

Potential Site Information





Potential New Site Information

Girls on the Run® of Lehigh County

About Girls on the Run of Lehigh County

GOTR of Lehigh County is a program of Diakon Family Life Services, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, that is dedicated to helping girls stay out of the “girl box.” The “girl box” is a term coined by GOTR founder, Molly Barker, MSW and four-time Hawaii Ironman triathlete, to describe the emotional “place” where girls go (or are driven to!) in which preoccupation with appearance and anxiety over being liked keeps girls from fulfilling their true potential and puts them at risk for eating disorders, depression, and succumbing to peer pressure. We use experiential learning programs, which combine training for a 5k (3.1 mile) race/walk event with curricula designed to promote good choices for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. GOTR, a rapidly growing movement throughout the United States and Canada, is available in over 150 regions of North America. GOTR of Lehigh County is the seventh program in Pennsylvania, with additional locations in Lycoming, Monroe, Montgomery, Chester, and Adams Counties, as well as in the Pittsburgh region.

Potential Sites

GOTR of Lehigh County began programming in Spring 2007, and has an incremental expansion plan to allow for manageable and sustainable growth. Currently offering the program at three sites, there will be opportunity for three to four additional sites for the Spring 2008 season. Partner sites can be public or private schools, community agencies, recreation bureaus, churches, or any site with a large enough constituency to support a viable program.

Site Involvement

GOTR of Lehigh County provides almost everything needed to run the program. The site would need to:

- Provide a contact person at the site to coordinate with GOTR of Lehigh County. This can be a staff member, teacher, principal, PTA president, parent and/or interested member of that particular community.
- Provide a safe place for running. This does not have to be a track. A field is fine. However, there would be a need to measure off part of the area for occasions when lessons require running a certain distance, e.g. 1 mile, 3k, etc.
- Provide a rain site (classroom, gym, etc.), if the primary site is outdoors.
- Choose two days a week for 1½ hours each day for programming.

- Distribute registration forms to all girls in grades 3 through 5.
- Provide a space for the end of season celebration (cafeteria, etc.).

The site also must provide:

- One volunteer coach and/or assistant coach- GOTR of Lehigh County provides all training for this individual, plus recruits and trains two additional volunteer coaches to ensure a minimum of three coaches per site.

Coaches

All our coaches must be CPR and First Aid certified (provided by GOTR of Lehigh County, if needed) and attend a day-long training session. They must also agree to submit to child abuse history and criminal record history clearance in order to serve youth in the program (costs paid for by GOTR of Lehigh County). They are provided with a very well-developed, well-researched curriculum which has been used successfully in over 150 sites across North America.

Each site will have a lead coach and two additional coaches or assistant coaches.

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

- Prepare, organize, and supervise the twice weekly lessons (20 lessons in total)
- Lead the program participants through each lesson (or coordinate leadership with another coach);
- Serve as a role model and mentor;
- Coach program participants on proper stretching, running form, hydration and sports nutrition;
- Attend a season-end community running race with program participants and other volunteers;
- Attend two coach meetings with the program coordinator during the season;
- Interact with parents of program participants;
- Plan and coordinate the end of season celebration (last session);
- Coordinate participation in the end of season 5k event;
- Understand and believe in the mission of the program; and
- Represent GOTR-LC positively in the community

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

- Serve as a role model for young girls, and understand and believe in the mission of Girls on the Run;
- 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; and
- Attend a season-end community running race with coaches, program participants 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 extraordinary experience of working with these girls, we also offer each coach a GOTR t-shirt and discounts on New Balance running apparel. New Balance is one of our corporate sponsors and provides these discounts on shoes and clothing through their website.

Group Size

We prefer a minimum of 8 girls and limit each group to a maximum of 15 girls, to ensure a positive experience for the participants. 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 twenty 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.**

Timing and Length of Sessions

Girls on the Run programming is available in two “seasons,” spring and fall. Sites may choose to host a GOTR program in both seasons, or just in spring or fall.

- Fall Season**, which usually begins in mid- September and runs for 10 weeks, meeting twice a week, ending around Thanksgiving.
- Spring Session**, which usually begins in mid-March and runs for 10 weeks meeting twice a week, ending around early June.

Registration Fees

The current fee per series is \$50 per participant, with the actual fee a girl’s family pays is according to financial need. Some girls pay as little as \$1 for the 30+ hours of programming. The suggested fee scale is printed in the registration brochure and is currently based upon an honor system, with the girl’s family selecting the fee appropriate for their ability to pay. Host sites may choose to pay all costs for participants, if they choose to offer the program free-of-charge to the participants.

Included in the registration fee are:

- the twenty 90-minute lessons conducted by certified GOTR coaches;
- end of lesson snacks;
- lesson handouts and materials;
- a Girls on the Run t-shirt;
- a Girls on the Run water bottle;
- end-of-season 5k race fees, including a Girls on the Run medal for all who finish the race;
- end-of-season celebration event with parents and siblings

Scholarship Shoe Program: New Balance, one of our corporate sponsors, also helps us to provide a limited number of free running shoes to those whose financial situations make buying appropriate shoes difficult. If a girl participating in the program needs a pair of

running shoes, please contact the Girls on the Run of Lehigh County program coordinator at 1-888-499-2699.

Curriculum

The 20-session 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 that provides consistency and structure for 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 Hannah Montana." All those girls who agree with the statement run (walk, jog - they set their own paces) the course marked out by the coach. These statements continue, with contributions by the girls, until everyone has run at least 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 concentrated and extended running. The amount of running varies based on each girls' ability, pace, and their stage of physical development within the training program. The program starts with shorter periods of running and builds up as the coaches assess each girl's ability and pace. 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 20 lessons conclude with the opportunity to participate in a 5k run, typically a 5k community race event in conjunction with all the other Lehigh County Girls on the Run

teams, during which each girl is matched with a volunteer “Running Buddy” to be her personal mentor during the race, and to motivate and encourage the girl to finish the race at her own pace. As one can imagine, the finish line reflects a very moving and inspirational experience as the girls cross the finish line, achieving a goal that she may never have dreamed being able to complete before her Girls on the Run experience.

Evaluation

Girls in the program are given a pre- and post-survey to evaluate attitudinal changes, allowing for program evaluation and determining efficacy of the curriculum and program delivery. Created by South Florida University professor Rita DeBate, Ph.D., MPH, CHES, the research data analyzed has concluded that the Girls on the Run curricula improve girls’ self-esteem, body image and eating attitudes to a “statistically significant” extent.

Contact Us

If you are interested in exploring partnering with Girls on the Run of Lehigh County to bring the program to *your* site, please call or email us at 1-888-499-2699 or eichmank@diakon.org. Please also check out the national GOTR web site at www.girlsontherun.org for more information.

Life....run with it.....