



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Date 9/16/2026

Contact Information

Organization Name: Thorncroft Equestrian Center, Inc.
Address: 190 Line Road, Malvern, PA 19355
Phone: 610-644-1963
Website: www.thorncroft.org
Year Incorporated: 1983
FEIN: 23-2218431

ED/CEO Name: Tiffany Meyer
ED/CEO E-mail: Tiffany@thorncroft.org
Board Chair Name: Andrew Goodman
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒
Primary Contact Name: Carolyn Mayo
Primary Contact E-mail: Carolyn@thorncroft.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☐	Arts, Culture, Heritage	☒	Education, Library	☐	Environment, Animals
☐	Health	☐	Human Services	☐	Social Justice, Civic Engagement
☐	Religion	☐	If other, please describe:		

Mission: Thorncroft's mission is to develop the physical and emotional well-being of all people regardless of their individual challenges. We are committed to personal growth and education in an equestrian environment of respect, love, and inclusion.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): All of Chester County and surrounding areas.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. (Include Chester County # &/or % served.)

Thorncroft serves approximately 183 adults and children from Chester County and surrounding areas every week. More than 55% of participants have a diagnosed special need, including cognitive, emotional, and physical disabilities.

Annual Budget \$ <u>1,639,575</u>	<u>14</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>62.59</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>14</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>27.18</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>120</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>10.22</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>13,000</u> # of Volunteer Hours
100% = total	

Top 3-5 funding sources:

- Rider Fees
- Markar
- West Pharmaceutical
- Foxwynd Foundation

This grant proposal is for: X Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or Capacity Building

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

☐	Contingency Planning	☐	Partnerships, Collaborations	☐	Merger, Closure
☐	Mission, Vision, Strategy	☐	Board Engagement & Leadership	☐	Marketing, Communication

☐	Resource Development	☐	Operations	☐	Technology
☐	If other, please describe:				

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 10,000

Proposal Summary: *(a few sentences, please)*

Thorncroft Equestrian Center respectfully requests \$10,000 in general operating and direct-service support to sustain accessible Adaptive/Therapeutic Horsemanship programming for children and adults with disabilities and other challenges throughout Chester County and the surrounding region. Funding will help bridge the gap between the \$62.50 participant lesson fee and the true cost of individualized programming, while supporting qualified instructors, adaptive equipment, safe and accessible facilities, trained volunteers, and the specialized equine partners essential to every participant experience. Thorncroft also provides approximately \$93,480 annually in scholarships and financial assistance. As Thorncroft cares for an aging herd while preparing the next generation of program horses, CCCF support will help protect program quality, safety, continuity, and access.



Thorncroft Equestrian Center
Chester County Community Foundation FY26 Grant Proposal
Request: \$10,000

Proposal Summary

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Grant Proposal Narrative

1. Overall Aims, Key Initiatives, Achievements & Distinctiveness

Established in 1969, Thorncroft Equestrian Center has been a leader in adaptive and therapeutic horsemanship, traditional riding instruction, veterans programming, inclusive educational opportunities, and equine-assisted activities for children and adults of all abilities. Thorncroft's mission is to develop the physical and emotional well-being of all people, regardless of their individual challenges. We are committed to personal growth and education in an equestrian environment of respect, love, and inclusion.

Thorncroft is a Premier Accredited Center with PATH International, reflecting rigorous standards for safety, program quality, professional practice, and equine care. A defining feature of Thorncroft is its inclusive model: people with and without diagnosed disabilities participate as members of the same equestrian community, creating opportunities for skill development, friendship, confidence, mutual understanding, and a sense of belonging.

Thorncroft serves 300 individuals annually and approximately 183 riders each week; 50% (90 participants) were Chester County residents; 55% of weekly riders had a diagnosed special need. An extraordinary volunteer community strengthens the work. In the first six months of 2026 alone, volunteers contributed 7,386.5 hours, assisting participants, supporting horses, maintaining the Farm, and helping deliver safe, individualized programming.

Thorncroft provides a continuum of mounted and unmounted opportunities. Weekly mounted lessons offer private, semi-private, and group instruction tailored to individual needs and goals. Pony Tales provides an unmounted pathway through grooming, groundwork, and equine-assisted activities. The Adult Horsemanship Program gives adults with intellectual and developmental differences opportunities to build skills, responsibility, independence, self-worth, and social connection. Thorncroft also has a longstanding commitment to veterans and first responders through horsemanship and equine-assisted activities focused on communication, emotional awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and stress resilience.

2. Funding Request: Sustaining Access, Quality & Program Continuity

Thorncroft respectfully requests \$10,000 from the Chester County Community Foundation to help sustain access to high-quality Adaptive/Therapeutic Horsemanship programming for children and adults with disabilities and other challenges. Demand for individualized, inclusive services remains strong, yet delivering them is resource-intensive. The true cost extends well beyond instructional time in the arena: it includes qualified instructors and program staff, specialized and adaptive equipment, safe and accessible facilities, volunteer recruitment and training, and the operational infrastructure required to maintain PATH International standards.

It also includes one of Thorncroft's most important resources: its horses. Adaptive and therapeutic horsemanship requires equine partners with exceptional temperaments, soundness, training, patience, and the ability to respond safely to participants with a wide range of physical, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional needs. Suitable horses must be carefully identified, evaluated, conditioned, trained, and integrated into programming.

This need is particularly important now. Many members of Thorncroft's current herd have spent years providing safe, patient, highly specialized support to participants. As these horses age, Thorncroft has a dual responsibility: to provide exceptional lifelong care to the horses that have served the community and to prepare the next generation of equine partners. Thorncroft invests approximately \$17,000 annually in the care of each program horse, with total annual herd costs of \$509,591 for its 30 horses. Feed, veterinary and dental care, farrier services, medications, conditioning, and specialized training continue throughout a horse's life, even as its workload is reduced or it retires. At the same time, Thorncroft must continually plan and invest in appropriate new equine partners so programs remain safe, effective, and available.

Despite these costs, Thorncroft remains committed to keeping its programs accessible. Participants are charged \$62.50 per lesson, while the actual cost to Thorncroft is approximately \$87 in direct expenses and \$110 when direct and overhead expenses are included. Even before overhead, participant fees cover only about 72 percent of the cost of providing a lesson. Thorncroft also provides approximately \$93,480 annually in scholarships and financial assistance, benefiting at least 100 participants, according to a conservative estimate. A \$10,000 CCCF grant will help bridge the gap between the true cost of specialized services and what participants and families can reasonably be asked to bear. The grant will provide flexible support for the interconnected resources that make the work possible: people, horses, facilities, volunteers, and financial accessibility.

Ultimately, this investment is an investment in people. For one participant, progress may mean greater balance, strength, or coordination. For another, it may mean communicating more effectively, independently completing a horsemanship task, building a trusting relationship with a horse, participating successfully alongside peers, or finding the confidence to attempt something once thought impossible. Skills developed through horsemanship, including confidence, perseverance, communication, responsibility, self-regulation, social connection, and independence, can carry into family life, school, work, and the broader community.

Results & Impact

Because every participant comes to Thorncroft with different abilities, challenges, and goals, progress is highly individualized. For therapeutic riding students, instructors establish individual goals and document progress quarterly. Documentation may include a standardized quarterly progress form or an instructor narrative describing goals, progress, and objectives being addressed. As participants progress, instructors may increase the level of challenge or establish more advanced goals, creating an individualized record of growth over time. Thorncroft currently evaluates outcomes primarily through qualitative instructor documentation rather than standardized aggregate measures and is exploring ways to strengthen the consistency and collection of participant data so individual progress can increasingly inform broader program evaluation while preserving the individualized nature of each participant's experience.

For more than five decades, Thorncroft has demonstrated what becomes possible when people are given an environment in which their abilities are recognized, their challenges do not define them, and their potential is nurtured. With a \$10,000 grant, the Chester County Community Foundation will help ensure that children and adults throughout our community continue to have access to that environment - one where barriers are reduced, possibilities expand, and the partnership between people and horses creates opportunities to learn, grow, connect, and belong.