

Founded in 1988 by Debby Sabin, Lovelane Special Needs Horseback Riding Program is a non-profit organization serving children with a myriad of physical, emotional, social and developmental disabilities. Lovelane has, since then, steadily grown to become one of the most respected therapeutic riding programs in the area. Following a highly successful capital campaign, the organization moved into its own brand-new, permanent home in Lincoln, Massachusetts in 2004. In September 2005, the first lessons were taught in the state-of-the-art indoor arena designed exclusively for the special needs population.

Lovelane's philosophy is centered on a commitment to providing an individualized program for children that integrates the fun of riding a horse with the appropriate therapeutic activities to achieve the child's specific therapeutic goals. We tailor our approach to focus on developing the inherent abilities of each participant. Our primary goals are to facilitate the child's treatment plan, to improve the child's quality of life, and to help our students gain the confidence and self-esteem needed to succeed beyond the Lovelane arena.

Therapeutic horseback riding is a growing discipline, and has garnered respect and recognition from the medical community for its remarkable success with a broad range of physical, emotional, developmental and genetic disorders. At its most basic level, therapeutic riding is based on the movement of the horse. Using that movement to work the muscles of the rider, Lovelane sessions focus on occupational, physical, and/or speech therapies with the goal of maximizing the student's independence and enhancing their quality of life well beyond the riding arena. The stimulation of the horse's gait helps improve posture, balance, muscle control, and muscle tone, and can help reduce self-stimulatory behaviors. In addition, tasks and exercises that can seem like a "chore" in a traditional therapeutic setting can seem fun and game-like as part of a therapeutic horseback riding session.

Primary diagnoses among Lovelane students include, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, genetic disorders, autism, cancer and a host of physical disorders and developmental delays. At Lovelane, these students find a place where they can succeed as athletes and enjoy a freedom of movement that might otherwise be denied them.