



Great and Small

# Participant Manual

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## History

Great and Small was founded in 1998 by Sarah Phelps with one horse and four riders. It operated out of several boarding facilities before finding a permanent home at the Rickman Farm Horse Park in 2004. The Rickman Farm is leased from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC). Great and Small is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, not a government program.

## PATH International

The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) was formed in 1969 to promote equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) for individuals with special needs. Its mission is to change and enrich lives by promoting excellence in equine-assisted activities and therapies. PATH provides instructor certification and facility accreditation programs as well as educational resources for its members.

## Program Description

Great and Small offers a selection of equine assisted activities and therapies for individuals with physical, cognitive, emotional, and/or learning disabilities. These opportunities include therapeutic riding and hippotherapy.

**Therapeutic Riding:** Therapeutic riding is an adaptive sport for those who need specific instruction, facilities, or assistance to participate in horseback riding. Benefits of therapeutic riding include improvements in balance, core strength, motor planning, confidence, communication, and social interaction. Therapeutic riding lessons are taught by an instructor certified in therapeutic riding through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (“PATH Intl”). Depending on the participant’s needs, the instructor may be assisted by up to three volunteers to ensure the safety and success of the participant. Independence is encouraged to the degree that is safe and appropriate for each participant and may include learning to care for the horse before and after lessons.

Therapeutic riding may be provided in private lessons or a small group setting depending on scheduling availability and the needs and goals of the participants.

**Hippotherapy:** Hippotherapy is a treatment strategy used by physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists. The movement of the horse provides graded sensory input and vestibular stimulation among other benefits and is used to improve functional outcomes. Therapists may use hippotherapy as one part of an integrated treatment program. A hippotherapy treatment team includes the participant, the therapist, a therapeutic riding instructor, and up to three volunteers.

## Program Policies and Procedures

### Application Process

1. Read and understand the Participant Manual.
2. Complete and submit the Participant Application.  
Note: Applications are not considered complete until all portions have been received.
3. You will be contacted to schedule an evaluation.
4. After evaluation, the staff will determine if EAAT is appropriate for the potential participant and if so, which program and lesson format is the best choice to meet the participant's needs.
5. Participants will be scheduled for the next session or placed on the wait list.

### Participant Eligibility

#### Age

The minimum age for therapeutic riding is 4 years (48 months). The minimum age for hippotherapy is 2 years (24 months). There is no maximum age.

#### Weight

The maximum weight that can be accommodated is 250 pounds. Riders over 200 pounds must be well-balanced, as determined by program staff. This is for the protection of our horses and the safety of our volunteers and participants.

We cannot safely manage riders over 75 pounds who are unable to sit up unaided while holding the surcingle handle.

#### Precautions and Contraindications

The major precautions and contraindications to mounted equine activities are listed on the first page of the physician's form. Each applicant will be individually screened for precautions and contraindications, and further information may be requested.

### Participant Discharge

At the end of each session, the professional responsible for the participant's current programming (therapeutic riding instructor or therapist) will evaluate the appropriateness of the current program. Factors include changes in physical abilities, weight, behaviors, availability of appropriate horses to meet the participant's need, availability of volunteers, progress toward goals, etc. Participants may be recommended for transition between therapeutic riding and hippotherapy at Great and Small, to EAAT programs at other facilities, to mainstream riding programs, or out of EAAT entirely.

## Confidentiality Policy

In the course of equine assisted activities and therapies, staff will provide volunteers with confidential information about the participant **only** on a need-to-know basis. Volunteer training includes a specific discussion of confidentiality and the importance of not divulging diagnosis, progress reports, and other private information to any outside party.

Great and Small will not release any information regarding a participant to outside sources (such as caseworkers, therapists, etc.) without written permission from the participant or participant's legal guardian.

## Annual Update

To comply with PATH International standards and provide for our own communication needs, Great and Small **must** annually update all participant information. The annual rider update form *and physician update form* are due at the beginning of the Fall Session (September), or prior to resuming participation in EAAT if the participant was inactive during the Fall Session.

All minor participants who reach the age of majority (18 years of age) must complete a new full set of paperwork unless they have a court-appointed guardian who is the same parent/guardian who signed the original paperwork.

## Program Participation

### Attire

#### Helmets

All participants must wear ASTM-SEI approved headgear while mounted. Helmets are available at the barn or riders may bring their own.

#### Footwear

Hard soled shoes or boots with a heel are ideal for riding, but sneakers are acceptable. There are riding boots available in the office for students to use. Sandals, crocs, and open-toed shoes are not permitted.

#### Other Clothing

Riders should dress appropriately for existing weather conditions so they can be comfortable during lessons. Layers are recommended, as the weather at Great and Small may be different from the weather at your home, school, or workplace. In the summer, sunscreen, bug spray, and a water bottle may be appropriate. Long pants are recommended year-round for rider comfort; however, shorts are permitted. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum as it could get caught on the horse's equipment.

## **Arriving for a Lesson**

If you arrive early for your lesson, out of consideration for others who may be taking a lesson, please wait in the Great and Small office or in your vehicle until your designated lesson time. Participants should be properly attired (footwear & helmet) and ready to meet the instructor or therapist at their designated lesson time. Your specific meeting location (office, mounting ramp, arena gate) will be determined by your instructor or therapist.

## **Observing a Lesson**

Family members and caregivers interested in watching the lesson may observe from the office or in the indoor arena area immediately outside of the office. Lessons in the outdoor arena can be observed from the picnic table or the grassy area next to the outdoor arena. If the presence of observers is distracting to the participant(s), the instructor or therapist may request that observers relocate to the office.

For the safety of our participants, volunteers, and guests, all children must be under the supervision of a parent/adult at all times. Noise and lots of activity can be distracting to participants and frightening to the horses. Children should be encouraged to play quietly, and they are welcome to enjoy the toys in the office. Playing on the mounting ramp is strictly forbidden.

## **Dogs**

Great and Small is a horse farm, not a dog park. You are encouraged to leave your dog at home. Should you choose to bring your dog to Great and Small, it must be in the car or on-leash and outside the buildings at all times. Any dog that causes a distraction will be asked to leave. Decisions of the staff are final.

Service animals are welcome. At times when they are not working, they should be appropriately supervised by someone on the ground.

## **Weather**

Great and Small follows Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) for weather-related delays and closures. A delay cancels all lessons before noon. An early release cancels all lessons after noon. A cancellation of school cancels all lessons on that day.

Great and Small may also cancel lessons for extreme heat, extreme cold, or local weather patterns that make it unsafe to hold lessons. For cancellations initiated by Great and Small, participants will receive an email and the message on the office voicemail will be changed to reflect the lesson status.

## **Dismissal of Guests from Center Activities**

Guests are welcome to observe at any time that staff is present. A guest is defined as anyone who is not a participant, staff member, or volunteer. Since the safety of our participants, volunteers, horses, and staff is of paramount importance, there may be occasions when a guest must be dismissed and/or told to leave the premises.

A guest may be told to leave the premises immediately if, for example, he/she:

- Threatens the safety of others;
- Is disruptive or abusive;
- Is not in compliance with Great and Small policies;
- Fails to properly follow established safety procedures;
- Is in possession of a weapon;
- Is under the influence or in possession of alcohol or drugs;
- Is under age and is using or in possession of tobacco or related materials;
- Is smoking anywhere on the entire 100 acres of the Rickman farm;
- Mistreats any animal or person at Great and Small;
- Acts or speaks inappropriately or dangerously.

## **Attendance, Fees & Payment Information**

### **Session Schedules**

Great and Small conducts four 10-week sessions each year (fall, winter, spring, summer). Each session is followed by a week for make-up classes, if needed. Rolling admission may be available for new participants, but is not guaranteed.

### **Fees**

Fees are dependent on the type of service (therapeutic riding or hippotherapy), session format (private or semi-private), and duration (30 or 60 minutes). A current fee schedule is available upon request.

### **Billing**

Participants will be billed in advance of the session. Payment is due at the beginning of the session. Cash, check, credit card, and Paypal are all acceptable payment methods. If you need to make alternate payment arrangements, please contact our office. We work with a variety of outside funding sources including LISS and DDA. We are happy to work with you to meet the requirements of your outside funding source.

## **Cancellations, Refunds, and Make-Ups**

Every lesson requires the coordination of volunteers, staff, and horses. For this reason it is important that you make every effort to attend your lessons on time and as scheduled.

### **Scheduled Absences**

If you know at the beginning of the session that you will be absent on a particular day (vacation or appointment), please notify the office. Your session will be prorated.

### **Unscheduled Absences**

If you must miss a lesson due to a last-minute illness, injury, or other emergency, please notify the office as soon as possible. Unscheduled absences will not receive a refund. If cancellation notice is made at least 24 hours prior to the unscheduled absence, the lesson is eligible for make-up. A maximum of two lessons can be made up in one session.

### **Make-up Lessons**

The week immediately following the session is reserved for make-up lessons. If you are eligible for a second make-up lesson, it must be scheduled during the current session. Check with your instructor and/or the office staff for openings. The availability of make-up lessons during the session is not guaranteed and may be limited due to the availability of instructors, horses, and/or volunteers.

### **Cancellations by Great and Small**

In the event that Great and Small must cancel lessons due to weather or facility emergencies, the cancelled lesson will be refunded. Participants without an unscheduled absence may choose to make up the cancelled lesson during the make-up week.

### **Late Arrivals**

Participants who arrive up to fifteen (15) minutes late may still have a lesson, but the lesson will end at the regularly scheduled time. Participants who arrive more than fifteen (15) minutes late will not be able to ride that day. Alternate activities are at the discretion of the instructor.