



Building Character...

Restoring Hope...

Empowering Relationships...

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## New Rider Information Packet

Revised: 22-Aug-2011

Since 2008, the leadership at Valley Trotters Youth Ranch has focused on molding and shaping the lives youth. In everything we do, it's our mission to be leaders in:

**Building Character... Restoring Hope... Empower Relationships...**

The vision that keeps us laser focused on our mission:

**Making a difference in the lives of valley youth, connecting the needs of  
Equine (horses) with the undiscovered potential in every child & youth.**

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## Welcome to the VTYR family

We want your experience to be safe, rewarding, therapeutic and fun. It is essential for our participants, volunteers, and horses that we uphold consistency in VTYR activities, procedures and policies. As a new family member of VTYR it is important that you understand how and why we ask for your commitment to respect the basics of our operating system, which are explained in this new rider manual. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask. We look forward to sharing the VTYR experience with you.

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### Important Phone Numbers:

**Greg Bozard** - Executive Director  
Mobile: 956-369-9278  
greg@valleytrottersyouthranch.org

**Abby Bozard** - Mentor & Instructor  
Mobile: 956-369-1078  
abby@valleytrottersyouthranch.org

**Leslie Crown** - Volunteer Coordinator  
Home: 956-631-5666  
volunteer@valleytrottersyouthranch.org

VTYR Office phone: 956-618-2128



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## 1. EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES

*“There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.”*

*~ Winston Churchill ~*

### More Than Riding at Valley Trotters Youth Ranch

VTYR is continually exploring services that would benefit youth and families of the Rio Grande Valley. The following is a brief description of each activity that VTYR offers and the proper definition of each.

**Equine Assisted Activities (EAA)** is an umbrella term inclusive of all the various offerings of this riding center. The term EAA does not differentiate between the typically developing individual and the individual with disabilities or diverse needs. This term will be used by VTYR to accurately make global statements about equine related activities.

**Focused Riding Program (FRP)** is a single or series of mounted activities including traditional riding disciplines or adaptive riding activities conducted by our instructors. At VTYR these activities are taught using a unique one horse/one rider/one instructor method, however, as the student develops and progresses we may utilize group lessons to accomplish specific goals. All lessons are scheduled by appointment. Mounted activities are designed to meet each participant’s individual needs and may focus on fine and gross motor skills, balance, strength, coordination and conditioning, tactile senses, team work, communication, and much more.

**Horsemanship Development Program (HDP)** is mounted and non-mounted equine activities conducted by our instructor. Those who benefit from this program are the typically developing or people with disabilities or diverse needs who wish to develop their skills in horse care, horse handling, and riding. Most students progress in riding and horse care skills while improving cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral skills.

**Equine Rescue Program (ERP)** is non-mounted equine activities lead by our instructor. Those desiring to participate in our rescue program have the opportunity to learn and practice the science skills necessary to care for mild -to- moderately abused or mistreated horses. While we cannot provide a clinical environment or direct in-house veterinary care we can and do supply a comfortable setting and excellent care for our angels in horse hair while they recover. Throughout the restoration process our goal is to return each horse to its useful and beneficial state. The children, youth and families of the Valley Trotters Youth Ranch develop broad expertise when caring for the recovering horses including, but not limited to; proper equine nutrition, disease prevention, wound care, parasite control, grooming techniques, rehabilitation methods and conditioning of the equine mind and body. Many horses recover completely and can be placed into service here at the ranch. After careful and complete evaluation by the ranch staff some horses are selected to be trained for use in our focused riding program. Horses that are not suited for our riding program are offered to a good home under mutual adoption terms.

**Therapeutic** - An activity is therapeutic if a participant derives benefit, shows improvement or feels better once engaged. An activity can be therapeutic without being considered as therapy. In general, EAAs may be described as therapeutic, but they are not therapy and are not considered treatment without fulfilling specific requirements. (See Therapy, defined below)

**Therapy** - At present, VTYR does not offer, nor makes any claims of providing therapy or treatment, or billing for services with a third party, this may be done only by a licensed/credentialed professional such as a PT, OT, SLP, psychologist, social worker, or MD, among others.



Building Character...  
PRINCIPLES OF CHARACTER

Restoring Hope...  
RESTORING HOPE

Empowering Relationships...  
EMPOWERING RELATIONSHIPS

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## 2. HOW TO SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS

*“In riding a horse we borrow freedom”*

**Delivery of Service and Scheduling of Sessions** - VTYR is open January thru December except for the holiday schedule stated below. VTYR accepts reservations for upcoming sessions beginning the 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month. Sessions are scheduled on a first come / first served basis. Reservations may be secured by calling the VTYR office (956) 618-2128. We may be busy with a lessons or chores, if so, we will return all calls in the order they were received. Participants may schedule two sessions per month per child. Special scheduling preferences are given to our students with disabilities or diverse needs.

**Holiday Schedule** - VTYR will be closed on the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Eve. In the event a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed to observe the holiday on Friday. Sunday holidays will be observed on Monday.

## 3. CANCELLATION POLICY

*“I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”*

**Who do I call if I can’t come?** - Many volunteers give their valuable time! If you must miss a lesson, please let us know as soon as possible, so we can notify volunteers for that day. If there is an emergency and you can’t come on the day of class, please call and speak to Greg Bozard at (956) 369-9278.

**How do I find out if lessons are cancelled?** - Because consistency is so important for our riders, we rarely cancel a lesson. If you think weather conditions threaten a safe riding environment or you are unsure that lessons are being held, please call Greg Bozard at (956) 369-9278. If VTYR triggers a cancellation, you will be contacted at the numbers given on your participant application.

**What if I’m late?** - We plan a prompt start to all sessions; under most conditions the 90 - minute session can tolerate small fluctuations to the start time however, if you are more than 15-minutes late that session will be cancelled and recorded as a participant absence.



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#### 4. DRESS CODE

*“He knows when you are happy. He knows when you are comfortable. He knows when you are confident and he always knows when you have carrots.”*

**Safety is our overriding priority** – In order to minimize risk of injury to person or horse we ask that you conform to our code of dress.

- ❖ Shoes or boots with minimum ½” heel height must be worn when riding. This will reduce the risk of a “slip thru” by the rider’s foot and ankle.
- ❖ You will find a higher level of comfort when you wear light weight stockings as opposed to thick athletic style socks.
- ❖ Full length jeans are acceptable, riding tights are preferred, shorts and uncovered legs are not permitted.
- ❖ Dress for comfort by layering your clothing, jackets or hoodies with front zipper are preferred as opposed to a pullover style. Don’t forget to protect your skin from sunburn, use sunscreen or long sleeves.
- ❖ Bulky jewelry, large belt buckles, and cell phones are unnecessary burdens to carry while riding at the ranch.
- ❖ Long hair is best controlled when gathered into a pony tail at the base of the skull.
- ❖ Available upon request VTJR can provide you a recommended equipment list for the rider.

#### 5. RANCH RULES

*“No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care”*

**Rules are developed for the benefit of all who visit** – During your visit, whether short or lengthy YOU ARE A WELCOME FRIEND! Please remember, everyone will benefit when you follow the rules...

- ❖ Please park to conserve as much space as possible in our small lot.
- ❖ Gates should be closed unless requested otherwise.
- ❖ All riders must wear a helmet.
- ❖ All visitors must have a completed release form.
- ❖ Riding is not allowed without a completed release form.
- ❖ Closed toe /heel shoes are required around horses.
- ❖ Enter paddock / tack areas only with a leader.
- ❖ Always move attentively / respectfully around horses.
- ❖ Clean up after yourself.