

## Equine Management Standards & Horse Care Philosophy

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Forward Stride is certified through the therapeutic riding industry's professional organization - the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) which is based in Denver. Forward Stride is the Portland metropolitan area's only Premier Accredited center. This status ensures that we are in compliance with NARHA's high safety and equine standards. The NARHA standards encompass:

- **Administrative Standards** which include emergency procedures, safety regulations, and written policies and procedures;
- **Program Standards** which include equine management equipment, volunteers, participants, and instruction; and
- **Facility Standards** which include safety and maintenance of buildings, pastures and grounds.

Our entire organization is centered on a commitment to excellence which encompasses not only service to our clientele, but also to our horses. Our horses are closely monitored for physical health and well being, and their needs are addressed on a daily basis by our Equine Manager and onsite Program Director, who also provides nighttime supervision. We enjoy comprehensive pro bono horse care services including numerous veterinarians (please see our website for names), Bald Peak Foaling & Rehabilitation Center, two equine massage therapists and a farrier. Additionally, we purchase the services of an equine chiropractor and acupuncturist. Veterinarian references are available upon request.

In many cases, Forward Stride own horse care standards exceed the standards outlined by NARHA as our philosophy is to give the best possible care to our horses while keeping them in their most natural environment.

In the wild, horses live in a free-roaming herd and graze almost constantly throughout the day. At Forward Stride, all the horses are turned out into large, sheltered paddocks with their herdmates daily. We have fifteen different pastures, and we practice pasture rotation year-round to ensure there is always plenty of grazing for the horses. For safety, we limit our herd size to a maximum of six, and rarely move horses into different herd groups. For protection against the elements, the horses wear warm blankets and rain sheets in the winter, and fly masks, fly sheets, and fly spray in the summer months.

Forward Stride maintains the herd atmosphere in the evening when horses return to their stalls by leaving stall doors open and secured with stall guards. With the stall doors opened, the horses are free to hang their heads out of their stalls, watch the activity in the aisle way and watch their fellow herd mates in neighboring stalls.

The feeding regiment for Forward Stride horses consists of hay in the morning, grazing throughout the day, and hay and grain with supplements in the evening. Each horse has their own personalized diet that is developed by our experienced Equine Manager and our pro-bono Vets. The horses always have access to water and free-choice salt and mineral licks. We routinely test the quality of our hay, and closely monitor our horses' weights and coat patterns to ensure our horses are receiving the best possible nutrition.

Forward Stride horses also enjoy regular hoof work by our well-known, reputable farrier, up-to-date vet care from our pro-bono Vets scattered around the Portland-metropolitan area, as well as regular massage and chiropractic work sponsored by Forward Stride.

Forward Stride handles each therapy horse daily to check for any physical or behavioral issues. Horses are regularly exercised by experienced handlers on the days they are not used in therapy classes. This practice keeps their bodies fit and their minds fresh. When used in therapeutic riding classes, each horse is limited to no more than three consecutive hours (per NARHA Standards), which entails walking and light trotting. Horse usage is planned and tracked daily, and is examined on a weekly basis by our Program Director and Equine Manager, who work together to make certain no horse is being overused.

Forward Stride would like to extend a very cordial welcome to those who would like to visit our facility and see a piece of horse heaven in progress. Our horses are very happy, and we believe if they could speak, they would tell you all about our wonderful facility and care program we have arranged for them.