Pony Party Checklist

Thank you for volunteering with LEC. Many of our riders first rode with us as a guest at a pony party and this is a great way for our riders to introduce our barn to their friends. LEC wouldn’t be able to provide these parties without you, our volunteers.

Each party will have an assigned Lead. This individual is either a LEC employee or a volunteer with experience hosting the parties. This individual is the point of contact for the guests and for any questions that arise during the party. A second adult Support person is available to grab needed items, assist with sign-in, and with securing helmets on the riders. Each party will also have three youth line-leaders to walk the ponies.

# Before the Party

## Prepare to Welcome & the Party Room

There is a ‘pony party basket’ that will be prepared ahead of time. This has the contract (info about the party), pens, markers, paper bags, name tags, and release forms. This should be taken downstairs to the concrete patio for the sign in table.

There should be at least 2 tables and 12 chairs for the little guests. A few chairs should be provided for the adult guests. Take chairs from the concrete patio if needed.

The upstairs room requires a little more set-up time than the outside room. If the party is upstairs, the chair will need to be moved to the side to allow room for the tables. The tables are kept behind the couch. A large garbage can should be brought up.

Sweep if needed.

## Prepare the horses

All horses should be groomed and tacked using small saddles & stirrups. The list of ponies and which saddles to use are on the worker bulletin board. The LEC shift workers are available to assist with tacking if needed, but the responsibility for the party ponies falls to the Pony Party Workers.

While preparing the horses, make sure a set of stairs are by the front of the arena and the cones are nearby. A trainer will set up the cones to mark off front of the arena for party use.

## Prepare The Hay Jump

The candy will be with the ‘pony party basket.’ The hay is in the trailer. *Get your own hay; if you see a wheel-barrow just sitting around, that is not for the pony party - that is what the workers got for them to use.* Typically, about ½ a bale is enough for the hay jump.

## Prepare to Paint the Pony

A blue tray and some paint are kept in the red box in the outside room (but when missing check the kitchen). Extra paint is in the craft storage room (the door underneath the stairs outside). Clean towels are in the kitchen.

Two water buckets are needed for hand-washing. Depending on the weather, you may want to start with very hot or cold water as it will cool or heat during the rides.

*Tip: when adding paint to the tray, add a base of color first then white. The reverse is what will show up on the pony.*

# During the Party

## Welcome

Greet the guests and introduce yourself. The parents will need to sign the release for the riders. Riders will need a helmet (*Tip: there is a dot on the back of the helmets with different colors for the different sizes; the smallest helmets are at top of cabinet*). Make each rider a name-tag & paper bag. Riders could decorate their own bag while waiting for other guests to arrive. Guests may walk around and pet the horses (especially if they are very early). As it gets closer to official party time, have guests sit on the bleachers so the Lead can review the plan and the rules for being around horses.

If the guests have balloons, let the trainers know. The trainer will make sure all horses in the arena are paused so the balloons won’t spook the horses. Make sure the balloons are held tightly and securely before they are brought in the building.

## Pony Rides

This flows best when the riders line up outside the gate. Parents can come in and stand in the middle to take pictures. Don’t forget to ask adult guests to turn off any flashes.

The Lead worker helps get the riders off and on. The support worker signs in late arriving guests. If all guests have arrived, the Support person can to go ahead and fill out the postcards for the guests (they will be in the ‘pony party basket’).

The Birthday child rides first and everyone gets 3 small laps. If there are 11 or less riders, it is great when the birthday child rides again. If there are 12 or more riders, it will depend on the time left if the Birthday child goes twice.

Variation: Some leaders do all 3 on, all ride, change all 3. Some leaders start as soon as the Birthday child is ready and keeps it moving. It depends on the leader, support, and if guests are arriving or not.

## Hay jump

While this is going on, the 3 line-leaders are un-tacking the horses. The Support should carry the paper bags to the hay (so the children don’t wave them around and startle the horses). Hand out the bags and have the children open the bags. Depending on their age, the Birthday child gets to say go. Tip: have all stand in a circle and then take one step back. For bigger children, have them turn their backs before the start. After all the candy is found, the bags should be handed to the parents.

## Paint the Pony & Group Photo

The Lead will decide what the Support and the 3 line-leads will do during this stage based on the individuals.

1. 1: Hold the head
2. 2: Stand by the rump
3. 3: Hold the tray and help the children add their print
4. 4: Help wash hands

After all guests have had a turn, line up the guests for a group picture. In the unlikely event the pony is not cooperating, use the Red Barn as a backdrop.

## Guest Use of Party Room (Worker Clean Up)

The Lead will escort the party guests to the party room. Everyone else should use the dirty water and wet towels to wash the pony. Empty out the used water and wash the paint tray (Tip: pour the dirty water over the tray first. A washing will still be needed, but it gets most of it off.) The dirty towels go in the kitchen down by the washer & dryer.

Make sure all ponies used are un-tacked and the tack is returned to the tack room. Turn the ponies out if they won’t be used any more that day.

Clean up the hay, checking for missed candy as it is put into a wheel-barrow. Depending on the time, feed the hay to the ponies. *Do not feed just the donkey as he will get a bellyache eating it all.*

# After the Party

Most guests will do a lot of their own clean-up and toss out food and tablecloths in the big garbage can conveniently placed in the room. **Even if they don’t, smile and tell them you hope they enjoyed their day at the Big Red Barn Arena. Hand out brochures and tell them we hope to see them soon.**

Clean up anything left in the party room. If chairs were taken from the concrete patio, they need to be returned. The garbage can must be emptied into the dumpster and returned to where it started the day. If the party was upstairs, the tables need to be returned behind the couch and the chair put back in its proper place.

Sweep the room.

**Go home and soak in a hot bath knowing you are appreciated.**