



# Girls on the Run<sup>®</sup> Vermont

## A Comprehensive Overview of Coaching in the Green Mountain State

Girls on the Run is the name of our organization, but we have two programs: Girls on the Run (GOTR) for 3rd-5th graders and Girls on Track (GOT) for 6th-8th graders. When referring to the organization, we just call it Girls on the Run or GOTR, but the reference is inclusive of both programs.

### **Glossary:**

**Council** – GOTR VT is one of 160 councils affiliated with Girls on the Run International.

**Site** – the physical location where the program(s) meet

**Program** – either Girls on the Run or Girls on Track

**Group** – contains no less than two GOTR VT certified coaches, one of whom must be Adult CPR certified (unless a school nurse is a Coach Assistant). More than one group can exist at one site and within one program. For example, you can have two GOTR groups and one GOT group at the same site.

**Coach Roles** - Our coaches are volunteers who are passionate about the mission, core values, and spirit of Girls on the Run. About five to six hours per week are required for lesson planning, coaching the girls, and administering the program. There are many ways for the coaches at each site to share the responsibilities of coaching. As long as all aspects of the program are attended to within the GOTR guidelines, each site is free to construct their program as they see fit.

**GOTR Certified Coach** – adult aged 18 or over who has attended a new coach training, completed the requisite paperwork, and will make every effort to attend all group meetings and the 5k. Certified coaches are given access to the curriculum and other copyrighted materials. These coaches will be provided program shirts, receive all GOTR VT communications (usually via email), and on the list for the Coach Appreciation table at the 5k.

**Coach Assistants** – are non-certified coaches. Their primary role is to assist with the lesson implementation, and be a cheerleader for the girls. Assistants are not required to attend a training, but must complete a Volunteer Application and background check form. They will receive a program shirt and be on the list for the Coach Appreciation table at the 5k.

Please note that any adult who assists at a site, regardless of role or frequency of attendance, must complete the paperwork (volunteer application including the non-compete clause and the background check form) as required by our insurer.

### **Certified Coach Responsibilities:**

- Serve as a role model by being on time, listening attentively, having a positive demeanor and outlook, and leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Prepare for and supervise lessons in a manner consistent with the GOTR philosophy and curricula;
- Encourage and cheer-on the girls as they play games and run laps.
- Instruct the girls on proper stretching, running form, hydration, and sports nutrition.
- Plan and coordinate the community service project and end of season banquet;
- Run with or support the girls in the end of season 5k race/walk.
- Have an email address that is checked regularly throughout the year and can accept file attachments from the GOTR VT staff. We ask that those who use school email addresses check with the IT person to make sure that there won't be server issues that would prevent emails from getting through.
- Keep the GOTR VT office alerted to any changes in your contact information or coaching status.
- Establish effective communication with parents/guardians to keep them informed.
- Ensure that at least one coach per group is Adult CPR certified (card on file with GOTR VT by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>.)
- Administer the program, including but not limited to: marketing the program in your school/area, the registration of participants, timely submission of group roster and forms to GOTR VT office, and responding to requests from parents and GOTR VT staff.

*Updated October, 2008*

### Transporting GOTR Participants

GOTR VT participants cannot be transported by GOTR VT coaches to or from any GOTR VT event or session due to insurance liability issues.

### Timeline of the Upcoming Season

Planning for the next season starts well in advance. Here's the administrative timeline that coaches are following for the 2009 season:

- **September** - contact site to confirm their participation, use of facility, plan for distributing & collecting registrations, etc.
- **October** - let GOTR VT know if you're in for the season & reserve a spot at training, recruit new coaches if needed
- **November** - ask new coaches at your site to submit paperwork to us & reserve a spot at training
- **December** - Happy Holidays!
- **January** - attend training, prepare registration & program materials, select lessons, compose parent letter
- **February** - handle registrations & paperwork
- **March** - registration period ends, submit info to GOTR VT office, and the season begins!
- **April** - keep on keepin' on
- **May** - Southern VT 5k
- **June** - Northern VT 5k

### Establishing A Site

GOTR Vermont has sites throughout the state at elementary and middle schools, recreation departments, after school programs, and other organizations. Coaches must actively engage with the site to coordinate logistics that are crucial to the success of the program. The first step in establishing a new site is for you to have a conversation with the appropriate person(s) such as the school principal, nurse, and/or guidance counselor; Rec Director; after school program coordinator, etc. It is essential to share with the potential site what GOTR is, how it would be implemented at the site, what factors would affect the administration & logistics of the program (*refer to green Site Talking Points page*), and what the site responsibilities are in order to create and run a successful program.

The site will need to:

- Agree to provide suitable and safe indoor and outdoor spaces for the program to be implemented. There does not need to be an outdoor track - a field or other space is fine, provided that the area can be measured off for the lessons that require running a specified distance. An indoor space for inclement weather would need to be readily available as well.
- Agree that the program will be run by no less than two GOTR VT-certified coaches. Sites may be asked in the fall to help locate potential coaches, usually in the form of teachers, school staff, or parents.
- Agree that the facility will be used for the program duration of 10 weeks (specific dates noted below) and the program will be held on two days per week, allowing for 60-90 minutes for each session.
- Work with the coaches to establish a plan for material distribution and retrieval of registration materials.
- If requested by the coaches, provide a time/place to hold a registration meeting with the girls and/or parents to answer questions and promote the program.
- Provide a space for the end of season potluck banquet (cafeteria, etc.)
- Consider giving coaches use of school copier and reasonable amounts of paper and other program supplies (markers, safety cones, jump ropes, first aid kit, etc.)

### Joining an Existing Site

If a program already is established in the town/school you wish to coach, we will most likely place you at that site. It is rare that a site is not in need of another coach to help out.

### Length of Season

The three curriculums are designed for 12-week programs. Our season runs each spring, beginning in March and ending in late May or early June. Due to our climate, Vermont sites go for 10 weeks to allow for snow melt and warmer outdoor temperatures, but we encourage longer programs whenever possible. **Please note:** At a minimum, all sites are required to meet for a 10-week span with two meetings per week that each last for one hour.

**Sites attending the 2009 Southern VT 5k:** The season starts the week of March 9, the 5k is Saturday, May 16 and the season ends the week of May 25 or later.

**Sites attending the 2009 Northern VT 5k:** The season starts the week of March 30, the 5k is Sunday, June 7 and the season ends the week of June 8 or later.

*Updated October, 2008*

*GOTR VT reserves the right to geographically designate which 5k the sites go to in order provide the best and safest experience for each participant.*

### **The 5k Events**

The highlight of the program is the opportunity for the girls to participate in a 5k run/walk. We host two fabulous community fitness events, one in Southern Vermont and one in Northern Vermont. These celebratory events are much anticipated by the girls and registration is open to everyone. We encourage family and friends to support the girls by participating in the 5k or coming to cheer them on!

### **Curriculum**

Coaches are provided with well-developed and well-researched curriculums which have been used successfully by GOTR® many times around the country. The curriculums combine training for a 5K (3.1 mile) run/walk with lessons designed to promote good choices for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living.

#### **The curriculums are divided into three sections:**

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

Each lesson within the curriculums focus on a specific issue-related topic and follows a five-part format that provides consistency and structure for the girls' experience.

**Part 1 - 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.

**Part 2 - The Warm Up:** The warm-up is brief activity or game that energizes the girls and warms up their muscles. The 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 listening to my iPod," or "I like country music." The girls who agree with the statement run (walk, jog - they set their own pace) the course marked out by the coach. These statements continue, with contributions by the girls, until everyone has run at least a few times.

**Part 3 - 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.

**Part 4 - 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 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 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.

**Part 5 - 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 coaches and a group cheer.

### **Group Size**

Because much of our program is related to team building and group dynamics, fewer than eight girls in a group may make it difficult to provide the experience we want to offer to the girls. More than 18 girls per group can make it difficult to establish the group rapport and the depth of community the programs seek to provide.

A site can have more than one group per season. Some of our current sites divide the groups by grade level, or offer the program on multiple days, or offer both an after-school and an evening group. There are lots of ways to have multiple GOTR groups at one site as long as each program follows the program and coach requirements.

### **Fees and Scholarships**

The actual cost of providing the program (administrative overhead, curriculums, program supplies, training expenses, etc.) is \$120 per participant. GOTR VT has set the program fee at \$70 per girl. Many schools or child-centered health/education organizations have made funds available which allow the girls to participate at an even more reduced fee or at no cost. We encourage sites to identify further sources of financial assistance. Scholarships through GOTR VT are available upon application to Girls on the Run Vermont. Applications for scholarships must be returned to the coaches with the participant's program registration form.

The program fee includes:

- sessions conducted by two GOTR VT-certified coaches;
- lesson handouts;
- a program t-shirt;
- Girls on the Run support at our GOTR 5k event;
- 5K entry fee;
- end of season celebration, certificates and awards.

### **Repeating the Program**

It is very common for girls to participate in multiple seasons of Girls on the Run. Each girl's second (and some times third) experience with the program 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.

### **Evaluation**

Girls in the program are given a pre- and post-test to evaluate attitudinal changes. This data helps us to evaluate our programs. This evaluation was created by Dr. Rita DeBate, Ph.D., MPH, CHES. Based on this evaluation tool, Dr. Debate has concluded that the Girls on the Run curricula improve girls' self-esteem, body image, and eating attitudes to a "statistically significant" extent.

We hope you will consider joining the great group of coaches at GOTR VT. If you are interested in coaching, please call 802-246-1476 or email us at [info@girlsontherunvermont.org](mailto:info@girlsontherunvermont.org). Additional information is also available on our website at [www.girlsontherunvermont.org](http://www.girlsontherunvermont.org).