



Girls on the Run of Puget Sound One Season Program FAQ

Q: What is happening with Girls on the Run Puget Sound?

A: Starting in the 2016-17 school year, we're shifting to one season to focus on providing access for more girls who have yet to experience the Girls on the Run message. Instead of offering two seasons – in the fall and spring – we'll focus on one season, expanding our efforts to give more individuals the opportunity to join our spring season, which culminates in our celebratory 5K event in May. This will allow us to increase our recruitment efforts in the fall and provide more impactful programs to individuals in the spring.

Q: Why is this change happening now?

A: Since our council was founded in 2002, we've had the joy of serving over 6,800 girls across King County. We've grown bigger and stronger and now, we have the resources in place to take important steps forward to significantly expand our reach. Through increased recruitment efforts and expanding our pre-teen Heart & Sole program, we envision more girls having the chance to participate in our curriculum and feel empowered to pursue their dreams.

Q: What about the girls who only participate in the fall?

A: Our research shows that 46% of girls who participated in a spring session had previously participated in a Girls on the Run program – many participated in both seasons in a single school year. Our expansion goal encompasses reaching girls who have not yet received the messages of Girls on the Run. With limited capacity in our teams, the best way to serve the greatest number of unique individuals is to offer the program in the spring. This also allows girls who want to repeat the program to do so at a different developmental stage and grade levels.

Q: Why did you eliminate the Fall Season?

A: Safety is a huge priority for us. The late start date of Puget Sound schools meant that a ten week program squeezed in between school start dates and December. The weather and lack of sunlight in the evenings created safety concerns for our fall participants as teams often ended practice in the dark. Coupled with our opportunity for growth and expansion model, it made sense to simultaneously eliminate the safety concerns associated with the fall season.

Q: How will you serve more girls by reducing the number of seasons?

A: By focusing on one season, we'll be able to direct more resources toward increasing program sites, numbers of teams, and growing our pre-teen Heart & Sole program during the spring. In spring 2017 season, we aim to grow our participants by 27% or 300 girls on 20 new teams for spring. While we are focusing on growing in the spring 2017 season, we are anticipating a slight reduction in number of girls served annually in the first year as we shift. By 2020, our goal is to serve 3,300 annually so we will focus on building a solid infrastructure to support this exciting growth over the next five years.

Q: Does this change mean Girls on the Run Puget Sound is struggling?

A: No, not at all! In fact, our 2015 Gratitude Report outlines our most robust participation stats and financial strength to date. This positive outlook is a solid indicator that we're ready to take on new challenges and pursue our plans for continued growth. To review the Gratitude Report, visit www.girlsrun.org/donate.

Q: When will these changes take place?

A: In 2016, we'll offer our spring season as part of the 2015-16 school year. We will be actively recruiting sites and participants in the 2016-17 school year, gearing up for the spring season beginning in March 2017. This will include earlier registration processes for sites, girl participants, running buddies, coaches, and other support to ensure that our program reaches more girls than ever!

Q: I'm a [coach/running buddy/5k volunteer]. How can I stay involved?

A: Great question! Keep doing what you're doing! To reach our expansion goals, we are counting on our community of dedicated volunteers to continue their support and we'll be in touch with all of the opportunities to contribute.

Q: How can I help Girls on the Run?

A: Volunteer with us, help us recruit new school sites, attend our events, promote our program, or donate! Visit our website (www.girlsrun.org) for more information on the opportunities we have available.