



## **SIDEWALKER JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **REQUIRED SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

- 14 years of age or older. Minors must have parental permission to volunteer.
- Friendly, flexible, dependable, and compassionate
- Strong communication skills
- Comfortable working with individuals who have special needs
- Comfortable working with horses
- In generally good health and able to walk for 30+ minutes and jog for short distances
- Able to hold arm above shoulder height and support a rider's weight
- Able to accurately understand and follow directions from a direct supervisor in a fast-paced environment
- Willing to be outdoors in many weather extremes

### **REQUIRED TIME COMMITMENT**

- Must be available for at least 90 minutes at the same time and day each week
- Must commit to a full 6-week riding session, or make suitable and timely arrangements otherwise
- Must attend initial 2-hour volunteer orientation and training

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Follow all Mountin' Hopes volunteer policies, procedures, and safety regulations
- Inform the Mountin' Hopes program coordinator in a timely fashion of any absences and follow the substitution policy
- Arrive 30 minutes before class starts
- Assist riders to groom and tack horses
- Promote rider independence and success
- Check horses for injuries
- Alert instructor of any horse or rider safety or health concerns
- Assist instructor in maintaining a safe environment
- Assist instructor during mounting and dismounting, including emergency dismount if necessary
- Walk beside the mounted rider to provide physical assistance and stabilization when directed or necessary
- Help rider to understand and follow instructor's directions and cues
- Communicate with rider when appropriate including verbal and non-verbal prompts
- Remain focused on assisting the rider

## Mountin' Hopes Volunteer Training Side walker Qualifying Checklist

Volunteers who have good interpersonal communication skills may qualify to be a side walker in Mountin' Hopes therapeutic riding program. The following checklist serves as basic criteria for this responsibility. Volunteers must have at minimum a "Good" scoring in all categories to qualify.

**Session 1:** The potential side walker will not assist with the rider unless the instructor requests. The potential side walker will shadow a mentor side walker and may ask any questions either before or after the session. The potential side walker may be asked to assist with preparation or clean up from the session.

**Session 2:** The potential side walker will be the riders primary side walker with the mentor side walker available for assistance. The potential side walker should use this time to demonstrate the criteria listed on the checklist. The instructor may ask the mentor side walker to resume an active position based on varying needs of the lesson.

*\* MH staff will provide a time for questions & feedback after the second session is completed. Based on their observation of the potential side walker, they will recommend that the potential side walker is ready to join the MH lesson program or that further shadowing is needed in order to fully meet the responsibilities placed on this position.*

		Needs Practice	Attempts	Good	Excellent	Notes
Arrived on time and adequately participated in preparation						
Interacted appropriately with the rider & other volunteers						
Followed directions from Instructor	Preparation					
	Mount					
	Rider needs					
	Dismount					
Followed all safety guidelines						
<b><i>MH Recommendation</i></b>						