

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact  
Kelly McGuire  
[media@girlsontherun.org](mailto:media@girlsontherun.org)  
(330) 502-3043



## **Girls on the Run Launches New Curriculum to Meet the Needs of Today's Girls**

**CHARLOTTE, N.C.** (April 2024) – Today, [Girls on the Run International](#) (GOTRI), a nationally recognized nonprofit that empowers young girls, launched its new research-based curriculum intentionally designed to meet the needs of today's girls. Entitled *Hello, Superstar!*, the innovative curriculum helps girls build the confidence to be themselves through meaningful and engaging lessons and activities that keep them moving.

"Since 1996, we have been on a mission to empower girls to activate their limitless potential and boldly pursue their dreams," said Dr. Allison Riley, chief program officer of Girls on the Run International. "With the launch of *Hello, Superstar!*, we are delivering on that commitment with lessons uniquely designed to support this generation of girls who must navigate an increasingly complex world. We've refreshed our program to not only help girls face today's pressures but to be joyful, healthy, and confident."



As the only physical activity-based, positive youth development program for girls in the United States with a research-based curriculum, trained coaches, and a commitment to serving all girls, Girls on the Run provides tools and teaches skills to enhance girls' physical, social, and emotional health. Numerous studies and reports have shown the decline in girls' mental health and physical activity levels over the last decade. In February 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [reported](#) that three in five U.S. teen girls felt persistently sad or hopeless in 2021, the highest level reported in at least a decade. [According to the CDC](#), only 24% of 6- to 17-year-olds participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.



"Despite these statistics, Girls on the Run offers a bright spot for girls," added Riley. In May 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a report about the vital connection between physical activity and mental health. In it, Dr. Murthy singled out Girls on the Run as a successful program for girls to learn life skills through engaging activities and lessons.

"Girls on the Run fulfills girls' needs in a pivotal time of their development and creates an environment where every participant feels accepted and has the potential to shine," said Senior Director of Program Development

Katarina Corda, who oversaw the curriculum development. "Based on our research on what matters to

coaches, girls, and families today, we created lessons to help participants get active, make friends, understand emotions, resolve conflicts, celebrate differences, embrace what makes each of us shine in our own way, and more.”

To shape the curriculum, the GOTRI programming team sought feedback from more than 2,000 participants, coaches, and caregivers from across the country. They also partnered with additional external experts in inclusion and positive youth development who reviewed the lessons at every stage of development.

*Hello, Superstar!* is the first of a three-part suite of curricula. The two additional curriculum versions are set to roll out over the next 18 months. The second version focuses on the confidence to do hard things, and the third is currently in development. These themes around confidence allow for a unique experience each season while reinforcing core Girls on the Run lessons on self-talk, emotions, communication, empathy, friendship, and teamwork through different lenses. The series encourages repeat participation, allowing for deeper learning and reinforcing the [lessons’ long-term positive impact](#).

To experience the lessons, check out [Sample Lesson 2](#) or [Sample Lesson 9](#). [Click here](#) for high-resolution photos of Girls on the Run teams using the new curriculum.

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#### **About Girls on the Run**

Girls on the Run International (GOTRI) creates and offers after-school empowerment programs designed for 3rd- to 8th-grade girls. The national nonprofit helps participants recognize their inner strength, increase their level of physical activity, imagine their possibilities, and confidently stand up for themselves and others through the innovative integration of fun physical activities, life-skills lessons, and impactful community projects. The research-based curriculum led by trained volunteer coaches explores core topics relevant to 8- to 13-year-old girls, including understanding emotions, fostering friendships, expressing empathy, and standing up for themselves. The coaches create a sense of belonging for all participants, and the curriculum helps meet the vital needs of girls today. The program culminates in a community impact project and a celebratory 5K. Since it was founded in 1996, this national movement has served more than 2.25 million girls in all 50 states and Canada. Learn more at [girlsontherun.org](http://girlsontherun.org).

# GIRLS ON THE RUN CURRICULUM FACT SHEET

## WHAT

Girls on the Run International (GOTRI) creates and offers after-school empowerment programs designed for 3rd- to 8th-grade girls. The national nonprofit helps participants recognize their inner strength, increase their level of physical activity, imagine their possibilities, and confidently stand up for themselves and others through the innovative integration of fun physical activities, life-skills lessons, and impactful community projects. The research-based curriculum led by trained volunteer coaches explores core topics relevant to 8- to 13-year-old girls, including understanding emotions, fostering friendships, expressing empathy, and standing up for themselves. The coaches create a sense of belonging for all participants, and the curriculum helps meet the vital needs of girls today. The program culminates in a community impact project and a celebratory 5K. Since it was founded in 1996, this national movement has served more than 2.25 million girls in all 50 states and Canada.

## HOW

Girls on the Run fulfills girls' needs at a pivotal time of their development and helps them feel empowered to lead a physically and emotionally healthy life. In fact, there is strong evidence from an [independent study](#) conducted by Maureen Weiss, Ph.D., University of Minnesota, showed that Girls on the Run is effective in driving transformative change in the lives of young girls. Girls who were the least active at the start of the season increased their physical activity level by 40% from pre- to post-season and maintained this increased level beyond season's end. Almost all girls (97%) said they learned critical life skills, including managing emotions, resolving conflict, helping others, or making intentional decisions at Girls on the Run that they are using at home, at school, and with their friends.

Through GOTR programs, participants develop and improve *competence*, feel *confidence* in who they are, develop strength of *character*, respond to others and themselves with *care* and compassion, and create positive *connections* with peers and adults. These life skills allow girls to contribute to the community and society and also prevent unhealthy and risky behaviors, such as physical inactivity and negative body image, and promote positive physical, mental, and social health outcomes.

## WHO

The Girls on the Run programming team, comprised of experts in positive youth development, child-centered learning, and curriculum design, created the new curriculum.

### Dr. Allison Riley, Chief Program Officer



Allison joined Girls on the Run in 2013 and leads the programming and evaluation team. She earned her Ph.D. in social work with a specialization in positive youth development in social settings from Ohio State University (OSU) and also holds a master's degree in social work with a concentration in clinical practices with children and youth from OSU, a master's degree in kinesiology from Purdue University, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Virginia. She has over 15 years of experience developing, implementing, and evaluating physical activity-based positive youth development programs. Allison believes intentionally designed sport and physical activity experiences are pivotal in youth development.

### Katarina Corda, Senior Director of Program Development



Katarina oversees curriculum development and is responsible for designing relevant, creative, and impactful programming. Before joining Girls on the Run in 2019, Katie gained extensive experience in constructivist-based curriculum design and differentiation, integration of social-emotional skill development, and culturally responsive curriculum development throughout her time at various educational settings in the K-12 school system. She has worked with young people in various settings for more than a decade as an educator and learning designer. Katie holds a master's in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a master's in teaching from Evergreen State College, known for its robust and child-centered learning approach.

## THEME

The first version in the new Girls on the Run curricula suite is *Hello, Superstar!*, and it helps girls develop the confidence to be themselves, love themselves, and encourage others to do the same. The stellar theme honors the fan-favorite Star Power lesson from an earlier curriculum version. During the season, participants learn what makes each of them unique and special. They discover their incredible strengths and refine the skills they need to shine in their own way and encourage others to shine brightly as well.

## CORE GIRLS ON THE RUN TOPICS

- Self-talk
- Emotions
- Communication
- Empathy
- Friendship
- Teamwork

## LESSONS

The program first focuses on the individual and her confidence. As the season progresses, it shifts to building relationships with others and amplifying their confidence. Finally, as a team, participants use their shared confidence to implement a community impact project.

Lesson 1: Our Superstar Team!

[Lesson 2: What Makes Me, ME!](#)

Lesson 3: Star Power

Lesson 4: Happy Pace

Lesson 5: Self-Talk

Lesson 6: All Bodies Rock!

Lesson 7: Feel Your Feelings!

Lesson 8: Share Your Emotions

[Lesson 9: We All Shine!](#)

Lesson 10: Stop & Take a Breather

Lesson 11: Friendship

Lesson 12: Shining Together: Our Practice 5K!

Lesson 13: Perspective

Lesson 14: Be an Includer!

Lesson 15: Teamwork

Lesson 16: Mapping Our Community

Lesson 17: Small Acts Make a Difference

Lesson 18: Helping Our Community Shine Brighter

Lesson 19: Share the Superstar Message!

Lesson 20: Our GOTR Toolbox