

**NEW KINGDOM TRAILRIDERS
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**



**18929 81ST STREET
SHERRARD, IL 61281**

2025

Office Contact Info

Office phone: (309) 764-4220
Address: 18929 81st Street,
Sherrard, IL 61281
General email address: info@nktriders.org
Website: www.nktriders.org

CONTACTS

Kelly Kreiter Penning – Executive Director	(563) 528-1708	Kelly@nktriders.org
Louise Ballanger – Equine Manager/Instructor	(563) 570-3146	louise@nktriders.org
Allison Langan – Accounting Administrative Assistant		allison@nktriders.org
Monika Murphy – Program Director/Instructor	(636) 328-5060	monika@nktriders.org
Sharon Vershaw – Instructor	(563) 529-6756	svershaw25@gmail.com
Bryanna Wright – Operations Lead/Instructor	(309) 912-8661	bryanna@nktriders.org

Board of Directors

Cheryl Wright – President	Denise Church – Member
Timothy Thor – Vice President	Matthew DeBisschop – Member
Dave Emerick – Treasurer	Tim Fanella – Member
Jennifer White – Secretary	Allen Holdsworth – Member
Katey Bignall – Member	Vallie Masias – Member
Kelly Carnes – Member	Jordan Kirkbride – Associate Director

2025 CALENDAR

Lesson Sessions

Session 1 Feb. 24 – Apr. 4
Session 2 Apr. 14 – May 23
Session 3 June 2 – July 11
Session 4 July 21 – Aug. 29
Session 5 Sept. 8 – Oct. 17
Session 6 Oct. 27 – Dec. 5

No Lessons/Office Closed

Jan. 1 – New Years Day
May 26 – Memorial Day
July 4 – Independence Day
Sept. 1 – Labor Day
Nov. 27 – Thanksgiving Day
Nov. 28 – Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve
Dec. 25 – Christmas Day

Welcome

Welcome to New Kingdom Trailriders! We are thrilled that you have chosen to spend your valuable free time with us and we look forward to working with you in the coming months. Providing therapeutic equine activities to our participants truly “takes a village” and your contribution makes NKT possible. Throughout your time with us, we hope you enjoy assisting in lessons and working with the students and horses. We hope you can become further involved with us by participating in additional volunteer opportunities and attending our educational workshops.

Please use this handbook along with any additional materials as a reference – both for our contact information and to guide you through the ins and outs of NKT. You are also encouraged to contact Kelly with any questions.

We look forward to working with you and thank you for your generous service!

Sincerely,

New Kingdom Trailriders Staff

Kelly Kreiter Penning – Executive Director

Louise Ballanger – Equine Manager – Instructor

Monika Murphy – Program Director – Instructor

Sharon Vershaw – Instructor

Bryanna Wright – Operations Lead – Instructor

Board of Directors

Mission:

To empower individuals of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential through equine assisted activities.

ACCEPT. ENCOURAGE. EMPOWER.

Vision:

New Kingdom Trailriders strives to become the leading standard uniting people with horses through acceptance and encouragement to achieve emotional and physical wellness

Volunteer Information

Qualifications

- Must be 14 years old to work with horse and rider in the arena.
- Must be dependable and have a reliable means of transportation.
- Must enjoy working with people with disabilities.
- Must be in reasonably good health and able to walk for 45 minutes.
- Must attend a Volunteer Training session and, if applicable, a horse skills evaluation/Horse Leader Training Session
- Must fill out and sign all volunteer paperwork.

Volunteer Opportunities/Jobs

- Lesson Greeter
- Side Walker
- Horse Leader
- Horse Handler
- Administrative Volunteer
- Grounds Volunteer
- Board Member
- Committee Member

Volunteer Job Descriptions

Lesson Greeter – Has learned lesson routines and procedures. Greets riders and families. Helps fit helmets. Hands out and explains any paperwork given to the rider/care giver. Makes sure everyone stays in a safe area and signs in. Meets with staff or instructor before lessons to establish any needs for the lesson.

Side Walker – Walks with mounted students during lesson times.

Horse Leader – Leads the horse during riding lessons.

Horse Handler - Prepares horses before lessons and untacks horses after lessons.

Administrative – Assist with any administrative duties

Grounds Committee Member – Meet monthly with grounds committee, review upcoming and ongoing projects, assist staff in maintaining facility grounds

Board Member and (Additional) Committee Member – Contact Kelly for additional information on these volunteer opportunities

Volunteer Job Training Requirements

Lesson Greeter *(1 day a week for first two weeks of riding session)*

- Requirements:
 - Helmet fit training
 - Meet with staff to learn layout of the barn
 - Bathroom
 - Parking
 - Payment Box
 - Sign-in Sheet

Side Walker *(1 day a week for six-week riding session)*

- Requirements:
 - Complete Preliminary Volunteer/Emergency Training
 - Work with a side-walking mentor for at least two weeks during lessons

Horse Handler/Horse Leader: *(1 day a week for six-week riding session)*

- Requirements:
 - Complete Preliminary Volunteer /Emergency Training
 - Undergo skills assessment
 - Attend Horse Leader Training Program

Administrative Volunteer *(as needed/as available)*

- Requirements:
 - Familiar with all aspects of NKT's program
 - Willingness to help with any/all administrative tasks

Grounds Committee Volunteer *(as needed/as available)*

- Requirements:
 - Familiar with all aspects of NKT's program
 - Willingness to help maintain NKT property and facility
 - Attend monthly meetings – Call in option available

Board Member *(monthly meetings)*

- Requirements:
 - Complete and submit an application *(applicant must be voted in by existing Board of Directors)*
 - Attend monthly meetings
 - Assist in maintaining the integrity of New Kingdom Trailriders, ensuring its mission is being met.

Committee Member *(monthly meetings)*

- Requirements:
 - Plan, organize, and facilitate NKT events and fundraisers

Continuing Education and Job Advancement Opportunities

Advancing our volunteers' education is very important to us! Please use these opportunities to expand your volunteer leadership options and knowledge! Have an idea for a workshop? Let us know!

Monthly Leader Trainings – Offered on a broad range of topics relating to horse care, therapeutic riding, disability education, and volunteer job expansion.

- Generally hosted on the second Saturday of each month from 9am – 1pm. Must attend Volunteer training before attending Leader Training.

As these opportunities come available, they will be posted on NKT's white board in the barn.

Dress Code

Please wear barn and family appropriate clothing – pants, appropriate length shorts, sturdy, comfortable shoes (preferably boots), minimal jewelry, etc. For safety reason, we recommend that you not wear loose, flowing clothing or jewelry, or slick jogging-type pants. CROCS, SANDALS, BALLET FLATS, FLIP FLOPS, OR OPEN TOED SHOES ARE NOT PERMITTED.

You are encouraged to wear NKT apparel.

Lesson Structure and Commitment

The riding season is divided into six, six-week sessions. A break week is scheduled between each session. Volunteers sign up to begin lessons or return on a session-by-session basis. When deciding to volunteer, we ask for a minimum of a six-week (one session) commitment. Lessons require adequate volunteer attendance – NKT cannot operate without its volunteers!

Lesson Arrival and Departure Times

Stated below are the preferred arrival times of each type of volunteer. As a general rule, please plan to arrive at the appropriate start time before the lesson and prepare to leave no earlier than 15 minutes after your last scheduled lesson has ended.

- **Greeter** – 15 minutes before first lesson is scheduled to begin
- **Horse Handler** – 1 hour before the first lesson is scheduled to begin
- **Side Walker** – 15 minutes before the lesson you plan to participate in
- **Horse Leader** – 30 minutes before the lesson you plan to participate in

Volunteer Cancellations and Absences

If you know you will be absent during a session for which you are volunteering, please let us know at least 24 hours ahead of time both verbally and on white board next to the viewing room. If you should have an emergency, please call the barn as soon as possible. 309-764-4220.

Lesson Cancellation Policy

The safety and good health of riders, volunteers, and horses is of utmost importance. If the riding portion of the lesson is unable to proceed, a modified lesson may be offered in its place.

If weather conditions are too threatening to be on site, a replacement/make-up lesson will be offered on the same day and time during 'break week' in between sessions.

- **Modified Lessons will occur if:**
 - Heat Index is 93° or above
 - Temperature is 20° or below
 - Lack of volunteers or instructors

- **Modified Lessons consist of:**
 - Ground Work / Obstacles
 - Horse Care and Safety
 - Classroom Lessons

PLEASE WATCH OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR LESSON CANCELLATIONS.

The instructor will also call or text you if lessons are canceled

Confidentiality Policy

Riders have the right to consent to the release of their information. Therefore, all personal and sensitive information must be kept within the barn. It is inappropriate to reveal names and identifying facts about students outside of NKT. Please speak with the instructor regarding question about how to best help your student – do not approach the student's family for personal information. See additional information about confidentiality in the "Confidentiality Agreement".

Working with People with Disabilities – People First Language

People with disabilities are – first and foremost – people who have individual abilities, interests and needs. They are moms, dads, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, friends, neighbors, coworkers, students and teachers. People First Language emphasizes the person not the disability. It describes what a person *has*, not who a person *is*.

Examples of People First Language	
<p>Say: People with different abilities. He has an intellectual disability. She has autism (or an autism diagnosis) He has a diagnosis of Down syndrome She has a learning disability (diagnosis) He has a physical disability (diagnosis) She's of short stature / she's a little person He has a mental health diagnosis She uses a wheelchair / mobility chair. He receives special ed. services. She has a developmental delay. Kids without disabilities. Communicates with her eyes/device/etc. Congenital disability Accessible parking, bathroom, etc. She needs... or she uses... Colleagues, team people Partner, spouse What pronouns do you use?</p>	<p>Instead of: The handicapped or disabled. He's mentally retarded. She's autistic. He's Down's. She's learning disabled. He's a quadriplegic/crippled. She's a dwarf/midget. He's emotionally disturbed/mentally ill. She's confined/wheelchair bound. He's in special ed. She's developmentally delayed. Normal or healthy kids. Is non-verbal. Birth defect Handicapped parking, bathroom, etc. She has problems/special needs. Ladies and gentlemen, guys and gals Husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend What are your preferred pronouns?</p>

“Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation’s compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain loving one another.”

~Erma Bombeck

Barn Rules

- Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- ASTM/SEI rated helmets are required by all riders while mounted, and by students during ground lessons – **NO EXCEPTIONS**. You may bring your own properly fitting ASTM/SEI rated helmet or use one of ours.
- No yelling/screaming/rock throwing/obscene behavior, language, or gestures.
- No standing on gates or fences.
- No running.
- Drive slowly on farm property.
- Reserve the parking areas closest to the doors for our riders.
- **No pets!** Please do not bring your pets to our facility. There are no exceptions to this rule due to safety concerns. Service animals are permitted.
- Horse stalls are off limits to students unless allowed and supervised by an instructor or volunteer.
- Get permission before feeding our horses treats as we monitor their diets closely. Please do not hand feed horses; you may place approved treats in a feed pan.
- Pick up after yourself.
- Return all tack and equipment to its proper place. Put it back where it goes, not where you found it.
- If you open a gate, close it.
- Gates and doors must be closed during lessons. Be sure to call out when you open the arena gate and shut it.
- **ALCOHOL, DRUGS, VAPING AND SMOKING ARE PROHIBITED ON SITE!**

Communication

Communication is key and encouraged by NKT staff and Board of Directors. You are welcome to reach out to NKT staff with any concerns you may have. All of the contact information is listed on the second page in the contact's section.

THANK YOU!