

# Southern Maryland Trail Riders

## Bridge Program: Making Trail Riding More Accessible for ALL!

### Information Sheet

#### *What is the Bridge Program?*

The Bridge Program enables community members of all ages and abilities to have access to trail riding at SMTR sponsored events. SMTR is a trail riding club that was founded to enable equestrians in Southern Maryland and the surrounding areas the opportunity to enjoy the trail riding experience.

The Bridge Program allows even more community members to participate because it:

- Provides riders with differing abilities (physical, emotional, and/or cognitive special needs) the opportunity to learn safe trail riding skills under the instruction of a certified PATH, Intl. Instructor.
- Provides youth riders with the opportunity to learn safe trail riding skills with instruction and supervision from trained, experienced, knowledgeable, and fun adult instructors.
- Provides riders of all ability levels access to safe, trained, and appropriate horses and ponies at reasonable cost
- Provides riders with the opportunity to gain experience, learn safe practices, reduce anxiety about riding outside of a ring, and expand their horse's training on trail.

The SMTR Bridge Program is supported by coaches Teri Carroll and Doria Fleisher. Teri and Doria have extensive experience in supporting riders of all ages and ability levels to enjoy trail riding in a safe, exciting, and community-based environment.

#### *How can I be involved?*

Riders of all ages and ability levels are welcome to participate, including riders who do not own or have access to his/her own horse and/or trailer. Horse leasing options are available to riders for each event. Volunteers, including family members, are also STRONGLY welcomed to participate, as long as they are members of SMTR as either individuals or a family.

#### *How do I sign up and get started?*

There are 10 easy steps to becoming a part of the Bridge Program!

- 1) Become a member of SMTR, paying annual dues. \*Families of riders who are under 18 and/or require additional supports due to physical, cognitive, or emotional needs are encouraged to consider a family membership so that family members can assist with supporting the rider! You can see the fee structure for dues at <http://smtr.org/membership/>
- 2) Participate in a yearly evaluation ride with Bridge Program coaches to determine rider's size, ability, and needs. This yearly evaluation ride has a cost of \$50, which includes mounted instruction in a ring/arena, plus instruction on trail.

- 3) Pre-register for each SMTR event, in the Bridge Program, that the rider would like to attend. Riders are responsible for the SMTR entry fee (ranges for each event, but is free for some events), plus an additional \$35 per Bridge fee for ALL riders (youth and adults) which covers the mounted and unmounted coaching and instruction for the ride. If riders need to lease a horse, there an additional fee of \$15.
- 4) Wait for Bridge Program coaches to confirm your registration and, if applicable, horse leasing for each event. You will also be told what time to arrive at the event, what the ground lesson for the event is, and if you need to bring or wear anything specific. You may be asked to complete waivers and/or horse leasing documentation at this time. \*Bridge Program riders MUST wear a helmet at all times when mounted. Helmets are NOT available and must be purchased in advance by the rider. Please feel free to contact Doria or Teri for suggestions on what to purchase and where to purchase from if you have any questions!
- 5) Arrive at the SMTR event on the scheduled day and time. An SMTR representative will greet you and give you a folder with your ride details. You will need to complete any unfinished waivers or horse leasing documentation at this time.
- 6) When your paperwork is completed, you can begin to groom and tack. If you trailer your own horse, you will do this independently. If you are leasing a horse, the horse owner will assist you at a level appropriate to your needs.
- 7) When you are groomed and tacked and checked by the horse owner, a Bridge Program coach will assist you with a safety check and will assist you with mounting.
- 8) Go out and enjoy the ride!
- 9) Return from the ride and assist the horse owner at a level appropriate to you with untacking, care/feeding, and trailer loading.
- 10) Say big thank you's to everyone who supported you and either stick around to enjoy food and friends, or head out!

### *How much does it cost to participate?*

The cost of the Bridge Program depends on whether you are a youth or adult, what type of membership you choose, and whether you need to lease a horse for the ride. A basic fee breakdown is below:

**General SMTR ANNUAL Membership:** Individual--\$20 OR Family--\$30.

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**General SMTR Ride Registration Fee:** Varies for each ride! See SMTR website fore details!

**Bridge Program Fee:** (includes mounted and unmounted coaching at ride): \$35 per person per ride.

**Horse Leasing Fee:** \$15 per rider per ride.