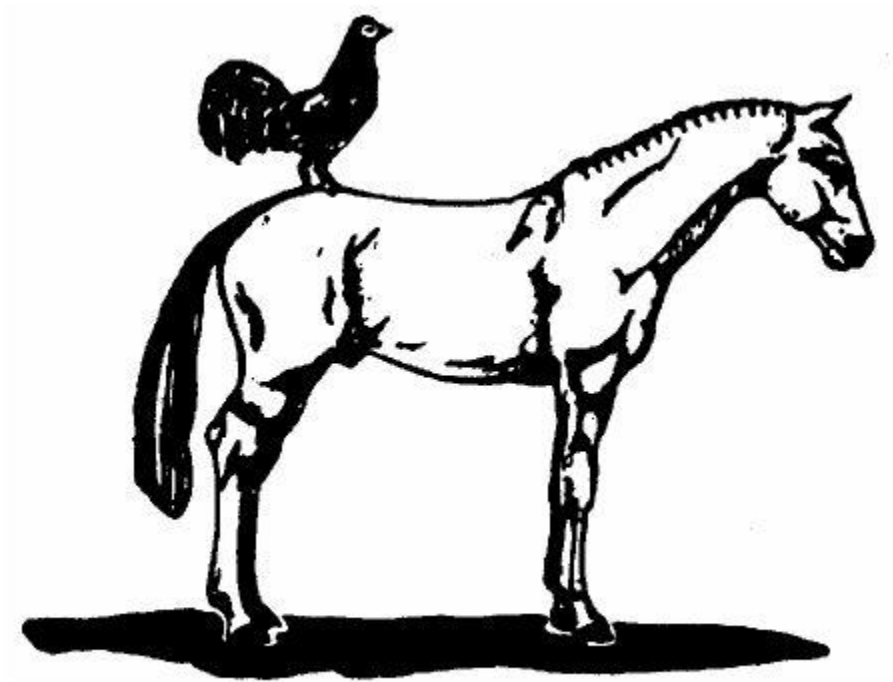


# THORNCROFT EQUESTRIAN CENTER VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



## Thorncroft Equestrian Center

190 Line Road, Malvern, Pennsylvania 19355

[www.thorncroft.org](http://www.thorncroft.org) | (610) 644-1963 | [info@thorncroft.org](mailto:info@thorncroft.org)

Thorncroft is a not for profit 501(c)3 organization. Tax ID 23-2218431

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Welcome.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About Thorncroft Equestrian Center.....</b>	<b>5</b>
• Mission	
• Vision	
• By the Numbers	
• PATH International	
<b>Equine Assisted Services (EAS) 101.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Programs and Services.....</b>	<b>7</b>
• Weekly Lessons	
• Summer Camp	
• Pony Parties and Celebrations	
• Pony Tales	
• Veterans Program	
• Introduction to Horsemanship for First Responders	
• Para-Equestrian Dressage	
• Barn Crew University	
• The Mainstreamers	
• Clinics	
• Therapeutic Riders Division of the Devon Horse Show	
<b>Volunteer Program: Basic Information.....</b>	<b>9</b>
• Requirements and Training	
• Equine/Rider Focused Roles	
• Commitment	
• Pennsylvania Equine Immunity Act	
• Opportunities	
• BAND App	
<b>Volunteer Program: Policies and Guidelines.....</b>	<b>11</b>
• Conduct and Behavior	
• Tracking Your Hours	
• Scheduling and Cancellations	
• Food and Beverages	
• Clothing	
<b>Volunteer Orientation: What to Expect.....</b>	<b>13</b>
• Sample Orientation Schedule	
• What to Wear/Bring	
• Arrival and Check-in	
• Group Introductions and Experience	
• Policies and Protocols	

- Property Tour
- Grooming, Tacking, and Walking
- Wrap-up and “Shadow” Scheduling

**Operations.....15**

- Facility and Property Rules
- General Rules
- Equine-Based Rules
- Lesson Rules

**Working with a Disabled Population.....17**

**Thorncroft Policies.....18**

- Confidentiality
- Nondiscrimination
- Social Media
- Dismissal

**Risk Management and Emergency Protocols.....20**

- Accidents and Injuries
- Whom to Notify
- Location of First Aid Kits
- Location of Fire Extinguishers
- Fire Procedure
- Severe Weather Procedure
- Trail Ride Procedure

**Property Map and Location.....22**

## **WELCOME!**

We believe that the best practices of organizations are based upon strong values and ethics and that people working in such an environment are more productive and engaged in their work.

We encourage our team members to embrace our mission and values as they support our Thorncroft community. Thorncroft volunteers are, first and foremost, ambassadors of the Farm and embody its spirit in acting on all tasks within their organizational role.

Thorncroft Equestrian Center includes 35 horses, 70 acres of open space, a conference center, office space, an outdoor arena, and two beautiful indoor arenas.

Most of our volunteers assist with weekly lessons by grooming, tacking and untacking horses, and supporting riders and instructors as needed. Some of these volunteers commit to the same day and time every week in order to establish relationships and teamwork between the rider, the instructor, and the horse, others are available to cover on an as-needed basis. No horse experience? No problem! We will teach you to work with horses and students, and ensure you feel confident whenever you come to Thorncroft. We also have opportunities for volunteers that do not wish to interact with the horses. We are always in need of help with barn work, repairs, grounds maintenance, and office work.

Our riders, instructors and program participants rely on the commitment of volunteers to help facilitate daily lessons and specialty programs in a safe, supportive environment. It's important to know the creation and sustainability of that environment stretches far beyond interactions with our herd. In addition to lesson and/or therapy session volunteers, opportunities include facility maintenance, fundraising, marketing, volunteer recruitment and leadership, office management, and other vital operations.

At Thorncroft, volunteers give much more than their time. They share their friendship, compassion, experiences, and heart. Accomplishing our goal of improving the lives of those with special needs is made possible through the generosity of our volunteers.

This work would simply not be possible without the efforts of those who give of their own hearts and spirit. You are a valuable asset, and we warmly welcome you to the Thorncroft family.

With gratitude,  
Your friends at Thorncroft

# ABOUT THORNCROFT EQUESTRIAN CENTER

## MISSION

Our mission is to develop the physical and emotional well-being of all people regardless of their individual challenges. We are committed to personal growth and education in an equestrian environment of respect, love, and inclusion.

## VISION

Thorncroft Equestrian Center is a premier leader in the field of therapeutic horsemanship. Our Farm embraces the continuing education and development of high quality programs and instruction. Thorncroft brings out the gifts and abilities of all people and helps them realize their potential.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Our volunteers donated over 10,000 hours to the farm in 2022. We are so grateful! To see more information about the farm please visit our website at [www.thorncroft.org](http://www.thorncroft.org).

## PATH International

We proudly maintain a "Therapeutic Horsemanship International Premier Accredited Center Status" with PATH International. This association leads the advancement of professional equine-assisted services by supporting members and stakeholders through rigorously developed standards, credentialing, and education. PATH Intl. certifies and accredits centers, instructors, and equine specialists according to a set of field-tested standards to ensure the highest levels of safety, ethics and effectiveness in the equine-assisted services (EAS) industry. Instructors must complete workshops and pass both written and practical exams to become certified to teach equine-assisted services. Participants and their families can be confident that PATH Intl. Member Centers and Professionals deliver safe and effective EAS programming.

# EQUINE ASSISTED SERVICES 101

## WHAT ARE EQUINE ASSISTED SERVICES?

Our equine-assisted services (EAS) make use of horses to help promote emotional growth in individuals with disabilities and/or to promote well-being in individuals struggling with life circumstances. They are typically employed in assisting individuals with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, autism, dementia, delay in mental development, down syndrome and other genetic syndromes, various types of depression, trauma and brain injuries, behavior and abuse issues and other mental health issues.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

EAS are not limited to horseback riding. Many students may feel intimidated by a horse's size and features, and may take some time to develop trust and confidence when around them. As a result, our programs may include riding lessons and/or time around horses learning horse care, horse handling, saddling and developing an awareness of "horse sense" and benefitting from interactions with our equine partners

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

People with cognitive, psycho-motor and behavioral disabilities have shown positive results when EAS are taught and encouraged correctly by our instructors and staff, most of whom are PATH Intl. certified instructors. Just like the use of physical, occupational and speech-language therapy, people are helped or assisted by alternative activities to cope with their disability. Our sessions are conducted in such a way that the riders or students do not feel that they are actually under therapy. EAS assist individuals in the following ways:

- Build sense of self-worth, self-concept.
- Improve communication.
- Build trust and self-efficiency.
- Develop socialization skills and decrease isolation.
- Learn impulse control and emotional management.
- Set perspective.
- Learn limits and boundaries.



EAS participants can expect to experience physical, emotional, and mental rewards. For individuals with impaired mobility, horseback riding gently and rhythmically moves their bodies like a human walking gait. These riders can experience increased balance, muscle control and strength. Individuals with learning or mental disabilities are motivated by riding to increase concentration, patience, and discipline. If a psychological or emotional disability is present, the unique relationship formed with a horse can help improve interpersonal relationships and increase awareness in how to approach others in a positive manner. Whether riding or interacting with horses on the ground, all participants experience increased self-esteem, awareness, confidence, and independence.

## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **WEEKLY LESSONS**

Thorncroft is a mainstreaming facility where people with and without disabilities come together to ride, learn and relate to one another. Students ride at the same time each week, on the same day in private, semi-private (up to two riders) or group lessons.

### **SUMMER CAMP**

Thorncroft Summer Camp introduces riders to the excitement, challenges, and responsibilities of horseback riding and care. While learning respect for each other and cooperation, the campers' days are filled with an in-depth look at horsemanship and riding. Campers range in age from 7-12 years old, and counselors in training (CITs) are aged 13-18. There are typically eight sessions throughout the summer, beginning in June and ending in August.

### **PONY PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS**

Guests enjoy use of our all-weather indoor arena, 2-4 volunteers to lead ponies and assist riders, and the use of our spacious, heated party room. The use of outside foods and beverages are welcome along with any decorations. Pony parties are held from September to early June. For more information, contact Susan Walker-Russo at [susan@thorncroft.org](mailto:susan@thorncroft.org).

### **PONY TALES**

These sessions invite our equine enthusiasts of all abilities to learn more about our horse and pony friends while sparking their creativity in a natural environment. Sessions are tailored to each individual participant or family and activities may include learning how to groom, how to lead a horse, story time (for our younger friends), and nature walks around the property. Sessions are led by a Thorncroft staff member and will be limited to two families at a time with a maximum of five people per family. No prior horse experience is necessary. All sessions will be thirty minutes and no horseback riding will occur.

### **VETERANS PROGRAM**

For more than a decade, Thorncroft has had the privilege of welcoming members of our military community to participate in our Veterans Program and engage in equine-assisted services. With a strong focus on the foundational principles of horsemanship, our Veterans Program includes lessons on equine behavior, herd dynamics, round penning, lunging, and riding. Since its inception, the Farm has welcomed over 100 veterans from all branches of the military. All programming remains free to all participants thanks to the generosity of our donors. The volunteer needs for this group are handled by a designated group of staff. If you, or someone you know, are a vet and would like to join our program, please reach out! We extend our thanks to those who have served our country.

### **INTRODUCTION TO HORSEMANSHIP FOR FIRST RESPONDERS**

Horses evoke deep emotional and physical responses in people, especially in individuals affected by or managing trauma or stress. Because of this innate quality, horses offer unique

healing opportunities for veterans returning from service and emergency first responders. These sessions will explore horsemanship fundamentals including a study on equine behavior and communication, herd dynamics, and natural horsemanship. No prior horse experience is required. Class size is limited to six individuals. The volunteer needs for this group are handled by a designated group of staff. If you, or someone you know, are a first responder and would like to join our program, please reach out!

### **PARA-EQUESTRIAN DRESSAGE**

Thorncroft is an accredited Para-Equestrian Dressage Center of Excellence (COE), one of only nine in the country. As a COE, our future goals include the development of athletes to a level where they can represent the U.S. at the International and Paralympic Games level. For more information contact USEF Silver Level Coach Carole Laulis.

### **BARN CREW UNIVERSITY**

Barn Crew University (BCU) was created to provide the hard-working barn staff, working students, and lesson volunteers with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge in different aspects of the equestrian world. Classes are typically 1-2 hours long, led by an array of Thorncroft senior staff and instructors. Topics change monthly and there are opportunities to attend sessions/clinics taught by special guests.

### **THE MAINSTREAMERS**

Founded in 1986, Mainstreamers is an equestrian drill team consisting of riders with and without disabilities. They work and ride together, stewarding collaborative performances and mutual understanding. As the skill of each rider improves, their lives are also enriched by the experience. Our Mainstreamers have performed in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, and have given demonstrations of their precision drills at several esteemed shows including the Devon Horse Show, Dressage at Devon, Ludwig's Corner Horse Show, and The Radnor Hunt Concours d'Elegance.

### **CLINICS**

As Thorncroft is an education center, the Farm hosts a number of continuing education clinics year-round for new and seasoned equestrians to enrich their skill set outside of Thorncroft's traditional curriculum. The Continuing Education Committee coordinates a diverse calendar of visiting and in house educators to facilitate these clinics and seminars for our farm and surrounding community. Please visit our website for updated clinic information.

### **THERAPEUTIC RIDERS' DIVISION OF THE DEVON HORSE SHOW**

Since 1980, Thorncroft's volunteer force has supported this celebration of Thorncroft's mission by hosting the Therapeutic Riders Division of the Devon Horse Show on the Saturday and Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. On Saturday the riders compete in classes at the Farm and on Sunday some riders go to the Devon Show Grounds for the finals. Devoted volunteers and riders have nurtured and developed the show to where it is today, a nationally respected competition.



# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM BASIC INFORMATION

## REQUIREMENTS

Since 1969, Thorncroft has provided a safe haven for children and adults with and without special needs. To prioritize the health and safety of everyone who visits the Farm, all volunteers must provide completed forms and releases as outlined below.

- Volunteer Release
- Volunteer Orientation Information Form
- Pennsylvania State Clearance (volunteers aged 18 years+)
- Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearance (volunteers aged 18 years+)
- Proof of Health Insurance
- Volunteers shall notify Thorncroft if they have ever been convicted of a felony, convicted of a sexual offense, or convicted for animal cruelty or neglect.

Volunteer paperwork also must be updated annually to comply with PATH Intl. standards for accreditation. Annual updates are available for completion at the end of the year, and also must be completed when a past volunteer is reinstated to the program. Copies of these documents and additional information is available on our website, [www.thorncroft.org/volunteer-sign-up](http://www.thorncroft.org/volunteer-sign-up).

Thorncroft, in compliance with PATH Intl. standards, shall evaluate volunteers on an annual or as needed basis or with any change in policy or procedure.

All volunteers must be at least 13 years of age. In addition, volunteers:

- are expected to demonstrate commitment, **punctuality** and **reliability**;
- must be able to work independently with minimal supervision;
- have a positive attitude and be able to adapt to change and be flexible; and
- possess the ability to follow directions and take instruction.

## EQUINE/RIDER FOCUSED ROLES

For roles that require interaction with our horses or riders, volunteers should also be able to:

- lift 35 pounds; and
- walk for at least for a forty-five-minute period.

Best practices and procedures for horse handling, leading, and tacking/grooming will be shared during a dedicated training. Only volunteers who have attended and completed this specialized training are permitted to handle or interact with our horses. Training is offered on the first Sunday of each month and space is limited to ensure a thoughtful learning environment for all participants.

We have divided the orientation sessions into two levels. The first level is to hear about our facility, take a tour, and work with the horses by learning to interact with and groom them. We will also demonstrate the proper way to tack the horses. If time permits, we may practice leading horses in the arena.

The second level will be for volunteers who have already completed level one and shown proficiency in horse handling, grooming, and tacking. This level will focus on interaction with our therapy students, and the roles of side aide and/or a horse leader in a lesson. It will be at the sole discretion of the staff as to the timing and availability of this session.

## COMMITMENT

With over 150 volunteers, scheduling and consistency is very important. We ask that you commit to a minimum of 2-hours per shift for equine/rider focused roles. If you are unable to make this commitment, there are more flexible opportunities available. Just ask!

## PENNSYLVANIA EQUINE ACTIVITY IMMUNITY ACT (4 P.S. §§ 601-606)

You assume the risk of equine activities pursuant to Pennsylvania law.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Our volunteers are diverse in age, skill and experience and there are hundreds of ways to contribute to the community here at Thorncroft. A few of the most common roles are outlined below and this list is by no means exhaustive.

- Lesson support
- Building and/or facility maintenance
- Grounds maintenance
- Community service or internship
- Marketing
- Special events
- Summer camp
- Special Olympics (additional paperwork required)
- Specialty programs
- Pony Parties (dates posted in foyer at Volunteer Station)
- Mainstreamers
- Volunteer recruitment/leadership
- School programs
- Office support
- Front desk greeter
- Photography *with permission of the Executive Director*
- Computer skills

If you have a particular set of skills or abilities, let us know! We are always looking for help and appreciate your willingness to share your experience and time.

## BAND APP

BAND is a free and secure communication app that allows Thorncroft volunteers to stay informed about last minute schedule changes, ongoing needs and general announcements. It allows staff to share relevant documents (helpful forms or event flyers), images (new signage posted in the barn), or videos (how to put on and remove a blanket or sheet from a horse) and store them for future use. There is also a calendar with important events/dates. In short, this is your one-stop-shop for all things volunteer related. Once you've completed the necessary paperwork and training, you will be invited to download the app. Additional instructions will be provided by the Volunteer Coordinator within one to three days of your volunteer orientation. Please feel free to reach out to the Coordinator at [volunteer@thorncroft.org](mailto:volunteer@thorncroft.org) if you have trouble getting on the app or do not receive an invitation.

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM: POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

## CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

Volunteers should maintain the highest standards of behavior in the performance of their duties and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the mission and vision of the Farm. As such, volunteers should:

- Act honestly, responsibly and with integrity.
- Treat others with fairness, equality, dignity, and respect.
- Always communicate respectfully and honestly.
- Observe safety procedures and remind others as needed.
- Lead by example.
- Perform roles or tasks in a safe, efficient and competent way.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Refrain from communicating externally on behalf of Thorncroft unless otherwise directed.

Please direct any questions regarding these expectations to Carole Laulis at [volunteer@thorncroft.org](mailto:volunteer@thorncroft.org).

## TRACKING YOUR HOURS

Tracking your time is important for a variety of reasons. It can help identify support needs, allow our programs more efficiently, and gain funding through grants. It's best if you track your hours same-day, so before you leave the Farm visit the Volunteer Resource Table in the Lobby to complete an entry.

- Locate the appropriate binder and form within it, both of which are alphabetized by last name.
- Add the **date, start/end times, daily total of hours** and **year-to-date total of hours**.

If you run out of space, additional forms are typically available on the table. If not, leave a note for the Office Staff that more copies are needed.

## SCHEDULING AND CANCELLATIONS

If you are able to pick up additional shifts outside of your usual schedule, get in touch with Carole Laulis to see what opportunities may be available. If you are unable to make it to your scheduled shift, please contact Carole at 610-644-1963 x102 as soon as possible or call the office at (610) 644-1963 and leave a message. You may also post in the BAND app to see if someone else is able to cover your shift.

## FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Thorncroft serves a diverse population. Food and beverages (other than water) should be consumed in the kitchen, designated indoor areas for events/meetings (such as the Green Room) or outside to avoid exposure to food allergens. All areas should be left tidy and free of food and trash. Please refrain from bringing glass bottles or containers in the barn.

## **CLOTHING**

Clothing should be practical for the role you are performing and may vary accordingly. Attire should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate. Clothing with rips, holes, tears, offensive language/images/designs, or political statements are prohibited.

### **WEAR TO THE BARN**

- Jeans, riding pants, opaque pants
- Shorts (mid-thigh or longer)
- T-shirts
- Polo-style and/or button-up shirts
- Hard-soled, closed-toe, and closed-heel shoes/boots
- Work/riding gloves
- Sweatshirts or jackets that allow free movement

### **LEAVE AT HOME**

- Low-cut or revealing tops
- Spaghetti strap tank tops
- Shorts (above mid-thigh)
- Baggy or loose clothing
- Sandals, flip-flops, Crocs, etc.
- Long or dangling jewelry/accessories
- Perfumes/colognes
- Steel-toed boots

## **QUESTIONS?**

If you have any questions about our volunteer program that are not outlined here, please don't hesitate to contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Carole Laulis directly at [volunteer@thorncroft.org](mailto:volunteer@thorncroft.org).

## **VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION: WHAT TO EXPECT**

Volunteer orientations typically take place on the first Sunday of each month but may be adjusted throughout the year to accommodate special events and/or holidays. Each session is led by a group of Lead Volunteers that are responsible for ensuring adherence to Thorncroft's best practices. The program may also be adjusted at any time depending on group size or at the discretion of Farm staff, and an email will be sent prior to each orientation to confirm details. An overview of the afternoon is as follows along with a bit more information.

### **SAMPLE ORIENTATION SCHEDULE**

- 1:00-1:10 p.m.** | Arrival and check in
- 1:10-1:30 p.m.** | Group introductions and experience
- 1:30-2:00 p.m.** | Overview of policies and protocols
- 2:00-2:15 p.m.** | Brief tour of the property and barn
- 2:15-3:45 p.m.** | Grooming, tacking and walking a horse
- 3:45-4:00 p.m.** | Wrap-up and "shadow" scheduling

### **WHAT TO WEAR/BRING**

We will be in the barn and working directly with horses during the orientation, so your clothing may become dirty. For your comfort and safety, we recommend hard-soled, closed-toe, and closed-heel shoes/boots (i.e. hiking-style boots or something similar). Seasonal and weather appropriate clothing is recommended should comply with the Farm's guidelines. Clothing with rips, holes, tears, offensive language/images/designs, or political statements are prohibited. We recommend a water bottle, especially during the summer.

### **ARRIVAL AND CHECK IN**

Please make every effort to arrive on time. All required paperwork should be completed and returned to Carole Laulis ([volunteer@thorncroft.org](mailto:volunteer@thorncroft.org)) prior to attending an orientation. If you have not completed paperwork prior, be prepared to complete it onsite.

### **GROUP INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

We will begin by asking each person to share their name and what, if any, horse experience they have. Experience is not required, and this information helps us divide into smaller groups for barn work a bit later. If you have any special skills that may be of use outside of the barn (such as building/facility maintenance or event planning) please share that with us. We may be looking for someone just like you to help with a project outside of the barn.

### **POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS**

Next, we will review some of Thorncroft's policies and safety protocols. We don't expect you to remember all of them and all of the information we share is found in this handbook. It is important to review as a group and provide the opportunity to ask questions or address concerns in case any guidance is unclear.

## **PROPERTY TOUR**

While the Farm spans over 70 acres, you will likely spend most of your time in the barn and walking horses to/from our three arenas for lessons. We will take some time to walk these spaces and provide guidance as we go. For example, in the barn you will learn the proper way(s) to store equipment and read each horse's ID card.

## **GROOMING, TACKING, AND WALKING**

Working in small groups, Lead Volunteers will share best practices when interacting with horses, and how to groom and tack them. We understand that many of you have some previous horse experience and may be used to doing things a set way. Our processes are in place for the safety and well-being of our people and horses. We ask that you please respect the way we do things at Thorncroft and make every effort to follow our best practices. Time permitting, we will venture into one of our arenas to learn how to lead a horse. We may even review some basic ways volunteers can assist with our therapy lessons, though additional training is required to support them. Much of the orientation is equine focused as that is where most of our support is needed, but we will also review and explain barn chores and other needs for those that would prefer to minimize working with horses directly.

## **WRAP-UP AND SHADOW SCHEDULING**

Before we conclude the day, you will be asked to complete a form indicating your availability for various volunteering opportunities, including desired roles or tasks, and preferred dates/times. You will also be asked to return to the barn and "shadow" one or more Lead Volunteers while you familiarize yourself with our barn, horses and corresponding protocols. *Please note that before shadowing, all required paperwork must be completed and returned to Carole Laulis.*

All potential volunteers are required to "shadow" one or more Lead Volunteers unless an exception is granted based on demonstrated experience, and the amount of time you spend shadowing will depend on a variety of factors. At the end of the orientation you may sign up for designated days/times when Lead Volunteers are available to guide you. You may also schedule directly with the Lead Volunteers from week to week or add yourself to the calendar displayed in the lobby near the volunteer table.

To be scheduled for a volunteer shift without supervision, you must be able to groom, tack and lead horses comfortably and safely. You will be given access to the BAND app, which is the best resource to keep apprised of shifting volunteer needs, upcoming special events that require many volunteers in a variety of roles and clinics or unique offerings hosted at Thorncroft. If you are interested in assisting with therapy lessons, more information for Level Two volunteer orientation may be found in the BAND app. As always, Carole Laulis remains your main point of contact for scheduling and general questions.

## OPERATIONS

To ensure the safety and well-being of our horses, riders, volunteers, and staff, please take a moment to review the following guidelines and honor them during your time at Thorncroft. Volunteers with previous experience from other barns should review the equine-based guidelines as they are specific to our Farm and allow continuity of experience and care for our horses.

### FACILITY AND PROPERTY RULES

- We have a zero tolerance policy for smoking anywhere on the premises or the use or possession of drugs, firearms or alcohol.
- With the exception of service animals, no dogs are permitted on the property or unattended in vehicles.
- Vehicles must not exceed 10 mph, follow paved pathways, obey posted signs, and park in designated areas. Be sure to yield to horses in the driveway, parking areas or pathways.
- Driveways and doors to arenas and barns must be kept clear at all times.
- All gates must remain closed and latched.
- Unused equipment must be kept in its proper place and aisles should be kept clear.
- Notify a staff member of broken or damaged fences, stalls, or gates as soon as possible.
- The tack room, office and entrance/exit doors are to remain locked at night; lights are to be turned off.
- Volunteers are not permitted to operate or drive farm machinery or equipment unless otherwise directed.
- We encourage all visitors, staff and volunteers to keep cell phone usage to a minimum. Maintaining awareness of your surroundings is paramount to the safety of all people and animals on the Farm. Please do not use your electronic devices at all during lessons or while responsible for our horses or students.
- Due to insurance reasons, you may not bring your child(ren) in to volunteer with you unless cleared with staff ahead of time.

### GENERAL RULES

- No running or excessive noise inside any Farm buildings.
- Children must be supervised by an adult, parent or guardian at all times.
- Sandals/open toed shoes are not permitted in the barn.
- All visitors must sign a release of liability and should be accompanied at all times by a volunteer or staff member as appropriate.
- Cell phones should be turned off or placed on vibrate; sudden, loud noises may startle the horses (and riders!). Do not use your phone while interacting or working with the horses.
- Volunteers are not permitted to perform tasks for which they have not been trained and cleared.

## EQUINE-BASED RULES

- **Riders, visitors and volunteers are prohibited from giving treats unless otherwise directed by a staff member or instructor. Many of our horses have particular dietary needs and/or food sensitivities. Free distribution of treats can lead to undesirable behaviors such as nipping or biting. Treats may be given to instructors to share with horses if appropriate.**
- Follow all directions, equipment and dietary needs posted on each horse's ID card, located directly outside of their stall.
- Always approach a horse from the front if possible. If not, be sure to get the horse's attention before approaching or touching by using a calm voice and moving slowly.
- When grooming, tacking, or adding/removing blankets, horses should be secured in the aisle via cross ties affixed to their halter and face toward the center of the barn.
- Halters should be completely fastened with no loose straps.
- Horses in cross ties should not be left unattended.
- Horses must be removed from the aisle to allow other horses to pass.
- While mucking out stalls, horses should be put in another stall or secured in the aisle via cross ties.
- No changes are to be made to horse's equipment, appearance, feeding or exercise programs by anyone other than appropriate staff members (such as the Barn Manager).
- Any injury, abnormality or change in behavior should be raised to the appropriate staff member (for example, a Shift Manager) as soon as possible.
- Only volunteers who have been trained, cleared to do so and on the approved list may open gates and enter fields to turn horses out and bring them in. Other volunteers may assist as needed in bringing horses between the barn and the gates at the request of and with the instruction of appropriate staff.
- If a horse gets loose and wanders off, notify a staff member of a "loose horse." Refrain from chasing and/or following the horse from behind.
- Prior to entering indoor and outdoor arenas, call "**door**" to alert horses and riders of your presence.
- Horses require their quiet time. Unless you are preparing them for a lesson or have been otherwise instructed to do so, please refrain from entering their stalls or otherwise engaging with them.
- Volunteers are prohibited from disciplining horses. Instead, notify a staff member who will evaluate and respond appropriately to any questionable horse behavior.
- When responsible for a horse including but not limited to holding a lead line, monitoring when in cross ties, entering/leaving a stall, etc., the use of cell phones is prohibited. If it becomes necessary to make a call/send a text, either wait until your task is complete or notify someone else to assist so you may step away.

## LESSON RULES

- Refrain from asking the rider about their disability.
- When the rider is on horseback, limit conversation. It is important that the instructor and rider communicate directly with each other.



## WORKING WITH A DISABLED POPULATION

Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take time to know your participant and direct questions to the instructors. Often, a major barrier for people with disorders of intellectual development and/or physical disability is not the disorder itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others. Above all, please treat individuals with respect, being considerate and sensitive to their needs.

### WHEELCHAIR ETTIQUITE

Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind. Always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before you help; be respectful - people's wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Don't hang or lean on them unless you have permission; and speak directly - be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get yourself on the same level as the wheelchair.

### ESCORTING AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may only need verbal direction/cues. **Ask them their preference in the type of help they require.** If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to have assistance. Repeat/verbalize information that may be written/posted. If you're uncertain of what to do, ask your instructor how you can be of further assistance.

### ESCORTING A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUAL AND/OR PERSON WITH SPEECH DISABILITY

Try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking to him/her. Speak clearly, avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words and avoid long verbal instructions/conversation. Become familiar with hand gestures/body positions that the participant may be using to represent words and concepts. Direct questions to your instructor. Aid with communication when needed (i.e., visual cues, gestures, etc). Alert the Instructor if the participant is having difficulty with hearing aid (i.e., ringing).

### NON-SPEAKING AND/OR MINIMALLY SPEAKING

Many of our participants are non-verbal or limited in their verbal expression. To enhance communication with these individuals, instructors and volunteers may reinforce requests and directions with basic American Sign Language (ASL) or the individual's assistive devices such as an i-Pad or tablet, picture book or relative equipment.

# POLICIES

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information regarding the riders, volunteers, horses, and personnel of Thorncroft shall remain privileged and confidential. This information may include, but is not limited to, any medical, social, personal, and/or financial information. Information concerning students and horses will be shared with volunteers on a need-to-know basis. If you have a concern or question regarding a horse, rider or staff member, please communicate directly and privately with the executive director and remember to maintain confidentiality of the issue. Disclosure of any confidential information shall not be released to anyone not associated with Thorncroft. Volunteers should refrain from taking pictures or videos **that include people in them** unless directed.

## NONDISCRIMINATION

Thorncroft Equestrian Center does not, and shall not, discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, and vendors.

Thorncroft Equestrian Center is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the bases of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

While Thorncroft does not intend to monitor the social media of its team actively, it cannot ignore that social media plays a large part in our society and acts as a place for people to congregate and interact on a variety of topics related to the Farm, the horsemanship community, and local and national news to name a few.

Team members are welcome, but not expected, to share their volunteer status at Thorncroft on social media. Every team member is representing Thorncroft with their actions online whether their affiliation with the Farm is shared or not.

**(SOCIAL MEDIA continued)**

To keep the Thorncroft community safe and welcoming, and to perpetuate our culture of love and inclusion, there are a few simple and for the most part universally recognized ground rules that Thorncroft team members and volunteers must follow:

- Do not post or comment negatively about the Farm, other team members, or Thorncroft leadership. Any issues related to the Farm should be brought to the Executive Director or a Board Member.
- Do not post threats or hate speech.
- Do not engage in arguments online with riders or their families.
- Do not use Thorncroft branding in your profile images.
- Do not “friend” or “follow” riders who are minors.
- Do not post anything relating to riders’ personal information and do not share photographs of riders without their explicit consent or the explicit consent of their parents/guardians.
- Do not post Thorncroft-related news (new herd members, equipment, hires, etc.) until after Thorncroft has officially announced.

In general, we ask that all team members exercise good and sound judgment related to social media engagement. Thorncroft reserves the right to remove any comments or content posted to its owned/operated social media channels under its sole discretion and without notice.

## **DISMISSAL**

Thorncroft reserves the right to dismiss a guest or volunteer from the facility and programs for failure to follow Thorncroft policies and procedures or if their behavior is putting themselves, a participant, staff, other volunteers, or any of the horses at risk of physical or mental harm. The Thorncroft instructor/staff in charge at the time will review the behavior with the volunteer and determine the level of intervention necessary. The level of intervention could include a verbal or written warning or immediate dismissal from the facility and program.

Physical, emotional, mental or sexual abuse by anyone at the facility will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal from the facility. Any incidents that occur which violate state or federal laws will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

# RISK MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

## ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

In the event of an accident, injury, or other emergency, you may be asked to fulfill one of the following roles. It is important to remain calm and follow directions.

### Person sent by instructor to call for help:

1. Call 911. If in the barn or office, press line 1 on the right side of the phone to get a line.
2. Relay the below information to the operator:
  - a. Your name and number from which you're calling. If from the barn or office, the number is (610) 644-1963.
  - b. Your location and directions:  
*Thorncroft Equestrian Center*  
*190 Line Road*  
*Malvern, PA 19355*  
*Intersection of East Boot Road and Line Road*  
(Directions are posted near the land lines)
  - c. A brief description of what happened and the condition(s) of the injured person(s)
  - d. Any help being given (i.e. CPR, pressure to wound, etc.)
3. Stay on the phone until Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrive, and continue to relay updated information.

### Person(s) sent by instructor to wait for EMS:

1. If possible, open all gates impeding access to injured person(s). If the person is in the field, a senior staff member will allow access to the fields if there are horses out at the time.
2. Obtain the injured person(s) medical form(s), located in the tan filing cabinets in the Front Office.
3. Go to the end of the driveway on Line Road (at the front of the farm) to wait.
4. Provide the injured person(s) medical form(s) and explain to EMS personnel the exact location of the injured person(s).
5. Ask the EMS to shut off lights and sirens as they enter the property.

### Person(s) sent by instructor to obtain necessary supplies:

1. Retrieve the First Aid Kit and blanket from under the counter in the Lobby.
2. Locate and/or contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the injured person(s).
3. Follow additional directions and guidance provided by the instructor.

## WHOM TO NOTIFY

**In case of emergency, please notify the most senior staff member on premises or if you are not sure of who that might be, please notify anybody on staff.**

## **LOCATION OF FIRST AID KITS**

A blanket and First Aid kit are located under the desk in the Lobby. We have two Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) on the Farm: one located in the enclosed box in the Main Lobby and another is located in the office area.

## **LOCATION OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

Fire extinguishers are located in the following areas:

- North Arena Lobby
- Main Office Hallway (by north door)
- Main Arena Lobby

## **FIRE PROCEDURE**

In the event of a fire:

- Lessons throughout the property must stop immediately.
- Riders should remain calm, dismount, and exit indoor arenas with their horses as quickly and safely as possible.
- All riders, horses, guests, and volunteers will meet in the Outdoor Arena located near Line Road.
- The most senior staff member will be responsible for providing additional directions.
- Designated staff members will evacuate horses only when all riders, guests and volunteers are out of the barn.

## **SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURE**

In the event of severe weather such as thunderstorms, excessive winds or tornado:

- Lessons throughout the property must stop immediately.
- Riders should remain calm, dismount, and return horses to their stalls as quickly and safely as possible. Horses may be untacked and turned out in the indoor arena if necessary.
- All office personnel, instructors, riders, parents, volunteers, and guests shall proceed to the Lobby.
- The most senior staff member will be responsible for additional guidance and direction.
- If horses are outside, leave them in the pastures.
- In case of excessive winds or a tornado, shelter in the tack room during the storm and remain there until the storm passes.

## **TRAIL RIDE PROCEDURE**

- For all lessons, instructors are required to take a cell phone and halter with lead rope.
- *For therapeutic lessons*, all instructors are required to have a leader or side aide present.
- In the event of an emergency, instructors must stay with the rider/at the scene until help arrives.

## PROPERTY MAP AND LOCATION



Yellow star = Main Office  
Red star = North Arena  
Kelly Green star = Party Room  
Purple star = Main Arena and Barn

Light Blue star = Hay Barn  
Royal Blue star = Outdoor Arena  
Lime Green star = Maintenance Barn  
(staff only)

