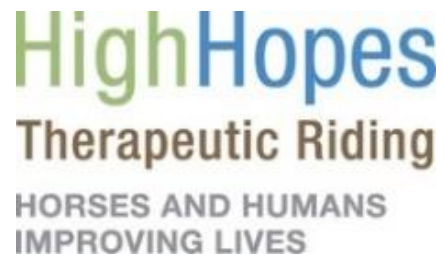


# Participant Handbook



**High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc.  
36 Town Woods Road  
Old Lyme, CT 06371  
Telephone: 860-434-1974  
Fax: 860-434-3723  
Website: [www.highhopestr.org](http://www.highhopestr.org)**

## **CANCELLATION POLICY:**

If you cannot make your scheduled class time, please call the main number, 860-434-1974, and advise *the first person who answers the phone* of your cancellation. If it is after hours, please call the main number and leave your message on the cancellation mailbox.

For questions regarding program, please contact Megan Ellis, Program Operations Manager, ext. 116.

## **High Hopes Staff Contacts:**

**Main Number – 860-434-1974**

Kitty Stalsburg - Executive Director/Instructor; ext. 113, [kstalsburg@highhopestr.org](mailto:kstalsburg@highhopestr.org)  
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Trudy Burgess - Development Coordinator; ext. 123, [tburgess@highhopestr.org](mailto:tburgess@highhopestr.org)  
Karena Garrity - Development Coordinator; ext. 119, [kgarrity@highhopestr.org](mailto:kgarrity@highhopestr.org)  
Marie Manero - Volunteer Coordinator; ext. 118; [mmanero@highhopestr.org](mailto:mmanero@highhopestr.org)

Juanita Paris - Barn Assistant  
Liesl Grigerek - Barn Assistant  
Barbara Abrams - LPC/Instructor  
Carolyn Jagielski - Physical Therapist/Instructor  
Donna Latella - Occupational Therapist/Instructor  
Carrie Wind – Instructor  
Imanol Echeverria – Instructor  
Laura Moya – Instructor  
Kerry Burke – Instructor  
Allie Leonard – Instructor  
Shannon Kelly – Instructor  
Pennie Garvin – Caretaker

**Board of Trustees** – As a nonprofit corporation with 501(c)3 tax exempt status, High Hopes is governed by a voluntary 21-member Board of Trustees.

**Mission:**

*The mission of High Hopes is to improve the lives of people with disabilities through the benefits of therapeutic horseback riding, equine assisted activities and therapies, and training and education while being a proactive leader, mentor and advocate for our profession.*

**Values:**Quality:

*We are committed to the highest level of quality throughout our programs, in our care for horses and in our interaction with participants, volunteers, donors and other members of the community.*

Teamwork:

*High Hopes' certified instructors, qualified staff and committed volunteers work together to create an inclusive environment providing the optimal experience for participants.*

Education:

*High Hopes promotes education within the field of therapeutic riding and values learning in collaboration with our participants and community.*

Leadership & Innovation:

*High Hopes develops leaders who are committed to excellence, current with advances in therapeutic riding, and eager to share innovative solutions that will enhance the experience for participants today and in the future.*

Serving the Community:

*High Hopes strives to effectively serve its local community and to be an active and valued community participant.*

# High Hopes Participant Handbook

The following information, policies and guidelines are designed to provide our participants and visitors with a safe, enjoyable and beneficial experience at High Hopes.

**Programs & Schedules** - High Hopes offers a variety of innovative programs that provide educational and therapeutic equestrian activities including:

## Therapeutic Riding Lessons

High Hopes offers day and evening therapeutic riding lessons to children and adults with cognitive, physical, psychological and developmental disabilities:

- **Physically**, it is the horse's movement which has a dynamic effect on the rider's body. The horse stimulates the rider's pelvis and trunk in a manner that closely resembles the normal gait of a human. This movement can be used to produce specific physical changes in the rider. The benefits to our riders include normalization of tone, postural improvement, improvements in balance and increased strength.
- **Sensorially**, the movement of the horse can help with a variety of Sensory Integration issues. Movement exploration while on the horse can help improve overall body awareness.
- **Emotionally**, the success of overcoming fear and anxiety can help a rider realize self worth and increase self-esteem. The ability to achieve a riding skill will also have a positive effect on a rider's self-perception. The relationships that develop between riders, volunteers, horses, and staff are all integral to a positive emotional experience at High Hopes.
- **Cognitively**, the horse provides many of our riders with the motivation to learn many new things. Educational goals such as letter recognition and sequencing can be incorporated into riding activities.
- **Socially**, therapeutic riding enables individuals to interact with their peers in a group activity. Riding and the related activities are both fun and challenging.

Through the development of an Individual Riding Plan (IRP) for each of our riders, the staff at High Hopes is able to achieve individualized goals and objectives for each of our participants. To address the needs of all our participants in a more comprehensive way, High Hopes incorporated the services of licensed therapy professionals specialized in occupational, expressive arts, speech and physical therapy into our programs. We invite and encourage each of our riders and their parents and guardians to actively participate in this process. Please feel free to contact us at any time to set up a conference opportunity to establish, review, and revise goals.

## **Equine Learning Program (ELP)**

High Hopes' Equine Learning Program (ELP) utilizes groundwork exercises with the horse to teach participants various horsemanship and supporting life skills. High Hopes offers various ELP programs that range from basic horsemanship skills, to adolescent character development programs, to literacy programs. Additionally, High Hopes provides ELP programs that are tailored to meet the needs of veterans and their families. Participants work under the supervision of a PATH Intl. certified High Hopes instructor often with the additional assistance of volunteer coaches. Each participant follows a prescribed High Hopes curriculum that is designed to fit their individual needs and goals.

## **Carriage Driving Lessons**

The High Hopes carriage driving program provides people with disabilities with restricted movement, such as those who cannot easily transfer from a wheelchair onto a horse, the opportunity to participate with the security of an adapted cart. Working with our PATH Intl. certified driving instructors, along with a core group of dedicated volunteers, High Hopes crafted a program that meets the highest professional standard while embodying the passion for excellence and compassion that is our legacy from our founder, Sis Gould. Carriage driving provides a recreational and sporting experience with a horse as well as a mental challenge and learning an equine skill step by step. Carriage driving encourages the development of self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment as various maneuvers are learned. It can improve the cognitive skills of sequencing, following directions and differentiating between left and right, etc. Driving is another venue for socializing with other participants, the volunteers and instructors, and of course, the horse. It offers another opportunity for developing relationships, equine and human, of mutual respect and trust.

## **Summer Camp**

High Hopes offers a comprehensive curriculum on horsemanship, including horse care, stable management, carriage driving, vaulting (positional changes on horseback), inclusive games, and daily riding lessons. This is an inclusive program for children with and without disabilities, ages 3 to 12. Weekly sessions are grouped by age and riding ability with instruction given by PATH Intl. certified instructors.

**High Hopes Horse Show Days** take place in the spring with riders being given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills for family and friends. For those seeking competitive opportunities, High Hopes will notify participants of area horse shows which incorporate classes for individuals with special needs.

**Specialty Field Trips** are available to groups. They may include a mounted and/or unmounted component, a tour of the facility, and a lecture relative to our mission and its related topics. Field trips are scheduled on an individual basis in advance throughout the year.

**Pony Power Demonstrations** by a High Hopes therapy pony and trained staff and volunteers provide a great opportunity to bring the equine experience to those unable to come to High Hopes. Outreach visits are scheduled in advance. Please contact High Hopes for details.

**PATH Intl. Approved Instructor Training Course** is designed to prepare individuals to plan and implement safe, effective therapeutic riding classes. Candidates who successfully complete the course requirements have the option of taking an exam to become PATH Intl. Registered or Advanced Instructors. The course consists of 100 hours of lecture and more than 100 hours of practicum. Subjects taught include disabilities, anatomy, kinesiology, physiology, psychology, and the operation and management of a therapeutic riding center. This course is offered in an intensive 8-week format and a more protracted 4-month format at various times throughout the year.

High Hopes is a teaching facility. As such, there are times during the year in which instructor training candidates and interns student teach participants under the supervision of a High Hopes Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor.

**Educational Workshops and Seminars** covering a variety of topics such as: cognitive impairments, sensory integration and riding, seasonal horse care, maintenance of tack and special equipment, and centered riding are scheduled and offered throughout the year. Please check the High Hopes calendar for educational opportunities at [www.highhopestr.org](http://www.highhopestr.org).

### **Volunteers**

High Hopes engages volunteers as leaders, sidewalkers, and carriage driving and ELP assistants to support individuals in their horsemanship experience. Volunteers may use techniques prescribed by the instructor to ensure safety and promote skill development. Volunteers are carefully screened by staff and submit to a background check. They attend both a General Orientation and specific training for their assigned role(s).

Volunteers play an important role in the programs and development of High Hopes. We encourage all family members to engage in volunteering as appropriate for your equestrian. Volunteering in the same class as your equestrian may not always be the best fit. We provide a positive and supportive environment for our volunteers to gain new skills and experience working with people and horses. Volunteering is also a great way to explore future career opportunities. Whether you have one hour or many to give each week, you can be part of a fun and rewarding experience! Please see a staff member or contact the Volunteer Manager for more information.

## High Hopes Policies and Procedures

### Non-Discrimination Policy

High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc. accepts participants and volunteers regardless of income, race, color, nationality or ethnic origin.

### Fee for Service

High Hopes is committed to providing Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies to individuals and groups who can benefit from these specialized services. As of 1/1/16, the actual cost per service unit was \$140.00. High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc. provides a sliding-scale tuition by subsidizing this cost through the generosity of individual and corporate sponsors as well as foundation grants and fundraising activities. The tuition that participants are asked to pay is established annually. As of August 1, 2016 that fee is \$50.00 per lesson, 38% of the actual cost. The tuition for the 28-week academic year is \$1400.00 and the 9-week summer session is \$450.00. Access to service is important to High Hopes. Additional financial assistance is awarded through an application and review process, and awards are based on availability of funds and financial need. Additional information can be found on the website at [www.highhopestr.org](http://www.highhopestr.org). Questions concerning cost of services can be directed to the Program Director, Megan Ellis, [mellis@highhopestr.org](mailto:mellis@highhopestr.org) (860)434-1974 ext. 116.

### Fees and Payments

Lessons are prepaid on a semester basis. The tuition is due prior to the first class in any activity period in accordance with the pre-established dates. Fees and dates are subject to change.

**28-Week Academic Year – \$1400.** Tuition may be paid in full at one time or divided into four equal payments of \$350 due on the following dates: September 1, November 1, January 1 and March 1.

**9-Week Summer Program - \$450.00** due June 15.

Please call for Summer Camp and alternative program fees.

High Hopes accepts cash, check (made out to High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc.) or credit cards. *If paying by credit card, please consider adding a 3% donation to help cover the added fees incurred by High Hopes for this convenience.*

### Financial Assistance

With our commitment to accepting participants into our program based on therapeutic need, regardless of financial means, we offer further financial assistance to those unable to pay the established fees.

Financial aid (in the form of adjusted fees) is rewarded through a simple application process. Additional financial assistance may be requested through an application and review process. Applications are available on line at [www.highhopestr.org](http://www.highhopestr.org).

### Scheduling

Participants are notified of schedule enrollment four weeks prior to the start of a session. Confirmation of intent to participate must be made to the office at least two weeks prior to each session to guarantee participation. A calendar of class dates is provided prior to the start of each semester. Please make note of any days when programs are not in session (holidays and spring break, etc.).

### Attendance & Cancellation Policies

High Hopes expects consistent attendance by all participants. If you are unable to attend a regularly schedule session, notification must be made by calling High Hopes at 860-434-1974. If during business hours, please speak to the first person who answers the phone to advise them of your cancellation. If after business hours, please leave your cancellation message on the cancellation mailbox (follow prompts).

Make-up sessions are not available unless High Hopes needs to cancel classes due to some unforeseen circumstance such as inclement weather. High Hopes will make cancellation decisions and notifications no later than two hours before a scheduled lesson. Notification will be provided via personal phone calls, text messages, on the website, Facebook and the recorded main message. Cancellations due to weather are limited. Make up opportunities are provided only when High Hopes cancels classes.

### **Attire, Helmets & Footwear**

All participants must wear an ASTM/SEI approved riding helmet with the chin strap secured when working with or around horses. Helmets are provided by High Hopes, and are sanitized on a regular basis. High Hopes saddles are equipped with safety stirrups. For additional safety, participants should wear a sturdy-soled boot with a ¼ inch heel. *All riders that ride off lead at a trot or canter will be required to wear proper riding boots (smooth soled boots with a heel).* We have many pairs to borrow in the lounge! Appropriate pants include: jeans, heavy cotton trousers or riding breeches. Nylon and loose-fitting or stretchy materials are discouraged as they are slippery on a saddle. Participants are encouraged to wear weather appropriate jackets and gloves. Please note that the indoor arena is not heated or air-conditioned.

### **Participant Records**

Participants are required to update their registration information annually. Current, accurate information is vital to our ability to provide effective services. Participants are not able to continue without the required updated forms.

### **Change of Health or Medication Status**

Participants must inform High Hopes immediately and in writing of any changes in health status, conditions and medications. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in weight, medications and dosages, revised diagnoses, medical interventions, surgeries, etc.

**Holiday Closings** - The High Hopes office is closed on:

- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day

### **Confidentiality Policy**

At High Hopes, we place great importance on protecting the confidential information of our clients, our staff and our volunteers. "Confidential Information" includes, but is not limited to, personally identifiable information such as surnames, telephone numbers, addresses, e-mails, etc., as well as the non-public business records of High Hopes. In particular, medical information about clients, and information about their disabilities or special needs, is protected as Confidential Information.

### **Parking**

The speed limit on High Hopes' grounds is 5 mph. The carport is to be used for drop-off and pick-up purposes only. Permit parking is available at designated areas in the front of the building.

### **Telephone**

The telephone located at the front desk may be used by our participants and their families in the event of an emergency. Please see staff for assistance.



## **Conflict Resolution**

Problems should be handled immediately, confidentially, and directly between the parties involved and High Hopes staff. Parents and participants who feel that their concerns are not being addressed may contact the Program Director.

## **Safety and Conduct for Participants & Visitors**

High Hopes supports all efforts to promote safe conditions at its facility. Working with horses is a high risk activity. The following rules must be adhered to at all times:

- Participants are required to use gentle hands and feet while on or near any horse.
- Running, yelling, abusive or aggressive actions are not allowed.
- Appropriate attire and footwear (no sandals) are required in barn and paddock areas.
- Feeding of the horses is not allowed under any circumstance.
- Photography or video are not allowed without permission from staff.
- Please do not tap on the arena windows as it may startle the horses.
- Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- Parents may view lessons from the lounge or arena rail just inside the stable door.
- No pets are allowed on the grounds.
- Food or beverages are not allowed in the barn or riding arena.
- Smoking, alcohol or illegal substances are not allowed on the premises.
- Visitors wishing to tour the facility or grounds must be escorted by High Hopes staff.
- Please respect any posted off-limit areas including the pond, barn, and paddock areas.

High Hopes has taken careful assessment of its facility and grounds in the development of a comprehensive Risk Management Plan. Emergency procedures are posted in the barn and are available at the Volunteer Sign-In desk for your review.

Individuals accepted into High Hopes' programs are required to follow High Hopes' rules and procedures and take part in periodic progress reviews. During these reviews, or as the result of unusual occurrences during a program session, the High Hopes professional staff may find that continuance in the program for a given individual is inappropriate. For this reason, High Hopes reserves the right to discontinue participation of an individual in its programs when it is deemed that discontinuance is in the best interests of High Hopes and/or the individual concerned.

High Hopes serves both children and adults with physical, cognitive, and other types of disabilities. In order to serve a wide population, we maintain a diverse herd of equines of various sizes, shapes, types of movement, and personality.

High Hopes implements weight limits for our mounted program that are based on the advice of our veterinarians, best practice for the therapeutic horsemanship industry, and our professional judgement about what is safe for each horse/rider combination. Each horse has an assigned maximum weight limit, and in addition to weight, a rider's other characteristics (such as skill level, muscle tone, balance, or behavior) are taken into account when making horse/rider matches. Weight limits: a) ensure that our riders, volunteers, and instructors are safe when assisting with mounts, dismounts, and emergency procedures, and b) help keep our horses fit and healthy to continue this important work as long as they are able. Participants may be weighed at the time of assessment, or periodically for reassessment, in order to be sure we are making safe and appropriate horse/rider matches.

If a participant is over the weight limit for the horses available, we may recommend alternative equine activities. Our Carriage Driving and unmounted Equine Learning Programs provide many of the same physical, cognitive and emotional benefits that riding does, and may provide safer, more effective ways of experiencing the therapeutic value of the horses.

***High Hopes reserves the right to decide when we are unable to serve an applicant due to unavailable resource(s) and or/safety concerns including PATH Intl. guidelines relating to contraindications for participation.***

**The Connecticut Equine Liability Act** is Section 52-577p of the Connecticut General Statutes. That Section provides: **Assumption of risk by person engaged in recreational equestrian activities.** Each person engaged in recreational equestrian activities shall assume the risk and legal responsibility for any injury to his person or property arising out of the hazards inherent in equestrian sports, unless the injury was proximately caused by the negligence of the person providing the horse or horses to the individual engaged in recreational equestrian activities or the failure to guard or warn against a dangerous condition, use, structure or activity by the person providing the horse or horses or his agents or employees.

### **Equine Code of Ethics**

High Hopes will support Equine Assisted Therapy activities while providing the horses in its care with the highest ethical consideration. Horses working in programs at High Hopes are selected by the professional staff. Once a horse is in residence at High Hopes, it becomes a reflection of the program in its entirety. The care of each horse is given with professional expertise and management. The High Hopes staff considers the comfort and well-being of each rider, volunteer and horse their highest priority.

Horses are scheduled to work in a manner consistent with their physical ability. The needs of the herd are met with regard to workload, feeding and general care. Prior to work in program, each horse is inspected for injury, illness or discomfort. Horses are not asked to work when they are uncomfortable or unfit. Horses no longer able to serve in the High Hopes programs are given every consideration when placed elsewhere.

### **Equine Limitations**

It takes a special horse to become a part of the High Hopes herd. Only a small percentage of prospective horses actually end up in program, demonstrating that they have the high level of patience, tolerance and the steady rhythmic gait required to be a good therapy horse. And like people, no two horses are alike – each offers specific benefits to our riders, with their own needs and limitations. Therefore, it is critical that we do not exceed each horse's weight limit and work schedule established by equine professionals. We ask for your understanding as we try our best to serve our riders within the limits of our herd. High Hopes strives to provide alternative activities such as carriage driving and the equine learning program to those for which we may not have a suitable horse.

### **High Hopes Statement of Participant Eligibility or Dismissal**

High Hopes Therapeutic Riding offers services to individuals with special needs. Prior to participation, an assessment is conducted by a therapeutic riding instructor and therapist if needed. Eligibility for participation in High Hopes' programs is based solely upon an individual's ability to participate meaningfully and safely, provided the necessary resources are available including: an instructor, horse, volunteers and a class available which meets an individual's needs. Financial consideration is not taken into account in determining the eligibility for participation.

As a Premier Accredited PATH Intl. operating center, High Hopes fully ascribes to the Precautions and Contraindications as recommended by the PATH Intl. Medical Committee as well as professional standards. Therefore, our professional staff provides initial and ongoing evaluations for all prospective and active participants.

Due to the nature of therapeutic riding and other equine related activities, there are individuals for whom High Hopes' programs are deemed inappropriate during the evaluation process, not accepted for enrollment, or not eligible to continue in High Hopes' programs. This determination is made on the basis of physical, behavioral and other limitations.

## Forms of Communication

**Consultation** - The High Hopes staff are available for consultation throughout the application and enrollment process, as well as during the program sessions. Participant progress updates can be obtained via telephone, email, or in-person meetings. Comment forms are available in the lounge, or you may contact the Executive Director with any questions, concerns, suggestions or comments at: 860-434-1974, ext. 113.

**Program Newsletter** – a program-specific newsletter for participants is sent via email, posted on the Rider Bulletin Board, and available in the lounge. It includes program highlights, upcoming events, and relevant program updates for participants, families, caregivers, and involved professionals.

**Participant and Volunteer Information Bulletin Boards** – include a variety of information and are posted by High Hopes staff and fellow participants on related topics, news, updates, and upcoming events. Please be sure to check it regularly and feel free to contribute.

**The High Hopes Rider** – is a periodic newsletter sent via mail and available in the lounge. High Hopes also sends occasional e-blasts to alert participants of special events and program updates.

**Website** – Please visit the High Hopes website at [www.highhopestr.org](http://www.highhopestr.org) for detailed information on our programs, as well as calendar items and upcoming events.

Thank you for taking time to review our policies and procedures which are designed to provide our participants with a safe, effective and enjoyable environment. We encourage your input and suggestions. Please feel free to forward comments to Executive Director, Kitty Stalsburg at 860-434-1974, ext. 113 or email: [kstalsburg@highhopestr.org](mailto:kstalsburg@highhopestr.org)