



## Volunteer Training Booklet

# WELCOME ABOARD

**“Where Horses are Living Mirrors, Empowering Positive Change”**



## **Welcome to the Stable Wranglers!**

Thank you for joining us here at Stable-Spirit and helping us fulfill our mission. We cannot do it without you.

### **Orientation/ Tour For all Volunteers**

- Tour of the facility: After which you should know the location of each of the following: the 3 different herds, horse care stall, volunteer stall, waiting room, feed and tack rooms, office, and restroom.
- Review general safety requirements such as: always close gates/doors that you open, always pay attention, always put items back in the proper place. Only use one earbud/ headphone for safety - you need to be able to listen to your surroundings.
- Review what to do in case of an emergency. Be able to call 911 and give specific directions to the stable. A stable phone is available in the office, however if the office is locked, most staff will have a cell phone, and nearly all the volunteers have a cell phone as well.
- You are not required to perform any function that you are not comfortable doing or that you have not been trained to do.

### **Volunteer Space**

**We are continually improving our facilities! Volunteers have access to:**

- **Volunteer Stall:** Equipped with cabinets and a refrigerator for your convenience.

- **Waiting Room:** A comfortable space to cool off, relax, and enjoy coffee.
- **Smoking Area:** Located at the first picnic table outside the fence.

## **Restrooms**

Restrooms are located to the right of the office at the front of the building.

## **Rain or Shine**

Our horses are the true miracle workers here and need care every single day, regardless of the weather. We are open to volunteers daily (once you have been trained), except Sunday

## **Find us on Social Media**

### **Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/stable.spirit.nonprofit>

### **Instagram**

<https://instagram.com/stable.spirit>

## **Volunteer Etiquette**

### ***To ensure a respectful and productive environment:***

- Stable-Spirit is a working facility; sessions often occur while volunteers are present. Please do not interrupt sessions or enter session areas.
- If grooming, keep horses farther in the breezeway or in the dirt areas to avoid session spaces.
- On busy days, you may need to tie horses to the ties behind the Director's home and carry tools over.

- If you have questions, seek out a Staff Member not in a session, an experienced Volunteer, an Office Person, or the Volunteer Coordinator.
- No pictures of clients are allowed. Please be respectful of other volunteers in photos, and do not post to social media without permission.

### **Tips & Expectations with the Schedule**

- **Hours of Operation:** Monday - Saturday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.
- Once trained, you may volunteer anytime during hours of operation.
  - Call/Text Katie Durio at 409-365-5277 before arriving to ensure a Staff Member or Upper-Level Volunteer is present.
  - Purple Volunteer status: Once achieved, you won't need to text ahead—except on Saturdays, when you must always call/text first.
- We appreciate reliability—please honor your commitments if you agree to a specific schedule or task.
- Remember to sign in and out.
- Wear your nametag while volunteering and leave it in the bin before leaving.

### **LOGGING YOUR TIME**

***It is essential to log your volunteer hours at Stable-Spirit for several important reasons:***

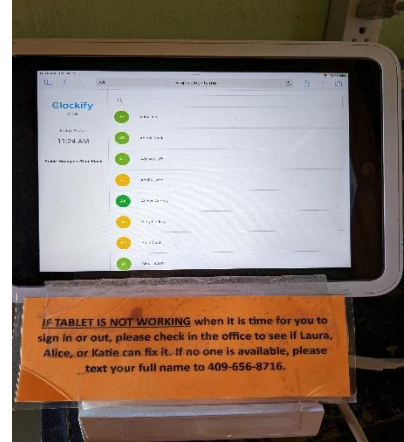
- **Safety:** In case of an emergency, we need to know who is on-site at all times.
- **Grants:** As a non-profit, we rely on grants that often require us to report the number of volunteers and the total hours worked.

- **Recognition:** We love recognizing our volunteers for the incredible hours they contribute to Stable-Spirit!

## How to Log Your Time:

### 1. Sign-In:

- a. When you arrive to volunteer, your first step is to sign in using the Volunteer Tablet.
- b. Search for your name in the Search Bar.
- c. Click on your name, then tap the Large Green “Clock-In” button.



### 2. Sign-Out:

- a. When you're done, please sign out by following the same steps.
- b. Search for you name again, click on your name, and tap the Large Gray “Clock-Out” button.

### 3. If the Tablet is Unavailable:

- a. If the tablet is not logged in, please first try to find an Office Staff member for assistance.
- b. If no one is available, follow the instructions posted on the note near the tablet to manually log your hours.

## MUCKING PASTURES

### *Horse Experience Level: Beginning/Intermediate*

**Why We Muck Our Horses' Pastures:** Keeping our horses' pastures clean is crucial for their health and well-being. A clean pasture helps prevent the spread of bacteria and parasites that can harm the horses. Remember, pastures are the horses' homes, and they can't clean up after themselves. Horses often roll in the dirt or sand to scratch itches, so mucking is a key part of their care.

Mucking may seem like a thankless job, but it's one of the most important tasks you can do to ensure our horses stay healthy. If every volunteer could take just one wheelbarrow load out every day, the positive impact would be enormous for our horses.

**\*\*\* IMPORTANT: Always close and latch any gate you open, whether or not horses are in the pasture.**

### Mucking Instructions:

#### 1. Choose a Wheelbarrow:

- a. Select a wheelbarrow that suits your ability to push and dump.
- b. The small wheelbarrow with yellow handles should be left for barn work or use by small children.

#### 2. Choose a Muck Rake:

- a. Select a muck rake from the wall by the wheelbarrows.
- b. Place the rake in your wheelbarrow as you head to the pasture you will be working in.

#### 3. Muck and Dump:

- a. Walk through the pasture, picking up piles of manure and placing them in your wheelbarrow. Continue until the load is manageable for you to push and dump.
- b. Once you have a full load, bring it to the Manure Dump pile in the corner of the pasture. Dump the load as far back into the pile as possible.
- c. Be sure to clean up any wet hay around the hay rings, as that's where the horses spend most of their time.



**4. Return Tools:**

- a. After you've finished, return the wheelbarrow and muck rake to their designated parking spots.
- b. Make sure the wheelbarrow is completely empty, and that the muck rake is free of manure.

**HALTERING, LEADING & TYING A HORSE*****Horse Experience Level: Beginning/Intermediate*****1. Locate the Halter**

- a. Find the individual horse's halter on the rack. Halters are hung by their noseband and should have the lead rope already attached.

**2. Approach the Horse**

- a. Go to the appropriate pasture and locate the horse you need to halter.

**3. Approach Slowly**

- a. Approach the horse calmly and slowly, with the halter ready to place on its head.

**4. Make Contact**

- a. Gently place your hand on the horse's body:
  1. If the horse is facing you, place your hand on its neck to let it know you are trustworthy.
  2. If the horse is turned away, approach from an angle towards the shoulder.

**5. Place the Rope Around the Neck**

- a. Drape the lead rope around the horse's neck. This helps to let the horse know you are there to halter it.

**6. Halter the Horse**

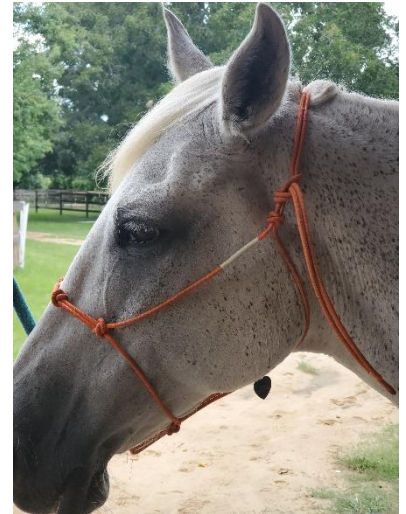
- a. Stand on the left side of the horse.



- b. Put the horse's nose through the noseband of the halter, then bring the long strap around the back of the horse's ears and through the loop.
- c. Cinch the halter up, tying a knot so that the noseband is 1-2 fingers below the horse's cheekbone.

## 7. Handling the Lead Rope

- a. Fold the lead rope in figure- eight loops, leaving about 6 inches between your hand and the halter.
- b. Hold the extra rope in the opposite hand.
- c. **DO NOT WRAP THE ROPE AROUND YOUR HAND(S) AT ANY TIME! Always keep control of the rope.**



## 8. Leading the Horse

- a. Stand beside the horse's head, slightly ahead of the shoulder, at the throatlatch.
- b. Look straight ahead at destination and begin walking. The horse will follow you at the pace you set.
- c. If the horse starts walking too fast, gently pull on the lead rope to slow the pace down.

## 9. Tying the Horse

- a. When tying, leave about 24 inches of slack in the rope.
- b. Create a loop in the rope and insert it straight into the safety tie.
- c. Insert the prong through the loop from behind, then pull down to make sure the knot is secure.

## IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

1. **Close Gates:** Always close all gates behind you entering and leaving the pastures.



2. **You Control the Horse:** Remember, YOU control the horse, not the other way around. Be comfortable being assertive – he/ she will still love you!
3. **Horse Herds: Horses** in different herds DO NOT MIX. When walking your horse, be aware of other horses in the breezeway that may belong to different herds. Never pass in front of or behind another horse with your horse too close.
4. **Remove Halters:** When you return horses to their pastures, remove the halter and lead rope, then replace them properly on the rack.

### A Quick Check-In

Thanks for sticking with us as you read through the handbook! We want to make sure everyone is prepared and on the same page before orientation. To confirm you've gotten this far, please remember the secret phrase: *Horses bring healing*.

You'll be asked to share this phrase at orientation—it's our fun way of making sure everyone has read through the important details.

## GROOMING HORSES

### *Horse Experience Level: Beginning/Intermediate*

**Why we groom our horses:** Grooming increases blood flow to the skin's surface, massages large muscle groups, and builds a bond between groomer and horse. Our horses deserve a spa day as often as they can get.

**\*\*\* To prevent skin issues between the horses, please sanitize each tool as you finish with it and place it in the "used" basket.**

1. **Rubber Curry:** Rub your horse with the rubber curry in a circular movement moving counterclockwise.



- 2. Body Brush:** Brush off the dirt and hair that was loosened by the rubber curry. Start at the neck and work over the entire body, brushing in long strokes with the direction of the hair. (Don't forget the legs and belly.)



- 3. Hairbrush:** Brush the tangles out of their mane and tails.

Detangler is in the grooming stall if needed. **Never stand directly behind a horse to brush his tail.**

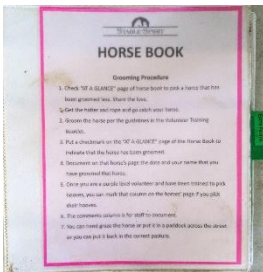


- 4. Fly Spray:** \*Please note – only Purple and above Volunteers may use the Fly Spray or have assistance



from Staff. On days the bugs are bad spray the horse down with fly spray. Do not spray their face. Always have them untied and held in your hands and start from legs up.

- 5. Sanitize:** Don't forget to sanitize the brushes with the Tea Tree Solution after each use.



- 6. Document:** Notate which horse(s) you groomed in the Horse Book, by putting a check mark next to their name on the "At a Glance" page and by writing your name and date on the grooming page behind that horse's Individual Tab. Be sure to Spread the Love to all the horses. When deciding which horse to groom look at the "At a Glance" page to see who hasn't been groomed yet.



- 7. Clean Up:** Sweep up dirt and hair from the floor and place the dirt in the small barn wheelbarrow and the hair in the trash can by the bench in the breezeway.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Remember to keep an eye on the Volunteer Hub at [timecounts.app/stable-spirit/opportunities](https://timecounts.app/stable-spirit/opportunities) for upcoming events and opportunities to volunteer. Sign up on the Hub for any events you are interested in.

## SKILL BASED VOLUNTEERING

If you see a need and can fill that need, let's talk. There are so many examples of skills you may be able to offer - photography, graphic design, clerical, sewing, carpentry, plumbing, electrical – just to name a few.



### HOOF CARE

**Horse Experience Level:** *Experienced (Additional Training Required)*

**Why we pick our horses' hooves:** Horse's hooves are prone to picking up bits of gravel, dirt, and debris on a regular basis, especially if they are out in a paddock, or pasture. If the hooves are not picked, these pieces of gravel or debris can lead to discomfort, infection, and lameness.

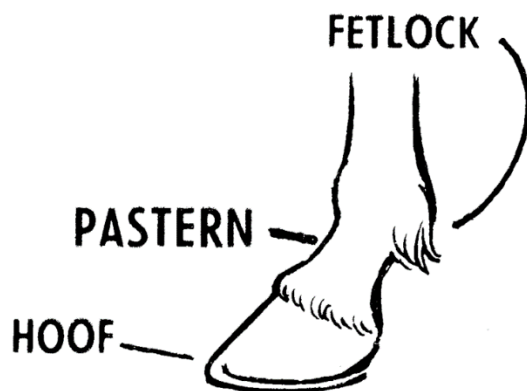
Order of lifting and picking hooves: **Right Front**- **Right Rear**- **Left Rear**- **Left Front**.

**IMPORTANT:** In some cases, the horse may be reluctant to cooperate and won't lift its feet. The horse should be examined to make sure it is healthy and not experiencing pain in one or more legs.

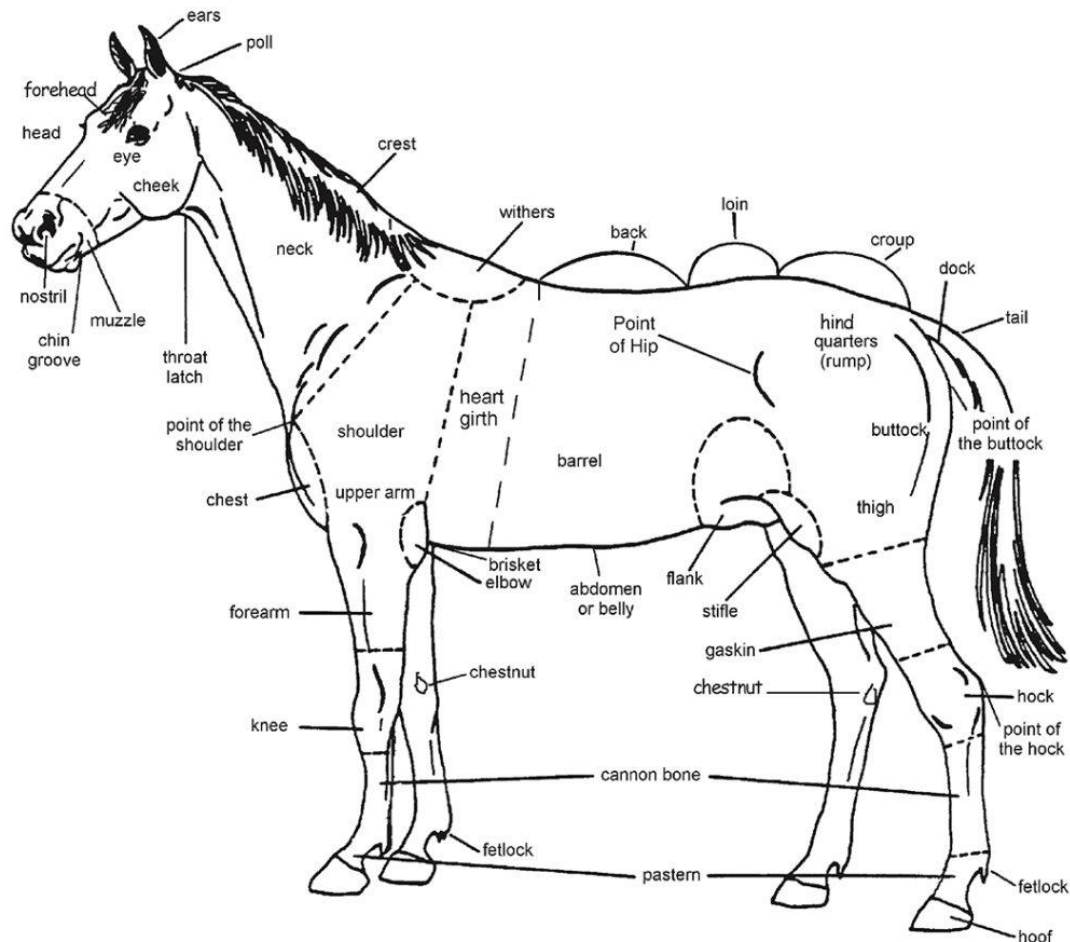
**DO NOT FORCE THE HORSE TO LIFT ITS LEG.** If this occurs, please make note of it in the grooming logbook in the comment section and if there is a Staff member near, let them know of your concern (make sure said Staff member is not in a Session).

1. **Hoof pick:** Have hoof pick in far hand when ready to lift horse's foot.
2. **Pick up the horse's foot:** Stand near the horse's leg, facing its rear, and run your near hand down the horse's leg, toward the pastern. (Some horses will pick up the foot automatically, but others need a little more physical involvement – a small pinch.) Cradle the foot in your hand. Keep the angle of the leg natural and don't bend it off to the side.
3. **Clean out the inside of the hoof:** Take the pick in your hand and, pointing the pick away from you, scrape out any dirt or manure with the tip of the pick, paying special attention to the sole, bars, and frog. Clean the areas around the frog, **but don't dig into the frog.**
4. **Spray:** Use Tea Tree solution under and around each hoof as you complete the picking.
5. **Clean up:** Sweep up all dirt/debris from picking hooves and place it in barn wheelbarrow. Do not put in trash can.

**\*\* You do not want the horses to walk in each other's hoof debris.**



## PARTS OF THE HORSE



## HIPPOTHERAPY TRAINING

*Additional Training Required & a Scheduled Commitment is Preferable*

## SIDE WALKER TRAINING

**Note:** Must be fourteen (14) years of age or older unless prior approval has been given by the Executive Director. *Experienced riders and current or previous horse owners will be given priority on a case-by-case basis.*

1. Various Holds, depending on client's needs:
  - a. Hand holding front of saddle with forearm across leg (just below the knee)
  - b. Hand on leg
  - c. Hand on ankle
  - d. Hold back curve of saddle, just behind client's leg to always remain in proper position.
2. Listen for directions from the Therapist as to when they need your assistance. Otherwise, do not engage verbally with the client unless asked to do so.
3. Throughout the session, the main task of the Side Walker is to be sure the client is safely in the saddle and to assist the Therapist when asked.
4. Give instructions as to what to do if a client needs to be taken off the horse suddenly due to horse or client behavior. Therapist will usually be the one to take the client off on their side of the horse.
5. Be aware that therapists may modify your holds as required for their clients.
6. Practice grooming a horse and assist in preparing them for a session.
7. Practice putting on the proper tack for the session (with the aid of a Therapist, Horse Handler, or Staff).
8. Review how to assist a participant to put on a helmet properly prior to the ride.

## HORSE HANDLER TRAINING

**Note:** Must be sixteen (16) years of age or older unless prior approval has been given by the Executive Director. *Experienced riders and current or previous horse owners will be given priority on a case-by-case basis.*



1. All elements of side walker training above must be completed.
2. Demonstrate how to lead the horse at the walk and trot.
3. Know the limits of correction that can be used for a horse when a child is on its back.
4. Be thoroughly familiar with the characteristics unique to each horse you lead.
5. Demonstrate how to tack horses using all the various types of equipment available.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of what tack to use for each horse/client by knowing where the information is located.
7. Demonstrate how to lead a horse into a mounting ramp, lead the horse, and unload at the ramp.
  - a. **LOADING STATION:** Be on the right side of the horse, enter from back of mounting station, horses head towards left mounting area, so horse is close to mounting station, stop horse at set point. Hold horse still while client mounts. Keep horse close to ramp so Therapist doesn't have to jump off.
  - b. **ENTERING ARENAS:** Big "U-Turn" towards gate. Be sure horse is walking down the middle of the gate so as not to 'scrape off" Therapist or Side Walkers by being too close to one side.
  - c. **DURING SESSION:** Listen for directions from the Therapist as to where to walk, when to stop, etc.
  - d. **RETURNING TO RAMP AFTER SESSION:** Be on the left side of the horse. Big "U-Turn" once through gate. Go in forward, close to ramp for Therapist to walk up ramp to flat mounting surface.

*Throughout the session, the main task of the Horse Handler is to control the horse and focus mainly on the horse.*



**Below is a list of volunteer opportunities while at the Stable. Again, you are never required to perform a task you do not wish to perform.**

### **Maintenance**

- Mucking (pastures, paddocks, arenas)
- Sweeping (tack rooms, feed room, breezeways)
- Rugs in Breezeway (shake out dirt)
- Dusting (tables, shelves, cobwebs)
- Janitorial (clean restrooms, take out trash)
- Restock bottled water
- Clean and fill dog/cat water bowl
- Laundry (horse blankets, towels, rags etc.)
- Distribute Sanitized Grooming Tools (after drying)
- Sprinkle ant poison on ant beds
- Rake (sweetgum balls, old hay around hay rings - dump on burn pile)
- Grounds Clean-up (pick up down branches - dump on burn pile)
- Trim low hanging branches (dump on burn pile) \*\*
- Weed eat along fence lines \*\*

**\*\* Speak with Katie D (Director) for equipment use approval**

### **Groom Horses**

- Brush horses
- Pick hooves \*\*
- Spray with Mosquito/fly Spray \*\*

**\*\* Must be a Purple Volunteer or have assistance from Staff**

### **Office**

- Shredding
- Photography \*\* **Speak with Volunteer Coordinator about Stable-Spirit Needs**

### **Special Events** \*\*

- We always need volunteers to help on Farrier Day, Events, Fundraisers etc.

### **Hippotherapy** \*\*

- We always need volunteers to help on Hippotherapy Day

**\*\* To view and sign-up for Events and Hippotherapy don't forget to go to:**

**[timecounts.app/stable-spirit/opportunities](https://timecounts.app/stable-spirit/opportunities)**

## NOTES

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