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[www.thstl.org](http://www.thstl.org)

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**We recommend that all clients with developmental or mental health special needs contact the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to become a DMH client. The DMH offers assistance for individuals with developmental disabilities. For more information about DMH, visit their website: [www.dmh.mo.gov/mrdd/help/faqs.htm](http://www.dmh.mo.gov/mrdd/help/faqs.htm). You may also reach them by phone at 314-340-6500.**

**What are the benefits of Therapeutic Riding?** Because the horse's gait is similar to the human walk, riding strengthens and supports the natural motion of the spine and pelvis. This repetitive motion helps balance, coordination, strength, and muscle tone as it gently mobilizes the joints. In addition, riding and interacting with the horse foster self-confidence and motivation and encourage verbal and non verbal communication. The freedom and independence clients experience through Therapeutic Horsemanship's programs act as a bridge to accomplishments and lead to success in other functional areas of their lives as well.

**Is this type of therapy safe for me/my child?** Our therapeutic riding center is a premier center accredited through the [North American Riding for the Handicapped Association](http://www.narha.org) (NARHA). NARHA has many safety standards that must be followed in order to maintain a premier center status. Our instructors are certified through NARHA having spent many hours volunteering and teaching before taking a certification test that includes written and mounted segments. Most riders have 3 [volunteers](#) that work along side of them. They have a leader that leads the horse and 2 sidewalkers who are beside them assisting them through the entire lesson under the direction of the instructor or therapist. Volunteers must attend an initial training session that covers safety standards.

Our horses are chosen for their temperament and health. They all go through a 30 day trial period in which they are ridden and trained for the job. Any horse not passing specific tests is sent back to its previous owner.

**Is there an age requirement to participate?** We accept clients beginning at age two and have had adults through the age of seventy. All clients must have written permission/prescription from their physician to participate.

**How can I get my child started in lessons?** The initial step is to meet with one of our therapists for a New Rider Evaluation. To schedule a new rider evaluation call 636-332-4940. The fee for the evaluation is \$60.00 and includes a 45 minute occupational therapy evaluation to address goals and objectives for the client. All [physician forms](#) must be into the office before the evaluation as the client will be put on a horse. A therapy time will be assigned.

**How are lessons offered?** Lessons are offered in three-month sessions. The spring session is March through May; the summer session is June through August; and the fall session is September through the beginning of December. We also offer a short six week winter session during January and February, but it is very limited due to the weather. Registration is done at the beginning of each session.

**Are there any special requirements that I must meet in order to join the program?** All students must have a documented diagnosis and are required to have a physician's signed approval or authorization. In addition, Hippotherapy students must also have a current physician's prescription for therapy.

**What is the difference between Hippotherapy and Sports Riding?** Hippotherapy is a more intense form of therapy where the client works one-on-one under the guidance of an occupational, physical, or speech therapist. **Sports Riding** is a group lesson where the riders actually learn riding skills while at the same time working on therapy goals set by parents, instructors and therapists.

**What days and times are lessons offered?** **Hippotherapy:** Mondays (9:30am - 8:00pm); Tuesdays (9:45am - 8:00pm); Wednesdays ( 4:15pm - 8:00pm); Saturdays ( 9:00am - 3:30pm). **Sports Riding:** Wednesdays (4:30pm - 8:00pm); Thursdays (4:30pm - 8:00pm); Saturdays (9:00am -3:45pm).

**What is the cost for lessons?**

**Hippotherapy:** \$50.00/therapy session: session is 1 hour long. **Sports Riding:** \$37.50/lesson: lesson is 1 hour long. We charge by the semester which usually is ten to twelve weeks in length.

The actual cost for Therapeutic Horsemanship to provide a one hour lesson to each client is \$211.48. We are able to keep the costs down for our clients in several ways. We do several fundraising events each year that include a horse show, horse-a-thon, benefit polo match, and dinner/auction. We apply for funds through many grants with organizations, corporations, etc. The actual fee passed on to clients is only one fourth of our cost.

**I can't afford the cost of lessons; do you offer scholarships?** We do offer partial scholarships. To apply, you must fill out an [application](#) at the time of registration and send it in with supporting financial information: i.e., latest tax return, last 3 months of paycheck stubs, etc. During the 2008 fall session, 9% of our riders received scholarships ranging from \$100.00 to \$300.00.

**What do I need to do to have my lessons billed to Regional Center, Medicaid, First Steps, or Insurance?**

**Regional Center** - You must have your case manager mail or fax proof of funding authorization (P.A.I.D. form) to our office before the session begins. Students (or parents/legal guardians) are responsible for payment of any amounts not covered by Regional Center.

**Medicaid** – You must present a copy of the front and back of your Medicaid card. We do not accept MC+ or Healthcare USA.

**First Steps** – You must have your case manager provide proof of authorization for service.

**Insurance** – You must present a copy of the front and back of your Insurance card. You will need to contact your insurance company to verify coverage. Each plan is very different. The procedure code used for billing is 97110. Your plan must cover outpatient occupational, physical, or speech therapy. Therapeutic Horsemanship is not an in network provider for any group health plan.

## **What are the PLB and the DDRB? I've been told they pay for my lessons.**

**The Productive Living Board (PLB)** - The PLB was established in 1979 when St. Louis County voters passed a property tax levy to develop services and supports for residents with developmental disabilities. The present tax is set at 8.5¢ per \$100 assessed value and generates approximately \$16 million annually. In fiscal year 2005 (July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005), the Board contracted with 46 different agencies that provide services to more than 4,300 individuals with developmental disabilities. If you would like to learn more about the PLB, visit their website, <http://www.plboard.com>. You may also reach them by phone at 314-726-2606.

**The Developmental Disabilities Resource Board (DDRB)** - The DDRB is a public taxing entity, commonly known as a "Senate Bill 40 Board" that enters into funding contracts with agencies that serve individuals with developmental disabilities in St. Charles County. This public tax was established in 1977 when voters of St. Charles County approved to tax themselves up to sixteen cents per \$100.00 of assessed property valuation to provide community based programs and supports for citizens with developmental disabilities.

Funded services include: adult day programs, residential services, advocacy services, supported daycare, early intervention, family support, transitional programs, respite, sheltered workshop, adaptive equipment, supported employment, and recreation. If you would like to learn more about the DDRB, visit their website, <http://www.ddrb.org>. You may also reach them by phone at 636-939-3351.

Therapeutic Horsemanship applies for grants from the PLB and DDRB which help to keep our costs lower for our clients. Each grant is based on the number of units/hours we serve to clients in these counties. These clients must have started the intake process through the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and have a DMH number assigned to them.

**What is First Steps?** First Steps is a support and service system designed to improve family capability to enhance their child's development and learning and to increase the child's participation in family and community life. First Steps is designed for families of infants and toddlers with disabilities through their third birthday. This program is offered through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education. You may visit their website, <http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/>. You may also reach them by phone, 1-866-583-2392.

**What is Parents As Teachers?** Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a parent education and family support program serving families throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten, usually age 5. Parents are supported by PAT-certified parent educators trained to translate scientific information on early brain development into specific *when, what, how, and why* advice for families. By understanding what to expect during each stage of development, parents can easily capture the teachable moments in everyday life to enhance their child's language development, intellectual growth, social development, and motor skills. Families receive personal visits, parent group meetings, screenings, and resource networking. You may visit their website, <http://www.parentsasteachers.org> for more information. To find a PAT program in your area call, 1-866-728-4968.

**Do you offer lessons for people without disabilities?** The Gaitway Riding Program offers horsemanship and riding lessons to individuals without disabilities. Lessons may include, but are not limited to, saddling your horse, riding a quadrille pattern, jumping, riding Western, or riding a dressage test. Riders of all levels are encouraged to enroll. Depending on your interests, TH can tailor a program suited to you. Lessons are scheduled by appointment with our Sports Riding/Gaitway Lesson Coordinator. Call TH and ask to speak with Amy Willard.

**Important Phone Numbers:**

Therapeutic Horsemanship – 636-332-4940

The Developmental Disabilities Resource Board – 636-939-3351

The Productive Living Board – 314-726-2606.

The Department of Mental Health – 314-340-6500

Parents as Teachers – 1-866-728-4968

First Steps – 1-866-583-2392