**Volunteer Training Information**

Understanding our Mission: **Our mission is to provide equine assisted activities to children with diverse needs.** Horses and horseback riding help physically, mentally and emotionally challenged people achieve a quality of life that is improved, enhanced and enriched. Based on input from doctors, therapists, teachers and parents, the student’s individual goals are designed to complement ongoing therapy and education.

**Physical Benefits:** The three dimensional motion of the horse provides the rider hip and back action that stimulates natural walking. Riding relaxes and strengthens muscles and improves body tone, posture, balance, joint mobility and coordination.

**Emotional Benefits:** Contact with horses and horsemanship training provides a non-competitive setting for learning. New abilities, self-discipline and improved concentration all help build self-confidence.

**Social Benefits:** Horseback riding nurtures a positive self-image. Riders benefit from interaction with both the other riders and their volunteers and maybe, for the first time in their lives, experience some independence and a sense of being a part of a team.

**Adaptive Therapeutic Riding:** Our programs @ Amy’s Wish With Wings are taught by PATH International certified instructors (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship).

**Hippotherapy:** Is a term that refers to the use of the movement of the horse as a medical tool. Licensed therapists use the horse and ranch setting to accomplish treatment goals as specified by a physician’s prescription. We currently do not have this program at our facility.

**Requirements of a Good Volunteer**

**Reliability**- Regular attendance is important. If you cannot attend your scheduled session, please notify us as soon as possible.

**Punctuality**- Late arrivals can be very frustrating to students who have looked forward to their weekly ride. The schedule allows for 15 minutes of prep time before student arrives.

**Physical Fitness**- Most classes are walking for 30-35 min of continuous walking on uneven ground. Wear appropriate shoes.

**Horse Knowledge**- Knowledge of horses is helpful, but many excellent volunteers have little to no previous experience.

**Sensible and comfortable clothing**- You should wear appropriate clothing for weather conditions and shoes that will protect you from mud or deep footed areas in the arena or getting stepped on by a horse. No sandals or crocs. Tennis shoes or hiking boots are best. No strong perfumes or scented lotions. No dangling earrings or jewelry that can be grabbed by small hands.

**Volunteer Opportunities**:

Volunteers at Amy’s Wish help with a variety of things. They do everything from catch horses in the pasture, groom and tack for class, bathe horses, clean tack muck stalls etc.

**Leader** – The role of the leader is to lead the horse as directed by the instructor during class. The leader is in charge of making sure the horse is under control at all times. Instructors recommend individuals when they feel the volunteer has the qualifications to be trained as a leader.

**Side-walker** – The side-walker will assist the rider with their balance during class. This could range from merely walking beside a rider to fully supporting the rider on the horse. Side-walkers may be asked by an instructor to use different type of handholds for support. If an emergency occurs with the horse, the side-walker is responsible for getting the rider off the horse safely and quickly.

**Fundraising** – Interested individuals are welcome to become active in helping meet the financial needs of Amy’s Wish With Wings. Our annual fundraiser, Bobbyfest , is held in the spring of each year and help is always needed on the Bobbyfest Committee. www.bobbyfest.com

**Special Events Volunteer** – These volunteers assist in the planning and execution of special events such as Chisholm Challenge, Special Olympics, and various other events.

**Minimum age requirement**

No one under the age of 14 can work directly with the horses and riders during class time due to insurance restrictions.

Please keep all cell phones on silent or vibrate during classes. Also, please keep chatter to a minimum so that rider can focus on the instructor.

If you would like to give a horse a treat please ask permission from the instructor. **Never feed horses with your hands** – use treat pans.

Thank you for attending our volunteer training today. We appreciate all that you can offer. We are excited about this upcoming Session.

If you would like to volunteer, please sign the list so Trina our volunteer coordinator can send you the link for the background check and sign up app. Once you receive the sign up app you can choose what day and times you are available.

Doreen Bruton, Executive Director 817-999-8332 [www.amyswishwithwings.com](http://www.amyswishwithwings.com)