



# GREAT OAK

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EQUINE ASSISTED PROGRAMS

## GREAT OAK VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Great Oak.....	2
About our Riders.....	4
Etiquette.....	5
General Information.....	5
Policies.....	6
Volunteer Positions.....	7
Position Descriptions.....	8
Facility Safety Rules.....	11
Volunteer Information Sheet.....	12
Photo Release.....	14

## WELCOME TO GREAT OAK VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS!

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Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Great Oak! Volunteers are the key to the success for all of our programs. Great Oak will provide the necessary training, continuing education and guidance to make your volunteer experience safe and enjoyable. This manual will serve as a guide to volunteer expectations and opportunities. Please contact our office if you have any questions during your time here with our program. Once you have completed orientation you will be scheduled to attend a volunteer training. The training will give you the tools to encourage a successful lesson and or session utilizing verbal and physical support. Great Oak offers volunteer enrichment programs and continuing education opportunities throughout the year to broaden your horsemanship skills, knowledge and learn more about working with individuals with special needs.

## WHO IS GREAT OAK?

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Great Oak is a therapeutic horseback riding program that provides equine-assisted living activities that promote the physical, emotional and psychological health of individuals with special needs. Great Oak is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization. Great Oak was originally founded as STAR Riding in 1996, providing equine assisted therapy to children and adults in the Aiken community.

In the fall of 2015, the board voted to reconfigure the organization. A new name, expanded programs and a year round facility was initiated. Great Oak is currently located on Edgefield Highway within five minutes of downtown Aiken and the major interstates. Great Oak is poised to offer an array of equine-assisted therapies on its 20 acre farm that program participants will find rewarding and beneficial in an almost undefinable way.

Great Oak is a member of PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) International. The facility at Great Oak adheres to PATH's rigorous standards to ensure the health and safety of our participants, horses, volunteers and staff. PATH was founded in 1969 as the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association to promote safe and effective therapeutic horseback riding throughout the United States and Canada. Today, PATH International has more than 850 member centers and nearly 7,600 individual members in countries all over the world, which help and support more than 54,000 men, women and children with special needs each year. The Great Oak is symbolic of the facility's impact as a place of nourishment for every aspect of one's being and as a secure and safe place open to everyone's journey.

## MISSION

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Our mission is to provide equine-assisted activities that promote the physical, emotional and psychological health of individuals with special needs.

## VISION

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Our vision is to impact the lives of participants through transformative healing and personal growth by creating the premier accredited equine assisted activity center in the Southeast.

## WHO DO WE SERVE?

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This dreamlike place is open to people of all ages. Children, teenagers, and adults will feel welcome. Their challenges may be physical, mental or emotional, and often reflect a combination of these factors. Sound horses and certified professionals guide participants down the path of discovery and recovery.

## HOW DO WE DO IT?

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Under the leadership of our Board of Directors, Great Oak employs three PATH certified instructors, a program and volunteer coordinator, and executive director. Great Oak currently has seven horses in its possession. These special equines have passed a stringent trial period and tests to determine their suitability for therapy work at Great Oak. Along with certified instructors and capable horses, Great Oak's work is dependent upon trained volunteers to help facilitate lessons and the day to day program operations.

## BENEFITS OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING

Each individual we treat at Great Oak comes with his or her own diagnosis, necessitating an individualized treatment plan with specific therapeutic goals. The benefits of using a horse as part of a treatment plan for individuals with special needs are vast and varied, and there is significant evidence of success.

### PHYSICAL BENEFITS

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The horse's movement has a dynamic effect on the rider's body. The horse stimulates the rider's pelvis and trunk in a manner that resembles a human's normal gait. This helps improve an array of areas including balance, strength, tone, and endurance.

### SENSORY BENEFITS

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The movement, as well as the multi-sensory opportunities on the horse, can help with a variety of sensory integration issues. A smooth-gaited, consistently-paced horse provides needed input to help a rider establish rhythm. A rough-gaited horse may provide a rider with the stimulation to help organize and integrate sensory input.

### EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

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The impacts are vast — success of overcoming fear and anxiety, the ability to achieve independence, master a riding skill, control and attend to an animal will help a rider to realize self-worth and increase self-esteem. The relationships that develop between riders, volunteers, horses and staff are integral to the positive emotional experience at Great Oak.

### COGNITIVE BENEFITS

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The horse's gait helps organize the nervous system of the rider and thus is a perfect time to work on educational goals such as multi-tasking, cause and effect learning, sequencing and attention while riding. The alternative setting also proves the motivation and inspiration to address other specific cognitive tasks.

## ABOUT OUR RIDERS

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Working with individuals with cognitive, physical and emotional needs may be a new experience for some of our volunteers. Great Oak's staff is available to answer questions you may have. Below are brief descriptions of some disabilities and conditions you may encounter.

**Autism** - is an impaired ability to relate to others. Characteristics may include impaired speech and poor social and communication skills.

**Brain Injuries/TBI** - are the result of a severe injury that occurred to the head that caused the death of brain cells. These individuals' motor skills, memory or speech may have been affected.

**Cerebral Palsy (CP)** - condition caused by brain damage that has occurred before, at, or after birth. A lack of coordination and postural balance can result from the damage. Individual can have high or low muscle tone.

**Developmental Disabilities** - a broad term applied to children that are functioning two or more years below their actual grade level. These children can have slow physical, mental or social processes.

**Down's Syndrome** - a chromosomal disorder often recognized by physical features and low muscle tone. The individual's development and learning capacity may vary widely.

**Emotional Disabilities** - a disturbance of emotional equilibrium as manifested in unadaptable behavior and impaired functioning caused by genetic, physical, chemical, biological, psychological, or social and cultural factors. These individuals may display inappropriate behaviors, have difficulty with learning, coping or have vast and dramatic mood changes.

**Hearing Impairment** - may be a range of partial loss of hearing to complete inability to hear. Individuals with a hearing impairment may communicate with sign language, lip reading or communication device.

**Learning Disabilities** - a term used to describe individuals with difficulty processing information and problem solving skills. Individual may not appear to have a disability.

**Intellectual Disability** - an impairment of intellectual functioning, social skills, communication and skills in daily living and personal care.

**Multiple Sclerosis** - the chronic destruction of the myelin sheath throughout the brain or spinal cord or both. This interferes with the nerve pathways causing muscular weakness, loss of coordination and fatigue.

**Muscular Dystrophy** - a condition causing the person's muscles to progressively weaken. As a result their muscles tend to fatigue easily.

**Paralysis** - the loss or impairment of the sensation of a body part, usually as a result of damage to its nerve supply. As a result, the person will lose the ability to move or function the affected area of the body.

**Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** - a common anxiety disorder that develops after exposure to a traumatic situation in which grave physical, mental or emotional harm occurred or was threatened. Family members of victims may also develop the disorder. PTSD can occur in people of any age, including children and adolescents. More than twice as many women as men experience PTSD following exposure to trauma. Depression, substance abuse or other anxiety disorders frequently co-exist with PTSD.

**Sensory Integration** - the integration and interpretation of sensory stimulation from the environment by the brain. This disorder occurs when sensory input is not integrated or organized appropriately in the brain. As a result problems in development, information processing and behavior occur.

**Visual Impairment** - characterized by a moderate or total loss of sight. These individuals may have poor balance due to their lack of sight and an increased level of fearfulness may occur.

## WORKING WITH SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION

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### **Wheelchair Etiquette:**

- Always ask the individual if they would like assistance before you help.
- Do not hang or lean on their wheelchair.
- When speaking to someone in a wheelchair be aware of their personal space; if the conversation lasts more than a few minutes sit so you are speaking to them at eye level.
- When assisting an Instructor or Therapist with a transport of an individual from their chair, keep open communication between all parties to assure that everyone included is moving cohesively to avoid any incident or injury.

### **Visual Impairment Etiquette:**

- When escorting individuals with visual impairments ask if they need assistance before you help.
- If physical assistance is needed allow the individual to hold your arm or elbow and walk one step ahead or ask if there is a specific way they prefer to be assisted.
- Be aware to communicate potential hazards, terrain changes and movements.
- Be sure to verbalize/repeat information or instructions that are posted or written.
- If you are unclear of what to do, ask the Instructor or Therapist for further instructions.

### **Hearing or Language Impairment Etiquette:**

- Try to maintain good eye contact. While you are speaking to the individual be sure to look at them.
- Speak clearly; avoid talking too slow, too quick or over-emphasizing words. Keep directions and conversations concise.
- Become familiar with hand gestures or body positions that the rider may be using to represent words and concepts.
- Ask the Instructor or Therapist for instructions or communication aides specific to the participant.

### **Non-Verbal or Limited Verbal Etiquette:**

- Become familiar with communication aides specific to the participant.
- Ask the Instructor or Therapist for instructions or reinforcement needs.
- Become familiar with hand gestures or body positions that the rider may be using to represent words and concepts.
- Keep directions and instructions clear and direct. Less conversation utilizing uncomplicated wording is always best.

## GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

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- Volunteers are encouraged not to bring any valuables into the barn. Great Oak cannot be held responsible for the loss of personal property.
- Parking is available in the parking lot. Please park further away from the main barn entrance so that our riders may have easy access to the building. Please do not use your car alarm when locking your car or at any other time.
- Please do not bring your pet.
- We will contact you as soon as possible if the lesson is cancelled.
- If circumstances prevent you from coming at your regularly scheduled time, please contact Great Oak in advance. If the office voicemail picks up, please leave a message on the cancellation extension. The earlier you can advise us, the better chance we have to find a substitute.
- In order to maintain appropriate social boundaries there should be no Facebook, email or phone communication between students and volunteers.
- If you are in contact with horses outside of Great Oak, please do the following “best practices” as recommended by our vet to prevent and spread of diseases. Before entering the barn please: Change or disinfect shoes, wash hands, and change clothes.

## GREAT OAK VOLUNTEER POLICIES

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### **Training**

Volunteers will receive training as part of their service with Great Oak. All volunteers must complete an orientation and training session prior to their service at Great Oak. Continuing education programs will be offered monthly for volunteers to increase their knowledge on horsemanship skills.

### **Attendance**

Volunteer attendance is important to the operation of each program. Volunteers should notify the Program and Volunteer Coordinator in advance if they are unable to be present for their time commitment.

### **Confidentiality**

All information (written and verbal) regarding participants for Great Oak is confidential and is not to be shared with anyone without the expressed written consent of the participant or parent or guardian of the participant. The use of rider or horse information/photographic materials for personal use especially on social media is not acceptable. All published materials or information must come from Great Oak or have the approval from Great Oak and affiliated parties. If it is reported to Great Oak that information about our organization, staff, riders, horses or other volunteers is being exploited on social media, you may be asked to leave the program.

### **Evaluation**

Volunteers will receive periodic evaluations to review their performance. The evaluations will allow for a volunteer and supervisor to suggest changes, seek suggestions and enhance the relationship between the volunteers, staff and to Great Oak.

### **Emergency Closings**

Great Oak strives to ensure the safety of all volunteers. In the event of inclement weather, volunteers will be responsible for contacting the volunteer coordinator to inform them that they will not be performing their scheduled service. If Great Oak should close, the volunteer coordinator will notify volunteers of the closing.

### **Security**

Great Oak desires to provide a safe volunteer environment. Volunteers are responsible for using the following common-sense suggestions to help ensure a safe environment. Be aware of any unknown person who enters Great Oak property. Do not bring valuables on site.

### **Attire**

Volunteers are representatives of Great Oak and are responsible for presenting a positive image to our participants and the community. Volunteers will dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. All volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes. All volunteers must wear their Great Oak shirt and name tag when on premises.

### **Cell Phone Usage**

While volunteering at Great Oak, no cell phones will be permitted.

### **Safety**

Great Oak aims to provide a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers. If a volunteer is injured in the course of the volunteer's service, it is important that the volunteer notify his or her supervisor immediately. Volunteers should also complete an incident report and submit the report to Great Oak staff.

### **First-Aid**

Volunteers will be trained on appropriate first-aid techniques. All volunteers will know where the first-aid kit is kept.

## EMERGENCY POLICIES

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### **In case of an incident or fall:**

- Check the scene and ensure that the individual is not in immediate danger. If it is not necessary to move the individual *do not move the individual*. In case of a rider fall, do not remove their helmet or boots. The Instructor or Therapist may choose to clear the ring of all activity.
- If medical attention is required the onsite PATH Intl. Certified Instructor or Great Oak staff will call for emergency services.
- Stay calm. Allow Great Oak staff to take charge of the situation. Unless asked to assist in any tasks, please keep clear of the area where the incident has taken place.
- If there is an open wound, blood or other bodily fluid present, do not touch it. The PATH Intl. Certified Instructor or Great Oak staff will wear gloves and tend to it.
- For incidents regarding bee stings, horse bites, or injury incurred at the barn, immediately contact Great Oak staff.

### **Weather Related Emergencies:**

- Lightning/Thunder - At the first sign of thunder and or lightning, volunteers are to assist instructors in dismounting riders off their horses and bringing the horses back to their stalls in a safe and orderly fashion. Riders will be escorted to the viewing room by volunteers. Lessons can continue 20 minutes after.
- Extreme Wind Conditions - In the case of extreme wind gusts, keep a good handle on the horse and rider. Communicate to the Instructor or Therapist if you feel the horse is sensitive to the wind.
- Extreme Cold Conditions - In the case of extreme cold temperatures be aware of hazards to humans if unprepared for the weather. Proper attire including hats, gloves and jackets should be worn. Horses should be wearing appropriate layers of coolers and quarter sheets, if necessary.

### **In Case of a Loose Horse:**

- Calmly inform Great Oak staff immediately.
- Volunteers are to assist Great Oak staff to gather riders and volunteers together and have them stand still in a safe place, away from the path that the horse may run.
- Great Oak staff in the arena should stop all horses and have them line up with the loose horse in their vision. Riders may be dismounted at this time.
- If appropriate, close all gates.
- If instructed, grab a bucket of grain; many times the sound will get the horse's attention and make them more attentive. Volunteers may be asked to assist by getting a halter and lead line to bring the horse in once caught.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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- Groomer
- Tacker
- Leader
- Sidewalker
- Feeders
- Receptionist and Office Support
- Fundraising and Special Events
- Community Outreach

## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

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**Groomer** - well versed in horsemanship and horse care to ensure proper hygiene according to Great Oak standards. Groomer opportunities are available before and after lessons, which may include proper weather related care of horses. Each horse has their own grooming bucket, please do not share grooming tools. Volunteers must be approved and supervised. The groomer ensures the hygiene of the horse by grooming the horse. Grooming is an essential element of horse care and is part of the daily maintenance of our horses. Each horse has his or own grooming box with all the necessary grooming tools, which are clearly labeled. The grooming boxes include:

**Curry Comb** - a rubber or plastic comb that lifts up dander from the horse's coat. It may be used to remove tough dirt spots on the horse's coat as well. Curry comb should not be used on the horse's face, legs and spine.

**Hard Brush** - A stiff brush used on the horse's body to remove dry mud, dirt and dander. Hard brush should not be used on the horse's face.

**Soft Brush** - a soft brush is used on the horse's body to smooth out and shine the horse's coat. May be used on the horse's face.

**Mane and Tail Brush** - A brush used to groom and clean the horse's mane and tail. Groomer will be instructed on how to properly brush the horse's tail.

**Hoof Pick** - A long hooked metal tool that is used to remove dirt, stones, shavings and manure from the horse's hoof. The hoof pick may also have a hard bristled brush attached to it used to brush away dirt and debris.

*\*Please note that if you observe any unusual bumps, cuts or signs of an injury, please notify Great Oak Staff immediately.*

**Tacker** - Well versed in horsemanship and equine related activities including full knowledge of equipment and tack. Volunteers in this role must be comfortable working independently with all of Great Oak's horses. A tacker gets the horse ready to ride by putting on the horse's riding equipment and tack. The tacker is responsible to loosen the girth of the horse in between lessons; removes tack from the horse and puts the tack away when the horse is finished with lessons for the day or otherwise told to do so. Tacking correctly takes a lot of patience and practice. Please do not hesitate to ask for help! Tacking the horse correctly can affect the horse's behavior and gait. Most importantly, proper tacking is necessary for our rider's safety!

### **Guidelines for being a tacker:**

The tacker ensures that cross ties are only attached to a halter, never the bridle.

The tacker checks with Great Oak staff to see if the horse is done and needs to be untacked.

Horses that are be used in another lesson within an hour will remain tacked in their stalls.

When a horse is in the stall between lessons, the tacker makes sure that the stirrups are rolled up so the horse does not get caught on anything.

When a horse is in the stall between lessons, the tacker loosens the horse's girth so that it is not too tight on the horse or too loose that the saddle will move.

When a horse is in the stall between lessons, the tacker always detaches the lead rope and reins from the bridle.

When the horse is finished being ridden for the day, the tacker removes the horse's saddle and bridle.

On most occasions this will be done in the horse's stall. When bringing the horse into the stall, the leader turns the horse around to face the door of the stall.



## JOB DESCRIPTIONS, CONTINUED

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### **Steps to saddle a horse:**

- Stand on the left side of the horse with the saddle pad in hand. Place the saddle pad on the horse's back close up by the withers. The side of the pad with the billet straps should be facing upwards and toward the front of the horse.
- Place the wither or half pad directly over the saddle pad.
- Gently place the saddle over the saddle pads. Make sure that the saddle is put on with the pommel in the left hand and the cantle in the right hand. When the saddle is on the horse, the pommel is near the front of the horse and the cantle is near the hind end.
- Go around to the right side of the horse to make sure that the saddle is flat and even.
- Attach the girth to the billets on the right side of the saddle.
- Return to the left side of the horse, reach under the horse's belly to grab the girth and pull it up to the billet straps. Make sure to put the billet strap through the top of the metal buckle of the girth.
- Tighten the girth enough to snugly fit a flat hand between the girth and the horse. Always check the girth tightness from under the horse's belly, not from the side. The girth should be even on both sides. For example, three holes on both the left and right sides.
- Make sure that if the horse is staying in the stall that the girth is loosened. It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure it is tightened prior to mounting.

### **Steps to bridle a horse:**

- Hold the crown piece in your left hand and the reins in your right hand. Check that the bridle and reins are straight and not twisted.
- Move to the left side of the horse.
- Hook the left arm through the crown piece and hold the reins so that the right side of the reins are in the right hand the left side of the reins are in your left hand. This will ensure that the reins are not twisted when they are placed over the horse's head. Gently put the reins over the horse's head, so that the buckle of the reins rests on your horse's withers.
- Place right hand over the horse's nose by reaching under the horse's head. With right hand in place, hold the bridle just below the browband against the horse's nose.
- Make sure that the right hand stays in place. This way, if the horse goes to move his or her head away from the bridle, he or she will not be able to due to the support of your hand.
- Cup the left hand underneath the bit and guide it toward the horse's mouth. Once the bit is in place, pull the bridle up and over the horse's ears making sure that the browband is in front of the horse's ears and the crown piece is behind the horse's ears.
- Fasten the nose band by tightening the leather straps so that only two fingers can fit between the horse and the noseband.
- Fasten the throat latch by tightening the leather straps so that the width of four fingers can fit between the horse and the throat latch. Do not attempt to adjust any other fittings on the bridle. If you have concerns please present to the instructor.
- Once the bridle is on the horse, make sure that the reins stay over the horse's head.

### **Steps to removing the saddle:**

- Standing on the left side of the horse, make sure that the stirrups are securely rolled up.
- Unbuckle both billets on the left side of the girth. Make sure that girth comes off completely from the left side. If the horse wears a martingale, make sure to slip it off the girth prior to removing the saddle from the horse's back.
- Unbuckle both billets on the right side. Place the girth on top of the saddle.
- Slide the saddle and the saddle pads off the horse.

## JOB DESCRIPTIONS, CONTINUED

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### **Steps to removing the bridle:**

- Make sure that the reins are still over the horse's head. Unbuckle the noseband and throatlatch.
- Gently pull reins and crown piece forward over the horse's ears. Allow the horse to drop the bit.
- To put the bridle away correctly, hang it up on the hook from the crown piece with the browband facing out. The lead rope and reins are to be unclipped and hung up on the designated hooks.

**Sidewalker** - Assists with the safety of the rider. Volunteers walk along side the rider to assist with positioning, skills, taking directions from the Instructor or Therapist and relaying information to the rider. The sidewalker helps to ensure the safety of the rider by assisting with the position of the rider's leg, taking all directions from the instructor, and offering an additional prompt to the rider if directed by the instructor.

### **Qualifications of a sidewalker:**

A sidewalker is a volunteer who has completed the volunteer orientation and training and has shown competency to be a sidewalker.

### **Guidelines for being a sidewalker:**

- The sidewalker assists in balancing the rider on the horse by being positioned along the rider's leg.
- The sidewalker always walks next to the student's side facing the front.
- The sidewalker takes all directions from the instructor and if needed reiterates them to the student.
- The sidewalker helps keep the rider's attention focused on the instructor.
- In an emergency, the sidewalker is responsible for the rider. The sidewalker stays with the rider. If the rider falls off the horse the side walker remains with the rider without moving him or her, keeping the rider calm until assistance comes or is instructed otherwise.

**Leader** - Assists in handling the horse during the lesson. The leader's sole responsibility and focus is the safety and well being of the horse they are working with.

### **Qualifications of a leader:**

The leader must be a volunteer who has vast horse knowledge, is fully capable of completing the role of a sidewalker, is capable of anticipating an unsafe situation and can take steps to avoid them.

### **Guidelines for being a leader:**

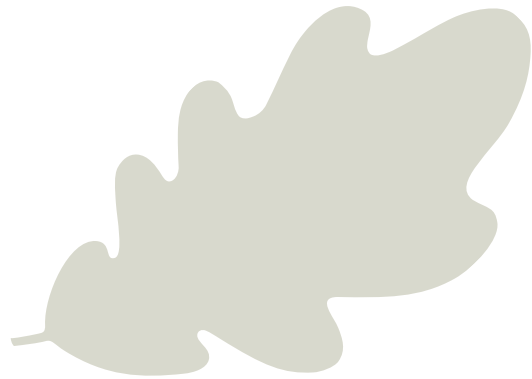
- The leader assists the rider with steering, stopping and starting when the rider is asked to do so by the instructor.
- Unless instructed otherwise, the leader always leads from the left side, holding the lead rope no less than 18 inches from the horse's chin with their right hand, and holding the remaining part of the rope with the left hand at all times. Do not wrap the lead rope around your hand or wrist. Avoid letting the lead line drag on the ground. Avoid hanging on the bit and or holding so tightly the horse tosses it's head or moves around in discomfort.
- The leader maintains constant communication with the instructor and listens to the rider for cues. For example, if the instructor asks the student to "walk," the leader should wait for the student to say, "walk please."
- The leader maintains a safe distance between the other horses in the ring.
- The leader is aware of the sidewalker's position and makes sure the horse does not push the sidewalker into the fence.
- The leader walks or jogs just behind the horse's head but in front of the shoulder.
- In an emergency, maintain control of the horse; when the rider is clear from the horse, the leader walks the horse away from the incident. If the emergency occurs to a rider on a different horse, the leader brings the horse to the middle of the ring and waits for directions from the instructor as to whether or not dismount the rider.
- The leader stays with the horse at all times.

## FACILITY SAFETY RULES

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These rules have been established for the protection and safety of everyone, including staff, horses, riders, family and friends. Please follow them and use common sense when around horses. If you ever have a question about anything, please ask.

- Children must be supervised at ALL times.
- Do not enter a horse stall unless instructed to by a Great Oak instructor.
- Do not feed the horses unless accompanied by a Great Oak instructor. Horses are to be fed in their buckets only.
- Helmets are required for all mounted riders. Riders participating in ground work may be asked to wear a helmet as well.
- Wear barn appropriate footwear.
- Proper clothes for the weather.
- Flat soled boots with a heel are best.
- No open toed shoes, sandals or Crocs.
- No dogs are permitted at Great Oak.
- Anyone on property must sign a Great Oak release.
- No smoking on the property.
- No drugs or alcohol on the property.



# GREAT OAK VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SHEET

## General Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License State: \_\_\_\_\_ Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, authorize Great Oak to receive information from any law enforcement agency, including police departments and sheriff's offices, of this state or any other state or federal government, to the extent permitted by state and federal law, pertaining to any convictions I may have had to violations of state or federal criminal laws, including but not limited to convictions for crimes committed upon children or animals.

I understand that such access is for the purpose of considering my application as a volunteer and I expressly DO NOT authorize Great Oak, its directors, officers, employees, or any other volunteers to disseminate this information in any way to any other individual, group, agency, organization, or corporation.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about Great Oak? \_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate areas of interest:*

Barn Support  
Horse Care  
Horse Handler/Leader  
Side-Walker

Green Team  
Social Media  
Public Relations/Marketing  
Office Support

Fundraising, Grant Writing  
Special Events  
Community Outreach

*When are you available to volunteer?*

	9AM - 11AM	11AM - 1PM	2PM - 4PM	4PM - 6PM	5PM - 7PM
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					

## GREAT OAK VOLUNTEER HEALTH HISTORY

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### Emergency Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

### If Minor (under 18):

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Any Medical Information we should be aware of?

Allergies:

Medications:

Date of Last Tetanus Shot:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# PHOTO RELEASE FORM

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## Permission to Use Photograph

I grant to Great Oak, its representatives and employees, the right to take photographs of me and my property in connection with the above-identified subject.

I authorize Great Oak, its assignees and transferees to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically.

I agree that Great Oak may use such photographs of me with or without my name and for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, and web content.

I have read and understand the above:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# GREAT OAK VOLUNTEER OATH

## We are **safe**

Great Oak volunteers will engage in best practices as set forth in Volunteer Training. Safety is our number one priority and it is each volunteer's responsibility to ensure that they are providing a safe environment for our participants and equines.

## We are **kind**

Great Oak volunteers will display kindness toward participants, families, staff, and other volunteers.

## We are **respectful**

Great Oak volunteers will show compassion toward participants and their families. Inappropriate and derogatory language will not be tolerated. Use of such language could result in a volunteer being removed from the program.

## We are **considerate**

Great Oak volunteers will always do their best to honor their commitment to Great Oak. If a volunteer is unable to make their scheduled shift, they will provide as much notice as possible to Great Oak staff. Great Oak volunteers understand that their presence is imperative for the riders to participate in their lessons. A volunteer no show may prevent a rider from participating in their lesson.

## We are **conscientious**

Great Oak volunteers will always communicate safety concerns including those involving participants, equines, property, volunteers, and staff with Great Oak staff. This includes your personal safety and well being. If you are unhappy with your current role at Great Oak, please communicate with Great Oak staff so we can develop a solution.

## We are **consistent**

Great Oak volunteers understand that Great Oak equines are to be handled in the manner that is set forth by Great Oak staff. If a volunteer has suggestions, they should bring it up with Great Oak staff and never implement a change in an equine's routine without consent.

## We are **flexible**

Great Oak volunteers understand that Great Oak has set forth policies and procedures. However, daily programming will involve many variables and volunteers may be required to adapt to a variety of situations.



**GREAT OAK**

EQUINE ASSISTED PROGRAMS

# GREAT OAK VOLUNTEER OATH

**Failure to adhere with the Great Oak Volunteer Oath may result in removal from the program.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of volunteer), have read and understand the Great Oak Volunteer Oath. By signing this Oath, I am accepting responsibility for following the above guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**GREAT OAK**

EQUINE ASSISTED PROGRAMS

803-226-0056

1123 Edgefield Highway  
Aiken, SC 29801

[www.greatoakeap.org](http://www.greatoakeap.org)



**GREAT OAK AIKEN THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER  
RELEASE OF LIABILITY, WAIVER OF RIGHT TO SUE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT**

**WARNING: PURSUANT TO S.C. CODE ANNOTATED SECTION 47-9-720, AN EQUINE ACTIVITY SPONSOR OR AN EQUINE PROFESSIONAL IS NOT LIABLE FOR AN INJURY TO OR THE DEATH OF A PARTICIPANT RESULTING FROM AN INHERENT RISK OF EQUINE ACTIVITY, AND NO PARTICIPANT OR PARTICIPANT'S REPRESENTATIVE MAY MAKE A CLAIM AGAINST, MAINTAIN AN ACTION AGAINST, OR RECOVER FROM AN EQUINE ACTIVITY SPONSOR, OR AN EQUINE PROFESSIONAL, FOR INJURY, LOSS, DAMAGE, OR DEATH OF THE PARTICIPANT RESULTING FROM AN INHERENT RISK OF EQUINE ACTIVITY.**

On behalf of myself, my personal representatives, heirs, next of kin, spouse, and assigns hereby acknowledge that horseback riding involves serious risks and that it is not possible to foresee or prevent all such risks. I am aware that the fall of a rider from a horse and other accidents involving the horse and it's rider can be caused by sudden, unforeseen occurrences and that a fall or other accident can be crippling or fatal to the rider and may cause an injury to or the death of the horse. I understand that the behavior of horses can be unpredictable and irrational regardless of their past training and past performance.

On behalf of myself, my personal representatives, heirs, next of kin, spouse, and assigns hereby acknowledge the risks related to COVID 19 also known as the Coronavirus. I agree to hold Great Oak harmless from any claim for illness or death arising from the Virus that may be alleged to have been caused directly or indirectly from exposure to the Virus at any facility maintained by Great Oak or at any function organized by or on behalf of Great Oak. I agree that Great Oak shall not be liable for any sickness, disease, or death which may be suffered by myself or any guest or invitee of mine arising from our related to the Virus. I agree that all risks relating to the Virus are to be borne by me. I hereby assume the sole responsibility for and agree to indemnify, defend and save Great Oak harmless from any and all loss and expenses (including legal and expert witness fees actually incurred) by reason of the liability imposed upon any of Great Oak due to illness, including death at any time resulting therefrom, sustained to myself, my guests and invitees, on account of the Virus. I expressly warrant and represent to Great Oak that neither I nor any of my guests or invitees have knowingly contracted nor been exposed to the Virus nor are any of the aforesaid exhibiting any symptoms of the Virus. In the event that I later discover that the aforesaid representation and warranty is false in any manner, I agree to immediately notify Great Oak and provide as much detailed information as is available.



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EQUINE ASSISTED PROGRAMS

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In light of the above, I voluntarily assume the risk and danger of injury or death inherent in the use of the horse, equipment and gear provided to me by Great Oak Aiken Therapeutic Riding Center, and/ or its officers, directors, employees, agents, sponsors and volunteers (all of the aforesaid being collectively known as "Great Oak"). If I have requested my own equipment be used, I agree that Great Oak shall have no responsibility to maintain such equipment and that safety hazards may be present.

I agree to and do Release, Discharge, and Promise Not to bring a lawsuit against Great Oak doing business under their own name or any other names.

I agree and promise to hold Great Oak harmless and to fully indemnify them from and against any claim, judgment, or expense that may incur arising out of or in any way connected with either my use of the horse and any equipment provided therewith or the facility and landowners, or any acts or omissions of other employees and agents and volunteers.

I agree to abide by and follow any instructions given or rules established by Great Oak.

The laws of the State of South Carolina shall govern this release and waiver. If a court holds any portion of this release invalid, it is agreed that the remainder of this release shall continue in full legal force and effect notwithstanding the invalidity of some part of it.

**I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT. I UNDERSTAND IT IS A PROMISE NOT TO SUE AND A RELEASE AND INDEMNITY FOR ALL CLAIMS. I SIGN THIS RELEASE VOLUNTARILY.**

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (or Legal Guardian if a Minor): \_\_\_\_\_

If signed by Legal Guardian, Print Name of Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Personal Insurance Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_



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