



THE SIXTH ANNUAL WOMAN'S DAY AWARDS

MOLLY BARKER TENÉ WELLS CYNTHIA KIDDER & KARI GROESSER WOMEN OF THE STORM SHINING STARS POISE RISING STAR AWARD



MOLLY BARKER

Founder: Girls on the Run
Charlotte, North Carolina
Nominated by Elizabeth Boarman

Running Toward Fit, Confident Lives

Molly Barker calls it the "girl box." Even confident young girls start thinking and acting as though they don't measure up. Around the fourth grade, the desire to be popular, fit in and attract male attention takes over.

To build up their self-confidence and remind preteens of their physical strength and power, Molly started Girls on the Run. The 12-week program combines training for a 5K (3.1-mile) running event with workshops that focus on the importance of being physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.

"It's as simple as watching the girls' body language when they come into the program and when they finish it," says Molly, a mother of two. "At some point, a girl will start standing up tall and look you in the eye."

Each year, tens of thousands of third- to eighth-graders participate across the nation.

Small teams of girls meet weekly with two volunteer female coaches to go through a program that blends physical fitness

with talks about body image, healthy eating and self-esteem.

Today, you can find the group in 130 cities across the United States and Canada. (They are now starting a program for high school girls, too.) Last year, when 1,700 girls ran their 3.1-mile course through Kalamazoo, Michigan, thousands turned out to applaud.

In Chicago, more than 3,000 cheered at the finish line. "After the race, you can see the pride in the girls' eyes. They're thinking, 'Wow! If I can do this, what else can I do?'" says Molly, who has run Ironman Triathlons. "It never fails to move me."

Woman's Day salutes Molly Barker for teaching thousands of girls just how valuable and capable they really are.

To find out more, go to girlsontherun.org.

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