



SERVICE THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

When it comes time for people to earn service hours for different organizations, many people think of local food banks and Habitat for Humanity. Texas Tech University has an outstanding place for anyone in need to receive service hours and allow them to come away with more than they ever imagined. There is so much that takes place out at the Texas Tech Equestrian Center. Every day, lives are being changed through the classes offered at the Therapeutic Riding Center.

“I really enjoy seeing the relationships form between the kids and the horses and the progress they make throughout therapy,” said Kenzie Black, a Physical Therapy major at Texas Tech, “It’s so encouraging and humbling to be involved in that process.”

The mission of this program is to provide high quality of equine-assisted therapy to people with disabilities in the South Plains area. Through a group effort of medical and professional staff, their goal is to enhance the quality of life of each person participating in the program.

“We couldn’t do what we do without volunteers. For every client that comes out here for a Hippotherapy class, we need a leader and two side walkers,” Heather Hernandez, Co-Director of the Therapeutic Riding Center said, “We have a lot of Therapeutic Riding classes that may have three riders in the class. That adds up to nine volunteers for just one hour of therapeutic riding.”

The Therapeutic Riding Center offers two courses to aid in the therapeutic recovery of children that come out to be a part of this program. Hippotherapy is a term which refers to the use of the movement of a horse as a treatment by trained physical, occupational, and speech therapist. The horse’s stride provides sensory input through movement that is variable, rhythmic, and repetitive and is used as a part of an integrated treatment program to achieve functional outcomes.

“I would definitely encourage anyone and everyone to volunteer,” said Black, “It is really fun and it taught me patience and discipline. I feel like others should get to experience that too.”

All of these courses are offered to benefit children with disabilities and are available with the volunteers that come out from the community of Lubbock and the surrounding area. Side walkers walk beside the rider and assist the rider in performing the requested activities of the therapists and PATH, Intl. instructors. Leaders guide the horses during the equine-assisted activities. Leaders must demonstrate the ability to control their horse in various situations. Additional in-depth training may be necessary to lead a horse during equine-assisted activities. In order to be considered as a side walker or leader, the volunteer must be able to assist the rider or control the horse.

“There are a lot of opportunities for you to volunteer your time in many different capacities and we can use anyone’s help.” **T**



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