Medicine Horse Way
Safety Contract

Medicine Horse Way programs emphasize mutual respect, exploration, creativity and responsiveness in relating to horses. Medicine Horse Way is committed to the safety of people and horses. Anyone who knowingly or maliciously breaks these safety guidelines is a safety risk for the entire group and, as such, will not be allowed to participate in the program. The following guidelines will prevent serious mishaps and make the experience more enjoyable for everyone involved, including the horses.

1. Do not touch or feed horses you have not been introduced to.
2. When leading the horse, never wrap the lead line around your hand. Do not lay the line over your neck or shoulder.
3. Avoid standing directly in front of or directly behind the horse. When walking behind the horse to get to the other side, put your hand on the horse's hindquarters and move around him with your body close to his body. This allows the horse to know where you are and keeps you from stepping into kicking range (about two feet out from the horse's body) Children who cannot comfortably reach the horse's hindquarters are not tall enough to walk safely behind the horse in this manner and should always ask for assistance in walking around the horse. When two people are working with the same horse, they should stand on the same side of the horse.
4. Do not hit the horse. Physical violence only escalates the horse's impulse to run or fight.
5. Stop what you are doing and move away from the horse or return to the neutral leading position when the instructor calls a "Time Out". Wait quietly for further instruction.
6. If a horse begins to panic, give him some space. Do not try to restrain him. If the panic escalates, LET THE HORSE GO! Call "Time Out" or "Loose Horse".
7. Horses are very sensitive to the emotions and energy fields of their herd members as well as the human beings who interact with them. Energy and emotions are a primary source of information to this species. Pay attention to your breathing, emotions, and spatial proximity. If you get frustrated, fearful, or angry, call your own "Time Out" and reassess the situation. Do not hesitate to ask for help.
8. Do not hold your breath. Horses give and receive information through the quality and frequency of their breathing. Holding your breath or producing quick, shallow breaths convey feelings of stress and fear to the horses and can cause them to become stressed or fearful.

I have read the safety guidelines above and will listen to the accompanying demonstration. I agree to follow these rules to the best of my ability and ask for help when I am having trouble with any of the Medicine Horse Way activities.

I agree to be responsible for my own safety and thus contribute to the safety of the horses and the group.

_____ _____

Date Signature