

Client Handbook

Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program



Our vision is to inspire and enrich people, families, and communities through the power of the horse

O'Shaughnessy Farm 12933 Popes Head Rd Clifton, VA 20124

Rocky Top 6501 Union Mill Rd Clifton, VA 20124

(703) 764-0269 www.nvtrp.org office@nvtrp.org





Updated: January 2020

WELCOME!

All of us at the Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program (NVTRP) want to welcome you to our program and thank you for joining our client family!

We serve over 450 clients each year and the benefits received through equines are unique to each individual and their families. Horses provide a sense of peace, a chance to connect socially and emotionally, and a way to build strength of body and mind.

This handbook should help you get the answers to some of our commonly asked questions, allow you to get familiar with our policies and procedures, and emergency procedures.



OUR VALUES:

NVTRP promotes and provides:

Safety First and foremost

Community Awareness, respect and compassion

Well-being Strong physical and emotional health

Excellence Heart and hard work

Joy An attitude of positivity and grattitude

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MISSION STATEMENT

NVTRP, at O'Shaughnessy Farm, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that helps each individual realize their highest potential by providing equine-assisted activities to people with disabilities, youth-at-risk, recovering military personnel, and others in need in an inclusive, community setting.







ABOUT NVTRP

NVTRP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We are a Premier Accredited Center of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH Intl.) and a member center of the Therapeutic Riding Association of Virginia (TRAV). We have worked with individuals in the Northern Virginia area since we started as the Fairfax 4-H Therapeutic Riding Program in 1980. In 2012, NVTRP was able to buy its forever home on O'Shaughnessy Hurst Farm and in 2018, begin construction to make many improvements to the facility and ultimately build an indoor riding arena. During the construction project, NVTRP also has a satellite location, Rocky Top.

ABOUT EQUINE-ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES (EAAT)

EAAT was organized formally during the 1950s and has proven to be an effective activity for people with mental, physical and emotional disabilities. By focusing on each client's ability rather than their disability, a high rate of success has been seen in improving balance,

coordination, muscle strength, rhythm, speech, social skills, and self-confidence. Combine all of these individual benefits with the special relationship between horse and client, and our clients have an exceptional opportunity to grow mentally, physically and emotionally.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

There is lots of great information through the rest of this handbook, but here is a quick guide to our clients' most common questions

Need to Cancel?

For cancellations more than 24 hours in advance: Call (703) 764-0269 or email <u>otaylor@nvtrp.org</u>. For day of cancellations: contact your instructor or therapist directly.

We are going out of town and will miss our weekly session, can I get a make up?

There are no make ups or refunds for missed TR/EAL group sessions. There is one make up available per season for private sessions and therapy sessions that are appropriately canceled with at least 24 hours notice.

Will I/my child ride/work with the same horse every session?

NVTRP does their best to provide the same horse for each session for consistency, however, changes may be made due to horses' health or client needs.

It's raining, are sessions canceled?

No! Horses are a year round, all weather activity. Many clients wouldn't normally be out in the rain and this is a time they get to experience the elements! If the rain is harder than a sprinkle, sessions will be moved to groundwork in covered areas.

NVTRP will notify clients by email and phone at least 2 hours before scheduled lesson for cancellations. We will cancel if the conditions are unsafe to travel or the temperature is too extreme even for sessions in the barn. See more information on weather in our policy and procedure section.



Where can I buy a helmet?

NVTRP recommends going to Dover Saddlery in Chantilly to buy your first helmet. The knowledgeable staff there will help find the perfect make and model within your budget.

After that, you can purchase helmets online, they must be ASTM-SEI approved and 5 years within manufacture date. Do not use a second hand helmet as it may have had hits that impacted the interior material. See more information on attire in our policy and procedure section.

Does NVTRP have any scholarship opportunities?

Yes! NVTRP is able to give out a small amount of scholarship. See more information on scholarships and payments in our policy and procedure section.

Will insurance cover this?

NVTRP does not communicate with or bill insurance. Therapy sessions only, may be able to be reimbursed by insurance, this is dependent on the insurance company and plan. It is the responsibility of the client's family to pay NVTRP fees by the due dates and then submit directly to insurance for reimbursement. No other activities are covered.

My child is nervous to be on a horse, can I walk with them while they are on?

NVTRP instructors and therapists are trained and experienced in helping calm nerves. They will do everything they can to help the client feel comfortable. All those walking with the horse and the clients in the ring must be trained volunteers. Parents will be asked to stay outside of the arena.



Connect with us on social media get updates and hear about events





PROGRAMS AT NVTRP

Therapeutic Riding (TR):

Therapeutic riding provides an opportunity for individuals with disabilities to learn how to ride a horse and also gain both physical and emotional rewards through challenging and stimulating activities. We see improvements in balance, strength, coordination, confidence, concentration and self-discipline while having fun.

The goals of therapeutic riding sessions center on learning riding skills such as steering, halting, and controlling the horse. The aim is for the client to become as independent as possible. Games are an important part of many therapeutic riding sessions. Although fun, games are designed with a specific purpose in mind to help clients reach individual goals.

Therapeutic riding sessions are taught by a PATH Intl. certified therapeutic riding instructor. Depending on a client's experience, volunteers may assist as horse leaders, sidewalkers or spotters during sessions.



Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT):

NVTRP's occupational and physical therapists use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement to engage sensory, neuromotor, and cognitive systems to achieve functional outcomes.

Unlike therapeutic horseback riding (where specific riding skills are taught), hippotherapy is part of a client's integrated plan of care and exists within a medical model of treatment in which equine movement is a treatment tool/strategy applied by the therapist.

Military Service Personnel (MSP):

NVTRP offers special sessions for recovering military service personnel. We are honored to partner with local military installations to provide EAAT services to active duty service members who are recovering from PTSD and other mental illnesses and substance abuse issues.

Patients come from all branches of the military, from across the U.S. and deployments around the world, to work on getting healthy again. NVTRP has riding and horsemanship classes available for participants at no cost to them.





Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL):

EAL combines life skills with horses. These facilitated sessions partner with the horse through groundwork. Some examples of goals are: practicing mindfulness, building communication skills, or learning teamwork all through individualized session plans that facilitate goals for the group. At this time, these sessions are designed for groups such as school classes, after-school groups or corporate teams.

Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP):

NVTRP partners with Dr. Ioana Marcus of Equibliss Psychotherapy to offer individual and group psychotherapy and counseling. Ioana takes an experiential and relational approach, focused on mindfulness and self-discovery facilitated by our equine friends and teachers. The relationship with the horses helps deepen relationships with self, not only in recovery, but way beyond. All scheduling, paperwork and payment is handled directly with Dr. Marcus.

For more information on our EFP program, contact her at <u>ioana.b.marcus@gmail.com</u>

Horsemanship:

Horsemanship lessons are unmounted sessions that focus on learning all aspects of horse care and to provide participants with another option for interacting with the horses. Many of the physical, cognitive and emotional goals that participants work on in riding lessons can also be worked on during horsemanship lessons.

Community Lessons:

NVTRP provides an inclusive setting where individuals with and without disabilities build relationships. As part of this culture and to build connections in the community which support our program, a limited number of riding lessons and summer camps are available at NVTRP for individuals without disabilities.

Summer Camps:

NVTRP hosts a variety of summer camp offerings from therapeutic camps for current clients with disabilities to those listed in Fairfax County Parktakes for neurotypical children. This is a great way to get a client sibling involved. Camps are half days and provide a riding lesson each day, hands on horse care classes, games, activities and crafts. Check the website for dates and how to register.









One Day Events

Annual Ride To Thrive Horse Show- One of the best days of the whole year is NVTRP's Ride to Thrive Horse Show. Usually held in May or early June, current clients are encouraged to compete in classes to show off skills learned in sessions to family and friends. Both judged and non-judged options are available.

NVTRP brings in judges for the event and all client's walk away with a ribbon and a great learning experience. The day finishes up with a family picnic where clients and their families can mingle with NVTRP volunteers, staff and board.

Hoofprints for HERoes- a half day offered to military women and their children. This event is a great way to learn alongside other women and families with similarities! The day is made up of a variety of activities that families and groups rotate through together as well as some child and adult specific activities. They are a mixture of riding and hands on horse care learning as well as fun and games.

Deputy Day- NVTRP partners with the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office and Second Story, an after school program for at-risk youth, to provide an afternoon of equine assisted learning. The session allows the two groups to interact in an unthreatening way and build a healthy relationship between children and law enforcement.



CLIENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Registration

NVTRP runs by season with a flat rate fee per season. Winter and Summer seasons are 7 weeks and Spring and Fall seasons are 13 weeks (number of weeks may change slightly depending on year).

A registration email with specific instructions on how to register will be sent about 6 weeks to 2 months ahead of each season. ALL clients must fill out the registration information as requested and make payment before the deadline listed in the email.

If registration information is not provided by the deadline, client will be returned to the wait list.

For group **therapeutic riding lessons**, potential session day and times will be listed in the registration information and the client should mark as many days/times that work for them and then NVTRP will group the client into the best possible group per their preferred schedule. There are times NVTRP may ask if the client if they are available at a day/time they did not request to get them into an appropriate group. Day and time preference are given to clients previously in the slot as long as an appropriate group can be made.

For **therapy clients**, day/time slots will stay the same from season to season unless there is a change in the therapist's schedule or the client requests a change.

NVTRP offers only a few **private sessions** a week. They are on a first-come, first-serve basis and fill up very quickly. When registering for private sessions, the client registers for a specific day and time. Private slots will not be held through verbal or emailed commitment, the client must provide registration information and payment.



Payment

Payment may be made by credit card, cash or check. Payment may be made in two payments both due by the posted due dates or in full. If smaller payments are needed, a payment plan may be arranged by communication with the Program Director, but full payment must be made before the last session of the season.

Michael Butcher Photography

If payments are not made by the due dates, client will not be able to continue their season until payment has been made. Client cannot sign up for any new seasons or events if they have a balance on their account past posted due dates.

Therapy clients submitting invoices for insurance reimbursement will receive receipts at the end of the season unless requested otherwise. NVTRP does not work with insurance. All payments must still be paid by the due dates regardless of when the client receives reimbursement.

All seasons are a flat rate and there are no refunds. One personal make-up per season is allowed for private lessons and



therapy clients. NVTRP will do it's best to find a makeup slot, but if multiple options are provided and the client cannot attend, the make-up will be forfeited.

If NVTRP cancels a class due to weather or staffing, the client is guaranteed a make-up class or refund.

Scholarship

NVTRP has a small amount of scholarship funding available each year. A scholarship application must be submitted by the posted due date to be considered for funding. An application is good for the calendar year, but client must make a written request for assistance each season. For example: an application is submitted for the spring season. When registering for summer, the client writes an email requesting assistance again for the new season. Client should also update NVTRP with any major changes in income status.

Consistent attendance for scholarship awardees is mandatory and missed sessions may result in loss of scholarship or denial of the next request.

Therapy clients receiving insurance reimbursements are not eligible for scholarship.

Paperwork

NVTRP works to provide the safest and most beneficial experience possible for the client as well as fulfilling insurance and accreditation requirements. To be able to do this, yearly updates of paperwork is required. Regardless of when paperwork is submitted, a new packet is required by January 1st. This includes all medical paperwork. Please schedule medical appointments as necessary.

Therapy clients seeing one of NVTRP's therapists will also need a prescription filled out twice a year.

If ALL paperwork is not submitted in time for the client's first session, the client will not be able to attend until the paperwork is completed and submitted. The client forfeits the session and will not receive a refund.

Cancellations

We understand plans may change or an unexpected illness may occur. Please give NVTRP as much notice as possible. We schedule volunteers, staff and horses all for you! We need to know if you will not be at your session.

NVTRP has a wait list of potential clients anxious to receive services. Clients with two no-shows in a season will receive a warning and three no-shows will result in the client returning to the waitlist for the next session. We want to help you or your child receive all the wonderful benefits of our services and consistent attendance is key in building skills, strength and relationships.

Attire

Clients are required to wear closed toe shoes no matter what program they are participating in. Long pants are also a must for all mounted programs such as therapeutic riding and hippotherapy.



Helmets are required when riding and up to the instructor or therapist's discretion when not mounted. Helmets must be ASTM-SEI certified and within 5 years of manufacture. NVTRP will check helmets at least once a year to be sure they haven't expired.

Clothing Tips!

• Where to find a helmet

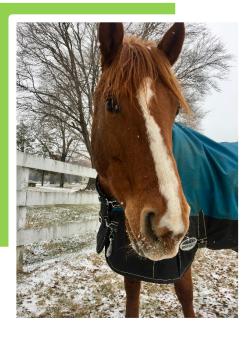
NVTRP suggests going to Dover Saddlery in Chantilly to get a helmet fitted by the store staff. A helmet has to fit correctly for it to do its job. Once you find the right size, make and model that fits (size varies between different models), you can also order online from any equestrian company or even Amazon.

• Cold Weather

It's really important to have good socks and gloves when coming to a winter session. Gloves do not need to be riding gloves, but they should have some grip to the fingers for holding reins or other equipment. Also finding an ear warmer or fitted hat that will fit under helmet and a neck piece. Instructors can provide help with adjusting helmets to fit over hats if possible.

• Hot Weather

Be sure to bring a water bottle to your session for water breaks. Some type of cooling handkerchief is really helpful to have around the neck while riding. Be sure to apply bug spray and sunscreen before session.



Weather

Only in cases of **extreme** weather will sessions be canceled. NVTRP will contact clients by email and then by phone if needed at least 2 hours before scheduled session.

Each season includes a number of sessions that will be unmounted therapy or horsemanship training. NVTRP will hold no more than a quarter of the full season as unmounted sessions. If the designated number is reached, the session will be canceled and rescheduled from then on if the weather is too harsh for mounted sessions.

If it is raining, please come to your session, unless otherwise advised. If you choose not to come and sessions are held, the session will be forfeited.

Update Information:

Please inform us on any change in the client's health. Immediately advise the instructor, therapist or the Program Director at 703-764-0269. The program staff and instructors must have current information on all elements of the client's condition in order to be able to provide the most effective instruction or treatment and ensure the safety of all clients.

Please keep your contact information up to date by notifying your instructor or the Program Director of any changes to ensure you receive information on sessions and current events.

Age and Weight:

Therapy clients must be at least 2 years old. Clients participating in any other activities must be at least 4 years old. There is no maximum age limit as long as physical status is appropriate for the activity or therapy.

Due to the size of our horses, and the safe load for them to carry we must restrict the weight of our clients to a maximum of 225 lbs. Please note that this weight limit may be dropped depending on the physical ability, support needs of each individual client and horse availability. As a result, mounted work may not be appropriate even though the client's weight is within the weight limit. Clients who are over the weight limit are encouraged to participate in NVTRP's unmounted horsemanship program. Please let us know if you/your client exceeds this limit.



Visitors During Lessons:

All parents, caretakers, guardians, siblings and friends of the client must stay within the designated waiting or observation areas. Children must be supervised by an adult at all times. These requirements are necessary for everyone's safety from the inherent hazards in and around equine facilities. If appropriate supervision is not provided or becomes an ongoing concern, the sibling(s)/friend(s) will be asked to leave.

At O'Shaughnessy Farm, use the playground area for playing. Please keep sound level to a minimum. Balls, frisbees or anything else that could accidentally roll into the riding arena are prohibited.

At Rocky Top, there is no playing allowed near the arena, and noise in the observation area must be kept to a minimum to minimize distractions for clients in session.

No one other than program personnel is allowed in the ring or outside of the designated viewing/waiting areas and parking lot without the express permission of the instructor. Only staff and volunteers or riders and/or guests accompanied by staff and/or volunteers shall enter the barns, pastures, or paddocks.

Parents/guardians of participants are responsible for the conduct of other observers and guests who have accompanied them. Playing ball or Frisbee in an area that could disrupt lessons is prohibited. If any participant, parent, guest, volunteer, or other person on program property does not abide by Program rules, they may be asked to leave per Dismissal Procedures. Should an emergency occur outside the riding ring, not involving the lesson participants, the staff or instructor will make an assessment and designate a responsible person to summon proper help.



Discharge

Clients may be discharged from activities based upon, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- The client's condition has worsened and the condition is now considered a contraindication.
- The client exhibits behavioral, physical or emotional change that we deem to be unsafe.
- The client now exceeds the weight limit or a weight that is safe for all involved.
- Excessive no shows or late arrivals to sessions with no prior notice.
- The client is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Any reason the staff has concluded that participation in NVTRP's equine-assisted activities and therapies is no longer an appropriate activity for the client.

Other Policies

- No dogs allowed on property. If the client has a working service animal, the presence of the animal will be on a case by case basis.
- There is **NO SMOKING**, e-cigarettes or vaping on the property.
- No firearms, drugs or alcohol allowed and no one under the influence of drugs or alcohol allowed on premises.





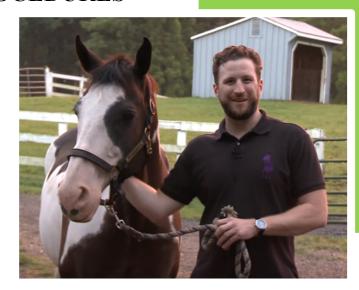


EMERGENCY AND RISK PROCEDURES

Inherent Risks

Equines, farms and outdoor activities have natural, inherent and assumed risks. Hazards such as cars driving in the parking lot, uneven footing, farm equipment, hot and cold temperatures, snakes, ticks, and other wild animals may be present. Everyone should use caution while navigating cars or walking on the property. We encourage clients to wear insect repellent and sunscreen, especially in the spring and summer months.

Please be sure to note allergies to bee stings or other allergens on paperwork and have an epi-pen at the activity site if applicable. In the event of a severe allergic reaction, staff and volunteers are directed to call 911.



Please read liability forms closely and be aware of the risks of equine activities and therapies. Under Virginia law, an equine activity sponsor or professional shall not be liable for injury to or death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risk of equine activities.

Falls

There is always the possibility of a fall from a horse. Horses are prey animals with an instinct of "fight or flight." This means they are always on the lookout for what might want to eat them and can be startled by sudden movements, noises, etc.

While learning to ride or practicing a new position on the horse, a client can also lose their balance. Even with volunteers leading and sidewalking with the client, there is still a possibility



of a fall. This possibility also increases as volunteers are taken away from a client to create independence. As the clients accomplish tasks, gain strength and increase attention skills, instructors and therapists will discuss with parents before removing a volunteer to be sure everyone understands the risks. NVTRP does everything possible to minimize risk and create a safe environment.

If your child/family member/friend falls while riding, do not enter the riding arena until the staff assesses the situation and asks you to enter. Many times, a client will not need medical attention and the staff will choose to ask the client to get back on the horse. The longer a client waits to get back on, the harder it will be to re-mount.

Emergency Dismounts

There may be times when a client needs to be removed quickly from a horse due to horse behavior, client behavior, or approaching weather. Volunteers have been trained in how to make a hasty dismount and will do what they can to make this the safest situation possible.

Human Injuries

Injuries are possible not only in falls, but also around the farm such as walking on uneven surfaces, insect bites or stings, splinters from wood, or sensitivity to weather. All of our staff are CPR/First Aid certified. At O'Shaughnessy Farm, emergency contact information is located in the carport and the tackroom. There is a first aid kit in the feedroom by the barn and a first aid kit in the staff office as well. At Rocky Top, there is a first aid kit and AED in the feed/tackroom.



Emergencies

In case of the events listed below, clients and their parents/caregivers will be escorted to the following locations. NVTRP staff will call the appropriate authorities, take attendance, send home volunteers and clients if safe and take care of the horses.

O'Shaughnessy Farm

• Fire: Playground

• Tornado: Office basement

• Thunderstorm: Under cover or in the office

• Flood: Upper level of the office

• Active Shooter: FEMA procedures of Run/Hide/Fight- the Hide location is the office basement

Rocky Top

• Fire: Far end of the fence along driveway by white barn

• Tornado: Farmhouse basement

• Thunderstorm: Under cover

• Flood: Upper level of the farmhouse

• Active Shooter: FEMA procedures of Run/Hide/Fight- the Hide location is the farmhouse basement

Other Emergencies

Staff is responsible for providing or summoning proper assistance and/or emergency care to clients and horses as necessary.

Where to find it at O'Shaughnessy Farm	
Fire Extinguishers	Feed Room, Tack Room, NVTRP Office
Emergency Phone/Numbers	Carport - Volunteer Nook (Numbers are also posted in the Tack Room)
Human First Aid	Feed Room (on the shelf to the right) and NVTRP office
AED	In office

Where to find it at Rocky Top	
Fire Extinguishers	Feed/tackroom, Red Barn, White Barn
Emergency Phone/Numbers	Feed Tackroom (numbers posted on the wall to the right of door)
Human First Aid	Feed/Tackroom (In container directly to the left of the door)
AED	None

STAFF DIRECTORY



Kelsey Gallagher Executive Director kgallagher@nvtrp.org



Wendy Baird
Development Director
Contact for donating to NVTRP
wbaird@nvtrp.org



Olivia Taylor
Program Director and Instructor
Contact for overall session questions or concerns
otaylor@nvtrp.org



Kristen Stombres
Program Assistant
Contact for paperwork and payment questions
kstombres@nvtrp.org



Katie WanstrathOffice Manager and Art Therapist
office@nvtrp.org



Tessa HassettOutreach Coordinator and Instructor
Contact for corporate volunteer events and to sponsor-a-horse thassett@nvtrp.org



Christina Duffy
Equine and Facility Manager and Instructor
Contact for questions about horse or equestrian donations
cduffy@nvtrp.org



Shelby MorrisonVolunteer Coordinator and Equine Specialist
Contact for questions about volunteering
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Clarice GutmanEquine Assistant Instructor
cgutman@nvtrp.org



Lorraine PuharicBarn Feeder
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Sarah Maceyak Instructor smaceyak@nvtrp.org



Nicole Bass Instructor nbass@nvtrp.org



Lindsey Collier Instructor lindsey.collier1214@gmail.com



Sydney SawyerPhysical Therapist
ssawyer@nvtrp.org



Ioana Marcus
Licensed Professional Counselor and Equine Gestalt Psychotherapist
Contact for questions about our Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy
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Amanda Ioannotti Occupational Therapist aiannotti@nvtrp.org



HORSE DIRECTORY

Each of our horses has a unique personality. You can read their bios (here) on our website to learn what makes each of them special.











Charles

Cinder

Happy

Loki



Hello! My name is Queen Lizzie and I am a confident Haflinger/Draft cross who moved to Clifton in 2017. I worked at a therapeutic riding program in the past, and after a brief hiatus, I decided to join a program once again.

I am great for military riders because of my large stature and really enjoying strutting around in the fields.



Lula

Howdy! My name is Woody and I am a Haflinger. I was born in 2003. Although I'm short in stature, I make up for it in personality.

I love to chat with other horses and volunteers just like Mr. Ed did. I excel in off lead lessons and love to trek kids around the ring at the walk and trot.



Woody



Max Maybelle



Prince Rain



Rose



Silky



Taffy



Teddy

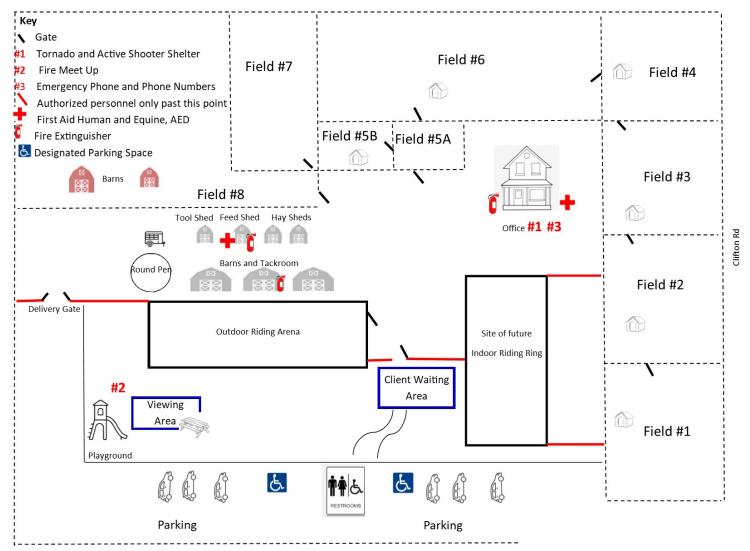


Pierre

Hey there! My full name is "Monkey Business" but all my friends just know me as Pierre. I was born in 2002 and moved to NVTRP in 2008. I'm a Draft Cross, but if I was a human, I would totally be a surfer dude.

I love to chill out and take it easy. Even though I'm big, I'm a favorite of some of our beginner riders because they know they can trust me. My favorite thing is to eat grass and relax.

MAP OF FACILITIES AT O'SHAUGHNESSY FARM



Popes Head Rd O'Shaughnessy Farm: 12933 Popes Head Rd, Clifton, VA 20124

MAP OF FACILITIES AT ROCKY TOP

