



**Special Olympics**  
*Florida*  
*Seminole County*

Since 1997, C.H.E.E.R. (Circle H Equestrian Event Riders) has represented the county's equestrian team as part of Special Olympics Seminole County. Our training seasons extends from October through May, ending with our State Special Olympic competition in May. In this sport, athletes are instructed in the proper way to ride and communicate with the horse to successfully compete in competitions on the local, county and state levels. Athletes are instructed to sit properly on the horse, hold the reins properly to steer the horse, negotiate obstacles such as cones, ground poles or turns and to execute timed patterns as in barrel racing. Athletes receive ribbons and medals when placement in a show is accomplished. Good sportsmanship is also an important program component. In addition to riding, athletes are also instructed on stable management such as the care, feeding and grooming of the horse.

In addition to competing in Special Olympic sanctioned events, our Equestrian Team participates in several "Challenge" shows for athletes with any disability. These shows serve as a valuable training experience for both 2 legged and 4 legged athletes to prepare for our Special Olympic area and state competitions.

Volunteers and dedicated family members are the lifeline of our group. I myself am a volunteer coach. Volunteers perform various tasks from assisting athletes, equipment upkeep and keeping our horses groomed and exercised. Athletes are paired with a horse and one or two volunteers who assist the athlete in the correct execution of selected tasks. The volunteer is also there as a safety measure in case there is a problem with the horse or rider that would require the volunteer to control the horse or protect the rider. The equestrian event is the only sport that depends on the cooperation of another living, thinking creature. Parents are often asked to assist in classes, practice with their athlete at home and in transporting their athletes to and from practices and shows.

Special Olympics is a non-profit organization that provides year round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 8 years of age and older with intellectual disabilities. Funding for the Special Olympics Equestrian Team is accomplished by individual and corporate sponsorship, fundraising dollars and in-kind donations of feed, equipment, or vehicles. As head coach and director of C.H.E.E.R., I donate the use of my facility, the use of my horses, daily care of the horses, feed, my time for lesson teaching and preparation, and partial vet and vehicle expenses. Any donation is graciously appreciated and is completely tax deductible.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thanks so much for your interest.

## Elise Hulme

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