What is Girls on the Run?

Girls on the Run (GOTR) is an uplifting, empowering and life-changing program that focuses on teaching life lessons to girls in the 3rd – 5th grades. We also offer a middle school program for girls in the 6th-8th grade called Heart and Sole. With 24 lessons delivered over the course of 12 weeks, GOTR and H&S inspire girls to be healthy and confident using an experience-based curriculum that creatively integrates running. At the end of the 12 weeks, the girls experience a sense of accomplishment and pride in themselves as they complete a 5k with hundreds of other participants and their running buddies.

GOTR began in the High Country in the fall of 2009 with 4 coaches and 13 girls. We have grown dramatically since then and this spring we will have sites at schools in Watauga, Avery and Wilkes counties with close to 200 girls and 50 coaches participating! Our spring end-of-season 5k will be held on May 7 in Boone at the Greenway Trail— all previous GOTR participants and community members are invited to attend! Our fundraisers for this year will be the High Country Triple Crown Race Series (pg. 5) and our annual Luck O’ the Lassie event at The Best Cellar/Inn at Ragged Gardens in Blowing Rock (pg. 2). Due to great effort put into these events and grant applications, we are able to offer full or partial scholarships to over 67% of our participants last year!

We are constantly in need of support for our fundraisers and 5k events and would like to increase our reach into Ashe and Alleghany Counties. If you are interested in helping get a site started at your school or community, volunteering at one of our 5k events or Triple Crown races, participating in one of our races, donating items, or sponsoring a fundraiser, please let us know. We would love to have you join us in helping girls discover their potential and inspiring them to pursue their dreams!
On March 19, 2017, Girls on the Run of the High Country will host its 7th annual Luck O’ the Lassie (LOL) celebration at the Best Cellar/Inn at Ragged Gardens in Blowing Rock. In a very festive and fun evening, the event honors the contributions made by all our coaches and highlights our wonderful sponsors while at the same time raising funds to support the GOTR scholarship program. We also award the Leigh Cooper Wallace ‘Making A Difference’ award to a volunteer who has greatly impacted the organization in the past year.

With approximately 67% of our participants receiving financial support in 2016, this event is of vital importance to the organization. We encourage you to get a group of friends together to attend! Tickets can be purchased online at www.gotr.appstate.edu/lucko. A portion of your ticket price and all donations are tax deductible and will truly make a difference in our ability to offer an affordable program to all girls in the high country!

“67% of our participants received financial support in 2016”

Daring to be Different,
Ana-Maria Temple, MD

I am proud of my life. I have a successful career and a wonderful family. It’s a good life. Getting here wasn’t a piece of cake, however. There is a backstory that exemplifies my favorite mantra: You can start late, be different, be uncertain, and still succeed.

I started out as a regular kid growing up in Communist Romania. The days were filled with laughter, games, homework, and various shenanigans. I was just like everyone else. In 1984, my parents immigrated to the United States for its freedom and opportunities and because I was insistent on becoming a doctor. The path to medical school in communist Romania was far from certain.

Upon arriving in the US, I was faced with a country and a culture I knew nothing about. I did not speak the language, had no friends, and didn’t own many material things. On the first day of middle school I got my schedule, which I stared at without comprehension. Nothing made sense. I only knew and understood "thank you" and "please."

Making friends is tough when the language is a barrier. Add middle school kids with their insecurities and need to fit in, and the result is a kid in search of an identity, language, and friends. Despite all this, I had to make it work. I would take notes letter by letter since no words the teacher said or wrote on the board made sense. At home, my dad would translate the English words I had written in my notebooks into Romanian. Needless to say, homework took hours. Within six months, I was making straight A's.

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I have been a teacher at North Wilkes Middle School for fourteen years! I love teaching and coaching! I have coached volleyball, cheerleading, and track for our school. I have been a coach for Girls on the Run for six seasons. I absolutely love being a coach and seeing the differences this program makes in the lives of young adolescent girls. I first read about the program in a magazine several years ago and then I saw an episode on Oprah about the Girls on the Run program. Immediately I knew I was meant to lead this group. I believe in this program and have seen the benefits it provides for our girls. I feel called to be a part of such a special organization.

The lessons in the program center on self-esteem, positive self-image, teamwork, and diversity. These lessons provide the opportunity for young girls to become confident, strong, and compassionate in their lives. In my younger years, I wish I would have had this opportunity to belong to a group that cares so much for the physical and emotional well-being of young girls. As a young girl in school, I struggled with self-esteem and self-image issues. I understand the challenges the girls face in school today. I see it on a daily basis. I want my girls to be proud of themselves and who they are as unique individuals. I want them to understand the value of being active and eating healthy.

My hope is for them to develop an unbreakable confidence and techniques necessary to deal with the pressures they face every day. I want the girls to believe in themselves and know that they are capable of achieving all of their dreams. My wish is for them to become strong, healthy, determined, and resilient young girls.

Coaching Girls on the Run has taught me to really listen to the girls and the experiences they have. I have learned from the girls how to have fun, to let go, and to just be silly sometimes. The girls have inspired me to become a better person too. They are my inspiration for running outside of school and setting goals for myself. They are my teachers and motivate me to be a better adult. I hope I can continue to serve as a role model for them and for them to believe they can do anything in life!
Good grades and my rise to the top of 6th grade academically did not get me many friends. In the beginning, I was an unknown entity in the school and now I suddenly got noticed as the nerdy kid who wore the same clothes every week. The bullying became very real. Over time, I made a few great friends who accepted me with my accent and my weirdness. On the other side of the spectrum, my younger sister transitioned beautifully into the American culture. I was starting to think that I had arrived in the US too late. Being different in a world that celebrates sameness takes courage. Being different is not a weakness and at times, it becomes a necessity. I hated high school. My self-doubt, insecurity, and anxiety worsened. The lack of control over my high school social life led me to launch a battle against food and my body, a war against The GPA, and fearless competition on the sports field. Unfortunately, my struggle with gaining control over food thoughts and my body image turned into a seven year illness. Continued pg. 5

It Takes Courage
by Jackie Dyer

It’s Thursday afternoon at 2:30 and the end of another long school day. I’m waiting in the car line to pick up my children and take them to swim practice and as I pull forward through the line, I take one look at the face of my 3rd grader and know something isn’t right. As soon as she gets in the car, tears begin rolling down her cheeks and she tells me about an incident that happened on the playground that has left her feeling excluded by her friends. I am immediately reminded of a GOTR lesson that coaches girls in strategies to use to stand up for themselves and be appropriately assertive in situations just like this!

The title of the lesson is “It Takes Courage” and teaches girls to use statements such as, “I feel…” when trying to communicate with others during difficult discussions instead of getting angry and yelling in response. For example, if you say “I feel sad” you are letting the other person know how you feel without putting the other person on the defensive.

You would follow this up with “When you…” to let the other person know the exact behavior or thing that is making you feel the way you do. Next you would use a “because” statement to let the other person know this makes you feel a certain way and give them a better understanding of why you feel this way. You would finish with a suggestion on how you would like them to do things differently in a respectful and non-demanding way. As an example of how to put it all together - “I FEEL sad WHEN YOU don’t listen to my ideas BECAUSE I have good ideas too. I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU to give me a chance to share my ideas.”

Once I reminded my daughter about this valuable Girls on the Run lesson and helped her frame what she would say to her friends, she seemed to calm down and go about her day. Several weeks later I checked in to see if she had taken my suggestion and used the methods from the curriculum. She said not only did she use them, but that the girls now seemed to be able to get along better and there had been no trouble during recess!
The High Country Triple Crown

The High Country Triple Crown (HCTC), the largest fundraiser for Girls on the Run of the High Country, just celebrated it’s 12th year as a running series. HCTC hosts runners from all over the country to participate in the series which consists of The Cub (7 miles), The High Country Half Marathon (13.1 miles) and The Knob and The Bonk (2 miles).

The 2016 race series again achieved huge success with over 400 runners participating. All proceeds from the events are donated to Girls on the Run and a check will be presented during the annual Luck o’ the Lassie on March 19, 2017!

In 2017, The Cub will be held over Memorial Day Weekend, the Half Marathon on Aug. 26, and The Knob/The Bonk will be on a Saturday in October. Please consider either volunteering for one of the races or registering to walk or run!

Daring, cont. from pg. 4

Amidst these insecurities and angst, I maintained a determination to make medical school a reality and I found the incentive needed to achieve admission to University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

During the uncertain college years, I started believing in myself and in my abilities. I forgave my short comings. I found my voice and I found my place in the world. I reconstructed an IMPOSSIBLE self-image, to I’M POSSIBLE. Medical school was my dream since I was five years old, and in 1995, I achieved it.

Fast forward to today, 32 years since arriving to the US, I still live by my mantra: You can start late, be different, be uncertain, and still succeed. Eleven years into my pediatric practice, I am no longer scared of what others think and I believe in myself. I will make a difference. Practicing medicine in the technology era takes courage to face uncertainty, perseverance to learn the unknown, and openness to take risks and be different. Aside from my clinical practice, I teach nutrition to 3rd grade students to inspire a change of habits. Moreover, I blog and post on various social media platforms. Learning this unknown and uncertain venue is not easy, but I am catching on slowly. It’s never too late to learn new tricks, and nothing is ever learned in one day.

Ana-Maria is a General Pediatrician who has worked at hospitals across the country and is currently with Charlotte Pediatric Clinic in Charlotte, NC. Along with treating children and teaching them about nutrition, Ana-Maria is a mother of three and blogs at MC2Charlotte.
GOTR of the High Country is sponsored by:

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Sponsor Spotlight:
Appalachian Ski Mountain

Appalachian Ski Mtn. became the High Country’s first ski area in 1962, and has been owned and operated by the Moretz Family since 1968. Skiing and snowboarding are sports that all ages can enjoy; children as young as 2 years old can learn to ski, and children 5 and under can ski free with a paying adult. Time spent together on the slopes and in the lodge make great memories that will stay with a family forever.

The French Swiss Ski College at Appalachian has taught over 1 million people how to ski and snowboard, or improve their skills. Rental equipment and rental clothing is also available on-site as well as the Alpine Ski Shop which is a full service ski and snowboard shop with exceptional customer service and great variety. Appalachian’s outdoor Ice Arena has a unique panoramic setting with a beautiful view of the slopes, and features the region’s only Zamboni surfaced Ice Arena.

Lift ticket options include the Flex Ticket which is good for 8 hours and your time starts when you buy your ticket. Beginning at 5:00pm, Appalachian offers the longest night session in the southeast region. Seven nights a week you can ski under the moon and stars and enjoy being on the slopes at a time that is the best value, lowest cost, and least crowded. There are also special Midnight Blast Sessions on Friday & Saturday nights, as well as many holidays.

Girls on the Run loves the family environment of App Ski Mt. and the opportunity it offers us to be active outdoors during the winter months. App Ski Mt. has been a generous Girls on the Run sponsor for five years!