

# Setting Up a Site Packet



[www.GOTRDFW.org](http://www.GOTRDFW.org)

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## **About Girls on the Run**

Girls on the Run is an experiential after-school program that uses the power of running to prepare girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. The curriculum creatively incorporates training for a 5k with lessons that encourage **third through eighth grade girls** to develop essential life skills. During the 10-week program, girls are empowered with a greater sense of self-awareness, a foundation in team building and a sense of achievement. The lessons inspire them to be strong, contented and self-confident young women who intentionally choose an authentic and healthy lifestyle. The program culminates with a 5k celebration.

**Girls on the Run DFW** is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. GOTRDFW is an independent council of [Girls on the Run International](#), which has a [network of 160+ locations](#) across the United States and Canada. GOTRDFW currently has programs at more than 25 elementary schools, recreation centers and YMCAs and continues to expand throughout the Metroplex. Our territory includes the counties of Denton, Tarrant, Collin, Dallas and Grayson. Details about our locations and territory can be found here: <http://www.GOTRDFW.org/locations>.

## **How to start a site**

- Read through this packet of information thoroughly.
- Ensure that you agree to and understand the content.
- Ensure you have achieved all aspects of the site responsibilities/readiness to participate criteria.
- Fill out a site application (available on the GOTRDFW website).
- Before any new site is added, Girls on the Run DFW seeks to meet with the site liaison and others at the location to review the space and to answer any questions about the program or at least have a conference call. Once a site application has been turned in and the appropriate people at the site have been identified (site liaison, coaches, administrators, etc.), please contact the GOTR office to schedule a visit or phone call.

Note that GOTRDFW is rapidly expanding and doing our best to accommodate as many new site requests as possible. We are somewhat limited by funding and staff capacity, therefore we can't guarantee a site will be able to start simply because they completed an application. Please be aware that starting and maintaining a Girls on the Run site is a serious commitment for volunteers and a time intensive endeavor.

Please direct any questions you may have to Janelle Carpenter at (734) 807-1952 or [JCarpenter@gotrdfw.org](mailto:JCarpenter@gotrdfw.org).

## **Site Involvement/Readiness to Participate**

GOTRDFW provides almost everything needed to run the program. The site has the following responsibilities:

- Approval from school principal or site administration. The school principal or site director must indicate his/her acknowledgement, awareness and support of Girls on the Run being delivered at your site if this site application is approved.
- Provide a Site Contact and Head Coach (could be the same person) and at least one other coach and a substitute coach.
  - The site contact is a volunteer who provides a valuable link between the site, coaches and the Girls on the Run staff and assures smooth implementation of the program (marketing the program, recruiting coaches, securing practice space, etc.). The site contact must either be an employee of the school or a parent. It is common for the site contact to also serve in the role as head coach.

- Each coach is required to attend a full day training provided by Girls on the Run and complete volunteer paperwork *before* the season begins. Each team must have at least two adults at each practice. Volunteers don't need to be runners or have coaching experience. Girls on the Run will provide training, the curriculum and all supplies needed to run the program.
- A safe, dedicated space for running. **THIS IS ESSENTIAL.** This does not have to be a track. A field is fine. However, there is a need to measure off part of the area for occasions when lessons require running a certain distance, e.g. 1 mile, 5k, etc.
- A rain site. Indoor, private, preferably a gym reserved for GOTR and **NOT** in conflict with other programs.
- Management of team enrollment. **Teams must have a minimum of 8 girls and a maximum of 15 girls, however 12 is the recommended maximum for a new site.** If you have more than 15 interested girls, you'll need to implement and manage a waitlist or add a team if there is enough coaching support. Teams should include a blend of ALL applicable grade levels as much as possible.
- Choose two days per week and the time the girls will meet for at least an hour and a half each practice. Recommended practice length is 1 hour and 15 minutes or 1 and half hours. Most sites practice right after school is dismissed so transportation issues are eased. **Dates can be tentative now, but MUST be firm by at least one month before the season begins.**

### Coaches

Acting as a Girls on the Run coach is time intensive yet extremely rewarding volunteer opportunity. All coaches are trained by Girls on the Run and are provided with a well-developed, well-researched curriculum, which has been used successfully by GOTR here in the DFW area and across the country. We require a minimum of two coaches per team to attend each practice.

### Coaching Roles:

#### Site Contact

- Must be connected with the school/rec center (i.e. a teacher or parent)
- Link between site, coaches and GOTR
- Assist with marketing and registration
- Commonly also serves as head coach but this is not required

#### Head Coach

- Must be female
- Manage coaching "staff"
- Prepare and lead lessons
- Commit to two practices/week unless sharing head coach duties

#### Assistant Coach

- Assist with lesson instruction and planning of program events and celebrations
- Commit to one or two practices/week

#### Substitute Coach

- Want to be involved but can't commit to regularly attend practice
- Available in case Head Coach or Assistant has issues.

### Coaching requirements:

All coaches and volunteers must complete three volunteer forms: volunteer application, background check/non-compete and health informed consent. Soon to be on-line.

- Adult CPR and first aid certification is required of head coaches all coaches must attend a full day of coaches training with the Girls on the Run staff prior to the beginning of the

season. Fall training is typically held in early August. Spring training is typically held in early January.

- One coach per site must attend a mid-season coaches meeting.
- Coaches will adhere to organizational and reporting deadlines throughout the season.
- Coaches will prepare for, supervise and participate in all lessons in a manner consistent with the GOTR philosophy and curriculum.
- Coaches should participate in the end-of-season 5k event with their team.
- Coaches will plan and coordinate other program events throughout the season such as practice 5k, community service project and end-of-season banquet.

**We also recruit volunteers who we train as coaches and assign to schools when the school is unable to provide enough assistant coaches.** Let GOTRDFW know as soon as possible if you will need assistance with coaches. Parents and teachers who have not been trained are welcome to attend the lessons to assist coaches and girls, offering encouragement and generally being cheerleaders for the team as practice partners, but should not be given coaching responsibilities. Any parent or teacher who is involved with the team consistently needs to fill out volunteer paperwork.

### **Group Size**

Each team should have between 8-15 girls. Because much of our curriculum is related to team building and group dynamics, fewer than eight girls makes it difficult to provide the experience we want to offer to the girls. More than 15 girls makes it difficult to establish the group rapport and depth of community we are seeking. The curriculum was designed to be delivered within this group size. In addition, this group size is optimal for a coach to manage. For a first-time site, the recommended number of girls is 12.

### **Timing and Length of Season**

We have two seasons of Girls on the Run each year:

- **Fall Season** – Registration takes place early to mid-August. Practices begin in early September, runs for 10 weeks meeting twice a week and ends in early/mid November with a 5K running event.
- **Spring Season** – Registration takes place in early February. Practices begin in mid-February, runs for 10 weeks meeting twice a week and ends in mid-May with our GOTR 5k.

### **Girls on the Run Curriculum**

The **Girls on the Run** curriculum is geared to girls in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade, while the **Girls on Track** curriculum was designed for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls.

Each lesson is divided into activities with specific functions to enhance the learning process. A lesson begins with a "**Getting on Board**" activity, which brings the girls' focus to the topic of the day.

The girls then do a "**Warm-Up**" activity, which again focuses on the day's topic, but does so in a manner that actually serves to warm up their muscles, joints and cardiovascular system.

A "**Processing**" question and answer time follows the warm-up activity. The girls stretch while specific questions are asked to bring out the relevance of the "Warm-Up" activity to the topic. The goal of processing is to help the girls make connections and see how the lessons apply to their lives. Processing is the most important piece of each lesson. Processing relates the activities to the "real world" and requires good listening skills.

A "**Workout**" activity follows where the girls do a variety of running workouts that incorporate a game or a team goal that keep it fun.

The lesson concludes with the girls answering some final "**Processing**" questions related to the "Workout" activity while they complete cool-down stretching.

Each session will "**Wrap Up**" with the coach expressing positive comments about individual and group behaviors. Each session also finishes with energy awards that recognize positive individual and group behaviors (awards are invented and decided upon by the girls).

Lesson plans are clearly laid out with required materials listed at the beginning. The 20-lesson curriculum is divided into three sets explores the following concepts:

The first set of lessons provides the participants with opportunities to:

- Gain an understanding of themselves
- Learn about their strengths and weaknesses while setting personal goals
- Explore the importance of being physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy
- Examine their own core values and what makes them unique

The second set provides the participants with opportunities to:

- Explore getting along within a group
- Learn active listening and confrontation/assertiveness skills
- Recognize the importance of "positivism" in dealing with others
- Examine the components of good decision-making skills

The last set provides the participants with opportunities to:

- Explore their responsibility to the community
- Analyze the cultural and social messages girls receive in the media and other institutions
- Examine their own stereotyping and discriminatory behavior
- Define community and their collective and individual roles in it
- Create and implement a community project
- Be empowered to change their environment around them in a positive manner.

There are no comparable programs to Girls on the Run. It is a unique curriculum in the genre of youth programs. It incorporates physical activity to teach very specific and well-defined social and personal skills. Research validates that the development of these skills prevents the future display of at-risk behaviors including early onset of sexual activity, disordered eating, depression and anxiety, substance and alcohol abuse and confrontations with the juvenile justice system.

### **5k Celebration**

Girls on the Run DFW hosts or participates in a 5k celebration at the end of each season. All Girls on the Run participants throughout the DFW metropolitan area come together for the semi-annual 5k (3.1 mile) run, which is the culminating event of the season. The event is open to the general public.

### **Program Fees & Scholarships**

Building confidence and setting young girls down the path of a healthy lifestyle is PRICELESS! However, there are real costs associated with operating a non-profit organization and delivering the Girls on the Run program to approximately 500 girls in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area each year. The fee is \$120 per girl for the twice per week, ten-week program. Although the actual out of pocket cost to deliver the program is a bit higher than this, the \$120 fee helps cover the direct costs of one child's participation. Our council serves a large territory with a diverse population and we want to

price our program so it is affordable to all families. Therefore we offer fees on a sliding scale (ranging from \$10 to \$120) so the program is more affordable to more girls. In addition, full and partial scholarships are available to girls in financial need. A scholarship form must be completed.

The tangible items each girl receives with her program fee include:

- 20 professionally developed and research based lessons (each approximately 90 minutes) conducted by trained Girls on the Run coaches
- Supplies for each class
- An official Girls on the Run program T-shirt
- Participation in the New Balance Girls on the Run 5k

### **Repeating the Program**

It is common for girls to participate in multiple sessions of Girls on the Run. There are two different curriculums for Girls on the Run, which can be rotated each season a site offers the program. Currently there is only one Girls on Track curriculum. Each girl's second (and some times third) experience with the curricula is different from the first. Repetition is an important part of the learning process, which allows each girl a feeling of mastery and an opportunity to be a leader or mentor to those who are new to the program.

### **Contact Us**

If you have questions about starting a program, please feel free to contact:

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Phone: 734.807.1952  
[JCarpenter@GOTRDFW.org](mailto:JCarpenter@GOTRDFW.org)

Or visit the website at [www.gotrdfw.org](http://www.gotrdfw.org)