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**Media interviews:**       **Kerin Brasch, Executive Director of Girls on the Run of Puget Sound, is available**  
                                  **for interviews**

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## **Local Youth Program Transforms Young Girls' Lives**

*New Study Indicates Girls on the Run of Puget Sound Helps Girls Learn Critical Life Skills*

**KING COUNTY**– As students prepare to head back to school, many parents are looking for after-school activities that provide a safe and structured space where children can learn skills and be physically active. Girls on the Run offers this and so much more.

A *new* independent study provides compelling evidence that Girls on the Run is highly effective at driving transformative and lasting change in the lives of third to fifth grade girls.

The independent study was conducted by Maureen R. Weiss, Ph.D, a leading expert on youth development. “Girls on the Run participants scored higher in managing emotions, resolving conflict, helping others, and making intentional decisions than participants in organized sport or physical education,” confirms Weiss. “Being able to generalize skills learned in the program to other situations such as at school or at home is a distinguishing feature of Girls on the Run compared to traditional youth sports and school physical education, and suggests that the intentional life skills curriculum and coach-training program can serve as exemplars for other youth programs.”

### **Key study results**

1. 97 percent of girls said they learned critical life skills at Girls on the Run that they are using at home, at school and with their friends
2. 7 out of 10 girls who improved from pre-season to post-season sustained improvements in competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, or physical activity beyond the season’s end.
3. Girls on the Run participants were significantly more likely than girls in physical education or organized sports programs to learn and use life skills, including managing emotions, resolving conflict, helping others and making intentional decisions.

4. Girls who were the least active before Girls on the Run increased their physical activity level by 40 percent from pre-season to post-season and maintained this increased level beyond the program's end.

**Quote from Executive Director, Kerin Brasch:**

"Frequently parents and coaches tell us how our program has given girls an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. I have personally seen so many girls accomplish what they thought they never could. This new study provides powerful evidence that participation in Girls on the Run leads to positive changes that empower girls for a lifetime."

**Quote from Participant:**

"I have learned that I have choices and that I'm able to make the right ones for me." — Dalona (4th grade)

"I really love GOTR because it's a place where I can be myself. It's taught me to tell myself that no matter what, I am not what my negative voice tells me. I know I can do whatever I want to if I try." - Emma (5<sup>th</sup> Grade)

**Quote from a Parent:**

"I discovered that Girls on the Run played a big part in giving her the confidence to speak about things important to her. Today at her school she is known by her teachers and fellow students as a girl with confidence and quiet, yet effective leadership skills." —Parent Tracey B.

**Quote from Coach:**

"This has been an amazing opportunity to watch our girls grow and unite through physical, mental and emotional triumphs." — Coach Emily

The program's intentional curriculum places an emphasis on developing competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contribution in young girls through lessons that incorporate running and other physical activities. Throughout the course of the ten-week program, girls learn critical life skills including managing emotions, resolving conflict, helping others and making intentional decisions. It is the combination of the research-based curriculum, trained coaches and a commitment to serve all girls that sets Girls on the Run apart from other after-school programs.

For more information about spring registration for Girls on the Run, please visit [www.girlsrun.org](http://www.girlsrun.org)

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**About Girls on the Run**

Girls on the Run of Puget Sound was founded in 2002 by Jeanne Higgins and Ana Maria King. Since its establishment, the program has *served over 10,000 girls in the King County area*. This year 1,900 girls will participate in the program, with 3,000 girls per year participating by the year 2020. Over the course of the ten-week program, girls in third to fifth grades develop confidence boosting life skills that help them navigate their worlds and establish a lifetime appreciation for health and fitness. The program culminates with girls positively impacting their communities through a service project and being physically and emotionally prepared to complete a celebratory 5K event.

Girls on the Run was recently included as a top research-based program in a Social-Emotional Learning Guide developed by researchers at Harvard University and has been recognized by the National Afterschool Association (NAA) as one of the most influential after-school programs.

**About the study**

Maureen R. Weiss, Ph.D., a leading scholar in positive youth development research, led the independent, longitudinal study. Dr. Weiss is a professor in the School of Kinesiology and an adjunct professor in the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota. She has published more than 150 refereed journal articles and book chapters, and has edited or co-edited four books on youth sport and physical activity. She received the 2014 President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition Science Board’s Honor Award and the Distinguished Scholar Award from the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity in 2016.