



THERAPEUTIC RIDING * GIRL SCOUT *PROGRAM



By: Mikayla Geeve

ABOUT ME

My name is Mikayla Geeve and I created this program for my Girl Scout Gold Award project!

My love for horses began when I started taking horseback riding lessons in the 7th grade. The center that I ride at also has a therapeutic riding program.

I have volunteered my time throughout my high school years to support disabled individuals experiencing the benefits of horses.

I chose to complete my Girl Scout Gold Award project on therapeutic riding to help educate and inspire others to learn about and support the field.



ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

Welcome Girl Scouts!

Girl Scouts of all ages are invited to learn about therapeutic riding!

This program is designed to help girls learn about the benefits of therapeutic riding, how they can help facilities continue to provide services, and what is required if they want to pursue a career in therapeutic riding.

This program is estimated to take a couple of hours to complete, not including the visit to a therapeutic riding facility.

There are five steps they will need to complete in order to earn their patch.

I hope you enjoy learning about therapeutic riding!



STEP 1:

What is therapeutic riding?

Info Paragraph:

Therapeutic Riding is a type of adaptive riding that provides therapeutic benefits. It can relieve symptoms associated with a disorder, such as autism or multiple sclerosis, that a person might have. Therapeutic Riding uses a horse to improve a participant's physical, emotional, cognitive, and social well-being. Physical well-being is like how strong you are. Emotional well-being is if you're happy, sad, mad, etc. Cognitive well-being is how you think, make decisions, or learn. Social well-being is how you interact with others and the relationships you have.

For example, when I visited Colorado Therapeutic Riding Center, my mom and I watched a session. The instructor used baby powder to create different shapes on the sand. By having the participant follow the path of the shape, different skills were being applied. A circle on the ground created round movement and bending. Shapes like squares created 90 degree turns. This teaches patience, listening skills and physical skills.

There are two different types of Therapeutic Riding, including Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT) and Therapeutic Riding (TR).

STEP 1:

Step Options

- Think about a sport or an activity you do that makes you happy or improves yourself physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially. Next time you do that activity, write down three things for each category.
Or
- Create a piece of art to demonstrate a part of your life. It can either represent your physical life, emotional, cognitive or social life.
Or
- Research the two types of therapeutic riding and create a project to show what you've learned.



STEP 2:

Who benefits from therapeutic riding?

Info Paragraph:

There are many benefits from Therapeutic Riding, and it can positively affect everyone. The participants, parents, volunteers, staff and the horses all benefit from these sessions.

Participants can benefit from either riding the horse or just simply being around them.

My mom and I visited Miracles Therapeutic Riding Center. They taught us about alternate activities participants can benefit from without riding the horse. They can benefit from activities like “buying” grooming tools to teach life skills, singing a song like “head shoulders knees and toes” to improve balance and coordination or playing twister to improve problem solving.

STEP 2:

Step Options

- Come up with a song that you think would help a participant in a session. You can either make up your own song, or find an existing song online.
Or
- With your troop, play a head shoulders knees and toes game.
Or
- Research other ways someone can benefit from therapeutic activities. For example, Horses Help in Arizona has a garden that participants can look at and care for the plants without actually riding a horse.



STEP 3:

What is required to be an instructor for therapeutic riding?

Info Paragraph:

If you have an interest in horses or helping people, being a Therapeutic Riding instructor would be a good option. While a college degree isn't required to be an instructor, studying equine science, psychology, physical therapy, speech therapy or occupational therapy would be beneficial.

In addition, most facilities are PATH certified and need PATH certified instructors. During my visit at Heart and Horses Therapeutic Riding Center, I talked to Liv, who obtained her college degree in equine science and psychology. Liv started off as a volunteer and worked her way up to become a PATH certified instructor. There is a greater need in the community for Therapeutic Riding services than there are instructors to support the need, which means in order to solve the problem, we need more instructors. Most of the facilities we visited had over 300 individuals in need of therapeutic services.

STEP 3:

Step Options

- Dive deeper on the requirements of being a Therapeutic Riding instructor. Talk with a real instructor or watch a video explaining more.
Or
- With your Girl Scout friends, role play your interpretation of what a therapeutic session would look like to you.
Or
- Research PATH certification, what it is and how it is important. Create a project to demonstrate what you've learned.



STEP 4:

Visit a therapeutic riding center

Info Paragraph:

While learning about this topic, I visited many Therapeutic Riding facilities. In Colorado, I visited Colorado Therapeutic Riding Center where I talked to Kristin Knudsen and watched instructor Michelle teach a session. I went to Miracles Therapeutic Riding Center to discuss the benefits with Lori.

At Hearts and Horses in Loveland, Colorado, I talked with Liv and watched one of her sessions.

When my family and I went to Arizona for vacation, I took the opportunity to visit a facility there. Horses Help was a gorgeous place and had lots of interesting information.



STEP 4:

Step Option

Tour a Therapeutic Riding facility and learn about their cause.



STEP 5:

How can you help?

Info Paragraph:

There are many ways you can help a Therapeutic Riding facility. Volunteering is one of the best ways to provide support, especially during the summer when more help is needed. I've volunteered at 2BG Equestrian School for the past five years, helping throughout the summer and during the school year. These facilities are in more need of volunteers because most are non-profits. Non-profit means the facility does not make money and in most cases, the therapy sessions are not eligible to be paid by health insurance companies the same as going to a physical therapist would be. Sometimes Equine Assisted Therapy(EAT) sessions are paid for by medical insurance. However, Therapeutic Riding(TR) is not considered eligible under health insurance coverage. Becoming a volunteer means you can support these facilities who are trying to benefit disabled individuals in the community. You could become a certified instructor, trainer or vet. You could donate money, horses or spread awareness through social media or word of mouth.

STEP 5:

Step Options

- Create a social media page online to show what you've learned (from step 4) to spread awareness about Therapeutic Riding and their cause.
- Or
- Create a newspaper/flier to share with family, friends or neighbors that explains the importance of therapeutic riding and what they can do to help spread awareness or support the cause.
- Or
- Volunteer at a Therapeutic Riding facility to show your support and help others.



INFORMATION

The first 50 Girl Scouts to complete my program will receive the patch for free!

To qualify for the free patch, please email
mgeeve3@gmail.com
the following:

*Photo of Girl Scout at therapeutic riding center visit
(step 4)

*Share your thoughts regarding my program!

*Name and address to mail patch

Just a heads up:

Once the first 50 patches are given, patches are \$3.00 each.

Thank you!!