



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 1, 2006

THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The CDSCL Therapeutic Riding Program is proving to be a huge success – so much so that they may have to turn riders away this fall if they aren't able to recruit more volunteers! Therapeutic Riding is a volunteer intensive activity – some riders need as many as four volunteers each – a horse handler, two sidewalkers and a spotter behind to ensure the rider stays centered.

As the program is growing, not only are there more riders, but the returning riders are more skilled and are ready to ride in groups of three or four. Riding in groups offers a variety of benefits - there are games that can be played that teach things like taking turns and cooperation, not to mention being so much fun the riders have no idea they are doing “therapy”. Groups are also motivational and offer a sense of community between the riders and their volunteers. A group of four riders could need as many as twelve volunteers at a time.

Volunteering with Therapeutic Riding also offers a host of benefits. At the very minimum, volunteers get regular exercise in the fresh air, in addition, working with the horses and people with disabilities is emotionally rewarding, volunteers learn new skills and become part of a close-knit team.

“I just love my time at Therapeutic Riding. It's therapeutic for me as well!” says Diana Miller who has been volunteering with the program since its start. She also lends her horse, Annie, for use in the program. “I get to check out from my own life and spend time with the other volunteers and the riders, as well as working with the horses outside in the fresh air – what could be better?”

Horse Handlers need to be familiar and comfortable with horses and able to walk and jog for short periods of time. Sidewalkers also need to be fit enough to walk and jog over uneven terrain, but also need to be able to do so with an arm raised to support a rider. Sidewalkers do not need to be familiar with horses, but do need to be comfortable around them. Horse Handlers and Sidewalkers do not need any experience working with people with disabilities. The minimum commitment is an hour a week for the eight week session that starts on September 19, plus attendance at an Information Session and Training Session. The organization also needs volunteers who can be on a “sub list” when regular volunteers are unable to attend.



THERAPEUTIC & PUBLIC RIDING PROGRAMS

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Volunteers Needed

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Volunteer Information Sessions are scheduled for 7:00 pm, September 14 and 28, at the lounge at 849 Erickson Road. Horse Handler and Sidewalker Training Sessions will be held on September 16 and 30, at the barn at 849 Erickson Road. If you are interested in volunteering, or any other aspect of the Therapeutic Riding Program, contact Sarah at 402-9646 or sschmidt.cdscl@shawlink.ca.

PHOTO ATTACHED Left – Right: Volunteers Martha McLaren, Michelle Whiteaway and Victoria Swanson work with Hayden Hollis

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Contact: Sarah Schmidt 402-9646 or sschmidt.cdscl@shawlink.ca