

Special Equestrians

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New Participant Information

Thank you for your interest in our program. Please find enclosed a new rider information package containing rider registration forms. **Complete the forms giving as much information as possible forms will be returned if incomplete, and then return them to Special Equestrians.** The level of instruction is tailored to the riders' capabilities. There are two aspects of our Therapeutic Riding program. One is Therapeutic Riding, and the other is Hippotherapy.

What is Therapeutic Riding?

There are many benefits to therapeutic riding; physical, psychological, educational and social. All students gain confidence by mastering the skill of riding. Any one can strive to achieve a partnership with the horse, whether a person has a disability or just wants to form a bond with a animal. Because the movement of the horse is very unique, it moves the rider in a manner similar to the human gait. Therapeutic Riding helps to improve gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination, reflexes, motor planning, range of motion and muscle tone. It can improve self-confidence, emotional control, self discipline, risk taking, patience and trust. Sequencing, patterning, eye-hand coordination, differentiation, and visual-spatial perception are also learned in horseback riding. Horses are very social animals and social interaction is developed by forming a bond with the horse, therapists, instructors, volunteers and other students.

What is Hippotherapy?

Hippotherapy is a physical, occupational and speech therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement and is part of an integrated treatment program. A trained Physical or Occupational Therapist work with the students. In the controlled Hippotherapy environment, the therapist modifies the horse's movement and carefully grades sensory input. Specific riding skills are not taught (as in therapeutic horseback riding); but rather a foundation is established to improve neurological function and sensory processing.

Your safety and well-being is our most important concern. Certain conditions require additional precautions to be taken when on or around horses and some conditions are contraindications to riding. Once you become an active rider, all forms will need to be updated on an annual basis. Should the physical condition of the rider change at any time, Special Equestrians should be notified immediately and a new Physician Release Form must be completed. (Please note that the Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy forms may not apply to each applicant.)

When you have returned your completed forms we will contact you to schedule an evaluation. Evaluation last approximately 30-45 minutes and riders are asked to wear long pants and shoes with a rounded toe and small heel. Safety helmets are to be worn by all riders and will be provided for you. An Evaluation Fee of \$60.00 must be paid day of evaluation.

Please find the enclosed forms

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Participant Policies and Procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Consent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Height and Weight Chart | <input type="checkbox"/> PT/OT Forms (if applicable) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical History | <input type="checkbox"/> Atlanto/Axial (if applicable) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rider Questionnaire | <input type="checkbox"/> Registration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Authorization/Liability Release | <input type="checkbox"/> Fee Schedule |

