



Freedom Riders
Horses Help Therapeutic Riding Program

Disabled Veterans and Injured Troops to Ride Horses

For Immediate Release

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Phoenix, AZ— [Horses Help](#), one of the Valley's oldest therapeutic horseback riding centers, launches its Freedom Riders Program for injured troops and disabled veterans June 16th. A North American Riding for the Handicapped ([NARHA](#)) Premier Accredited Center, Horses Help is making it possible for our service men and women and veterans who are participating in rehabilitative therapies to experience the joys, rewards and responsibilities of horses at a convenient location. In keeping with centuries old military traditions, modern equine-assisted activities include fundamental riding skills with an emphasis on safety, and horsemanship instruction in the care of the horse and equipment. The Freedom Riders Program at Horses Help is an opportunity for injured veterans to have healthy outdoor exercise and recreation under the guidance of therapeutic riding instructors with the support of other veterans. Recently injured OEF/OIF troops, as well as veterans of previous conflicts, can benefit physically and mentally from interacting with horses specially chosen and trained to work with special needs riders. Space is limited in this special program so that veterans receive individual attention from a team

of instructor and veteran volunteers who understand the adult special needs rider with military experience. “A 26 year old veteran of OIF who has a traumatic injury has different life experiences than an 8 year old child who was born with a condition for us to work with. Many of our wounded troops, men and women, rode horses in their youth, and are eager to revive that connection,” says Leslie Paradise, one of the Horses Help instructors who will be teaching the classes. “Other veterans have never even touched a horse before, but find there is something irresistible about this age-old partnership of a troop and his mount.” Participation is generously underwritten by a grant from the Veterans of Foreign Wars [Post 7507](#) of Fountain Hills, AZ

Gregg Goodman, Horses Help Executive Director, explains the focus of the new Freedom Riders Program, which has special facilities, such as wheelchair ramps for mounting.: “We use the medium of the horse’s natural behaviors, physical characteristics, and unique movement to provide a recreational activity suited to the needs of a variety of injured. The rhythms of the ranch, and the camaraderie of other veterans who are experienced horse men and women provide a comfortable and encouraging atmosphere for our troops and veterans to relax, ride, and have fun accomplishing a goal outdoors.” Cindy Ramsey, Horses Help Founder and Board Member adds, “We are pleased to be able to add the Freedom Riders Program to the core therapeutic riding, therapeutic driving, and hippotherapy services of Horses Help. Our success implementing customized programs for specific client groups, such as our horsemanship program for [Gateway Academy](#)’s Asperger students, has enabled us to focus the dedication and community spirit of our volunteers on a need close to their hearts – in the case of our Freedom Riders, our recently wounded and veterans. The result is a program where clients immediately feel relaxed and ready to benefit from being with and on a horse.”

Horses Help is a 501(c)(3) charitable therapeutic riding center centrally located to serve the Phoenix metropolitan area on Rose Garden Lane near Cave Creek Road founded in 1987.

Registration is in progress for the sessions that begin June 16th and July 14th on Mondays and Fridays. Rider applications, which need their physician's approval, are downloadable from Horses Help's website at <http://www.horseshelp.org/therapeutic-horsemanship/therapeutic-riding.aspx>. More information about the unique benefits of horseback riding for the disabled is provided there for interested veterans, their physicians and therapists as well. Volunteer or sponsorship opportunities are also available online or contact Horses Help at (602) 569-6056

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Horses Help adult rider, with his Therapeutic Riding Instructor, and trained volunteers during a riding lesson.



Walter Reed Army Medical Center
soldier works on balance during a session with horses and soldiers of the Old Guard Caisson Platoon at Fort Myer, 2006. *Photo ABC News*

Further Information Contact:

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