

In a peaceful, rural setting nestled in the hills of Orinda, Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center provides a broad range of equine-assisted activities and therapies to children and adults with mental and physical disabilities.



At Xenophon, miracles happen every day. A wheelchair-bound rider holds himself upright with only minimal help from his sidewalkers. A nonverbal child signals for her horse to “walk on” by blinking. A young adult is given the freedom to be in charge. A veteran makes a profound connection to his horse. An Alzheimer’s sufferer smiles for the first time in ages.



That’s the magic of Xenophon. In a safe and secure environment, we offer life-changing experiences for children and adults challenged by a wide range of disabilities. Using the horse as the therapeutic mode and focusing on enhancing each individual’s unique abilities, participants achieve goals they or their families never dreamed possible.



Therapeutic horses are amazing animals: Powerful yet gentle and highly astute, they develop deep relationships with their riders and caretakers. To our well-trained, dependable therapeutic horses, it’s irrelevant whether their rider uses a wheelchair or their handler doesn’t speak; these remarkable animals have an extraordinary ability to inspire confidence, pride and an exceptional sense of accomplishment.

Mission: To enrich the lives of children and adults with disabilities through a high-quality program of equine-assisted activities and therapies, including therapeutic horseback riding, hippotherapy, horsemanship, life skills and related activities.

Instructors: Seven therapeutic riding instructors, one licensed physical therapist and an occupational therapist—all registered through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) International. Two instructors have masters degrees in counseling. Hippotherapy instructors are licensed physical or occupational therapists. All participate regularly in industry conferences and continuing education.

Horses: Our seven horses, of various breeds, have undergone extensive training that ensures their reliability, patience and acceptance of the adaptive equipment needed that enables them to do the job required.

Volunteers: More than 100 dedicated volunteers generously give their time in various capacities, including during lessons as sidewalkers and horse handlers. Others help behind the scenes with horse care, facilities upkeep, special events and fundraising.

Students served: In 2017, Xenophon served 55 students per week in weekly therapeutic riding and hippotherapy lessons (plus additional substitute riders when space allows); our young-adult program served 30; our veterans program served 13; and our newest program for Alzheimer’s patients and their caregivers served 12. In all, we logged in more than 1,750 lesson hours.

Fees: Although the cost to Xenophon of each therapeutic riding lesson is \$150, Xenophon’s fee is just \$45. Hippotherapy sessions are higher, but are often covered by health insurance. Our adult and veterans programs are self-funded. We also offer a scholarship program on a sliding scale for families needing additional financial assistance. No one is turned away due to an inability to pay.

Accreditation: Accredited by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) International, Xenophon is the only Premier Accredited Center of its kind in Alameda and Contra Costa counties and is considered one of the highest-quality therapeutic riding centers of its size in the country. In the accreditation process, centers are evaluated on more than 100 criteria to ensure a safe and meaningful program; in its most recent review, Xenophon earned a perfect score.

Operations and Governance: Xenophon is run day-to-day by a paid staff comprising a full-time Program Director, Horse/Barn Manager and Executive Director and a part-time Volunteer Coordinator. It is overseen by an active volunteer Board of Directors comprising parents, professionals, and community and philanthropic leaders.

Fundraising: Xenophon’s annual gala typically provides roughly two-thirds of our annual operating budget; the remainder comes from grants, business donations and contributions from individuals. We are currently in the early stages of establishing a planned-giving program to enable our supporters to participate in Xenophon’s long-term sustainability.



Xenophon Programs

Therapeutic Riding

Therapeutic riding focuses on improving muscle tone, balance and motor skills while also developing riding skills. In many cases, it also addresses communication and social skills. Each lesson is specifically tailored to the rider's abilities, with quantifiable goals established at the outset and reviewed at the end of each session. Each lesson comprises an instructor, a horse handler, and two sidewalkers who ensure the rider's safety.

Sessions/schedule: Offered five days per week in five 7-week sessions

Age of participants: 5 to 18 **Riders served:** Approximately 40 per week



"My daughter loves Xenophon. She is always welcomed with smiles and staff encouragement."

Hippotherapy

Hippotherapy is a form of physical or occupational therapy that uses the warmth and rhythmic movement of the horse to influence a rider's posture, balance, coordination and strength through a full sensory experience. Each session is led by a licensed, PATH-certified physical or occupational therapist, guiding the rider to encourage specific motor and sensory responses. In hippotherapy, the horse is led ("driven") from behind to maximize its full range of movement for the benefit of the rider.

Sessions/schedule: Offered four days per week in five 7-week sessions

Age of participants: 2 to 18 **Riders served:** 15 per week



"Our son's progress in his gross motor skills and socialization has been remarkable."

Bridle Paths to Success

This adult program was piloted in 2015 and has subsequently been incorporated into Xenophon's offerings to respond to the dearth of opportunities for disabled adults in our community. In this program, participants do not ride, but they polish valuable communication and life skills through their interaction with the horses, participation in their grooming and care, and learning about the goings-on at our barn.

Sessions/schedule: Meets weekly in 7-week sessions

Age of participants: 22 and up **Riders served:** 8 per session



"Xenophon gives me a chance to be outdoors, and it reminds me to take care of myself."

Operation Hooves on the Ground

Piloted in 2016, this program was developed to meet a need for local veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Through working with our horses, the goal is for veterans to experience relief from their symptoms and/or restore function and to improve their physical, social and emotional health. Veterans groom, lead, lunge and interact in other ways with our horses, as well as develop basic and intermediate horse-handling, communication and training skills.

Sessions/schedule: Meets weekly in 6-week sessions

Age of participants: Adults **Riders served:** 6-8 per session



"This program is the best program that the VA has ever offered us."

The Connected Horse Project

Piloted in 2017, this program offers pioneering equine-guided workshops for people living with early-stage dementia and their care partners. Led by trained equine handlers and expert facilitators, participants engage in grooming, leading and interacting with horses in an open arena. No riding is involved; the emphasis is on therapeutic activities, stress reduction, multi-sensory awareness and more.

Sessions/schedule: Meets weekly in 7-week sessions

Age of participants: Adults **Riders served:** 6-8 per session



"It was wonderful. It was the best thing I've ever done."



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