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Unleashing Confidence:

New Study Demonstrates that Girls on the Run Transforms Young Girls' Lives

Approximately 5,000 Girls Participate Locally Each Year

FAIRFAX, VA – Girls on the Run of NOVA is accustomed to launching new program teams each season. But when the nonprofit first came to Forest Grove Elementary School in Spring of 2017, it was to launch the first afterschool program ever offered at the Loudoun County school.

Head Coach, Tracy Scannell Crowe, explained, “Our girls were in need of something that would not only provide physical activity, but would encourage them as they learn to be strong women.” Mrs. Scannell Crowe was familiar with Girls on the Run from her daughter’s participation. She wanted to bring it to Forest Grove where she is an ELL instructor. “The parents love the program and have been very supportive. It has been great to see new friendships emerge and their new confidence is visible.”

As students prepare to head back to school throughout Northern Virginia, many parents are looking for afterschool activities that provide a safe and structured space to learn skills and be physically active. Girls on the Run offers this, and so much more.

Maureen R. Weiss, Ph.D, a leading expert on youth development, conducted a recent independent study on Girls on the Run programs across the country. This study found compelling evidence that Girls on the Run is highly effective at driving transformative and lasting change in the lives of third to fifth grade girls. Furthermore, the study shows the program’s combination of a physical activity, research based curriculum, trained volunteer coaches, and a strong commitment to serve all girls resulted in these key findings:

- 97 percent of girls said they learned critical life skills at Girls on the Run that they are using at home, at school and with their friends.
- 7 out of 10 girls who improved from pre-season to post-season sustained improvements in competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, or physical activity beyond the season’s end.
- Girls on the Run participants were significantly more likely to learn and use life skills, including managing emotions, resolving conflict, helping others and making intentional

decisions than girls who participated in physical education or organized sports programs without a curriculum.

- Girls who were the least active before Girls on the Run increased their physical activity level by 40 percent from pre-season to post-season, and maintained this increased level beyond the program's end.

"It's more than just a running program," said Katey Comerford, Executive Director for GOTR NOVA. "The goal of our program is to help girls unleash confidence through accomplishment while developing the physical, social, and emotional skills needed to achieve." Currently, ninety-three sites throughout the Northern Virginia region, including Forest Grove Elementary, will be open for Fall 2017 registration starting August 21, 2017. For more information about fall registration and sites for Girls on the Run of NOVA, please visit our website at www.gotrnova.org.

About Girls on the Run of NOVA

Girls on the Run of NOVA is a 501c3 nonprofit and one of the largest independent affiliates of Girls on the Run International, serving 5,000 girls each year at more than 150 school-based sites across Northern Virginia annually. Now offering the Girls on the Run program for girls in 3rd to 5th grade and Heart & Sole for girls in 6th to 8th, GOTR NOVA envisions a world where every girl knows she has the ultimate power to be her best. GOTR NOVA programming is delivered over a 10-week season by trained volunteer coaches who guide and mentor pre-adolescent girls through a rich curriculum.

About the study

Maureen R. Weiss, Ph.D., a leading scholar in positive youth development research, led the independent, longitudinal study. Dr. Weiss is a professor in the School of Kinesiology and an adjunct professor in the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota. She has published more than 150 refereed journal articles and book chapters, and has edited or co-edited four books on youth sport and physical activity. She received the 2014 President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition Science Board's Honor Award and the Distinguished Scholar Award from the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity in 2016.

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