



CHALLENGE UNLIMITED AT IRONSTONE FARM

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WELCOME TO IRONSTONE FARM

Thank you for your interest in our programs and services. Ironstone Farm is the home of Challenge Unlimited and Ironstone Therapy. The Challenge Unlimited Program offers a variety of therapeutic and recreational riding programs.

Our mission is to provide life-changing equine-assisted services that foster the human-horse connection to help individuals and families with physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges experience healing and joy while realizing their full potential. Our weekly lesson programs are adapted to fit each rider's needs. We incorporate therapeutic measures that strengthen muscles, improve balance, coordination, and endurance, lengthen attention span and increase determination and ambition. Our recreational riding program works to create well-rounded riders while developing horsemanship skills. Every rider who comes to Ironstone Farm will have therapeutic goals woven into their curriculum, regardless of what program they fall under.

The enclosed information describes our programs, policies, and procedures. ***Individuals enrolling in Ironstone Farm programs must complete all necessary paperwork before starting lessons.*** An individual with *any* diagnosis must provide a completed physician's approval form. Once completed and returned, the office will reach out to you.

If you have any additional questions or would like to schedule a visit, please email us at Lessons@IronstoneFarm.org. We look forward to meeting you soon!

Warm Regards,

Jessica Casolari & Danielle Wilson

Program Director

Lesson Coordinator

450 Lowell Street, Andover, MA 01810

978-475-4056 Tel • 978-475-4046 Fax • lessons@ironstonefarm.org • www.IronstoneFarm.org

Challenge Unlimited is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization at Ironstone Farm and maintains a policy of nondiscrimination.



BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANIZATION

Ironstone Farm was founded in 1960 by owner Richard Donovan as a facility for thoroughbred horses. A nonprofit called Challenge Unlimited was created out of the Donovan family's desire to share the farm with people whose lives have been challenged by disability. In 2001, Challenge Unlimited purchased the farm.

Today, Ironstone Farm provides beneficial therapy for individuals with a wide range of physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities. Our primary programs are Challenge Unlimited and Ironstone Therapy. Both use a horse's unique ability to enhance a person's movements, develop strength, and inspire hope and encouragement. Ironstone Farm also offers recreational riding lessons for people of all ages and abilities.

Collaborating with more than 30 outside agencies (hospitals, schools, and human service agencies), Ironstone Farm's programs have become well-respected alternatives and complementary services to traditional interventions.

Ironstone Farm is home to over 25 equines that live on property all year-round. Our versatile herd allows us to accommodate almost every rider hoping to join us for lessons and programs. Our staff of instructors come to us with extensive knowledge in foundational horsemanship as well as riding at all levels. Every rider who comes to Ironstone Farm will have therapeutic goals woven into their curriculum, regardless of what program they fall under.

OUR MISSION

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HOURS OF OPERATION

Week Day	Office Hours	Lesson Hours
Monday	9:00 AM - 7:00 PM	10:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Tuesday	9:00 AM - 7:00 PM	10:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Wednesday	11:00 AM - 7:00 PM	12:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Thursday	9:00 AM - 7:00 PM	10:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Friday	9:00 AM - 7:00 PM	10:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Saturday	8:30 AM - 2:00 PM	9:30 AM - 2:00 PM
Sunday	**CLOSED**	

OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

Lessons team:

lessons@ironstonefarm.org

(978) 475- 4056 ext. 3

For all time sensitive calls, please call (978) 475- 4056 ext. 1. This is our same-day cancellation line which is staffed during all open office hours. Thank you!

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2024 LESSON DATES

- **Friday, December 15th, 2023: Registration Due for January- March Block**
 - **Monday, January 1st: CLOSED** for New Year's Day
 - **Tuesday, January 2nd:** First day of January-March Block
 - **Monday, February 19th: CLOSED** for President's Day
 - **Tuesday, February 20th: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Wednesday, February 21st: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Thursday, February 22nd: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Friday, February 23rd: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Saturday, February 24th: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Friday, March 9th: Registration Due for April-June Block**
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- **Monday, April 1st:** First day of April-June Block
 - **Monday, April 15th: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Tuesday, April 16th: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Wednesday, April 17th: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Thursday, April 18th: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Friday, April 19th: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Saturday, April 20th: CLOSED** (makeup lessons will be available based on need)
 - **Saturday, May 25th: CLOSED** for Memorial Day Weekend
 - **Monday, May 27th: CLOSED** for Memorial Day Weekend
 - **Sunday, June 2nd:** Spring Horse Show (open to all riders)
 - **Friday, June 7th: Registration Due for July & August Block**
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- **Thursday, July 4th: CLOSED** for Independence Day weekend
 - **Friday, July 5th: CLOSED** for Independence Day weekend
 - **Saturday, July 6th: CLOSED** for Independence Day weekend
 - **Friday, August 16th: Registration Due for September- December Block**
 - **Monday, August 26th- Saturday, September 7th: CLOSED** for Summer Break Weeks
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- **Sunday, October 6th:** Barbara DeNitto Horse Show (open to all riders)
 - **Saturday, October 12th: CLOSED** for Columbus Day Weekend
 - **Monday, October 14th : CLOSED** for Columbus Day Weekend
 - **Monday, November 25th-Saturday, November 30th: CLOSED** for week of Thanksgiving
 - **Friday, December 13th: Registration Due for first block of 2025 lessons**
 - **Monday, December 23rd- Saturday, January 4th: CLOSED** for Winter Break Weeks

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LESSON PROGRAM

Our Programs

Ironstone Farm offers therapeutic and recreational riding lessons, all year around, to clients of all abilities, starting at the age of 6. We offer three types of lessons: private, semi-private, and group lessons, based on age and ability. All of our lessons are highly individualized to address the client's therapeutic goals.

Lesson Format

The Evaluation: Every therapeutic client enrolling will begin with a 30-minute evaluation lesson as their first lesson with us. You can expect your evaluation to be predominantly unmounted. Please note that often an evaluation lesson may not include any riding. The instructor will then recommend to the office what lesson plan will be appropriate for the rider moving forward.

Below is a list of all lesson formats provided within Challenge Unlimited:

1. **Private Lessons (one rider):** A one-on-one approach in either a half-hour or hour-long format. This lesson format can be adjusted most to meet the client's needs and interests. Private lessons are available on the lunge line, in hand, or independently under saddle. In hour-long private lessons, the rider will brush and tack their horse with the instructor's guidance as a part of that lesson. **This is the required lesson format for all riders who start with us.**
2. **Semi-Private Lessons (two riders):** An hour-long lesson with two riders. These lessons are great for riders learning how to brush and tack up their horses, as well as basic riding and social skills.
3. **Group Lessons (3-4 riders):** Our group lesson can accommodate riders at varying riding levels: from therapeutic riders to the independent beginner or those riding at an advanced level. For safety reasons, the rider may move into a one-hour group lesson only when their instructor determines the rider is ready. We may ask that riders arrive approximately 15 minutes before their lesson begins, which will allow the time needed for students to prepare their horse before they ride each week. Riders are expected to stay 10- 15 minutes after their lesson to care for their horse and put equipment away.

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Cancellations and Weather Closings

If you are unable to attend your lesson, Ironstone Farm has a 48-hour cancellation policy. **Pre-cancellation requests must be made at least 48 hours in advance in order to receive a make-up lesson.** We will always try to schedule a makeup lesson for any cancellation made 48 hours in advance, but in the event, we are unable to get something on the schedule within the current session, we can look into providing you with a credit or refund. **Only up to two lessons that are pre-canceled can be refunded or credited per session.**

All cancellations given less than 48 hours in advance will not be refunded or granted a make-up lesson option. Refunds or make-ups will be offered for cancellations within the 48 hour window due to a medical condition, only if a doctor's note is provided within 5 days of the cancellation.

If you are running late to your lesson, please call the office at **978-475-4056**. Ironstone has a 15-minute late policy, where the horse will be put away if you are more than 15-minutes late to your lesson, and do not notify anyone. If you notify us using our same-day phone line, we will hold the horse for you. Arriving late will not result in extra time on the horse, so please plan accordingly.

Ironstone Farm uses the Andover Public School System as a **guide** for weather closings, but we ultimately make our own decision whether to remain open or cancel lessons. Ironstone Farm does **not** follow public schools for all holiday closures, election days, or professional development days.

In the event Ironstone needs to cancel your lesson due to weather or staffing issues, the farm will attempt to provide a make-up lesson. If a make-up time can not be agreed upon, Ironstone will credit the rider in their next bill or provide a refund if the rider does not continue with their lessons.

Heat and Cold Weather Policies

In cases of hot or cold weather where we are able to safely hold lessons and remain open, we will hold lessons and modify activities to still be productive and help our riders learn new skills outside of riding. Ironstone Farm reserves the right to hold unmounted or modified lessons in cases of very hot or very cold weather with safety for our clients, instructors and horses being our #1 priority.

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Supervision of Clients

The parents/guardians, caregivers, and aides (the person responsible) of riders with a diagnosis must remain within eyesight of the rider at all times. This means that the person responsible should stay nearby and not leave to sit in the car or leave the property; they should also be the primary supervisor of the rider prior to their scheduled start time. During the lesson, please remain outside the active teaching area and watch from designated areas. If you are unsure where that is, please ask your instructor.

Preparedness for Lessons

Ensuring safety is a top priority, and riders will only be allowed on the horse if properly dressed. An equestrian helmet (ASTM/SEI approved), and closed shoes or boots are required for all riders. Sneakers are appropriate for participants in our vaulting and in-hand lessons only. A boot or shoe with a small flat heel (a distinct separation from the sole of the shoe) is required for riders in saddles. Open-toed shoes, crocs, mules, and ballet-style shoes are not allowed.

Ironstone Farm has a limited availability of loaner boots and helmets, however, we cannot guarantee that we will have availability at all times. If you arrive unprepared for the lesson and cannot participate, it will be considered a same day cancellation.

Paperwork

All riders must fill out a registration form and annual emergency release form and provide their most recent physical before starting lessons, as well as the start of a new year. All areas of the form must be filled out to ensure all pertinent information is given to our administrative staff. Failure to provide any required documentation will result in halting lessons and possible loss of lesson time scheduled.

Billing and Payment

Payment is required as part of the registration process to reserve your weekly lesson. We recommend for ease of payment and no interruption in lessons, that a credit card is provided to be charged for each block of lessons. For any riders opting for Ironstone to not automatically process payment on their behalf at the beginning of each new block, we require a new registration form to be filled out to confirm their commitment to ride by the registration deadline specified prior to each block. Payment will be due by the rider's first lesson of the block of lessons; **if payment is not received by a rider's second lesson of the block, their lessons will be halted and a late fee of \$35 will be added to their balance.**

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Additional Safety Regulations

- There is **NO SMOKING/VAPING** allowed on the property of Ironstone Farm.
- Please leave your pet(s) at home. With regards to service animals, please check with the office before visiting the farm.
- Please do not feed the animals.
- **Please park in designated areas only.** Observe the "No Parking" signs and spaces allotted for the pick-up and drop-off of clients. Please do not sound your horn/car alarm while on Ironstone Farm property!
- Please do not use umbrellas on the property, they can startle our horses.
- Please do not go anywhere on the property without a staff member. We are a working horse farm and anyone on property must be accompanied by staff or in the designated viewing areas provided.

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