



CLOUD DANCERS

THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP

Participant Handbook

Welcome!

Cloud Dancers Therapeutic Horsemanship Program provides equine-assisted experiences to individuals who are mentally, physically, emotionally, or socially challenged. We operate under a board of directors with the support of many other volunteers.

Cloud Dancers is a member center of **PATH Int'l** (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International). As such, Cloud Dancers complies with PATH Int'l standards, precautions, and contraindications. For more information on PATH Int'l, visit **PATHintl.org**.

Staff

- Karen Molony, lead instructor/barn manager
- Tasha Books, instructor/participant coordinator
- Sandy Labarbera, volunteer coordinator

Web

You can find the application packet, program calendar, and other helpful information on our website, **www.-CloudDancersTHP.org**. Find us on Facebook for regular updates, related media, and pics of our participants.

Terminology

Horsemanship is the practice of caring for and communicating effectively with horses. At Cloud Dancers, any lesson may include activities such as feeding, grooming, leading, riding, etc. Our approach to horsemanship is holistic, with the understanding that an equestrian should have a well-rounded skill set.

Therapeutic Riding (one of many equine-assisted activities) in the United States is a recreational activity specialized for the participation of persons with disabilities, with the aim to teach riding skills. Though there is great therapeutic benefit to riding and other equine-assisted activities, *it is not considered therapy or medical treatment.*

Vaulting is gymnastic movement on the back of a moving horse. A lunguer directs the horse on a circle while participants perform basic to complex exercises while mounted. Vaulting encourages balance, strength, creativity, and teamwork.

Hippotherapy is a medical treatment modality in which the movement of the horse is used by occupational, physical, and speech-language therapists, etc., to address neuromuscular skeletal dysfunction in clients. Cloud Dancers does not currently offer hippotherapy.



Program

Cloud Dancers offers both group and private lessons in the following disciplines:

- ❖ Riding or moving astride a horse through various environments or obstacles.
- ❖ Vaulting or gymnastic movement on the back of a horse moving in a circle.
- ❖ Unmounted horse handling or care.

Eligibility

Cloud Dancers serves a broad spectrum of persons with special challenges. However, participants must be at least 5 years of age and under 185 lbs. Due to the nature of riding and other equine-related activities, there may be individuals for whom our program is deemed inappropriate or contraindicated according to PATH Standards. Our staff provides initial and ongoing evaluations for prospective and active participants, and reserves the right to determine that continuance in the program for a given individual is inappropriate.

Registration

- ◆ Each new calendar year, new and returning participants must fill out and submit a Participant Application Packet with a \$20 application fee.
- ◆ Each participant must submit a Physician's Release form before he/she can join in any horse-related activities. Physician's Release forms *expire one year* from the date signed.
- ◆ Prospective participants will receive an evaluation with an instructor to determine eligibility and best placement.
- ◆ Participants will have the opportunity to sign up for specific sessions throughout the year.
- ◆ Registration will remain open until all available lessons are filled, but only payment of the session fee will hold a spot. If a participant registers for a session that has already begun, the cost will be prorated.
- ◆ Schedule preferences are taken into consideration, but our primary goal is to group participants of similar ability or skill level to allow for more quality instruction.

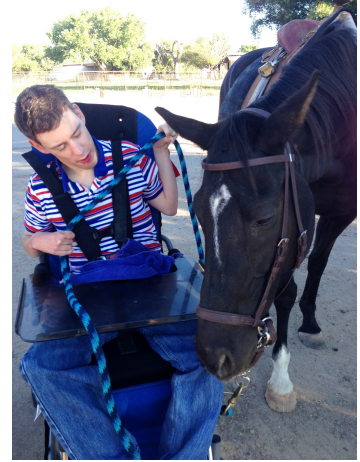
Lessons

- ☑ Participants are encouraged to arrive for each lesson in a timely manner to receive the greatest benefit from their lesson time.
- ☑ Bring a water bottle, and consider appropriate environmental protection such as sunscreen, bug repellent, coat, gloves, etc.
- ☑ Wear appropriate attire:
 - ▶ All participants are required to wear an ASTM/SEI approved riding helmet with the chin strap secured when working with or around horses. Participants may bring their own ASTM/SEI approved helmet or use one provided by Cloud Dancers.

- ▶ For riding: long pants (i.e. jeans or riding breeches) and closed-toe shoes, heels preferred (i.e. boots).
- ▶ For vaulting: comfortable clothing (i.e. stretchy/sweat pants) and soft shoes (i.e. tennis shoes or dance shoes). Ask your instructor about ordering vaulting shoes.

Guidelines for Safety

- ☑ Respect ALL people and animals.
- ☑ Be gentle when mounted or in the vicinity of horses.
- ☑ Do not hand feed the horses as this encourages undesirable behavior.
- ☑ Yelling, abusive language, or aggressive actions will not be tolerated.



Cancellation

- ◆ It is Cloud Dancers' policy to hold lessons *rain or shine*.
- ◆ If cancellation is initiated by Cloud Dancers, we will do our best to schedule a makeup lesson or, when necessary, refund the cost for the cancelled lesson.
- ◆ If you need to miss a lesson, please give at least 24 hrs notice to the Participant Coordinator. Refunds are not given for missed lessons.
- ◆ To give notice of a missed or cancelled lesson, please call or text the Participant Coordinator at (505) 217-5813.

Appropriate notice to miss a lesson is crucial because Cloud Dancers does not have a full-time staff. Instructors and volunteers are scheduled around lessons. Please be respectful.

New Mexico Equine Liability

All participants or guardians must sign Cloud Dancers' liability release before participating in any equine-related activities. As stated in section 2 of the New Mexico Equine Liability Act "The legislature recognizes that any persons who participate in or observe equine activities may incur injuries as a result of the numerous inherent risks involved in such activities" and in section 4A "No person, corporation, or partnership is liable for personal injuries to or for the death of a rider that may occur as the result of the behavior of equine animals while engaged in any equine activities."

Payment

- ☼ Full payment for lesson sessions is due before or on the first lesson day. If payment is not received by the first lesson day (or special arrangements made with the Participant Coordinator) your participation will be suspended until payment is received.
- ☼ If you receive financial assistance from an outside source (i.e. Carrie Tingley Hospital Foundation, Centennial Care, Mi Via, etc.), it is your responsibility to request this from the funding source in a timely

manner. If you are having difficulties, please discuss this with the Participant Coordinator as soon as possible.

Scholarships

In partnership with community organizations and foundations, Cloud Dancers offers scholarships (when available) to those who meet specific qualifications. Qualifications may vary by scholarship. Contact the Participant Coordinator for more information.

Guidelines for Vista Hermosa Farm

- * Please honor the 15mph speed limit.
- * Remain within the Cloud Dancers designated areas of operation unless otherwise directed by an instructor.
- * Smoking is only permitted when seated inside your vehicle.
- * Please do not bring dogs or other pets onto the property.
- * Please leave closest parking spaces for participants with limited mobility.
- * Refrain from touching or interacting with horses other than those belonging to Cloud Dancers.

Change of Health or Medication

Participants must inform Cloud Dancers immediately of any changes in health status, conditions or medications. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in weight, medications and dosages, revised diagnoses, medical interventions, surgeries, etc. This is for your safety.

Confidentiality

Any information pertaining to the participants at Cloud Dancers must be held in strict confidentiality. It is critical that we respect each individual. Confidentiality is considered a serious responsibility of staff, volunteers, and participants.

Conflict Resolution

Problems or issues that arise should be handled immediately, confidentially, and directly between the parties involved and Cloud Dancers staff. Participants who feel their concerns are not being addressed may contact the Head Instructor, Karen Molony at (505) 235-8358.

More Questions?

Contact Tasha Books at (505) 217-5813 or tasha.books@clouddancersthp.org

