IN THE IRONS RIDING ACADEMY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

www.intheironsequestriancenter.com

WELCOME

Our Pledge:

In The Irons offers a high-quality equestrian learning experience for all ages and abilities. Certified and experienced trainers will help your rider reach all their equine goals. We operate in a professional manner with safety being our first concern. Professionally trained lesson horses will be available for all skill levels to help our riders gain confidence and make progress.

Our program is a multi-faceted learning experience. We combine riding with learning horsemanship skills and horse psychology to better understand the "why" instead of just the "how". Our program is an immersive, informational journey which turns out not just brilliant riders, but informed and educated "horsemen" who are keenly aware of their horse's needs.

MEET OUR TEAM

Jill Ammann

Owner/Founder/Trainer/Instructor

jillammann@gmail.com

Jill has spent the last 21 years training, teaching and showing dressage. She competed successfully on several different horses through 3rd level Dressage, but her main focus has always been her students. Over the years she and her students, both children and adults have attended countless shows from Texas to New Mexico and Arizona and have won numerous Regional and National titles.

Jill recently formed the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization H.A.L.O. (Horse Assisted Learning Organization) which offers mentorship and vocational programs to foster and adopted children. (For more information about H.A.L.O. or to get involved, visit www.halotx.com.) Jill's training/teaching ambitions are refocused on Arabian Sport Horse and Dressage. It was her love of the Arabian horse which originally propelled her passion for horses and led her to become a horse trainer. Jill is accepting new students who are interested in a journey into the world of Arabian and Half-Arabian Sport Horse and Dressage. Your horse or hers.

Elizabeth Gonzalez

Instructor

ergonzalez194@outlook.com

Elizabeth has been riding since the age of 5 years old! With experience in mainly English styles, she has also explored western horsemanship and reining. She has a degree in Equine science and competed in both English and western on her university IHSA team, making it as far as regionals every season she competed.

Since graduating her focus has returned to the English disciplines. She gives lessons in both dressage and hunter styles. Her passion is in teaching students how to use their bodies and muscles to build strength, confidence, and kind communication to the horse. Elizabeth's goal for all her students is to build them up to be independent and knowledgeable horse people both in and out of the saddle!

Ashley Willis

Instructor

awmt16@gmail.com

Ashley started riding in grade school. Although her family wasn't able to afford a horse, Ashley begged and pleaded for lessons and worked and rode at every barn in the San Antonio area that would let her in the door to work off her lessons.

At 18 years old she took over her first riding program, and has taught lessons in many disciplines, training riders to multiple championships.

Ashley has ridden Saddleseat, western, hunters, gaited horses, o-MOK-see, and worked with horses competing in a variety of disciplines from race horses to show jumpers to reining. She has her associates in early childhood education and spent many years working with young children alongside coaching and training equestrians.

Ashley firmly believes in life-long learning, being a good horseman and champion of horses. Whether you are a young horse crazy kiddo starting out or experienced rider looking to dial-in specific skills, Ashley has over 20 years of experience coaching and training to help you on your journey.

Anna Hobson

Hunter-Jumper Instructor

IEA Team Coach

akhobson01@gmail.com

Meet our new IEA Team Coach and Hunter/Jumper instructor, Anna. Anna, a lifelong equestrian, grew up in the Houston Area and spent her formative years showing horses at local shows and was a member of the Greater Houston Hunter Jumper Association.

Anna will take the reins of our Interscholastic Equestrian Association middle and high school teams at In The Irons. Anna was herself a member of her high school IEA team. Her experience with the showing format will be a benefit to our riders.

Anna is currently completing her last semester of college and will graduate in May 2023 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Anna's specific interests in psychology include child development and mental health, so she loves to apply what she's learned in school to her lessons.

Anna's lessons are lighthearted, upbeat and are enjoyed by children and adults alike. Her goal is to create confident, independent riders.

Cierra Riddle

Instructor

cierrariddle2024@gmail.com

Cierra has always had a passion for horses and children. She has ridden for many years and grew up on a horse farm where she helped with daily chores and care of several horses.

She has ridden hunter-jumper, dressage, western and on the trails.

She is excellent with young beginners, patiently helping them to learn the fundamentals. Cierra incorporates games and other activities into her lessons that are as educational as they are fun. Kids are learning the basics while having a great time!

Presley Zamponi

Instructor

presleyzday@gmail.com

Presley Zamponi started her riding journey in 2016 right here at In The Irons. It was here that she found her passion for dressage. Presley went on to show at third/fourth level before deciding to take a year to try 3-day-eventing.

Presley is amazing with beginners, especially children. Because of her experience and formal riding education she is also a very appropriate instructor for more experienced riders.

Presley currently attends Boerne High School and plans to continue follow an equestrian career path in the future.

LESSON PROGRAM

Signing up for lessons at In The Irons marks the beginning of an exhilarating journey into the world of horses.
We have a proven curriculum that takes the rider, step-by-step, through the process of learning to ride skillfully, while learning the importance of safe practices and appreciation of the relationship between horse and rider.

> “to build confidence and character...”

LEVEL UP RIDING PROGRAM

A comprehensive learning system for mastery of riding and care of the horse.

IN THE IRONS ACADEMY LEARNING LEVELS

RAINBOW LEVEL
All new students start here. Provides a solid foundation from first ride to first trots. Teaches basic riding and horse care with assistance.

RED LEVEL
Mastery of skills at the walk through learning the rhythm of posting trot Introduction to horse care and beginning theory. Can demonstrate skills on at least 3 different lesson horses .

YELLOW LEVEL
Competency of the trot, both posting and sitting Introduction to riding maneuver based patterns. Pre-jumping exercises (ground poles) and Dressage Intro A Test. Horsemanship skills suitable for beginning shows or partial horse leases.

BLUE LEVEL
Beginning and intermediate cross rails and practicing Dressage Intro - Training Level, Test 1. Beginning jump courses or speed patterns USDF Introductory or WDAA Basic Tests Horsemanship skills ready to look at owning first horse.

ORANGE LEVEL
Intermediate cantering jump courses up to 2'. Dressage Training Level. Learning how to gather a horse to work back to front. Comfortably ready to compete in schooling-open shows. Horsemanship skills: ready to own or manage a horse.

PURPLE LEVEL
For dedicated equestrians eager to move past the basics and develop intermediate skills. It introduces more challenging flatwork exercises and prioritizes fitness of the rider in both dressage and jumping positions. Students begin to study different facets of equine management in depth.

TEAL LEVEL
Interduction to more sophisticated dressage techniques and training philosophy, and develops strong jumping skills in a variety of settings. Students will be prepared to pursue equine higher learning or work in the horse industry.

WHY A LEVELED PROGRAM?

- It gives students **clear, achievable milestones**.
- It gives instructors, students and parents a way to **measure achievement outside of the show ring**.
- **Students who aren't able to ride** can still have unmounted learning goals and rewards.
- It encourages students to devote time to **fundamentals, flatwork, and their unmounted education**, all of which can be lost in the excitement of jumping and competing.
- Students learning in a group setting easily form bonds with other students and **encourage each other to learn**.
- It helps both students and parents understand **requirements for advancement**.

2020 IEA Team

LEVEL UP

HOW DOES IT WORK?

When your child begins the Level Up program at In The Irons they will first be assessed as to which level they should start off in. This program builds upon skills progressively, so it is important that the skills at each level are learned and can be easily demonstrated before moving to the next level.

Each student will receive a study guide for the level they are in. The study guide will contain a checklist of the objectives they need to achieve and lots of information about the skills they will be working toward acquiring.

We have a large progression board in the barn. Each student has a name tag on the wall. Upon successfully demonstrating each objective, the student will be awarded the accompanying ribbon and certificate and move their name tag to the next level on the progression board. If the parents do not object, their child will also be featured in a social media post to congratulate them on their accomplishment!

Lesson Policies:

Lessons at In The Irons run in 6-week semesters. Riders will have a consistent, weekly day/time for their lesson which cannot be changed until the end of the semester. You may make changes for the next semester at any time, but they will only come into effect at the beginning of the next semester.
If you are out of town or have a conflict, makeup lessons can be done anytime within the semester, provided you followed the cancellation policy listed below. Unused lessons do not roll over into the next semester, all unused lessons expire at the end of the current 6-week semester.

Lesson Types:

- Little People: Ages 3-6 only. Riders will have a 30-minute private lesson, approximately 20 minutes of riding time, and 10 minutes of grooming/horse care.
- Little People Semi-Private: By invitation only; limited availability. 30-minute lesson with 2 students. Working on guiding and building group skills for more advanced groups.
- Semi- private lesson 45 minute lesson with 2 riders.
- Private Lesson: Ages 7+. 45 or 60 minutes. These lessons are reserved for intermediate to advanced riders looking to polish skills and prepare for competition and for beginning riders who are not able to safely maneuver in a group setting. For beginning riders, time to learn about the equipment and tack up the horse is included in this time. Intermediate/Advanced riders should arrive early to prepare their horse so they can spend the entire time riding.
- Group Lesson: These are groups of 3-6 riders that are grouped based on ability and age. Lessons are 1 hour long with 15 minutes of grooming and tacking built into the lesson. Riders will learn how to perform basic maneuvers at the walk, trot, and canter and work in a group setting. We also offer special adult-only groups.

Lesson Payment Plan:

Payment for the semester will be charged to a debit or credit card kept on file by our third-party processor on the first day of a new semester. Or, you may pay by check no later than the first day of the new semester. (Similar to a gym membership or dance/gymnastics/karate tuition plans).
Riders will still have the option to pay per lesson at the individual rate but will not be guaranteed the same time spot. Individual lessons will be booked no more than 7 days in advance so there are openings for make-up lessons for the semester plan group.
If you wish to stop payment on the pre-payment plan please send a cancellation notice via email [jillammann@gmail.com] at least 5 days prior to the first day of the new semester.

Cancellation Policy

- Cancellations will require a 24-hour notice to be eligible for a make-up lesson. Lessons canceled without a 24-hour notice will not be eligible for a make-up. All cancellations must be emailed to intheironsappointments@gmail.com. Facebook messages, Instagram messages, texts, or calls to individual instructors, etc. are not accepted as cancellation notices.
- Riders who are purchasing lessons individually (as opposed to the semester plan) will be booked no more than 7 days in advance and must have a card on file to be charged on the day of the lesson, prior to the lesson beginning.
- Riders on the semester plan must attend at least 4 (8 when taking 2 lessons per week) of their regularly scheduled lessons to hold that spot on the schedule. Please plan ahead when choosing your rider's time to ensure that you can make that lesson day/time work.
- If you do need to do a makeup lesson, please be aware that there may be limited times available. Joining already scheduled group lessons is encouraged for make-ups as finding an individual time may require some flexibility in your schedule.

Riding Attire:
All riders are expected to come to lessons in proper riding apparel. This equipment helps to keep your rider safe as well as comfortable during lessons. Riders just beginning need to come in close-toed shoes and long pants (no shorts or capris, pants must touch the shoes. No jeans with "bling" on the back pockets as they scratch our saddles.) Once a rider has completed their first semester of lessons, they are required to have the following items.

● Helmet: Once you have decided to join our program you will want your own helmet. We recommend Ovation Schooler Deluxe or similar. These are adjustable and will last most riders for several years if properly cared for. If purchased in black, this helmet can also be used for showing. Please do not purchase used helmets. There is no way to know if that helmet has sustained falls or been improperly cared for and will not meet safety standards.
● Paddock Boots/Half Chaps: Black boots that come up to the ankle. Can be zip up, laced, or pull on. Half-chaps are *highly encouraged as they will stabilize the rider's leg and make the learning process much easier for them and more comfortable for the horse. (Fewer legs sliding forward, fewer riders pulling on reins to post.) *Cowboy boots are not allowed as they decrease the rider's ankle flexibility and can get caught on the saddle.
● Breeches or tights: These pants fit close through the hip, thigh, and knee. They will have a suede or grippy patch on the knee area. Tan breeches are traditional for showing jumping disciplines and white breeches are worn for dressage shows (however, white breeches are not encouraged for lessons).
In The Irons Tack stocks boots, half-chaps, tights, breeches, and helmets at reasonable prices.
● Shirts: No Spaghetti straps or tank tops. We recommend a well-fitting polo or other collared shirts that allow the instructor to see the rider's form.
● During the winter months riders need to show up dressed for the weather. This means thick multiple layers on top (a rider's core often gets hot while riding, please send them in zip-up layers that can be removed mid-lesson if necessary), and gloves.
● Riders with long hair need to have it pulled back neatly in a <u>low</u> ponytail or braid, hairstyles set up higher on the head will prevent your helmet from fitting properly and will need to be redone before riding.
● No large or dangling jewelry.
Riders who show up in attire that does not meet the requirements listed above will be given a warning and the next time they will not ride; there will be no refunds or make-ups for this lesson.
Please clearly label your rider's equipment, we have many riders all with the same equipment, and in the event it gets lost or misplaced we want to be sure to get it back to the correct owner.

<u>Expectations: Riders</u>
It is expected that riders will arrive early to lessons (if they have been approved to tack on their own), in proper attire. Lesson time spent changing boots, putting on and adjusting helmets, doing hair, etc. means less riding time. Riders are expected to come to lessons with a willing attitude, good sportsmanship, and showing respect for all In The Irons staff and horses. Riders who talk back, do not follow directions, are disruptive to the group, mishandle the horses, etc., will be asked to dismount and leave the lesson without a refund. Riders are expected to care for all equipment properly (see below).
Riders are not allowed to pick and choose what horses they ride, there will be times when they will ride a horse they think is "harder", but they need to use this opportunity to appreciate the new skill this horse is teaching them and rise to the challenge. This is all a necessary part of growing as a rider.

Expectations: Parents

Provide a positive role model through their own actions to make sure their child has the best equestrian experience possible. Let your instructor be 100% responsible for the coaching of your child. A necessary part of riding is learning to problem solve in a safe group environment and remembering to work on tasks given to them. Parents and all guests are asked to refrain from talking to riders during lessons. Please move any loud or lengthy conversations out of earshot of the arena. Riding will often push your child out of their comfort zone, allow them this time to work through any issues to make progress. Riders are to work independently in the grooming areas. Riders who are more confident on the ground will be more confident in the saddle. Riders will also learn about the equipment needed, how to properly use it, and time management skills while doing the groundwork.

● All lessons (including make ups) must be completed within the month they are purchased. There will be no rollover for unused lessons. If you know you will be going out of town, please plan ahead and do your makeup prior to leaving. Any lesson cancelled by In The Irons is always eligible for a make-up. Please familiarize yourself with our severe weather policy and be sure to check both email and the In The Irons Facebook or Instagram pages for updates.

Lesson Rates:

As with any sport the more you practice the better you will become! Riders who are riding multiple times a week will gain an increase in confidence, retention of information, and muscle strength and toning.

Lesson Type	Monthly (4 or 8 lessons)	Single Lesson
Private Lessons 45 min. (1x/week)	$270 per month	$80 each
Private Lessons 45 min. (2x/week)	$500 per month	$75 each
Private Lessons 60 min. (1x/week)	$290 per month	$90 each
Private Lessons 60 min. (2x/week)	$540 per month	$85 each
Semi-Private Lessons (1x/week)	$250 per month	$75 each
Semi-Private Lessons (2x/week)	$460 per month	$70 each
Group Lessons (1x/week)	$230 per month	$65 each
Group Lessons (2x/week)	$420 per month	$60 each
IEA Lesson Package (Group IEA + Private Weekly)	$460 per month	$70 each
One Private + One Group Lesson Weekly	$460 per month	$75 private + $65 group
Little People Lessons 30 min (1x/week)	$210 per month	$65 each
Little People Lessons 30 min (2x/week)	$380 per month	$60 each

Severe Weather:
In the event of rain or excessive cold/heat, lessons will continue as usual. The rider will take advantage of the time to learn more about horsemanship. This will also serve as a great time to work on the Level-Up objectives! The horsemanship part of our Level Up program contains approximately half the objectives necessary to master the level. Level Up clinics are held at least once a month for anyone needing extra help with horsemanship objectives, or those who are interested in expanding their knowledge about horses, horse care, horse psychology, etc.

- Tornado Warning: Lessons are automatically canceled.
- Excessive Heat: Horses and riders can become susceptible to heat stroke and other heat-related illnesses. We will attempt to move lessons to cooler parts of the day to avoid this risk.
- Excessive Cold: Occasionally it can become too cold for the horses to safely exercise, these days are not frequent. Riders should come dressed for the weather.
- Ice/Snow: In the event riders and instructors cannot safely travel to and from the barn or there are road closures, lessons will be rescheduled. We will follow the Boerne ISD policies for closures.

Equipment Usage and Storage
In The Irons will provide all necessary equipment for our lesson horses and riders including brushes, saddles, pads, girths, and bridles. It is the job of the rider to make sure these items are put back correctly after they have used them.
Riders who leave items out or put them back incorrectly will be required to help clean the equipment at their next lesson.

Updates:
Email is our main way of communication, please ensure that you have provided an email that is checked regularly when you fill out the online waiver.

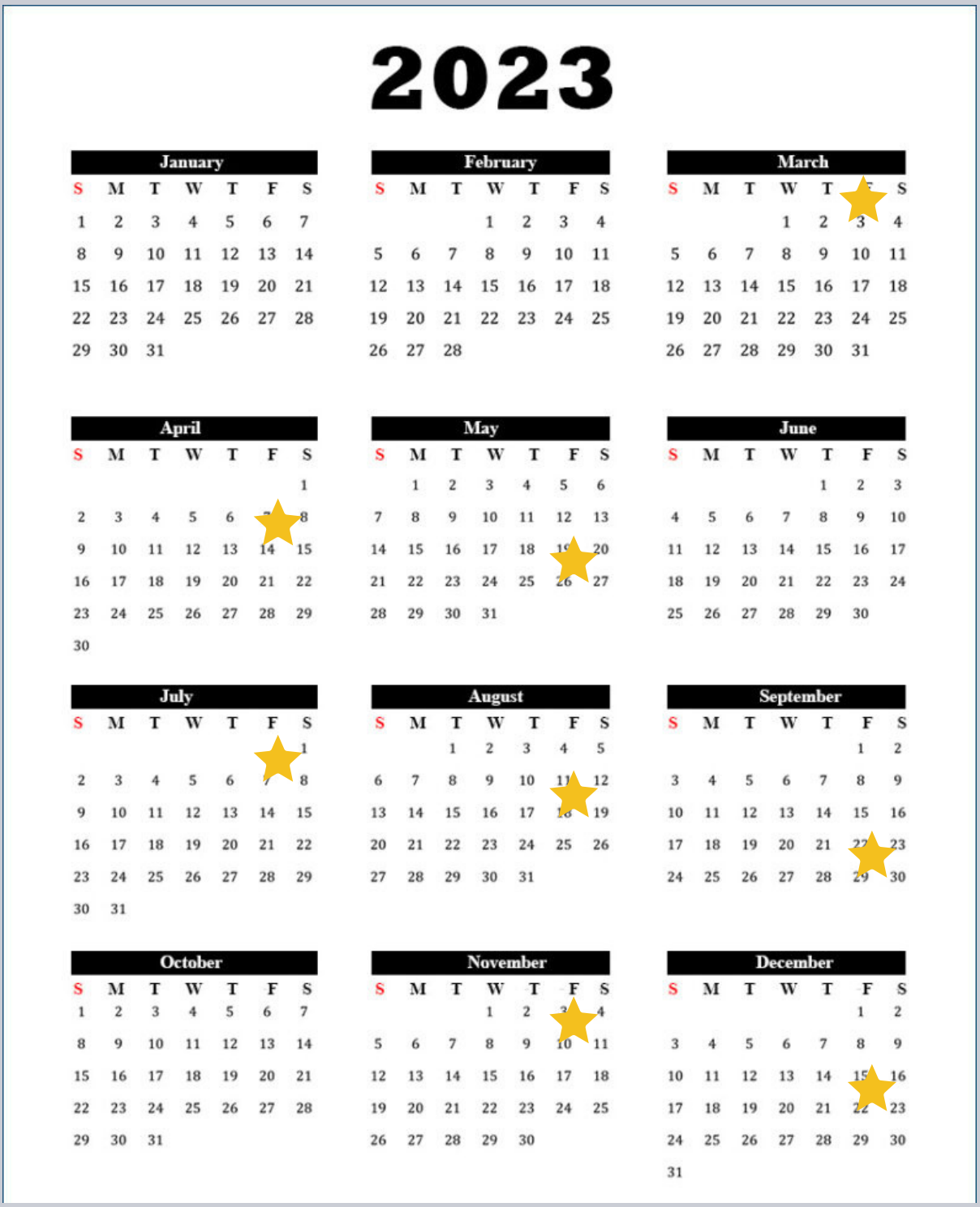
Showing:
We offer a unique showing experience for riders of all levels, no horse purchase necessary! Having the opportunity to show allows riders to have an end goal and work to improve their skills. All riders are strongly encouraged to participate in some level of showing.
In The Irons has its own, onsite horse shows with real judges and awards. Our shows are reasonably priced and are a great way to begin horse showing in a relaxed environment.

Helper Program:
Riders who are 12+ years of age and are approved by their instructor will have the opportunity to join our intern program. These riders will help keep the barn running smoothly during lesson times by helping students to bring their horses in or take them back to their paddocks, helping students tack up correctly, assisting with lessons, and general barn chores. These riders will also have the opportunity to assist with summer camps, horse shows and birthday parties and can earn additional riding time in exchange for their efforts. Please ask your instructor for more details.

IEA Team: In The Irons offers IEA Hunt Seat teams for riders in 4-12 grade. The Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA) is a nonprofit organization that gives youth in grades 4-12 the opportunity to compete in team and individual equestrian competition without the financial burden of owning a horse.

Students have the opportunity to earn scholarships toward their college education through awards in competition and through sportsmanship activities. Please request an IEA Team Handbook. *Team membership requires one team lesson and one private lesson per week.

SEMESTER CALENDAR



2023

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A note from the owner of In The Irons:

Thank you for your interest in our program!

I have been a dressage instructor, trainer, and rider for over 20 years. I have taught hundreds of children to ride and I've owned dozens of show and lesson horses. The students and horses of In The Irons are my lifework. The institution of a program that includes riding and horsemanship has been a personal quest for years. So, I'm thrilled to finally launch this new format for In The Irons.

It is so important for students to really understand horses. To spend some time learning how they think and feel, and what motivates them. To know the importance of establishing a relationship based on trust. And, to learn to take care of them correctly, with empathy and respect. A student who understands all these things will always be the most effective rider.

I hope you will see the tremendous value in our Level Up program. In order to be an educated, successful rider, one must learn not just the "how", but the "why"! It is this element that makes all the difference.

Thank You!

-Jill Ammann

Our mission is to offer an outstanding experience in a peaceful, family atmosphere. Please stop by the office or reach out to me anytime with any comments or concerns.

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jillammann@gmail.com