



ROCK (Ride On Center for Kids)

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Ways to Volunteer at ROCK

Volunteering at ROCK is a great way to develop personal and professional skills. These skills include sensitivity awareness, creativity, problem solving, and teamwork.

The ROCK Team:

Without volunteers, ROCK would cease to exist. Each session involves a team effort consisting of people and horses, working together to accomplish therapeutic goals. The ROCK team consists of:

- **Side Walker(s)**- In an equine-assisted therapy class, the side walkers aid the therapist in the physical manipulation and support of the participant. These sessions tend to be very “hands on”. In a Therapeutic Horsemanship session, depending upon the level of independence of the participant, the side walker may provide some physical support as well as emotional and motivational support. The ultimate goal of a good side walker is to encourage the participant to stretch, grow and develop to their fullest potential, while providing a safe environment. Side walkers work side-by-side with the instructor, **never leaving the participant’s side** without direction from the instructor.
- **Horse Handler**- In most cases, the horse handler will remain in control of the horse throughout the session. In some therapeutic riding sessions, depending upon the level of independence of the participant and at the discretion of the instructor, the horse handler may sometimes pass control of the horse to the rider. Regardless, the horse handler remains in constant awareness of the horse’s movement and behavior and is prepared to step in to take control of the horse at all times.
- **Horse Prep**- Volunteers assist with the grooming and the tacking of the horses before sessions. Volunteers are also responsible for keeping the tack room organized and for ensuring that all equipment is in proper working condition.
- **Team Leader**- Oversees the tack room, grooming area, and horses to ensure that class transitions run smoothly.
- **Pit Crew**- Volunteer that is trained to pull horses from stall area and prep horses for class.

In addition to the team members in the arena, it takes many other volunteers working on the sidelines to make ROCK therapy sessions possible. These include:

- **Welcome Wrangler**- Office volunteers that answer phones, greet guests and families, communicate needs, assist the ROCK staff and help out with numerous office functions.
- **Special Event Volunteers**- Volunteers who assist with the planning and execution of special events such as Barn Dance, Golf Tournament, horse shows, VIP tours, Horse Shoe Club committee, Appreciation Dinners and various fund raisers.

Most volunteers find that they prefer to “wear many different hats”. A typical day for a volunteer may include side walking in one session, horse handling in another, prepping horses, or answering phones.

We would love for you to come and be part of the ROCK team. Please check the website at rockride.org for upcoming sessions or call us at (512) 930-7625. You may also email the Volunteer Department at ROCKateers@ROCKride.org.