



Athelas Therapeutic Riding, Inc
1179 County Highway 5 • Otego NY 13825 • 607-783-2321
www.athelastherapeuticridinginc.org

January 31, 2026

Dear Participant,

Welcome to the 2026 Athelas season! We are excited for another year of equine fun! Please read all the paperwork in this packet, as we have some updates and changes.

There is an additional Athelas Family letter in this year's packet. It includes the reality of our finances but also outlines a wonderful new scholarship that will help keep riding affordable for all. Please make sure you fully read that letter so you can take advantage of Cosmo's Gift Scholarship.

The 2026 Participant Agreement packet: Riders must complete, sign, and return all forms in the packet before we can schedule riding lessons. Please ensure you have read, understand, and initialed all the enrollment terms, and have provided an email address for electronic billing. If you wish to use Cosmo's Gift Scholarship, please also ensure you check the appropriate box on the payment form. All clients must have a current physical, and we reserve the right to weigh any rider for the safety of both rider and horse.

Please make a copy of your completed packet and keep it in your files for reference. After Athelas has reviewed and approved the completed Participant Agreement packet, our Instructors will contact the rider to set a schedule and start date.

A final reminder to all riders to notify Athelas at least 5 hours in advance if you must miss a lesson. Athelas relies on volunteers to assist with lessons. Their time is important. We ask our riders to please respect our volunteers and their time by calling with advanced notice when you cannot make it to your lesson.

Thank you for choosing Athelas Therapeutic Riding and for your support. We are looking forward to another great year with all of our riders!

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Marsh
Board President

Anneliese Gilchrest
Program Manager, Executive Director



Dear Athelas Families,

We hope this message finds you and your rider well! We would like to share an important update about our lesson pricing and an exciting new scholarship program that will help keep Athelas accessible to everyone.

What's Changing on February 1, 2026

Starting February 1st, our lesson rate will increase from \$50 to \$80 per lesson to better reflect our actual operating costs. We know this is a significant jump, which is why we're immediately implementing a solution to keep riding affordable for all current families.

Introducing Cosmo's Gift Scholarship Fund

Every single rider is eligible to receive a \$25 scholarship through our new Cosmo's Gift Scholarship Fund! This means while our lesson rate is increasing to \$80, your cost may only increase **by \$5 per lesson.**

You pay \$55 per lesson, and Cosmo's Gift Scholarship picks up the other \$25.

Cosmo, one of our beloved therapy horses who recently passed, gave so much to our riders over the years. It feels fitting to honor his legacy by ensuring that financial barriers never prevent a rider from experiencing the transformative power of therapeutic riding.

**To receive this scholarship, you must CHECK THE BOX on the 2026 application.
Every rider in 2026 is eligible!!**

For families who need additional financial assistance beyond the Cosmo Gift \$25 scholarship, our existing Joann Curie Scholarship remains available. You can learn more and apply at ATRINC.org.

The Reality of Our Costs

The cost of caring for our therapy horses and maintaining our program has increased significantly. To cover the cost of maintaining the horses and the program, Athelas realistically needs to charge \$100 as lesson. Here's where each of those dollars would go:

- **Horse Care (\$65):** Board, hay & feed, vet care, supplements, vaccines, hoof maintenance.
- **Facility & Arena (\$15):** Arena rental fees, maintenance, and utilities.
- **Instruction (\$15):** Trained instructors & side-walkers who make each lesson safe and effective.
- **Program Operations (\$5):** Insurance, equipment, administration, office supplies, website.

In 2025, at \$50, lesson revenue only covered half of our operating costs. This creates a deficit that must be made up through fundraising and grants, sources that can fluctuate unpredictably. Unfortunately, this doesn't provide the stable program foundation our horses and riders deserve.

Our Fundraising Goal

Our new lesson rate of \$80 per lesson better reflects our true operating costs and providing every rider with a \$25 scholarship bridges the gap between sustainability and accessibility. To fully fund Cosmo's Gift Scholarship for all riders in 2026, we need to raise approximately \$33,000.



How You Can Help

We know you're already investing in your rider's therapy. Here are meaningful ways you can support Athelas and the Cosmo's Gift Scholarship, without needing to contribute financially:

Spread the Word

- Share our social media posts with your networks
- Tell friends, family, and neighbors about Athelas and the impact it's had on your rider
- Leave us a Google review or testimonial we can share with potential donors

Engage with Our Community

- Like, comment on, and share our Facebook and Instagram posts (every interaction helps!)
- Attend our fundraising events (even just showing up matters)
- Volunteer at events if you're able

Champion the Mission

- When people ask about your rider's progress, share the Athelas story
- Connect us with local businesses, organizations, or individuals who might support our mission
- Help us think creatively about fundraising opportunities

Why This Matters

Every rider who comes through our barn doors experiences something magical - the unique bond between horse and human, the building of confidence, the achievement of goals that once seemed impossible. Our therapy horses don't care about diagnoses or disabilities; they simply show up with patience, gentleness, and consistency. But keeping this magic alive requires honest conversations about sustainability. By moving our lesson rate closer to our actual costs and building a robust scholarship fund, we're ensuring that Athelas can continue serving riders for years to come, without anyone being turned away due to financial need.

Looking Ahead

We're incredibly grateful for your trust in our program and your commitment to your rider's growth. This pricing change isn't easy, but we believe it's the right path forward to maintain the quality of care your riders deserve while keeping our doors open to all who need us.

If you have questions, concerns, or ideas about how we can work together to make 2026 our strongest year yet, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're in this together.

With gratitude and anticipation for the year ahead,

The Athelas Therapeutic Riding Board of Directors

Jocelyn Marsh - President

Lindsay Chase - Vice President

Abby Costello - Treasurer

Alison James - Secretary

Cathrine Moore

Katie Madonia

Marly Rabstajnek

P.S. – Keep an eye out for information about our 2026 fundraising events and volunteer opportunities. We can't wait to see you at the barn.



2026

Athelas Therapeutic Riding, Inc.
1179 County Highway 5, Otego, NY 13825
(607) 783-2321
www.athelastherapeuticridinginc.org

Participant's Name _____ Organization _____

Best telephone number to contact for schedule changes, etc. _____

Can we text you at that number with schedule changes, etc.? () yes, () no

Mailing address _____

E-mail address _____

Dear Participant, Parent or Guardian,

Thank you for your interest in our programming.

Please review the following terms and policies for Athelas Therapeutic Riding, Inc. In order to maintain our excellence in programming and the safety of our riders, we ask that all participants and their families adhere to our policies. Failure to commit to these policies will result in loss of riding and/or barn time at the participant's cost. **Please initial next to each term and policy to indicate that you have read and understand it, as well as signing and dating at the bottom of this agreement.**

The following are the terms for enrollment in our program:

- 1. Costs & payments:** The cost per lesson is \$80, but only \$55 if you apply for Cosmo's Gift Scholarship, which is available to all. Be sure to check the box on the payment form to enroll. In the warmer months, typically April - October, monthly sessions will be run. Riders are expected to sign up monthly for a session and pay the entire session price regardless of attendance. For example, a five-week session in July would cost \$400 (\$275 with Cosmo's Gift Scholarship applied), regardless of attendance. Some predetermined client groups will be monthly throughout the entire year.

_____ **Initial**

*Application for further scholarship through the Jo-Ann Currie Scholarship Foundation can be found on our website under the "Our Programs- How to Enroll" tab.

- 2. Client cancellation:** If a rider is ill or cannot attend their lesson for any reason, Athelas should be notified at least 5 hours in advance of the lesson. Failure to do so will result in the lesson being billed, and clients will be responsible for payment. _____ **Initial**
- 3. Athelas cancellation:** Conditions or instances of illness that affect the presence of the instructor or proper coverage by volunteers will result in the cancellation of lessons by Athelas. If Athelas cancels a lesson, there will be no monetary refund; however, Athelas will give credit towards another lesson. _____ **Initial**
- 4. No-show client:** There is no credit or make-up lesson given for a rider "no-show," and the client will still be charged for the lesson. A "no-show" absence is one in which the client has not provided a 5-hour advance notice of their absence. Without advance notice, Athelas still incurs arena rental and instructor fees. _____ **Initial**

5. **Bad Weather Policy:** Lessons will only be canceled in the event of dangerous or threatening weather (e.g., thunderstorms, snowstorms, very low temperatures). To determine cancellations, you can call the Athelas barn directly at (607) 783-2321, or call or text Anneliese's cell (607) 287-2468. **No credit or make-up lessons will be given for spontaneous weather events that result in cancellation (e.g., a thunderstorm that begins just before or during a lesson).** _____ **Initial**

6. **Clothing Requirements:** Long pants and closed-toed shoes (with heels if possible) are required for riders. For safety reasons, we highly recommend that any parents, guardians, or staff who will be standing near the horses also wear closed-toe shoes. **No sandals or flip-flops.** During the winter months, we require riders to have warm coats, gloves/mittens, and socks that come above the ankles. _____ **Initial**

7. **Helmet Policy:** When near or on a horse, participants must wear an ASTM-SEI approved riding helmet. Athelas provides these helmets. Please note that bike helmets, motorcycle helmets, or ski helmets are not acceptable. _____ **Initial**

8. **Late Rider Policy:** It is important for riders to arrive 5 minutes before their scheduled lesson time. If a rider is more than 15 minutes late to a lesson, the rider will not be able to ride. Horses will be un-tacked and volunteers will be released 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of the lesson. In addition, the participant (rider) will be charged the full lesson fee. _____ **Initial**

9. **Safety Policy:** Athelas reserves the right, at any time, to refuse any participants who we cannot accommodate safely. _____ **Initial**

10. **Upon Arrival:** Participants, parents, guardians, or staff must remain in the viewing room. An Athelas staff member will escort the participant, parent, guardian, or staff to the mounting block for the lesson. _____ **Initial**

11. **Non-client visitors accompanying the Athelas participant:** Any individuals arriving with the Athelas participant, other than the participant's parent, guardian, or staff, must remain in the viewing room during the lesson. For safety and insurance reasons, we do not allow individuals to enter the barn area or walk about on the property unattended by Athelas or Northfield Farms staff. _____ **Initial**

12. **Weight Limit Policy:** Rider weight limit is 210 pounds. Those who wish to participate in activities with horses but are above this limit may be involved in other equine-assisted programs. Talk with staff about those opportunities. _____ **Initial**

13. **Non-riding activity:** Athelas reserves the right to substitute a non-riding equine activity should they feel a rider is unable to safely ride at that time of their lesson. This can be due to rider or equine mood/behaviors, as well as due to a lack of volunteers. Our riders' safety is our number one priority, and sometimes we need to make changes to the plan. _____ **Initial**

Your signature below indicates that you have read, understand, and will abide by the aforementioned terms and policies of this agreement.

Printed name of Signee _____

Signature _____ Date _____



Athelas Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

1179 County Highway 5, Otego, NY 13825

(607) 783-2321

Name: _____

I/We are: Participant/Rider Volunteer Student Intern
Please circle one

Release and Hold Harmless Agreement – 2026

Please initial each statement below to indicate your acceptance:

_____ I/We acknowledge the inherent risks which are involved in riding and working around horses. The risks may include, but are not limited to, damage to personal property, illness, bodily harm, trauma, or death resulting from a fall while riding or being in close proximity to horses.

_____ I/We further understand that both horse and rider can be injured in the normal course of events while riding, riding in a cart, or grooming, interacting with or feeding horses, and therefore agree to indemnify and hold harmless Athelas Therapeutic Riding, Inc. (Athelas), its Board of Directors, Northfield Farms, LLC, its employees, staff and volunteers and further release them from any liability or responsibility for any accident, injury, damage, or death to the Participant and any person accompanying the participant while on the premises of Athelas' contractor Northfield Farm, LLC located at 1179 County Highway 5, Otego, NY 13825.

_____ I/We understand that Athelas will provide protective headgear (equestrian helmet) and it must be worn by all participants when they are *on or near* horses.

Permission for Medical Treatment Agreement

In the event that the Participant or any person accompanying the Participant, volunteer or student intern needs emergency medical attention while at Athelas: (must initial one option below)

_____ I/We give permission for the instructors and staff of Athelas to give emergency first aid if needed.

_____ I/We do not give permission for emergency first aid to be given and understand in choosing this option I/We will hold Athelas harmless. I/We do understand that Athelas will call 911 if they feel the injury warrants it.

Permission for Photo Release Agreement

Athelas occasionally takes photos or videos during therapy lessons or special events and they may be used for educational or promotional purposes. (Must initial one option below)

_____ I/We give permission for photos or videos to be taken.

May we use your name with photos and videos? () yes, () no

_____ I/We do not give permission for photos or videos to be taken.

I/We have read, had the opportunity to ask questions, understand, and agree to the above agreements

Printed name: _____

Contact information: Mailing address: _____

_____ Email address: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Cell: _____

Signature: _____ Date of signature: _____

Please immediately notify Athelas in the event of any changes in contact information. Thank you.

(revised 2/2026)



Athelas Therapeutic Riding, Inc. - Payment Form 2026

Participant Name: _____

Billing is done electronically. Please provide an email to which invoices & all billing notifications should be sent.

Email: _____

Please be sure that the address provided is correct & legible.

Check here to have the Cosmo's Gift scholarship fund applied to your billing statements.

Please complete either the "Self-pay" section and/or the "Pay through Agency" section below to indicate how your therapy lesson fees will be paid.

() Self-pay

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Will you be using any vouchers or scholarships to assist with your payment? Check the appropriate type.

() Springbrook vouchers () JCS

Self-pay clients can pay weekly by cash/check at each lesson or receive a monthly/session invoice.

() Pay through an Agency

Agency Name: _____

Service Coordinator: _____ Phone: _____

Broker (if applicable): _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please note: Some agencies require the client to pay for lessons on their own and then submit receipts for reimbursement. Athelas will provide receipts after each lesson. The client is responsible for submitting them to the appropriate agency.

Is this OPWDD funding? () yes () no



Athelas Therapeutic Riding Inc.

1179 County Highway 5

Otego, NY 13825

Personal Information and Goals – 2026

Participant name: _____

Please tell us a little more about the participant so we can personalize the lesson to meet the needs and interests of this individual.

Social: Tell us about fears or concerns, etc.

Interests: Tell us about your favorite games, hobbies, TV shows, songs, etc.

Goals for Riding:

Sensory: Please describe any difficulties with touch, eye contact, wearing hats or helmets, etc.

Additional Information: Please provide any other details that would be helpful for the staff to meet the needs of this rider.



Athelas Therapeutic Riding, Inc.
 1179 County Highway 5, Otego, NY 13825
 Phone (607) 783-2321
 www.athelastherapeuticridinginc.org

Annual Medical History and Physician's Statement for Participants

This must be completed by a physician

Participant: _____ DOB: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____
 Address: _____ Home Phone: _____
 Diagnosis: _____ Date of Onset: _____
 Surgeries in the past 12 months: _____

Circle Y for "yes" and N for "no"

Non-verbal: Y N

Seizures: Y N Type of seizure: _____ Controlled? Y N Date of last seizure: _____

Photosensitivity: Y N Precautions: _____

Allergies: Y N Precautions: _____

Shunt Present: Y N Precautions: _____

Any other special precautions needed: Y N Please list precautions: _____

Mobility: Independent Ambulation: Y N Assisted Ambulation: Y N Wheelchair use: Y N

List any other mobility assistive devices: _____

Those with Down syndrome: AtlantoDens Interval X-rays: Date of last one: _____

Results: + -

Please indicate current or past special needs in the following systems/areas:

| Area | Yes | No | Comments |
|---------------|-----|----|----------|
| Auditory | | | |
| Visual | | | |
| Cardiac | | | |
| Pulmonary | | | |
| Neurologic | | | |
| Orthopedic | | | |
| Psychological | | | |
| Other | | | |

To my knowledge, there is no reason this person cannot participate in a supervised therapeutic riding program.

Provider Name: _____ MD DO Other _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

License/UPIN Number: _____

Please add any addition information you feel we should be aware of on the back.



2026 Participant Background Sheet

(This demographic information is necessary for funding source purposes)

Agency/Family name: _____ **County of Residence** _____

Gender: male _____ female _____

Age or Date of Birth: _____ **Returning Participant?** ___ YES ___ NO

Race/Ethnicity: White/European American African American Hispanic/Latino

(Circle all that apply) Asian/Pacific Islander American Indian

Additional _____

Benefits Received by the Participant: SSI SSD Medicaid

Rider Diagnosis:

ADHD Nonverbal Paralysis Mental Retardation/Intellectually Impaired Autism Depression Mood Disorder

Down Syndrome Cerebral Palsy Muscular Dystrophy Multiple Sclerosis Learning Disabilities Brain Injury

Additional: _____

Family Size and Income: 2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Circle the number of people in your household (first row). Looking in the column below the number(s) of people in your household, determine where your income falls and circle that number. For example, if there are 3 people in your household and your income is \$23,000, then you would circle \$28,180 in the column for "3 Persons", because \$23,000 is equal to or less than \$28,180. Or if there are 5 people in your household and your income is \$40,200, then you would circle the \$43,170 in the column for "5 Persons", because \$40,200 is equal to or less than \$43,170.

| Number in Family | 1 Person | 2 Persons | 3 Persons | 4 Persons | 5 Persons | 6 Persons | 7 Persons | 8 Persons |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Income Equal to or Less Than | \$12,760 | \$17,240 | \$21,720 | \$26,200 | \$30,680 | \$35,160 | \$39,640 | \$44,120 |
| Income Equal to or Less Than | \$17,609 | \$23,791 | \$29,974 | \$36,156 | \$42,338 | \$48,521 | \$54,703 | \$60,886 |
| Income Equal to or Less Than | \$19,140 | \$25,860 | \$32,580 | \$39,300 | \$46,020 | \$52,740 | \$59,460 | \$66,180 |
| Income Equal to or Less Than | \$25,520 | \$34,480 | \$43,440 | \$52,400 | \$61,360 | \$70,320 | \$79,280 | \$88,240 |
| Income Equal to or Less Than | \$31,900 | \$43,100 | \$54,300 | \$65,500 | \$76,700 | \$87,900 | \$99,100 | \$110,300 |
| Income Greater Than | \$38,280 | \$51,720 | \$65,160 | \$78,600 | \$92,040 | \$105,480 | \$118,920 | \$132,360 |



Athelas Therapeutic Riding, Inc.
1179 County Highway 5, Otego, NY 13825
(607) 783-2321
www.athelastherapeuticridinginc.org

2026 New Rider Screening:

All new clientele to Athelas Therapeutic Riding Inc. must undergo a new rider screening, which will allow for appropriate placement in our Therapeutic Riding Program. This screening gives Athelas the opportunity to assess you/or your child for placement as well as providing you time to meet with our Instructors, obtain all necessary information needed, and to receive answers to any questions that you may have. Screening time slots are limited and offered throughout our weekly schedule. The screening costs \$55.00 per individual. During the screening, our Instructors will evaluate the individual's behavior towards the horseback riding process, including the individual's reaction to wearing a helmet, interaction with the horses, and the environment.

We have helmets that are available to borrow for the duration of the lesson; we ask that all riders wear long pants, socks, and closed-toed shoes. If you choose to use your own horseback riding helmets, all helmets must be riding helmets that are ASTM/SEI approved. Our Instructors can answer questions regarding other horseback riding equipment. All participant paperwork must be submitted to Athelas before setting up your screening time. Please fill out the enclosed forms and mail them back to Athelas. Our Instructors will be in contact regarding available dates and times for screenings. Once the screening appointment has been completed, the instructor will determine appropriateness for the program. An Athelas Therapeutic Riding Instructor will then follow up with the Therapeutic Riding Program's scheduling availability and confirm a weekly lesson day and time.

Thank you for your interest in our program.

Anneliese Gilcrest
Executive Director
Athelas Therapeutic Riding Inc.