



*Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding, Inc.*

We improve quality of life through equine-based therapy to physically, mentally and socially/emotionally challenged individuals. Our unique program integrates academic, social and physical skills, using the horse as a catalyst.

## **INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH EQUEST?**

- Sidewalk with riders (14 years of age and older)
- Lead horses in class (14 years of age and older)
- Greet riders at the Welcome Center desk
- One-time volunteer group experience for individuals of all ages



**For more information, contact  
Sara Nelson at:**

SaraNelson@equestcenter.org  
616-866-3066 ext 102



## *Did you ever wish for something as a child?*

Some children wish for a new toy, video game, or pet. Other children wish for simpler things - balance, coordination or the ability to walk where they want to go. Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding works to turn these special children's wishes into reality all year round.

Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding is a unique program that utilizes the horse to restore hope, health, and happiness to individuals with disabilities. This form of therapy is widely recognized as an effective rehabilitation tool in the treatment of children and adults with an extensive range of physical, mental, and social/emotional disabilities. Individuals with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, Down syndrome, ADD, muscular dystrophy, autism, traumatic brain injury, and learning disabilities have been among the thousands who have benefited by participating in Equest Center's programs.

Equest's riding program began in 1990 with just 16 riders per week. Since that time, we have grown to serve 185+ individuals (ages 2-100 with a variety of physical, mental and social/emotional challenges) each week with a waiting list of over 60 individuals waiting to participate. Programming opportunities have also expanded to meet the specific needs of our clients. To learn more about our programs visit [www.equestcenter.org/programs/](http://www.equestcenter.org/programs/).

The facility is located on 34+ acres of beautiful, pastoral land in Rockford, MI and is one of the two largest therapeutic riding centers in the state of Michigan. With 1 mile of outdoor trails and a heated indoor arena/classroom/facilities, Equest operates on a year-round basis, which is critical to so many of our riders. We are the only year-round center in this area.

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Vital to our program is an army of dedicated volunteers who assist in virtually every area of the center. Much is learned through the interaction with our special needs riders, volunteers, staff, parents, and equine therapists. Many volunteers experience their first interaction with disabled individuals at Equest. It doesn't take long to eliminate stereotypical ideas and misconceptions regarding these special people! A greater understanding and respect is gained for these individuals after witnessing their courage, determination, and all that they encounter on a daily basis. It allows everyone involved to gain a new perspective which carries over into all areas of life.

We invite students who are looking to complete service/volunteer hours in the community as a part of graduation requirements, class internships, requirements for inclusion in the National Honor Society, or any other organizations to consider becoming a part of the volunteer team at Equest!

Regularly scheduled classes run Monday through Friday each week, both during the day and in the evening. ***No horse experience is needed! For those who choose to work with the horses and clients - we will***

**train you!** There are other volunteer needs that do not involve working with the horses, as well. Additional classes and special events run on weekends.

Some of the most pressing volunteer needs are:

1. Welcome Center desk attendant - Involves greeting riders/parents as they arrive, answering phones, helping distribute and gather information as riders enter and leave. **This is a great opportunity for high school students, as there are times when the desk is quiet and they may be able to read or work on homework until the next clients arrive.**
2. Working with horses and riders in the barn and arena as a side walker, horse leader, groomer, barn buddy (**CRITICAL NEED**). All training is provided!
3. Data entry
4. Helping with special events - Easter with the Equest Bunny (April) and Derby event (May)
5. Summer Camp - work with horse riders of all abilities as they ride, learn to care for a horse, and enjoy a variety of fun activities
6. One-time group volunteering - **great team-building opportunity for student organizations, clubs, and sports teams!**
7. Farm maintenance/special projects
8. Working with Veterans in Horses for Heroes program
9. And the list goes on and on....

If you are interested in learning more about how to get involved, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Sara Nelson at [saranelson@equestcenter.org](mailto:saranelson@equestcenter.org) or call her at the center 616-866-3066 Ext 102. You can also locate more information online at [www.equestcenter.org](http://www.equestcenter.org) or find us on Facebook! We welcome your questions and participation!

Equest has proven to be a lifeline to many children, adults and their families who had given up hope with conventional therapy. For those of us who are involved with Equest, we are blessed not only with the joy of knowing these very special riders, but also with actively participating in their physical, emotional and intellectual growth. Each rider is a success story. With your help, many more children will be able to benefit from our program and have their wishes come true. Join the team today! Make new friends, learn new skills and most importantly, make a difference in the life of a very special rider!

With Much Appreciation,



Kathy Ryan, Executive Director  
616.262.4994

[KathyRyan@equestcenter.org](mailto:KathyRyan@equestcenter.org)  
[Equest Center Brochure](#)



### ***Mission Statement***

*We improve quality of life through equine-based therapy to physically, mentally and socially / emotionally challenged individuals. Our unique program integrates academic, social and physical skills, using the horse as a catalyst.*

*Equest also provides a meaningful community outreach program to businesses, schools, juvenile programs and youth organizations willing to accept the opportunity to become trained volunteers in the program. We are committed to collaborating with as many organizations as possible to provide quality therapy programs.*