

LACES (Lady Athletes Can Expect Success) RUNNING CLUB
PLEASANT HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED S.D. 15
(as written by one of the teacher organizers)

Our program started 4 years ago by myself and one other teacher. We heard about the "Girls on the Run" program and were thinking about joining that but when we realized the cost associated with the club, we didn't want to exclude anyone from participating so we developed our own curriculum together. Since our club is comprised of girls in grades 3-6 we really wanted to focus on "girl" issues that these kids might struggle with in their daily lives. Our main goals throughout the season range from: self-esteem, team building, healthy body image, nutrition for running, injury prevention, commitment, and perseverance.

We meet twice a week after school for an hour and our practices are structured by having a lesson about the goal for that week, followed by a movement activity/game illustrating the goal we discussed. From there we train for about a 1/2 hour each practice and end with discussions about how we can incorporate the goals we learned into our running and other aspects of their lives.

As far as the training goes, we loosely follow a walk/run program that has the girls running for a certain amount of minutes and not measured by distance. The season begins with circuits of 1-2 minutes running with 1-2 minutes walking in between for about 5-6 times. Eventually, we work up to about 4 minutes running, 1 minute walking. We try to keep the training element fun and different to keep their interest so we change location (playground, around the outside of the school building, a local park, and even throughout the hallways of the school on rainy days). We also vary the training so they might be doing their runs with a buddy or in a small group where one person runs while the other rests and then they alternate. Again, we want to foster a love of running and fitness so we don't want to make it feel like a punishment. Variety is key!

Typically our season begins the week after spring break for 9 weeks and finishes with our participation in a local 5K race together – which is more than most of them have ever run before. We have a few that are able to run the entire thing, while most will stop for walking breaks throughout. A majority of our runners finish around 35 minutes. For 2014, our season is shortened to 7 weeks which works out great as we are participating in Got2Run For Education and will be running the 2.62 mile Micro-Marathon. We will be taking a bus to the event to foster camaraderie and expect there will be 60-65 girls in attendance.