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# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

### Girls on the Run Begins March 8th

**Waukegan, IL (March 1, 2016)** - Waukegan Park District participates in the Chicago Girls on the Run Program. This spring, girls ages 8-12 will have an opportunity to build new social relationships, develop confidence in their physical abilities and increase physical fitness through an exceptional running program called Girls on the Run. The program begins at the Field House Sports and Fitness Center on March 8<sup>th</sup> and ends on May 26<sup>th</sup>. The highly structured program and curriculum which has already served more than 168,000 teenage girls throughout the nation, provides girls with a positive, encouraging and fun environment that offers physical challenges and supports healthy choices. The program is led by experienced coaches, including Alderman Lisa May, Tracy Sompolski and Monica Vervilos; all have worked with the program in the past. Coaches create a positive and encouraging environment that strengthens girls' confidence and supports their health while having fun.

Lisa May, returning head coach for the Girls on the Run program, stated, "I'm looking forward to another season with Girls on the Run! Our number one goal is to have FUN and make new friends while training for a spectacular 5K race that we'll run with other GOTR teams at end of the program. Over the course of the program, our girls will participate in activities that will help them embrace their individuality, learn skills to navigate life's experiences and encourage them to build healthy relationships through teamwork. The physical component is

suiting to every girl, regardless of their athletic ability. We train together as a team in a very supportive and non-competitive environment while encouraging improvement and growth. No one gets held back and no one gets left behind! Coaching GOTR has been a rewarding experience and I can't wait to start a new season! I look forward to seeing new friendships grow and watching these girls become empowered while achieving new goals".

The Girls on the Run program can best be described via their opening message from the Girls on the Run webpage, [www.girlsontherun.org/Who-We-Are](http://www.girlsontherun.org/Who-We-Are): "Meeting twice a week in small teams of 8-20 girls, we teach life skills through dynamic, interactive lessons and running games. The 24-lesson curriculum is taught by certified Girls on the Run coaches and includes three parts: understanding ourselves, valuing relationships and teamwork and understanding how we connect with and shape the world at large.

Running is used to inspire and motivate girls, encourage lifelong health and fitness, and build confidence through accomplishment. Important social, psychological, and physical skills and abilities are developed and reinforced throughout the program. At each season's conclusion, the girls and their running buddies complete a 5k running event which gives them a tangible sense of achievement as well as a framework for setting and achieving life goals-the result-making the seemingly impossible, possible, and teaching girls that they can." For more information about the Waukegan Park District Girls on the Run Program, please call 847-360-4706.

Girls on the Run Mission statement: "We inspire girls to be joyful, healthy and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running".

## **About the Waukegan Park District**

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 48 sites and more than 725 acres of land, including the 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. Properties are managed to the highest environmental and conservation standards. Facilities operated by the district include the Field House Sports and Fitness Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, an outdoor swimming pool, disc golf course, dog exercise area and agility course, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, and sports courts including basketball, tennis and pickleball. A full range of programs and services are offered year round for all ages, from infants to seniors as well as special needs populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, the Bowen Park Theatre Company, and the Waukegan History Museum. There is something for everyone! The award-winning District employs 59 full-time and over 250 part-time, year round, seasonal, and temporary employees. The District is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), and Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The district maintains national accreditation from the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), the Illinois Association of Park District (IAPD) Distinguished Agency accreditation and the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) accreditation and sustains a Level A Loss Control Program. The district was a NRPA Gold Medal Finalist in 2012 and 2013, and awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013.

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## **Contact**

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