



EQUICENTER
WILLIAM & MILDRED LEVINE RANCH

VETERANS HANDBOOK



Professional Association of Therapeutic
Horsemanship International

EquiCenter fosters growth, wellness, and educational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities through the power of equestrian, horticultural and outdoor experiences.

Welcome to the EquiCenter! The purpose of this handbook is to share with you our policies, procedures, and general rules. In it you will find contact numbers, attire requirements, and specific information regarding the different programs we offer to veterans here.

Throughout the year, there are needs for updates and changes. We ask that you visit our website, www.equicenterny.org, for any current or anticipated changes that occur.

We ask that you help to make this our best year yet. Help us in being an active part of the EquiCenter's growth by becoming volunteers. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator if you are interested.

EquiCenter Contact Information

Barn Phone: 585-624-7777 | Fax: 585-624-7772 | General Email: Info@equicenterny.org

Director of Equine Operations

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PATH Certified Instructors

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All of our instructors hold a PATH certification (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International). For more information on PATH please visit their website at www.pathintl.org

Requested Paperwork

- At the beginning, midway and at the end of your session EquiCenter may ask you to fill out a survey. In addition to a pre and post survey we may have a quick questionnaire for you to fill out after each session depending on the program you are in. These help us to collect data to provide to organizations that help make this program possible by their continued grants and donations.

General Safety Rules

- **EquiCenter is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is only permitted in your personal vehicle in the big parking lot. Take all butts with you – no littering.**
- Park in designated areas.
- We must receive complete registration forms annually for any program.
- Please include a copy of your DD 214 or VA card in your initial paperwork.
- Firearms **are prohibited** on property at the EquiCenter.
- Alcohol and illegal drug use is prohibited. EquiCenter reserves the right to reschedule your lesson if we feel there are safety concerns due to impairment.
- EquiCenter's hours of operation are from 8am-8pm. Please call ahead to schedule any visits outside of your lesson or volunteer time.
- Do not visit the horses without permission and supervision. Do not hand feed the horses.
- No pets are allowed on the property. The only exception to this is a certified service dog or therapy dog. EquiCenter must be notified if you are bringing your dog. Approved dogs must remain on leash at all times and you may be asked to stay in specified areas. You may not be able to take part in all programs with a service/therapy dog. Dogs are not allowed in the barn or near the horses. Please be aware that there may be therapy dogs on site so please keep dogs separated from other dogs as well as horses.
- Do not enter the farm, greenhouse or North Barn without permission.
- Do not enter the house without permission.
- EquiCenter serves a variety of populations. Please be respectful and help to keep this a therapeutic environment for all.
- Your family members and friends are encouraged to visit. When lessons are in progress or horses are out, all visitors must remain in the designated spectator area.
- We encourage you to take photographs; however it is always best to ask staff permission prior to using a flash.
- Also make sure the volunteers and any other participants around are ok with their picture being taken.
- EquiCenter staff will maintain a professional relationship with participants and ask that all participants do the same.

Volunteer Request

- All fees for lessons provided to Veterans are paid for by EquiCenter scholarships. EquiCenter is able to do this over the year through fundraising events, government grants and individual and corporate donations. As a non-profit organization we are dependent on volunteers and the involvement of our participants and families to help meet our organizational needs. We ask that all of those who receive a scholarship volunteer their time equal to the amount of time the participant rides if you are able to. (Example: 1 hour lesson = 1 hour per week).
- We ask you to volunteer in whichever program you are participating in.
- Please sign in and out on the volunteer sign in log located in the volunteer room.



ADAPTIVE RIDING & HORSEMANSHIP

EQUICENTER

Contact: Lindsay Alberts, Director of Equine Operations: LABerts@equicenterny.org 585-624-7777

Riders participate in structured classes that provide therapeutic and educational benefits in accordance with the individual's goals, as well as an outlet for sport, recreation, and leisure. Lessons are tailored to provide optimum therapeutic experiences for each student.

Cancellation Policy

- Adaptive riding lessons may be changed to non-mounted horsemanship lessons when the temperature is above 90 degrees or “feels like” over 95 degrees AND when the temperature is below 15 degrees or feels like less than 0 degrees.
- If local schools (i.e. Pittsford-Mendon, HF-L, Victor) are closed due to weather, lessons will also be canceled. If the weather is borderline contact us at 585-624-7777.
- Due to the demands of the schedule, make-up lessons are not possible.
- Please call if you cannot make your scheduled time as soon as possible (24 hours is ideal) so that we do not have horses, volunteers & instructors waiting for you.
- Two “no calls” or “no shows” in a session may result in you being asked to forfeit your spot to someone on the waiting list.

Attire

- All students will wear approved ASTM safety helmets while mounted or when working around the horses. We have a selection available for you to borrow while riding or you may purchase your own at any local Country max store or online at www.doversaddlery.com, www.statelinetack.com or www.freedomriders.com. Helmets must be purchased within 5 years due to PATH regulations.
- Wear appropriate closed toe shoes. Boots with low heels and smooth soles are required for all students who use stirrups.
- Long pants are required. Stretch pants or breeches are most comfortable.
- In cold weather, wear layers and make sure you have gloves that will enable you to grip the reins.
- In hot weather wear “breathable” clothing to avoid overheating. Sunscreen and a cold drink may also be a good idea!

Registration

- Due to PATH regulations we must receive complete registration forms annually (including medical forms from your physician for mounted activities).
- Please include a copy of your DD 214 or VA card in your initial paperwork.
- Continuing registration forms are due 1 month prior to the start of each new session.
- Continuing registration forms should contain all of your days and times of availability. If you do not have at least 3 scheduling options we cannot guarantee you a lesson slot.
- If you are a Post 9/11 veteran and have deployed to a combat zone, you must register with Wounded Warrior Project. The directions on how to do that is as follows: Register with WWP via the WWP Resource

Center at 888-997-2586 or via the website at

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/wwp-registration>

- After registration, you must request a PATH International Program Referral from WWP by contacting the WWP Resource Center at: resourcecenter@woundedwarriorproject.org or 888-997-2586. Choose option #1 as a registered member and then #1 for mental health services then ask for a PATH International Program Referral for EAAT.

Precautions and Contraindications to Adaptive Riding

Unfortunately riding is not an appropriate activity for everyone, and we may occasionally decline services for individuals for whom riding is contraindicated. As a PATH Premier Center (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International), we must follow PATH guidelines. Here are a few precautions and contraindications that we may need to discuss with you prior to riding.

- Arthritis & Osteoporosis
- Behavior & Psychosocial Problems
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia
- Hip subluxation, dislocation, or degeneration
- Indwelling catheter
- Osteogenesis Imperfecta, Lordosis or Kyphosis
- Eating Disorders
- Hypertension
- Recent Surgery
- Recurrent pathological fractures
- Substance Abuse
- Spina Bifida
- Spinal Fusions/ Spinal Instability/ Spinal stabilization devices/Spinal Injuries
- Structural scoliosis greater than 30 degrees
- Student is over 200 pounds
- Tethered cord or Chiari II Malformation
- Uncontrolled seizures
- The staff is unable to safely manage the student in any situation, including an emergency dismount



**MISSION
MUSTANG®**
EQUICENTER

Contact: Lindsay Alberts, Director of Equine Operations: LAlberts@equicenterny.org 585-624-7777
Trainer: Emma Minter: Rosehillranch1@gmail.com

While veterans fight to build new lives after service, another American symbol is fighting a battle to find a place in a changing world. The American mustang has been a symbol of freedom throughout our nation's long history, representing resilience and strength to many Americans. As the open land continually shrinks, these horses are left with less room to live and thrive. The Bureau of Land Management has been essential in preserving the mustangs and while 50,000 horses continue to roam free, there are 48,000 horses in holding facilities waiting for a second chance. To find these horses homes, they must be "gentled" and given an opportunity for a meaningful life.

EquiCenter has been selected by the Bureau of Land Management to help lead a national pilot program that will address the needs of both America's veterans and mustangs. Veterans work alongside professional mustang trainers, to "gentle" the mustangs in order to help them find homes. Working together is giving veterans and mustangs a chance to save each other. Mustang Trainer, Emma Minter, has a background in natural horsemanship and training all different types of horses including mustangs.

Cancellation Policy

Same as Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship Program Policies

Attire

- All students will wear approved ASTM safety helmets when working around the horses. We have a selection available for you to borrow or you may purchase your own at any local Country max store or online at www.doversaddlery.com, www.statelinetack.com or www.freedomriders.com. Helmets must be manufactured within 5 years due to PATH regulations.
- Wear appropriate closed toe shoes (hard sole with some traction).
- In cold weather, wear layers and make sure you have gloves.
- In hot weather wear "breathable" clothing to avoid overheating. Sunscreen and a cold drink may also be a good idea!

Registration Policy

Same as Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship Program Policies *no medical forms needed for Mission Mustang*.



**THERAPEUTIC
HORTICULTURE
& FARMING**

EQUICENTER

Contact: Katie Nuber, *Director of Therapeutic Horticulture*: KNuber@equicenterny.org 585-624-7772

EquiCenter Farm includes a 3-acre in-ground teaching farm, greenhouse, accessible raised beds, apiary (honeybee hives), and maple syrup operation. Our horticulture programs are a great way for participants of all abilities and experiences to learn about farming and the growing world around us. By engaging in hands-on planting, maintenance, and harvesting activities, participants in our horticulture programs experience emotional healing, improved cognitive skills and improved balance, coordination, strength and stamina. They are able to hone skills as they help grow thousands of pounds of vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers each year, which are used in farm-to-table cooking classes, events and, donated to food security programs throughout the Rochester area.

Therapeutic Horticulture programs include weekly classes, seasonal workshops, and virtual courses. You can find all of our current and upcoming offerings at www.equicenterny.org/horticulture



Contact: Katie Nuber, *Director of Therapeutic Horticulture*: KNuber@equicenterny.org 585-624-7772

“From farm to table by the hands of heroes.”

This free program, for veterans, is taught by military veteran Ellen Adams, a chef and former contestant on the Food Network cooking show "Chopped!" Ellen provides participants the opportunity to learn to prepare a nutritionally complete, cost-efficient and delicious meal using fresh produce, partially sourced from the EquiCenter Farm.

This fun and educational program is run by veterans for veterans!

We welcome groups and individuals in this program, which allows participants to engage with one another socially while learning food preparation, presentation, and the opportunity to share a meal together.

To see our the Cooking With Heroes calendar and to register to reserve your spot, go to www.equicenterny.org/cooking-with-heroes

Resources for Veterans

- **Veterans Crisis Line:** 1-800-273-8255 <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>
The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that's available to anyone, even if you're not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. The caring, qualified responders at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained and experienced in helping Veterans of all ages and circumstances.
- va.gov: This website is a one-stop site to access and manage your VA benefits and health care.
- **Monroe County Veterans Service Agency:** <https://www2.monroecounty.gov/vsa-home>
125 Westfall Rd, Rochester, NY 14620 | Phone: 585 753-6040
To educate veterans and their families about the benefits they have earned; To represent and guide them in obtaining benefits and services both through the VA and the community; To make veterans an economic force in education, employment and business development.
- **Disabled American Veterans-DAV:** <http://monroepowers15dav.org/>
919 Westfall Rd building b suite 300, Rochester, NY 14618 | Phone: (585) 463-2782
We are dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We accomplish this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them. Primary services include claims assistance and resource connection.
- **Warrior Salute**
441 Penbrooke Dr Ste 5, Penfield, NY 14526 | Phone: (585) 364-3171
Through various wellness and family support services, Warrior Salute Veteran Services provides assistance to veterans and their families during the journey to transition back into their community.
- **Rochester Vet Center:**
2000 S. Winton Road, Bldg 5, Suite 201, Rochester, NY 14618 | Phone: 585-393-7608
Providing mental health and wellness services to combat veterans and their families.
- **Veterans Outreach Center:** <https://veteransoutreachcenter.org/>
447 South Ave, Rochester, NY 14620 | Phone: (585) 546-1081
Providing a variety of services for veterans including employment training and assistance, legal counseling, residential services, veteran and family support services, and support for veterans treatment court
- **Compeer Corps: PFC Dwyer Program** <https://www.compeerrochester.org/compeercorps>
259 Monroe Avenue Rochester, New York 14607 | Phone: (585) 546-8280
Offering peer support that provides opportunities for Veterans to engage, network, and form friendships with other Veterans to help reestablish the feeling of camaraderie and build positive mental health as they transition from military service to civilian life.
- **Trybe Ecotherapy:** <https://trybeecotherapy.com/forveterans>
1790 Penfield Rd. Penfield, NY 14526 | Phone: (585) 678-1313
Veterans receive nature-based (outdoor) mental health services which are easily accessible and at no charge to the veteran. Clinical services are offered 1:1 or in groups with other veterans. Trybe clinicians use a combination of mindful awareness and sensory experiences in a natural setting to support a cognitive behavioral approach to therapy.
- **Homeless Services:** <https://www2.monroecounty.gov/vsa-homeless-rc>

- **Canandaigua VA Medical Center-**
400 Fort Hill Ave, Canandaigua, NY 14424 | Phone: (585) 394-2000
<https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/veterans/>
- **NYS Department of Labor / Rochester Works!** <http://www.rochesterworks.org>
267 Waring Road Rochester, NY 14609
- **Nicholas Brown Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist**
nicholas.brown@labor.ny.gov | 585-266-7760 Ext. 208