



Hoof Care

Training And Certification For Zoo Professionals

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People have been trying to maintain and improve the health and integrity of the hooves of horses for hundreds of years. A lot was learned over those years. Until recently, however, most of it was about how to prepare and apply shoes or some other artificial contrivance ... none of which is relevant to barefoot zoo animals. Instead, successful hoof care for animals living in captivity requires a multifaceted approach that includes trimming that encourages the hoof to grow into its optimally-functional aboriginal form, and a lifestyle and environment that support hoof and animal health and prevents the emergence of abnormalities and pathologies. These principles and the methods to implement them are the focus of the Liberated Horsemanship training and certification program for zoo professionals.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

The Gateway Clinic

The five-day Gateway Clinic (GC) is where the road to a professional hoof care career and certification begins. GC participants receive extensive hands-on, supervised trimming instruction.

However, the GC is a hoof care clinic not just a trimming clinic. Hoof health is determined by many factors. Trimming is one important element. But hoof health and shape are also significantly influenced by management practices, and environmental and lifestyle factors. Deficiencies in these areas can undermine the efforts of even the most highly skilled trimmer. It is imperative that hoof care providers understand this basic premise and, importantly, know that problems caused by such factors cannot be fixed by trimming. Instead, the root cause of the problem must first be addressed. Then proper trimming can facilitate healing. Consequently, GC participants receive extensive practical and theoretical information about how management practices, and environmental and lifestyle factors affect hoof health.

Hoof health and shape conversely can affect general health, biomechanics and well-being. The relationships between hoof, body, and mind are reciprocal and inseparable. Factors that affect one, either directly or indirectly, affect the others. This is another important premise that permeates every aspect of the Gateway Clinic.



Application to Zoo Hoofstock

Cindy Hall, Certified Zoo Hoof Care Professional, spearheads the continuation of this program after the GC. Cindy is the Hoofstock and Primate Supervisor at Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens. She was the first Zoo Hoof Care Professional certified by Liberated Horsemanship, LLC, and she has been instrumental in developing the hoof care program at Naples Zoo.

Following the GC, program participants will spend time with Cindy, who will provide deeper insights about the relevancy of GC information to zoo hoofstock and support their real-life application. Cindy will also provide hands-on trimming instruction and on-going consultation and guidance when needed. Following attendance at the Gateway Clinic, participants continue through the program at their own pace.



Field Instruction

Field instruction provides practical information about hoof trimming, cooperative animal handling, tool use and maintenance, and healthy body mechanics.

Participants are required to spend one day with at least two different LH Field Instructors.



Final Assessment

The Final Assessment is a one day, "on-site" evaluation. Your work with hoofstock in your care and your hoof care skills and knowledge are evaluated by the Director of the LH Barefoot Initiative, Ann Corso, Master Hoof Care Professional, or another designated instructor.



Certification

Participants who pass the Final Assessment receive a Certificate of Accomplishment stating that they have successfully completed the Liberated Horsemanship, LLC training program for zoo hoof care professionals. Graduates receive the designation Certified Zoo Hoof Care Professional (CZHCP) and are listed on the LH website as a courtesy of recognition and to promote and support their efforts to advance the care of hoofstock.