

Media Release



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For Immediate Release:

Girls on the Run Palm Beach Celebrated another Season of Success

A local non-profit focused on young girl empowerment applauded girls' accomplishments during their bi-annual fitness event.

(Lake Worth) Girls on the Run Palm Beach celebrated this season's running goals for the program with a 5K (3.1 mile) event at Bryant Park on Saturday, November 12, 2017.

Girls on the Run is more than running — it's an educational mentoring program that empowers girls in third through eighth grade to be joyful, healthy and confident.

Gigina Young, a parent of Hana at Roosevelt Middle School, is so thankful that her daughter got involved in the program. "She's made incredible friendships, and it's such an accepting atmosphere. The girls are like a pack together; it's such a safe zone," said Young. "My daughter just lights up when she talks about the lessons. It's made her more confident, and we're so thankful!"

Abby Vaknin, a fourth-grader at Manatee Elementary School who participated in GOTR at the Smith Farms community location in Lake Worth, could not run in this weekend's 5K because of an injury. She and her family showed up at the 5K because she wanted to cheer for her friends at the finish line. She says her favorite part about Girls on the Run is the lessons that she learns, noting the topic of inner beauty to be her favorite. Abby reflects the true spirit of teamwork that GOTR promotes by coming out to the event even though she could not run.

Three awards were handed out, which focus on values that the girls explored in the program. Coaches from each location nominate one girl per category, and the winners are randomly selected at the 5K event. These awards help GOTR emphasize that the focus of the 5K is on completing the event, and not on who finished with the best time.

The Positive Plug Award goes to a girl who understands the importance of having a positive attitude and shows that positivity most of the time. This award was given to Soraya Medina, a fourth-grade student at JC Mitchell Elementary and GOTR participant at Florence Fuller Child Development Center East in Boca Raton. Coach Mirvine Azor said, "She was always upbeat and kind to all of her friends in the program." Soraya demonstrated that she understands what it means to approach and react to activities in a positive manner. Throughout the program, she showed that she is an uplifting friend who enjoys her friends to have positive attitudes, too.

Two students from Ben Gamla Charter School in Boynton Beach also captured awards. Yve Leitzke, a third-grade student, received The Energetic Encourager Award, which is given to a

girl who has been the most encouraging to all of her teammates. Coach Jamie Shapiro said, "She was always the first to start running, and she got her friends excited to join in." Another third-grader, Eliana Drummond, earned the Extra Mile Award Mile Award, which honors a girl who does not give up and shows she perseveres in all she tries to do. Coach Jamie added, "She's terrific; we just love her attitude and how motivated she is! When she gets moving, there's no stopping her."

GOTR is grateful to The Education Foundation of Palm Beach, which hosted the girls in its Heroes for Education 5K; Roger Dean Stadium for sponsorship through the Cardinals/Marlins Foundation; the sites which host our program throughout the season; the coaches – volunteers who work with the girls each week; the Running Buddies - volunteers who motivate and guide each girl to cross the finish line; and all of the volunteers who came out that day to support the joyous event.

To learn more about Girls on the Run Palm Beach visit [www. GirlsontherunPBC.org](http://www.GirlsontherunPBC.org)

About Girls on the Run®

Girls on the Run Palm Beach (GOTR) was founded in 2011 as a local Council within a network of 225 federated councils nationwide. Locally, GOTR serves approximately 200 - 250 girls per year and fundraises to maintain quality programming for all girls and to ensure that girls in need are able to participate in its life-changing program. GOTR is a physical activity-based positive youth development program for 3rd to 8th grade girls. Participants develop and improve competence, feel confidence in who they are, develop strength of character, respond to others and themselves with care, create positive connections with peers and adults, and make a meaningful contribution to community and society. Each session is led by trained volunteer coaches who guide and mentor the girls through an evidence-based curriculum. The program concludes with girls completing a celebratory 5k event and a community service project, which give them a tangible sense of achievement as well as a framework for setting and achieving life goals. Nationally, Girls on the Run has served over 1.2 million girls since its inception in 1996.

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Photos follow...



Eliana Drummond received her award from Council Director Diane Evans.



As is GOTR tradition, Audrey Mayville celebrates her 5K with sparkling hair, sprayed by her coach at Calusa Elementary School, Mallory Biazzo



GOTR girls gather before completing their 5K running event.