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## Girls on the 5K Run

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By: Ivanhoe Newswire



(CHARLOTTE) -- Self-respect and healthy lifestyles are just two of the things a non-profit program is teaching young girls. Girls on the Run helps young women start life off on the right foot, literally.

The girls are running for more than just strong bodies, they're running for strong futures. It's all part of Girls On the Run program

that combines running activities with esteem building exercises to foster the character of girls in third, fourth and fifth grade.

Molly Barker, founder of Girls on the Run International, says, "The idea is to introduce girls to some tools that will help them weather adolescence, so they'll come out on the other side much stronger than when they went into it."

Group activities are geared toward helping the girls develop a solid sense of identity, a positive body image and a voice in the community. Seven-year-old Olivia Walker says, "It's about supporting other people and running and having your body healthy."

Barker started Girls on the Run in 1996 with just 13 girls. The program has since spread throughout North America and will host 50,000 participants this year alone. "I needed to do something (with my life and one of those things was to do something) for little girls that would help them feel comfortable and safe in their own skin," she says.



The 12-week program culminates in a 5K run, a goal that symbolizes all the curriculum's ideals. About half of the girls who participate in Girls on the Run repeat the program, and when they get too old for it, most go on to participate in a companion program for teenagers called Girls on Track.

**If you would like more information, please contact:**

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