



## **GallopNYC FAQ**

*As of June 1, 2011*

Thank you for contacting GallopNYC's Therapeutic Riding Program! We are delighted to hear from you and look forward to working with you and your family.

### **About GallopNYC – Page 2**

1. What is GallopNYC?
2. Who can benefit from therapeutic riding?
3. What is the difference between therapeutic riding and hippotherapy?
4. How do I contact you?

### **About GallopNYC Lessons – Page 3**

5. How often are lessons offered?
6. Are your instructors specially trained?
7. What is your minimum age?
8. Are lessons indoors?
9. What should riders wear?

### **Program Fees, Registration, and Schedule – Page 4**

10. How much does it cost?
11. How do we sign up?
12. When can we ride?
13. Do you have weekend lessons? Summer lessons?
14. How do we get to the stable?

### **Specific Questions – Page 5**

15. Can riders who do not have disabilities also participate?
16. Do we submit our insurance info to you, or do we pay you and get reimbursed?
17. What forms of payment do you accept?
18. Are private lessons available and how much is the fee?
19. Is it possible to do one trial lesson?
20. Are there conditions that therapeutic riding and/or hippotherapy are not appropriate for?
21. Does my child have to wear a helmet? My child tries to take helmets/hats off.
22. What are the criteria that determine if a new rider must be evaluated by the Physical Therapist? If an evaluation is needed, how do I arrange the appointment?
23. Do I need to get the forms to you prior to the first lesson, or can I just bring them with me?
24. Does your Hippotherapist require an RSA and case ID for billing purposes?
25. What do people say about GallopNYC?

## **About GallopNYC:**

### **1. What is GallopNYC?**

We are a nonprofit organization based in New York City that offers therapeutic riding to individuals with disabilities. We operate our riding program at three facilities: the historic Kensington Stables in the East Windsor Terrace section of Brooklyn, near Prospect Park; Jamaica Bay Riding Academy on the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn; and Lynne's Riding School in Forest Hills, Queens.

GallopNYC (Giving Alternative Learners Uplifting Opportunities, Inc.) provides therapeutic horseback riding to children, youth, and adults in New York City, using interactions with horses to promote the growth of functional and mental abilities in a safe, supportive, and fun manner. GallopNYC bases its program on good horsemanship, sound riding principles, and therapeutic riding and hippotherapy standards that are approved by NARHA (a national accrediting organization).

### **2. Who can benefit from therapeutic riding?**

We think that just about anyone will benefit from therapeutic riding. GallopNYC works with children, youth, and adults who face developmental, emotional, social and physical challenges. Our riders have a wide range of disabilities including learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, and developmental, speech and language delays. We also work with at-risk teens and children exposed to domestic violence. We focus on the individual with compassion in an enjoyable, supportive, and rewarding learning environment. GallopNYC helps our riders achieve their life goals. As one volunteer observed: *"I have marveled to see how much people are capable of when you don't limit the expectations put upon them."*

GallopNYC knows from experience that therapeutic riding is a uniquely effective and engaging form of therapy for people dealing with various disabilities, and growing research is providing evidence to back this up, with two clear themes emerging:

- 1) The combination of effective physical and cognitive tasking in a motivating context enables people with disabilities to more rapidly attain needed skills, and
- 2) A bonding relationship with a horse opens individuals to better acceptance of counseling, therapy, or training.

Therapeutic riding provides concrete benefits, as demonstrated in a recent study that found "that children with autism between the ages of 7 and 12 showed improved cognition, communication, and motivation after participating in specific equine assisted activities (EAA). The research shows that riding, grooming, and interacting with horses had a noticeable, positive effect on study participants."

These research results are consistent with anecdotal reports from parents and teachers, who report gains in attention span and communication skills that carry over to the home and the classroom. As one teacher of students with autism spectrum disorders said, *"We have been able to use GallopNYC as a springboard for academic tasks.... We have seen astronomical changes in posture, balance, muscle control, body awareness, concentration, [reduced] self stimulatory behaviors, language, socialization, patience and sensory integration."* A special needs teacher from an NYC public school wrote: *"It is amazing to watch my unruliest students calm down, my most scattered students focus, my quietest students shout, and my least expressive students laugh when they interact with you and the horses... I feel like we can never do enough to express our gratitude."*

### **3. What is the difference between therapeutic riding and hippotherapy?**

Therapeutic riding lessons teach an individual to ride, which typically offers many therapeutic benefits. Lessons are conducted by a NARHA certified therapeutic riding instructor employed by GallopNYC. Hippotherapy sessions are offered by a physical therapist trained in Hippotherapy, a method that uses the horse as a physical therapy tool, with less emphasis on learning to ride.

### **4. How do I contact you?**

Email us at [info@GallopNYC.org](mailto:info@GallopNYC.org) or call 917-740-4696.

### **About GallopNYC Lessons:**

#### **5. How often are lessons offered?**

Lessons are offered in 10-week sessions – Fall, Winter, and Spring. We do not currently offer lessons in the Summer. We do not offer one-time rides. However, a rider can join a session at any time, if room is available. We generally allow riders to continue participating as long as we and their family agree that the rider is benefiting from the lessons (and funds are available).

#### **6. Are your instructors specially trained?**

Therapeutic riding lessons are taught by a riding instructor certified by NARHA, who is supported by a dedicated and experienced group of volunteers. Hippotherapy sessions are offered by a physical therapist trained in Hippotherapy. GallopNYC's program offers a safe and supportive environment in which an individual can reap many benefits.

#### **7. What is your minimum age?**

Therapeutic riding is generally offered for riders starting at age 4, but we do occasionally allow exceptions. Hippotherapy riders can be as young as 18 months. We work also work with youth, adults, and seniors.

#### **8. Are lessons indoors?**

Our lessons happen rain or shine, as we have access to enclosed indoor arenas. Lessons are typically in a group format with up to three riders.

#### **9. What should riders wear?**

Riders should dress appropriately for the weather, as we do not have heat or A/C in the arenas. Riders should wear long pants and closed toe shoes or boots with heels. We supply riding helmets, which must be worn at all times around the horses. Riders are welcome to purchase their own helmet and bring it with them each week for lessons. We can order a helmet at a discounted price if you are interested in purchasing one. We require all riders use a helmet that meets ASEI safety standards. Jewelry and hair ornaments can catch on the horse's mane and tail and should not be worn to lessons. A simple tie back is fine to keep hair away from the rider's face.

## **Program Fees, Registration, and Schedule**

### **10. How much does it cost?**

Our standard fee is \$400 for a group session of 10 lessons, and an additional day of makeup lessons at no charge. We do have subsidies and discounts available and can direct you to possible funders. Hippotherapy fees must be discussed with the therapist.

GallopNYC can accept any subsidy that you might receive toward the cost of lessons, and can provide forms to apply for subsidies such as NYSID. We also accept the “Family Reimbursement” component of the Medicaid Waiver. Families must apply for subsidies on their own, but GallopNYC can provide invoices or other paperwork as needed. Some partial tuition waivers are also available through GallopNYC.

### **11. How do we sign up?**

Once you have decided to register, we will work with you to find a good lesson time. You may need to be on our waiting list until a spot opens up. If you are on our waiting list, we will contact you when we have an opening.

We start setting our lesson schedule about 6 weeks before the session begins – in August for the Fall session, in December for the Winter session, and in March for the Spring session. We will send you the relevant forms that must be filled out and signed prior to beginning lessons. The only form that needs another person’s signature is the medical form, which must be signed by the rider’s physician.

Prior to beginning actual lessons, riders with physical disabilities **must** be evaluated by GallopNYC’s Physical Therapist before enrolling. We will discuss this with you after we have more information about the rider’s physical condition.

### **12. When can we ride?**

Riders can join the program any time during the 10-week session, pending availability, and their fee will be reduced on a pro-rated basis. We offer lessons daily at one of our three locations, except for Saturdays. Our lessons generally take place between the hours of 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Our schedule generally follows the public school schedule. Schedules are available on our website at [www.gallopnyc.org/riders.html](http://www.gallopnyc.org/riders.html).

Lessons occur at the same day and time every week unless otherwise noted. All lessons are held in the indoor arenas at Kensington Stables in Brooklyn or Lynne’s Riding School in Queens. Lessons at Jamaica Bay are outdoors unless it is rainy.

### **13. Do you have weekend lessons? Summer lessons?**

Currently GallopNYC does not have lessons on Saturdays. We offer Sunday morning lessons in Queens. We do not currently have a summer session.

### **14. How do we get to the stable?**

GallopNYC offers its program at three stables. More information about the locations can be found on the websites below, or you can look up door-to-door subway directions using [www.hopstop.com](http://www.hopstop.com).

**Kensington Stables in Brooklyn near Prospect Park, 51 Caton Place, Brooklyn, NY 11218.**

Directions to the stable can be found at: [www.kensingtonstables.com/directions/index.htm](http://www.kensingtonstables.com/directions/index.htm). The closest subway stop is the F train at Fort Hamilton Parkway.

**Lynne's Riding School, 88-03 70<sup>th</sup> Rd. Forest Hills, Queens 11375**

See [www.lynnesridingschoolnyc.com](http://www.lynnesridingschoolnyc.com).

**Jamaica Bay Riding Academy, Shore Parkway, Brooklyn NY**

Not easily accessible by public transportation. See <http://www.horsebackride.com/>.

**Specific Questions:**

**15. Can riders who do not have disabilities also participate?**

The program is for riders with special needs. Siblings who do not have a disability can join the rider's class if we have room.

**16. Do we submit our insurance info to you, or do we pay you and get reimbursed?**

Hippotherapy riders should discuss this issue with the therapist, as we understand that in some cases, coverage is available. However, insurance rarely covers therapeutic riding lessons. You may be eligible for Medicaid waiver benefits. Some agencies, such as NYSID, pay us directly, others prefer to reimburse you.

**17. What forms of payment do you accept?**

We accept checks and can take credit card payments through our website (gmail account required.)

**18. Are private lessons available and how much is the fee?**

We do have a few private lessons available for a fee of \$650 for a series of 10 half-hour lessons. However we encourage riders to join groups as the socialization is a positive benefit.

**19. Is it possible to do one trial lesson?**

We discourage this as it may take a few lessons for a new rider to get comfortable (although most people take to riding instantly.)

**20. Are there conditions that therapeutic riding and/or hippotherapy are not appropriate for?**

We reserve the right to determine if a person will ride with GallopNYC. We work with people at all functional levels and with a wide range of disabilities. However, there are some conditions we may not be able to accommodate. This is not an exhaustive list, but these are the conditions that we have addressed in the past.

For example:

- Weight: The horses we use have weight limits and we may not be able to offer mounted lessons to a rider with weight in excess of 200 pounds.
- Seizure history: A history of seizures may preclude riding.
- Abusive behavior: Many people with behavioral problems are able to control abusive behaviors while riding, but continued abusive behavior is not tolerated.

- Shunts: Helmets are mandatory and people with shunts may not be able to wear helmets.
- Physical conditions: A person must be able to sit comfortably on the horse. Some spinal conditions may not be suitable for riding.

**21. Does my child have to wear a helmet? My child tries to take helmets/hats off.**

Yes, a helmet is required. This can be an issue, but usually children are sufficiently motivated to ride that they will wear a helmet, or once they are riding, they are too focused on riding to be upset by the helmet.

**22. What are the criteria that determine if a new rider must be evaluated by the Physical Therapist? If an evaluation is needed, how do I arrange the appointment?**

Please let us know about the rider's disability and we will make this assessment.

**23. Do I need to get the forms to you prior to the first lesson, or can I just bring them with me?**

We'd very much appreciate having all forms in advance. Please mail to GallopNYC at 540 President Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11215.

**24. Does your Hippotherapist require an RSA and case ID for billing purposes?**

Please speak with the therapist about this.

**25. What do people say about GallopNYC?**

A list of links to press about GallopNYC's therapeutic riding program can be found on our website at [www.gallopnyc.org/links.html](http://www.gallopnyc.org/links.html). If you would like to speak with a family currently involved in our program, please let us know.