

EQUI & KIDS



Changing lives one stride at a time!



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ABOUT EQUI KIDS



Founded in 1989, EQUI-KIDS is a 501c3 organization that provides life-changing equine-assisted services to a large and diverse community of children and adults with special needs, active-duty service members, veterans, and first responders in Virginia Beach and Hampton Roads.

Our mission is to provide, promote, and support equine-assisted activities for individuals with mental, physical, emotional, social, or learning disabling conditions.

The organization is accredited by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) as a Premier Accredited Center. PATH Intl. is the international professional organization that sets the standards for the equine-assisted services industry and certifies credentials for PATH Intl. centers and instructors.

EQUI-KIDS serves an average of 80 to 100 participants each week and all services are provided by credentialed providers. Our services include therapeutic riding, therapeutic horsemanship, equine-assisted learning, equine-assisted psychotherapy with a licensed mental health provider (mental health services for individuals and groups), Speech Therapy provided by a licensed speech language pathologist, Occupational Therapy provided by a licensed occupational therapist, EQUI-VETS Military Service Program (serving active-duty service members and veterans), EQUI-HEROES First Responder Program, job coaching, school partnership programs, summer inclusion camps, and educational workshops. Participants range in age from 5 years to seniors in their 90s.

We focus on providing therapeutic interventions to help develop healthier, more productive citizens, creating a positive impact for our community today and in the future. Connecting with our horses empowers our participants to focus on their abilities, opens up a world of possibilities, and provides both physical and emotional benefits in a unique and supportive environment.

EQUI-KIDS has the ability to create sustainable, long-term programs that provide measurable objectives that carry over into the participant's life at school or at work, at home, and in the community. Now, more than ever, EQUI-KIDS is an invaluable resource for children and adults with special needs and their families as well as our military heroes and first responders.



OUR FACILITY



EQUI-KIDS Therapeutic Riding Program is located within the Heritage Park community in Virginia Beach, VA.

Our 92-acre facility was built specifically for equine-assisted services and the individuals we serve, with every nook and cranny deliberately considered.

From the calming, soothing color scheme to the interactive classroom with handicapped learning access to a teaching stall, no detail was overlooked.

The entire facility is ADA compliant, offering handicapped parking, six handicap-accessible restrooms, zero transition flooring, and decor lighting and paint colors designed by a regional specialist. Every detail incorporates sensory considerations, ensuring that those we serve have the greatest opportunity for reduced environmental distractions. This environment has allowed the program to expand beyond our child-focused origin to offer a broader spectrum of services across a larger population base.



OUR PROGRAMS



Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (mental health) is an individual or group-based service. EAP fosters an organic approach to helping participants reach their clinical goals. These services are provided by Licensed Mental Health Professionals and Equine Specialists in Mental Health and Learning.

Speech Therapy services at EQUI-KIDS are provided by a licensed Speech Language Pathologist and are available to children and adults. Speech therapy is the assessment and treatment of communication problems and speech disorders. The patient receives proprioceptive input, vestibular input, tactile input, auditory input, olfactory input, and visual flow, all simultaneously as the horse is moving. Best practice dictates that occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology professionals integrate hippotherapy into the patient's plan of care, along with other therapy tools and/or strategies. The term hippotherapy refers to how occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology professionals use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement as a therapy tool to engage sensory, neuromotor, and cognitive systems to promote functional outcomes.

Therapeutic Riding provides mounted activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well-being of individuals with special needs. Therapeutic benefits include increased muscle strength, balance, coordination, motor skills, communication, self-confidence, self-esteem, and independence.

Therapeutic Horsemanship provides unmounted activities that focus on teaching participants various equestrian skills while improving their cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral skills.

Equine-Assisted Learning is an experiential learning approach, which promotes the development of life skills. This focus on life skills can be related to academic achievement and classroom behavior, personal growth and exploration, or professional pursuits such as leadership development, team building, and executive coaching.

Occupational Therapy services at EQUI-KIDS are provided by a licensed Occupational Therapist, in partnership with, Sentara Therapy Center – Redmill. Occupational therapy treatment can help to meet developmental milestones, overcome sensory challenges and improve self-care, play and self-



regulation skills. Occupational therapy can help in areas such as moving, learning, playing, activities of daily living, and skills required for education. Best practice dictates that occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology professionals integrate hippotherapy into the patient's plan of care, along with other therapy tools and/or strategies. The term hippotherapy refers to how occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology professionals use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement as a therapy tool to engage sensory, neuromotor, and cognitive systems to promote functional outcomes.

School Partnership Program is a collaborative program with schools in the Hampton Roads area that assist students with special needs from local public elementary and middle schools. Participants work on improving learning comprehension, social interactions, and self-esteem. The curriculum enhances their focus and attention, both inside the classroom and at home. This program meets many of the state of Virginia's Standards of Learning.

Job Coaching is a collaborative program with the Virginia Beach City Public Schools Office of Exceptional Children. This program provides job coaching, in partnership with the school, to young adults with special needs. This helps participants acquire life skills and receive hands-on training for the social and task-related skills needed to prepare for entering the workplace after aging out of the public school system.



Girl Scout Program offers a Therapeutic Horsemanship Patch to the Girl Scouts of America. This program teaches scouts about the benefits of equine-assisted activities and how scouts can become involved in volunteering in order to give back to their community.

Summer Camps are offered for children as inclusion camps that are open to the public as well as our participants. In addition, private camp weeks can be developed as contracts with an organization or business. These camps are customized based on the learning objectives and criteria provided to us.

Professional Education Opportunities such as Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship Intl. approved workshops, other continuing education for EAAT professionals, and collaborations with local colleagues and universities is offered.

Professional Retreats customized to the needs of your organization to include leadership development, team building, and professional development.



OUR PROGRAMS

EQUI-VETS Military Service Program offers equine-assisted activities for active-duty service members and Veterans. Services include therapeutic riding, therapeutic horsemanship, mental health services, horse care activities and outdoor experiences. This program is offered at no cost to participants in honor of their dedication and service to our country. The goal of the program is to assist in physical and mental well-being through equine activities to help our military heroes reconnect to their families and their lives.



EQUI-HEROES First Responder Program is a one-of-a-kind equine-assisted learning program that provides an opportunity for participants to be in a supportive environment where they can focus on themselves, de-stress, focus on well-being, and have fun. EQUI-HEROES combines both ground-based learning and mounted activities to help provide the participants with an all-around learning approach and experience. EQUI-KIDS has teamed up with the City of Virginia Beach Police Department's Mounted Patrol Unit to be able to provide additional services through this program. Services are provided at no cost to the participants for their dedication to protecting our community.



VOLUNTEERING

The tireless dedication and devotion of our volunteers enable us to carry out our mission every single day. We are so grateful for each and every person who selflessly offers their time and compassion to support our equine-assisted services and programs. To successfully operate the organization and facility, we need the help of 400-500 volunteers each week. Without this generous donation of time and support, we would not be able to serve our participants.

No experience? No problem! We provide all of the necessary training to help you be successful in whatever volunteer role you choose. Volunteers must attend an orientation followed by the specific trainings for their area of interest (lesson, barn, or office). We encourage all of our volunteers to sign up for a consistent schedule, which helps us to ensure the success of our participants as well as their comfort levels.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Side Walkers

Side walkers assist with grooming and tacking the horses before the lesson. During the lesson, side walkers directly assist the participants by providing guidance, physical and emotional safety, and encouragement.



Horse Leaders

Horse leaders assist with grooming, tacking, and warming up the horses before the lesson. During the lesson, horse leaders are directly responsible for leading the horse and ensuring the horse stays focused and comfortable during the lesson.



Barn Volunteers

Barn volunteers help clean stalls, tack, equipment, and assist with repairs around the farm.



Office & Special Event Volunteers

These volunteers help with fundraising events, assist with administrative projects, and greet participants and guests at the reception desk.



Volunteer Teams

We always welcome corporate workgroups, community services teams, and other parties looking to offer their time on special projects.

Email: volunteer@equikids.org



CONTACT US TODAY!

**Become a part of the
EQUI-KIDS family today!**

We hope to see you at the farm soon!
Please reach out to a member of our
team and we will be happy to get you
connected with EQUI-KIDS!



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