
Back Cover

FRONT COVER

Welcome to LoveWay!



We are truly grateful for your willingness to help with our therapeutic equestrian program and hope that you will enjoy your time with us.

At LoveWay we strive to improve the quality of life for individuals with special needs. Through therapeutic horseback riding our students not only learn the basics of horsemanship but also gain skills that improve their daily lives. LoveWay provides a sense of responsibility, value, and purpose in life, and also instills confidence as relationships are formed with the horses, staff, and volunteers. The experience stimulates independency, by using the horse's legs as the rider's own, and freedom that otherwise would be impossible. Miracles happen in our arena everyday in many forms: a smile, a word spoken, a step taken.

As a volunteer, you will be part of the miracle of changing the lives of our riders.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Resources

<http://www.pathintl.org/>



Other Volunteer Opportunities

MAINTENANCE: Help with maintenance and upkeep of the pastures, grounds, stable & buildings such as mowing, string trimming, manure removal, fence repair, etc.



CAMP: Assist children without disabilities in week-long day camps during the summer and winter breaks. You'll act as the rider's buddy for the week helping them learn to ride and interact safely with their horse.

FEEDER: Work with instructors to bring in horses and give them grain and hay and clean stalls. Feeders help with either morning or evening feedings.

OFFICE: Help with data entry, answer phones, filing, mailings, grant writing, etc.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Help prepare for or on the day of a special event such as Derby Day or Ride-a-Thon. It could be helping obtain door prizes or helping with food preparation, etc.

SMTV: (Saturday Morning Teen Volunteers) A program for teens age 14-18 years old on Saturday mornings from 8am-10am. Teens help with horses and barn chores.

SCHOOLING RIDER: Ride LoveWay's horses to keep them exercised and in shape. Must be an experienced rider and be able to walk, trot, and canter. This position has limited availability and will be assigned by LoveWay staff.

BOARD MEMBER: Be part of a professional team that oversees, advises, and makes decisions concerning LoveWay. Terms last for three years.

Please see the Volunteer Coordinator to help with any of these volunteer opportunities.

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About LoveWay

MISSION STATEMENT

Transforming the lives of individuals with special needs through comprehensive therapeutic equestrian services.

BRIEF HISTORY

LoveWay was founded in 1973 by Gary and Sandy Weatherwax in memory of their 16 year old daughter Laurie. They began giving lessons in their driveway with the help of specially selected horses and volunteers. Since that time we have grown to serve over 200 hundred students each year with the help of around 150 volunteers. Our facility is located on 29 acres of land and now has a heated indoor arena and stable, an outdoor arena, wooded trails and office space.

HOW IS LOVEWAY FUNDED?

LoveWay is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit organization and receives no Federal or State funding to run our facility. We rely on support from the community to fund our programs. Donations and fundraisers are the primary ways LoveWay is funded. Grants and student fees also contribute a small portion to our budget. We continue to grow and expand each year with the generous support of the community.

RIDERS

The riders at LoveWay all have a diagnosed disability that may be physical, cognitive, or emotional. They come to LoveWay to gain skills that can help them in their daily lives. Daytime classes are made up of schools that bring their special needs classes on buses.

Evening and Saturday morning classes consist of students that are individually enrolled and come with their families or guardians. Evening students pay a fee to ride but scholarships are available for those that need assistance.



HOW IS LOVEWAY RUN?

LoveWay operates with an active Board of Directors and a small staff of mostly part-time employees. All instructors are PATH Certified and require training on disabilities and horses. We also utilize the help of over 150 volunteers to make our organization run.

Horse Leader Duties

MAIN FOCUS: THE HORSE

- Arrive 20 minutes early to get horses ready for class
- Check with the Instructor to see which horses need groomed.
- After grooming, return to commons room to be assigned to a student/horse
- Escort student to the barn and help them groom & tack
- Help student lead horse into the arena-make sure rope is not wrapped around their/your hand

DURING THE LESSON

- Always hold the horse's lead rope
- Horse should be on your right side when leading
- Walk between the horse's eye and shoulder
- Lead rope should be in your right hand with excess in your left hand in a figure eight-NEVER wrap rope around your hand.
- In the arena, line up at the number assigned by the instructor-don't play with its muzzle, face, eyes, ears, or forelock
- Keep horse still at the mount-stand directly in front of horse
- Be conscious of sidewalkers and don't run them into walls
- Wait for student to give cues before directing the horse
- Make sure horse behaves and listens to rider
- If horse spooks, speak calmly and continue on so the rider doesn't get scared
- If a rider falls, which is rare, your concern is the horse-move quickly to get the horse away from the rider. Turn the horse's nose toward the student moving its feet away from the student
- Lead horse from arena back into correct stall after class

AFTER THE LESSON

- Escort student back to commons room
- Make sure tack gets put away
- Help put horses back out outside in assigned pasture
- Clean manure in the stall or arena, empty wheelbarrow if needed
- Sweep barn aisle

Sidewalker Duties

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Arrive 20 minutes early to get horses ready for class
- Check with the Instructor to see which horses need to be groomed.
- After grooming, return to the commons room to be assigned to a student/horse
- Escort student to the barn and help them groom & tack

RIGHT SIDEWALKER - “Main Sidewalker”

Main Focus: To ensure rider follows instructor’s directions and is balanced and safe.

- Listen to the instructor’s directions
- If necessary, repeat directions to the rider
- If student doesn’t respond to instructions, use hand-over-hand method
- Should always know what the rider is doing
- Maintain rider’s balance if they cannot--instructor will show you how to support student
- If rider goes off balance, ask them to move to center or gently move them to the middle of the saddle after notifying the other sidewalker
- If rider begins to fall, help them regain their seat
- Limit conversations with other volunteers so rider may focus on instructions

LEFT SIDEWALKER - “Safety sidewalker”

Main Focus: rider’s safety

- Be aware of what the rider is doing at all times
- Limit conversation with rider or volunteers so rider may focus on instructions
- Maintain rider’s balance if they cannot

AFTER THE LESSON

- Escort student back to the commons room
- Make sure tack is put away properly
- Help put horses outside in assigned pasture
- Clean manure in the stall or arena, empty wheelbarrow if needed
- Sweep barn aisle

What are Therapeutic Equestrian Activities?

Therapeutic Equestrian Activities is a broad topic but at LoveWay we focus on two disciplines: Recreational Therapeutic Riding Classes and Equine Assisted Learning. In these sessions we use horses to stimulate parts of the brain and body that are not reached by other methods.



RECREATIONAL THERAPEUTIC RIDING CLASSES–

Are designed for students of all ages with a variety of disabilities. Students learn sequencing and work on memory skills as well as improve fine and gross motor skills by grooming and tacking their horses. In the

arena, students not only learn riding skills but also work on balance and strengthening muscle tone while riding. They form bonds with their volunteers that serve as sidewalkers and horse leaders. They also learn to trust and respect their horse. Many of our students find it very hard to form bonds with others in their life but in the therapeutic setting it comes more easily. Games are utilized during the arena lesson while the students are on horseback to work on attention span, following directions and coordination.

EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING (EAL)-Utilizes the *Cowboy Poetry* and *Journey of the Spirit Horse* Curriculum from Strides to Success. It is designed for students that are at risk of failing in the traditional school setting due to failing grades, negative behaviors, suspensions or low attendance. EAL uses the horse as a member of the teaching team and is highly recommended for any young person who is struggling with developing the interpersonal skill sets necessary to be successful in everyday life. Student populations served include individuals with emotional disabilities, ADHD, anger management issues, poor social skills, and difficult behaviors.

Each student is expected to participate in circle time where they will learn Cowboy Ethics and the Code of the West. Every week a new character skill is introduced and the students are encouraged to use the journal provided by LoveWay for creative writing and reflection. Throughout each lesson, utilization of character skills is encouraged. Team-building games are played to enhance relationships among the students. With a broad range of skills to learn and a stimulating learning environment, students who are typically disengaged find themselves

Volunteer Guidelines

LoveWay, Inc. reserves the right to not accept the volunteer services of any person for whom it has been determined that volunteer service at LoveWay, Inc. is not appropriate. This determination may include but is not limited to consideration of availability, health, attitude towards others, behavior or criminal record.

Volunteers must submit a signed and completed Volunteer Application and paperwork before being able to serve as a LoveWay, Inc. volunteer.

Volunteers must be able and willing to abide by all LoveWay, Inc. and PATH Intl. guidelines, including but not limited to confidentiality agreements and safety regulations. All LoveWay, Inc. volunteers must be able to safely serve the participants. Volunteers are not allowed to discuss or try to contact clients outside of the therapeutic environment.

Volunteers must complete a LoveWay, Inc. volunteer training and orientation session which includes but is not limited to facility orientation, organization history, tour, emergency procedures, confidentiality issues, persons served information, class schedules, horse handling/tacking procedures and arena procedures.

Volunteers should perform only the duties agreed upon with the instructor/supervisor.

LoveWay, Inc. is a non smoking facility. Discarded tobacco products are hazardous to our horses so please refrain from smoking on LoveWay property. Volunteers serving under the influence of alcohol or other potentially harmful drugs (prescription or otherwise) will be asked to leave and may be dismissed from service.

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner towards people and animals at all times while on the LoveWay, Inc. property.

In the event that a volunteer is not able to comply with LoveWay, Inc. or PATH Intl. guidelines, that volunteer may be removed from service by the Executive Director.

Tacking Order



- Tack should be put on in the same order each time to help the students with sequencing and to provide consistency for the horses.

1. SADDLE PAD

***Some horses use gel pads on top of the saddle pad.**

- goes in the center of horse's back
- put high on withers and slide back to smooth hair



2. SADDLE

- goes on top of saddle pad
- just behind horse's shoulder
- in center of horse's back



3. GIRTH

- attach to right side of saddle first
- use 1st and 3rd billets



4. BLACK & WHITE REINS

- clip to each side of halter
- white on right
- black on left



5. LEAD ROPE

- clip to ring under halter



Grooming Sequence



- Must be done each time a horse is ridden to prevent saddle sores.
- Always groom the horse from front to back and top to bottom.
- Grooming buckets contain two sets of brushes so that you may work along with the student.
- Always use the correct sequence when grooming to provide consistency for horses and students.

1. BODY BRUSH

- smoothes hair
- use in direction of hair growth
- flicks dirt/hair off horse
- may use on face and legs



2. MANE/TAIL COMB OR BRUSH

- untangles hair
- use on mane, tail, and forelock
- start at bottom of hair and work to top



3. HOOF PICK

- cleans dirt/debris out of hoof
- avoid frog
- pick away from body



Confidentiality Policy

All persons participating in the Love Way, Inc. program, including board members, staff, participants and volunteers will not disclose any information about a participant unless it is necessary for service to the participant.

Staff, board and volunteers will only discuss information about students for Love Way, Inc. related purposes.

Love Way, Inc. instructors should educate and alert their volunteers to be aware of any participant limitations that could be present while at Love Way, Inc.

All medical/participant records will be kept under the supervision of the Love Way, Inc. Program Manager.

All participant records will be kept in a locked file cabinet with limited key access in the Program Manager's office.

All records will be kept in accordance with any applicable PATH Intl. or HIPPA standards.



Important Information



ABSENCES: Volunteers are expected to be here for their scheduled class. Our students rely on you! If you are unable to make it to class, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible to allow adequate time to find someone to fill your spot. Without enough volunteers to help, the students cannot ride. Also, if you are interested in being on the sub list, let us know.

WEATHER/CLOSINGS: LoveWay follows the Elkhart Community Schools' guidelines for weather related closings. If the schools are closed, there will be no riding classes--this goes for evening sessions as well. When the schools are on a 2 hour delay, morning classes will also be cancelled at LoveWay. When in doubt, call the office.

BEHAVIOR ISSUES: Notify the Instructor of any issues you are having with horses or students. We may be unaware of the problem and can't fix it unless it is brought to our attention.

DRESS CODE: Volunteers should dress for the weather. Layered clothing that you are not afraid to get dirty is suggested. Clothing that is overly revealing or has offensive language is not permitted. Boots or sturdy shoes with closed toes are required.

IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE: Talk to the Instructor or Volunteer Coordinator if you aren't comfortable with the horse, student, or class, etc. you are working with. We will do our best to accommodate you.

FEEDBACK: We want to know what you enjoy about our center and also how we can improve. Do not be afraid to talk to us about any problems, concerns, suggestions, or questions you may have.



Rules for the Barn

1. The instructor is in charge at all times
2. Always walk--no running
3. Students must wear a helmet and be accompanied by a volunteer at all times in the barn
4. Give treats to horses in feed buckets only, don't feed by hand
5. Speak in respectful tones--no yelling
6. Closed toed shoes must be worn in the barn and arena
7. Only do tasks that are assigned to you
8. Bend at the waist in the stall, never kneel
9. Put things away when finished with them
10. Keep a positive attitude and HAVE FUN!



Horse Information

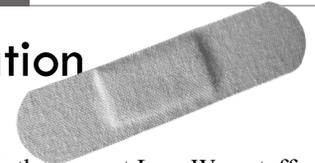
Working at LoveWay is not physically demanding for our horses but they can easily get burned out mentally. Here are a few tips to keep our horses happy for years to come:

- Speak in a calm voice around the horses
- Horses must be tied in their stall when they are tacked
- Keep lead rope and reins off the ground
- Always walk behind your horse in the stall and in front in the arena
- When leading, always use a loose lead to allow for natural head movement
- When a horse is behaving badly, it is not ok for volunteers to hit the horse. Please leave discipline up to staff.
- Give horses treats only when approved by staff so they don't get overfed.
- You may pet the horses but please refrain from playing with their face, muzzle, nose, mouth, forelock, etc.



LoveWay's horses are all specially trained and well behaved. They go through a rigorous selection process before they are selected to work in our program. However, please remember that they are still horses, not machines, so you should always be alert and pay attention when near the horses.

Emergency Information



IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY: the nearest LoveWay staff person is in charge. All Instructors are CPR, AED, and First Aid certified and will assess the situation. They will designate:

- Appropriate action to take based on the situation
- Who will phone for help/call 911
- Who will stay with the injured party
- Who will get the first aid kit/AED
- Who is responsible for students/volunteers
- Who is responsible for horses

CLASS EMERGENCY: all horse leaders will stop their horses. Side walkers will calm students, if needed, and follow the directions of the instructor in charge.

FIRST AID KIT: located on the counter under the helmet cabinets in the commons room. If you need anything from the first aid kit, please notify a staff person.

AED: (Automated External Defibrillator) located in the top right cabinet in the helmet area. This should only be operated by those that are trained to do so.

INJURIES/ACCIDENTS: even minor ones must be reported to a staff person. They will fill out a center occurrence report to document the event.

PHONES: located in both offices and on counter in the commons room.

FIRES: everyone will be evacuated from the building. If it is safe, staff will take care of the horses. Fire extinguishers are located in the cabinet under the helmets, in the barn aisle, beside the tack room, in the arena, and under the kitchen sink.

TORNADO/SEVERE STORM WATCH OR WARNING: all classes will be cancelled and everyone will be evacuated.

SEVERE WEATHER: cancellations will be determined by staff and will take the safety of riders, volunteers, staff, and horses into account.

Working with People with Disabilities

While volunteering at LoveWay you may work with individuals with a number of physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities. It is not possible for us to give a description of every disability you may encounter at LoveWay but your Instructor will give you the information you need to effectively work with each rider. We don't expect you to become an expert on your rider's disability. You will learn a lot about your student just by working with them each week. Don't be surprised if you are not told a lot of information about the rider. This is due to our confidentiality policy and to protect the privacy of our clients.

One important thing to remember is that although all of our riders have a disability, they are all unique and deserve the same respect as anyone else. Volunteers should focus on what the student CAN do and not what they can't do.

You may be feeling insecure about how to act or react to people who may look, sound, move and behave differently from what you usually expect. It can also be unsettling to meet a person who you know has a terminal illness or a parent of a teenage child who has cognitive limitations. What do you say? What do you not say? How should you react? What is the best way to help? These questions and the feelings of uncertainty they bring with them are perfectly normal and you need not be embarrassed about them.

Don't worry about making mistakes when meeting and communicating with a person who has a disability. Relax and let the person with the disability put you at ease. You will find that with experience and time, you will come to find ways of relating to individuals with disabilities and illness. After a while, you will come to know them as individuals and will reach the point where you will see them as friends and people first—without dwelling on the differences or constantly worrying about what to say or how to act.



Riders and You

HERE ARE SOME BASIC SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO RELATE TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES:

- A person with a disability is an individual first and is entitled to the same dignity, respect and considerations expected by anyone.
- Treat adults as adults. Only call an adult person with a disability by his or her first name after asking for the privilege.
- Do not “pat” people with disabilities on the head, shoulder or any other part of their body.
- Only help a person with a disability if they ask for assistance. You may offer assistance, but if it is declined, do not be offended.
- When assisting an individual with a disability always ask “how” you can help. Do not take over.
- Always address the person with a disability directly. Do not speak “about” them as if they were not present.
- Do not shout. Hearing aids make noises louder, not clearer. Blindness does not affect a person's hearing.
- If a person has difficulty speaking, allow them to finish their sentence. If you do not understand what they are saying, tell them so. Do not pretend you understood if you didn't.
- When meeting a person with a visual impairment, always identify yourself and tell them you are leaving before you walk away.
- Do not make assumptions. A person with a disability is the best judge of what they can do unless they are substantially cognitively impaired.
- Do not push a person's wheelchair, grab their arm or try to help without asking first.
- When speaking to a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair, find yourself a chair or crouch down at a comfortable distance so that you can converse on the same level.
- Respect personal space, but when a person with a disability asks you for help, they may direct you to hold, lift or otherwise assist them in a very specific way.
- When an assistant accompanies an adult with a disability, address the person with the disability directly, unless you are asked to do otherwise.
- Never move someone's crutches, walkers, canes, service animal or other mobility aid without permission.