

## HINTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

### Ready to ride



The Volunteer (Helper) is one of the most important members of the Al Marmoom Initiative Team. Without people like you we would not exist.

These pages outline some of the qualities of the ideal Volunteer. Again, this is far from exhaustive, but we hope that it will help you become a confident member of the team and that you will enjoy coming to our sessions as much as the riders and that you will share their excitement and achievements.

### You may be asked to LEAD THE PONY

1. First make sure that you have completed your New Volunteer's Form and have been issued with, and have signed, your Basic Training Record Card.
2. To lead the pony correctly, lead from the pony's shoulder, one hand as close to the headcollar as necessary, the other hand taking up the looped length of rope. Do not wrap the rope round your hand.
3. Hold the pony while your rider is mounting - stand 45-degree angle from the shoulder of the horse.
4. Check the girth before and after mounting. Adjust the stirrups to the right length.
5. Listen to the Instructor at all times and make sure your rider and helper are ready for any change of pace or direction.
6. Keep the pony's movements smooth.
7. Keep a safe distance from the tail of the pony in front of you.
8. Remember games are for the riders. Keep to a suitable speed with no sudden turns or stops.
9. Be prepared to stop if your rider becomes unbalanced or has a problem. Any adjustments should be made off the track to allow the ride to continue.



**Not like this!**

### You may be asked to HELP THE RIDER



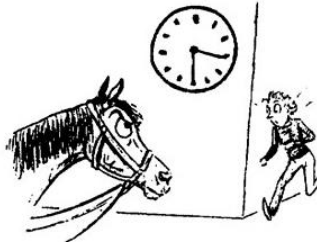
**No treats!**

10. If there is one helper, plus leader, it is easier to walk on the opposite side to the leader. If there are two helpers - one either side.
11. You are there to prevent your rider falling off. Don't hang on although you may have to help them maintain balance by placing a hand on their thigh or lower leg, or as directed by the Instructor - particularly when trotting.
12. Help your rider obey the Instructor and make sure commands are understood.
13. When it is time to dismount, check your rider has both feet out of the stirrups and do not allow dismounting until you are ready to help.
14. Find out about your rider's problems so you will know how best to help.
15. Try to keep track of what your rider does each week so you can help them to make progress.

16. You are there to give confidence and prevent accidents. Allow riders as much independence as possible intervening only when necessary so that they gain the maximum benefit from each session.

## THANK YOU!

### Don't be late



### THE IDEAL HELPER...

- Is always on time, at least ten minutes before the session begins, and finds a suitably trained replacement if unable to attend.
- Is armed with 100% concentration, forgetting all everyday problems, and is suitably dressed.
- Is prepared to do ANY job that they are capable of from tacking up ponies, unloading riders from the bus, taking to the loo, chatting to a nervous rider or welcoming a new helper.
- Is always alert when mounting riders, ready to give a helping hand if needed but never too much. Most riders prefer to struggle and achieve rather than be manhandled into position. Help, if needed, should be given with kindness, humour and dignity.
- Is always aware of the rider's abilities, temperament and mood. Someone who has a hard time coping with a new drug, treatment or the pressures of exams will appreciate an understanding approach.
- Is aware of what the Instructor wishes to achieve for the rider, always concentrating on the Instructor's words and quietly reinforcing the message.

### REMEMBER

- \* Sympathy without sentimentality
- \* Alertness without anxiety
- \* Unlimited patience
- \* Interest in the rider as a person
- \* Allow independence
- \* You are an important member of the team

**WHATEVER YOUR ROLE, YOUR HELP IS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED.**