

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact
Kelly McGuire
Kmcguire@girlsontherun.org
330.502.3043



WNBA Star Nneka Ogwumike Joins the Board of Girls on the Run International

Professional basketball player for the Los Angeles Sparks, adidas athlete, president of the WNBPA will become a playmaker for the girl empowerment nonprofit

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (Oct. 6, 2022) – Today, [Girls on the Run International](#), a nonprofit that empowers young girls, announced that Stanford University graduate and WNBA star [Nneka Ogwumike](#) will join its leadership team. Ogwumike (pronounced *Ah-gwoo-ma-kay*) plays for the Los Angeles Sparks and serves as the president of the Women's National Basketball Players Association. Now she will combine her star power from on and off the court to serve Girls on the Run International as a member of the board of directors starting October 1, 2022.



“At 6 feet 2 inches, girls literally and figuratively look up to Nneka. She is a tremendous role model and embodies so many of the things we reinforce in our curriculum: leadership, teamwork, resilience and confidence,” said Elizabeth Kunz, CEO of Girls on the Run International. “She has done so much for our organization over the years, and she brings both her head and heart to our mission. Now our board, our entire organization and the hundreds of thousands of girls we serve every year will benefit from her perspective and leadership.”

Ogwumike has already been generously supporting Girls on the Run (GOTR) for three years. In 2019, she cheered on participants at end-of-season 5K events for the Girls on the Run councils in Charlotte, N.C., and Los Angeles. When the world was sidelined early in the pandemic, she created a [GOTR at Home video](#) during the spring 2020 season. In 2021, she helped garner a \$50,000 donation from Pepsi for GOTR Los Angeles and also participated as a panelist at

GOTR's 25th Birthday event which raised more than \$250,000.

"I'm incredibly honored to join the Girls on the Run board of directors. I do what I do today thanks to role models before me. These role models looked like me and opened my mind and heart to the many possibilities to be phenomenal. I hope in my own way as an athlete and an advocate, I'm able to serve as a role model for young aspirers also looking to see, relate and ultimately be empowered to be great," said Ogwumike.



Ogwumike graduated from Stanford University in 2012 and was the first overall pick in the WNBA draft that year. She just finished her tenth season as a power forward with the Los Angeles Sparks. In 2016, she led the Sparks to the WNBA championship and was named the 2016 WNBA Most Valuable Player. Ogwumike was elected president of the WNBA Players Association in 2016 and was re-elected to a new three-year term in 2019. In 2021, the WNBA's 25th season, she was named to *The W25* as one of the top 25 players in league history.

Her success both on and off the court make her a fantastic team and board member. Sports help develop leadership skills such as team building, decision-making, communication and discipline, among others. According to research, 54% of girls report increased leadership skills as one of the top benefits of playing sports. For example, one 2013 survey that studied 821 top female executives found that 90% of them had played sports at some level

while growing up. That percentage grew to 96% if the women were now CEOs.

Girls on the Run helps girls grow in confidence and become leaders just like Nneka Ogwumike. Its programs have a proven impact with 97% of participants saying they learned critical life skills from the research-based curriculum. From increased physical activity to character development, GOTR girls experience life-changing positive effects.

Ogwumike added, "There is no box that is big enough to contain the potential of these girls. By being involved with Girls on the Run, I want to play a part in reminding them of that, so they can go wherever they want to go and be whoever they want to be."

###

About Girls on the Run

Girls on the Run International (GOTRI) designs programming that strengthens third- to eighth-grade girls' social, emotional, physical, and behavioral skills to successfully navigate life experiences. Each year, more than 200,000 girls ages eight to 13 participate in communities in the United States and Canada. More than 2 million girls have participated in the program since it launched in 1996. The curriculum reaches girls at a critical stage, strengthening their confidence at a time when society begins to tell them they can't. Underscoring the important connection

between physical and emotional health, the program addresses the whole girl when she needs it the most. Results show GOTRI programs inspire and empower girls to build healthy physical and mental habits that last long beyond the program. According to a longitudinal study conducted by The University of Minnesota, 97% of Girls on the Run participants said they learn critical life skills including resolving conflict, helping others or making intentional decisions; and 94% of parents reported it was a valuable experience for their girl. To learn more about this international nonprofit, visit www.girlsontherun.org.