



VOLUNTEER GUIDE

561-713-6133

www.horseshealingheartsusa.org

Goals of Horses Healing Hearts is to...

- Let child know this is a safe place to feel and “own” their emotions... whatever they are – happy, scared, mad, sad, frightened. There are no bad emotions. However, we do expect honesty. It is important they are honest with us and themselves about their feelings around horses. It makes a horse uncomfortable and sometimes “skittish” if there is a lack of congruence in their outer behavior and inside feelings. It becomes a safety issue.
- Teach them to safely groom, tack, wash, handle, feed, and ride a horse.
- Teach them horses are 90% work and 10% riding.
- Don’t force a child to share feelings. If they look upset you can ask, “Are you scared?” and/or “Do you want to talk about it?” If they do, just listen. Don’t judge or offer advice right away. Most times they just want a caring ear. You can share if you’ve had a similar circumstance and how you handled it if you feel it would be helpful. We are not counselors; nor do they expect us to be.

Specific Administration/Legal:

- Before a child does anything in the barn, a parent/guardian (cannot be friend/aunt, etc.) must sign 2 release forms 1) for sponsor barn and 2) for HHH.
- All participants MUST wear a helmet while on the horse.. NO EXCEPTIONS.

How the program operates:

Until HHH has ample financial resources to have our own facility we are operating the program similar to a program in California called “Horses in the Hood.” This program matches children with sponsor barns where they take weekly lessons (child rotates to different barns). The only problem with this system is that it has inherent inconsistencies (with location and horses always changing). Children of alcoholics and addicts have enough inconsistency in their lives, so one thing that we’re trying to remain consistent with is the volunteer that is assigned to a child. Once we have a place of our own it will be easier for the kids to connect and bond with the horses.

You will receive the name of your child, sponsor barn name and address, and time of lesson. Please arrive a few minutes early. If it is the child’s first time, please ensure both releases are signed (each sponsor barn will have them, but please have HHH one with you.) The sponsor barn has “donated a lesson” so they will have staff to assist in tacking and will give lesson. Since it is their facility please be sensitive to allowing them to “call the shots” on how all things are handled with their horses and procedures. Your job is to assist the child and the sponsor barn staff. Please make safety number one concern. Typically children will groom and tack, then ride, then untack and wash the horse.

