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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Local Nonprofit Hosts 5k Run to Empower Young Girls to Find Inner and Outer Strength

EUGENE, Ore. – Girls on the Run hosted their annual 5k in the Willamette Valley on Saturday, May 1st. The 5k marks the end of the year-long, extracurricular program designed to teach physical and mental health skills to elementary school girls.

Girls on the Run's programs are created to help inspire girls of all abilities to recognize and embrace their inner strength and make meaningful connections with others. Volunteer coaches have spent the year facilitating lessons for the program that blend physical activity with life skill development including managing emotions, fostering friendships, and expressing empathy. At the end of the season, the team completes a 5K together, which provides a tangible sense of accomplishment and sets a confident mindset into motion.

Misha Smith, a 4th grader in her second year of the program, completed the 5k alongside her mom. "It was so much fun. Your legs get kind of tired but after you feel amazing. I feel really proud of myself because I just ran a 5k and I thought I could never do that," Smith said.

Not only does Girls on the Run provide physical activity for young girls, but the program also teaches them crucial emotional lessons. Studies show that girls' self-confidence begins to drop by age 9, girls' physical activity levels decline starting at age 10, and 50% of girls ages 10-13 experience bullying.

Girls on the Run provides essential resources to prevent this decline. Ally Kamp, Volunteer Coordinator for Girls on the Run Willamette Valley, knows the importance of these lessons. "We teach the girls Social-Emotional Learning skills which really helps them grow. I have seen really

shy girls come into this program and come out much more confident in themselves. These are skills they are going to use for the rest of their lives. I have even learned so much for the program and have used the skills at my work,” Kamp said.

A recent independent study of Girls on the Run found that 97% of girls said they learn critical life skills including resolving conflict, helping others or making intentional decisions.

The Willamette Valley chapter of Girls on the Run consists of 7 schools that competed in the 5k at Island Park in Eugene, Ore. Over 100 girls participated in the program, all completing the race with a parent, sibling or guardian, called a “running buddies.” In addition to finishing the race, the girls walked away with emotional skills that they will use for the rest of their lives.

About Girls on the Run

Girls on the Run® is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization designed to enhance participants' social, emotional and physical skills to successfully navigate life experiences. Our fun, interactive lessons meet the unique needs of participants of all abilities and backgrounds.

About Girls on the Run Greater Oregon

Girls on the Run Greater Oregon is a council of Girls on the Run International, proudly serving Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah and Washington Counties as well as Bend, Corvallis, Bend, and Eugene. Since our council's inception, we have unlocked the power and potential of our participants and made a lasting impact on our community through participant-led service projects.