



# ANGELS ON HORSEBACK

A PATH INTERNATIONAL CENTER MEMBER

1284 Pendley Circle, Jasper, GA 30143

770.893.2807

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## **Our Mission:**

**Angels on Horseback is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to provide equine assisted activities to individuals with mental, physical or emotional disabilities and to encourage growth through the benefits of horse and human relationships.**

## **Rider and Parent Handbook**

Welcome to Angels on Horseback! We offer Equine Assisted Activities that include Therapeutic Riding and Equine-facilitated learning. At Angels on Horseback we focus on each rider's ability not their disability. Our program is designed to benefit our riders physically, socially, and emotionally by using horses and trained volunteers. Our dedicated, caring instructors have been certified in adaptive teaching methods through PATH Intl. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International). PATH Intl. is the credentialing organization for accrediting centers and certifying instructors and equine specialists. Their mission is to promote safety and optimal outcomes in equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs.

The purpose of this handbook is to share our policies and procedures so that Angels on Horseback can give you the most effective Equine Assisted Activities possible and make your experience with us the best it can be. By reading this handbook and being an active participant in your lessons you will get the most out of your riding experience. Additionally, parents are welcome to share their child's Individual Education Program (IEP) and will find that many aspects of the IEP are easily subsumed in therapeutic riding. The IEP will be kept in the client's file, and will be reviewed to determine how to integrate certain goals within the therapeutic riding program. Again, this is open to parents who wish to utilize this service. We look forward to working with you!

## **Program Information**

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### **Understanding Therapeutic Riding and Equine-facilitated Learning**

Therapeutic riding uses equine-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities.

Equine-facilitated Learning is an educational approach to equine assisted activities. The content is developed and organized with the primary intent to facilitate personal growth and development of life skills through equine interactions.

### **Why Horses?**

Horses are unique in their response to humans because they are prey animals, not predators, and their survival demands they be extremely sensitive to the environment. Horses are able to “read” people in terms of their feelings and intentions. Horses ignore the outward form and respond, instead, to the person’s inner substance. Additionally, a horse’s three dimensional swinging gait causes the rider’s body to move in ways similar to those produced by the human walk.

### **What actually takes place in a lesson?**

Lessons are taught by a certified riding instructor and provide each rider a unique experience. We use a team of 1 – 3 volunteers per rider to assist during each lesson. Riders participate in tasks and games that encourage physical strengthening and cognitive improvement, while learning basic riding skills. Instruction is tailored to fit each of our rider’s specific needs and to help improve their levels of strength, balance, mobility and confidence during the riding experience. The emphasis is on developing riding skills in a safe environment that is both therapeutic and fun. Specific goals are set for each rider at the beginning of a session based upon input from the rider’s parents, physician and/or therapists.

### **Preparing for a Class**

Please arrive 5-10 minutes prior to the scheduled class time. This will give the rider time to find a helmet, get a drink or use the restroom etc. and be ready to ride. **Please do not allow children to play on the mounting ramp while waiting for lessons or during another rider’s lesson.**

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers play an important role in the therapeutic riding lessons and the success of the program. Volunteers assist the instructors in various capacities such as horse handling or side walking with mounted clients. For non-riding clients, volunteers assist with activities relating to working with a horse from the ground that may include grooming and lungeing a horse. Volunteers may also perform other non-horse related functions for the organization.

### **Equines**

Our horses provide a special service and in return receive the quality care and consideration from us they deserve. Only a small percentage of horses qualify to be a therapy horse due to the level of patience, tolerance and training required. As their advocates, we consider their physical abilities and needs when scheduling activities. Prior to work in program, each horse is assessed for signs of injury, illness or discomfort and would not be asked to work when they are uncomfortable or unfit. It is critical that we do not exceed each horse’s established weight limit. Currently, Angels on Horseback horses have a maximum carrying capacity of less than 180 lbs. depending on the horse. Alternative activities to riding such as the Unmounted

Horsemanship program may be provided based on horse availability and limitations. We ask for your understanding as we try our best to serve our participants within the limits of our herd.

Many of our guests and participants enjoy spending time with our horses. Here are a few rules to remember when it comes to keeping our horses happy and healthy:

- No treats – Treats fed by hand can lead to mouthy and inattentive horses. For everyone’s safety, and for the health of the horses, please do not feed them treats.
- Do not approach a horse unless invited by a staff member. Many people want to stand in front of the horses and pet their faces. Although our horses love the attention, too much crowding can be upsetting to them. If you are invited to pet a horse, please do so from the side of the horse, not in front of his/her face.
- Although Angels on Horseback horses are trained to work with many distractions, they are still animals with a strong flight instinct. Loud noises, running children and unexpected movements can create an unsafe environment as well as divert the attention of our students.

## Family Involvement

Families are invited to become actively involved in the development of their student’s individualized lesson plan and in providing information and feedback as the program progresses. We have found that for both safety and the accomplishment of the riding lesson objectives, family involvement during the actual riding time should be kept to a minimum. The student’s attention to the movement of the horse, his or her balance, control and behaviors are essential to both safety and progress. The instructor will consult with the family during the lesson only if necessary, and if appropriate within the context of the lesson plan. If a family member wishes to become a volunteer, training will be provided and the family member may volunteer at the discretion of the head instructor. If families wish to view the riding lesson, they are asked to remain on the bleachers or in the chairs behind the arena railing. We encourage parents to view the lessons as a “relaxing time” for themselves, feel free to sit outside at the picnic tables, or in the heated/air conditioned break room.

## Policies and Procedures

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### Rider Limitations

Angels on Horseback’s rider weight limit is currently 180 lbs. We do have a scale in our break room area, if there are questions regarding weight. Therapeutic horseback riding may not be a suitable activity for certain individuals and therefore it is necessary for every client to have his/her physician complete and sign the Client’s Medical History and Physician’s Statement. Should the physical condition of the client change at any time (for example because of surgery, a new injury or diagnosis, pregnancy, etc.), Angels on Horseback must be notified immediately and an updated Physician’s Statement form must be completed and turned in to the Program Director. All forms must also be updated annually. Certain conditions require additional precautions to be taken when on or around horses and **some conditions are contraindications to riding**. We follow the guidelines established by PATH Intl. Most activities have some type of precautions and guidelines for participation and therapeutic horseback riding is no exception. All clients must have reached the age of four before beginning lessons

### Clothing

For safety as well as comfort, riders should dress in close-fitting clothing. Loose/floppy clothing can get caught and tangled with equipment. Keep in mind that, while there is an indoor arena, there is no heat or air conditioning. Riders should wear long pants such as riding breeches, jeans, or leggings to prevent leg chafing. Skirts may NOT be worn for lessons. It is recommended that clients learning more advanced skills and participating in more independent activities wear paddock or tall boots. Closed-toed shoes for riders are required. Tennis shoes are acceptable. Riders wearing slippers, flip-flops, clogs, sandals etc. will not be allowed

to ride. Clients should avoid wearing jewelry. Long dangling necklaces and earrings will not be allowed during lessons. Gloves are a great addition, to help protect hands.

## **Helmets**

All riders are required to wear appropriately fitting ASTM/SEI certified riding helmet. Angels on Horseback provides a wide range of helmets that riders may borrow. Most riders do borrow our helmets. However, if we do not have a helmet that fits, or if you wish to have your own helmet, please consult with an Instructor or the Executive director prior to purchase. Angels on Horseback also has a range of boot sizes available for riders to borrow. These are much more limited and should be viewed as a last resort.

## **Cell Phones**

Cell Phones should be turned off, or on silent. Ring tones can frighten horses and be very distracting to riders. If you need to take a call, please exit the arena to the parking area.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance is necessary for the progress and benefit of the rider. Each rider and lesson requires considerable planning and preparation. If you are unable to attend a lesson please call or text Tammy at 770.894.7297 or your individual Instructor. If your awareness of a need to be absent is last minute (within 2 hours of your lesson,) please also contact one of the instructors as soon as you are able. If a rider is a “no-show” (absent without a call) more than **one time** in one session or more than **three times** in one year, that rider will be dropped from the schedule. If a rider is going to be late for a lesson, please call or text the Instructor. Riders who are more than 20 minutes late may not be able to ride that day.

## **Dismissal Policy**

The Instructor has the authority to dismiss any rider from the arena, for safety concerns of the horse, rider or volunteers during the lesson. The rider needs to return their helmet to the cabinet, and a guardian will escort them to their car, so other horses and riders in the arena are not affected by the unwanted behavior. The rider will not be allowed to return to the lesson that day. Depending on the number of volunteers the lessons might have to be discontinued until the rider and horse are removed from the arena. The Executive Director will decide what other punishment might be needed, if any, and the guardian will be notified of the decision.

## **Rider Paperwork**

For Therapeutic riding all the riders' paperwork must be up-to-date and the medical release form must be updated annually. No Therapeutic Riding student will be allowed to ride without these forms properly completed, with original signatures, and turned in prior to class. Medical release forms must be completed in full with rider height, weight, diagnosis, doctor signature and dated.

## **Sick Policy**

During the cold and flu season it is important to protect yourself and others from the spread of illness. We want to keep our barn doors open and classes running as normally as possible through the winter, but we need the help of all participants to do this. Angels on Horseback is unique in that many of its participants experience fragile health which puts them at a higher risk of complications if exposed to flu and cold. Following these basic policies will help to keep everyone as healthy as possible.

- **Wash your hands regularly:** The H1N1 virus is said to live on dry surfaces for 2 days and the equipment at the barn is used by many people every day. Use soap and water to wash before and after riding.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu:** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling tired.
- **Stay home if you are sick:** for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Any participants who come to class with signs or symptoms of severe cold or flu will be asked to return home.

## Weather

Angels on Horseback benefits from an indoor riding arena. This allows us to have class in rainy weather, but when we hear thunder, we have to continue lessons unmounted. Angels on Horseback cancellations due to severe/inclement weather will result in a makeup class later in the session or during an off-week. If class is cancelled due to extreme weather, participants will be notified by telephone. Our weather cancellation policy is as follows:

- If the temperature in the arena is below 40 degrees we will have an unmounted activity in the warmth of the tack room, feed room or break room. If the temperature is over 95 degrees or the total heat index is over 170, we will have unmounted activities in a cool spot. Unmounted activities may be learning activities, study of educational video, educational games, etc.
- If the Pickens County school district announces late or cancelled classes, for inclement weather, Angels on Horseback does the same. If the schools are operating, so will we. Saturday class cancellations will be based on the evaluation of the road conditions by staff.

## Lesson Cancellations by Angels on Horseback

Although we strive never to do so, Angels on Horseback reserves the right to cancel lessons at any time when we feel they could not be conducted in a safe manner. Reasons may include, but are not limited to: adverse weather conditions, an inadequate number of volunteers available to assist, or lack of an appropriate equine to meet the needs of a client.

## Facility Protocol

Families are asked to observe any posted facility rules. If there are open stall doors or horses in the barn aisle, please wait for the direction from the instructor or a trained volunteer before entering the barn. Students, families, or visitors may not enter stalls, paddocks, pastures, or tack room without direction from the instructor. Siblings or accompanying friends must be kept under adult supervision and behave appropriately. Feeding of horses may only be done under the supervision of instructors or trained volunteers. Donations of treats are always welcome. Visiting dogs must remain in their owner's vehicles. Please make staff aware of any service animals. Please keep children away from the electrified fences, dumpster, tractor and any areas outside of the barn labeled off-limits. **Please do not allow children to play on the mounting ramp.**

## Billing and Payment Policy

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Angels on Horseback has taken great care in setting client fees for our lessons. Our fees must cover our costs for the horses, facility, insurance, etc. The information below sets forth the billing and payment policies of Angels on Horseback. We **do not** turn families away for their inability to pay, scholarships are available.

### Lesson Fees:

Lessons are \$40 per lesson. If you have more than 2 children, the 3<sup>rd</sup> one rides free.

### Billing and Payment:

Lesson fees are invoiced at the beginning of each session. You can pay for all lessons at one time or pay by the lesson, on lesson day. We accept cash, check, or credit card payments online. Alternative payment options are available and must be discussed with the Executive Director prior to the first lesson. Clients who are more than 60 days in arrears on their accounts will not be scheduled for lessons until their accounts are brought up to date.

Credit card payments may be made online at [www.angelsonhorseback.org](http://www.angelsonhorseback.org), under the Pay for Lessons link. Please leave the name of the student for whom you are paying in the Notes field on the checkout page.

Checks should be made out to “Angels on Horseback.” and given to the Instructor or mailed to: 1284 Pendley Circle, Jasper GA 30143.

### **Financial Assistance:**

We fundraise in order to provide scholarships for clients who would otherwise be unable to afford lessons. A limited number of ½ scholarships are available. Donors may also choose to sponsor specific riders. This is at the donor’s discretion. Please see Tammy Hermann, Executive Director to discuss scholarship money for your child.

### **No-Shows, No-Call**

If you are unable to attend a lesson please call or text Tammy at 770.894.7297. If a rider is a “no-show” (absent without a call) more than **one time** in one session or more than **three times** in one year, that rider will be dropped from the schedule. **You will be charged for the lesson, if you are a “no-show”**. If a rider is going to be late for a lesson, please call or text. Riders who are more than 20 minutes late may not be able to ride that day.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

#### **Angels on Horseback**

Physical Address: 1284 Pendley Circle, Jasper GA 30143

Tel: 770.893.2807

Website: [www.angelsonhorseback.org](http://www.angelsonhorseback.org)

Email: [angelsonhorseback17@gmail.com](mailto:angelsonhorseback17@gmail.com)

Executive Director: Tammy Hermann; 770.894.7297

Volunteer Communicator: Karen Davis; 404.372.6018

Parent Chair: Ron Goff; [ronwgoff@gmail.com](mailto:ronwgoff@gmail.com)

Instructors: Tammy Hermann 770.894.7297, Jean Baldwin 706.299.6937

#### **PLEASE don't be a “No-show, No-call” – these results in:**

Unnecessary tacking and untacking of horses

Inefficient use of instructor and volunteer time

Excessive absences take up a time slot that could have been used by another rider

## **Angels on Horseback Calendar**

Angels on Horseback currently operates 4 sessions a year: Winter Session, Spring Session, Summer Session and Fall Session. Schedules will be given out at the beginning of each year.

## **How can you get involved?**

Angels on Horseback is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Fundraising and parent/guardian involvement is critical to the success of the programs and a necessary part of providing the service at the price that it is offered. A number of events and campaigns are planned each year and your participation is greatly needed. On-going volunteering is a rewarding and helpful way to contribute too. Following are some ways you can get involved:

- **Public Events:** Angels on Horseback goes to local restaurants monthly, we visit churches, community events all to advertise for volunteers and riders, sell items and take donations.
- **Web-based fundraising:** We encourage participants to tell their friends and family about their experiences at Angels on Horseback and ask for support through our simple, online donations link on our website [www.angelsonhorseback.org](http://www.angelsonhorseback.org).
- **Casino Night:** This is our biggest fundraiser of the year! We need individuals to sell/purchase tickets, committee members for procurement of items, décor, facility prep and more.
- **End of the Year Horseshow:** An annual event to provide participants with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills to the public, family and friends.
- **Spread the word:** Help at outreach events around Jasper, selling Angels on Horseback memorabilia, share the benefits of therapeutic riding with your church, businesses, friends and family.

## **Thank you for choosing to ride at Angels on Horseback!**

The instructors and volunteers at Angels on Horseback want to make your time spent with us enjoyable, fun, and rewarding. Please give us your feedback, positive and negative. Let us know how we are doing and what we can do to improve your experience with us. Thank you!

**Please sign and return this form with the Rider forms**

Thank you! By signing below, I agree that I have read and understand the policies and procedures of Angels on Horseback.

Client name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please Print*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Client, Parent or Legal Guardian*

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Client, Parent or Legal Guardian*

**Comments:**

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**What is the best way for us to communicate with you regarding lessons?**

Text me: \_\_\_\_\_

Email me: \_\_\_\_\_

Call me: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this page to:**

**Angels on Horseback**

**Tammy Hermann, Executive Director**

**1284 Pendley Circle, Jasper GA 30143**

**[angelsonhorseback17@gmail.com](mailto:angelsonhorseback17@gmail.com)**

**770.894.7297**