

## RIDE ON

# Joining Team USA

## ■ Organization to help with Special Olympics

By Karen Hibdon  
Special to The Star

Ride On Therapeutic Horsemanship has been selected to manage the equestrian competition at the Special Olympics World Games this summer in Los Angeles.

Since its founding 19 years ago, Ride On has provided more than 83,000 therapy sessions to individuals with disabilities at its ranches in Newbury Park and Chatsworth. Now the organization is charged with finding 80 horses for the 140 equestrians with

See RIDE ON, 4A

### TO HELP

**To donate a horse:**  
Contact Gloria Hamblin,  
Gloria@RideOn.org  
and fill out the form at  
[http://goo.gl/forms/  
L8Upt1nUqc](http://goo.gl/forms/L8Upt1nUqc).

**To volunteer:** Register  
by March 1 at [www.la2015.org/volunteer/  
general-volunteer](http://www.la2015.org/volunteer/general-volunteer).

**Information:** 818-700-  
2971, [sara@rideon.org](mailto:sara@rideon.org)

## RIDE ON from 3A

intellectual disabilities.

The riders, from 25 countries and speaking 16 languages, will compete July 25 through Aug. 2 at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center in Burbank.

The nonprofit Ride On is up to the challenge, said Sara Jones, the program's development director and deputy manager of the equestrian games.

Erin Porter, vice president of sports for the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, agrees.

"Ride On has an impressive set of credentials, which includes 18 years of managing the CALNET Horse Show for individuals with a disability and a qualified staff," Porter said.

Show manager and Ride On Executive Director Bryan McQueeney was top manager at the 1996 Paralympic Dressage Championship competition in 1996 in Atlanta. His wife, Gloria Hamblin, Ride On co-founder and program director, is a three-time coach of U.S. Dressage teams competing at the Paralympic and World Championship levels. The couple live in the Conejo Valley.

Horses on loan to the games must be quiet, sound, well-trained at the walk, trot and canter, and remain composed in an active horse show experience, Jones said. They will be housed at the Equestrian Center, with food and bedding provided.

Owners are asked to accompany their horses and serve as a groom or show volunteer, and to haul their horses to and from the show if possible.

The Special Olympics equestrians are 7 to 64 years old and will be showing in various disciplines including dressage, English and western equitation, working trail, team relays, pole bending and barrel racing.

Team USA riders come from Arizona, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina,

Illinois, Maryland and Pennsylvania. To qualify for the World Games equestrians must, among other criteria, have earned a gold medal at a state level Special Olympics equestrian competition.

Special Olympics equestrian competition has waned in recent years in California. "We hope to be able to reignite and reinvigorate" future involvement through the World Games, Jones said.

A few hundred volunteers are needed to help with the horse show, she said. Professional staff and volunteers from Ride On will participate, including Jones' two daughters, Emily, 15, and Holly, 14, who hope to loan their own horses and serve as grooms.

Horse owners interested in loaning their horses must first fill out a form and then be contacted to schedule time for someone to meet the animal. Ride On staff will match horse to rider using profiles supplied by team coaches.

Special Olympics Summer World Games take place every four years. The 2011 games were in Athens, Greece, the 2007 games in Shanghai, China, and the 1999 games in North Carolina.

This year 7,000 athletes representing 177 countries will compete in 25 Olympic-style sports at venues throughout the Los Angeles area. Supported by about 30,000 volunteers, the games are expected to draw some 500,000 spectators.

"Ride On is incredibly excited and very honored" to be involved, Jones said.

"This is so important. The whole world is coming, and everyone is looking at Los Angeles and us. It's an amazing experience — they want a world class show, and we're ready to put a world class show on for them."