

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Kent Association of Riding Therapy, Inc. (KART) is to help children and adults with disabilities enhance their developmental growth physically, emotionally, and cognitively. KART uses a multi-faceted program that involves therapeutic horseback riding, grooming and caring for the horse, and comprehensive classroom instruction.

## **WHAT WE HOPE STUDENTS WILL GAIN FROM THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN KART**

1. Learn to ride horses to the best of their ability.
2. Raise self esteem.
3. Improve ability to follow directions.
4. Increase attention span.
5. Create better muscle tone and relax tight muscles.
6. Improve coordination.
7. Improve balance.
8. Improve behavior problems.
9. General exercise.
10. Make new friends
11. Learn about horses.
12. Sense of accomplishment.
13. Have fun!

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. We meet rain or shine.
2. Try to arrive 15 minutes early to insure the program runs smoothly. Once you are on Worthmore's driveway please go no faster than **10mph**. Speeding cars can upset the horses and cause dust.
3. Check in with the volunteer coordinator when you arrive.
4. Worthmore is a working farm and private home. Volunteers should be in the classroom, the ring or the area outside of these only. All of Worthmore's barns are off limits. Enter our barn only when asked to do so. If you are watching a session, remember to keep your voice down so you are not a distraction.
5. If you have any questions, concerns or complaints please discuss these with the instructor or volunteer coordinator after the riding session.
6. Dress appropriately. Wear sensible, sturdy shoes, no sandals, open toes or slides. Wear comfortable, old clothes. Do not wear dangling jewelry or perfume.
7. When you meet a handicapped person, treat them like anyone else. Help only when it is needed. Enjoy the interaction.

# **BASIC SAFETY RULES FOR WORKING WITH HORSES**

Always speak to a horse when approaching it and before touching it. Never approach a horse directly from the rear.

Pet a horse by putting your hand on its neck, not its face, nose, or mouth. Do not pet horses that you don't know.

Do not feed any of the horses.

Never be loud or noisy around the horses.

Walk; don't run.

Dress appropriately (see General Information for Volunteers.)

## **EMERGENCY PLAN**

IN CASE OF A FALL TO A RIDER OR INJURY TO A PERSON WHILE  
AT THE KART FACILITY, THE FOLLOWING ACTION IS TO BE  
TAKEN.

Stay calm.

If the accident occurs during a mounted session, the riding instructor will assess the situation and take charge. **Stop your horse and stay with horse and rider** until you are instructed otherwise.

If emergency services are needed, someone will be designated to call  
**DIAL 911 AND STAY ON THE PHONE**  
until the respondent clears all directions to Worthmore Farm with you.

If dismounting all riders is indicated, sidewalkers take the riders to the designated area and keep them calm. You will be apprised of the situation as soon as possible.

Horses will be taken by leaders to the stalls. Leaders will remain with the horses until notified to do otherwise.

Volunteer coordinator will be responsible for keeping accident area clear of unnecessary persons.

For minor mishaps see volunteer coordinator or classroom teacher.

**FIRST AID KIT is in cupboard, clearly marked in the KART tack room.**

## LEADERS (Volunteer) – Job Description

The primary responsibility of the leader is the management of the horse. Before a volunteer can become a leader, he/she must:

1. Exhibit knowledge of horses and horsemanship.
2. Observe experienced leaders during a session, including using the mounting ramp.
3. Attend at least one orientation session.
4. Become familiar with the KART horses and their characteristics.

### Responsibilities

1. Maintain control of the horse but be aware of the rider.
2. Reinforce the rider's attempts to control the horse, including starting, steering and stopping.
3. Avoid unnecessary talking.
4. Stay alert to what is happening in the ring.
5. Stand in front of the horse when stopped.
6. In the event of an emergency, STAY with the horse.

# How to Lead

## At the mounting ramp

If you are assisting a rider who mounts from the ramp, the instructor will tell you where to position the horse at the ramp. It is the leader's responsibility to keep the mount from moving forward or backward and as quiet as possible while the rider is mounting.

Approach the ramp from the platform end and position the mount as directed and as close as possible to the side of the ramp from which the rider will be mounting.

Stand directly in front of the horse as you normally would at the halt. **STAY ALERT.** Keep both hands on the lead.

When the rider is mounted, the instructor will ask you to move the horse out of the ramps. Once you are clear of the ramps, halt immediately so the stirrups can be adjusted.

When the necessary adjustments have been made, the instructor will ask you to assume the proper leading position and assist the rider to guide the horse to the riding area.

## Mounting from the ground

If you are assisting a rider who mounts from the ground, the instructor will tell you where to position the horse. In some cases, the rider will be asked to lead the horse to the proper position with your assistance.

As at the mounting ramp, it is the leader's responsibility to keep the mount from moving and as quiet as possible during mounting.

Stand directly in front of the horse with both hands on the lead. **STAY ALERT.**

It is the responsibility of the instructor or a trained volunteer to assist the rider with mounting. The rider must wait for this help. The leader **should not** allow or assist the rider to mount without the instructor's directions. Riders waiting to mount should stand with the leader.

The leader should know his/her rider's name in order to be able to follow instructions given to that rider.

### At the halt

Be sure that there is adequate space between mounts as you prepare to halt. Then step directly in front of the horse and keep it from moving forward or backward until the rider is directed to proceed,

Encourage the mount to remain calm and relaxed, stroking it on the neck if necessary. **Do not rub the horse's head or allow it to rub its head on you.**

### At the walk

Working from the correct position, help the rider guide and control the horse as directed by the instructor.

When there are one or two side walkers present to help the rider maintain his/her balance, be sure to allow enough space for them to work without bumping into the sides of the arena or obstacles being used for the lesson.

Avoid sudden stops and/or sharp turns.

Maintain adequate space between mounts if the rider fails to do so.

### At the trot

The rider should ask the horse to trot only when directed to do so by the instructor. Once the rider is prepared to trot and gives the "trot" command to the mount, the leader should increase the pace slightly and encourage the mount to move by repeating the "trot" command. **Do not** run or jog in front of the mount or attempt to pull it forward with the lead line.

As at the walk, the leader needs to help the rider avoid sudden stops and sharp turns and maintain adequate space between the mounts.

### During exercises and games

When exercises are done at the halt, the leader should stand in front of the mount's head as described under **at the halt**.

When exercises are done at the walk or trot, the leader should control the horse and maintain a steady pace.

Games are included in the lessons so the riders can have fun while using the skills they have learned. Leaders as well as riders need to listen to the rules given by the instructor.

Enthusiasm is catching, so encourage the rider to play well and allow him/her to participate as independently as possible within the limits of safe riding.

### Dismounting

The instructor is responsible for dismounting all riders and will give directions for the positioning of the mounts before dismounting riders.

The leader is responsible for positioning the horse and then standing in front of it just as during mounting to keep it from moving and as quiet as possible.

**Do not** allow or assist rider to dismount without directions from the instructor.

### In case of emergency

Occasionally a ride will fall off a horse or have a problem that requires immediate special attention. If such an emergency occurs, step immediately in front of the mount you are leading and hold it at the halt. Remain calm and keep the mount as quiet as possible.

**DO NOT LET GO OF THE LEAD LINE!**

The instructor will attend to the rider involved. While doing so, he/she needs to be able to rely on the leaders to keep the mounts under control in order to prevent further confusion.

## **SIDEWALKER (Volunteer) – Job Description**

The primary responsibility of the sidewalker is for the safety of the rider. Before a volunteer can work as a sidewalker, he/she must:

1. Observe experienced sidewalkers during a session.
2. Attend at least one orientation session.
3. Initially work with an experienced sidewalker.

### Responsibilities

1. Help student focus attention on the instructor.
2. Avoid unnecessary talking.
3. When two sidewalkers are working together one should be the “designated” talker
4. Allow rider ample time to respond to the instructor’s request before giving assistance.
5. Use the designated manner when you assist the rider, e.g., putting your hand over the rider’s to help him/her turn rather than just pulling the rein.
6. Maintain position by the rider’s knee.
7. Properly support rider at the knee or thigh when requested to do so by the instructor.
8. If you become tired, wait until there is a break in the lesson to switch sides or request a substitute sidewalker.
9. Stay alert to the rider to prevent accidents, i.e., rider slipping to one side.
10. Help challenge the rider to perform to the best of his abilities.

# How to Sidewalk

## At the mounting ramp

If you are assisting a rider who mounts from the ramp, the instructor will give you specific directions on how to help with the mounting of that particular rider.

## Mounting from the ground

If you are assisting a rider who mounts from the ground, the instructor may ask you to counterweight the saddle on the off-side as the rider mounts, in order to keep it from slipping when the rider places his/her weight in the stirrup to mount.

It is the instructor's responsibility to assist the rider with mounting. **Do not** attempt to allow the rider to try to mount without the supervision of the instructor unless specifically directed to do so.

Once the rider is mounted, the instructor will tell you what kind of assistance he/she will most probably need (e.g. constant support, occasional support, or reinforced directions). Riders have various physical limitations. Therefore, the sidewalker **should not** handle the rider (as in attempting to change the position of his/her hand, arm, leg etc.) unless specifically asked to do so by the instructor.

## At the halt

Remain in position next to the rider and listen for directions from the instructor.

Be especially alert for balance changes as the mount starts and stops.

### At the walk

Remain in position next to the rider and listen for directions from the instructor. The sidewalker may need to reinforce the directions when the rider does not hear or understand them.

If the rider needs special attention (such as repositioning in the saddle or having his/her foot replaced in the stirrup), alert the instructor and the leader working with the horse. It is usually best to go to the center of the ring to make any necessary adjustment in order to avoid interrupting the rest of the class.

### At the trot

The rider should ask the horse to trot only when directed to do so by the instructor and only after he/she is fully prepared (holding the reins, seat deep in the saddle, etc.)

The instructor may take the sidewalker's place for a short time when asking the rider to trot in order to work with him/her on a one-to-one basis to develop the skill.

When assisting the rider at the trot, be especially alert for changes in balance caused by both the upward and downward transition.

### Dismounting

The instructor is responsible for dismounting all riders.

Remain next to the rider until the instructor is ready to help him/her dismount.

**Do not** dismount the rider without the instructor.

### Working with a leader

Riders who require the assistance of one or more sidewalkers most often need a leader to assist them with guiding and controlling the horse. The leader is responsible for the horse and sidewalker for the rider. Working together, they allow the rider to learn riding skills in safety. Riders often progress from needing three helpers to needing none.

Sidewalkers need to keep the leader informed of any special needs the rider may have. However, casual conversation between the leaders and sidewalkers only serves to distract everyone's attention from the lesson and **should not** take place.

### In case of emergency

Occasionally a rider will fall off the horse or have a problem that requires special attention. If any such emergency occurs, the leader will stop the horse immediately and instructor will take care of the rider involved.

All other riders in the class will halt and sidewalkers will remain in position until the problem is solved and lesson can continue.

Sidewalkers should remain calm and keep their riders from becoming overly excited while waiting for directions from the instructor.

# CORRECT SIDEWALKER POSITIONS

**SAFETY RULE #1:** Do not walk behind the saddle next to the horse's hindquarters!

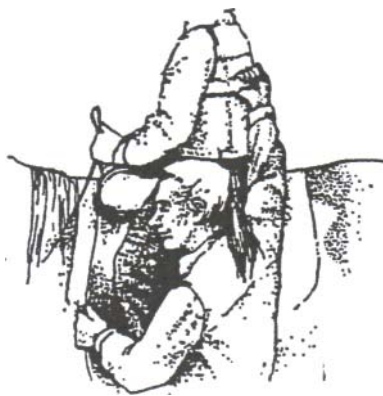


**correct**  
sidewalker position

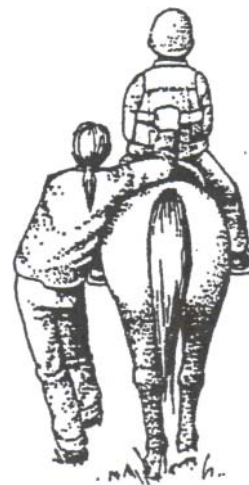


**incorrect**  
sidewalker position

**SAFETY RULE #2:** Do not lean on the horse.



**correct**  
hand positions



**incorrect**  
hand positions

# **LEAD GROOM (VOLUNTEER) – Job Description**

## Oversight Responsibilities:

1. Organize and supervise the team of volunteers who groom the horse.
2. Schedule volunteer grooming sessions.
3. Check each horse before each session or on a scheduled basis between sessions for general good health and soundness. Report any problems to head instructor. Take appropriate action for the horses care.
4. Monitor tack repair and cleaning to ensure all tack is in good order. Arrange for tack repair as required and set a schedule for cleaning.
5. Schedule regular cleaning of blankets, pads, girths and barn towels
6. Train new grooming volunteers.

## Tasks

1. Curry comb and brush each horse.
2. Clean hooves.
3. Attend to any small injuries.
4. Report and/or get help for any major injuries and/or soundness problems.
5. Tack up horses.
6. Lead horses from barn to riding ring or designate volunteers to do so.
7. Be readily available to exchange horses between barn and ring as needed for each session.
8. Remove tack after each session, wiping down and storing it appropriately.
9. Cool down horses as necessary.
10. Turn horses out to pasture after session if instructed to by farm owner.

## **Groom (Volunteer) – Job Description**

### General Responsibilities

1. Receive training and/or orientation on grooming procedures from Lead Groom.
2. Perform grooming tasks.
3. Report any concerns to Lead Groom.

### Tasks

1. Curry and brush each horse.
2. Clean hooves.
3. Report any visible equine injuries or anomalies to Lead Groom.
4. Tack up horses.
5. Be readily available to exchange horses between barn and ring as needed for each session.
6. Remove tack after each session, wiping down and storing it appropriately.
7. Cool out horses as necessary.
8. Turn horses out to pasture after session if instructed by farm owner.