

# How to Bring Girls on the Run<sup>®</sup> to Your Location

The Girls on the Run of Cincinnati, Inc. (GOTR) program is supported by:



# How to Become a Local GOTR Site:

## **About Girls on the Run**

GOTR is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to helping girls stay out of the “girl box.” This nationally-successful program for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade girls is designed to educate and prepare them for a lifetime of self respect and healthy living. The program’s goal is to reduce at-risk behaviors (including eating disorders, depression/suicide and substance abuse) by providing each girl with the tools and encouragement she needs to make healthy decisions and form healthy self-images. The lessons are taught through the use of running/walking games and workouts, gradually building each girl’s endurance towards a common goal of completing a 5k. The program is noncompetitive and focuses on the cooperation and teamwork of all the girls. First started in 1996 with 13 girls in Charlotte, Girls on the Run International has helped over 50,000 young girls across 140 cities in the United States and Canada. [An independent evaluation of the Girls on the Run program found statistically significant improvements in the girls’ self-esteem, body size satisfaction and eating attitudes/behaviors after completion of the program.](#) Girls on the Run of Cincinnati is an independent non-profit dedicated to providing this proven program to the girls of the greater Cincinnati area including Hamilton, Warren, Clermont and Butler counties in Ohio and Campbell, Kenton and Boone counties in Northern Kentucky.

## **Potential Sites**

GOTR partners with local schools, parks, recreation centers and YMCA’s to offer our program in a variety of locations in an effort to reach as many girls as possible.

## **Site Involvement**

Girls on the Run of Cincinnati will provide almost everything needed to run the program. However, the site will need to commit to:

1. Provide a contact person at the site to coordinate with GOTR of Cincinnati. This can be a staff member, teacher, principal, PTA president, parent and/or interested member of that particular community
2. Provide a safe place for running. This does not have to be a track. A field is fine. However, we recommend a distance of 1/4 or 1/5 mile.
3. Provide an inside rain site preferably where running can occur (gym, hallways, etc.)
4. Choose two days a week to meet for one hour each
5. Distribute registration forms to all girls in age group
6. Arrange a time/place for a Girls on the Run<sup>®</sup> representative to meet with the girls and/or parents prior to registration to answer questions, encourage registration, etc.
7. Provide a space for the end of season potluck banquet (cafeteria, gym, etc.)
8. Provide a coach and/or assistant to help (Girls on the Run<sup>®</sup> will train these people)

## **Coaches**

All our head coaches must be CPR certified and attend an intensive, day long training session before the programs begin. They are provided with a very well-developed, well-researched curriculum which has been used successfully by GOTR around the country.

Each site will have a head coach and an assistant coach.

The **Head Coach** has the following responsibilities:

- ✓ Serve as a role model for young girls
- ✓ Understand and believe in the mission of Girls on the Run
- ✓ Become CPR and First Aid certified
- ✓ Attend full day Coaches' Training
- ✓ Attend a pre-season Coaches' Meeting, plus two other coaches meetings throughout the season
- ✓ Prepare for and supervise 24 one-hour lessons in a manner consistent with the GOTR philosophy and curricula
- ✓ Plan and coordinate the end of season banquet
- ✓ Plan and coordinate the "Run for Reason" fund raiser for their site
- ✓ Run with the girls in the end of season 5k race/walk

The **Assistant Coach** has the following responsibilities:

- ✓ Serve as a role model for young girls
- ✓ Understand and believe in the mission of Girls on the Run
- ✓ Attend full day Coaches' Training
- ✓ Attend program on selected day(s) on a consistent basis
- ✓ Help deliver OGTR lessons as directed by Head Coach
- ✓ Assist coaches with setting up/breaking down games and lessons
- ✓ Encourage and cheer for all participants
- ✓ Participate in games and workouts with the girls as needed by the coaches
- ✓ Attend the end of season 5k race/walk with coaches and other volunteers

At some sites, we have "co-coaches" who split the head coaching responsibilities between them and work together to facilitate the lessons.

In addition to the wonderful experience of working with these girls, we also offer each coach discounts on New Balance running shoes and apparel. New Balance is one of our corporate sponsors and provides these discounts on shoes and clothing through their website.

## **Group Size**

Each location need to have a minimum of 8 girls and a maximum of 15 girls. The minimum is based upon both financial and curriculum considerations. Because much of our curriculum is related to team building and group dynamics, fewer than 8 girls may make it difficult to provide the experience we want to offer to the girls and more than fifteen girls make it difficult to establish the group rapport and the depth of community we are seeking. **New sites are limited to 12 girls during the first season only.**

## **Timing and Length of Sessions**

We have three seasons of Girls on the Run each year.

- ❑ **Fall Session** usually begins in mid- September and runs for 12 weeks, meeting twice a week, ending around mid-December. To begin a session at your site in the fall, planning should begin in March and be finalized no later than **July 15<sup>th</sup>**.
  
- ❑ **Spring Session** usually begins in mid-February and runs for 12 weeks meeting twice a week, ending around mid-May. To begin a session at your site in the spring, planning should begin in September and should be finalized no later than **November 15<sup>th</sup>**.

## **Fees and Scholarships**

Girls on the Run is usually set up as an individual pay-to-participate program, although some locations decide to fund the program directly. Each girl's fee is based on their household income, ranging from \$10-\$150 per girl. This fee is currently based on the honor system with each girl's family selecting the appropriate fee for their income level. Any girl unable to pay may be eligible for a full scholarship and should submit an application to Girls on the Run.

Included in the fee price are:

- 24 one-hour lessons conducted by a certified GOTR coach
- Fitted New Balance running shoes
- Healthy snacks at the end of each lesson
- Lesson handouts and materials
- Girls on the Run t-shirt
- Girls on the Run water bottle
- Girls on the Run journal
- Entry into the GOTR 5k race
- Finisher's medal and goodie bag
- End of season party

## **Curriculum**

The Spring and Fall Curriculum both cover the 24 one-hour lessons by meeting 2 times per week for 12 weeks. The curriculum spans three main focuses:

- Part One:** Understanding themselves and setting personal goals (4 weeks)
  
- Part Two:** Learning skills to foster leadership, team building and cooperation (4 weeks)
  
- Part Three:** Examining their relationship to the community, including development and implementation of a community service project (4 weeks)

## **Lesson Format**

Each lesson focuses on a specific topic and follows a five part format to provide consistency and structure to the girls' experience:

**Introduction/Getting on Board:** As the girls arrive and settle into a circle, the coach "checks in" with them, seeing how each is feeling, getting a feel for the group's dynamic for the day and introducing the topic of the lesson.

**The Warm Up:** The warm-up is brief activity or game that energizes the girls and warms up their muscles. The Warm Up activity is usually a short interactive running game that incorporates the lesson topic for that day. For instance, in one of the first lessons, the coach marks off a short running course. The girls stand at one spot and the coach calls out a "like statement" - "I like chocolate chip cookies," or "I like to dance." All those girls who agree with the statement run (or walk, jog, skip - they set their own paces) the course marked out by the coach. These statements continue, with contributions by the girls, until everyone has run a few times.

**Processing:** With their muscles warmed up a bit, the coach leads the girls through a brief stretching session. During that time, the girls and the coach "process" the topic. In this example, they might discuss how people can have different likes and dislikes and still be friends or how our likes and dislikes develop, etc.

**The Workout:** The workout follows the warm up/stretch. This involves more actual running. The amount of running varies based on each girls' ability, pace and their stage of the process. The program starts with shorter periods of running and builds up as the coaches assess each girl's ability and pace. Eventually, the Work Out will build up to a "practice" 5k on site, to give the girls the confidence helpful in participating in an actual 5k racing event (see below). The running also involves the "topic of the day." For instance, in the session on positive attitude, each girl may be asked to make a positive statement about herself to the coach, each time she completes a lap.

**The Wrap-Up:** Following the workout is a cool-down and stretching period where the girls do a group processing and discussion. Each session ends with positive reinforcement from the coach, a group cheer and a snack.

The 24 lesson season concludes with the opportunity for all the girls to participate in a 5k run.

## **Evaluation**

All girls in the program during the Spring Season are given a pre- and post-program survey to evaluate attitudinal changes. This evaluation survey was created by Dr. Rita DeBate, Ph.D., MPH, CHES. Previous evaluations have concluded that the Girls on the Run curricula improves girls' self-esteem, body image and eating attitudes to a statistically significant extent. We hope to continue to use the data gathered to offer even more support to girls and their families.

## **Contact Us**

If you are interested in starting a site in the Cincinnati area, please feel free to call or email us to discuss your interest at (513) 755-6407 or [GOTRCincinnati@fuse.net](mailto:GOTRCincinnati@fuse.net)