staff via various methods.
- Horse knowledge and experience is helpful but not required.
- Ability to follow the directions of the Instructor and support his/her leadership role.
- Able to commit to a consistent volunteer schedule or be willing to substitute.
- Able to hear, speak and understand instructions in English.
- Have adequate vision and hearing to ensure safety of horses and participants.
- Ability to be flexible and adapt to changes.
- Ability to attend training and enrichment courses periodically throughout the year.
- Ability to perform emergency dismounts.

Responsibilities:

- Arrive 15-30 minutes before scheduled volunteer time, appropriately attired and ready to work.
- Assist Instructors and therapists by serving as a lesson Leader or Sidewalker (as trained and applicable).

- Assist with general work area maintenance at the end of the day and/or lesson.
- Perform miscellaneous tasks assigned by staff.
- Attend continuing education opportunities whenever possible.



Volunteer Job Descriptions

Sidewalker

Objective:

To have primary responsibility for the participant prior to, during and after lessons.

Qualifications Required:

- Ability to be a Lesson Volunteer
- Horse knowledge and experience is helpful but not required.
- Ability to communicate with a wide variety of people with special needs.

Responsibilities:

- Assist participants with grooming and tacking of horses, if needed.
- Communicate with participants and equine-assisted lesson team regarding the needs of the participant.
- Assist participant with mount and dismount as necessary.
- Assist participant with lesson activities as directed by the Instructor. Verbal communication must be minimal so the participant can focus on tasks and Instructor directions.
- Assist with activities required at the end of the day and/or lesson.
- Perform miscellaneous tasks assigned by staff.

Getting to Know a Rider with Special Needs

General Approach and Interaction

It is important to remember that every child, teen or adult participant at Healing Reins is an individual who wants to be understood and valued. Each has his/her own learning rate and style, unique personality, and temperament. The Healing Reins team includes our trained volunteers. Together, our goal is to provide all participants with the opportunity to learn and grow in our safe and supportive environment.

Relating to People with Disabilities

Being around people with disabilities may be a new experience for you. You may be overwhelmed at first with things you have never seen or do not understand. This is natural for most people. Allow yourself time to get used to being with the person who is disabled. Do not give up on being a part of the program without a fair try, for your experience can be very rewarding. At first you may want to do jobs which are not in direct contact with the riders. Feel free to talk with a staff member about this. This is common. If working directly with our riders is a hardship for you, consider helping Healing Reins in some other way and indicate other areas that you would like to be helpful on your Volunteer Information Form.

Choosing Words with Dignity

When talking about a person with a disability, make reference to the person first, not the disability.

Avoid

- Afflicted with blindness
- Crippled or handicapped
- Stricken with

Use instead

- Visually impaired
- Person with physical disability or physically challenged
- Person who has

The preferred terms focus attention on the uniqueness and worth of the individual rather than emphasizing the disabling condition. The connotation of "disability" is very important to avoid. Words such as defective, deformed, invalid, lame, maimed, spastic, and crippled imply pity, infirmity, and a general lack of competence. People are neither invalid nor defective. People

aren't spastic, muscles are. By choosing words carefully, positive images can be conveyed about persons who experience disabilities.

Each of us has to learn how to relate to others, especially if it requires new skills. Here are a few suggestions to assist you in your relationship with our participants.

- Relax and be yourself.
- Explore mutual interests in a friendly way. For starters, talk about the horse and whether the person has ridden or been around horses before.
- Speak directly to the person you are working with. Your attention should be to them and not to the person escorting them. Find yourself a chair or crouch down at a comfortable distance so that you can converse on the same level as appropriate.
- If a person has difficulty speaking, allow them to finish their sentence. If you don't understand what they are saying, tell them so. Don't pretend you understood if you didn't. Don't be afraid to say, "I'm sorry I cannot understand you. Please say it again."
- Offer assistance when asked or when the situation requires it. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist upon helping when they are managing alone. When a person is trying to increase their physical ability or learn new skills, effort on their part is necessary.
- Do not hinder the participant's ability to expand their skills and independence, even when their movements may appear difficult or their efforts seem awkward to you. It's important to give the participant the space and time they need to succeed.
- Respect the person's right to independence and their request for the kind of assistance that they feel they do or do not require.
- Be guided by the wishes of the person you are working with. Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, but don't pry.
- Appreciate what the participant can do. Remember that the difficulties the person may be facing could stem from society's attitudes and barriers rather than from the disability itself. People with disabilities generally do not view themselves to be as handicapped as society perceives them to be.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to accomplish something or respond to something. Be patient.

The Therapy Horse

The Horse's Lifestyle

In addition to understanding the horse's sixth sense, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the horse's lifestyle. This will assist us in responding appropriately in various situations

Flight as a Natural Instinct

Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it.

Implications

- A sudden movement or noise can startle a horse.
- A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back.
- Be sure not to stand directly in front of or behind the horse.
- If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like the stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working around the horse in a stall.
- If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful it may be helpful to allow a more experienced horse to lead or handler to work with the horse.
- Most horses chosen to work in an equine-assisted services setting have less of an instinct to flee.

Herd Animal

Horses like to stay together in a herd or group. One or two horses will be dominant and a pecking order will be established amongst the rest.

Implications

- Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving a paddock or the arena or if a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride.
- Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter.
- If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse's length between horses when riding within a group to respect the horse's space and pecking order.

** Being aware of horse behaviors is one of the best safety precautions for any therapeutic riding center. Knowing how to read your horse can prevent an accident and increase the quality of your "mutual" relationship.*

Conduct and Dismissal Policies and Procedures

Healing Reins Equine Assisted Services relies greatly on volunteers as important members of the team that provides services to our clients. We also recognize the extreme importance of the safety and well-being of our clients, volunteers, staff, guests, and animals. All volunteers and guests are expected to follow Healing Reins rules and policies and may not engage in disruptive, unsafe, or inappropriate behavior. In the event a volunteer or guest does not comply, the following actions may be taken.

No-Show Policy

Healing Reins is always grateful for your time and energy. Without your diligent work, care for the participants and the horses, and committed time, we would not have a successful program. Healing Reins and the participants depend on you. We trust that you will follow through on the scheduled time to which you agreed. When a volunteer does not show up for their scheduled lesson, it creates problems and can force us to cancel a participant. Any time a volunteer does not call ahead and does not report to a scheduled lesson or commitment it is considered a no-show situation.

After three (3) consecutive no-show occurrences within a 6-month period, the volunteer is removed from the current schedule and sub list. The volunteer will be asked to take some time from the program to get things in order. The volunteer will be encouraged to return when they are better able to fit the program into their schedule. If the volunteer returns at a later time, their record begins at zero no-shows.

Level 1 Verbal warning

Breaking of Healing Reins rules and/or policies and procedures may be followed by a verbal warning from the Program & Services Director, Instructor or Volunteer Manager to be documented in the occurrence report file and volunteer file.

Level 2 Written warning

Breaking of Healing Reins rules and/or policies and procedures for a second time will be followed by a meeting for discussion regarding the infraction (with Volunteer Manager, Instructor and Program & Services Director). The purpose of the meeting is to determine the exact reason the infraction occurred for a second time and discuss with the volunteer/guest how to avoid the circumstance ever occurring again. This meeting will be documented and placed in the occurrence file and volunteer file.

Level 3 Dismissal from the Organization

- Immediate dismissal from the property and the organization will occur for:
- Repeated infraction of rules and/or policies and procedures
- Endangering the safety of others
- Inappropriate use of the facilities, mailing lists or monies
- Disruptive or abusive behavior to the animals or people at Healing Reins

- Repeated disregard of the organization's rules, policies and procedures
- Possession of a weapon

Conflict Resolution Grievance Procedures

Healing Reins wants to assist in solving problems and settling grievances quickly and fairly. We believe the best way to settle a disagreement or problem is to discuss the issue and find a way to reach mutually agreeable solutions. The grievance procedure can be used if you believe you have been discriminated against due to race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, or if you feel that your rights as a volunteer have been violated.

Complaints involving another volunteer, staff member or the program should first be addressed by the persons involved. If this does not resolve the situation, the issue should be taken to the Volunteer Manager. Depending on the situation, the Volunteer Manager may talk with you and the other party/parties to gather facts to help reach an agreement. If a solution cannot be reached, the next step is to take the issue to the Program Director. If a resolution cannot be reached, the Executive Director will initiate an investigation. A determination will be made by the Executive Director regarding an appropriate solution.

Confidentiality

Instructors may share general participant information with volunteers on a need-to-know-basis. Any information shared is to be kept in the strictest of confidence. Guests and volunteers are asked to respect participant's right to privacy at all times.

Holiday Closings

In addition to the dates listed on the event calendar on the website, there will be no lessons on:

- Typically, the first week in January
- Martin Luther King Day
- Spring Break (Bend-La Pine school calendar)
- Memorial Day Weekend and possibly the week after
- July 4 and possibly days surrounding the holiday
- Labor Day Weekend (Sat-Mon)
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Week (Mon-Sat)
- December Holiday Break (typically 1 week at the end of the year).

How can you help?

Fundraising

Our biggest fundraiser of the year, Diamonds & Dust, is responsible for generating approximately 25% of our annual operating budget. We need committee members for procurement of items, assisting with event night decor, facility prep and more. Healing Reins creates many other fundraising opportunities each year which cannot be successful without volunteer help.

Spread the word!

Recruit friends and family to volunteer, help at outreach events around Central Oregon, buy and sell Healing Reins t-shirts and sweatshirts, share the benefits of equine-assisted services with your businesses, friends and family.

Contact us

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 5593, Bend OR 97708

Tel: 541-382-9410 Fax: 541-508-5553

Website: www.healingreins.org

Staff- please refer to our website <https://healingreins.org/our-staff/>

Farm and Safety Rules

Here at the farm there are some very important safety rules that must be followed at all times:

- No smoking or vaping anywhere on the property.
- No weapons, alcohol, or illegal substances allowed on the property.
- Off limit areas are posted and must be avoided.
- No running, pushing, yelling, climbing the rails, stairs or ramp.
- Do not go into fields, paddocks, barns, or stalls unless you are supervised by a staff member, volunteer, or your therapist.
- Close all gates behind you.
- Driveway speed limit is posted at 5 mph. This speed limit is strictly enforced.
- No pets allowed on the premises. Please leave dogs at home.
- Visitors must be respectful of the students and clients who take part in Healing Reins' services, remembering that sessions are private and confidential. PLEASE DO NOT APPROACH areas where services are clearly taking place.
- Visitors must avoid areas where programs are taking place. There is an indoor viewing area and a space on the indoor arena railing for observing participants. There is an outdoor viewing area to observe participants in the outdoor arena and sensory trail. Visitors may visit the small animal enclosure or the playground near the parking areas.
- All visiting minors must be supervised at all times.
- Chasing, teasing, taunting, harassing, or purposely annoying, scaring, or irritating the animals at the farm is strictly prohibited.
- Treat animals with respect. Use kind, even if direct, words with the animals. Anyone not being kind will be asked to leave the immediate area where the animals are located.
- Do not give the animals any food or treats (despite what the animals may tell you!).
- Picture taking is not allowed without permission from the Healing Reins staff.
- Participants must wear appropriate clothing and footwear to be allowed near the horses. Helmet policies are stated in each program's Informational Packet.
- Helmets are required while around horses for those under 18 years of age or those with physical conditions that necessitate additional protection, and are required at all times regardless of age when doing mounted activities.
- Caution: Fencing on the property has electrified strands of wire.
- Listen to the Healing Reins staff, volunteers, and therapists at all times, and follow these safety rules.

We greatly appreciate your help and support in this, as the safety and wellbeing of our clients, participants, and all of our animals relies upon all of us doing our part.

