

DEAR FRIENDS,

Finding strength in our connectedness is one of the core values at Girls on the Run. The launch of a spring season celebrates this so much, as we see schools open their doors, volunteer coaches step up, and our community (you!) meet the needs of our girls.

2020 is unlike any other season, though. Three weeks into our season, COVID-19's impact became even more significant as schools in Southwest Michigan closed for the safety of our community. We're navigating uncharted waters, like the rest of our country, and looking forward as best we can.

Our mission is to inspire girls to be joyful, healthy and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running. Right now, that looks a little different, but we are committed to our girls knowing we are a resource and a safe place in the complexities they are facing. Our girls are in 3rd through 8th grade, in communities throughout Berrien, Van Buren, Cass and St. Joseph counties. This event will be part of their story, and now more than ever they need the skills and tools that Girls on the Run teaches them.

During the closures, we have offered "GOTR At Home" activities via email, video, and mailed them to our families without internet access (especially for our rural teams, this is a serious barrier). Our coaches have connected digitally with the girls, and we've devoted our time to making sure our girls are nurturing their physical and emotional health in this trying time.

Expressing joy, optimism and gratitude through our words, thoughts and actions is another core value of Girls on the Run. I'm writing today to do exactly that! I want to share the joy of our community connecting, and the optimism I have for the future.

Most of all, I am grateful. I am grateful to be part of a community that puts so much forward. I am grateful we have partners like The United Way of Southwest Michigan, United Federal Credit Union and Midwest Family. I am grateful for the grants that commit to supporting girls, including Michigan Gateway Community Foundation, The Pokagon Fund, The DeGroot Family Foundation, St. Joseph County United Way, Berrien Community Foundation, and the Rotary Club of South Haven. I am grateful for the sponsors that celebrate our girls, like AEP-Cook Nuclear, Bronson, Wightman, Kruggel Lawton CPAs, Insurance Management Service, Whelan & Company, Silver Beach Pizza, and All-Star Family Chiropractic. I am grateful for the organizations that donate services, like St. John's ELCA Church in Baroda, Spectrum Lakeland Health, Southwestern Michigan College, and Café Julia. I am grateful for our SoleMates, a team of fundraising superstars, and for our donors who step up to the needs of our council.

While we turn inward as a community, I want to share and celebrate with you our season so far. Our season is paused, but the energy, spirit, and connection is still here. Take a moment to see what has happened so far, and thank you for your support along the way!

**With gratitude,
Tess Carragher, Executive Director**

Untangling our emotions

Just before our season paused, our curriculum guided the girls through a lesson that explored different emotions. It taught the girls how to identify what they are feeling, and express it in a healthy way. We're so glad the girls have this lesson in their pocket as they navigate the messages and complexities that COVID-19 has brought to their community. As they are faced with school closures, resource scarcity, new family dynamics, and an uncertain end, we know their Girls on the Run skills will serve them well. We're grateful to our coaches, who guided them through "Untangling Our Emotions" as a lesson, and helped them apply it to their lives before the pandemic reached their communities.



Stewart Elementary in Stevensville



Coloma Intermediate in Coloma



Hoppin Elementary in Three Rivers

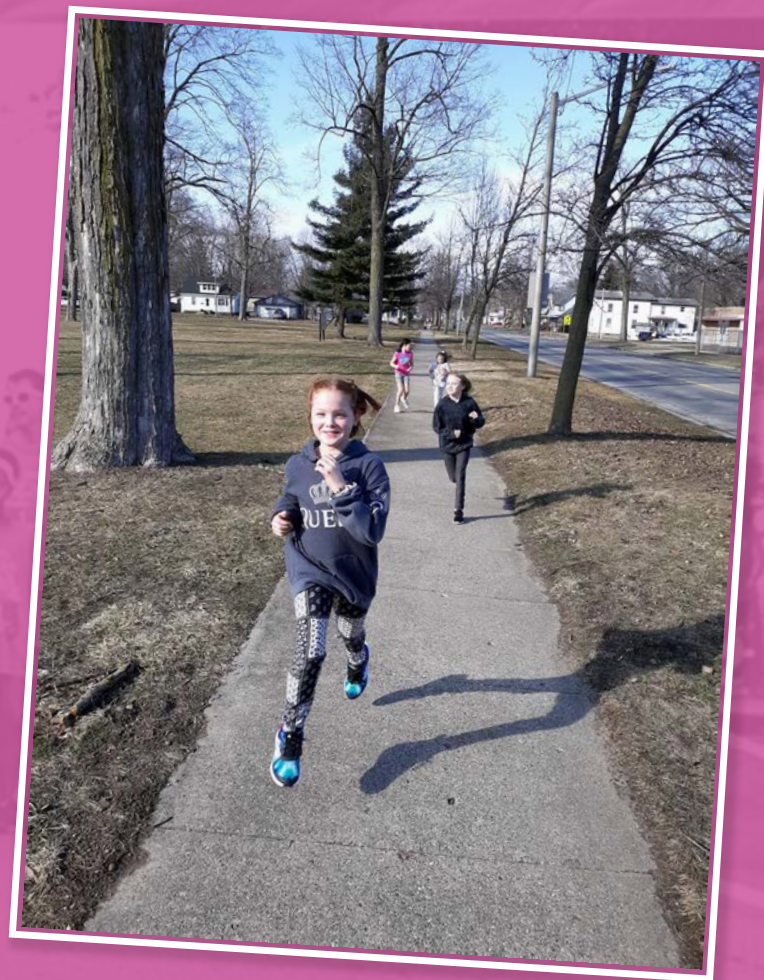


Lincoln Elementary in St. Joseph



Girls on the Run 5K

Here's a
snapshot of our
season so far!



Our Girls

759

45% are at or below
the Federal Poverty
Level

62% qualify for free or
reduced lunch

Our Teams

42

37 3rd-5th grade teams

5 6th-8th grade teams

25 participating districts in
Berrien, Cass, Van Buren
and St. Joseph counties

Our Coaches

179

14 Junior Coaches
high school junior or seniors

60% returning from 2019

They joined a team...



Moccasin Elementary in Buchanan



Brown School in St. Joseph



Eagle Lake Elementary in Edwardsville



Hoppin Elementary in Three Rivers

They jumped in...



Eastwood Elementary in Sturgis



Upton Middle School in St. Joseph



North Shore Elementary in South Haven



Fairplain East in Benton Harbor

They ran with their hearts...



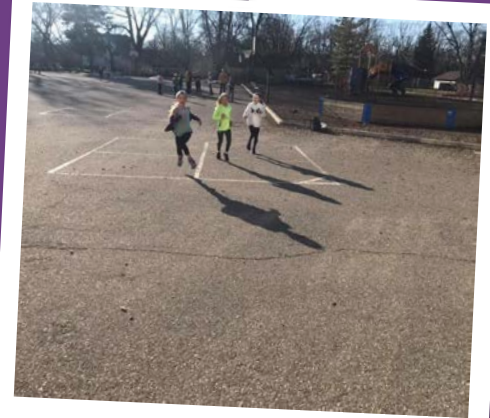
Hoppin Elementary in Three Rivers



Brown School in St. Joseph



Eagle Lake Elementary in Edwardsburg



Lincoln Elementary in St. Joe

and their coaches led the way



Coach Casey in Constantine



Coach Toni in Benton Harbor



Coach Renae in Watervliet



Coach Elizabeth in St. Joseph

OUR PARTNERS

Girls on the Run is grateful for the generous financial support and contributions from corporations, foundations and organizations that advance our mission of transforming the lives of girls across the country.



NATIONAL PARTNERS



PRESENTING SPONSOR



FUNDED PARTNER



United Way
of Southwest Michigan

Michigan Gateway

community foundation

for girls in Cass County, Niles, and Buchanan

The Michigan Gateway Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Council awarded \$6,250. Additionally, YAC members and Foundation staff stepped up as coaches for the program at Moccasin Elementary.



for girls in New Buffalo and Three Oaks

For teams at New Buffalo Elementary and River Valley Middle School, the Pokagon Fund committed up to \$6000 for scholarships helping girls with program access at both schools.

DE GROOT
FAMILY FOUNDATION

for girls in Watervliet and Coloma

The DeGroot Family Foundation awarded \$5,000 to teams at Coloma Intermediate and Watervliet North for registration scholarship. Additionally, funds will help with the 5K event.



for girls in St. Joseph County

We're proud to be a funded agency with the St. Joseph County United Way. Their \$1800 commitment helps us serve girls in Three Rivers, Sturgis, Colon, Constantine, and Centreville.



for girls in Benton Harbor

We received a "For Good" grant from the Berrien Community Foundation. The \$720 awarded provided girls at Mildred C. Wells with new running shoes, so they could participate in our program to the fullest extent.



for girls in South Haven

Committing to teams at North Shore Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, and Maple Grove, the Rotary Club of South Haven provided \$500 for scholarships.



United Federal Credit Union's deep commitment to their community shines in their partnership with Girls on the Run. Their significant support allows us to deliver a high-quality 5K to girls, engaging their staff before and during the race, and supporting our team's program season and Camp GOTR. Because of them, we're able to not only have fun, but cultivate opportunities for girls to discover their limitless potential.



**United Way
of Southwest Michigan**

We're proud to be a funded partner of the United Way of Southwest Michigan. With their commitment to the community and Girls on the Run, we're able to devote time and resources to high-quality programming and partnerships. United Way of Southwest Michigan's resources are a crucial part of the Girls on the Run experience in Southwest Michigan.



The support from Midwest Family extends beyond the 5K – they are our cheerleaders all year round, making sure that our community knows about the impact and the fun of our program.

Program and 5K Sponsors

These sponsorships helped us begin an amazing season for girls in Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, and St. Joseph counties, and laid the foundation and possibility for an incredible 5K event.



United Way
of Southwest Michigan



COOK
NUCLEAR
PLANT



In Kind Sponsors

These contributions fulfill crucial council needs, and we are so grateful!



United Way
of Southwest Michigan



St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church
Baroda, MI

Making sure ALL girls can participate

Our friends at United Federal Credit Union stepped up to make sure all girls were equipped to **unleash their limitless potential**. From January 13th through January 31st, they hosted a shoe drive in their branch lobbies. Helping us extend our reach further, they arranged for Coldwell Banker Advantage in Stevensville to participate. Thanks to them, girls in our program that needed help most were able to access shoes, sports bras, and socks.

United
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Every branch in Berrien County participated – thank you!



In addition to shoes, this drive raised \$120 for more sizes.

COLDWELL BANKER
ADVANTAGE

Thank you for supporting Girls on the Run in our community! It's great to have new community partners dedicated to joyful, healthy and confident girls.



Team Fairplain East ready to run in Benton Harbor, thanks to this initiative.

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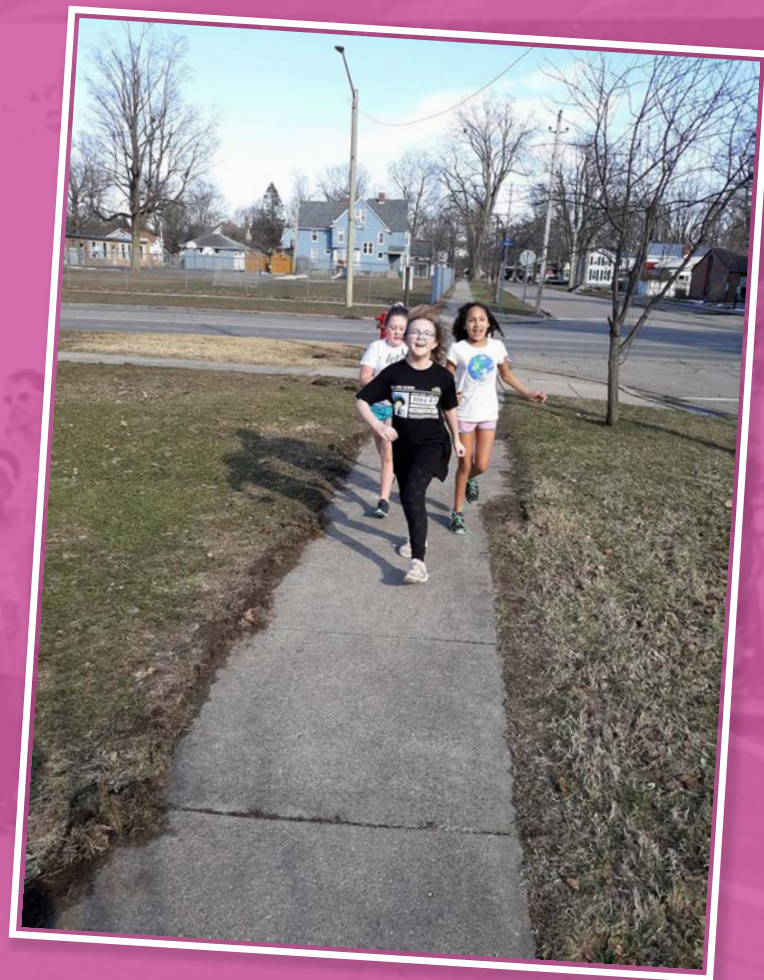
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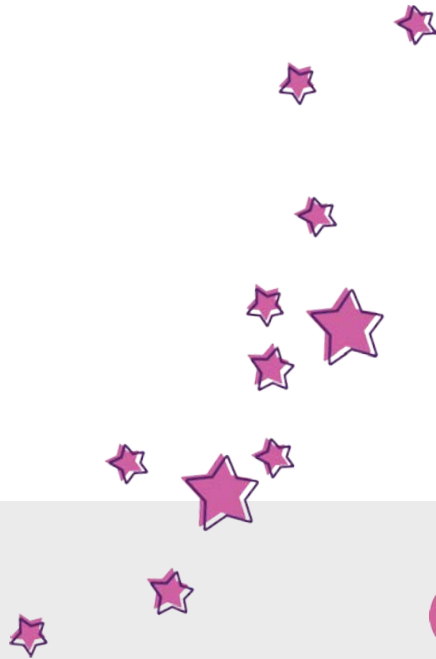
Thank you to **Karen Klug** who completed her board service in October 2019.



Girls on the Run 5K

Thank you for
being part of our
GOTR team.





JOIN THE
MOVEMENT ↘

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