

SOUTHERN DELAWARE THERAPEUTIC RIDING

IMPROVING LIVES ONE STRIDE AT A TIME



ABOUT US:

Southern Delaware Therapeutic Riding (SDTR) is a Premier Accredited therapeutic riding center located in Eastern Sussex County. We are accredited by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH). Our PATH certified therapeutic riding instructors and trained volunteers have provided planned sessions in equine-assisted services to children and adults with disabilities since 1988. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in Delaware.

CONDITIONS SERVED:

- Cerebral Palsy
- ADD/Hyperactivity
- Autism
- Head Trauma
- Learning Disabled
- Intellectual Disability
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Speech/Visual/Hearing Impaired
- Emotional/Behavioral
- At Risk Youth
- Aspergers Syndrome

PROVEN BENEFITS:

PHYSICAL:

- Improved balance, muscle strength & coordination
- Faster reflexes & better motor planning
- Increased range of motion of the joints
- Improved respiration & circulation
- Stretching of tight or spastic muscles

PSYCHOLOGICAL:

- Exercise in fresh air on a farm away from a clinical environment
- Improved self-confidence, independence & freedom of movement without walkers & wheelchairs
- Increased self-esteem & sense of responsibility by gaining skills required to control animal much larger/stronger
- Improved risk-taking abilities & problem solving concepts
- Development of patience, cooperation and communication skills
- Increased emotional control & self discipline

QUICK FACTS:

- SDTR participants range in ages 4 to 75
- Our 2015 move to new accessible riding center in Eastern Sussex County has enabled us to serve more participants and we are planning for additional growth!

WAYS TO SUPPORT SDTR:

- Sponsor a rider through a scholarship
- Sponsor a horse—their care is our biggest expense
- Contribute to our Capital Campaign
- Volunteer! It's fun and rewarding!
- Contribute through United Way #9415
- Give through employer matching campaigns
- Give by credit card via PayPal

SDTR, P.O. Box 219, Nassau Delaware 19969, 302.644.1920

at SDTRHR.com



Southern Delaware Therapeutic Riding (SDTR) *Executive Summary*

Our Mission: To improve the physical and emotional well-being of children and adults living with disabilities through equine assisted services in a supportive environment for riders and families.

Who We Are: SDTR is affiliated with the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, Intl. (PATH). Our program is one of two PATH Premier Accredited Centers in the State and the only one located in southern Delaware. Through our specially selected and trained therapy horses, six certified therapeutic riding instructors, and over 125 trained volunteers, SDTR provides therapeutic riding lessons and other equine-assisted activity sessions for children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities. SDTR partners with Sussex Consortium in the Cape Henlopen School District and the Howard T. Ennis School in the Indian River School District. Students from both schools come to the center regularly for riding experiences and other equine assisted services. We also partner with the Children's Beach House and Operation SEAs the day, a special program for wounded soldiers and their families. In 2025, we started a year-round equine program to support local Veterans.

Our Program: Lesson activities are prepared by Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors (CTRIs) and are developed to address each individual's goals and abilities with respect to balance, strength, flexibility, concentration, and following directions. There is also a ground program for those individuals who are physically unable to ride.

How Our Program Helps: Through our transformative equine-assisted programming, participants gain confidence, improve communication skills, become less anxious and find opportunities for social interaction. There are countless examples of the life-changing stories we see every day. Emily came to SDTR as a nonverbal participant displaying a heightened sensitivity to tactile sensations. Now during lessons, Emily successfully interacts with her team by using facial expressions and giving her horse direction through leg taps and hand gestures. Her improved communication skills have carried over from the arena to home where she is expressing herself in ways she has never done before. When Adam first started lessons, he was very anxious about getting on a horse. In fact, it took two more lessons before he felt comfortable enough to get in the saddle. Now, Adam mounts up



independently, and he knows how to give rein, leg, and voice signals to guide his equine partner. He even ends his lessons with a horsey hug.

At SDTR, our mission goes beyond lessons; it's about creating a sense of community. Many of our participants face barriers—whether physical, cognitive, or emotional—that limit their opportunities and choices. They often face skepticism about their abilities, but when they are on a horse, they are not just part of something; they become the center of it. For our participants, SDTR is a place where they are empowered, supported, and celebrated.

Our Impact: The benefits of our program carry on beyond the barn, extending into participants' homes and communities. The skills, confidence, and sense of belonging developed here impact their daily lives, allowing them to navigate the world with increased independence and joy. There are also other activities for riders and their families to participate in at SDTR. Family events such as movie nights, arts and crafts sessions, and days at the farm provide fun opportunities for educational and social enrichment. Additionally, while their child or family member participates in equine-assisted activities at SDTR, parents and caregivers have the opportunity to talk with one another, to share information and resources, and to offer support to each other.



How You Can Help: Southern Delaware Therapeutic Riding (SDTR) is a 501c3 nonprofit and donations are used to support direct services to meet the needs of our community. Our vision for SDTR includes facility improvements and program expansion so that we can bring equine therapy to many more participants dealing with a broad range of physical and developmental challenges. And as a volunteer-driven organization, we also rely on the efforts of volunteers to help bring our work to life. We are grateful for the many ways our community partners support our Mission. Together, we truly can improve lives.... one stride at a time!

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Please visit our website: <https://www.sdtrhr.com/>