



TAG in Action: Girls on the Run

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow**® (TAG), the Office of Adolescent Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country.

The Goal | Girls on the Run is a positive youth development program designed to enhance girls' social, psychological, and physical skills and behaviors.

The Game Plan | Girls on the Run uses running and other physical activities as a platform for teaching life skills and promoting holistic health outcomes. Girls on the Run began in 1996 in Charlotte, North Carolina with thirteen girls. Today, approximately 53,000 volunteer coaches help to serve more than 200,000 girls each year across the United States and internationally.

Girls on the Run offers two 10-week programs, one for girls in 3rd to 5th grade (Girls on the Run) and another specifically designed for middle schoolers (Heart & Sole). Each 10-week curriculum addresses themes girls can relate to and includes lessons that target competence, confidence, caring, character, connection and contribution. The volunteer coaches participate in a National Coach Training Program which prepares them to build relationships with and between the girls, create a positive, inclusive environment, support individual improvement and deliver the intentional curriculum. During the program, girls learn specific skills and strategies on topics such as managing emotions and resolving conflict, and discuss how the skills can be applied at home, school, and with friends. Girls also have the opportunity to give back to their communities in meaningful ways. The programs conclude with a celebratory 5k event that gives the girls a tangible sense of achievement as well as a framework for setting and achieving goals.

In 2016, Dr. Weiss from the University of Minnesota conducted a rigorous, independent study on the Girls on the Run program. The study compared Girls on the Run participants with girls involved in physical education or organized sports programs. The study concluded that Girls on the Run has a stronger impact in the areas that the curriculum intentionally addresses including managing emotions, resolving conflict, helping others and making intentional decisions.

The Winning Ways | Allie Riley, the Senior Vice President of Programming and Evaluation, shared that “We know that adolescents bring a lot to the table. We help the girls to recognize their inner strength and celebrate what makes them unique. The program accomplishes this by combining physical activity with a very intentional approach to teaching social and emotional skills. We provide girls with a relevant and safe environment where they can learn and practice team work, conflict resolution, emotion management, healthy relationship skills and more. They explore how they can positively shape the world around them. And when they cross the finish line of the 5k, they see that anything is possible!”

Learn More | [Girls on the Run
https://www.girlsontherun.org](https://www.girlsontherun.org)

