



**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 focus is to help each individual achieve their potential through the benefits of our equine encounters, riding, and the experience of a working farm environment. Our 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](mailto:Lessons@IronstoneFarm.org). We look forward to meeting you soon!

Warm Regards,

***Jessica Casolari***

Program Director



January 2023

## 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.

## OUR HERD

Ironstone Farm is home to more than 25 amazing equines that live on our 19-acre property year-round. They are our hardest workers and our most loved employees. Our herd brings a sense of calm when needed and do not judge anyone for having a rough day.

Most importantly, they teach our clients confidence, patience, and understanding.

## COVID-19 STATEMENT

Ironstone Farm takes our responsibility seriously to keep our community and team members safe. Our organization continues to follow the local guidelines provided by the Andover Public Health department and regulations set at the state and federal levels.

To all members of the Ironstone community: **If you do not feel well or are exhibiting severe symptoms of COVID-19, we ask that you consult a Medical Profession or provide a negative COVID test before coming on the property.** All inconveniences due to COVID-19-related illness will not be penalized. We appreciate your cautiousness and understanding during this pandemic!



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## HOURS OF OPERATION

Week Day	Office Hours	Lesson Hours
Monday	9:00 AM - 6:00 PM	10:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Tuesday	9:00 AM - 6:00 PM	10:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Wednesday	11:00 AM - 7:00 PM	12:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Thursday	9:00 AM - 6:00 PM	10:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Friday	9:00 AM - 6:00 PM	10:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Saturday	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM	9:30 AM - 2:30 PM
Sunday	**CLOSED**	

Ironstone Farm Holiday Closures 2023		
<b>New Year's Day</b> (January 2nd)	<b>President's Day</b> (February 20th)	<b>Memorial Day</b> (May 29th)
<b>Independence Day</b> (July 4th)	<b>Summer Break Week</b> (August 28th- September 4th)	<b>Labor Day</b> (September 4th)
<b>Indigenous People's Day</b> (Oct 9th)	<b>Thanksgiving Day</b> (November 23rd)	<b>Day after Thanksgiving</b> (November 24th)
<b>Christmas Eve</b> (December 24th)	<b>Christmas</b> (December 25th)	<b>Winter Break Week</b> (December 26th- January 1st)



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## LESSON PROGRAM GUIDELINES

### 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. Our therapeutic lessons are highly individualized to address the client's needs and age. Private, in-hand lessons use the horse's movement, position changes, and age-appropriate games and activities to benefit riders physically, emotionally, and cognitively.

### Lesson Format

**The Evaluation:** Every client enrolling will begin with a 30-minute evaluation lesson. You can expect to spend about 20 minutes on the horse and 10 minutes talking with the instructor. Please note that sometimes 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. Please understand we will need to receive the required registration forms before scheduling an evaluation.

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. **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. **Vaulting Lessons:** The vaulting lesson is a 30-minute private lesson on the lunge line. The program allows the rider to develop balance, rhythm, and confidence while the instructor maintains control over the horse.
4. **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. The rider may move into a one-hour group lesson when their instructor determines the rider is ready. The rider must be able to steer independently at the walk and trot before moving into a group. 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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## Supervision of Clients

Our goal at Ironstone Farm is to provide safe, enjoyable, and engaging therapeutic riding lessons for every rider at all levels. We strive for a safe environment for riders, their families, caregivers, aides, volunteers, staff, and our horses.

To achieve this, **we ask parents/guardians, caregivers, and aides (the person responsible) of riders with a diagnosis (or under the age of 12) to supervise 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.**

If, for example, the client needs to dismount before the end of a lesson, the person responsible must be available to walk the client to the car, bench, bathroom, or another safe area. If the individual requires assistance with mounting and/or dismounting, we reserve the right to ask the person responsible to assist with mounting and/or dismounting under the direction of the Ironstone Farm staff.

To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all, Ironstone Farm may ask that the person responsible participate as a side walker, walking alongside the rider. If the person responsible is unable to or unwilling to assist, Ironstone Farm may not be able to accommodate the rider. If you have any questions regarding our policies and procedures, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

## Importance of Proper Clothing

Ensuring safety is a top priority, and riders will only be allowed on the horse if properly dressed. An equestrian helmet (ASTM/SEI approved), long pants, 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.

Helpful Websites for Clothing: [www.DoverSaddlery.com](http://www.DoverSaddlery.com) & [www.SmartpakEquine.com](http://www.SmartpakEquine.com)

## 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.

Riders with a medical condition or diagnosis must also get a physician's approval form filled out before starting lessons and once every three years. All forms are available on our website but will also be sent through email when you inquire about lessons.



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## HOW TO SCHEDULE RIDING LESSONS

Lessons are available based on instructor and volunteer availability within our hours of operation.

All current and new riders must register for each two-month block of lessons by the registration deadline. Reminders and instructions will be sent via email well in advance of each block. **If registration is not received by the deadline, we may not be able to hold that spot for you due to our extensive waitlist.**

**If you wish to change (or end) your riding time at any point, you must email [Lessons@IronstoneFarm.org](mailto:Lessons@IronstoneFarm.org).**

### Payment

Lessons are prepaid on a bimonthly basis based on each rider's registration form. Payment can be made by card or check by the registration deadline for each block of lessons. **Please note we cannot allow you to begin your lesson until we have received all parts of your registration, including payment.**

Ironstone Farm does have a "Sponsor a Child" program if you wish to apply for financial aid. The sponsorship packet can be found on our website and outlines the requirements necessary to apply and be approved.

### Fees for Service

Below is an outline of our current fees for service. These are subject to change based on inflation of equine care, staff, and other day-to-day expenses.

## LESSON PRICES

*(Clients with a medical diagnosis need a physician's approval form)*

LESSON FORMAT	# OF RIDERS	FEE PER LESSON	TYPICAL FEE FOR BLOCK (varies depending on each month)
1-Hour Group	Up to 4 riders	\$65	\$520
1-Hour Semi-Private	2 riders only	\$75	\$600
30-Minute Private	1 rider	\$75	\$600
1-Hour Private	1 rider	\$95	\$720



## 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 48 hours in advance in order to receive a make-up lesson.** We will always try to schedule a makeup lesson for any cancellations. 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 pre-canceled lessons can be refunded or credited per block.**

If you cancel within 48 hours of your scheduled lesson, we ask that you use the same-day cancellation line at 978-475-4056 Ext. 1. **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 or COVID-19 only if a doctor's note is provided.

**If you are running late for your lesson,** please call the office. Ironstone has a 15-minute late policy. We will put your horse away if you are more than 15 minutes late to your lesson and have not notified the office. If you notify us in advance, we will hold the horse for you. Arriving late will not result in extra time on the horse, so please plan accordingly.

Ironstone Farm follows the Andover Public School System for weather closings but not for all holiday closures, election days, or professional development days. If schools call for a delay, Ironstone Farm may not follow, as the farm takes some time to prepare in inclement weather.

If we need to cancel your lesson due to weather or staffing issues, we will attempt to schedule a make-up lesson. If a make-up time can not be agreed upon, Ironstone will credit the rider in their next bill.

## MAKE-UP LESSON STRUCTURE

Make-up lessons are offered to riders as the following options, and will be based on the availability of our lesson schedule:

LESSON FORMAT	MAKEUP OPTIONS			
<b>30-Minute Private</b>	30-Minute Private		1-Hour Group*	
<b>1-Hour Private</b>	Two 30-Minute Privates	1-Hour Group*	1-Hour Semi-Private*	1-Hour Private
<b>1-Hour Group</b>	30-Minute Private		1-Hour Group*	
<b>1-Hour Semi-Private</b>	30-Minute Private	1-Hour Group*	1-Hour Semi-Private*	

**\*Dependent on the rider's ability to safely ride in a group/semi-private lesson**



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## IRONSTONE FARM SAFETY REGULATIONS

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The following regulations have been established for your safety and the safety of all involved in the activities at Ironstone Farm. Please make every effort to abide by them during your time on the premises.

**SMOKING:** There is **NO SMOKING** allowed on the property of Ironstone Farm.

**CHILDREN:** Ironstone is a working farm. When not involved in a lesson, we insist that all children remain beside their accompanying adult. Running, yelling, or unaccompanied children can create hazardous situations – for themselves, riders, handlers, staff, and other visitors at the farm. Please observe (or ask about) designated areas for viewing lessons. If children behave unsafely, we may ask you to remove them from the premises.

**PETS & SERVICE ANIMALS:** The animals at Ironstone Farm live in harmony with one another, and the introduction of a new animal is handled very carefully. Visiting pets will upset this harmony and can be very disruptive, creating an unsafe situation. Please leave your pet(s) at home. With regards to service animals, please check with the office before visiting the farm.

**TREATS:** Our animals are on a routine feeding schedule. Their daily intake is carefully monitored. Treats may be harmful to some animals, and hand-feeding encourages the animals to bite in search of treats and can be dangerous. Please do not feed the animals.

**PARKING:** 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! Sudden loud noises may frighten the animals residing at the farm as well as clients participating in therapy.

**UMBRELLAS:** Please do not use umbrellas on the property. The odd shape and sudden movement of opening/closing an umbrella can startle our horses.

**THE BARN:** The upper barn is a staff-only area. If you need to reach someone in the barn office, please call us at 978-475-4056, or ask a present staff member to contact us for you.

**OBSERVATION:** Our instructors and therapists are trained professionals. Please remain outside the teaching area during lessons. You are invited to watch from designated areas.

**PADDOCK:** Only Staff, Working Students, and Feeders (all of whom must have Paddock Privileges) are allowed in the Paddocks. *Volunteers and visitors are not allowed to enter the Paddocks for any reason.*

We appreciate your patronage. We pledge to offer you the best in quality, horse-related and therapeutic programming. During your time spent with us, we ask that you have respect for the property, the animals, and the staff. -- Thank you!