

# PARTICIPANT'S HANDBOOK



Montgomery Area Nontraditional Equestrians

“Where Horses Change Lives”

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Visit our website: [www.manenet.org](http://www.manenet.org)

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## **Introduction to MANE**

The Montgomery Area Nontraditional Equestrians (MANE) program is a non-profit organization formed in 1994 by a group of individuals who recognized the need for therapeutic horseback riding opportunities for children and adults with disabilities. MANE has been operated by a Board of Directors under the guidelines of the North American for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) since its conception.

MANE strives to provide a therapeutic horseback riding program that safely and effectively meets the therapeutic needs of individuals in the Montgomery area who have physical, cognitive, and/or developmental disabilities.

At the present time, MANE is the only program of its kind in the Tri-County region, and one of only three NARHA Premier Accredited Therapeutic Riding Centers in the entire state of Alabama.

### **Volunteers**

Each miraculous step our students make would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our trained volunteers. Volunteers are critical to the success of the program and we rely on their help to make classes go smoothly. MANE volunteers must be at least 14 years old and undergo sufficient training to ensure the safety and privacy of all of our students. Volunteers report directly to and are supervised by MANE staff and volunteer coordinators. They must agree to follow our volunteer guidelines and policies, meet the requirements for the task(s) they have been assigned, comply with and sign our Confidentiality Agreement.

MANE volunteers can assist in a variety of ways: leading horses during lessons, sidewalking (walking alongside the horse to offer the rider support when needed), grooming horses, tacking up horses, cooling out horses, cleaning tack, horse care, gardening, helping with fund-raisers, participating in public relations, assisting with administrative duties, planning of special events, site maintenance, and anything else that needs doing!

### **Family Volunteer Involvement**

There are virtually hundreds of tasks that need to be accomplished daily to keep a program of this magnitude effective and safe for our riders, horses, and volunteers. One of the key ingredients to our program's success is the direct, hands-on participation from our volunteers. Their commitment allows us to continue providing lessons at a reasonable cost to you.

Each volunteer at MANE is pre-screened and thoroughly trained for the job(s) they have been assigned. The only information shared with volunteers about the students they work with is that which is pertinent to the student's progress during the riding lesson. To ensure your confidentiality, volunteers are required to sign an agreement not to discuss personal information about our students.

There are literally hundreds of ways to volunteer at MANE. A few examples include:

- Leading
- Sidewalking
- Sweeping the barn
- Cleaning stalls
- Washing blankets, etc.
- Cleaning tack room
- Cleaning office
- Cleaning bathrooms
- Video taping classes
- Grooming horses
- Mending fences
- Painting
- Helping with the newsletter
- Getting others involved
- Organizing fund raisers
- Gardening
- Photography
- Filing
- Answering phones
- Updating computer records

If you would like to help, please check in at the office and schedule your orientation and training!

Thank you in advance for your hard work, support, and dedication to the program.

## **Funding**

Even with all the volunteer help we receive, the costs of our program are substantial. Currently, MANE's operating expenses exceed \$180,000 per year. Some of the funding comes from tuition, but the majority of our funding comes from grants, individuals, and corporate donations.

MANE keeps a "Wish List" of items that we need (such as tissue paper and soap) or would like to have (such as a video camera to record client progress) for our program. We also graciously accept monetary donations and donations in the form of memorial contributions or honorariums. (For the person on your gift list who has everything, consider making a donation in their honor.) Also, please keep in mind that professional services and in-kind services may be donated and are fully tax-deductible. All families participating at MANE are encouraged to contribute needed items as they are able to do so.

If you or someone you know would like to make a tax deductible gift, the mailing address is:

MANE  
3699 Wallahatchie Road  
Pike Road, Alabama 36064

## Program Guidelines

Our goal at Montgomery Area Nontraditional Equestrians is to provide a safe and effective experience for our participants, volunteers, horses, and staff. With this in mind, we ask your cooperation in adhering to the following requirements.

1. Complete and turn in all required paperwork and payment no later than one month prior to the beginning of the riding session. Scholarship Applications must be completed one month prior to the beginning of the riding session. Questions about any forms should be directed to the Administrative Coordinator, Audrey Adamson.
2. Staff and Instructors will review all student applications and select all participants for the program based on class availability. (See Participant Selection Policy.)
3. Once a student is accepted, on-going evaluations will determine if riding therapy continues to be beneficial and our horses, volunteers, and staff are able to safely and effectively accommodate the student.
4. Properly fitted, ASTM/SEI approved helmets for horseback riding must be worn at all times when riding or working directly with horses. Participants are encouraged to purchase their own helmets; however, a limited number of helmets are available for use by participants unable to do so. Please, consider helmet use when preparing participant's hairstyle.
5. If you are allergic to insect bites, it is important that you bring medication each time you come to MANE. For your own safety, be sure to let your teammates know of your sensitivities and the location of your medication in the event a sting occurs.
6. Participants must be dressed in appropriate riding attire. (See Dress Code.)
7. MANE reserves the right to cancel classes as outlined in our Cancellation Policy. If you are unable to come to a lesson, please call MANE as soon as possible. Advance notice is very important to ensure proper care of the horses and proper use of our volunteers.
8. Parents, siblings, and visitors are asked to wait in the Volunteer/Viewing room or picnic area during classes to avoid creating distractions for participants and instructors.
9. All children/siblings who are not participants of our program **must** remain with and be directly supervised by their parents while on MANE property. Designated off-limits areas (including the pond, barn utility areas, and outbuildings) must be respected.
10. Smoking is not allowed on MANE property.

## **Participant Selection Policy**

As a process of assuring the benefits of each participant in the Montgomery Area Nontraditional Equestrians (MANE) program, the staff reserves the duty to select clients for the MANE program based on their professional knowledge and experience, horse suitability and availability (including weight carrying limits of the horses), availability of volunteers, access to therapists, and the age, weight, and disability of the rider. MANE is designed to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities; however, there are some precautions and contraindications, limitations, and challenges that may prevent MANE from successfully providing therapeutic riding activities to some individuals. Also, to ensure the most potential benefits for each rider, MANE's registered instructors are given the right to limit the number of riders for each class based on the staff/volunteer ratio to the students, demands of the students, and/or availability of the horses.

As a method of ensuring a successful program, the staff, administrator(s), and instructors must carefully evaluate all factors involved in the implementation of the therapeutic riding services. The instructors and administrators will review all student applications and select all participants for the program.

The Precautions and Contraindications to Therapeutic Riding Guide (provided by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association) is used in determining the individuals who may benefit from therapeutic riding and who may not. The following guidelines are a few which have guided the professionals of MANE in the process of evaluating the potentials of our services for interested individuals:

1. If the movement activity will cause a decrease in the client's function, an increase in pain, or generally aggravate the medical condition, therapeutic riding may not be the activity of choice.
2. If the interaction is detrimental to the client or the horse, equine activities may be contraindicated.
3. If the therapeutic riding program can not accommodate the client's equipment needs, or the environment will aggravate his condition, riding may not be the activity of choice.
4. The possibility of a fall should be given careful consideration and may lead to the informed decision that therapeutic riding is not the activity of choice.
5. Working around horses (i.e.: grooming, leading, etc.) involves risk. Horses are large, move quickly, and can be dangerous to the client who is unable to respond appropriately.

Based on one or more of the guidelines above, our staff will determine if therapeutic riding is a beneficial activity for each student. Other conditions and guidelines can be researched from the Precautions and Contraindications Guide.

## Class Information

### Scheduling

All classes are scheduled in one hour increments and generally last for 45-minutes. Unless special arrangements have been made, students and caregivers should expect to be at the MANE site for a minimum of one hour. Exceptions to this are as follows and participation limits are determined on a case to case basis:

- When students are under the age of six.
- When it has been mutually agreed upon by MANE staff and program participants that a shorter or longer lesson time is needed.
- When a student is enrolled in Hippotherapy classes under the supervision of a contracted therapist.

Classes are limited by number of participants based on working area and disability. Class conducted in the large arena are limited to six riders, class in the covered arena on the Sensory Integration Trail are limited to three riders. Six students may participate in classes conducted on the Sensory Integration Trail. Instructors have the right to limit class size by involvement of the disabilities taught in each lesson. As always, classes are limited by the amount of volunteer man power.

Near the end of each session, participants wishing to participate in the next session are required to submit a registration form. Submission of this form and timely receipt of tuition is necessary to ensure your continued participation.

### Curriculum

Lesson plans are developed according to client needs and the goals agreed upon by MANE staff, the participant, and (if applicable) the participant's caregiver(s). Effective communication between participants, MANE staff, and caregivers is essential for ensuring a safe and enjoyable riding experience. To this end, MANE encourages on-going input and from participants and their caregivers.

Further, MANE curriculum is structured to include a classroom component, a barn component, and a riding component. It should **not** be expected that students will ride every lesson. In some situations, such as extremely muddy conditions, inability to use necessary equipment, a heat index in excess of 95 degrees, or the lack of available volunteers or horses, students will *not* have a riding component during their scheduled lesson.

## Dress Code

For safety reasons, all participants should adhere to the following dress code when participating in therapeutic riding lessons:

- All participants must wear ASTM/SEI approved helmets for horseback riding. Consider helmets when preparing hairstyles. Long hair should be tied back at the nape of the neck. Avoid large accessories or barrettes and hairstyles that might interfere with helmet fit. Refrain from wearing large and dangling jewelry that could catch on tack. When possible, participants are encouraged to provide their own helmets.
- Long pants, breeches/jodhpurs, or jeans must be worn to prevent chafing or pinching. During extremely hot weather, the student may be allowed to wear shorts, but only with the permission of the instructor.
- Shirts should be tucked in and jackets should be zipped so that the instructor can observe the participant's posture.
- Proper footwear is mandatory. Absolutely no open-toed shoes or sandals are permitted. Leather boots or sturdy leather shoes with a one-inch heel are suggested for all riders. Close-toed, hard-soled shoes are permitted for riders using saddles that are equipped with NARHA approved safety stirrups and for riders who do not use stirrups.
- Dress weather appropriate. Jackets and gloves should be worn on cold days. Scarves, earmuffs, and toboggans may be worn under riding helmets only if fit allows.

## Tardiness

Please arrive 10 minutes prior to class start time. If a rider has not arrived or is not ready to begin the lesson, tack will be removed from their horse 15 minutes past class start time.

**Latecomers will not be permitted to ride as this disrupts the lesson.** Missed time due to tardiness will not be made up.

## Absences

Participants must commit to coming to lessons for the entire duration of the scheduled riding session. Those unable to attend a scheduled lesson should contact the center as soon as possible. Advance notice of an absence is very important to ensure proper care of the horses and proper use of our volunteers. If you know a rider cannot attend a future lesson, advise us in writing as soon as possible so we can make the necessary staff/horse adjustments.

If a rider is unable to attend a lesson and we do not receive a phone call earlier than one hour before the scheduled lesson, it will be considered a "no show." "No shows" will not be included in make-up lessons.

## Cancellation Policy

MANE reserves the right to cancel lessons based on the availability of instructors, volunteers, and/or horses. Further, any factor or situation considered by MANE staff to be a threat to the safety of students, volunteers, staff, or horses is reason for cancellation.

Cancellations due to weather will be made if MANE staff determines that the following conditions exist one hour prior to class:

- Winds exceeding 25 MPH.
- Tornado warnings, severe thunderstorms, or hail storms.
- Steady, heavy rain. (Classes will not be cancelled in light rain.)
- Hazardous driving conditions.
- Temperatures above 97 degrees or wind chill/temperature below 40 degrees.
- Conditions, such as extreme muddiness, that would make it unsafe to hold classes

## Make Up Lessons

Program participants should bear in mind that MANE is a highly weather dependent activity, much like football, soccer, baseball, etc. To facilitate scheduling and the accommodation of as many students as possible, and to prevent instructors from becoming overwhelmed by efforts to offer make-up lessons and suffering “burn out,” MANE’s official make-up policy is as follows:

The week after the session ends is reserved for make-up lessons that were cancelled due to weather or instructor illness. Characteristically, **the program offers only one make-up opportunity for each student, but two make-ups are allowed at the discretion of the Program Director** when four or more lessons have been cancelled. Refunds are not given.

## Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees charged to MANE clients only accounts for a very small fraction of our operating expenses. In an effort to make our services accessible to as many clients as possible, MANE tuition is currently set at \$25 per therapeutic riding lesson – this is much lower than the industry standard for therapeutic or able-bodied riding lessons with similarly qualified instructors. Session rates and due dates are as follows:

10 Week Fall Session .....	\$250
10 Week Winter Session .....	\$250
10 Week Spring Session .....	\$250
Summer Camp (4 1 week sessions) .....	\$125 per week

The actual cost for MANE to run all 4 sessions each year is more than \$4,984 per rider! Although it is not required, it is suggested that participants or the families of participants provide “sweat equity” in exchange for more affordable lessons. If you will not be working with your

own rider or another in the class each week, feel free check in at the office and choose from the long list of tasks that volunteers can help us with.

## **Scholarships**

MANE provides a limited number of scholarships to assist riders who demonstrate a financial need with the cost of tuition. As these scholarships are dependent upon donor sponsorships, the amount available for assistance varies each session. Applicants interested in applying for tuition assistance must request a scholarship application and return with all necessary paperwork according to the tuition schedule above. If accepted, participants will be notified in writing of the scholarship amount awarded. Provision of scholarship assistance for one term in no way guarantees continued financial subsidy.

### *Scholarship eligibility*

As a method to meet the needs of potential clients with financial limitations, MANE's Board of Directors will accept applications for scholarships to pay partial fees of the lesson cost for each recipient.

1. Scholarship candidates will be required to submit the application for the scholarship one month prior to the session they wish to attend.
2. Applications must be resubmitted *each* session. If you need a scholarship application, please see Administrative Coordinator Audrey Adamson.
3. Upon receiving applications, the Board of Directors or an assigned committee will select recipients based on the financial need.
4. Some scholarship recipients will be required to pay a portion of the lesson cost depending on the client's financial status and the availability of MANE scholarship funds. This decision will be left upon the discretion of the Board of Directors.
5. You will receive written notification concerning the status of your scholarship.
6. Any balance owed to MANE will be due when session starts.

## Points of Contact

Communication is important as we work together to increase the abilities of our riders. Parents/guardians, as well as participants, may have information that could benefit a rider's potential. At the end of each session, a survey is provided to give you an opportunity to share your thoughts with us. Please take a moment to fill these out as they provide us with a valuable opportunity to learn how we can serve you better.

If you have any questions, suggestions, ideas, or concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss them with any of us.

Anne Alan Duncan Program Director	Phone: 334-213-0909 Email:
Audrey Adamson Administrative Coordinator	Phone: 334-213-0909 Email: viviselphie@hotmail.com
Mary Carol Gavin Volunteer Coordinator	Phone: 334-213-0909 Email:
Dr. Bettie Borton Executive Director	Phone: 334-315-5799 Email: bchampion1@aol.com

## Staff

### *Dr. Bettie Borton*

MANE's Executive Director is Dr. Bettie Borton, originally from Texas, Dr. Borton joined the program in 2001. With a doctoral degree in Audiology from the University of Florida, Bettie has years of experience working with children with disabilities and their families. She has worked with the Bright Preschool for Hearing Impaired Children in New Orleans, the Tennessee Infant Parent Service (TIPS), and was the director of the Early Intervention Program for the State of Alabama. She was engaged in the private practice of Audiology in Jasper for 10 years and was a clinical audiologist at the Kirklin Clinic for 5 years. She was the co-owner/director of Doctors Hearing Centers in Birmingham and is currently the owner of Borton Audiology Consultants and serves as a clinical professor at Auburn University Montgomery Speech and Hearing Clinic. A lifelong horse enthusiast with a background in Saddleseat Equitation, Bettie is certified through NARHA as a Registered Instructor.

### *Anne Alan Duncan*

Anne Alan grew up in Florida riding and training young event horses. She competed for Auburn University Equestrian Team in 2002 in both English and Western disciplines where she graduated in 2006 with a degree in Human Development and Family Studies with an emphasis in adolescent counseling and developmental disabilities. Anne Alan became a North American Riding for the Handicapped registered instructor in May of 2006 and subsequently accepted the

position as Equine Director at Montgomery Area Non-traditional Equestrians. Ms. Duncan has been with MANE for two years where she now serves as the Program Director.

*Audrey Adamson*

Audrey Adamson joined MANE full time in March of 2007 after two years of volunteer work with the organization that included an internship in 2005. Audrey serves as the Staff Instructor/Administrative Coordinator. Audrey teaches classes and does various program duties including computer maintenance, session planning and arrangement, and organization of the MANE newsletter. Audrey graduated with honors from Auburn University Montgomery with a bachelor's degree in psychology in 2005. Audrey is also certified by American Humanics, a national organization that helps college students develop and perfect the skills for effective non-profit management. She received her NARHA Registered Instructors Certification in May of 2007. Audrey strives to pursue continuing education in horse and teaching knowledge and hopes to continue her formal education as well.

*Mary Carol Gavin*

Mary Carol Gavin is MANE's volunteer coordinator and a staff instructor. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina –Chapel Hill with a degree in physical education. She has over 15 years of teaching experience in various venues including the Cerebral Palsy Center of Northern Virginia and both private and public schools in North Carolina, Nevada, and South Carolina.

An enthusiastic recreational rider, Mary Carol was introduced to therapeutic horseback riding as a volunteer at Heroes on Horseback in Hilton Head, South Carolina. She came to MANE as a volunteer in 2006 and received her instructor certification in 2007.