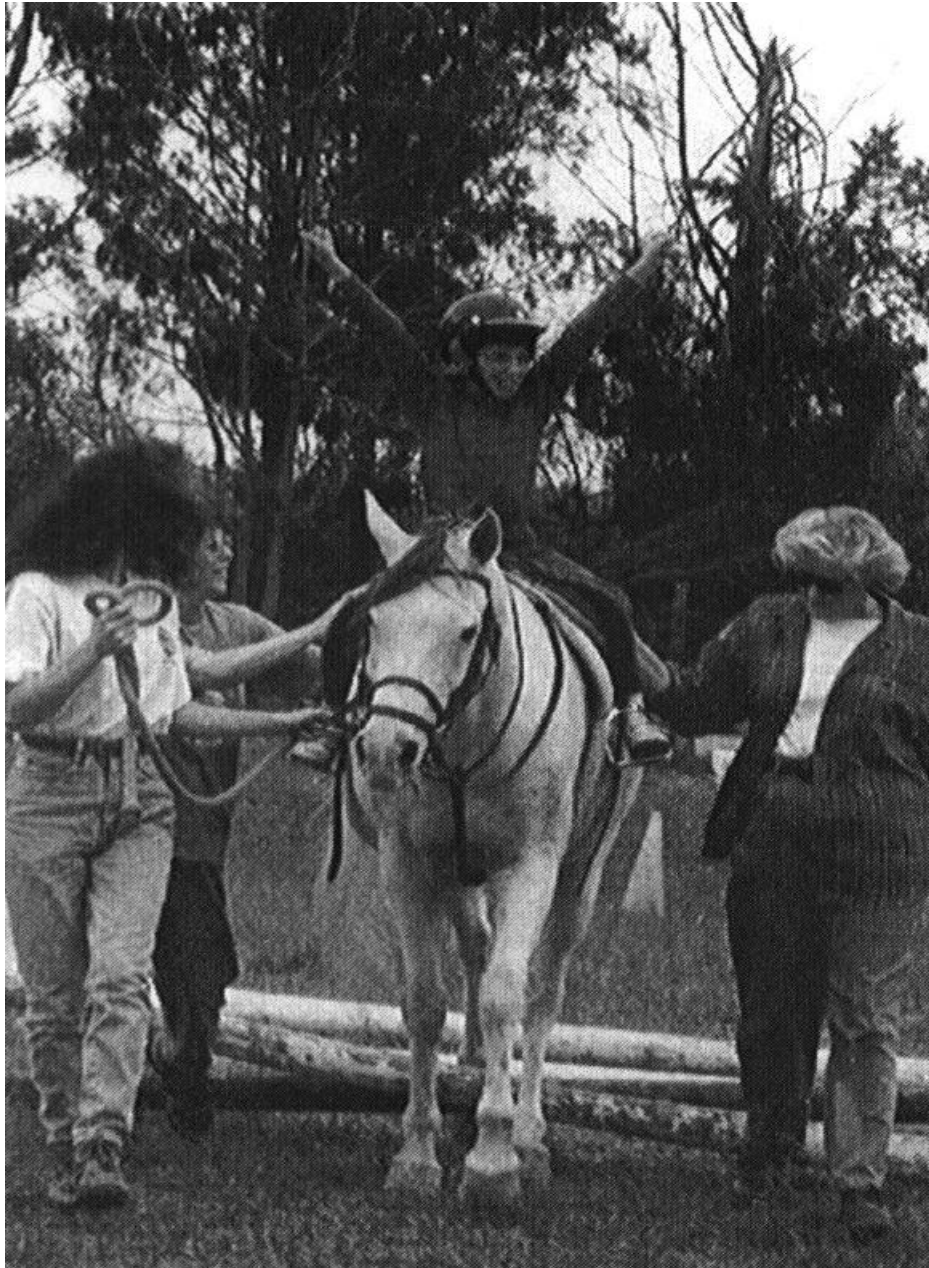


*Special*  
**EQUESTRIANS, Inc.**  
*A Therapeutic Riding Program*



**Student Information**

# *Special*

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## **EQUESTRIANS, Inc.**

*A Therapeutic Riding Program*

Special Equestrians, Inc. was created to offer therapeutic horseback riding to the physically, emotionally or mentally challenged. We are a 501C(3) non-profit corporation and accredited through NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association). We are funded primarily through the community and fund raisers, with scholarships available for riders who cannot pay.

### ***Physical Benefits***

On horseback, physically challenged individuals often experience the freedom of motion their bodies alone will not allow. By relaxing and stimulating muscles, riders can learn new skills and improved movements, building muscle tone, strength and coordination.

### ***Emotional Benefits***

In addition to the warmth and security of close physical contact, therapeutic riding can offer the mentally and emotionally challenged new feelings of self respect and confidence through the opportunity to control this large but gentle animal at will. In some cases, this sense of personal accomplishment has helped improve riders' concentration, self-discipline and language skills.

*There are far too many benefits to name them all, but they can be summed up in one word, FUN!*

### ***Who Can Participate***

Special Equestrians serves people age 2 or older who are physically, mentally or emotionally challenged. The disabilities we presently serve include Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Spina Bifida, Mentally Retarded, Learning Disabled, Downs Syndrome, Head & Spinal Cord injuries just to name a few. They have all seen a tremendous benefit from horse back riding.

### ***When We Ride***

Our riding sessions are held on Saturday, Sunday afternoons, and several times during the week. Each session consists of 8-10 weeks in the Spring and Fall and 6 weeks in the summer.

### ***Lesson Information***

Our lessons consist of approximately 30 to 45 minutes of riding each week in a group of 4 to 7 riders. We attempt to group riders of equal age and abilities where possible.

### ***Lesson Content***

A typical lesson would include work on riding skills, activities such as games or obstacles on horseback, and possibly a trail ride. Lessons are geared toward the abilities of the riders. Most riders begin with 3 to 4 volunteers and may progress to an independent status if able.

### ***Cost***

Spring and Fall sessions cost \$125 for 8-10 weeks. The summer cost is \$85 for 6 weeks. Scholarships are available for anyone in need.

### ***What to Wear***

Long pants that do not bind or pinch & hard soled shoes with heels are preferred. All riders will be required to wear an approved helmet provided by Special Equestrians in order to participate. You are welcome to purchase your own, but please verify the proper type with our instructor first. Properly fitted gloves are beneficial.

### ***Parent Participation***

We find that the riders are more attentive to the instructors if a parent is not immediately visible. An enthusiastic parent can sometimes be distracting. Occasionally, we may need a parent to walk with a child that is apprehensive, but this is usually only temporary. On occasion, if they are willing, we are forced to ask parents to step in if we are short of volunteers. If so, we usually assign them to a child other than their own. We hope the parents will have an opportunity to relax and enjoy some quiet time.

### ***Additional Activities***

We also have special events throughout the year. Derby Day has been a favorite for years, where we set up a make believe race course and run or walk for the roses. Our annual Ride-a-thon takes us to the trails while assisting with Fund Raising and awareness. Competition is becoming more available to our riders both locally and regionally.

### ***Some Safety Guidelines to make your visit to Special Equestrians more enjoyable:***

- The safety of our riders is our first priority. Please observe all rules and signs while visiting our facility.
- If possible, it is helpful for the student and their parents or spouses to attend our volunteer training session. It will give you an idea of what we expect from the volunteers, and to orient yourself to the facilities and horses.
- Parents or a responsible party should remain on the premises while the student is riding (This does not apply to independent riders that transport themselves).
- Do not give the horses treats, it can encourage them to bite. You can give them to the feeding staff and they will put them in the horses' bucket at feeding time.
- Please stay on our premises. We lease our property from Indian Springs School. This does not allow us access to the rest of their facilities.
- Parents, Spouses and siblings should leave the stable and wait in the People Paddock after a volunteer takes over the rider.
- Do not go in stalls or paddocks with horses.
- Do not enter restricted areas. These areas are posted.
- All children should be supervised at all times and should remain in the people paddock if they are not riding in a lesson.

### ***Special Note***

***Be sure to call if you are not going to be able to ride. Our volunteers give generously of their time, and we like to let them know if they are not needed.***



*I Saw a Child*

*I saw a child that couldn't walk sit on a horse, laugh and talk.  
Then ride it through a field of daisies and yet he could not walk unaided.  
I saw a child, no legs below, sit on a horse and make it go through woods of green  
And places he had never been to sit and stare, except from a chair.  
I saw a child who could only crawl mount a horse and sit up tall  
Put it through degrees of paces and laugh at the wonder in our faces.  
I saw a child born into strife take up and hold the reins of life  
And that same child was heard to say, Thank God for showing me the way.*

*John Anthony Davies*

*Special*  

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**EQUESTRIANS, Inc.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to enroll a rider.
- I would like to become a Special Equestrians volunteer.
- I would like to sponsor a rider (\$100).
- I would like more information on your Adopt-a-Horse program for my organization or myself.
- My tax-deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_ is enclosed.
- Please have someone contact me regarding a presentation to my organization.

Please make checks payable to  
Special Equestrians, Inc. and mail to:

**SPECIAL EQUESTRIANS, INC.**  
**1215 Woodward Drive**  
**Indian Springs, AL 35124**  
**PHONE: (205) 987-WHOA**