

# Thought you were too old for Pony Club?

## Check out the USPC Horsemasters Program for Adult Volunteers!

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The Horsemasters Program is designed to teach interested adults about Pony Club and to help increase our valued Pony Club volunteer base. All adults are welcome, whether or not they have prior equine experience.

While some activities are geared toward 'beginning' riders, we welcome more experienced and highly-skilled adults and Pony Club alumni as well! Members of Horsemasters Groups become Corporate Members of USPC, and friends or Sponsors (at the discretion of the District Commissioner) of the club, center or region.

The USPC Horsemasters Program for Adult Volunteers affords the opportunity for adults to experience many of the same benefits that Pony Club youth members receive: the chance to learn from our excellent curriculum, an opportunity to be part of a 'team' of likeminded individuals wanting to work together, and a venue to enjoy a horse. Horsemasters follow the USPC curriculum in an adult-friendly format, which allows adults to explore areas of interest and customize their own program of study to meet their individual needs. The Horsemasters Program does not have Pony Club ratings as such, instead, it affords participants a way to measure their progression with an evaluation process of checking off areas studied, practiced and proficiency acquired. We hope all your members will have a good time and hone their skills in both Horse Management and riding, as well as learn more about Pony Club.

The enclosed agreement is for the "Horsemasters Liaison." The individual who agrees to serve in this capacity (at the discretion of the District Commissioner, Center Administrator, or Regional Supervisor) will interact with the local Pony Club, Riding Center or Region, and will help other adults learn more about horses, horse sports and Pony Club. Part of the job of Liaison will be to return the necessary paperwork, including responding to USPC questionnaires. The application process does not automatically guarantee that a group will be permitted to start a Horsemasters Group, and remember until each person in a group has individually registered with USPC and paid all membership fees, that person is not a

member and may not participate in any Horsemasters activities.

The Liaison will work with the DC, CA or RS to facilitate the Horsemasters program: identify instructors and evaluators, set up lessons and lectures, explain the expectations and paperwork to adult members, oversee Award achievement and be 'the person to call' at the local level when adults in your area have questions. It's a big job, but it will be very beneficial to the USPC Board of Governors to learn how the Horsemasters Program works at the local level. Of equal importance, you'll be developing a network of important friends—the Horsemasters—who will be able to help your local club, center or region! We know you're going to have a great time!

Volunteerism is a big part of the Horsemasters Program, and is actually included in the expectations and curriculum. Pony Clubs are encouraged to set up an internal process to 'track' and reward volunteer efforts within their club, center and region.

Horsemasters Program members are actual Corporate Members of USPC and pay an Activity Fee. Clubs may, at the discretion of the DC, CA or RS, require Horsemasters become *friends* of the local club and charge a nominal fee to help support the youth program. The club DC may invite Horsemasters to become Club Sponsors.

Because regular communication is so important to the success of the program, we have established an email-based Horsemasters Digest to which each Horsemasters Group is expected to belong. If you, as Liaison, do not have internet access, we ask that you appoint someone in your group, who does, and then have this person be responsible for relaying all information to you. Individuals are welcome to join as well. It's a great way to share experiences between groups and to have questions and concerns addressed in a timely manner.

We look forward to working with you. Welcome to Pony Club!