



HETRA

Proudly Presents:

**HETRA UNIVERSITY**



**“Happy, Healthy, Sane & Sound”**

**EAS Workshop | March 14-16th , 2025 | Gretna, NE**



*HETRA University is the educational arm of Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Academy. Our mission is to educate and empower equine assisted services professionals toward the safest and most successful sessions possible for our valued horses, volunteers and participants.*

**HETRA University Live: Happy, Healthy, Sane & Sound**  
**March 14-16<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Location**

Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Academy (HETRA)  
10130 S. 222<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Gretna, NE 68028

**Workshop Overview:** As the EAS industry continues to expand and diversify, it is of utmost importance to keep the needs of our equine partners at the forefront of the movement. We'll discuss topics as they pertain primarily to mounted activities such as adaptive riding and/or hippotherapy. Gain a deeper understanding of appropriate equine selection (evaluate what your program needs and what to look for), proper training, conditioning and integration into programming (including appropriate workload management and effective handling techniques), regular health assessment and maintenance and other management best practices that help keep herd members engaged for the long haul. By prioritizing the physical and mental health of our equine partners, EAS programs can ensure a sustainable and fulfilling experience for both the animals and the participants. Workshop attendees should expect a combination of valuable hands-on experience with horses, classroom-based education and individualized coaching to help solidify workshop content.

**Registration**

Registration will be available until the day the workshop begins or until capacity for the workshop has been reached, whichever comes first. In order to ensure a high-quality, hands-on experience, we are limiting registration numbers.

Lunch will be provided on both Friday and Saturday of the workshop for full registration participants.

*\$125 [early bird registration expires January 10] for full workshop experience, non-members.*

**\$150 for full workshop experience, non-members.**

Full Registration includes:

- Access to hands-on opportunities such as practical saddle fit, horse handling and more throughout the weekend.
- One-on-one mentoring with HETRA staff to help you troubleshoot specific cases and investigate how strategies learned may integrate with your center/staff/resources.
- Follow-up resources and support provided at 3- and 6-months post-workshop.

**\$70 for virtual conference.** *New this year!* Please note that the hands-on components of this conference will be difficult to broadcast live virtually and are not guaranteed. Please see the agenda for details on which sessions may be impacted. Recordings will not be provided, this is a live-only virtual option.

Virtual Registration includes:

- Virtual access to classroom presentations with digital downloads of handouts available.
- Select access for observation of hands-on components of workshop, again not guaranteed due to the dynamic nature of sessions.
- (1) one-on-one virtual mentoring session with HETRA staff to help you troubleshoot specific cases and investigate how strategies learned may integrate with your center/staff/resources.

**\$70 Audit + Lunch or \$50 for Audit Only.** Access to all sessions as an observer only, no hands-on components

**Refund Policy**

Refunds will not be offered unless the workshop is canceled. If you are unable to make it to the workshop other arrangements can be made for the value of your registration including but not limited to on-site trainings or clinics, individual mentorship, online education, future HETRA University live events and more.

## **Day One**

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### **9:00 – 10:15 AM Set Yourself Up for Success: Evaluation and Intake of EAS Horses**

Description: Start your journey to a healthy, happy herd of EAS horses by choosing the right horses for the job first! Expect an in-depth discussion regarding the evaluation and intake of EAS horses. There are a lot of vital factors to consider, including breed considerations, conformation, and personality. It is also important to take time to truly assess program needs and what your center can accommodate. We will also discuss different types of onboarding strategies including lease, purchase, and other arrangements to help add new members to your herd.

Presenter(s): Shelby Schult, PATH Intl. CTRI, Program Director at HETRA

### **10:15- 10:30 AM Break**

### **10:30 - 12:00 PM The Weight of Responsibility: Setting Weight Limits for Mounted EAS Programming**

*INTERACTIVE. This session will be held in our arena, interacting with live equines. Virtual opportunity may be limited.*

Setting weight limits is a hot-button topic that can get messy, fast. It can involve a lot of uncomfortable conversations, but it is our responsibility as professionals to advocate for our equines, staff, and volunteers. Learn how to set policies to help your center be consistent and successful while navigating this difficult subject. We will have the opportunity to evaluate horses and practice techniques for assigning weight limits based on equine conformation, breed, age, and more.

Presenter(s): Cassidy Godden, PATH Intl. CTRI, Equine Operations Manager at HETRA

### **12:00- 1:00 PM Lunch Provided with Registration**

### **1:00- 2:45 PM Practical Saddle Fit for the EAS Horse**

*INTERACTIVE. This session will be held in our arena, interacting with live equines. Virtual opportunity may be limited.*

Description: Expect to learn what has become a practical approach to saddle fitting for the EAS herd at HETRA. We will talk English, Western, and even Treeless saddles. We know a healthy back is imperative for a therapy horse, but we also know we have a limited budget and have to work with the tack we have. So how can we shim, adjust, or adapt the saddles available to our program for optimum comfort for our horses? We'll take a look as a group and get a chance to feel hands-on proper and poor-fitting saddles and brainstorm about what might be a realistic approach for your center.

### **2:45-3:15 PM Additional Practice with Saddle Fit**

*INTERACTIVE. This session will be held in our arena, interacting with live equines. No virtual opportunity available.*

Description: Saddle fit can be a “feel”. Use this opportunity to develop your “feel” and gain valuable feedback from a seasoned professional. This additional hands-on time will allow for discussion and troubleshooting around difficult-to-fit horses, adaptive tack, or additional considerations for mounted programming.

Presenter(s): Shelby Schult, PATH Intl. CTRI, Program Director at HETRA

### **3:15- 3:30 PM Break**

### **3:30- 4:45 PM Equine Sustainability in EAS: Conditioning and Maintenance**

Gain a deeper look at how to create a tailored conditioning program for horses involved in EAS, ensuring their health, fitness, and overall well-being while performing their unique role. The session will explore the specific physical and psychological demands placed on therapy horses, discussing the importance of a balanced conditioning regimen that includes not only physical health but mental health for a long working career in our programs.

Presenter(s):

Shelby Schult, PATH Intl. CTRI, Program Director at HETRA

### **5:00 PM Wrap up and dismiss for optional networking at local venue**

## **Day Two**

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### **8:30-9:00 AM Welcome Back & Reflections**

### **9:00- 10:00 AM The HETRA Method of Leading: Using the “Magic Wand”: Part 1**

*INTERACTIVE. This session will be held in our arena, interacting with live equines. Virtual opportunity may be limited.*

Description: Using our “Magic Wands” and this unique approach to leading, HETRA has been able to significantly cut back on the amount of equine burnout in our program. It’s time to start focusing on what contributes to improved equine welfare in EAS and how we handle our horses is where it starts. How would you like it if every day you went to work you had a different boss and a different set of expectations? The methods we use to lead our horses and the consistency in which we use that method are pivotal parts to creating an environment our horses LOVE to work in. In Part 1, expect to get hands on with our horses and the wand to learn introductory skills.

### **10:00- 10:30 AM Practice with the “Magic Wand”**

*INTERACTIVE. This session will be held in our arena, interacting with live equines. No virtual opportunity available.*

Description: Continue practice to learn how the method applies to horses of different personalities.

Presenter(s): Cassidy Godden, PATH Intl. CTRI, Equine Operations Manager at HETRA

### **10:30- 10:45 AM Break**

### **10:45 AM- 12:00 PM Categorizing Horses & Volunteers: Development for Success**

Description: HETRA has a unique method of categorizing our horses and volunteers to ensure that each horse is matched with a leader of appropriate skill level. We put special care into educating and developing both our horses and volunteers so that everyone feels comfortable and confident in the arena. For our horses, this categorization process contributes to a significant decrease in equine burnout and allows HETRA the ability to bring newer and younger horses into programming safely. This process has significantly increased our volunteer retention and lends itself greatly to volunteers who want to do the best they can to contribute to the safest sessions possible. Expect to receive an in-depth look at why and how we developed this process as well as how to implement it at various levels of center size and resource level.

Presenter(s): Shelby Schult, PATH Intl. CTRI, Program Director at HETRA

### **12:00 - 1:00 PM Lunch Provided with Registration**

### **1:00-2:15 PM The HETRA Method of Leading: Using the “Magic Wand”: Part 2**

*INTERACTIVE. This session will be held in our arena, interacting with live equines. Virtual opportunity may be limited.*

Description: Expand on the leading technique learned in Part 1. Expect to gain valuable hands-on experience with advanced wand skills like front and hind crossovers, using the wand to manage energy and mounting block approach.

### **2:15- 2:45 PM Practice with the “Magic Wand”**

*INTERACTIVE. This session will be held in our arena, interacting with live equines. No virtual opportunity available.*

Description: Continue practice to learn how the method applies to horses of different personalities.

Presenter(s): Cassidy Godden, PATH Intl. CTRI, Equine Operations Manager at HETRA

### **2:45- 3:00 PM Break**

### **3:00- 4:00 PM Integrating Horses into EAS Programming and Continuing Development for Success**

Change is hard for humans and horses - and transitioning new equines into programming can be a BIG change. This presentation explores the crucial process of transitioning new horses into programming and provides a comprehensive overview of the steps, considerations, and tried and true practices for successful transition. This session will also examine how we can move through the colored “level system” to promote not only equine success but volunteer success as well.

Presenter(s): Shelby Schult, PATH Intl. CTRI, Program Director at HETRA

**4:00- 4:15 PM Break**

**4:15-5:15 PM Individualized Coaching for a Successful Equine Welfare Program**

*INTERACTIVE. Scheduled slots will be available to sign-up for individual times with staff. Available virtually.*

Description: Individual coaching sessions are designed to help you put all the pieces together. We will help you troubleshoot policies, and procedures, and where to start with a new Equine Welfare Program. Together we will take a deeper look at how to adapt these strategies to your center and make integration practical for the resources you have.

Presenter(s): Cassidy Godden, PATH Intl. CTRI, Equine Operations Manager at HETRA; Shelby Schult, PATH Intl. CTRI, Program Director at HETRA; Edye Godden, OTR/L, HPCS, PATH Intl. CTRI, ESMHL, CEO at HETRA; Kaiti Otte, OTD, OTR/L, PATH Intl. CTRI

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### **Day Three**

**8:00-9:00 AM Equine Strategic Planning**

Description: Strategic planning is an important part of all businesses that is often overlooked, undervalued, and misunderstood. Equine Strategic Planning is no different, but is a valuable tool for our organizations to plan financially and, in turn, be more sustainable. Learn processes for how to take a critical look at current equine herds and evaluate the herd for long-term sustainability. Learn how to assess programs to develop a targeted approach for equine intake based on specific needs, as well as looking at ethical systems for retiring Steady Eddie in a timely manner.

Presenter(s): Edye Godden, OTR/L, HPCS, PATH Intl. CTRI, ESMHL, CEO at HETRA

**9:00- 9:15 AM Break**

**9:15- 10:30 AM Avoiding Equine Burnout**

Description: We all know the amount of work and time that goes into bringing on a new equine team member, so how can we keep them around long-term? Let's put all the information gained together to create effective policies and impactful Equine Welfare Programs. We will review and solidify topics regarding our equine team including equine selection, weight limits, workloads, caseload demographics, handling, health maintenance, time off, physical conditioning, and other management practices that will help us keep our herd members around and engaged for the long haul! Reflect on your program and identify what areas of increased stress may be present for your equines.

Presenter(s): Shelby Schult, PATH Intl. CTRI, Program Director at HETRA

**10:30 – 10:45 AM Break**

**10:45 – 12:00 PM Dynamic Connections: Exploring the Relationship of Horse and Rider**

*INTERACTIVE. This session will be held in our arena, interacting with live equines. Virtual opportunity may be limited.*

Description: Observe live horse and rider teams as we analyze equine gait, understanding how each movement pattern influences the rider's body and sensory experience. Examine the relationship between the rider's posture and the equine. Learn how small adjustments can enhance your session and improve your horse's comfort. Receive insight into sensory integration and how horse movement can impact those with diverse needs. Learn practical strategies for adaptive activities based on the unique movement of the horse and the needs of the participant. Further understand how equine soundness impacts a session and the importance for our riders.

Presenter(s): Edye Godden, OTR/L, HPCS, PATH Intl. CTRI, ESMHL; Kaiti Otte, OTD, OTR/L, PATH Intl. CTRI

**12:00 PM Conference End. Safe Travels!**