

# Wild Hearts Volunteers Roles and Responsibilities

Your calm and centered energy is the most important element of this program. Horses sense and feel everything around them, from boisterous actions such as running or yelling to something as subtle as when we blink or breathe.

As a result, in order for the athlete to succeed with the horse, the overall volume must be low. The volume is too high when multiple people around the horse are trying to provide instruction. All volunteers need to maintain a quiet spirit.

Four main points reinforced at clinic

1. Quiet Spirit – horses are like autistic kids, too much input produces overload
2. Controlled Energy – horses feel every bit of our energy
3. Soft Hands – horses feel tension through the lead line
4. Clear Intention – be clear in our minds about what we want

Leaders (focus on horse and athlete communication with horse)

1. Take athlete to pasture to get horse
2. Monitor athlete getting horse, haltering and leading back to work area
  - a. Help athlete with knot until athlete can do it on their own
  - b. Provide further assistance only when needed
3. When leading the unmounted horse, leave 2-3' of slack in the line
4. Hold horse for athlete while grooming and picking front hooves
  - a. Assist only when needed
  - b. Be sure to place yourself on same side as athlete
5. Lead horse to mounting block and hold horse for mounting
6. Lead horse while athlete riding, leaving approximately 12" of line
  - a. Pay complete attention to the horse
  - b. Use your thoughts to help guide the horse
7. Hold horse for athlete to dismount
8. Hold horse for athlete to untack and groom
9. Walk athlete and horse back to pasture

Sidewalkers (focus on safety of the athlete while riding)

1. Gather grooming tools and helmet
2. Gather bareback pad, girth and secondary pad
3. Place items in the designated work area that Karen has determined (e.g., front of barn, round pen, arena)
4. Locate mounting blocks and make sure they are in the designated work area
5. Quietly assist athlete with mounting the horse
  - a. Listen for Karen to coach the athlete how to mount
  - b. Sidewalkers assist athlete physically to maintain safety
6. Walk next to athlete
  - a. Listen and follow directions from coach
  - b. Please refrain from instructing client-all instruction comes from the coach
  - c. Focus solely on maintaining the safety of the athlete
  - d. Help athlete keep legs off of barrel of horse (legs of athlete should swing freely)
7. Listen to Karen coach the athlete through the dismount and help with physical safety
8. Put grooming equipment and tack back where you found it.

Above all, do not distract horses from their job with the athlete (e.g., do not give treats to or hand feed horses at any time for any reason).