



The HwH Special Olympics Equestrian Team

Horses with H.E.A.R.T. (HwH) is associated with Special Olympics Arizona (SOAZ). Our coaches are certified through their state office and we use their requirements/policies, forms and insurance. We are the largest S.O. Equestrian Team in the State of Arizona.

The Special Olympics mission statement is *“To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.”* For more information about Special Olympics in general please visit www.specialolympics.org.

Horses with H.E.A.R.T. began participating in Special Olympics in 1998 with a team of six riders, one certified coach – Trudy Chapman, three horses and a handful of volunteers. We traveled to a regional show in Payson and a State Games Show in Phoenix. In 2008, 17 riders, six certified coaches, eight horses and 15 - 20 volunteers participated in weekly practice sessions, two State Games Shows and hosted our own Equestrian Show at the Whistle Stop Ranch.

The HwH Special Olympics Team has been lead by Head Coach Pam Berry since 2004. Assisting her are S.O. Certified Coaches: Trudy Chapman-Radley; Butch McCarty; Ken Pimentel; Karen Richert and Larry Walz. Our goal for the HwH team is to encourage each rider to become as independent as they are able.

With supervision, each rider grooms and tacks his or her own horse. Some riders require assistance when mounted, some do not. Some riders are walk only, some are walk trot, and others are learning to lope. Our riders are coached and compete in showmanship at halter, equitation, and trail as well as the speed events barrel racing and pole bending.

New members are added to the team when class space and/or horses are available. Volunteer staffing is also necessary to provide a safe environment. To be eligible for the HwH Special Olympics team, a rider must:

- ♥ Have an interest in competing in equestrian sports.
- ♥ Submit a Special Olympics Medical Release form (completed by the rider's doctor) to the head coach prior to the rider participating.
- ♥ Be able to use their reins and legs to guide, stop, and start their horse.
- ♥ Be able to maintain good balance on the horse.
- ♥ Complete a minimum of 1 six-week session with one of our therapeutic riding instructors to learn the HwH safety practices.

In order to meet Special Olympics Arizona requirements and coordinate our practice schedule with SOAZ events, our session schedule runs differently from HwH Individual/Group Riding sessions. To be eligible to compete in a SOAZ event, an athlete must have participated in eight practice sessions. A full schedule of our team practices, shows and events is found on the following page.

Saturday is Special Olympics day at Horses with H.E.A.R.T. In order to accommodate the number of riders, our practices are divided into 3 classes. Because the riders do their own grooming and tacking up, our sessions are 1 ½ hours, to allow as much riding time as possible.

The classes are scheduled 9:30 – 11:00 a.m., 11:00 – 12:30 p.m., and 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. The afternoon class has an extra half hour because they also do the evening feeding.

SOAZ organizes two Equestrian Shows a year and reimburses for travel fees for our riders to participate in these shows. All other expenses are covered by Horses with H.E.A.R.T.'s operating budget and local Special Olympics Equestrian Team sponsors.

The Sponsors for our 2008/2009 Season are:

Ken & Ginny Pimentel ♥ HwH Bowl-A-Thon ♥ Soroptomist International of Prescott ♥ Al Moody ♥ Prescott Cleaners ♥ Proforma Quality Imaging ♥ Janet Cope ♥ Shirley Merrill ♥ Kick-A-Little Ranch ♥ Prescott Cleaners ♥ Ray & Ethel Peterson ♥ Altius Healthcare ♥ Goodwin Street Medical Supply ♥ Triple Crown Enterprises

2009 HwH Special Olympic Team Schedule

Regular Practice Sessions:
May 9th, 16th, 23rd, & 30th, June 6th

SOAZ Horse Show at Horses Help, Phoenix
June 13th

Spring Break Beach Party
TBD

Regular Practice Sessions:
September 5th, 12th, 19th, & 26th
October 3rd, 10th, 17th, & 31st

SOAZ Fall Show at AZ Horse Lovers Park, Phoenix
November 7th

Volunteers interested in working with the HwH S.O. Equestrian Team and/or helping at Special Olympics events need to complete an additional application required by SOAZ. To obtain this form or if you would like more information on the HwH Team, Special Olympics or becoming a sponsor, please contact Pam Berry at so@horseswithheart.org. or call our office at 928-533-9178.

