

Frequently Asked Questions

Dressage4Kids

Winter Intensive Training

What is the WIT program?

The Winter Intensive Training (WIT) Program is a rare opportunity for aspiring riders, ages 25 and under (using actual birthdate), who are committed to being the best they can be. This program, as its name suggests, is intense and takes determination, drive and passion. The program runs January through March in Florida.



What's in a Name?

It is important that potential applicants understand that the WIT program is very well known, especially by the international gathering wintering in the Wellington area. Lendon Gray, founder of Dressage4Kids, has established a renowned reputation of assembling a fantastic group of youth riders for this program. The WIT name is recognized, the WIT logo is recognized, and strangers will stop and talk to you about the program. The WIT program has opened countless doors for riders to pursue their passion with some of the top professionals in our sport. It is a privilege to be a participant. You have a responsibility to yourself and to Dressage4Kids to represent both yourself and the organization with pride and respect. You are an extension of decades of dedication to make these opportunities available. There will be no tolerance for inappropriate behavior that reflects badly on Dressage4Kids.

More than 50%

*of WITees return to Florida
as working students, to train, and compete.*



Wellington and the surrounding areas are renowned as the winter destination for equestrians across the globe.



Where is the program?

The WIT program takes place in Florida. With the generosity of Heather Whiles, the 2022 program will call Farmore Farms home. The address is 13252 Collecting Canal Road, Loxahatchee, FL 33470.



Who can participate in WIT?

Any rider age 25 and under may apply, it does not matter how much experience you have, at what level you're currently riding, or the horse you have. Dedication, passion and discipline are major factors in the participant selection process. Participants should fully expect to be held to very high standards of character and professionalism.





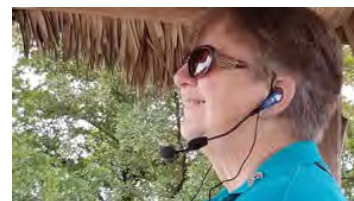
Who are the trainers?

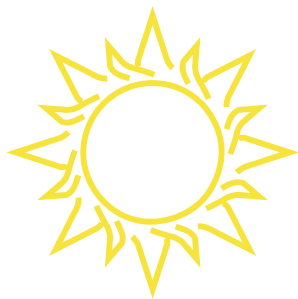
Two-time Olympian Lendon Gray is the main instructor of the program. The goal of the Winter Intensive Training Program is to give opportunities for youth riders to participate in consistent and extensive training not only in the saddle, but in all areas of horse care, riding and training theory, and competition skills. There may be options at times to ride with other trainers.



What are the amenities at the stables?

Our 2022 facility is only four miles from Global and WEF on five beautiful acres. With two well appointed stables, 13 paddocks, a dressage arena with superb fiber footing and mirrors-perfect for daily lessons. It also boasts a round pen and viewing area. Inside you'll find two air-conditioned tack rooms, two wash stalls with hot and cold water in the main barn and one wash stall in the back barn. There may be limited trailer parking for the season for WIT riders, please check in advance.





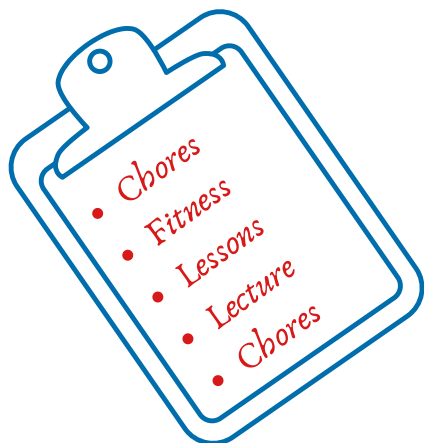
What is a typical day like?

The program starts at 6:30 a.m. with basic stable chores. Each rider must take care of his or her own horse as well as help with maintaining the facility where the program is held. Group fitness is scheduled immediately following A.M. chores and then lessons begin. Lesson times are posted the day prior, riders can sign up for their desired lesson times in advance. Days vary with private lessons, semi-privates or group lessons.



Everyone should plan to watch as many lessons as possible with a journal in hand for note taking. Lendon encourages and will answer questions from the spectators during lessons.

Participants will have a full schedule of learning that includes fitness, theory, written and verbal tests, riding lessons, field trips and lectures on many pertinent subjects. Days at the stables will end around 4:30 p.m. with some evening activities where participants will leave straight from the stables after P.M. chores. Evenings may include off-site lectures, competitions to watch, or volunteer activities. Notice will be given to allow for a change of clothes.



What is a typical week like?

A typical week includes five days of lessons, one day for riders to hack on their own or give their horse another day off, and one “day off”. Supervised night check is typically organized in teams of two, expect to return at least once a week at night.

The “day off” usually falls on Monday, this is also when you can expect more than usual activity at the farm with regard to landscape work, trash removal, manure removal, deliveries, and maintenance. It is also a popular day to schedule your farrier, vet, or chiropractor appointments. Turn your horse out, hand walk, graze, etc. but do not ride your horse. Horses are working very hard in the program and one day off is required unless you discuss otherwise with Lendon.

This is a “day off” for your horse, as YOU are still expected to take care of your horse and complete stable chores on Mondays. Riders often pair up so one does the AM chores for two horses and the other does PM chores, this frees up a half day.



What else will I have to do?

Here are a few things you might not expect. Participants will be required to interview someone from the horse world, usually in a sit down, one-on-one private meeting session lasting up to an hour. If a personal meeting is not possible, by phone or Facetime is arranged. You will need to take notes and write up the interview to share with the group. All participants are required to give a presentation to the group on a topic of their choice, with a Q & A session. You will have regular written tests, sometimes on non- horse related topics, such as current events. You will have required reading for tests. You will also be tested on general horse knowledge and skills, such as mounting from the ground, or changing hands with your whip or citing the number of beats in each gait. Cleaning the bathroom, watering plants, and raking the sides of the arena are also expected.



Shavings Mannequin Challenge



Bull Riding for Charity



Presentation



Laura Graves at Friday Night Freestyles



Photo Shoots



What other activities does the program offer?

Beyond lessons, lectures, and fitness at the stables, participants are exposed to a plethora of other opportunities. Some of these will be mandatory/strongly suggested and some will be optional, and others will be more social in nature. These include: schooling shows on-site, visiting the facilities of top riders and trainers, auditing off-site clinics, attending evening lectures, conferences, sponsor-hosted parties, volunteering at equestrian related events, helping in advance with event planning and set-up, and more.

Wellington is known as the Winter Equestrian Capital of the World, you are minutes away from Dressage, Polo and Show Jumping events during the three months. You are welcome to take advantage of some of these activities during your personal time.

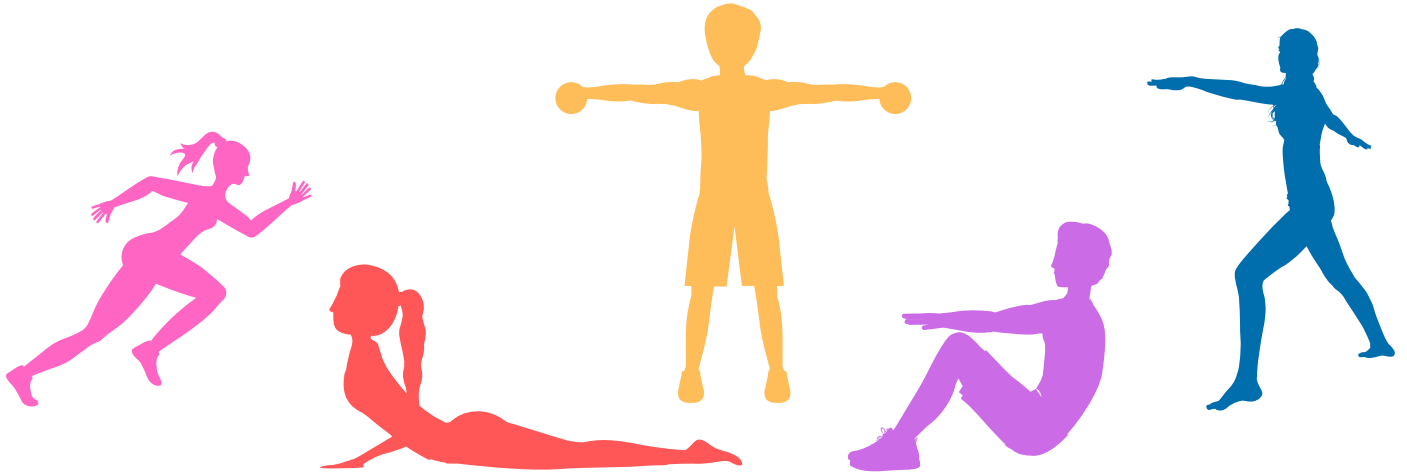


**More than
75%**

*of the riders in the youth classes at the
2021 USEF Festival Champions participated in D4K.*

Is the fitness portion of the program optional?

Fitness is required. All participants are expected to take part in physical fitness programs, even if they choose to do additional workouts outside of the WIT program. Exceptions are made if there are medical or health reasons that prohibit safe involvement. Any concerns should be handled confidentially with Lendon to determine the best plan. Fitness might include yoga, Pilates, running, swimming, weight-lifting, general aerobic training, as well as coordination and balance exercises.

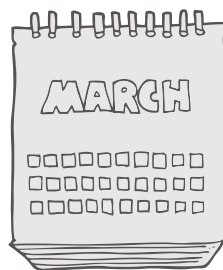
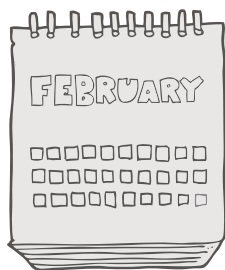
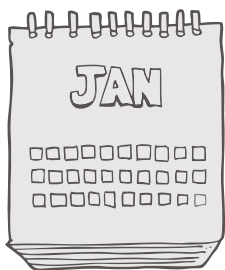


Do participants get days off?

The real answer here is “No”. Horses get Mondays off, but participants are still required to provide all care. There may also be more time consuming chores scheduled on Mondays, i.e., major clean outs of the feed room, refrigerator, small grass paddocks, etc.

Each year the program is run slightly differently. There may be opportunity to split shifts or share chores in order to get more of a real “day off”. Riders often pair up so one does the AM chores for two horses and the other does PM chores.

However, even in the best-case scenario, you can expect to sleep in maybe two Mondays a month.



Do I have to do the entire three months?

You may attend for a shorter amount of time only if stabling permits. This is coordinated on a case-by-case basis after full program participants are booked. Preference is given to riders who stay three months. Please inquire.



Do I need to bring my own horse?

Yes, horses are not provided for the program. If you are looking to lease a horse specifically for the program, please contact D4K in advance to discuss feasibility. Historically, these short-term leases have posed some complications. If you have a long-term lease, you are responsible for showing proper documentation that the horse is permitted to participate and travel and board at the WIT facility.



Can I change horses during the program?

Ideally the program is designed to provide three months of consistent training on the same horse so that you can assess, set goals, create a plan, and experience progress. If you have a multiple horse question, please ask in advance of submitting your application so that fit and feasibility can be determined.



Will D4K Ship my horse?

No, D4K does not get involved with horse shipping. We may be able to refer you to a shipper. The participants will be able to contact each other in advance and often see if there is an opportunity to use the same shipper or share rides. You are responsible for the arrival and departure of your horse. You should plan on being there, night or day, to meet your shipper. You will be given the gate code if needed for entry. There may be special instructions if you are shipping with a tractor trailer. Please be sure you communicate the vehicle in advance.





Does D4K provide housing?

No, D4K does not assist with housing. In the past, participants and their parent/guardian have shared housing with other participants. This can certainly help with the costs as well as car pooling/transportation.

The Village of Wellington and Loxahatchee are the immediate area near our host stable. Surrounding towns are also about a 20-minute drive. Rentals can be found online at VRBO, Zillow, Realtor.com, AirBnB, and other similar sites. Many homes offer a private bedroom rental with shared amenities. Realtors in the area are also very accustomed to sourcing seasonal housing. We encourage you to be diligent about these decisions and ask for references. D4K does not assume any responsibility for housing issues, nor can we refund your money if housing does not work out as planned.

Rental fees within Wellington can range dramatically based on the housing details. Be prepared to see rates for a private room that shares a bath and other house amenities to start at approximately \$800-\$1,000 per month. A two bedroom/two bath type condo \$3,800 and up per month. Homes with 3 bedrooms, pool, 3 baths \$5,500 and up. These are very rough prices to give an idea, there is no guarantee these prices are available. More luxurious homes with extensive amenities can easily start at \$15,000 per month. Location, access to pool, tennis courts, clubhouse, and if a gated community all factor into rates.





How do I apply?

The application can be found on the Dressage4Kids website (www.dressage4kids.org) or by clicking [HERE](#)

When is the deadline for applications?

You may submit your application and video at any time. Participants are typically announced in mid-summer. Keep in mind the timing with regard to which winter session you are hoping to attend.

What are the fees?

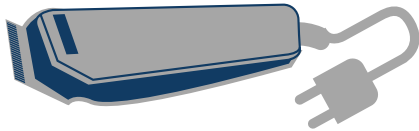
What do the fees cover? Program fees include your stall, hay, minimal amount of shavings, lessons, coaching at competitions and stable management supervision. The **2022 fees:** \$3,000 per month. It does not include items such as horse's grain, vet, farrier, transport, show fees, supplements and your living or food expenses. If selected, there is a payment schedule, please inquire for details.

Visit www.dressage4kids.org
for the most up-to-date information.



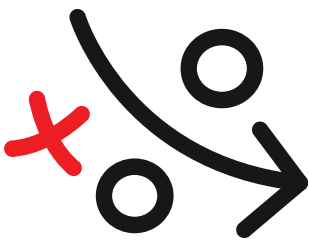
Should I clip my horse?

Yes, horses typically arrive already clipped. And, will often require another clipping during the program. If this is first time shipping across such drastic climate change, please talk with your shipper about how to dress your horse for the trip. Horses that originate in the cold areas and are already clipped will start with a blanket of some sort. The shipper will need to take off layers as the temperatures rise along the route. Be sure to discuss the best approach with all parties involved.



What if something happens and I can't come? (My horse is injured, I am injured/not able to ride, etc.)

Please contact D4K immediately to discuss your situation. Refund decisions are made based on each individual circumstance and often times if a replacement participant can be found.



What if something happens *during* the program and I can't ride? (My horse is injured, I am injured/not able to ride, etc.)

Lendon will do her best to help you continue in some fashion with the program. Sourcing another horse, sending your horse home, moving your horse elsewhere for continued care by you, allowing another rider to work your horse, etc. are all options under consideration for discussion. Lendon and the D4K team have experience with many unexpected situations and always handle with the utmost professionalism and empathy. Keep in mind that a tremendous amount can be gained from auditing lessons and attending lectures. You are expected to be present and involved to the best of your ability. And while there are many resources available though the D4K network, remember all expenses are your responsibility.



Will I be able to show/compete during the program?

Yes, well... maybe. We encourage you to make decisions about competing in conjunction with your training progress. If you want to show, there are several local schooling and recognized shows as well as CDIs during the season. Entering as a non-compete is also an option if you want to expose your horse to the showgrounds and school without showing in any classes. You will be responsible for your entries, expenses, and any trailering needed to the show. Most of the time another participant will have a trailer locally and may be willing to help. Lendon is also available to coach, you must coordinate the specifics with her and her schedule.



Is showing required?

No, it is completely optional. Many choose to focus on the training and the program and forego showing until they return home.

Schooling shows will be offered as part of your program fees. Judges will visit our stable and WIT will hold a private schooling show, typically a few times during the program. Your decision to show and which level will be discussed with Lendon in advance. Riders are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. Ribbons may or may not be presented but usually some fun prizes. All riders get a signed copy of their test to keep and review during lessons.



What should I do about school?

Participants and their families are responsible for all facets of continuing necessary schoolwork. Numerous tutoring services are available in Wellington and can be easily coordinated as needed. Off-site tutoring is often scheduled for Mondays. Dressage4Kids is not responsible for supervising schoolwork in any fashion. D4K will, however, provide you with a note verifying your involvement in the program. These details should be worked out on a case-by-case basis and be sure to give plenty of notice if you require any formal documentation. Schoolwork is a priority, Lendon and Dressage4Kids supports the importance of maintaining grades while in the WIT program. It is the participant's responsibility to plan around the WIT activities. If for some reason your schoolwork requires you to miss a lesson or activity, you must inform Lendon personally of the situation. Excusals are possible, but not encouraged.



Can I do homework at the stables?

Yes, there is WIFI and time during the day for participants to do some schoolwork at the stables. Keep in mind, you will need to adapt to your surroundings.



12 *WITees represented their Regions on the Junior and Young Rider Teams at the 2019 North American Youth Championships*

What should I expect as a parent (adult guardian)?

This will vary greatly based on the age and personality of your rider. And, based on the amount of time you will be in the area. If you are the primary source of transportation, you should expect to drop off in the morning and pick up in the afternoon. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to watch lessons. This may mean returning back to the stables midday at lesson time (for a total of three round trips per day).

Parents/guardians are discouraged from “hanging out” at the stables and lingering in the aisles, etc. during the day. Specific rules will be announced at the start of the program. Parents are also welcomed to attend the majority of lectures and off-site activities. Parents are not permitted to help with the daily responsibilities of the participants with regard to chores, horse care, etc.

The program is intended for the participants to fully immerse themselves in the day-to-day routines of ownership and care, irrespective of what your routine at home may be. Obviously exceptions are made for things the rider is not capable of or physically able to do, however, it is encouraged that they seek assistance and rely on fellow participants whenever possible instead of a parent. You may also expect to play a much greater role in your child’s schoolwork. Checking in that assignments are completed, maintaining any required communication (verbal and written) with the school/teachers, and ensuring supplies are always stocked in terms of feed, supplements, fly spray, etc.

The schedule will be very busy—you may also need to help keep your rider on time and organized with regard to activities. And, while it seems basic, perhaps some of the most important things parents do for riders of all ages is ensure they are eating regularly, getting the necessary nutrition, drinking plenty of fluids, and getting as much sleep as possible so they are rested.



The D4K family included 35 competitors at the 2020 Festival of Champions and Dressage Seat Medal Finals



What is Wellington like?

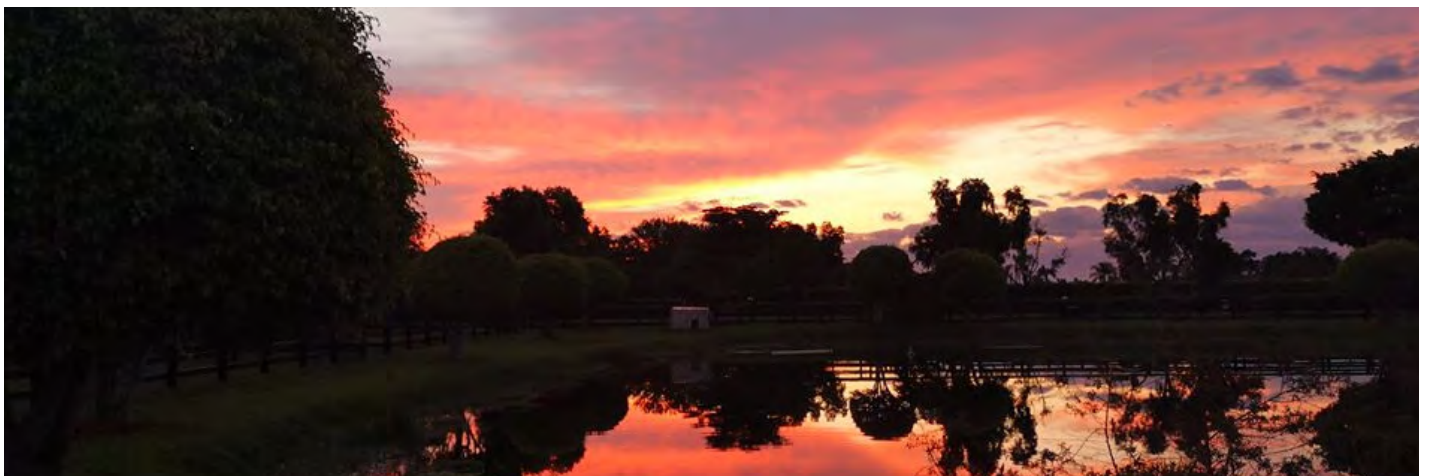


The first response here is usually “expensive”, but of course it depends on your normal. It’s not unusual to see your favorite brand bacon for \$12 a pack, and butter for \$6 a pound. Gas will be at the higher end of the spectrum for national prices. If you were to purchase your own bale of timothy and alfalfa mix it runs about \$17. Once you get past some of the sticker shock, it is an area synonymous with equestrian life.

Wellington is technically a village, about 25 minutes west of West Palm Beach. It is a year round home to many people but is best known for the seasonal population who come from all over the world to train and compete in dressage, polo, and jumping. Wellington has an abundance of traditional retail chain stores and restaurants, as well as several specialty and boutique businesses and services. It also offers a vast variety of restaurants.

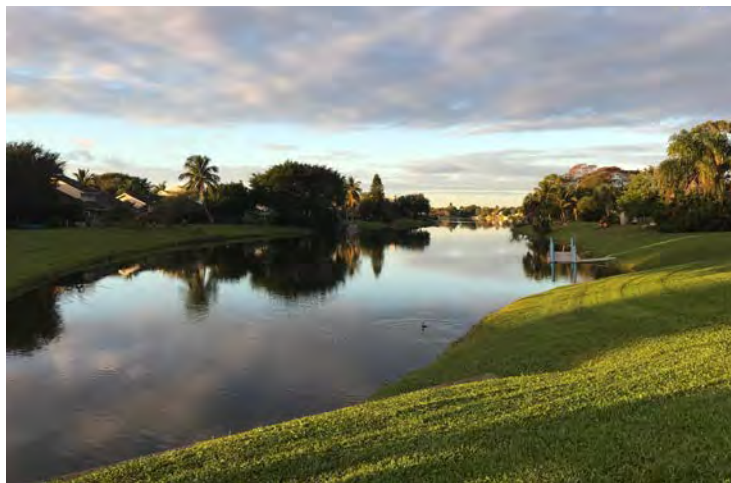


Within Wellington and immediate surrounding area, you will find many feed stores and tack stores as well. We have rarely heard of anything that was not available to our participants within the immediate vicinity of our stables. The Village is also a very easy 20-minute drive to public beaches.

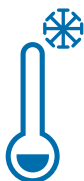
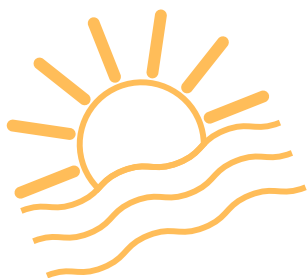


What's the weather?

January through March in Wellington is typically the best weather of the year. Cloud cover is minimum with daily highs in the mid-high 70's F and nights in the mid-high 50's F. This does not mean it doesn't get chilly. Parkas and "puffy coats" are needed at least a few times due to cold and windy conditions. The cooler evening can feel particularly cold if you like to be warm and especially if you have been in the sun all day. The days can also



get to the mid 80's and feel quite hot by the end of the program. Most sessions are fairly dry, but there have been a few very rainy and wet ones. Rain gear for rider (and possibly horse) should be available. The UV rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes, even with cloud cover. The UV index in Florida during the session may be much higher than what you are accustomed to at home. Be sure to cover up and use proper sunscreen for protection. Sunglasses, hats, long sleeve sun shirts, etc. are all encouraged for sun safety. Lessons continue rain or shine, and there is no cover overhead. Lessons will be cancelled or delayed if dangerous conditions exist such as lightening or heavy wind and rains.



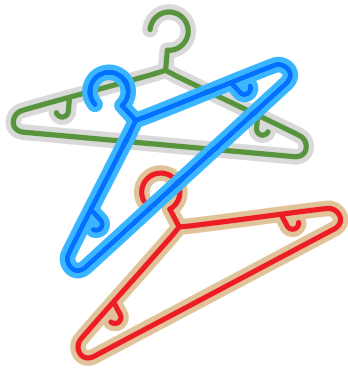
30%

of the 2019 Discover Dressage USEF/USDF Emerging Athlete Program Members are WIT participants

Can my trainer come?

Trainers are welcome to visit the program. We do ask that you give a courtesy heads up to Lendon and the stable manager so we know who to expect on the property and when. If you want to receive instruction from your regular trainer during the program, please see Lendon for details and permission waivers.





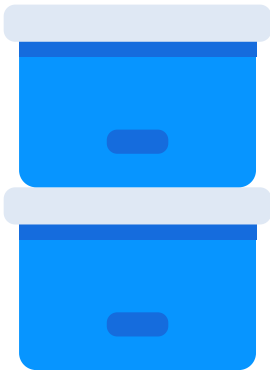
What should I wear?

Proper helmet, breeches, belt, collared shirt, and hair neatly pulled back or in a bun is required for your lessons. There may also be a specific dress code for events, such as matching D4K shirts (provided at the session). Proper clothing for daily fitness is also required—traditional exercise attire, proper sneakers, etc. When you are not riding, and there is no required dress code for a lecture or event, you may change into casual clothes (or your earlier fitness outfit) around the stables. Under NO circumstances will open toed shoes, sandals or inappropriate footwear be tolerated in the stables or while handling horses. Safety is a number one priority.



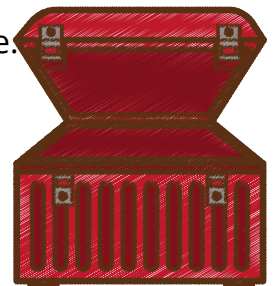
What should I bring for my horse?

A fairly comprehensive lists of things to consider while packing will be provided. However, requirements can vary greatly by horse. You should know, or find out, what your horse needs to be comfortable on a daily basis in full work. For certain you should have a fly sheet, fly mask, and fly spray. Your usual supplies for turnout boots, bell boots, etc. Liniment, bathing supplies, and any medication/first aid items you keep on hand. It often gets cool at least a few nights, so it is recommended that you bring a Back on Track or whatever you would use for temperatures in the high 40's. Keep in mind your horse will be clipped. Since storage space is at a premium, consider acquiring items locally as needed versus a three month stockpile.



Where will I store all my supplies at the stables?

The set up is organized and run by the stable manager for that session. The stable manager will announce guidelines and rules (approved by D4K) that she/he feels will create a successful environment. In general, participants can expect a set up that is very similar to stabling at an away show. Keep in mind, storage space is shared. There is usually a shared room dedicated to feed and supplements. You may be asked to use a specific size/shape container for your feed. It is recommended that any trunk or storage container is water tight if contents are required to stay dry. Shavings may be in bulk and banked or bagged. This will be determined at each session. All stalls have an exterior window, fly spray system, and fans. You should not plan to hang your own fan unless your horse has some special medical requirements. Personal fans must be approved in advance.



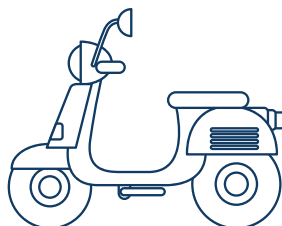


Do I need to worry about “failing out”?

The WIT program is a very supportive environment. Riders will vary in ages and level of riding. While there will be regular testing to ensure you are absorbing the material, both on and off the horse, you can't necessarily “fail”. You must show a commitment and continuous effort to improve. IF you choose not to participate as required, or show disregard for the testing, or become complacent/disruptive it is possible that you will be asked to leave the program.

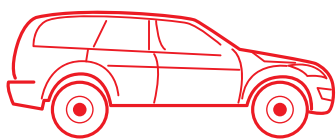
Do I need my own transportation?

Yes, you need your own car or your own transportation. Since ages vary in the program, many participants will not be of driving age, or may have a license with restrictions. If you are not old enough to drive, you should plan ahead for all your basic transportation, especially if you do not have a full-time parent with you. This includes getting to the stables in the morning, getting back home, and getting to night check at least once a week. Also keep in the mind the need to get groceries, shopping, tack/feed store, and other transportation necessities.



Should I bring my bike?

Yes, if you like to ride your bike. You may also keep a bike at the stables for use as your daily transportation if close enough to your house. We recommend you have a lock to secure when away from the stables.



If you have a license and a car and are permitted to drive others/minors, your help with group day trips is always appreciated. Sometimes we also ask for parent volunteers to drive. Carpooling to evening activities may also be needed from time to time.



What should I do about meals?

Participants are responsible for all of their own meals. The stables have a refrigerator and microwave dedicated to the WIT participants. Feel free to bring food and snacks and drinks. Please label everything and keep your belongings neat and tidy.



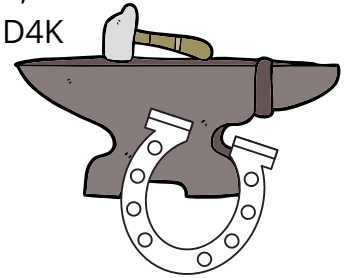


Does D4K have their own veterinarian?

No, participants are required to source a vet, schedule, and pay for services in accordance with payment terms. D4K can help with names and numbers of local veterinarians. Participants can also ask for referrals from past WITees.

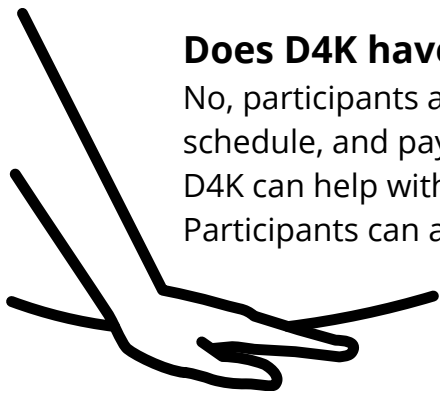
Does D4K have their own farrier?

No, participants are required to source a farrier, schedule, and pay for services in accordance with payment terms. D4K can help with names and numbers of local farriers. Participants can also ask for referrals from past WITees.



Does D4K have their own equine chiropractor?

No, participants are required to source a chiropractor, schedule, and pay for services in accordance with payment terms. D4K can help with names and numbers of local chiropractors. Participants can also ask for referrals from past WITees.



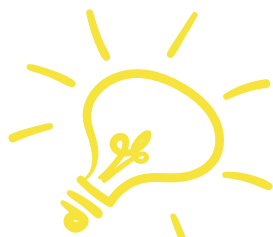
Does D4K have their own equine massage therapist?

No, participants are required to source a massage therapist, schedule, and pay for services in accordance with payment terms. D4K can help with names and numbers of local therapists. Participants can also ask for referrals from past WITees.



The Wellington area boasts some of the top equine professionals and facilities in the country. Search online to become better familiar with the available services before you arrive.

HELPFUL HINTS



- Florida has very strict laws about horses crossing into the state. A Health Certificate is required. Be sure to talk with your veterinarian well in advance about documentation and to ensure your horse is up to date on required vaccines.
- Contact your school as soon as possible to see if they are willing to work with you regarding an extended absence.
- When searching for housing, note that many online listings are for annual leases and are NOT furnished. Pay close attention to the minimum rental period. You may have to call to get these specific details.
- Consensus over the years suggests that staying within a 10-minute drive to the stable is ideal. This also puts you in close proximity to the dressage and jumper showgrounds. This is recommended such that your daily drive to drop off/pick up and watch lessons is manageable; the drive time to evening activities (almost always within the Wellington area) is also minimal. This will allow more time to run back and shower/change, grab the forgotten lunch, deliver the correct polo shirt for the field trip, and be in the vicinity when riders meet up for ice cream, a movies, or other things on their personal time.
- Driving conditions- once inside the Village of Wellington there is rarely any traffic to report. There will be delays during school hours for crossing guards, buses, and school line pick up and drop off areas. The area drivers can be a bit precarious at times. The village has thousands of drivers descend on the roads from all over the world. Driving style and competencies vary greatly. It is a good idea to be a very alert driver and accustomed to being extremely conscious of your surroundings.
- Check with your horse insurance carrier regarding the extended stay off of your primary property where the horse is normally stabled and coverage impact.
- The damp ground and humidity can pose unique challenges for horses, particularly their feet and legs. Instruction will be given early on during the program advising riders what to look for, how to protect, and how to treat some common conditions in the Florida climate.
- To take advantage of all that WIT has to offer, you will be best served if your horse and you are in fit condition. Horses should be ready to work 5 days a week and you should be fit to be able ride that often and participate in daily fitness classes (tailored to each person's ability).
- This is a very hands-on program where everyone is expected to share in the chores. If you are not accustomed to, or feel you should not be required to: sweep, muck, clean, even scrub a toilet, then this might not be the right program for you.





Summary

Thank you for taking the time to explore the Dressage4Kids Winter Intensive Training Program. It's likely impossible to cover every aspect of the program and all the potential questions. This document was created as a guide and hopefully answers many of your questions--those you had and those you didn't even think of. We encourage you to talk with other WITees and their parents or guardians to get a better sense of this fantastic experience.

From meeting Olympians to holding their Olympic medal, from learning ringside from an FEI judge to getting pointers from the 'go to' Grand Prix freestyle master, and expanding overall knowledge of proper horse care and training--WIT delivers. The specifics of each session varies but you can count on D4K and its supporters to go above and beyond for these enthusiastic, passionate young riders.

Each session concludes with a dinner celebration where participants are presented with their certificates...but things never end there.

The program creates friendships that last for life. Our WITees from coast to coast are still in touch and meeting up whenever possible. Each session an Alumni dinner party is hosted in Wellington by Lendon for all WITees who can attend. Everyone gives an informal update of what they are doing and many rounds of applause ring out for the successes over the past year.



This amazing opportunity is available thanks to the dedication of Lendon Gray and the entire Dressage4Kids team of volunteers and supporters.



Frequently used addresses:

Global Dressage Festival
13500 S Shore Blvd.
Wellington, FL 33414

Winter Equestrian Festival
Palm Beach International Equestrian Center
3400 Equestrian Club Drive
Wellington, FL 33414

