



MORNING DOVE

THERAPEUTIC RIDING INC

Participant Handbook

Updated: February, 2020



Mailing Address: PO Box 721, Zionsville, IN 46077
Telephone (317) 733-9393

Street Address: 7444 W. 96th Street, Zionsville, IN 46077
Fax (317) 733-9353



Morning Dove Therapeutic Riding, Inc. Is a Premier Accredited member center with the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH). **Our Mission:** to improve the lives of individuals with physical, cognitive and/or behavioral disabilities in the greater Indianapolis community through equine assisted therapies and activities.

Morning Dove is guided by the principles, certifications and standards of PATH. For more information about PATH please visit their website, www.pathintl.org.

Contact Information

Telephone: 317-733-9393

Fax: 317-733-9353

Website: www.morningdovetrc.org

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Mailing Address: P.O. Box 721, Zionsville, IN 46077

Morning Dove Team:

Executive Director: Brad Schleppi Brad@mdtrc.org

Office Manager: Patti Henry officemanager@mdtrc.org

Volunteer Manager: Elizabeth Sadler volunteercoordinator@mdtrc.org

Barn/Equine Manager: Abigail Schounce abigail@mdtrc.org

Development Director: Bailee Reynolds bailee@mdtrc.org

Instructors: Elizabeth Sadler - Lead Instructor
Jayne Owens
Allison Gast



Overview:

- Every instructor at Morning Dove is a PATH Certified Instructor or an Instructor in Training under the supervision of a PATH Certified Instructor. As such, our instructors are not only qualified riding instructors, but also trained to teach riding to people with disabilities. PATH Certified Instructor are all certified in adult and pediatric first aid and CPR.
- Morning Dove's students range in age from 4 to 75+ and have a broad range of disabilities/challenges. Our priority is to provide a safe riding lesson to our students. Our goal is to do that AND facilitate progress towards specific riding, behavioral, physical and/or social goals.
- Morning Dove's horses are specially selected for this job. They are very unique in their patience and skill for what they are asked to do. As a flight/prey animal it is not a horse's natural instinct to stand quietly no matter what might be happening on their back or around them. Our therapy horses are carefully selected and trained for this reason. And, while our horses are uniquely qualified, we must also remember they are horses first! We ask that everyone treat our special horses with respect for what they do for us every day!



Approach to Lessons:

Morning Dove, under the guidance of PATH International's standards and recommendations is able to accommodate most disabilities. In general, our criteria include, but are not limited to the following:

- Able to be safely mounted on a horse using a mounting block or ramp (with or without instructor assistance) or mechanical lift
- Able to be safely supported by side walkers
- Able to be safely dismounted to the ground
- Does not suffer from physical, emotional or behavioral conditions that are contraindicated for equine-assisted activities (ask an instructor for details)

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Students will be placed in classes based on student needs, age, and scheduling preferences.

- Current students always have priority in scheduling up until 4 weeks prior to the start of the next session. At that point unconfirmed lesson spots are made available to students wishing to change times and to new students.
- We try to accommodate requests for specific instructors and horses. BUT, it is not always possible to make all of these things work perfectly every session for every student. We do our best.

Each student at Morning Dove will have his/her own unique progress plan with individualized goals that reflect their unique needs.

- Students in classes together may be working at different levels, with different priorities.
- As possible, we schedule students in groups with similar age/interests. Scheduling conflicts, however, do make this process imperfect. We appreciate your patience and understanding during the scheduling process.
- Each week your student's instructor will have a lesson plan prepared before class begins. HOWEVER, much can happen to require changes to that plan. For example, if your student has had a bad day, changed medications etc. your instructor may need to adjust her plans.
 - a. Note: it is very helpful if you inform your instructor of any issues that may impact the student's lessons on any specific day.
 - b. Please feel free to ask questions after your student's lesson.

Horses are assigned to students based on our knowledge of our horses and the students' needs. Our goal is to keep students with the same horse through the course of a session. However, many things can cause us to have to make a change (e.g. horse injured or sick; not a good match with the student, etc.) Please understand that your student may need to ride a different horse than they want. We understand that change is extremely difficult for some of our students; we will do everything we can to smooth the transition.

Forms:

All forms are to be signed and returned to Morning Dove PRIOR to your first lesson of the year. Forms must be updated annually and include:

- Physician signed Medical History and Physician Statement
- Parent or Guardian signed Registration and Release forms
- Parent or Guardian signed Photo Release form
- Parent or Guardian signed Property Release form
- Parent or Guardian signed Handbook Reviewed form

All forms are available on our website or in our office.



Payments:

Morning Dove's lesson fees are \$45.00 per lesson.

Lessons are scheduled for full sessions only; and thus, students are enrolled in full sessions, not individual lessons. As an example, a 10 week session will be \$450.00.

- Session fees may be paid in full at any time prior to the end of the session. Please make payment arrangements with the Office Manager prior to the start of each session. An invoice for any outstanding balance will be sent monthly. **Session fees must be paid in full by the end of each session.**
- Payments may be made directly to Morning Dove (either mailed or dropped off in the office) in cash or check. Payment may also be made online through our PayPal account on www.morningdovetrc.org.

Cancellations: **Cancellations or no-shows are NOT refundable and will be charged to your account.**

Morning Dove cannot fill your spot if you cancel given the specialized nature of our services. Additionally, please note that our full schedule does not give us the ability to schedule make-up lessons other than for Morning Dove initiated weather related cancellations. (See weather related cancellations)

Student Arrival and Pickup Procedures:

PLEASE keep us all safe by driving SLOWLY on our driveway! If there are horses on the drive, STOP a safe distance away and wait for them to clear the driveway. Following horses up the drive is extremely dangerous for our riders, volunteers, and horses. The speed limit on the driveway is 5 mile per hour.

Parking: Park on the side of the drive before the gates. If your student is disabled or you need to drop off your student, you are welcome to drive up to the spaces in front of our office. We ask that you then park on the side of the drive in front of the gates.

- If we are riding in the indoor arena, there are 2 parking spots in front of the arena by the picnic area for disabled students only.
- Please do not park beyond the gates if you or your rider is not disabled!

Arrival/Pick up:

Please arrive five minutes before scheduled class time to allow time to get helmets. All students are to be supervised by caregiver until released to their instructor.

Parents/caregivers should be onsite to pick up their students at least 5 minutes before the scheduled end of the lesson. Instructors will assist with each dismount, and the students will be escorted to the barn by a



volunteer or staff member. At that point your student is released to you. Your instructor may have comments for you and your student following the lesson. You may ask questions or share information at that time as well.

Riding Attire:

- According to PATH standards students must wear an ASTM/SEI approved helmet before entering the stable area. Helmets will be provided by Morning Dove. Students may purchase their own if they wish as long as it is an ASTM/SEI approved helmet. Do not remove the ASTM/SEI sticker on the inside of the helmet. Note: helmets should be replaced annually.
- Students must wear closed toe shoes or boots with a heel of no more than an inch (NO sandals, Crocs, clogs, etc.). We do use safety stirrups so a heel is not required.
- It is recommended that students wear comfortable long pants/jeans. Shorts, slippery sweat pants or very loose clothing may be dangerous and uncomfortable.
- Have students dress appropriately for the weather. Most of our lessons will be outdoors so dress appropriately ... which may mean gloves!
- No jewelry, scarves or other dangling, billowing clothing for the safety of our riders and horses.

Absences:

- Please contact the office at 317-733-9393 as early as possible before an absence. Each class has specific volunteer needs based on student needs. It is imperative that you let us know as soon as possible of an upcoming absence so volunteer assignments can be adjusted.
- Morning Dove cannot fill your spot if you cancel given the specialized nature of our services. Rider-initiated absences are not refundable and will be charged to your account.

Weather Related Cancellations:

- Morning Dove will cancel lessons if the weather does not permit a safe lesson either in our outdoor arena or our indoor arena. Thunder or lightening near our facility are always cause for a cancellation. Extreme temperatures may also require cancellation. In the event of a weather related closing, Morning Dove will notify students by telephone, email and listing the closing on our Facebook page.
- We will offer a makeup class prior to the end of the session (or the week following session) for Morning Dove initiated cancellation ONLY. If, due to Morning Dove's schedule makeup lessons cannot be scheduled, your account will be credited for the cancelled lesson.



Safety Precautions – The instructor is in charge at all times

On our property:

- If at any time during a lesson a student's behavior is unsafe (for themselves, the horse, the instructor or the volunteers), the instructor may stop the lesson and dismount the student. In this case, a make-up lesson will not be offered.
- Students may not chew gum; eat candy or food in the arena or stable area.
- Parents must supervise all siblings at all times.
- Please do not climb fences, gates or enter any animal enclosures without staff supervision.
- No smoking on Morning Dove property at any time.
- Please leave all pets at home.

Our horses:

- You are more than welcome to love on our four-legged friends but please make sure a volunteer or staff member is present.
- Keep hands away from the horse's face and mouth. Fingers look like carrots!
- Do not run, move quickly or yell around horses. Sudden movements and loud noises may frighten a horse. Please do not bring bikes/trikes or other riding toys.
- We welcome you to watch your rider's lessons. But, for all of our safety, do not open umbrellas, flap blankets or other similar actions. Sudden loud or large movements can scare a horse.
- **Do not hand feed horses.** If you have a treat (e.g., apple, carrot, peppermints), please ask your instructor to help you put it in your horse's feed bowl.



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