



# **VOLUNTEER MANUAL**

We are so grateful to you for sharing your time and energy with all of us. Without your service, your smile and the contribution of your time our program could not exist. Our pledge to you is that we will make every effort to make this a rewarding experience for you. We thank you very much for all you give!

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## **ABOUT FRIENDS FOR TOMORROW**

Friends For Tomorrow, Inc. was founded in 1994 by Diane Lesneski Auger as a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and young adults facing intellectual and physical challenges. Our mission is to enhance our clients' lives through the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding.

Our philosophy is simple; we encourage all involved with the program to have a fun and supportive learning experience in a warm and nurturing environment. We are here to guide the children through a challenging and rewarding experience in self-confidence and exploration. The rewards come through achieving goals set by the student and ourselves, and the inherent benefits of successfully communicating with the horse and team of instructor and volunteers. The examples we model and the atmosphere we create are so important to achieving our collective goals in the program.

We are a member of the NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association), and therefore must adhere to all NARHA safety standards.

**SAFETY IS ALWAYS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE!**

While we encourage our riders to be as independent as possible, we are at the same time trying to anticipate any unsafe situations and be prepared for them. We want to make riding fun for our clients and yet need to carefully plan the range of activities provided.

This manual is designed as a guideline and reference for volunteers. As we offer an individualized program, the instructors will try to brief you about the needs of each rider before the start of the lesson. We encourage you to ask as many questions as you would like and we will provide the training necessary to become a successful volunteer.

## STAFF & CONTACT INFORMATION

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## SCHEDULE FOR 2010

### **FFT SESSIONS**

Winter Session: February 15<sup>th</sup> – March 25<sup>th</sup>

Spring Session: March 29<sup>th</sup> - May 27<sup>th</sup>

Summer Session: June 1<sup>st</sup> - July 29<sup>th</sup>

Fall I Session: August 30<sup>th</sup> - October 16<sup>th</sup>

Fall II Session: October 18<sup>th</sup> – December 2<sup>nd</sup>

### **PONY PARTNERS SESSIONS**

Spring Session: March 12<sup>th</sup>- May 21<sup>st</sup>

Fall Session: September 10<sup>th</sup> – November 12<sup>th</sup>

### **HOLIDAYS- NO LESSONS**

Monday, May 31<sup>st</sup> - Memorial Day

Monday, September 6<sup>th</sup> - Labor Day

Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>- Veterans Day

Thursday, November 25<sup>th</sup> – Thanksgiving

Friday, November 26<sup>th</sup>- Day after Thanksgiving

## **A TYPICAL AFTERNOON AS A VOLUNTEER.....**

- 2:30pm: Arrive 15 minutes before the start of a lesson. Horses need to be brought in and groomed.
- 2:45pm: There are 4 lessons taught by each of the two instructors in one afternoon (2:45, 3:30, 4:15, 5:00). Help to greet riders and their families and make them feel welcome. Assist the rider grooming the horse (not all riders like to groom or tack). Help with tacking up (bridling will be done by the instructor). Help lead the horse and rider into the arena for mounting. Mounting will be done by the instructor, however, your assistance during the mounting process is needed. During the lesson, you will be either a leader or a sidewalker (refer to volunteer roles for descriptions). The instructor will guide you as to how much support a rider needs and will try to involve you in games, etc.
- 3:25pm: After the lesson, the horse returns to the aisle to be untacked and put away.
- 5:45pm: After the last lesson, all tack and grooming materials should be put away. Bits and bridles need to be cleaned. The aisle needs to be swept and all manure picked up from rings, driveway, etc. Also, all games and props need to be put away.
- 6:00pm: Volunteers leave

\*\* Some volunteers find that they would rather come for part of the afternoon, rather than the whole afternoon.\*\*

## **VOLUNTEER ROLES**

### **Horse Leader**

As the leader, you will lead the horse or pony during the lesson. Your first responsibility is the horse, but you also need to be aware of the rider's needs and the instructor's directions.

The leader's job requires familiarity and confidence in horse handling. When leading the horse, please walk in line with the horse's head and avoid "dragging" the horse along. Please refer to the leading article in back for more information. You will be responsible for setting and maintaining the pace of the walk or trot as directed by the instructor. Each rider will have different requirements.

During mounting and any prolonged periods of standing still, it is recommended that you stand in front of the horse facing the horse. People and horses are equally deserving of the personal space; please try not to crowd the horse (especially around the face). You also need to be aware of your steering around obstacles, making sure to leave room for the horse and sidewalkers to go by.

In an emergency, you are asked to stay with the horse and lead the horse away from the scene of the incident.

Please notify the instructors of any behaviors that you find questionable or bothersome- your feedback may alert us to an unknown problem. Please always ask for help!

## **Sidewalker**

The sidewalker is responsible for the safety and comfort of the rider while on the horse and on the ground.

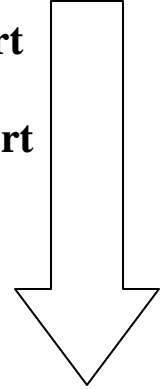
During the lesson, the side walker offers physical and moral support to the rider. Please walk in line with the rider's leg, unless you are instructed to do otherwise; you will then be in the most effective place to offer assistance as needed. Be patient. Some riders require a little time to process instructions. Let the instructor guide you as to when it is appropriate to offer help. Let them try first before you help! When directed by the instructor, you should assist the rider to carry out the instructor's directions, but make sure not to introduce other instructions that might cause confusion.

The instructor will inform you of each rider's needs and special procedures. Generally, during mounting, you will be asked to stand on the off side (right side of the horse) to support the rider's weight coming down into the saddle and put weight into the off-side stirrup. If a rider needs physical support (see below for levels of support), make sure that your hand or arm rests gently on the rider. The position of the supporting hand or arm should be changed frequently so that no numbness on the rider's limbs occurs.

It is a physically demanding job to be a sidewalker, and it is imperative that we know about any physical limitations that you may have.

## LEVELS OF RIDER SUPPORT

**Least amount of support  
to  
most amount of support**



**Spotter:**  
Watching  
from a distance

**Sidewalking:**  
Walking next to the rider's leg, not  
touching, but watching and ready  
to offer a "hold" if rider needs support.

**Ankle hold:**  
The sidewalker cups the hand closest to the rider  
and gently holds it against the rider's ankle from behind.

**Arm-over-thigh hold:**  
The sidewalker holds the front of the saddle with the hand closest to the rider. The soft  
part of the underside of your forearm should rest gently on the rider's thigh. Be careful  
that your elbow does not accidentally dig into the rider's leg or into the horse's side.

## **VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT**

Because we are a volunteer-based organization, we rely heavily on the commitment that our volunteers have made to us. If you do not show up, or are unable to work, our lessons cannot happen!

\*\*Please check the volunteer calendar that will be posted in the barn to make sure that you are signed up correctly.

### **Cancellations**

As a volunteer, your role is critical to the success of our program and ultimately our riders. *As a part of this commitment, we ask that you reserve cancellations for emergencies.* Your service is extremely important to the safety of our clients and if you must cancel please contact Allie as soon as possible so that a replacement can be found. If vacations or plans are made for the future, please let us know and we will schedule around that. Please check the *volunteer calendar* in the barn to make sure that we have your times down correctly.

### **Dress Code**

Appropriate footwear and clothing should be worn at all times. Volunteers may not wear open-toed shoes or sandals around the horses. It is suggested that volunteers wear good walking shoes. Dangling jewelry or scarves should be left at home (they can get caught on things and also are too tempting to pull!). We go outside all year long, so please be prepared for the weather. Perfumes should be avoided as they can bother sensitive students, but also will attract bees and flies.

### **Smoking and Alcohol**

FFT is a smoke-free environment. There is a no-tolerance policy with regards to alcohol, drug use and smoking.

### **Communication and Confidentiality**

Please keep personal conversation limited as children hear everything! See the Confidentiality Agreement for more information.

### **Conduct and Behavior**

All volunteers are expected to set a good example for our students. Inappropriate language or behavior is not acceptable. As volunteers, you are representatives of our organization. If you are subject to any type of inappropriate behavior by a student, please inform the staff immediately.

If you are unsure or have questions about any of the above policies, please speak to Allie.

FFT Staff reserves the right to ask a volunteer to leave the premises if inappropriate behavior is witnessed on the property. We also reserve the right to have a criminal background check on a volunteer, if we deem it necessary.

## **SAFETY**

*Safety is always the most important issue in our program! While the instructors are trying to keep the barn area and riding lessons safe, they cannot keep an eye on everything. Please try to use common sense around the barn area and let us know of any safety concerns you might have.*

### **General Safety Rules**

- **DRIVE SLOWLY IN DRIVEWAY!**
- Absolutely **NO SMOKING** on any premises.
- Please make sure that there are no grooming kits, halters, or lead ropes lying around the aisle. Grooming kits need to be to the side of the aisle, and halters and lead ropes hung up on hooks when not in use.
- Riders must always wear a helmet when working with the horses.
- Please do not run or shout around the horses; they might get frightened or distrustful.
- Riders must never be left unattended anywhere on the farm!
- Riders should never enter the paddocks or stalls where horses are loose.
- Please be sure that all gates and stall doors (and latches) are open all of the way before leading a horse through. Gates need to be closed properly as horses can be pretty sneaky and try to escape when given the opportunity!

### **Safety Around Horses**

*Here are some hints to keeping safe while working with the horses.*

- Always speak to a horse before approaching or touching him. Approach from the side, and walk around him to the front, never behind him or under him.
- Never wrap a leadrope or the reins around your hand or yourself. A horse is much stronger than you and could crush your bones if he pulls suddenly.
- Never let a leadrope or reins drag on the ground or near your feet (you or the horse could trip).
- Do not attach cross-ties to the bit.
- We never hand feed treats - we use special **TREAT FEEDERS**. Our horses can get “mouthy” with too many treats (not to mention their expanding bellies!). So, please do not bring treats for the horses (kind words and pats are welcome!).
- When entering the arena, make sure to yell out “**DOOR**” and check for other horses before entering.
- Stirrups should always be run up or put over the saddle when leading the horse without a rider.
- Keep a good distance between horses at all times.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

There are a variety of possible emergency situations that we might encounter, as well as those that are extremely unlikely.

**Please familiarize yourself with the location of phones, fire extinguishers and exits.**

*Phones are in the viewing area (one by couches, one on the wall by the bathroom), in the grain room and across from where the brush boxes and helmets are stored.*

*Fire Extinguishers are at the side entrance to the barn, the viewing area, the hay loft and in the arena*

*Exits are through the main entrance, through side alley, through viewing room and through the arena.*

In the event of an emergency, remain calm. Remember that horses and riders will pick up on your nervous energy. Listen to the instructor's directions and follow instructions calmly and quietly.

### **Unmounted Emergency**

Try to move the student away from the horse or to a safe location. Do not try to assist with an agitated horse- let the instructor handle the horse and you keep the child calm.

### **Mounted Emergency**

If the horse becomes agitated or excited, the instructor will attempt to bring the student off of the horse in a safe "emergency dismount". If this is not possible, the sidewalkers should look to support the rider in any way, even if it is to break the rider's fall. The leader should focus on the horse and try to take it away from the source or student.

### **Loose Horse**

All students should be removed from the area, and should stay with volunteers until the horse is caught. Only instructors should try to catch a loose horse. You may be asked to grab a feed bucket to lure the horse in.

### **Fallen Rider**

Should a rider fall from a horse, become injured or have a medical emergency during a lesson, all activity should stop. The instructor is responsible for managing the incident including applying any necessary first aid. The horse leader should move the horse away from the scene. Stay calm and follow the instructor's directions.

\*\*\*All of the FFT instructors are certified in CPR and First Aid.\*\*\*

## **WORKING WITH THE STUDENTS**

The riders at FFT range from ages 4 to 25, and the range of disabilities is even greater. Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take time to get to know the students and direct any questions you may have to the instructors. Often a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others. Following are some hints to working with children with special needs.

### **Wheelchair Etiquette**

Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind. Always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before you help. Be respectful – people's wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Don't hang or lean on a wheel chair unless you have permission. Speak directly and be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If a conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get on the same level as the person in the wheelchair.

### **Non-verbal students**

Do not assume that students who do not communicate with words do not understand what you are saying. Try to talk to them like you would to any other person. Many of our students have hand gestures they use to communicate.

### **Riders with low muscle tone**

These riders will need more support when in the saddle, but we always try to do as little as possible. The instructor will show you how much and how to support each rider. When physically supporting a rider, make sure not to apply too much pressure to the rider's limbs or pull on their body. Always ask for permission before touching the rider to reposition or re-direct his or her body. Don't put too much strain on your own body while assisting a student- inform the instructor if you are having any pain.

### **Escorting an Individual with a Visual Impairment**

If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may only need verbal direction. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to be assisted.

*\*\* Unnecessary talking during riding lessons should be avoided; it might distract or confuse the rider. Be patient and clear with your communication. Be positive and confident; your attitude will be mirrored by our riders!\*\**

## GROOMING

*In order...*

- Curry Comb- Curry in circles, starting at the top of the neck and working towards tail. This is to loosen dirt and hair. Be firm but aware of the sensitive parts of a horse (legs, face, belly).
- \*\* Shedding blade if necessary- this is used to help shed the winter coat or if wet or extremely muddy!
- Body Brush- Short stroke in the same direction as hair. This smoothes the hair and flicks off what the curry comb loosened.
- Hoof pick- Clean feet, remove any dirt or rocks.
- Comb or hair brush- for mane and tail

## TACKING

The instructor is ultimately responsible for the student, horse and tack. We will teach you and always check the tack before the rider mounts. We want to keep the volunteers safe and ponies comfortable. We are happy to teach you anything you may not know or understand- JUST ASK! We couldn't do this without you!

- The saddle should not sit too high on horse's shoulder, and the saddle pad should not be tight against the withers.
- The girth should be attached on right side of the horse first and then brought under the belly. It should start loose and then be tightened one hole at a time to prevent any painful pinching.
- If rider has not arrived, the girth should stay loose. When the rider is ready to go into the ring, the girth should be snug but not tight. Girth should be tightened and checked before student mounts.
- Saddle pad loops can be put on billet straps of saddle or left loose, but make sure that they aren't stuck under saddle where they would rub the horse's back.
- If needed, little foam/ bounce pads should be put on after saddle is on the horses back. This can be done by lifting up the back of the saddle and sliding the pad it.
- Please make sure that the bit connector attaches to the bit below the reins and that the clip handles are facing away from the horse's face (so the clips won't poke the horses).
- **ONLY THE INSTRUCTOR WILL BRIDLE THE HORSE.**

## HORSE SENSES

When working with horses communication is key. Horses communicate through body language, vocalization, smell, taste, and touch. Understanding THEIR language is the key to predicting behaviors, managing risks, and building a positive relationship.

- **HEARING:** The horse's sense of hearing is very acute. A horse's mind is focused where his ears are pointing, so note the position of the horse's ears for signs of his/her mood. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear.
- **SIGHT:** The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head, creating good peripheral vision but also two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. Therefore, the best way to approach a horse is at his shoulder.
- **TOUCH:** The horses' sense of touch is very sensitive. They can detect very light touch or pressure. Each horse has sensitive areas (i.e. flank and belly areas) and it is important to be familiar with them. The tongue, lips, and bars of the mouth are especially sensitive places, and we need to use caution when a horse has a bit in his mouth.
- **SMELL:** The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations. We ask that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may go after them.
- **TASTE:** Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects. A horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people.
- **SIXTH SENSE:** A horse does have a "sixth sense" when evaluating the disposition of those around him. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider.

\*\*We have a library of resources for our volunteers, including an updated 2009 VOLUNTEER MANUAL and a summary and descriptions of some of the frequent disabilities seen here at FFT. There is also a new Volunteer Training PowerPoint that Allie can send to you if you are interested. We hope that you will take advantage of these and refresh your knowledge.\*\*

## **HORSE BEHAVIOR**

- **FLIGHT AS NATURAL INSTINCT:** Wild horses use the “flight” technique as their defense against predators and other dangers, but that instinct remains in domesticated horses. Although our therapy horses are chosen for the patience and tolerance, they are still prey animals and we need to be aware of their instinctive behaviors.
- **HERD ANIMAL:** Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with an established pecking order and one or two horses as the dominant individuals. Some horses may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride. Never separate or leave a horse alone on the trail or let one get very far behind without explicit direction from all instructors participating.

Horses like their personal space and some do not like to be close to other horses. For safety, it is recommended that you keep at least one horse’s length between horses when riding or leading within a group. This maintains respect of the horse’s space and pecking order.

## **GLOSSARY OF PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DISABILITIES**

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter in a therapeutic riding setting. This is not intended to be a comprehensive explanation of specific disabilities. Rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how therapeutic riding can be beneficial.

**ARTHRITIS:** Inflammatory disease of the joints. Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid. Characteristics: Pain, lack of mobility, loss of strength.

*Benefits of therapeutic riding:* Gentle rhythmic movements to promote joint mobility and to relieve pain: increase strength.

**AUTISM & PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENT DISORDER (PDD):** A broad spectrum of disorders ranging from mild to severe, which affects thought, perceptions and attention. Characteristics: Impairments in social interaction and communication, restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities, impairments in the use of nonverbal behaviors such as eye to eye gaze and facial expressions, lack of social or emotional reciprocity, delays in or lack of the development of spoken language, impairments in ability to initiate or sustain conversations with others abnormal responses to senses such as sight, hearing, touch, balance, smell taste, reaction to pain, deficits in gross and fine motor skills.

*Benefits:* Provides sensory input and promotes sensory integration. Promotes communication skills (expressive and receptive). Develops strength, coordination, muscle tone and gross and fine motor skills. Promotes socialization.

**CEREBRAL PALSY:** Brain damage occurring before, at or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder. Types and characteristics: Spastic, decreased or increased muscle tone, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes. Athetoid: Extensor muscle tension, involuntary movements, difficulty maintaining upright posture. Ataxic: weakened muscles, poor balance, and difficulty with quick, fine movements.

*Benefits:* Normalization of muscle tone, muscle strengthening, development of posture, balance and motor coordination, opportunity for promotion expressive skills, socialization and confidence.

**CEREBRAL VASCULAR ACCIDENT (CVA) – STROKE:** Brain hemorrhage or brain emboli, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment. Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of the body. May impair thought, speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength.

*Benefits:* Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech, socialization and confidence.

**DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DD):** A diverse group of physical, cognitive, psychological, sensory and speech impairments that begin anytime during development up to 18 years of age. Characteristics: Varied, but can include processing delays, and delays in physical, motor and social development.

*Benefits:* Increase confidence and self-esteem, stimulates processing, speech and body awareness, provides opportunity for sport and recreation, promotes socialization.

**DOWN SYNDROME:** A genetic disorder in which a person is born with an extra chromosome (chromosome 21). Characteristics: Mild to severe learning disabilities, low muscle tone, speech impairments.

*Benefits:* Promotes expressive and receptive language skills. Increases gross and fine motor skills, balance, and coordination, posture and muscle tone. Promotes social skills. Increases confidence and self esteem.

**EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES:** Social, emotional or behavioral functioning which is not age appropriate and affects a child's academics, social relationships and self-care.

Characteristics: Difficulty coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations, inappropriate affect or behavior responses, depression, anxiety, physical symptoms, difficulty learning, withdrawal, and aggressiveness.

*Benefits:* Increase confidence and self-esteem, provide opportunities for accomplishments, promotes positive socialization.

**HEARING IMPAIRMENT:** Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound. Characteristics; Difficulties in communication or communication through sign language, lip reading or finger spelling.

*Benefits:* Increases confidence, self-esteem and sense of accomplishment. Provides recreational activity with opportunity for socialization, stimulates balance, posture and coordination.

**LEARNING DISABILITIES:** Neurological disorders that interfere with a persons' ability to store, process or produce information. Characteristics: Difficulties with reading, writing, speech, computing math. May affect development and social skills.

*Benefits:* Promotes processing, language skills and attending skills, increases confidence and self-esteem, provides opportunity for success, increases balance, coordination and posture, provides opportunity for socialization.

**MENTAL IMPAIRMENT OR MENTAL RETARDATION (MR):** A disorder in which a person's overall intellectual functioning is below average with an IQ of 70 or less. Impaired ability to cope with common life demands and daily living skills. Characteristics: Impairments in learning, communication, social interactions, self-care. *Benefits:* Increases balance, coordination, strength and posture, improves gross and fine motor skills, promotes socialization, increases confidence, reinforces life and vocational skills.

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS):** Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation. Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity. *Benefits:* Maintains and strengthens weak muscles, maintains balance, increases confidence and self-esteem.

**MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY (MD):** Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males. Characteristics: Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes. *Benefits:* Provides opportunity for recreational, physical, and social activity. May help slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, allows for movement free of assistive devices.

**PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME:** A complex non-hereditary birth defect resulting from an abnormality on the 15th chromosome. Characteristics: PWS typically causes low muscle tone, short stature, incomplete sexual development, and a chronic feeling of hunger that, coupled with a metabolism that utilizes drastically fewer calories than normal, can lead to excessive eating and life-threatening obesity. Intellectual, social and motor deficits also exist. *Benefits:* Exercise to combat calorie intake, social interaction, and strengthening of weak muscles.

**SCOLIOSIS:** Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S shape with rotary component. Characteristics: Shoulder, trunk and waistline asymmetry. May have back pain and postural fatigue. *Benefits:* Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles.

**SPINA BIFIDA:** Congenital failure of vertebral arch closure which results in spinal cord damage. Characteristics: Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss. May also be associated with hydrocephalus, scoliosis and hip dislocations.

*Benefits:* Stimulates posture and balance, increases strength, balance and coordination, promotes confidence and self-esteem.

**SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI):** Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function. Characteristic: Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores.

*Benefits:* Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, and provides opportunity for recreational and social activity.

**TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI):** Accidental injury to the head resulting in impairment of cognitive, emotional and/or physical functioning. Characteristics: May include deficits in gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination and strength. May have deficits in language, communication, processing, memory and perceptual skills.

*Benefits:* Stimulates balance, posture, coordination, and gross and fine motor skill. Stimulates speech and perceptual skills. Increases confidence.

**VISUAL IMPAIRMENT – MODERATE TO TOTAL LOSS OF SIGHT:**

Characteristic: May include insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity and fearfulness.

*Benefits:* Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture, balance and coordination. Provides opportunity for socialization, structured risk-taking and freedom of movement.

## **HORSE PROFILES 2010**

### **DAYTON**

Dayton was bred in Iceland, born in 1993 (now 15 yrs old). Dayton only walks in the program, but is great for carrying our larger and most rambunctious riders. Dayton is fabulous with children, but is not very friendly with other horses. He only goes out alone. Dayton is a great horse for teaching students to ride off-lead for the first time.

### **DOC**

Doc was one of the first two Icelandic horses here at Berryfield farm. Doc was born in Iceland in 1986 (he is now 23). He was bought because he was the perfect horse to work with children- small, strong, calm, and friendly! Doc had surgery to fix a tendon in his back in the summer and will be coming back to work in the Spring '09. Doc is great with all kids and is very good at teaching riders to trot.

### **SAM**

Samwise is a "blue dun" Icelandic horse who was born in 1995 (now 13 yrs old) in Iceland. The Berrys' bought Sam as a riding horse for the guests, but once he proved his intelligence and big heart, he started being used in the FFT program as well. Sam has a great trot and can be ridden off lead. Sam does have a fear of snakes and can sometimes get spooked by a dragging leadrope or hose, so be aware.

### **THOR**

Thor is another "blue dun" Icelandic Horse, who came from the same farm as Ohio and Samwise in New York. He grew up in a herd of Icelandics and was a trail horse. He is 8 years old now. He is especially cute because of his enormous forelock. Thor is patient and kind with the students and volunteers. Thor is new to the program in 2008 and is still in training. He has come a long way and continues to learn a lot every day.

### **JIGSAW**

Jigsaw is a tri-colored paint Welsh pony cross. She is 12.2h and is around 20 yrs. She is the newest member of our FFT horse squad. Jigsaw has had a couple of babies and she is a great mom- her last baby's name was Prince! Jigsaw does not like to have her ears touched but she loves to be pampered. Jigsaw does not go off-lead.

### **ROMEO**

Romeo is a 11 yr old, chestnut Quarter Horse who joined us in September 2009 and has blown us all away with his quick learning and playfulness- he always wants to play with the toys before the students get to! Romeo was a successful competitive reining horse for many years with a teenage boy and has now begun his second career as a therapy horse. He has a beautiful trot and is great at teaching our more advanced students to post and ride independently. He is very friendly and will often nicker if you call to him in the barn!