



## **Setting up a Site for Girls on the Run of Catawba Valley**

### **Setting up a Site for Girls on the Run of Catawba Valley**

#### **Mission**

*We inspire girls to be joyful, healthy and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running.*

#### **About Girls on the Run**

Girls on the Run is a life changing experiential learning program for girls ages eight to thirteen years old. GOTR is a prevention program that uses an established curriculum combined with interactive games and activities to empower young girls with a greater sense of awareness, a sense of achievement, a foundation in team building, and a commitment to enhancing their communities. The goals of the program are to encourage positive emotional, social, mental and physical development.

Girls on the run is an international organization serving more than 164 councils across North America, and over 50,000 girls annually. GOTR is a 501(c) 3 charitable organization founded in 1996 by Molly Barker of Charlotte, NC.

#### **Objectives**

The Girls on the Run program objectives is to reduce the display of at risk behaviors by providing participants with the tools to make smart healthy decisions. The GOTR goals are fewer pregnancies and eating disorders, less depression and suicide attempts, as well as fewer substance/alcohol abuse problems and confrontations with the juvenile justice system. Our girls become strong, content, self-confident women.

#### **About Girls on the Run of Catawba Valley**

GOTR of Catawba Valley is the vision of a small group of professional women dedicated to serving the children of the Unifour area. Their dream was to offer this

nationally recognized program to the girls of our community. The YMCA of Catawba Valley and Frye Regional Hospital were instrumental in bringing the program to our area. GOTR of Catawba Valley is an affiliate of the YMCA of Catawba Valley. GOTR of Catawba Valley conducted its first session at the Hickory Foundation YMCA in the spring of 2006 with 60 girls (after expecting only 20). In our first two years, we reached more than 1000 girls, and trained and worked with more than 120 coaches. Just in the 2010-2011 school year, 1600 girls participated with over 150 volunteer coaches! We celebrated our 5<sup>th</sup> birthday in the Catawba Valley this spring. We are the fastest growing children's programs in the area, as well as one of the fastest growing GOTR councils in the country. We are confident these women and children are better prepared to face the challenges that lie ahead of them.

GOTR of Catawba Valley now serves Alexander, Burke, Catawba and Caldwell counties in both public schools as well as independent locations.

### **Potential Sites**

Girls on the Run of Catawba Valley has programs running in more than 40 locations across Catawba Valley. We partner with Catawba, Newton/Conover, Hickory City, Alexander, Caldwell, and Burke county schools. In addition we can offer our programs at the YMCA's of Catawba Valley and in numerous private schools. Sites determine their own schedule in order to accommodate their coaches and girls.

### **Site Involvement**

Girls on the Run provides each site with almost everything needed to run the program. The site's responsibilities will include:

- Provide a contact person at the site to co-ordinate with GOTR. This can be a staff member teacher, guidance counselor, school nurse, PTA president, parent or the designated Head Coach.
- Provide a safe place for running. This does not have to be a track. A field is fine. At some point the lap distance of the area may need to be estimated or measured.
- Provide an inclement weather location such as a gym, hallway, cafeteria, or class room.
- Distribute registration forms to all girls in age group (Grades 3rd-5th for GOTR and 6th-8th for GOT).
- A coach and/or assistant coach to be trained by GOTR. Must have two adults per 20 girls.

- **Optional:** Schedule a time for a GOTR representative to meet with girls prior to registration to answer questions, encourage registration, and sample the program. This is often a pep rally type presentation during PE classes, or short presentation at a PTA meeting.

## **Coaches**

GOTR coaches serve as a role model for young girls, understand and believe in the GOTR mission. All coaches attend an intensive GOTR training session before the program begins. This training is provided at no cost to the coaches/sites. GOTR will train up to 4 coaches per site. Each site must have a head coach, and an assistant coach. Often responsibility is shared by having co-coaches who can split the responsibilities and work together to facilitate the lessons. Coaches come from all walks of life, all ages and all fitness levels. Common head coaches are guidance counselors, school nurses, social workers, teachers, PTA members and parents.

## **Group Size**

GOTR prefers a minimum of 8 girls and limits each group to a maximum of 20 girls. These sizes are based upon curriculum considerations. Much of the curriculum is based on team building and group dynamics. Fewer than 8 girls makes it difficult to provide the experience we want to offer the girls, more than 20 girls make it difficult to establish the group rapport and depth of community we seek. We encourage first time coaches to limit the group to 16 girls.

## **Timing and Length of Sessions**

Girls on the Run offers a fall and spring session each year. Sessions are 10-12 weeks, meeting twice a week, for 60-90 minutes. Site Commitment forms must be received by August 25th for fall sessions, and January 16th for spring. A current season calendar is attached.

## **Fees and Scholarships**

GOTR hopes that every girl that chooses to participate is able. We do not want finances to stand in the way. Parent approval is necessary. Scholarships are available upon application to GOTR and the site. GOTR of Catawba Valley will work with each school system individually to formulate the scholarship award program that best meets the needs of the girls and community.

New Balance helps us to provide running shoes in situations that make buying the appropriate shoes difficult. If a participant needs running shoes, a request should be made by the head coach, to the council director. This request must be received within the first 2 weeks of the season.

The GOTR of Catawba Valley program fee is **\$80** per entire 10-12 week season. Included with the fees are:

- The 24 60-90 minute lessons lead by a certified GOTR coach.
- Healthy snacks following each meeting
- Lesson handouts, materials, and lap counters (beads, bracelets, rings, stickers, etc.)
- A GOTR 5k Race T-shirt, water bottle and race goody bag
- Registration Fees for the scheduled GOTR Celebratory 5k race
- GOTR support at all scheduled GOTR runs
- End of season certificates and awards (medals)

## **Curriculum**

GOTR has two curricula, one for fall and one for spring. Each curriculum is divided into three parts:

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

Each lesson focuses on a specific issue related topic and follows a five part format. This provided consistency and structure to the girls and coaches' experience. Each curriculum is designed and encouraged to be repeated. The lessons include:

- Introduction/Getting on Board
- The Warm Up
- Processing- Discussion of the lesson
- The Workout
- The Wrap Up

GOTR lessons are designed for girls in 3rd through 5th grade, while Girls on Track lessons deal with more mature topics, addressing the needs of middle school girls.

The 24 lessons conclude with the opportunity to participate in a 5k run. All race finishers are awarded with a medal. There is no first or last place, but each girl is equally recognized for her efforts.

