

**EAGLE MOUNT  
THERAPEUTIC  
RIDING  
PROGRAM**



**Eagle Mount**  
**B O Z E M A N**

**Volunteer  
Handbook**

# Volunteer Handbook

This handbook is written for you, the volunteer. Its purpose is to give you information on the safety aspects of horseback riding for the disabled, as well as useful information on horses, tack, and some of the disabilities you may encounter.

You are vital to the success of Eagle Mount's riding program. We need your time, energy and talents to make the program happen. Most volunteers work directly with the horses and/or the participant under the direction of the riding instructor. However, there are many other projects that we need volunteers for. Eagle Mount needs volunteers for special events, cleaning tack, building adaptive equipment, recruiting volunteers, obtaining donations, and the list goes on. Eagle Mount always has a project for someone with your special talents.

## Eagle Mount Mission

Eagle Mount Bozeman is committed to provide quality therapeutic recreational opportunities for people with disabilities or cancer, and to provide support for families of participants so that "they shall mount up with wings as eagles." (Isaiah 40:31)

## Eagle Mount's Therapeutic Riding Program Goals

1. To give children and adults with disabilities the opportunity to develop individually directed riding skills in a safe setting.
2. To teach basic skills of horse grooming, handling and management.
3. To offer physical benefits through exercises designed to improve rider muscle tone, balance, coordination, and body awareness.
4. To increase the rider's self confidence, social skills and self-esteem.
5. Safety first, fun second, learning third.

## Eagle Mount Participants

Eagle Mount welcomes participants of any age, with any type of disability or cancer, regardless of their ability to pay. Participants are screened by Eagle Mount staff for suitability with the particular program. They must have permission from their doctors to participate in the particular activity.

You will receive information about the participant you will be working with. This information must be treated with the utmost confidentiality and may not be disclosed to anyone outside of Eagle Mount. If you have additional questions, please ask a staff member or your instructor.

## **Working Guidelines for Participants**

The following are Eagle Mount's working guidelines to determine participant eligibility.

1. Physically disabled such that special accommodations or teaching approach or adaptive equipment is required for individuals to participate in recreational activities. Examples may include but are not limited to: amputees, non-ambulatory participants, limited or no use of extremities, visually impaired.
2. Developmentally disabled such that special accommodations or special teaching approaches are required for an individual to learn or participate in recreational activities (includes severe learning disabilities). Examples may include but are not limited to: Autism, Downs' Syndrome, and developmental delays.
3. Includes temporary disabilities where special accommodations are required for an individual to participate in recreational activities or where a temporary disability precludes an individual from participating in recreational activities that are available to the general public. Examples may include but are not limited to: joint arthroplasty or post cerebral vascular accident.
4. Includes individuals whose primary disability makes them eligible for service and who may have a secondary emotional disability or mental illness. Does not include individuals whose primary disability is an emotional disability or mental illness (i.e. depression, bipolar, psychosis, post traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, etc). Examples may include but are not limited to: an individual with Downs' Syndrome, who also has depression.
5. If an individual's behavior results in a safety concern for the individual, staff or other participants, a parent or other legally responsible adult may be required to act as volunteer for that participant.
6. Big Sky Kids camps are available for young individuals who have or have had cancer.
7. Individuals who have or have had cancer may participate in other Eagle Mount programs if their illness has resulted in a qualifying disability. Examples may

- include but are not limited to: amputees, non-ambulatory individuals, visual or hearing impaired.
8. Please note that Eagle Mount's working definition of a disability is not exactly the same as that defined by the US Government and covered by IDEA.

## **Confidentiality**

You must treat all information about a participant with the strictest confidentiality. Do not use the name of a participant in discussions outside the framework of services in the program.

## **NARHA Premier Accredited Center**

Eagle Mount is a member of North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA). In 2003, Eagle Mount was certified as premier accredited center. All instructors are certified riding instructors. Eagle Mount follows all standards established by NARHA for a premier accredited center. For more information, go to [www.narha.org](http://www.narha.org).

## **Insurance**

Eagle Mount provides secondary insurance for its participants, volunteers and staff. This means that you submit your claims and bills to your own insurance company first. After receiving your benefit payments from your own insurance company, you can submit claims for the balance to Eagle Mount's insurance. Please see the Program Director when you need assistance with this.

## **Volunteer Requirements**

1. **Safety:** Consider safety first at all times. You must be aware of phone, first aid kit, and fire extinguisher locations. You must understand and follow all emergency procedures.
2. **Reliability:** Your regular attendance is required. Eagle Mount strives to keep the instructor, participant, volunteers, and horse the same for the entire length of the program. This assists in a good working relationship between the instructor, volunteer and participant. Please notify the instructor of scheduling conflicts as soon as possible.

3. **Punctuality:** It is important that you report for your class on time. Generally, this is 15 minutes before your assigned class begins. This will ensure that you arrive before your assigned participant. If you are late, your class will not be able to start on time, and, may result in cutting the class's riding time short.
4. **Physical Fitness:** You must be able to walk in deep sand for up to 45 minutes. You must be able to jog for shorter periods of time.
5. **Vision.** You must be able to see the instructor, horse, participant, and arena.
6. **Hearing:** You must be able to hear your instructor's directions. It is absolutely critical that you listen to your instructor's directions. There are many reasons an instructor may give a particular instruction. Please follow these directions, and if you have a question, ask about it when there is a lull in the class.
7. **Relaxation and Enjoyment:** You should be relaxed and enjoy the experience. An anxious volunteer can create a nervous rider and a tense mount.
8. **Empathy and Sensitivity:** It is important to tune into your participant.
9. **Patience:** You must be patient to adjust to the often slow movements of a participant. You may also be called to assist with a participant with a disability with short attention span, medical or behavioral issues.
10. **Sensible Clothing:** You must wear sensible clothing. You must wear appropriate foot wear, including a closed toe and heel. Eagle Mount recommends boots. Eagle Mount also recommends long pants. You must be prepared for varied temperatures and weather conditions. It is possible that you may be in the indoor arena or on the outdoor track or arena.
11. **Horse Sense:** You must know the precautions to take to handle a horse safely.
12. **Sober:** YOU MUST BE SOBER AND DRUG FREE WHEN YOU VOLUNTEER.
13. **Ask Questions:** If you are not sure, don't be afraid to ask questions. The staff and instructors are here to help you and to make your experience the best that we can.
14. **Incident Reports:** Tell your instructor about all mishaps and their circumstances. The instructor is required to complete an incident report for each occasion.
15. **Talk to Staff or Instructor About Your Concerns:** Immediately tell your instructor or staff about any potentially unsafe conditions. This includes equine, participants, equipment and/or tack.

16. **Personality Clash:** Don't suffer through a personality clash, ask to be reassigned. Sometimes the volunteer-rider-horse-instructor combination will not work. We appreciate your honesty about your particular situation and will work to make adjustments to improve your experience.
17. **Sidewalker / Leader:** You will either be a sidewalker or leader. You must understand your particular role. These are explained in greater detail in the next section.
18. **In General:** Never become so relaxed or distracted that you forget your participant, instructor or horse. Keep talking between the volunteers to a minimum. Your focus needs to be on the participant, horse, and instructor.
19. **NO use of cell phones while you are "on duty."** Your cell phone must be turned off or in silent mode.

## Horse Leaders

Your primary focus is on the horse. Generally, you will be catching your assigned horse and placing the horse in cross-ties. Assemble your saddle, blankets, grooming bucket and other gear before you put your horse on the cross ties whenever possible. You have the primary responsibility to make sure that the horse is properly groomed and tacked up.

If you are retrieving your horse from a stall, enter the stall, pull the door partially closed so that the horse does not escape into the aisle. If your horse's rear is facing the door, speak to the horse to alert him to your presence. Move carefully and quietly around the horse. Never let a loose horse get between you and a wide-open stall door. Place his halter on, open the door fully, check for traffic in the barn aisle, and lead him out into the aisle, closing the door after your horse has exited the stall.

If you are retrieving the horse from a paddock, enter the paddock and close the gate behind you. Approach your horse quietly and calmly, speaking with him as you approach. Loop the lead rope around his neck, and put on the halter. Be careful that you do not let other horses out as you leave the paddock, and be sure to close the gate.

Never lead your horse under a cross tie. If another horse is on a cross tie and blocking your way, ask the volunteer with that horse to move him so you can get safely through. Always use extreme caution when passing another horse with the horse you are leading.

When your horse is in the cross ties for grooming and tacking up, do not leave him unattended, except to run to the tack room for your gear. Never tie your horse in the cross ties by his bridle. Always use the halter to secure the horse in the cross ties.

Be sure that no one is by your horse's head as you saddle him and tighten the girth, or warn the person holding your horse's head to be on the alert.

Check out your horse. Immediately tell your instructor or staff member if you notice anything unusual with your horse. It is important that your horse is sound and not having any behavioral issues for your class.

Check the tack and equipment as you use it. Immediately tell your instructor or staff member if there is any tack or equipment that is in need of repair.

During the lesson, you must be aware of the rider, instructor, and any potential hazards in or around the arena. You must also consider the sidewalkers, making sure that there is enough room along the fence and around obstacles for them to pass.

You must know the horse you are leading. You should have a good understanding of horse behavior and correct horse handling techniques. You should understand basic horse terminology.

You must understand the correct length of lead line to utilize with the horse and the skill level of the participant. You should hold the lead shank with your right hand, 6 to 12 inches from the snap. This position is more therapeutic to the rider and less irritating to the horse. The tail end of the lead should be looped in the left hand to avoid tripping on it. Never coil the lead around your hand. A sudden pull could crush or amputate your fingers.

You should pay close attention to the participant's needs as well as to where the horse is going. This attention reinforces the participant's attempts to control the horse. However, you should be careful not to execute the instructor's directions until the participant has had time to process the information and makes an effort to comply.

Avoid the temptation to talk to the participant and/or sidewalkers. The participant may get confused by too much input and not know who is in charge. (Instructors often make terrible leaders because they cannot keep their mouth shut!)

You must work with your horse. Your head should be up and the horse's head should be approximately at your shoulder. This is a change from how we generally lead horses. Normally, a horse's head would be in front of you. But, if you allow this, you will run out of room for your sidewalker. Having the horse's head parallel to you also focuses the horses' attention on you.

Do not walk backward or sideways to look at the rider. It's dangerous for everybody and the horse will actually slow down and not want to go forward.

Talk to your horse. Eagle Mount's horses know "walk on", "whoa" and "trot". Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving. The horse can set himself against a steady pull. You are not going to win a tug-of-war with your horse. You weigh a lot less than any horse. You cannot out-pull him. If a horse pulls back, step with him rather than pull against him. Avoid disciplining the horse with a participant on his back. Let the instructor know if you are having a problem, so that the instructor or other program staff can work with the horse to correct the problem before the horse is used again.

When you halt for more than a few seconds, turn towards your horse. Turn your toes towards your horse's feet. Stand approximately 2-3 feet from the horse's shoulder.

If the horse moves out unexpectedly, you will be able to best control your horse from this position.

If the worst happens and there is an accident, stay with the horse. There are other people to care for a fallen rider. The situation could easily become far more dangerous if there are loose horses running around the arena. Move your horse away from the fallen participant and turn your horse to face the fallen participant. Stay calm and listen for your instructor's directions.

## **Sidewalkers:**

You will normally get the most hands-on duties in therapeutic riding. You are directly responsible for the participant. You are responsible for assisting your assigned participant during grooming and tacking up.

In the arena, you should help the participant focus on the instructor's directions. You should avoid unnecessary talking with either the participant or other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone. To riders who already may have perceptual problems, it can be overwhelming. If there are two sidewalkers, one should be the "designated talker" to avoid this situation.

It is important to maintain a position by the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back will make it difficult to assist with directions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy. Keep your head up so that you may assess the rider's position. If your rider becomes unbalanced, immediately inform the instructor. If it is a safety concern, tell the leader to stop the horse and ask for immediate assistance.

When the instructor gives a direction, allow your participant plenty of time to process it. You should know your participant and the correct assistive techniques. You must work to provide the right balance of assistance. You should understand why you are giving assistance and what results are expected.

Sometimes volunteers forget that the participants are to do the exercises and the sidewalkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to games. Don't get so competitive that your rider doesn't get to use and develop his skills.

There are several techniques of sidewalking: 1) Arm-over-thigh hold. You will grip the front of the saddle with the hand closest to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm rests gently on the rider's thigh. This is the most secure hold. 2) Therapeutic Hold. The leg is held at the joints, either the knee and/or ankle. 3) Gait Belt. Be careful not to pull down or push up on it. Touch your thumb and finger together around it. 4) Spotting. You will be supporting but not in direct contact with the participant.

Avoid wrapping an arm around the participant's waist. It is tempting, especially when walking beside a pony or with a young or small rider. However, this will often provide uneven support and can even pull the participant off balance. Encourage your participant to use their own trunk muscles to the best of their abilities.

You must be strong enough to perform emergency dismounts, and strong enough to hold your arm above shoulder height for an extended period of time.

The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch and grow. You are in the best position to challenge him to the best of his ability.

## **Lesson Procedure**

1. **Arrival Time:** You will be given the exact time you should arrive. This is 15 minutes prior to the class start time.
2. **Check In:** Sign in and check the posted lesson list for any changes.
3. **Horse Leader:** The horse leader will retrieve the horse. The horse leader is responsible for making sure that the horse is properly groomed, including hoof picking, and tacking.
4. **Sidewalkers:** You are responsible for assisting your assigned participant during grooming and tacking up. You will make sure that your participant has the appropriate helmet. No participant may be by a horse without a helmet.
5. **Arena Entry:** In general, the participant will assist with leading the horse into the arena. The horse leader will ensure that the horse and participant enter the arena safely. The horse leader will allow the participant to assist to the best of his ability. Some participants will not assist in leading the horse, and the sidewalker will assist the participant into the arena. Unless the participant will mount using the mounting ramp, the participant will walk into the arena.
6. **Mounting:** The instructor will check the cinch before entering the mounting blocks. The horse leader will stay with the horse. The instructor and the participant will ascend the mounting blocks. The sidewalker will be on the off-side block. After the rider is mounted, and when instructed, the horse leader will lead the horse out of the mounting blocks and then into the center of the arena. Any adjustments will be made at this time.
7. **Feedback.** Give the instructor feedback about the rider and/or horse at appropriate times
8. **Listen.** Listen carefully to what the instructor tells you and follow their directions. Please keep your talking to other volunteers at a minimum. If you are talking unnecessarily you may miss important instructor directions.
9. **Empower.** Our goal is to empower, to encourage, and invigorate the participant during the lesson.

10. **Ring Etiquette:** When a horse and participant need to stop during the lesson, the horse should be moved to the center of the arena, out of the way of other riders. Make sure to keep proper distance between horses. A good analogy is to keep an elephant between the horses.
11. **Emergency Procedures.** The riding instructor is in charge of all emergencies. If you become aware of a safety problem, immediately tell the instructor. Rarely, an emergency will happen that will require that a participant is immediately removed from the horse. You will practice an emergency dismount during your volunteer training.
12. **Dismount.** The participants are dismounted by the instructor and assisted by the sidewalkers. Do not ever attempt to dismount a participant by yourself. In most cases, the participant is dismounted to the ground.
13. **Untack.** The participant may help untack the horse. The sidewalker will stay focused on the participant. And, the leader will stay focused on the horse. The sidewalker will see that the helmet is returned and the participant is delivered to their parent or transportation. The leader will turn the horse out.

## **Horse Sense**

1. Horses are prey animals. If they are frightened or startled, their instinct is to RUN away instantly. Horses are extremely perceptive of their situation.
2. Humans are predators. You must be aware that many of our normal activities are startling to horses.
3. Approach the horse from the side. It helps to talk to him in a low voice. Keep your hand on your horse when walking around him.
4. Horses cannot see behind them. If they cannot see you, you may startle them.
5. Be a good model for the participant. Never walk under or behind your horse. Do not walk under your horse's neck, especially when they are in the cross-ties. Walk in front of your horse.
6. Always speak to your horse before approaching or touching him. Horses are more likely to become startled if you surprise them.
7. Do not run around horses.
8. Pet your horse by strokes on his shoulder or neck.
9. Do not let your horse rub his head on you or a participant.

10. When checking or cleaning the hooves, do it from the side, facing the rear. Many of Eagle Mount's horses are older. When you ask the horse to lift his leg, please keep the horse comfortable and not lift the leg too high. Never squat or put your knee down when cleaning.
11. Adjust the saddle carefully. SLOWLY and GENTLY tighten the cinch or girth enough to keep the saddle in place until the rider is ready to mount. Be aware that some horses are "cinchy" meaning that they can get agitated when being cinched up. A horse may pin his ears back, and try to turn and bite you. Make you sure that you are aware and that no one is standing in front of the horse when cinching.
12. Keep reins and lead shanks off the ground so that the horse won't step on them. When a horse is in cross-ties, leave the lead line on. Loop the lead line around the horse's neck so that it does not drag on the ground. Do not tie the horse by the reins or attach a lead rope directly to the bit.
13. When you turn out a horse, walk him far enough into the stall or pasture so that you can turn him around to face the gate or door. Close the gate or door. Take the halter off the horse. It is helpful to undo the halter, but not to release the horse. This will allow you to control the horse's movements and to give final permission for the horse to leave you.

## **Programs**

Therapeutic riding uses equine-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of participants.

**Hippotherapy.** Hippotherapy literally means ‘treatment with the help of the horse’ from the Greek word hippos, meaning horse. It is a direct medical treatment.

During a hippotherapy session, a licensed physical or occupational therapist works one-on-one with a participant. The horse is used as a therapeutic tool. The horse’s three dimensional rhythmic movement mimics the action of a person’s pelvis during a normal walk. With hippotherapy, participants can benefit from the improvement in dynamic posture and balance as well as improvement in sensory processing and functional mobility.

**Developmental Riding.** The participant has a one-on-one lesson with an instructor. The instructor gives increased support and instructions to transition a rider from hippotherapy into sports or recreational riding.

**Sport.** Therapeutic riding instructors are primarily responsible for the design and implementation of the program. Activities are directed toward the acquisition of skills leading to the accomplishment of specific horsemanship goals. By learning skills needed for the sport, therapeutic and recreational goals are also achieved. The participant has a one-hour lesson with an instructor with up to three other participants similar in either age or ability. The focus is on increasing individual riding skills while gaining a therapeutic benefit.

**Recreational.** Participants may use equine activities, adapted as needed, as pure recreation. The emphasis is on an enjoyable and relaxing experience that provides additional therapeutic benefits in the areas of socialization, posture, mobility, and an overall improved quality of life. The participant has a one-hour lesson with an instructor with up to three other participants similar in either age or ability.

**Multiple Sclerosis Class (MS).** Dealing with the effects of Multiple Sclerosis holds unique challenges. In response to needs demonstrated by some of our riders, we created this class to specifically focus on these challenges. Classes are designed to maintain endurance, improve muscle tone, as well as provide an opportunity to socialize and gain support.

**Mini-Experience.** For people who do not meet the weight requirement or for other medical reason cannot ride and want a fun and enjoyable horse experience. The participants enjoy interacting with our specially trained miniature horses. An instructor leads a 45 minute class with up to 4 participants.

**Barn Management.** For sport riders who want to increase their horsemanship. Participants work with the horse on the ground and receive instruction on barn management, feeding, breeds, parts of horse, grooming, and advanced safe horse handling.

## **Emergency Policies and Procedures**

1. The instructor is in charge of an emergency situation.
2. The first priority is the safety of all individuals, participants, volunteers, and staff. The second priority is the safety of the horses. And, the third priority is the preservation of the facilities.
3. Be familiar with these emergency policies and procedures.
4. Be prepared to act on them clearly and in rapid succession.
5. The best emergency procedure is prevention!
6. Maintain a sharp and educated eye. Remember SAFETY first.
7. Observe and Act.
8. Check condition and adjustment of the tack each time a rider is mounted.
9. Be aware of horse's mood and temperament.
10. Be observant and persistent in regards to spacing.

## **Emergency Situations:**

### **Fallen Participant in the Ring**

1. Stop all participants to prevent the emergency from multiplying.
2. Instructor will assign another staff member or volunteer in the ring to take charge of the group.
3. Leader: immediately take control of horse and move horse away from fallen rider. Take horse to a safe distance and turn and face the fallen participant.
4. Sidewalker: stay with the participant. Do not move the participant. Follow instructor's directions.
5. Substitute Instructor:
  - a. Calm the group
  - a. Explain what happened
  - b. Reassure the participants
  - c. Move participants and horses to a safe distance from the fallen rider
  - d. Be prepared to dismount and move to another location if necessary

## **Fire Emergencies**

1. Stop all participants to prevent the emergency from multiplying.
2. Dismount riders, perform emergency dismount if instructed.
3. Sidewalkers take charge of participants and move calmly to the parking lot away from the fire.
4. Instructor will tell someone to call 911. That person will call 911 and provide location of fire and whether medical attention is needed.
5. Evacuate the horses.
6. Clear away from fire.
7. Keep gates and roads open for firefighters.
8. Do NOT put yourself in danger.
9. Use fire extinguishers, hoses, shovels, etc. to fight fire while waiting for help.

## **Weather Emergencies**

1. Lightning, hail, wind, and blizzards are common weather emergencies for the area.
2. If weather becomes a safety issue, and horses are likely to spook, the instructor will dismount the participants and the class will end.
3. Sidewalkers will take the participants to the viewing area until it is safe for them to leave.
4. Horses will be untacked by horse leaders and turned out when the instructor determines that it is safe to do so.

## **Runaway Horse in Ring / Bucking Horse /**

1. Stop all participants to prevent the emergency from multiplying.
2. Runaway horse:
  - Horse leader: pull horse's head to one side to stop him quickly. If you can do so safely, make horse complete a small circle.
  - Sidewalker or Instructor: perform an emergency dismount.
  - If rider is independent, move to block runaway, but do not step in front of horse to make him dodge, he might lose rider.
  - Use slow deliberate movements.

3. Non-runaway horse:
  - Instructor will assign another staff or volunteer to take charge of the group.
  - Leaders should take control of all non-runaway horses.
  - Sidewalker: immediately use arm-over-thigh hold and if directed by the instructor, perform an emergency dismount of participant.

### **Rearing Horse or Horse Backing Rapidly**

1. Stop all participants to prevent the emergency from multiplying.
2. Horse leader: give short pulls to move horse forward and in a circle.
3. Sidewalker: immediately use arm-over-thigh hold and when directed by the instructor, perform an emergency dismount of participant.
4. Follow procedure for runaway horse.

### **Horse Rolling**

1. Stop all participants to prevent the emergency from multiplying.
2. Best procedure is to recognize symptoms: pawing, lowering head, bending knees.
3. Remember a horse cannot lay down when he is moving forward.
4. Horse leader: give short quick pull and move forward.
5. Sidewalker: immediately use arm-over-thigh hold and when directed by the instructor, perform an emergency dismount of participant.
6. Follow procedure for runaway horse.

### **Horses Fighting While Being Ridden**

1. Stop all participants to prevent the emergency from multiplying.
2. This generally happens when proper distances are not being maintained.
3. Horse leaders: move the horses apart
4. Sidewalker: immediately use arm-over-thigh hold and when directed by the instructor, perform an emergency dismount of participant.
5. Follow procedure for runaway horse.

## **Horse Shying While Being Ridden**

1. Stop all participants to prevent the emergency from multiplying.
2. Calm is the most effective solution to panic.
3. Horse leader:
  - Take control of the horse and reassure him.
  - Stop and let the horse get a good look at whatever he shied at
  - Proceed at a slow and easy pace
4. Sidewalker: immediately use arm-over-thigh hold and when directed by the instructor, perform an emergency dismount of participant.
5. Follow procedure for runaway horse.

## **Horse Stepping on a Person's Foot**

1. Go quickly and calmly to the horse.
2. Push or lean on the horse.
3. Pull back on the reins/lead rope.
4. When close enough, push horse off.
5. Pulling foot away makes him step harder.

## **Horse Pulling Back While Tied**

1. Clear participants away from the horse.
2. Bring horse forward (from behind) if possible.
3. If horse is panicked, pull quick release knot/clip and free horse.

## **Tips To Be an Effective Volunteer**

1. Safety first, at all times.
2. Give instructor feedback about the participant at appropriate times.
3. Give instructor feedback about your horse at appropriate times.
4. Immediately notify an instructor if a horse is acting oddly.
5. Assist your participant in maintaining the order of the activity, the horse's spacing, and positions of hands and body when necessary.
6. Remain calm in an emergency and remember your job.
7. Praise should be given equivalent to the deed accomplished.
8. Smiles say a thousand words . . . only louder.
9. Do not hang or rest on horse, participant, fencing, or rails.
10. First ask the participant to do the task independently, and then assist.
11. Always encourage the participant to thank the horse.
12. Maximize, not minimize, your participant's capabilities.
13. Encourage teamwork, among volunteers and participants.
14. Re-latch all doors and gates behind you.
15. Ask questions.
16. Be familiar with Eagle Mount's emergency procedures.
17. Immediately notify an instructor about all mishaps and their circumstances.
18. Stay attentive to the horse, rider, instructor, and situation.
19. Never hand feed a horse.
20. Be reliable, everyone is depending on you to do your part.
21. Be courteous and respect everyone.
22. Greet your participant upon arrival and acknowledge their departure.
23. As soon as possible, notify an instructor of any scheduling conflicts. Be sure to put any scheduled absences on the calendar.
24. Give verbal cues prior to change for the visually impaired.
25. Make reference to the person first, not the disability.
26. Listen to and help the rider focus on the instructor's directions.
27. Respect everyone's right to confidentiality.
28. Know and respect Eagle Mount's policies.
29. Encourage the participant's to be as independent as possible.
30. Allow a participant to fail as well as succeed.

31. Allow a participant ample time to process a direction.
32. When using a gait belt, don't pull the participant off-balance.
33. Return things to the spot that you found them.
34. If something is broken or needs fixing, let someone know.
35. If a horse is lame or injured, immediately tell an instructor.
36. If a participant has fallen, DO NOT move them. Follow the instructor's directions.
37. Pet a horse on the neck or shoulder, not on the face.
38. Do not bring pets to Eagle Mount.
39. Be attentive to signs of participant's fatigue and frustration.
40. Do not force a participant's body into a desired position.
41. Alert the instructor immediately, if a seizure occurs.
42. Share knowledge and experiences with others.
43. Maintain the dignity and integrity of Eagle Mount.
44. If you are ever uncomfortable about a task you are assigned, or do not know how to do the task, let the instructor or staff know right away. They can accompany you and teach you or can do the task, but you are our most valuable resource. We need you to be and feel safe, and to have an opportunity to learn while you are here! THANK YOU!

# **Eagle Mount Therapeutic Riding Program Staff**

## **Maggee Harrison, Equestrian Program Director**

- MS Animal Science, University of Connecticut – focus on equine reproductive physiology.
- NARHA Certified Riding Instructor since 2007
- Volunteer at Eagle Mount from 2002 - 2009
- Program Director in 2009
- Lifelong 4-H Horse club member and supporter

## **Meredith Maynard, Equestrian Program Assistant Director**

- NARHA Certified Riding Instructor since 2007
- Staff member since 2006

## **Megan MacNichol, Equestrian Program Assistant**

- NARHA Certified Riding Instructor - 2009
- Volunteer at Eagle Mount since 2007

# Hippotherapy

## **Angie Bates, DPT**

- Physical Therapist
- American Hippotherapy Association HPOT Level 2 Certified

## **Laura Heck, OTR/L**

- Occupational Therapist for over 20 years
- Worked at Eagle Mount as an occupational therapist for past 3 years

# Volunteer Certified Instructors

## **Lisa Borick**

- Volunteer at Eagle Mount since 2004
- Certified in 2004

## **Elena Micucci**

- NARHA Certified Riding Instructor since 2007
- Staff member 2006 & 2007
- Attending MSU to obtain degree in occupational therapy

## **Michele Snowberger**

- Volunteer at Eagle Mount since 2002
- Certified in 2004

## **Molly Berndt**

- NARHA Certified Riding Instructor 2009

## **Betsy deLeiris**

- Volunteer at Eagle Mount since 2008
- NARHA Certified Riding Instructor 2009

## **Sandy Kypfer**

- NARHA Certified Riding Instructor 2009

## **Amy Pakula**

- NARHA Certified Riding Instructor 2009

I acknowledge that I have read the Volunteer Handbook for the Eagle Mount Equestrian Program. I agree that I will comply with the requirement of confidentiality with regard to any information I may have about participants in the program, and that I will do my best to comply with all other directions in the Volunteer Handbook.

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Name

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Date

**Please note that Volunteers will not be permitted to participate in the Equestrian Program until they have completed training, read and understand the Volunteer Handbook, and sign this acknowledgment**