



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

### **Mission**

*Our mission is to educate and prepare girls for a lifetime of self respect and healthy living.*

### **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 40,000 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 it 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 have reached more than 1000 girls, and trained and worked with more than 120 coaches. 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 has recently been approved to offer the curriculum in Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell counties. We look forward to working with these communities and their children.

### **Potential Sites**

Girls on the Run of Catawba Valley has programs running in more than 30 locations across Catawba Valley. We partner with the Catawba County, the Newton / Conover, and the Hickory City Schools. In addition we offer our program at the YMCA's of Catawba Valley and in numerous private schools. The programs are offered in a variety of locations and at various times in an effort to reach as many girls as possible.

### **Site Involvement**

Girls on the Run provides each site with almost everything needed to run the program. The site will need to:

- 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 classroom.
- Distribute registration forms to all girls in age group (Grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> for GOTR and 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> for GOT).
- 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.
- Provide space for an end of season banquet (classroom or cafeteria).
- A coach and/or assistant coach to be trained by GOTR.

## **Coaches**

GOTR coaches serve as a role model for young girls, understand and believe in the GOTR mission.

All coaches must be CPR certified and 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 17 girls.

## **Timing and Length of Sessions**

Girls on the Run offers a fall and Spring Session each year.

Sessions are 12 weeks, meeting twice a week, for 1 hour. Finalized plans must be in place by August 25<sup>th</sup> for fall sessions, and January 15<sup>th</sup> 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 \$45 per session, with a one time registration fee of \$5. Included with the fee are:

- The 24 one-hour lessons lead by a certified GOTR coach
- Lesson snacks following each meeting
- Lesson handouts, materials, and lap counters (beads, bracelets, rings, stickers)
- A GOTR T-shirt
- Registration Fees for the scheduled GOTR 1 mile fun run and graduation 5k
- GOTR support at all scheduled GOTR runs
- End of season certificates and awards (medals)

### **Curriculum**

GOTR has two curriculums, 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 lesson are designed for girls in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, while Girls on Track lesson 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 participants are awarded with a finishing medal. There is no first or last place, but each girl is equally recognized for her efforts.