



## MANE STREAM

### VOLUNTEER TIPS & DAILY PROCEDURES

- Dress casually, in shorts or pants, sneakers or boots, no hanging jewelry, scarves, etc. Bring sweatshirts/coats, gloves and hats in cold weather. Long hair should be tied back.
- Volunteering with Mane Stream is not just about grooming, leading and sidewalking. We rely on volunteers to help us with a variety of tasks around the facility to keep us going. **We require a “Team Player” commitment from our volunteers**, you will be asked to help with various barn chores, cleaning around the facility (including therapy clinic and tools) and occasional administrative work when you are not needed in the ring with the participants.
- **Put on name tag**; it helps instructor, other volunteers, riders/therapy clients and their families to become familiar with you.
- **SIGN IN** through the volunteer tablet in the tack room when you arrive at the barn. **SIGN OUT** at the end of your shift. This is very important as tracking volunteer hours is valuable for grant writing and fundraising purposes. Also, we want to make sure we can thank you for all of your hard work and dedication! If you are unable to volunteer on a day when you are expected, it is VERY important that you **call** the office and notify us as soon as possible, to give us a chance to seek a replacement. Either speak to someone or leave a message in the Absence Voice mail, #5. Although it is a good idea to follow up your phone call with an email, **DO NOT rely on email alone to communicate an absence**. Our riders & therapy clients are very disappointed when they are unable to ride due to a lack of volunteers.
- **Check the Assignment Book** to see which horses will be used for lessons or therapy sessions. Grooming tools are in buckets in the tack room. Groom horses on crossties in the aisle, or in the wash stall. Don't forget to pick hooves. Check the book to see what tack is needed and put it outside each horse's stall.
- If you are volunteering with Adaptive Riding lessons, check with the Head Barn Volunteer/Instructor to determine your assignment & schedule. If you are volunteering with therapy (Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Speech & Language Therapy), check the assignment book for your assignment. Horse can remain in his stall with saddle on but **NOT** bridle...put bridle and reins on right before he is led into ring. Check the tacking list: sometimes the halter stays on & the bridle goes over it. Other times, the halter is removed before the bridle is put on. Reins may go on the halter or the bit; check the tacking list to see which one. Only those volunteers designated as leaders should bridle the horse.
- **Adaptive Riding Lesson Leaders**: Once the instructor or Head Barn Volunteer asks you to take the horse into the ring, walk the horse in the indoor ring or up to the outdoor ring as instructed, until the instructor is ready for the rider to be mounted. The instructor or assigned volunteer will check/tighten girth before you get to the mounting block. When leading the horse up to the mounting block, turn so you're walking backward between the blocks, then stand and face the horse, keeping him steady during mounting. Lead the horse and rider into the ring and walk until the instructor has the rest of the class mounted. Always stand in front of the horse facing him, whenever you're stopped for any length of time. When the instructor gives a command to the rider, allow him/her a few seconds to attempt it, then help out if necessary. The leader must be paying attention to the horse, the rider and the instructor at all times. If you are having a problem with the horse, notify the instructor immediately.

## **MANE STREAM VOLUNTEER TIPS & DAILY PROCEDURES (continued)**

- **Adaptive Riding Lesson Sidewalkers:** The instructor or Head Barn Volunteer will tell you if you should accompany a rider to the outdoor ring or meet them in the indoor arena. If you're sidewalking, your focus should be on the rider at all times. The instructor will let you know if the rider needs a constant armlock, an ankle hold or just a spotter for balance. If you see a problem with the rider (such as shifting to one side, losing balance, emotional upset), immediately notify the instructor. Feel free to speak to the rider prior to the lesson, and to provide encouragement during the lesson, but be sure you're not distracting him/her from listening to the instructor. **Let the instructor do the teaching!**
- **Adaptive Riding Lesson Volunteers in general:** Once the lesson has been completed, the instructor will ask the leaders to turn the horses away from the ring exit and stand quietly until the instructor comes to assist the rider in dismounting. Riders are not allowed to dismount until the instructor is present. Sidewalkers should remain in place until the rider is safely on the ground, and then accompany the rider out of the ring. Riders who require supervision should not be left alone at any time...it is the sidewalker's responsibility to stay with them until they are ready to leave. Leaders should lead the horse back to the barn and either untack or change tack for the next lesson. You will be asked to help with various barn chores when you are not needed in the ring with the riders. **Please remember that the majority of our adaptive riding lessons take place in the outdoor ring and so are weather dependent. Be sure to check your email, our Facebook page and the Weather Hotline before you head out to volunteer, in case of lesson cancellations.**
- **Therapy Horse Leaders:** Therapists will have instructions for you in the assignment book. Leaders should usually take the horse into the indoor arena to warm up 10 minutes before the next client. The therapist will check/tighten girth before you get to the mounting block. When leading the horse up to the mounting block, turn so you're walking backward between the blocks, then stand and face the horse, keeping him steady during mounting. Lead the horse and therapy client into the ring as per the therapist's instructions. Always stand in front of the horse facing him, whenever you're stopped for any length of time. The leader must be paying attention to the horse, the client and the therapist at all times. If you are having a problem with the horse, notify the therapist immediately.
- **Therapy Sidewalkers:** Therapists will have instructions for you in the assignment book. The therapist will be working with the client, and will let you know how much support is required. Try not to distract the client...he needs to remain focused on the therapist.
- **Therapy Volunteers in general:** Therapy sessions often take place in the indoor arena, so they are not weather dependent. However be sure to check your email or give the office a call before you head out in case of client cancellations. In the winter, also check the Weather Hotline in case of poor road conditions.

**All Mane Stream Volunteers:** Please remember that volunteers are here to assist and support Mane Stream's specially trained instructors and therapists. We couldn't do our job without you and truly value your help, but remember that it is not your job to teach the riders & clients...leave that responsibility to us!

Questions and suggestions about the rider/therapy clients and/or lesson are welcome, but please save them for AFTER the lesson, out of the presence of the riders/clients/parents. Please don't hesitate to contact Rebecca at [volunteer@manestreamnj.org](mailto:volunteer@manestreamnj.org) or 908-439-9636 if you have any questions or concerns regarding your volunteering experience.

Mane Stream recognizes the importance of our dedicated volunteers, and the success of our program depends on them. Hopefully these tips will help our volunteers to feel confident in their abilities to help our riders & therapy clients. Thank you for your time and assistance!