

# Courtney Cares

## PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK



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## **HANDBOOK CONTENTS**

### **1) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

In an effort to continuously improve and better communicate policies and procedures with participants and guardians, the following changes were made for this coming year at Courtney Cares: 1. Applications for both participants and volunteers are now all available online

### **2) OVERVIEW OF COURTNEY CARES**

#### **VISION**

The Courtney Cares vision is to be a leader and model program for providing service learning opportunities in equine-assisted activities and therapies

#### **MISSION**

Cultivating future leaders and supporters of equine-assisted activities and therapies through education and service learning opportunities.

#### **COURTNEY CARES STRUCTURE**

Courtney Cares is currently housed under the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine. Courtney Cares maintains strategic partnerships with Parsons Mounted Cavalry and ROCK, Ride On Center for Kids in Georgetown, Texas. Additionally, the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) certifies all Courtney Cares therapeutic riding instructors. Licensed therapists are required to have training from the American Hippotherapy Association. Volunteer horse handlers and side walkers are trained in specific methods to help provide our participants with the most beneficial experience possible.

#### **THE COURTNEY CARES STORY**

Courtney Anne Grimshaw Fowler was an accomplished businesswoman and internationally ranked dressage competitor who passed away in 2010. At the time of her death, Courtney was in the process of building her permanent home and horse ranch in Thorndale, Texas, where she had plans to begin a therapeutic equestrian program. The year after Courtney's death, Jim Grimshaw, Courtney's brother, contacted Texas A&M University to inquire about establishing a therapeutic riding program in Courtney's honor. Shortly thereafter, the pilot program, dearly known as "Courtney Cares," began in the fall of 2012. This program, named in Courtney's honor, gives testimony to her extraordinary life and continues her legacy of service.

#### **BENEFITS OF EQUINE-ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES**

The benefits gained vary from person to person and depend on numerous factors

including the type and severity of the condition, the individual's motivation and the connection between the person and the horse. Pairing horses with children and adults who have physical, mental or emotional disorders has been shown to produce remarkable results.

- Children with autism and attention deficit disorders often have difficulty communicating and interacting with others, but frequently will achieve the desired results when they have the opportunity to be in a therapeutic environment with the horse.
- Veterans have shown a decrease in depression and an increase in quality of life.
- Individuals with mobility challenges are frequently able to build up their core strength in ways that traditional physical therapy was not able to provide. The movement of the horse simulates walking and stimulates muscle systems in a unique way that only the horse can provide.
- Individuals experiencing aggressive and/or anti-social behaviors may become calmer and appropriately responsive to those around them.

#### Additional Benefits:

- Improved gait.
- Improved speech and language skills.
- Improved muscle tone and coordination.
- Improved gross and fine motor skills.
- Enhanced balance and posture.
- Stimulates the cardiovascular system and promotes wellness.
- Builds self-esteem and confidence.
- A relationship is developed between the participants, volunteers, and the horse.
- Improves memory and organizational skills.
- Improves ability to perform activities of daily living.
- Improves communication skills.

- Improves problem-solving skills.

Research studies have shown that just being around horses can change our brainwave patterns. There is a calming effect that comes from being with the horse, resulting in a positive experience. According to Franklin Levinson, internationally known horseman and the creator of the Beyond Natural Horsemanship Program:

Horses react as a mirror to the person who's with him. He's a prey animal so he wants to feel safe and is always on the lookout for predators. A horse will become very fearful if he's with someone who's aggressive, noisy, and disrespectful or too controlling. On the other hand, if the person makes requests rather than demands the horse will begin to cooperate. He is always looking for a leader.

It is natural for us to want to please the horse and thus, the horse motivates us to be fully in the present, to put aside emotions such as anger or frustration, to speak and physically respond to the horse in a way that is calming and acceptable to the horse. The horse helps us draw on the self-healing potential that is within each of us.

## **OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS**

Sessions are 45 minutes and include mounted and un-mounted activities. They may include riding skills, fitness exercises, gym activities, horse care, arena preparation and team building. Each session includes individualized goals. Horses are an essential part of the team as they facilitate learning, motivation and skill building.

Equine-Assisted Activities or Therapies (Therapeutic Horsemanship):

Private Session: This consists of one instructor or therapist and one participant.

Semi-Private Session: This consists of one instructor or therapist and two participants.

Group Session: This consists of one instructor or therapist and a maximum of four participants

Equine-Assisted Therapy, Physical Therapy: Commonly known as Hippotherapy, is a physical therapy treatment that utilizes the movement of the horse to help achieve functional goals. This treatment can specifically address impairments of muscle tone, range of motion, motor planning, timing, attention, awareness, coordination, balance, speech, and postural control.

## **IS COURTNEY CARES RIGHT FOR YOU?**

Courtney Cares provides services to children and adults with many different physical and cognitive challenges including, but not limited to:

Autism	Brain Injury	Cerebral Palsy
Developmental Delay	Down Syndrome	Genetic Syndromes
Learning Disabilities	Muscular Weakness	Spina Bifida
Spinal Cord Impairment	Stroke	Visual Impairment

In order to provide the best benefit and the safest environment for our participants, Courtney Cares has established guidelines for acceptance into the program:

- Participants must be at least 2 years of age for Equine-Assisted Therapies (i.e. PT or HPOT).
- Participants must be at least 4 years of age and have emerging head and neck control for Equine-Assisted Activities or Therapeutic Horsemanship.
- To protect our participants, volunteers and horses, weight guidelines have been established. A participant plus tack should not exceed 20% of the horse's weight. For example, a participant that weighs 180 lbs. using a saddle that weighs 20 lbs. should ride a horse whose weight is greater than 1000 lbs.
- A therapist or instructor will screen each participant before they are allowed to participate at Courtney Cares.

Please contact our office at (936) 245 - 4489 if you have any questions or need additional information.

### **3) APPLICATION PROCESS**

#### **PROCESS AND SUBMISSION DATES**

PATH Intl. requires Courtney Cares to update applications each year. The riding year is divided into two semesters: the fall semester begins in September and ends in November, while the spring semester begins in February and ends in April. Existing participants are given scheduling priority. Any additional openings are filled from our waiting list. Interested participants may be added to the waitlist at any time throughout the year.

## **APPLICATION FORMS**

### Online

- Participant Registration
- Consent Forms

### Hard Copy

- Participant Medical History and Physician's Statement
- Physician's Prescription for Physical Therapy (not required for therapeutic horsemanship)

## **SCHEDULING POLICY**

Existing participants will be scheduled based on their needs, goals, and abilities. Other considerations include the schedules of therapists, instructors, and horses.

## **NEW PARTICIPANTS**

Upon receipt of all required paperwork, you will be contacted to schedule a screening. A Courtney Cares therapist or instructor will screen new participants before they are accepted into the program. Acceptance into the program is always dependent upon the availability of volunteers and instructors/therapists, appropriate horses and safety precautions.

## **WAIT LIST**

When an opening becomes available, Courtney Cares will notify the family by the contact information provided on the wait list. Applicants will have 48 hours to respond when contacted. If they decide to ride, applicants must submit a completed application before a screening is scheduled. Once screened, applicants will be placed on the schedule as soon as a horse, instructor/therapist and volunteer(s) are available. If the applicant declines, the applicant will either be removed from the wait list or if the decision is due to a scheduling issue, the applicant will retain their spot on the wait list.

## **WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPANT**

If a participant desires to withdraw from the program, written notification must be submitted prior to the participant's withdrawal, detailing the date and reason for withdrawal.

## **4) SESSION PROCEDURES**

### **OVERVIEW**

Sessions are 45 minutes and include mounted and un-mounted activities. They may include riding skills, fitness exercises, horse care, arena preparation and team building. Each session includes individualized goals. Horses are the foundation of the team as they facilitate learning, motivation, group skill building and three-dimensional symmetrical movement.



During a session, up to 10 participants may be in the arena at one time. At times this may create a delay getting participants on horses. Courtney Cares makes every effort to keep that delay to a minimum by reviewing procedures for efficiency. If there is a delay Courtney Cares will rotate the order participants mount horses each week.

### **ARRIVAL**

It is important for a participant to arrive about 10 minutes prior to the scheduled session time so that he/she will be prepared for the services provided. This gives the participant time to put on a helmet, greet people and not be rushed. If a participant is late for the scheduled session time, Courtney Cares cannot guarantee he/she will be able to ride or receive services for the full time. Once the session has begun, the instructor/therapist may not be able to leave the other riders to mount late arriving participants. Please contact your instructor/therapist at Courtney Cares if you are going to be late.

### **ATTENDANCE AND CANCELLATIONS**

In order to maximize the participant's progress, it is critical that he/she attend all scheduled sessions. Arriving late or missing sessions impairs the participant's ability to progress and disrupts staff schedules.

Please note the following:

- If you are unable to make your session, please give Courtney Cares a minimum of 24 hours notice. If you have a last minute cancellation, contact your instructor/therapist directly or call the office at 936-245-4489.
- We understand occasionally emergencies happen or a participant may get sick within the 24-hour cancellation period. If this happens, please contact your instructor/therapist as soon as possible to cancel the session. The reason for cancellation will then be reviewed.
- Three unexcused cancellations per fiscal year will result in the loss of your scheduled session time.
- If you are returning after an injury or hospital stay, you must have a note from the doctor to return to riding at Courtney Cares.

### **CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS**

Courtney Cares requires closed toed shoes and helmets to participate in equine-assisted activities or therapies. Courtney Cares provides helmets. If you choose to have your own helmet, it needs to be a labeled ASTM/SEI approved helmet and cannot exceed more than 5 years past the manufacture date. Please see your instructor or therapist with any questions.

Wear comfortable clothing such as long pants or shorts based on the weather. Do not wear jeans with sequins on the pockets as it may cause damage to saddles. For shoes, wear closed toed shoes or boots. As the weather changes consider sunscreen, gloves, or a jacket, as needed.

### **WEIGHT GUIDELINES**

A participant's weight plus tack should not exceed 20% of the horse's weight. For example, a participant that weighs 180 lbs. using a saddle that weighs 20 lbs. should ride a horse whose weight is greater than 1000 lbs. Please talk to your instructor/therapist if you have any questions.

### **CAREGIVER ONSITE POLICY**

Caregivers of participants that are under 18 years of age or have a legal guardian must remain on the premises at all times while the participant is on Freeman Arena property, unless prior approval to leave has been obtained.

### **INSTRUCTOR/THERAPIST COMMUNICATION**

At the beginning of each riding year, your instructor or therapist will contact you to update any necessary information and provide you with their own contact information. In addition, group instructors/therapists will send emails over the breaks to check in with you. Email or call them directly if you have questions or updates throughout the year. Instructors/therapists need a minimum of 24 hours to respond to emails or phone calls as they are in the dirt working with participants throughout the workday.

We realize that it can be difficult for long or private conversations before or after sessions. If needed, Courtney Cares will provide a private area suitable for conducting a confidential interview or for processing sessions. The private area may include but is not limited to the office space, tack room, or other outside space.

If you have questions or concerns regarding sessions, begin by talking with your instructor or therapist. If you need further assistance, your instructor/therapist can direct you to a different staff member or person who can help. You may also refer to the contact us page on the website for assistance finding emails.

### **PARTICIPANT GOALS**

Goals are created each year for participants based on the participant's current goals, goals from previous years and input from therapist or instructor.

### **5) PATH INTL.**

Courtney Cares is a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center. PATH Intl. stands for Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. It is a

501(c)(3) nonprofit that was formed in 1969 to promote equine-assisted activities and therapies. PATH Intl. is the largest organization governing equine-assisted activities and therapies. Its mission is to promote safety and optimal outcomes in equine-assisted activities and therapies.

Courtney Cares has been a Premiere Accredited Center with PATH Intl. since 2016. This means that Courtney Cares has voluntarily participated in a site visit from PATH Intl. to ensure that it is following the safety standards for horse care, service, and business set by PATH Intl. Courtney Cares goes through reaccreditation every five years. Being a Premiere Accredited Center means Courtney Cares implements best practices for the industry.

## **6) COURTNEY CARES POLICIES**

### **RESEARCH AND TEACHING**

Courtney Cares has made a commitment to being a leader in research and learning facility. Conducting research and teaching people to become instructors are essential to this mission. At Courtney Cares, interns and instructors in training will participate in sessions by observing and learning from Courtney Cares Certified Instructors and therapists and by teaching our participants. Courtney Cares partners with other therapeutic riding centers and universities for research to help further best practices. A Courtney Cares participant may be asked to participate in a research opportunity. We hope you will support this very important component of Courtney Cares.

### **WEATHER POLICY**

The Courtney Cares instructors and therapists make every attempt to provide services, even in inclement weather. Sometimes, if riding is not possible, unmounted horsemanship sessions may be given inside or goals will be worked on in an indoor space.

If temperature + humidity is over 150 degrees, if temperature drops below 32 degrees Fahrenheit or if there is any inclement weather, alternative sessions will be administered to work towards the participant's goals and objectives. If Texas A&M University cancels school then Courtney Cares will cancel sessions and no sessions will be held at Courtney Cares inside or outside.

The decision to continue mounted activities during inclement weather or pending inclement weather, is made by the instructors and therapists who are teaching that hour with input from the Equine Team. The decision will be for the whole hour. Ground sessions will be offered at the discretion of the instructor or therapist.

The office and tack room are the most suitable places to stay in the event of severe thunderstorm or lightening. When the Emergency Broadcasting System indicates a severe storm warning in College Station, all people will be advised to stay in the office and tack room for safety.

The restroom on the west side of the arena is the most suitable place to seek shelter during a tornado. When the Emergency Broadcasting System indicates a tornado warning in College Station, all people will be evacuated to the restroom for safety.

Your instructor, therapist or the staff in the front office will call the number that has been designated to inform you of session cancellations. You may also call the office or contact your instructor or therapist if you have questions.

### **ILLNESS AND MEDICAL CARE**

Participants should be fever free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours before returning to Courtney Cares. In the event a participant needs to miss a session, please notify the office and your instructor or therapist.

If a participant has experienced an injury outside of Courtney Cares, a doctor's note is needed before a participant will be allowed to return to riding.

If a participant requires medical care, Courtney Cares will contact the participant's emergency contact directly. Please ensure that Courtney Cares is kept informed of any changes in telephone numbers so that this service remains efficient.

If a participant knows or believes they may be pregnant they should report this to the Program Director and their instructor/therapist immediately. A participant who is 18 or more weeks pregnant will not be allowed to ride Courtney Cares horses, lead Courtney Cares horses, groom horses, or tack/untack horses.

Alternative lessons may be offered to participants who are less than 18 weeks pregnant. It is required that participants who are less than 18 weeks pregnant discuss their Courtney Cares activities with their physician and provide Courtney Cares with a physician's statement releasing them to participate in Equine Activities and Therapies.

It is very helpful to keep in close contact with your instructor or therapist about any health problems a participant has however slight they may seem. Even small health concerns can affect a participant's behavior or performance. Being aware of any changes with a participant will help instructors or therapists meet the ongoing needs of the participant.

## **MEDICAL LEAVE**

Medical leave may be applied to participants who are absent due to a hospital stay or a significant medical issue. The staff along with the families will determine, on a case-by-case basis, if the absences are considered medical leave. Should medical leave occur repeatedly, the staff of Courtney Cares along with the families will determine, on a case-by-case basis, if continuing in the program is in the best interest of both parties. Common illness and doctor's appointments are not considered medical leave.

Long-term medical leave is when a participant is on medical leave for more than 3 consecutive sessions. After the 3rd absence, Courtney Cares may choose to offer the riding spot to someone on the wait list for the remainder of semester.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Communicable diseases such as scabies, head lice, ringworm of the scalp and impetigo are highly contagious and can cause problems in the Courtney Cares environment. Participants with these conditions must notify their instructor or therapist and show proof of their treatment. In order to help prevent the spread of head lice, a lice spray is used on all Courtney Cares helmets after each use.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO**

Courtney Cares controls what is posted on the TAMU Courtney Cares Facebook page and other Courtney Cares media outlets. Only participants with a signed Photo/Video Release may have photographs or videos posted. The last name of a participant is not posted.

If taking pictures or video for personal use, respect the privacy of other riders by not posting photographs or videos on any form of social media that includes other participants.

## **SIBLINGS**

If siblings are in attendance with parents of participants, parents are responsible for the direct supervision of these children at all times. Please keep in mind, noise and lots of activity or movement can distract riders, staff and horses from the optimal lesson.

## **REQUEST FOR RECORDS**

When there is a request for records, Courtney Cares will provide copies of the records to the participant or guardian to forward to the requesting party. In the event that Courtney Cares is asked to provide information regarding a participant, the original copy will be given directly to the participant or guardian to forward to the requesting agency and Courtney Cares will send the agency a

letter indicating the requested information has been given directly to the participant or guardian.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

It is mandatory that everyone complies with all posted safety rules and abides by all posted off-limit areas. Courtney Cares is a no smoking facility and the use of drugs or alcohol on the property is strictly forbidden. No mistreatment, abuse, or suggested abuse of any person or animal will be tolerated. Personal pets are not allowed on property, with the exception of service dogs. In accordance with Texas Penal Code 30.07 Courtney Cares does not allow the open carry of weapons on the premises. Courtney Cares reserves the right to ask anyone to leave the Courtney Cares premises. Additionally, Freeman Arena is used for multiple purposes for Texas A&M. The use of this property for this program is designated and scheduled. Please check with the Program Director for a clarification of times.

Please note that as of September 1995, Texas enacted the following law:

*Texas Law (Chapter 87, Civil Practice and Remedies Code), an equine professional is not liable for the injury to or death of a client in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities.*

### **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All staff and volunteers will be subject to background checks. If information is revealed that is a concern for Courtney Cares, the CEO and staff will take appropriate action.

### **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

Courtney Cares does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion or disability. Courtney Cares does not, and will not, tolerate any type of harassment of our employees, applicants for employment, our participants, their families, or our volunteers.

### **SOLICITATION OF GOODS AND SERVICES**

The solicitation of goods and services is not allowed at Courtney Cares. While we understand that we have many talented persons and successful companies within our community, connections should not be made through solicitation. No printed information may be distributed to staff, participants, parents or volunteers.

### **RESOLUTIONS FOR CONFLICT AND CONCERNS**

The purpose of this policy is to provide individuals with an orderly process for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. We encourage people to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the

appropriate staff member or other administrator. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution.

#### Level 1: Informal Conflict Resolution

Participation in this informal resolution process shall be mandatory prior to the filing of a Level Two complaint. It is expected that every reasonable effort shall be made to resolve a complaint at the informal level. At the informal resolution stage, there shall be an in-person meeting or telephone conference between the staff member and the individual to discuss the possible complaint. The staff member may obtain the assistance of other staff in an effort to reach an informal resolution of the complaint. If, however, it appears that an informal resolution is not possible, the staff member shall review this complaint policy with the participant or participant's guardian and provide a copy of the complaint process.

If the individual's concern is with a staff member and that individual is uncomfortable approaching the staff member, he/she may contact the Executive Director, Nancy Krenek at [nancy@rockride.org](mailto:nancy@rockride.org). She will act as a facilitator in the process.

#### Level 2: Written Complaint to the Program Director

When a Courtney Cares participant or guardian of a participant has a complaint or concern regarding Courtney Cares, the individual shall bring their complaint or concern in writing to the Program Director. The complaint must be brought within 14 days of the date that the complainant knew or should have known of the concern. The complaint must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The Program Director must hear the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint in the best interest of the affected parties, and document the outcome. The Program Director must respond to the complainant and issue a final decision within 14 days of the Program Director receipt of the complaint.

#### Level 3: Written Appeal to the Executive Director

If the individual bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the Program Director's decision, the individual may appeal their complaint in writing to the Courtney Cares Executive Director within 14 days of receiving the Program Director's decision. The complaint shall be addressed to the Executive Director, and shall include a copy of the written complaint to the Program Director, along with a copy of the Program Director's decision. The decision shall be based on a review of the record developed at the Program Director's level. The decision by the Executive Director is final.

### **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

Following safety rules and procedures is required to protect the people, horses and equipment at Courtney Cares. Training is provided to volunteers and staff. Follow all signs that are posted throughout Courtney Cares stating safety rules.

Violators of safety procedures will be talked to and asked to leave the Courtney Cares property if the behavior continues.

### **FIRE/MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

The fire extinguisher is located on the wall by the corner of the tack room. They are bright red and clearly labeled. If a fire is growing larger and cannot be contained, all people will move to a safe area outside main gate of the facility.

First aid equipment is located in the main office. The AED is located on the wall by the tack room and should be used only by a trained person. Therapists and instructors are trained in emergency medical treatment. Any injury to a person at Courtney Cares should be reported to the main office as soon as possible, and an incident report completed. Should it be necessary to call for emergency medical assistance, ask that the responding agency turn off their siren when approaching Courtney Cares to avoid any discomfort to the horses and riders.

Courtney Cares maintains a cell phone service for emergency and business use. The cell phone is located in the main office, on the television stand. Emergency information is posted near the phone.

### **HEAT EXHAUSTION/STROKE**

Strenuous exercise in the heat can cause dehydration in both humans and horses. Sweating, paleness, dizziness, severe headache and nausea are observable symptoms of over-heating. The simplest prevention is to drink plenty of water. Courtney Cares will conduct un-mounted sessions at the discretion of the instructor or therapist when over-heating is likely.

## **7) COURTNEY CARES INFORMATION**

### **CONTACT AND OPERATING INFORMATION**

Location

Dick Freeman Arena  
7802 Turkey Creek Rd.  
College Station, TX 77845

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 3266  
College Station, TX 77841

Phone: (936) 245-4489

Fax: (512) 863-9231

Hours of Operation

Sunday: Closed



Monday: 8am - 5pm  
Tuesday: 8am - 5pm  
Wednesday: 8am - 5pm  
Thursday: 8am - 5pm  
Friday: 8am - 5pm  
Saturday: Closed

## **CALENDAR**

Courtney Cares begins regular sessions in September and ends sessions in April. Breaks and holidays are included during that time. Courtney Cares has a break in the fall, winter, and spring. We closely follow the Texas A&M University calendar for most holidays and weather issues. For detailed information, you will find a copy of the Courtney Cares calendar on the website.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Courtney Cares is open to suggestions for improvement. The goal is to help every participant have a meaningful experience with the horse to facilitate independence and life skills. Courtney Cares provides a variety of ways for all people involved at Courtney Cares to give feedback. Courtney Cares will communicate regularly with parents through electronic media, including the website and mass emails. Instructors, therapists and staff will communicate with participants or guardians of participants on an individual basis using emails, in-person conversations and phone calls. Surveys are distributed periodically to gather anonymous evaluations of services provided by Courtney Cares. Please participate in these opportunities to communicate how Courtney Cares can better serve you and your family.

## **CONTACT NUMBERS**

Courtney Cares works hard to communicate with participants or guardians of participants. The website has a section with names, titles, and email addresses. Please look there if you need to contact staff. You may also call the office to have them connect you with anyone you need to speak with at Courtney Cares.

## **EMAIL**

For your convenience, each Courtney Cares staff member has a professional email account. Please note that staff do not access email during instruction time and are not required to access email after scheduled work hours. Important information should be shared with your instructor or therapist via calling the office and leaving a message or by texting the instructor or therapist directly.

## **SUGGESTION BOX**

A suggestion box is located in the office and checked by staff regularly. Suggestions or comments can be placed in the box at any time.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Please follow TAMU Courtney Cares on Facebook to see all that goes on at Courtney Cares. You can also go to the website to keep up with Courtney Cares or find answers to your questions.

## **THE COURTNEY CARES HERD**

TAMU Courtney Cares partners with Texas A&M University's Corp of Cadets Parsons Mounted Cavalry. The Parsons Mounted Cavalry horses undergo extensive training through the cavalry—they are ridden in parades, in the Texas A&M University's football stadium during home games, on roads, and through many downtown areas (i.e., Fort Worth and Houston). Furthermore, the horses that participate in the Courtney Cares program are handpicked based on a variety of factors and personality traits by both Parsons and Courtney Cares staff. The horses that are selected to participate in the Courtney Cares program receive additional training, so that they may better serve our participants.

Horses are matched to participants based on several factors. The instructor or therapist takes into account the goals and needs of the participant. This is combined with their knowledge of the unique movement, size and temperament of each horse. Finally, the horses schedules and health are also factored in to select a horse that matches with a participant. Occasionally during the riding year, participants will have a change of horse due to any of the above factors. Please talk with your instructor or therapist if you have any questions.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Fulfilling the mission of Courtney Cares would be impossible without the commitment and dedication of our volunteers. Not only does Courtney Cares make a difference in the lives of our participants and their families, it also makes a difference in the lives of our volunteers.

Courtney Cares is always looking for dedicated volunteers! Volunteers are thoroughly trained in courses that cover the Courtney Cares procedures, safety practices, and handling of horses. Regardless of prior experience, anyone wishing to work with the horses or participants must be trained and demonstrate competency in the area they wish to assist.

Steps to become a volunteer:

- Check the [courtneycares.org](http://courtneycares.org) website for upcoming volunteer training dates.
- Call the office at (936) 245-4489 or email [info@courtneycares.org](mailto:info@courtneycares.org) to register for training.

- Complete the volunteer application that can be downloaded from the website ([www.courtneycares.org](http://www.courtneycares.org)) and bring it with you when you come for volunteer training.
- Complete a background check and volunteer training.

For more information about volunteering, email [info@courtneycares.org](mailto:info@courtneycares.org) or call (936) 245-4489.

## **USE OF FACILITIES**

Courtney Cares has an open and welcoming environment. Please help us take care of the facility for everyone by leaving areas the same or better than you found them.

Remember to be quiet while sessions are going on. Noise and lots of movement are disruptive and distracting to the horses and riders. Courtney Cares has indoor and outdoor space available for participants, parents, staff, volunteers and visitors to congregate away from the arena.

## **BUILDING**

Courtney Cares is a handicapped accessible facility. The facility was built and is maintained to continue with compliance.

**Main Office:** This is a staff office space that is also used by all volunteers, participants, families, and visitors while at Courtney Cares.

**Tack Room:** The tack room stores equipment and tack for the horses. Helmets are also located here.

**Bathrooms:** Public restrooms are located on the west side of the arena. There is also a port-a-potty by the main office that is open to the public and cleaned regularly.

**Mounting Ramp:** The mounting ramp is located directly in front of the office. Please read and respect all signage. This area is only for trained staff and volunteers.

**Freeman Arena:** This is the heart of Courtney Cares. Only authorized staff, volunteers, and participants may enter the arena.

**Porch Area:** The covered porch area is used by everyone at Courtney Cares. The staff of Courtney Cares encourages participants, families, and visitors to sit on the porch while waiting for their lesson to begin.

Bleachers: The covered bleachers on the south side of the arena are also available for use. The staff of Courtney Cares encourages families and visitors to sit in the bleachers to watch lessons, if they wish.

### **DONATIONS**

All monetary donations to Courtney Cares are greatly appreciated and may be made through the Texas A&M Foundation. If you are interested in sponsoring a horse or donating specific items for the program, please contact Texas A&M University's Parsons Mounted Cavalry, our horse and tack provider. Donors will be provided a donation receipt for tax purposes.

### **FUNDRAISING**

If you are interested in having a fundraising event for Courtney Cares, please contact a staff member directly.