



presented by the **American Youth Horse Council**

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**help kids connect through horses**

## Starting a Youth Horse Club

### ***AYHC “Unifying Kindred Spirits – Tips on Starting a New Youth Horse Club”***

*So you have a group of horse loving kids and they want to start a club. Now what? This pamphlet will give you some basics for starting a new youth horse club and information on where to go to get more details.*

#### **What is the common theme?**

One of the most important questions for you to answer as a group is, “What brings us all together?” The answer might be a particular breed of horse, a certain discipline of riding, an activity involving horses that everyone likes to do or just plain old, “We all like horses!”

Once you have decided what the common theme of the group is, this will help you find other resources to get your club going.

Breed interest – If your club members all own a certain breed of horse make sure to start by contacting that breed membership association. Often these organizations will have literature on starting a youth group so all the work is done for you. (Hint—these manuals may also help if your group does not own the same breed of horse.)

#### **How to get kids to come**

Once you have decided on a common theme and have contacted the local and/or national association, the next step is to make sure you have interested kids and that the word gets out in your local area that you exist. Make sure that your core group of kids and parents work with you as the club leader to help with this step. Create a flyer with a contact name and phone number on it. This person should be the youth adult leader that will be organizing the group.

Schools – Make sure that the local schools get a flyer regarding your new club and what you are

planning on doing. If you give it to the administration office many times they will find a common area to post it or may even make copies for teachers to distribute in class.

Local arena – If you have a local public arena or barn where many of your kids ride or keep their horses make sure to post a flyer here and start spreading the word.

City Council or Civic Group – Many cities will allow local clubs in their area to advertise in their city council newsletter or come to a meeting and talk about your new group.

Local Library – Libraries are a great resource to post information about your new youth horse club.

#### **Meeting place and time**

Once you have kids interested, the next step is to figure out when and where you are going to meet. Normally meeting once a month is sufficient to get things done and keep the club moving ahead. A central location inside so you can meet year round works best. Sometimes your local library or bank has free meeting room space for local clubs that they will let you use even after hours. Other times meeting at a pizza place or another restaurant is a fun way to get together.

#### **Details**

Some youth clubs have formal meetings with minutes and club bylaws that are followed. These teach important skills for the kids such as Robert’s Rules of Order, parliamentary procedure and other meeting skills that will come in handy in their adult lives. Contact your local 4-H, FFA, breed association or other club to get a sample set of bylaws and minutes to learn from. Some youth clubs also elect officers such as a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer.

#### **What to do at your meetings**

At each meeting it is super to have a group activity planned or a guest speaker. This makes the meeting interesting and educational and you normally get more of your youth to come.



Trainers, breeders, feed and tack store owners, veterinarians, farriers, 4-H, Pony Club or FFA area contest winner and equine massage therapists in your local areas make great speakers. Use your members' resources and ask if they or their parents know of anyone that would make a good speaker for a club meeting.

Making T-shirts designs, having a mini hippology contest, practicing judging a class of horses that is brought in on video tape or making stick horses is a great way to bring the group together during a meeting and work on team work and leadership skills regardless of the kids ages.

### **Group field trips**

A great replacement for a meeting one month or do it as an extra activity is a club fieldtrip. Visit a big barn in your area, watch a farrier work, go to a horse show, visit a theme park that has horses, visit a national breed registry if there is one near you, visit a tack store to watch a saddle maker work, etc.

### **Supporting each other**

One of the best things about being a club member is the friends you meet and how you support one another. If you show together make sure to always applaud for each other even if someone in your club beats you. Working together as a team is a great feeling!

### **Fundraisers**

To be able to do some of the things mentioned money is needed. Parents will provide some of it, but the rest needs to come through club fundraisers. These fundraisers are a great way to get club members together working on a common goal.

**Bake Sale and Car Washes** – These tried and true events are fun to do and can raise some great cash. Have the bake sale at your local horse show or endurance ride at the different vet checks. The car wash can be done during a horse show as will or your kids can go in the parking lot during an adult club meeting and wash the cars.

**Silent Auctions** – Local retailers seem to be willing to donate items for kids to raise money for a worthy cause such as their year-end awards. Have the kids ask for the items, as they seem to do a much better job of soliciting. Bid sheets will need to be created and a minimum bid set for each item along with

bidding increments. A good rule of thumb is to take 50% of the retail value and make that your minimum bid and then a percentage of the remainder as your increments. For example, a \$ 50 sweatshirt would have a \$ 25 minimum bid and would have \$ 5 bidding increments. Have the event at a local horse show or adult club meeting or even during a larger event such as the annual county fair. When final bids are due make sure to have it set up near a lot of people so you can even have a mini live auction at the end to raise more funds. If you set it up that the people do not have to be present to win make sure you have enough money to ship items to them.

**Raffles** – If you get a large dollar item donated to your club a raffle is a great way to make money. The only problem is that they are not legal in every state. You should research and comply with gaming regulations set forth by your local city and state. This may include purchasing a license to legally conduct the raffle in addition to disclosure of proceeds to your state's gaming agency. License fees are normally around \$ 50 and are generally good for one year. You will then need to purchase raffle tickets and then start selling them! A great way to sell them is individually and then as package deals. For example, \$ 1 a ticket or ten tickets for \$ 5. Some state regulations prohibit discount sells and require that each ticket be sold at the same rate. Make sure to have the drawing a time and location where there are a lot of people around so you can sell a bunch of tickets at the last minute to raise more money! If the winner does not have to be present to win make sure you can get the item to them in an inexpensive way. Be sure to follow your state's gaming regulations on the procedure of selling and distributing tickets as well as conducting the actual raffle and drawing.

### **Programs and Awards**

Setting goals for your youth group such as raising a certain amount of money in a fundraiser or doing a good community service act is a great way to build camaraderie and teach goal-setting skills. Can drives around the holidays or doing Christmas caroling on horseback in your neighborhood can be super programs for your club. Also having year-end awards in you club for members who show or compete in other ways can work. Make sure to also have awards such as best attendance at meetings and most money raised in a fundraiser to make sure that your awards are not all about winning.



### **The American Horse Council Horse Industry Directory**

...contains the following information and more.

[www.horsecouncil.org](http://www.horsecouncil.org)

202-882-5578.

...also you can contact your local state horse association for local information.

Appaloosa Horse Club, Inc.

[www.appaloosa.com](http://www.appaloosa.com)

208-882-5578

Arabian Horse Association

[www.iaha.com](http://www.iaha.com)

303-696-4500

American Paint Horse Association

[www.apha.com](http://www.apha.com)

817.834.2742

Pony of the Americas Club

[www.poac.org](http://www.poac.org)

317.788.0107

American Quarter Horse Association

[www.aqha.com](http://www.aqha.com)

806.376.4811

Tennessee Walking Horse  
Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association

[www.twhbea.com](http://www.twhbea.com)

931.359.1574

Certified Horsemanship Association

[www.cha-ahse.org](http://www.cha-ahse.org)

800.399.0318

### **Discipline Interest**

If your youth group is joining because they all ride western or do dressage then there are national riding discipline organizations that may be able to assist you. Also the breed associations normally have information on specific styles of riding.

National Barrel Horse Association

[www.NBHA.com](http://www.NBHA.com)

706.722.7223

National Cutting Horse Association

[www.nchacutting.com](http://www.nchacutting.com)

817.244.6188

United States Dressage Federation

[www.usdf.org](http://www.usdf.org)

859.971.2277

National Reining Horse Association

[www.nrha.com](http://www.nrha.com)

405.946.7400

International Side Saddle Organization

[www.sidesaddle.com](http://www.sidesaddle.com)

609.476.2976

### **Activity Interest**

If your youth group is coming together because of a certain type of activity that they like to do with their horses such as showing, endurance riding or playing polo. Then there are some national organizations that specialize in these activities that might be able to help.

American Endurance Ride Conference

530.823.2260

United States Polo Association

[www.uspolo.org](http://www.uspolo.org)

859.219.1000

USA Equestrian Federation

[www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org)

859.258.2472

American Vaulting Association

[www.americany Vaulting.org](http://www.americany Vaulting.org)

513.874.7732

***This is just a start to getting a horse youth club going. For more information about this topic and others, please call the American Youth Horse Council at 1.800.TRY.AYHC.***