

We all belong at the **FINISH LINE**

Girls on the Run®

Upstate NY

2026 SITE GUIDELINES



**Bring Girls on the Run to
your school, neighborhood
or community!**

WHO WE ARE



Girls on the Run is a physical activity-based program designed to nurture girls' social, psychological, and physical competencies to navigate life experiences. Our program instills self-esteem and leadership development through health education, life skills development, mentoring relationships, and non-competitive physical activity – all of which are accomplished through collaboration with girls and their parents, schools, volunteers, staff, and the community. We offer two programs: **Girls on the Run for 3rd-5th grade girls**, and **Heart & Sole, for 6th-8th grade girls**. GOTR Upstate NY served 443 girls in 2025.

The program is delivered in schools, parks, and community centers and meet twice a week for 10 weeks. Each 90-minute session is led by specially trained volunteer coaches and includes lessons dealing with issues such as body image, negative self-talk, self-awareness, resisting peer pressure, gratitude, gossip, nutrition, making healthy decisions and contributing to the community. Running is woven into our program to inspire an appreciation of fitness and to build habits that lead to a lifetime of health. At the end of the 10-week session, the girls participate in a celebratory 5k event.



"The lessons reinforced through GOTR really helped strengthen my daughter Elyana's character. I am very proud to have watched Elyana flourish and learn to love and accept herself and even more importantly, become proud of what makes her unique."

-DIANE, PARENT

**Pre-pandemic statistics. We look forward to building back stronger.*



TRANSFORMING LIVES

Three programs, one life-long impact.

At the heart of our programs are:

Evidence-based curriculum

Nationally trained coaches

Intentional evaluation

IDEA-focused approach

Physical activity accessible for all ability levels

Social-emotional skill development

Community service involvement



Girls on the Run: Grades 3-5

The research-based curriculum includes:

- Understanding ourselves
- Valuing relationships and teamwork
- Recognizing how we can shape the world at large

The program unleashes confidence through:

- Setting and achieving goals (like the 5K)
- Making new friendships
- Participating in community service work
- Empowering girls to appreciate the value of healthy habits



Heart & Sole: Grades 6-8

- Focuses on five key parts: body, brain, heart, spirit, and connection with others
- Incorporates movement-based activities and lessons that instill critical life skills such as:
 - Developing a strong support system
 - Fostering healthy relationships
 - Offering help to those in need



A CRITICAL NEED

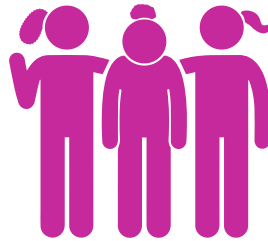
50% of girls ages 10 to 13 experience bullying.



Girls' self-confidence begins to drop by age nine.



Physical activity declines starting at age ten and continues to decrease as girls age.



Since the start of the COVID pandemic, 79% of girls feel lonelier and more depressed.

The U.S. Surgeon General recently highlighted the urgent need to address the nation's youth mental health crisis, stating that "the future wellbeing of our country depends on how we support and invest in the next generation."

WHY GIRLS ON THE RUN?

Evidence-based research from leading youth development experts has proven that Girls on the Run:

Builds confidence

Prompts independent thought and intentional decision-making

Strengthens self-respect

Enhances girls' ability to stand-up for self & others

Fosters healthy relationships

Establishes a life-long appreciation for health and wellness





GIRLS ON THE RUN COACHES

LEADERS. VOLUNTEERS. MENTORS.



Girls on the Run and Heart & Sole Coaches:

- Complete National Coach Training
- Receive season-long support, resources and tools from GOTR
- Create positive, trauma-sensitive and inclusive environments
- Lead teams through curriculum with co-coaches
- Do not have to be runners or athletes
- Are committed to seeing girls in their community grow, have fun and become leaders of tomorrow.



"From the girls I coach, I have learned a little bit more about myself and a whole lot about the power we have as adults to encourage and motivate the next generation."

- CASSIE, COACH

PROGRAM DETAILS & RESOURCES

Host Site Requirements

- Offer a safe and accessible outdoor place and a restroom.
- Provide a designated accessible indoor space in case of inclement weather where coaches can meet the girls right after school, have a snack, and leave their backpacks.
- Accommodate a regular practice schedule **2 times a week for 90 minutes.**
- Assist in identifying a site liaison.

Site Liaison Requirements

The site liaison can be a teacher, school administrator, nurse, counselor, PE or other staff, and may serve in a dual capacity as a coach. Site liaison responsibilities include:

- Acting as the main site contact for families/participants and Girls on the Run council staff.
- Aiding in recruitment efforts by distributing marketing materials provided by GOTR.
- Offering support to families who need registration assistance.
- Identifying 2-3 coaches from your site or community. If needed, GOTR can help find coaches.
- Meet with coaches prior to season to review space, communicate with coaches all season.
- All coaches and assistant coaches must receive a background check, paid for by GOTR.

GOTR Upstate NY Responsibilities

- The GOTRUNY Program Director is responsible for coordinating these services.
- Coordinates certificate of liability insurance distribution for the sites provided by GOTR.
- Arranges required national coach training. A comprehensive online and in-person training before start of season. Sex offender background checks on all coaches and volunteers every two years.
- Manages of participant recruitment, flyers, online registration, smartphone app.
- Provides lessons, supplies, and materials, program t-shirts for participants and coaches.
- Facilitates financial assistance for participants in need.
- Plans and arranges 5K celebration and provides 5K finisher medal.
- Screens Running Buddies assigned to a program location.



COST AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Program Cost

Our current program fee is \$185 per participant, which includes:

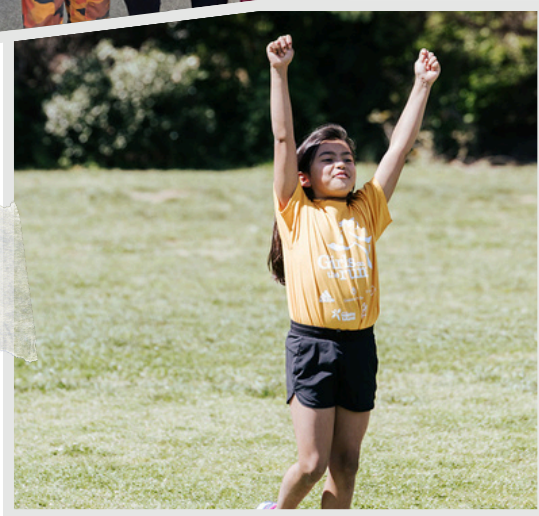
- 10 weeks/20 lessons/90 minutes each, led by trained coaches
- Curriculum materials
- Program t-shirt/Water Bottle
- 5K event registration/Medal
- Coach bag with all the necessary items to run the season

Financial Assistance

EVERY GIRL DESERVES TO CROSS THE FINISH LINE

Financial assistance is available to families who cannot pay the full registration fee. Girls on the Run Upstate NY is proud to provide 33 percent in financial assistance each year. We are committed to being accessible to any girl who wants to participate and are dedicated to ensuring that program cost is never a barrier to participation.

At Girls on the Run Upstate NY. We are able to provide the program at this rate due to the generous support of local and national funders. Families are also able to set up payment plans if needed.





NEXT STEPS

Are you ready to join the GOTR community?

Invest in tomorrow's leaders! Kick off this new and exciting chapter by completing the following steps:

- Submit site application at www.GOTRUPSTATENY.org
- Identify Site Liaison
- Confirm your site's practice schedule
- Use GOTR marketing materials to help register girls



Mark these important dates on your calendar!

- New site application due date: March 1, 2026
- [season] program start date: March 22, 2026
- Celebratory 5K event date: June 7, 2026

We look forward to collaborating with you on this incredible journey. Your role in this program is pivotal to so many girls' futures. Because of your investment, many more girls will have the confidence to follow their dreams, defy societal norms and create healthy habits that last a lifetime.

Questions?

We are here for you!

Please contact: Bénédicte Doran, Council Director at benedicte.doran@girlsontherun.org



"The experience my daughter, Lana, gained from Girls on the Run helped her realize that she could participate in any activity with fellow peers and work toward independence by building strength, a strong sense of self and more confidence in who she was and who she always desired to be."

- SABRINA, PARENT

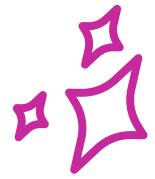


PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES AT A GLANCE



SITE LIAISON		COACHES	GOTRUNY STAFF
Practice Facilities	<p>Arrange for safe indoor and outdoor practice locations, including obtaining permission from school/rec center</p> <p>Arrange for restroom access during practice</p> <p>Troubleshoot problems</p>	<p>Communicate with parents and participants about where to meet and pickup</p> <p>Practice in designated locations and enforce facility rules</p>	<p>Provide certificate of insurance to sites as needed</p> <p>Submit any additional partnership forms as needed (for Community Ed., afterschool programs, etc.)</p>
Recruitment	<p>Take the lead in publicizing GOTR to school and community members according to season calendar</p> <p>Distribute provided recruitment materials</p> <p>Collect and submit to GOTR in a timely fashion</p>	<p>Work with site liaison to attend recruitment opportunities (open houses, speaking to classes, etc.)</p> <p>Collect any paper registration forms and submit to GOTR in a timely fashion</p>	<p>Provide recruitment/registration materials (posters, postcards, paper registration forms if needed)</p> <p>Provide updated rosters to sites in a timely fashion</p>
Throughout Season	<p>Answer coach questions about the site as needed</p> <p>Communicate with GOTR about any challenges or changes</p>	<p>Take the lead on parent communication</p> <p>Arrive early for each scheduled practice with a healthy snack</p> <p>Deliver curriculum as trained and instructed</p>	<p>Provide training, curriculum, materials, activity sheets, parent communication templates,</p> <p>Conduct site visits and offer additional support as needed</p>
Practice 5k	<p>Attend to assist coaches as needed and to see the program in action</p>	<p>Plan course, water stops, festivities with co-coaches</p> <p>Communicate with girls, parents and Running Buddies so they are excited and prepared</p> <p>Submit to GOTR in a timely fashion</p>	<p>Provide updated Running Buddy info</p> <p>Place community Running Buddies as needed</p> <p>Provide tips on best practices</p> <p>Provide materials (t-shirts, etc.)</p>
Community Support	<p>Partner with coaches to identify local opportunities to celebrate the girls (e.g., feature community impact project in school newsletter, mention girls in morning announcements)</p>	<p>Partner with site liaison to identify local opportunities to celebrate the girls</p>	<p>Provide additional ideas and support as needed</p> <p>Official press spokesperson for any additional coverage</p>
Celebration 5k <i>TBD 2021</i>	<p>Promote 5k event at site. Post flyers, distribute materials as allowed at site</p>	<p>Oversee the team and have fun!</p>	<p>Provide a safe and fun 5k celebration</p>
Season Wrap-Up	<p>Submit site renewal info in a timely fashion</p>	<p>Return materials</p>	<p>Seek feedback from parents and coaches</p> <p>Collect materials</p> <p>Provide site renewal info</p>

FAQS



Team Size

The minimum for a team is 6 girls and the maximum is 15 girls. The minimum is based upon both financial and curriculum considerations. Because much of our curriculum is related to team building and group dynamics, fewer than 6 girls may make it difficult to provide the experience we want to offer the girls.

Participant Registration

- Girls on the Run is open to ALL girls. We allow girls who are unaffiliated with a program site and girls of any fitness level to participate.
- Program sites are responsible for promoting GOTR to girls and parents and for distributing registration information.
- Registration is open for up to two months and closes two weeks after the season begins.
- Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. If more than 15 girls register for a team, a waitlist will be started. We will try to find more coaches to fill two teams at a site if there is interest.
- Registration is online. Paper forms will be available only if needed.

Program Fees and Scholarships

The program fee is \$185 per girl. Included in that fee are 20 lessons conducted by Girls on the Run certified coaches, coach training, all GOTR curriculum materials, coach bags, an official Girls on the Run program shirt and water bottle, end of season 5K celebration and 5K registration fee. The fee covers operating overhead such as the GOTR licensing fee, insurance, financial assistance costs, printing, etc. Administrative assistance and support to coaches' site, girls and parents is also included. Families can pay registration in installments, which can be set up during online registration.

We offer financial assistance through an online application. We do not ask for proof of income. We rely on the honesty and integrity of parent/guardians to choose their appropriate registration fee and contribute as much towards the full cost of the program as they are comfortable. We never turn away a girl for the inability to pay.

Volunteer Coaches

Volunteer Coaches facilitate the easy to follow, well researched curriculum at each program site. Coaches do not have to be runners; they need only have the desire to serve as a role model for the girls by showing positive behavior, interacting with them, and listening attentively. Volunteer coaches can be faculty, staff, parents or community members. It is mandatory for there to always be at least two volunteer coaches (a head coach and at least one assistant coach) at least one of whom is CPR/First Aid certified* (both written and in-person skills tested), on site at all times with Girls on the Run participants.

Qualifications

A strong commitment to girls' positive development.

The capacity to work in partnership with co-coaches.

Experience working with youth is a plus, but not necessary. Coaches do not have to be runners. Any person who lives a healthy lifestyle and is committed to improving the lives of girls can volunteer as a coach.



HEAD COACHING DETAILS

The Head Coach works with her team of coaches to facilitate the Girls on the Run curriculum to a group of 6-15 program participants. She works closely with the Council Staff and serves as the primary point of contact for parents/guardians of the girls on her team. Throughout the season, the head coach will serve as a role model, exhibiting a healthy lifestyle and positive attitude. Most importantly, the Head Coach will have fun with the girls and encourage positive behaviors.

Responsibilities:

- Prepare and deliver/supervise Girls on the Run lessons in a manner consistent with GOTR philosophy and curricula.
- Serve as a role model for the girls by being on time, listening attentively, having a positive demeanor and outlook, and leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Manage team and coach schedules and communications.
- Take attendance, orchestrate dismissal and have a cancellation plan in place.
- Encourage all participants and participate in games and workouts as needed.
- Mediate disputes amongst girls in an immediate and respectful manner.
- Interact with parents/guardians of program participants.
- Plan and coordinate a community service project per the curriculum.
- Attend end of the season 5K run and encourage the girls and parent participation/guardian.
- Return all coaching materials as received in a timely manner postseason.
- Be yourself ... and have fun!



Time Commitment

- Complete a 1-hour online pre-season and 30-minute mid-season training session
- Prepare for delivery of lessons (typically 15-30 minutes to read through and plan)
- Attend and lead or supervise two, 90-minute lessons, 2x a week for 8 weeks (plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to start of the lesson to set up anything needed and take attendance, and remain until all girls are picked up or delivered to aftercare)
- Attend a *First Aid and CPR certification course including both written and in person skills testing if not already certified and submit certificate to GOTR.
- Submit to a criminal background check in accordance with GOTR policy. GOTR will provide a link on the Coach Application confirmation sheet.
- Attend and/or participate in the end of season 5K event
- *New Coach training is 6-8 hours and is required to be completed prior to the start of the season.
- Returning Coach training 1.5-2 hours.

Requirements

- Must be female and over the age of 21
- Must be CPR and First Aid certified, both written and skills tested *
- Must complete a Volunteer Application and non-compete form
- Must submit to a criminal background check
- Must complete a full coach training



****CPR and First Aid: A minimum of one coach per team must have CPR and First Aid certification on file by the first session of any given season and be present at every practice. The CPR training course curriculum must be equivalent to The American Red Cross, American Heart Association and National Safety Council. CPR certification may be obtained through an online training course; however, it must include an in-person skills test and receipt of a course completion card.**

ASSISTANT COACHING DETAILS

The Assistant Coach assists the Head Coach in all aspects of program delivery at a Girls on the Run program site.

Responsibilities:

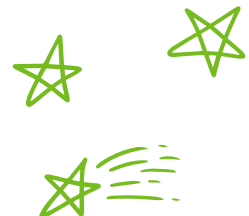
- Assist Head Coach in the preparation and delivery of Girls on the Run lessons in a manner consistent with GOTR philosophy and curricula.
 - Serve as a role model for the girls by being on time, listening attentively, having a positive demeanor and outlook, and leading a healthy lifestyle.
 - Encourage all participants and participate in games and workouts as needed.
 - Assist in setting up/breaking down games and lessons.
 - Assist Head Coach in planning and coordinating a community service project.
 - Attend end of the season 5k run and encourage the girls and parent/guardian participation.
- *Be yourself ... and have fun!

Time Commitment:

- Complete a 1-hour online pre-season and 30-minute mid-season training session.
- Prepare for delivery of lessons (typically 15-30 minutes to read through and plan) Attend at least one (preferably two) 90-minute lesson per week for 10 weeks.
- Attend a First Aid and CPR certification course including both written and in-person skills testing if necessary.
- Required in order to sub for the Head Coach.
- Submit to a criminal background check in accordance with GOTR policy. GOTR will provide a link on the Coach Application confirmation sheet.
- Attend and/or participate in the end of season 5k event.
- Coach training is 6-8 hours and is required to be completed prior to the start of the season.
- Returning Coach training 1.5-2 hours.

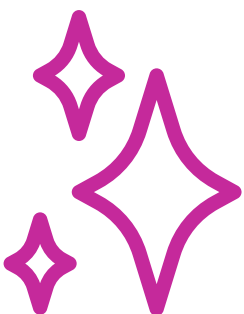
Requirements

Maybe female or male and must be over the age of 18.
Must complete a Volunteer Application and non-compete form.
Must submit to a criminal background check.
Must complete a full coach training.



Substitute Coach

All substitute coaches must comply per above including having had a valid background check through the Girls on the Run Upstate NY within the past 24 months and attended a Coaches Training. If a substitute is acting as Head Coach, the substitute must be CPR/First Aid certified (both written and in person skills tested).



RUNNING BUDDY DETAILS

5K Running Buddies

A running buddy is an individual designated to run/walk alongside and/or supervise a participant on or off the course for the duration of the 5K event. Running Buddies are often a girl's parent, friend, neighbor, aunt, uncle, sibling, or other trusted adult age 16 or older.

GOTR International mandates that in any public race (not a part of the official Girls on the Run 5k Series) all program participants must be accompanied by a Running Buddy per below. Public races are not within the Girls on the Run 5k guidelines and therefore the risk of incident for each participant is significantly higher than that of a Girls on the Run sanctioned event. For girls running in an official Girls on the Run 5K event, running buddies are strongly recommended and must adhere to the guidelines below. Our council is committed to keeping our participants safe and have the following policy in place:

*Legal guardians and parents of participants may be Running Buddies or may assign running buddies for their participant. Legal guardians or parents acting as a Running Buddy or legal guardian/parent assigned Running Buddies are not required to conduct a background check for either public or Girls on the Run 5k events, but they must be 16 years of age or older.

*If a representative of Girls on the Run (Council Director, Staff, Coach) supplies a GOTR participant with a Running Buddy, a background check must be conducted on the Running Buddy. Running Buddies must also comply with all other volunteer requirements set forth by the council, including filling out a Volunteer Application.

*Girls on the Run of Upstate NY will provide any necessary background checks.

*Running Buddies self-register for the 5k. Participant 5k registration fee is included in their GOTR program registration fee.

