



RIDER'S HANDBOOK

“ In riding a horse, we borrow freedom ”

How to Register Your Rider

All necessary registration forms are located on our website- www.positivestridescenter.org. All forms must be updated on a yearly basis. We cannot allow your rider to participate if the packet is incomplete, as per PATH guidelines.

We ask that you give detailed information regarding your rider. We utilize the forms when matching the rider with the horse, and it is very helpful to have as much information as possible for us to make each rider's experience a safe and happy one.

For More Information (FMI) regarding registration contact Kim Thomas at 443-239-4953 / positivestridesed@gmail.com

Payment

Unless you have been awarded a scholarship, payment for the session is due at the beginning of the session. The current price of the session is \$55 per day per rider. This fee is well below our actual cost, and below the rates of other programs in the area. You will receive a bill early into the current session. Spring and fall sessions will contain 10 weekly rides, and summer and winter sessions will contain 6 weekly rides. We charge by the session and expect riders to attend all days of each session they commit to. We do not refund or make up any lessons the rider does not attend unless PSI must cancel for weather or any reason.

Pricing for camps and other specialty programming will vary.

You may pay online or by check, credit card, or PayPal.

Checks should be made out to Positive Strides, Inc. If you are mailing the check, mail to Positive Strides Inc, PO Box 391 Easton, MD 21601.

Credit cards will have a 4 % processing fee to cover our cost. If paying by credit card, please contact Mike Jordan at bookkeeper@positivestridescenter.org.

PayPal payment may be made by using our email address: Specialriders@hotmail.com.

For more information regarding payment questions, please contact bookkeeper, Mike Jordan, at bookkeeper@positivestridescenter.org

Scholarships

PSI offers limited scholarships to families who can demonstrate a hardship in paying for the session. Each rider must individually apply for a scholarship. The application is short, and must be complete for the scholarship committee to make an informed decision. The amount of each scholarship awarded may vary based on the needs of the client.

FMI regarding scholarships contact Kim Thomas [443-239-4953](tel:443-239-4953) / positivestridesed@gmail.com.

Cancellations/make up days

Our new facilities at Timber Grove Farm enable us to ride most days. However, we will cancel riding due to thunderstorms, or other weather conditions that may create a safety issue. PSI will follow the school cancellation policy, and if you have questions, please don't hesitate to call the numbers listed below.

We will do all we can to ensure that your rider will have a makeup for any lessons PSI has to cancel. If we are unable to have makeups for lessons we cancel, we will either credit or refund for the canceled lesson.

To cancel a lesson please call or text Kim @ 443-239-4953

Riding information

We are including some basic tips to help your rider have a great riding experience at PSI

Attire: Long pants are required to ensure each rider has a comfortable riding experience. Stirrup leathers and other equipment can cause rubbing, irritation, and/or sores on bare legs. If the weather is warm, please pack long pants for them to change into right before riding.

We stock extra gloves and some coats in the PSI office but try to remember to dress your rider in multiple layers if the weather is cold. Gloves are also necessary as the hands are exposed the entire time of the ride.

PSI supplies and assigns boots, helmets, and safety belts for each rider. Please make sure they are returned after each ride as we have many riders who utilize the same equipment.

Helmet fit is important, as an improper fitting helmet can be a safety hazard. High pony tails or other hairstyles can change the fit of the rider's assigned helmet. Please make sure to have alternative hair supplies, or be prepared to change your rider's hair to ensure a proper and safe fitting helmet.

If you are interested in finding out how to purchase boots or a helmet for your rider, you can check out the following websites for reasonably priced items:

Dover Saddlery- www.doversaddlery.com

Chicks Saddlery- www.chicksaddlery.com

Dangling jewelry/sunglasses or any accessory that can get caught up in the tack are safety hazards, and are not allowed to be worn during riding times.

FMI regarding attire contact Kim Thomas 443-239-4953/ positivestridesed@gmail.com .

All Observers (caregiver, parent, family, friends)

To ensure the safety of all riders, volunteers, instructors, and horses, we ask that you closely supervise all children and guests under your care while on the property. Certain areas are restricted to TGF staff only—please observe and respect all posted signage.

We have a designated area by the arena with picnic tables for family and caregivers to sit and watch riding. We ask you to please make sure not to distract riders while in the arena. Riders and their horses can become distracted when spectators call out to them, and horses can become spooked if there are loud noises, talking on cell phones and lots of activity near the fence.

Please refer to the **Farm and Facility Safety Rules** for detailed rules and instructions.

Cell phones

Riders are not allowed to carry cell phones while riding. They are a distraction to the riders, and can startle the horse if the ringer is not turned off.

Farm and Facility Safety Rules

TGF (Timber Grove Farm) owners and PSI (Positive Strides, Inc.) members ask that you always follow our farm and facility rules while on the premises. Implementation of the following rules are important in maintaining the safety of our volunteers, staff, riders, volunteers, visitors, and horses.

Please drive slowly when entering the farm. We have children and adults who may not be aware of your vehicle approaching. Horses can become distracted or startled by a fast moving vehicle, potentially causing a fall or injury to the therapy team.

Only vehicles transporting our riders may park in the designated Handicapped Parking areas near the PSI office. Our parking area near the office is limited, and we need to keep driveway clear in case of a need for any emergency response vehicles. The driveway area between the PSI barn and the arenas is also utilized for mounting, and our riders and horses gather there as they wait for their turn to mount. You may park along the front fields and front arena along either side of the lane.

Certain areas are restricted to TGF staff only—please observe and respect all posted signage.

Guest and Child Supervision Policy

To ensure the safety of all riders, volunteers, instructors, and horses, we ask that you closely supervise all children and guests under your care while on the property.

Horses are prey animals with strong flight instincts and can be easily startled by unexpected sights or sounds. Because of this, things such as the following are strictly prohibited anywhere on the property. All of these have occurred in the past and have created unsafe situations.

- **umbrellas**
- **balloons**
- **loud or sudden noises**
- **running**
- **yelling**
- **loud cell phone conversations**

We understand that family members and housemates often want to attend and support their rider—especially during sessions—but it is essential that all children and guests remain calm, quiet, and within designated PSI areas at all times (the PSI office, our arena, observation area). Riders, horses, and therapy teams must be able to focus without distraction. Unsupervised guests, particularly young children, can pose a major safety risk to everyone involved. This is especially concerning for our team members who are responsible for ensuring everyone's safety.

When observing sessions, we ask that all guests display a calm, quiet presence. This helps maintain a safe and supportive environment for the riders, volunteers, instructors, and horses.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is strictly prohibited anywhere on the property, including inside vehicles and at the end of the lane. This is not only a courtesy—it is a critical safety measure. The risk of barn fires is one of the greatest concerns for any horse farm. In an emergency, many horses refuse to leave their stalls when frightened (because they've always felt safe there). This can result in tragedy. We enforce this rule without exception, and continued disregard may result in being asked not to return to the farm.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe, peaceful environment for everyone involved."

Do not attempt to pet or feed any horses, in the stalls or fields. While we all love our horses and ponies, we ask that you do not, or allow your children, to pet the horses without permission. Some of the horses that reside at TGF are not PSI program horses and may have specific behavior issues that could cause harm to someone who is not privy to their needs. We also ask that you do not feed any of the horses on the grounds, as hand feeding can encourage horses to nip. Also, many of our horses and ponies have special dietary needs and feeding them certain treats can cause illness. Please do not enter the main barn as it is the TGF barn and houses horses that are not a part of the PSI program.

About Us

Founded in 1981, Positive Strides (PSI), formerly Talbot Special Riders, is a nonprofit organization that provides equine assisted services (EAS) to individuals with physical, mental, and emotional challenges. Our curriculum is adjusted to the individual needs or requirements and capabilities of our participants.

Our goal is to build confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment. Our therapies also increase their attention span, coordination, spatial relations, stretching/strengthening capabilities, and ability to follow directions.

We emphasize ABILITIES, not disabilities!

In the summer of 2016, Positive Strides, Inc (PSI) relocated to its new home, Timber Grove Farm (TGF), in Preston, MD. This move enabled us to expand our 20 week spring and fall program to a full time, year-round program. In addition to this expansion, we now offer special camps and weekend programming.

OUR STAFF

Kim Hopkins, Executive Director

Ashley Hopkins, Equine Manager "Vendor"

Mike Jordan, Bookkeeper "Vendor"

Merry Skirka, Volunteer Coordinator

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Moore, President

Meg Stein, Vice President

Tracy Detrich, Secretary

Mary Cottingham

LeeAnn Hutchison

Ridgely Ochs

Sandy Wellford King, Founder

Jessie Browne, Founder, Emeritus Director

We currently own six program horses and ponies but are already forecasting a need to increase the herd, due to our expanding programming.

The remainder of the PSI family is made up of a large and wonderful group of volunteers.

PSI implements and follows all guidelines mandated by Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH).

Share Your Thoughts

We truly appreciate your feedback—both positive and constructive! Positive Strides, Inc. is committed to providing the highest quality equine-assisted services, and we rely on input from our entire community to grow and improve.

Whether you're a rider, parent, caregiver, family member, or friend, your voice matters. You are all an important part of the Positive Strides family—and some of our most powerful ambassadors. When you share your experiences, you help spread the word to others who might benefit from our programs or inspire donors whose support helps us continue and expand our services.

We'd love for you to share your story with us! Whether Positive Strides has brought you healing, growth, connection, or just a big smile, we want to hear about it.

Please visit the Testimonials page on our website to tell us how Positive Strides has made a difference in your life:

👉 www.positivestridescenter.org/testimonial_form.html

Thank you for being such a valued part of our community!

**Please “like” us on Facebook @positivestridescenter
and ask all your friends to do the same**

Positive Strides, Inc

P0 Box 391

Easton, MD 21601

443-239-4953 or 410-673-7450

PositiveStridesCenter.org



