

The Bit-by-Bit Therapeutic Horse Riding Program at Rogers State University has been providing educational and safe equine experiences for students with disabilities for more than a decade. The program provides therapeutic horse riding for clients with cognitive, developmental, behavioral, or physical disabilities.

RSU is committed to the providing the highest level of dedication and service to its Bit-by-Bit clients in a safe and nurturing environment.

Recently, the interim director of the Bit-by-Bit program resigned from the position. The university is not able to discuss matters of personnel as part of its policy to protect the privacy of all current and former employees.

In the current fiscal year, a total of five full-time positions have been designated and budgeted to serve the RSU Bit-by-Bit Therapeutic Horse Riding Program. Those positions include Director of the Bit-by-Bit Therapeutic Riding Program, Therapeutic Riding Instructor, Equine Manager, Office Manager, and Caretaker.

Presently, the positions of Director of the Bit-by-Bit Therapeutic Riding Program and Therapeutic Riding Instructor are vacant.

The university is currently conducting an official search process to fill the positions of Director and Instructor. The university intends to fill these positions as soon as possible.

If necessary, certified part-time instructors will be employed to teach classes at the Bit-by-Bit program. The university has identified a pool of qualified, experienced instructors who have the required certification and have expressed a desire to teach courses in the program as needed.

In addition, the RSU Bit-by-Bit Therapeutic Horse Riding Program and Equestrian Center employ several part-time RSU student employees to assist with horses and maintenance.

Presently, the Bit-by-Bit program serves 80 student-clients. Each year, approximately 75 dedicated volunteers donate their time to assist with instructor and activities in the program. The university anticipates a similar number of volunteers this year.

Classes are free for students and offered Tuesday through Friday each week. Evening classes are offered on Tuesday through Thursday. Because of the nature of therapeutic horseback riding, class size is limited.

The horses are trained and maintained for this purpose by instructors certified by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association to ensure the environment is conducive to enhancing the cognitive, developmental, behavioral, and physical abilities of the students.