

Girls on the Run: A Program Evaluation

by

Ann M. Carson

A PROJECT

submitted to

Oregon State University

University Honors College

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Exercise and Sport Science
(Honors Associate)

Presented May 28, 2009
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In an increasing sedentary society, it is becoming even more important to encourage adolescent girls to participate and value physical activity. This document provides a study grounded in scholarly research exploring issues of importance to the promotion and implementation of programs relevant to motivating girls to be physically active, specifically with respect to the Girls on the Run® program. In-depth interviews with parents and coaches provide insight into parental values and perceptions of the program pertinent to achieving success. Three coaches and five parents were interviewed in this study, and participants were purposefully selected based on their association with Girls on the Run Willamette Valley®. Consistent themes emerged from the interviews. Specifically, strengths of the program include the ability of the program to promote self-referenced achievement and self-competence without being competitive. Parents also appreciated discussions conducted within the running groups and valued additional support of female role models. Concerns were expressed regarding the organization of the program as well as the program's ability to measure stated objectives. Rapport between coaches and parents appeared to be a major influence in parents' perceptions of the program; high levels of rapport coincided with a high value of the program. Increasing parental value can potentially increase the number of girls enrolled in the program, which can effectively increase the number of girls encouraged to value physical activity and to be physically active, and ideally, motivate a physically active lifestyle for a lifetime.

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presented on May 28, 2009.

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I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon
State University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to
any reader upon request.

Ann M. Carson, Author

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	<u>PAGE</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Purpose	3
LITERATURE REVIEW	5
Declining Activity in Adolescent Girls	5
Barriers and Motivators to Participating in Physical Activity	7
Motivation, Physical Activity, and the Adolescent	8
PROGRAM BACKGROUND	14
METHODS	19
The Sample	19
Data Collection	20
FINDINGS	22
Advocating Personal Best and Self-Competency	22
Additional Support on Hot-Topics	24
Constructive Feedback	25
Meeting the Objectives	26
Reaching the Target Audience	27
Organization	28
IMPLICATIONS	31
Developing Rapport	31
Improving Communication	33
Generating Awareness	35
Measurable Objectives	36
CONCLUSION	38
Summary	38
Recommendations for Future Research	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY	41
APPENDICES	44
Appendix A Questionnaire for Parent Interviews	46
Appendix B Questionnaire for Coaches Interviews	48
Appendix C The Girls on the Run Program Mission	50

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	1985 Obesity Graph	51
2.	2007 Obesity Graph	52
3.	Global Model of Self-Worth	53

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
A Questionnaire for Parent Interviews	46
B Questionnaire for Coaches Interviews	48
C The Girls on the Run Program Mission	50

GIRLS ON THE RUN: A PROGRAM EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

As adolescent females mature and progress into adulthood, a dramatic decline in their physical activity has been observed. Unfortunately, inactive, or highly sedentary behaviors have grave consequences for long-term health and wellness. In light of the obesity epidemic in the United States and declining activity levels, developing healthful habits early in adolescence can be imperative to sustaining physical activity levels for a lifetime, and youth activity programs are an outstanding opportunity to encourage physically active habits early. Designed to accomplish this, Girls on the Run® incorporates components from various health behavior theories in motivating girls to be physically active. Girls on the Run®, a curriculum-based running program, integrates training for a 5K race, goal setting, games, and group discussion to promote and develop physically active habits in 3rd through 8th grade girls. Considering the noted concerns regarding obesity and sedentary lifestyles, offering and using programs like Girls on the Run® can be a step in preventing inactivity.

In 1985, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began collecting data that revealed a growing prevalence of obesity in the United States. Obesity results from caloric imbalance: too few calories expended for the amount of calories consumed. Initially, obesity rates of 10-14% were evident in only eight states (see Figure 1). By 1995, all 50 states reached the 10-14% obesity benchmark, with over half of the states pressing into the range of 15-19%. Shockingly by 2007, only one state (Colorado) remained with an obesity rate less than 20% of its population (see Figure 2). In the same year, obesity rates of 25% were reported in thirty states, while three states (Alabama,

Mississippi, and Tennessee) reported obesity rates equal to or greater than 30% among residents (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2007).

The rate of childhood obesity has escalated as well. In 1980, childhood obesity affected only 6.5% of the United States population. In twenty years, that percentage has more than doubled. In 2006, the prevalence of obesity among children ages 6 to 11 was 17%. For adolescents, ages 12 to 19, the prevalence of obesity more than tripled, increasing from 5% to 17.6% (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Though poor nutrition and high caloric consumption are components of escalating obesity rates, declining physical activity levels also play a significant role. In recent years, time allotted to physical activities has diminished. More sedentary hobbies and activities such as playing video games, viewing the television, playing computer games, and surfing the Internet dominate children's free time. The lure of modern media has a strong effect, as time spent in video game tournaments and chat-rooms is more frequently replacing time for recreational sports and outdoor activities. Ultimately, less time is available each day to be physically active, and individuals are choosing to be less active.

A lack of physical activity and a sedentary lifestyle can have lifelong consequences for an individual's health and well-being. Inactive lifestyles can increase the risks for obesity and cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks, coronary artery disease, and congestive heart failure. Additionally, the occurrence of hypertension, cancer, type II diabetes, depression, and anxiety tend to be greater for individuals who do not engage in physical activity (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Childhood inactivity can prove to be an even more substantial hindrance. Obese children are more at risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological

issues like low self-esteem (US Surgeon General, 2001). Though the diseases related to obesity often manifest in adulthood, many of the behavioral patterns are set while an individual is young.

The prevalence of obesity is significant, and in response, the US Department of Health and Human Services published *Healthy People 2010*. In this publication, the Surgeon General recommends adults participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) on most days of the week. MVPA is any movement greater than a brisk walk. The recommendation for children is double the recommendation for adults: “youth should engage in at least 60 minutes of MVPA daily” (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Unfortunately, the recommendation given by the Surgeon General is often not achieved. Demonstrating this is a study by Sproston and Primatesta (2003) in which only half of the girls in their sample achieved at least 60 minutes of physical activity on all seven days of the week; one-third achieved less than 30 minutes per day. The findings of this study align with the current observations across the nation regarding increasing obesity and showcase the need for continuing physical activity as adolescents progress into adulthood.

The purpose of this document is to offer a research-based review that helps to understand the potential value of programs designed to motivate girls to be physically active, specifically with relation to Girls on the Run®. The program incorporates components considered to be relevant, if not absolutely necessary, for motivating girls to be physically active throughout their lives. Though the program may be designed to benefit girls, for paramount success, parents and the community must also be aware and supportive of the program. To speak to program support, interviews were conducted with

program parents and coaches to better understand strategies that can be used in implementing and promoting this program, with the hope of exposing more girls to Girls on the Run® and allowing more girls to benefit from participating in the program. The ultimate objective is to teach girls the value and importance of physical activity, to help them learn to enjoy physical activity, and encourage them to sustain participation throughout their lives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Declining Activity in Adolescent Girls. Individuals who engage in early and continual participation in active youth programs like recreational sport teams or Girls on the Run® are likely to be physically active as adults, and sustaining physical activity can decrease the risk of obesity and obesity-related diseases manifesting in adulthood. More important, however, is the outcome that adolescents learn to appreciate and value active lifestyles. It behooves all individuals to value and participate in physical activity, and the importance may be exaggerated in adolescence (Janz, 2000). Since behavioral patterns tend to extend from childhood into early adulthood, establishing physically active lifestyles in children is vital (Bungum, 1997). Similarly, Pate et al. (2007) observed that adolescent participation in sports and other physical activities was linked to continued participation in those activities with maturity.

The importance of establishing value and appreciation for physical activity at an early age may be even more essential for females than for males. In one notable study, Pate et al. (2007) concluded that “early-in-life” participation in physical activity was essential for “the maintenance of physical activity in girls” (p. 3). In another study, Whitehead & Biddle (2008) concluded that, “The personal importance attached to physical activity upon entering the adolescent years is a determining factor in whether girls will continue to be active or will instead choose to conform to the more common norms attached to being a teenage girl whereby physical activity is not considered to be important” (p. 251).

Several studies observed this correlation between gender and declining physical activity levels. In The National Growth and Health Study, Kimm et al. (2002) observed

that physical activity declined by 83% in girls between the ages of 9 and 19. Researchers predict declining physical activity is due in part to decreased female participation in organized activities. Further, Pate et al. (2007) determined that, “Age related decline in physical activity in adolescent girls is associated with decreased participation in activities such as bicycling, softball, basketball, dancing, and running” (p. 7). Also important, however, are the socio-cultural factors contributing to girls’ activity levels. Often, girls have a greater dislike than boys for physical education classes. In Whitehead & Biddle’s (2008) interviews with adolescent girls, comments regarding their growing dislike of physical activity included not wanting to get sweaty before class and not wanting to mess up their make-up or hair. Increased concern related to appearance in adolescent females, both during and after physical activity, deters many girls for participating. By specifically targeting this susceptible adolescent age range, activity programs such as Girls on the Run® can potentially reduce declining activity levels.

As Molly Barker, the founder of Girls on the Run® articulates, during adolescence, girls often enter the “girl box”: a place where girls’ thoughts and values begin to be scripted by cultural expectations and norms (Girls on the Run International). As an adolescent, a girl who may have previously loved being physically active now may feel that physical activity is unfeminine, maybe even unacceptable by social standards. It is at this crucial time in a girl’s life that developing positive perceptions and values for physical activity and health is essential in sustaining a lifetime of physical activity. The following research explores the barriers pertinent to adolescents as well as motivational components and techniques that are important to adolescent perception of physical activity.

Barriers and Motivators in Participating in Physical Activity. In addition to gender roles, socio-cultural barriers contribute to individuals' physical activity levels. As time priorities change during the teenage years, social reasons have a tendency to be common barriers. Biscomb et al. (2000) identified among their participants "teenage reasons" not to participate in physical activity. Going out with friends and increasing time with their peer groups were among the reasons given. As teenagers spend more unstructured time engaging in their social activities, they tend to devote less time to physical activity. Additionally, Whitehead and Biddle (2008) interviewed adolescent girls reporting that, "Spending time with friends and boyfriends/girlfriends, watching films, going shopping and going out in the evening were all activities that the girls were becoming more involved in" (p. 250). Though the barriers to being physically active are prevalent, motivation can play a significant role in establishing and sustaining adolescents' engagement in physical activity.

Weiss (2000) defines motivation as a "behavioral choice, effort, persistence and performance and can be translated to the physiological jargon of frequency, intensity, duration and level of physical activity" (p. 1). Self-determination theory suggests that motivation in an activity can be understood as a continuum from amotivation to extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Amotivation is one end of the spectrum in which an individual completely lacks motivation. An individual who is motivated by external rewards, like monetary incentive or prizes, is extrinsically motivated. At the other end of the spectrum, intrinsically motivated individuals participate in an activity for internal or psychological rewards; intrinsically motivated individuals are also more likely to maintain a particular activity overtime. Psychological

engagement in an activity tends to be a major contributor to motivational involvement as well. More than just joining an activity, psychological engagement requires that individuals become interested and excited by the activity (Larson, 2000). People are more likely to be intrinsically motivated by what is personally important to them (Sharp, 2002). Thus, activities, which engage psychological components important to adolescents, allow intrinsic motivation not to be the focus of the program but rather more of a result.

Motivation, Physical Activity and the Adolescent. Physical activity can appeal to adolescents by promoting and developing self-competence, by utilizing the function of the peer group, and structuring activities to be fun and enjoyable. One common reason adolescents report participating in an activity is because they are good at it. The role of perceived competence, or individuals' judgments about their abilities in a certain arena, is imperative to an individual's motivation level. Additionally, adolescents are also more likely to participate in an activity if their friends and peers are involved. Though social obligations and time commitments can sometimes weaken involvement, the peer group can also be used to encourage participation when the activities are designed to focus on socialization and use of social support. Also important to motivating adolescents' involvement in physical activity is enjoyment. Activities must be fun. Though multiple factors can contribute to individuals' motivation, the components of self-competency, peer support and enjoyment are highly correlated to sustaining physical activity for the lifetime, especially in females.

Self-competence. Bungum (1997) and Sallis et al. (1989) indicate that physical activity is highly related to self-efficacy, and that self-efficacy can be a significant predictor of current physical activity behaviors. Individuals who feel a sense of

competence in relation to physical activity are likely to continue the activity. Sharp et al. (2000) defines competence as “the ability to feel able to perform a given task well. A given task must provide the correct degree of challenge: too easy and it becomes boring; too difficult and there is little reason to continue” (p. 40). Similarly, Weiss (2000) indicates that environments enhancing perceived competence “translate to greater enjoyment, self-esteem, motivation and physical activity behavior” (p. 2).

In a study by Fredrick et al. (2002), researchers sought to understand factors that influence adolescents’ commitments to extracurricular activities. Fredrick recommended ways in which involvement could be promoted from within an organization: “Teachers and coaches should try to create mastery-oriented contexts in which adolescents can feel competent...” (p. 92). A positive sense of efficacy in performing a task increases the likeliness of attempting, persisting and maintaining a given effort (Wigfield, 1998). Furthering the importance of competence to adolescents, Weiss (2000) states, “Youth who report stronger beliefs about their physical competencies are more likely to enjoy activity and sustain interest in continuing involvement” (p. 2).

Weiss (2000) furthers her notion of self-competence, stating, perceived competence is not only important to motivation but it can also predict motivation. Using Harter’s (1987) model of global self-worth, Weiss indicated that competence and social support are influences on an individuals’ self-esteem; perceived competence and perceived social support are input factors. The outcomes, dependent on the input factors, are enjoyment and physical activity behaviors (see Figure 3). In addition to considering self-competence, social support should be considered in discussing methods to motivate adolescents to be physically active.

Social Support. Social support is a strong contributing factor to girls' motivations and a "mechanism by which children and adolescents come to evaluate their self-competencies in physical activity" (Weiss, 2000, p. 2). The gravity of peer relationships is more substantial in adolescence than it is in childhood. During this time, the "peer group becomes more salient and important to adolescents. Their social roles and relationships both within the family and within the peer networks typically become redefined" (Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990, p. 279). By incorporating ecological knowledge about adolescence, like the function of their peer group, social advantages to participating in physical activity can be created. As Duncan (1993) observed, peers play an important role in influencing children and adolescents' participation in sports activities. By constructing environments that allow relational development, the possibility of sustaining physical activity increases.

Research in the function of peer groups suggests it is especially strong when evaluating female relationships. Smith (1999) found that friendship was strongly correlated to physical self-worth, motivation, and physical activity behaviors. "Friend support" was shown to influence physical activity behaviors and was shown to be especially powerful in influencing physical activity among women (Bungum, 1997). For both genders, adolescence is a time of redefining the importance of friendship; peer groups weigh heavily on an adolescent's opinions and to a stronger degree in adolescent females. In Fredrick et al.'s (2002) study, many girls reported that their friends influenced them to join an activity, or they joined a particular activity so that they could spend more time with their friends. Similarly, Pearce & Larson (2006) evaluated the function of peer groups with regard to youth development programs and concluded peers provide a

welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Talking with peers and sharing experiences increased an “individual’s commitment to the mission of the particular program;” additionally, “camaraderie among the participants made participation more enjoyable” (p. 126). Encouraging adolescents to establish healthy physical activity habits can be achieved by tapping into the role peers already play in adolescents’ lives.

Because of the daily proximity of individuals to their peers, social groups can influence individuals’ commitment level to an activity. Peers contribute, beyond the influence of adults, to “psychosocial development” and involvement in physical activity (Weiss, 2000, p. 2). Peer relationships can be associated with adolescents’ commitment levels, through the use of time, perceived social support, and development of identity (Patrick et al. 1998). Using this knowledge to promote group-related activities and encourage group commitment can enhance the attraction of participating in physical activity. Hidi (2000) stated that personal connections formed could be seen as providing “triggers,” that mobilized individuals’ interest in matters leading to the development of sustained engagement.

Peers are necessary sources of support for adolescents. Whitehead & Biddle (2008) examined the influences peer groups play in encouragement and support. Closer friends tend to be more influential, but “other girls of a similar age” also encouraged comfort levels. Friends provided comfort in times of insecurity, contributed to the level of enjoyment in an activity, and provided encouragement when the activity became challenging (Whitehead & Biddle, 2008). Much of the support adolescents necessitate stems from their connection to their peer groups, which are often their most important social support systems.

Involvement with peer groups also encourages individuals to develop their identities. As Savin-Williams & Berndt (1990) observed, “Another way that peers can contribute to adolescents’ identity development is through the provision of opportunities for social comparison; peers function to accentuate adolescents’ individuality and assist them in differentiating their own identity from those of others around them” (p. 279). By teaching the importance of being physical active collectively, rather than in a one-on-one setting, the opportunity for comparison and discussion is provided. Positive peer groups increase individuals’ commitment level and identity development, while peer socialization is a strong and valued source of encouragement.

Activity Enjoyment. In addition to competency and social support, enjoyment of an activity is also highly correlated to initial and sustained participation in an activity. Weiss (2000) states, “Providing enjoyable experiences is a potent strategy for increasing activity levels in youth, their attitudes about the value of exercise, and ultimately long-term health outcomes” (p. 2). A strong association exists between adolescent girls’ level of enjoyment and their physical activity participation (Biddle et al., 2005). Participation in extracurricular activities typically occurs because the individual is intrinsically interested in the activity and enjoys it (Mahoney et al., 2003). Logically, enjoyment is essential in sustaining either an individual or a group attraction to a particular activity. For example, Fredrick et al. (2002) concluded enjoyment was the most common reason adolescents reported participating in an activity. Further, Whitehead and Biddle (2008) determined that enjoyment levels in a given activity were the major difference between individuals who chose to participate and those who did not. Activities that are not enjoyed are not sustained; thus, if intrinsic motivation and continual participation in

physical activity throughout adolescence and the lifespan is the ultimate objective, it is imperative that activities are enjoyable.

By capitalizing on the research regarding self-competency, peer support and enjoyment, activities can be structured to strengthen the participants' motivation levels. Through interviews with adolescents, Whitehead & Biddle (2008) concluded that, “[Physical activity] must be fun, informal in nature, and must involve participation with friends. Providers should be aware of the importance of these factors to help create opportunities for adolescent girls to participate in physical activity in an enjoyable and non-threatening environment” (p. 257).

Motivation is a dynamic construct and by its nature changes throughout adolescent development into maturity. Components that contribute to adolescent motivation might vary slightly from components contributing to the motivation of young children or older adults. By structuring activities to incorporate key elements specifically directed to adolescent tendencies, motivation for physical activity can occur at a more intrinsic level. Programs designed to include elements of self-efficacy, peer support, and enjoyment can teach adolescents how to enjoy being physically active and to develop an intrinsic value for sustaining physical activity throughout their lifetime.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Programs that incorporate aspects of self-competency, peer support, and enjoyment exist among the growing umbrella of youth programs and sports, and exist locally with Girls on the Run Willamette Valley®. Girls on the Run® is a nationally-based prevention program encouraging girls to develop self-respect and healthy lifestyles through running. The program seeks to “reduce the display of at-risk activities” such as drug and alcohol use, teen pregnancy, eating disorders as well as confrontations with the juvenile justice system. The strengths of the program include fostering social support through friendship and peer discussion, and encouraging physical activity through fun, interactive, enjoyable games. Additionally, it helps girls develop self-competence in the physical domain through goal setting and progress tracking in training to run a 5K race at the end of the season.

Founded in 1996 by Molly Barker, Girls on the Run® seeks to provide a way for pre-adolescent girls to embrace their “girlhood gifts” as they enter into adolescence. The mission of Girls on the Run® is to “educate and prepare girls for a life time of self-respect and healthy living.”

The Girls on the Run® objective is to reduce the potential display of at-risk activities among its participants. The goal is fewer adolescent pregnancies and eating disorders, less depression and suicide attempts, as well as fewer substance/alcohol abuse problems and confrontations with the juvenile justice system (<http://Girlsontherun.org.html>).

Girls on the Run® seeks to achieve the mission and objective through an interactive curriculum and learning through running. Girls on the Run® promotes physical,

emotional, psychological and personal development. Ideally, girls complete the program with a stronger sense of identity, a greater self-acceptance, a healthier body image and an understanding of group collaboration (Barker, 1996).

The program is specifically designed for girls in grades 3-8. Girls on the Run® is geared towards pre-adolescent girls in 3rd-5th grades, while Girls on Track® targets the middle school population for girls in 6th-8th grades. Typically, a maximum of 15 girls will participate in the program, yet to run discussions and games efficiently, at least five girls are usually needed.

The program is typically offered in “seasons” during the fall and spring. In Corvallis, seasons coincide with the Oregon State University quarter system; lessons begin the first week of fall or spring classes and the final 5K races are held the weekend before finals. Because many of the volunteer coaches and running buddies are university students or affiliates, this schedule works well on campus. Curriculum lessons consist of a warm-up game, group discussion, physical activity through running, and team-building skills. The curriculum progresses through three general themes: “Learning about Me,” “Building My Team,” and “Community Begins with Me” (Girls on the Run International). Practices usually run about an hour and half and are offered two evenings during the week for 10 weeks at local elementary or middle schools. Primarily, girls participate in the program at the school they attend, though it is not required. If a different day or time is more feasible, families may enroll in a program facilitated at another school.

Volunteer “coaches,” usually female adults or college students, administer the curriculum. Because of the program’s proximity to campus, many of the coaches are

recruited through campus advertising as well as word of mouth. With Girls on the Run Willamette Valley® many coaches, though not all, have previous experiences with running, teaching or both; a spectrum from college track athletes, ultra-marathoners, tri-athletes, recreational runners and even non-runners currently coach for Girls on the Run Willamette Valley®. It is not a requirement for coaches to have experience with running, but many do. At least two coaches run the lessons, though often because of time obligations, three coaches will split the responsibilities. Lessons are predetermined and established by the national council; coaches are responsible for knowing and being familiar with the daily lesson, but not for planning or constructing the curriculum.

Running is often presented in a game format and the duration and intensity build as the season progresses with the ultimate objective of running or walking a 5K race. Through its curriculum and focus on running, Girls on the Run® targets the three psychological constructs important to motivation in the literature: self-competency, social support, and enjoyment. By encouraging personal-best performance and individual improvement, the program aims to encourage self-competence in the physical domain. In helping girls develop positive body images and self-esteem through interactive discussions, the affective and cognitive domains are also incorporated. Additionally, Girls on the Run® structures activities to be social in nature. Games, relays, and peer activities are often used to introduce running; in fact, most of the running takes place within the format of a game like a relay. Lastly, the program is enjoyable for girls. The camaraderie that the girls develop throughout a season encourages them to have fun while participating in physical activity.

The program is designed to incorporate intrinsic motivational techniques previously highlighted in motivating girls to be physically active. In addition to this, the program seeks to teach adolescent girls to value and love themselves as well as physical activity. Through journaling, goal setting, and a focus on personal achievements, Girls on the Run® activities are structured to promote self-competence and esteem. With physical activity, Girls on the Run® promotes personal bests and attempts to deter the focus from competition with others. By gearing activities to be physically active in nature, yet structuring it in a game format, the girls are able to increase their physiological capacity for running and their self-competence in the physical domain. It is through the structure of the games and running activities that girls are able to push their threshold and have fun while doing so. This allows girls to develop greater self-competence without being cognizant of the “exercise” component. As Girls on the Run Willamette Valley® coaches have indicated, girls who did not think they could run a 5k race upon entering the season are thrilled with their physical competence when they complete the race at the end.

An additional strength of Girls on the Run® is its dynamically social nature. Programs are facilitated at girls’ schools, increasing the likelihood that girls are at least familiar with one another; many of them are often friends. Topics are presented in discussion format, and though prompted by adult coaches, the girls ultimately direct the discussion. By structuring programs to incorporate and develop friendships, motivation for the activity as well as the chances for sustained activity in the future increases. Additionally, the curriculum integrates team-building components enhancing positive social interactions within the group dynamics. Team-building components offer the

opportunity to build trust and rapport with peers and can help participants feel securely connected to the social world (Baumeister, 1995).

Though the program design incorporates components of motivation that are described as significant in the literature, the program is relatively new to the Corvallis area, only running programs since the spring of 2008. The purpose of this research is to provide a better indication of how to market and encourage the success of the program within the Corvallis community. An assessment study of the program was conducted based on personal interviews with both parents and coaches involved with the local program to highlight strengths of the program, areas for improvement, as well as opportunities to promote and encourage the program's success.

METHODS

The research has served as a coach for Girls on the Run® and is familiar with the program and its implementation. The researcher coached both Girls on the Run® as well as Girls on Track® with Girls on the Run Willamette Valley®. It is important to acknowledge that these experiences may bias the inquiry in some ways. For that reason, the interview guide was reviewed by an independent advisor. This review served to reduce unnecessary narrowing of research focus that might have come from preconceptions developed through personal experience. Further, the analytic interpretations were also challenged by outsiders who also work to mitigate these potential biases and to focus the analysis to the data. The researcher's background as a coach is of value, too, as a point of analytic reflection. The multiple perspectives of parents, coaches, and the researcher's personal experience serve to triangulate the research and bear upon its credibility.

Interviews were chosen as the qualitative method of assessment to better understand the current perceptions of the program, both from the parents' perspectives as well as from a source more familiar with the daily operations of the program such as coaches. Though a focus group would have also been a reasonable option for data collection, the timeframe and availability of participants made personal interviews the most suitable choice in this instance. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is aware and familiar with this project. The research was reviewed and approved by the IRB.

Sample Size. Five parents and three coaches, all residents of the Corvallis area and all associated with Girls on the Willamette Valley®, were recruited to participate in interviews. Purposive sampling was used to recruit coaches and parents. Coaches who

had at least one season of experience with the program were recruited rather than mid-season coaches, as mid-season coaches' perspectives may be less developed than a coach with more experience. Coaches were arbitrarily recruited from a list supplied by KidSpirit™, though KidSpirit™ did not provide assistance in recruitment or selection. KidSpirit™ was unaware and will remain unaware of who was interviewed during this process. Of the coaches interviewed, one coach was highly familiar with the program and had volunteered as a coach since the initial season. Another coach had coached for more than one season, and the last interviewee had just finished coaching her first season in the fall of 2008. All coaches interviewed were female.

Additionally, purposive sampling was used to recruit parents from diverse backgrounds. For example, single parent homes, dual-income homes, parents who are OSU affiliates, etc. were sought out. Parents were primarily recruited based on where their daughter participated in Girls on the Willamette Valley®: Hoover Elementary, Garfield Elementary, and Lincoln K-8 School, etc. Additionally, parents were recruited based on varying experience levels with the program: first time participants, one-time returning participants, and participants from the first season the program was implemented. By seeking this sampling diversity, the data incorporates a wider range of experiences and viewpoints. Parents were arbitrarily contacted based on which school their daughter attended. KidSpirit™ provided a list of participating families with contact information; however, KidSpirit™ did not provide any suggestions or recommendations of whom to interview.

Data Collection. Data were collected via personal in-depth interviews in which participants were asked specific questions relative to their perspective and encouraged to

speak freely about their experiences. Coaches were asked about the delivery of the program and the perception that they formed from both the girls and the parents. Additionally, coaches were asked about the success of the program in meeting its objectives. In terms of the components found to be beneficial in motivating girls to be physically active (self-competence, peer support, enjoyment), coaches were asked to what extent the components were incorporated in the program (for specific questions please see Appendix A). Coaches were interviewed for thirty minutes, while each parent interview lasted about one hour.

Parents were invited to share their perceptions of the program. They were questioned about their main considerations in choosing an activity program for their children and how they prioritized the factors contributing to that decision. Additionally, parents were asked to consider if and how they felt their daughters benefited from participating in the program (for specific questions please see Appendix B). Both groups of interviewees were asked about ways in which the program could improve for upcoming seasons.

Because of the exempt status provided by the IRB review process, the interviews were not recorded and transcribed; rather, during the interviews, the researcher took detailed notes. Interviews were analyzed based on similarities between participants. The majority of the findings presented were ideas or comments shared by interview participants. Interviews were also highlighted for ideas or comments that were not necessarily repeatedly shared yet were deemed to be an important component or addition to this project by the researcher.

FINDINGS

Through the interviews, specific themes emerged from the discussions with the parents and coaches outlining a few opportunities the program organizers can capitalize upon to increase awareness and ultimately success of Girls on the Run Willamette Valley®. Also a possibility, the national program council may consider the findings and implications from this study as well. Though the more broad concerns pertaining to the national council are more difficult to address, they are relevant to operations of the local council as well. On a global level, parents and coaches interviewed were thrilled that the program is available to girls here and for the most part, spoke highly of the impact the program has on the girls and the community. One parent commented humorously that in moving at the end of the summer, if the program is not offered in their new city, she would like to bring it with her. Though pleased with the program, both coaches and parents offered constructive criticism to help the program's success and scope.

Advocating Personal Best and Self-Competency

The primary strengths expressed by both coaches and parents were two-fold. Primarily, parents and coaches felt the program allowed girls to participate, engage in physical activity and run at their own pace; team competition was largely eliminated from the program. Additionally, parents and coaches valued the confidence in the physical domain their daughters appeared to have gained through participating in the program. As one coach stated:

The girls who are not as athletic tend to not be as engaged in physical activity.

[Physical activity] has a tendency to be performance driven. With Girls On the

Run® there is such an emphasis on making it non-competitive. For girls who are

not typically high performing at physical activity, they have fun at it. It meets the needs of girls who are not as physically athletic as well.

This viewpoint was shared among the coaches and parents interviewed; the non-competitive focus and the ability of girls to develop and progress at their own pace was considered to be one of the most important components of the program. The program also promotes personal-best achievement and encourages girls to challenge themselves at their own pace. “This is your race; run it at your pace” is often a comment delivered to the girls on race day. Additionally, coaches felt that the games outlined in the curriculum facilitated physical activity and running, without being considered “exercise.” “Everything is a game and is not really a structured activity,” one coach commented. “The activities are infused with physical activity; the girls do not know they are doing physical activity so they enjoy it more.”

Coaches also felt the program encouraged girls who may not have previously pushed themselves in physical activity to do so. As one coach commented:

Definitely some girls, when they come in, state they do not like running, and by the end they are pushing themselves. You get the sense that they are going to keep challenging themselves physically, and for the girls who are athletes, they keep running; they enter other races.

One parent commented that she was “shocked” that after participating in the program, her daughter began the voluntary running program offered during lunch at the school. To this parent, the change in her daughter’s competency in running and in her own physical abilities was highly noticeable after participating in the program. The resulting change this parent noticed was the aspect of the program that she valued the most and found to

be most beneficial for her daughter; it was the reason that she encouraged her daughter to participate in consecutive seasons of Girls on the Run®.

Building confidence in the physical domain was another strength of the program expressed by parents. As one mom of a program participant commented, her daughter's completion of a 5K race was "such a confidence builder." The Certificate of Completion hung on the refrigerator for weeks. From the coaches' standpoint, another manner in which the program excels is encouraging girls to be active and promoting a healthy environment in which they can individually push their physical threshold.

Additional Support on Controversial Discussion Topics

From the parents' perspective, a great strength of the program is the additional outlet, besides mom or dad, for initiating discussion on controversial topics like drug and alcohol use, self-esteem and relationships. The additional role models promoting self-confidence and a positive body image were important to parents as well. Parents commented that though they have conversations with their daughters regarding issues like these, having the messenger be an outside face, a female college student for example, encouraged further discussion at home. One mother expressed her thankfulness for the discussions the group had, as they helped open conversational doors at home even more. Her daughter would bring home ideas and questions prompted from the discussions without the "nagging" influence adolescents often claim that parents bring to discussions. Discussion at home was prompted and encouraged without initiation from the parent; it was the daughter's idea to ask mom about the harmfulness of drugs rather than the mom presenting the topic to the daughter. Though outside conversations cannot replace parental guidance with these topics, prompts from a role model who the girls look up to

can encourage further discussion. As one parent expressed, “College students have huge currency with the kids.” Parents recognized the weight that girls’ role models bare on controversial issues, and parents value the role that positive relationships with older females can contribute to their daughters’ development in the affective, cognitive and physical domains.

Constructive Feedback

Feedback was given from both parents and coaches regarding areas for improvement. From the coaches’ standpoint, questions were raised about evaluating the national program objectives. One coach felt that the girls already knew the correct responses during the group discussions. To her, the discussions seemed to be repetitive of lessons the girls were learning at home or school. Similarly, another coach commented that the girls in the program were already active with AYSO soccer specifically. A general comment expressed was that girls who already displayed a value for physical activity seemed to participate in the program; how much the program truly helped the girls then was unknown.

Coaches also commented that the communication within the infrastructure of the program was incomplete and weak at times. Parents also expressed frustration with the communication at times; specifically, the timing and fluidity of races and practices was of concern. At times parents felt the events were somewhat unorganized and haphazard. Additionally, the development of rapport between parents and coaches was a component both groups of interviewees felt could be stronger. Parents particularly, however, expressed a value in the development of rapport with the program directors and with coaches.

Meeting the Objectives

A common concern among coaches was the ability of the program to meet the national program objectives, to prevent risky behaviors and teaching a “lifetime of self-respect and healthy living.” Coaches felt that the 10-week program was not sufficient to determine if the curriculum and discussions were effective at preventing “risky behaviors” as the objective states. As one coach commented, “We really do not have any way of know if it is preventing risky behaviors.” Though the national Girls on the Run® website indicates that a survey has been developed by the University of Virginia to assess the national program objectives, its relevance at the local level may be suspect. The aim of the survey is to gauge perceptions of health, body image, physical activity, and individual choices such as substance use/abuse prior to and after a Girls on the Run® session. Surveys are taken at the beginning and end of practices and mailed back to the national office. One limitation with this system is that reports of survey results or outcomes are solely relevant on the national level. An accurate assessment of objectives and progress is not documented on the local level.

Without an effective means to measure the objectives, the coaches implementing the program may have little indication of whether or not the program is meeting the objectives. As one coach commented, she really has no idea whether or not “risky behaviors” were prevented as that decision may be years down the line for the girls. Another coach commented that in her short time with the girls, she really had no indication of whether or not the discussions were relevant to their lives. Not knowing if what they do makes a difference in girls’ lives may hinder coaches’ long-term involvement. Often the feeling of purpose or competency is correlated with perceived

outcomes. Similar to the girls' competency levels discussed earlier, coaches who do not feel they make a difference in the girls' lives may choose not to continue involvement with the program.

Reaching the Target Audience

One seasoned coach commented that the girls she encountered in Girls on the Run® seemed to be girls who would be physically active without the influence of the program; most of the girls played youth sports already, and also seemed to have encouraging parents who valued physical activity themselves. Essentially, this coach felt that the girls already had a high level of competence with regard to physical activity, and though Girls on the Run® was another avenue to encourage this, it may not have contributed to the degree that the program objectives would indicate. From another coach's perspective, the majority of girls' parents were highly involved in the girls' lives and actively promoted health, wellness, and physical activity to their girls.

As an important complement to the program, many parents are actively engaged in conversations with their daughters at home about topics such as drug and alcohol use. Prompting coaches that although their support may not be the only or initial outlet for the girls to discuss important topics, their role and contribution is valued. The fact that the girls already know the answers to the discussion questions should positively reinforce to the coaches that the program is reaching its goals.

Cultural capital appears to influence program participation. Though not all girls that participate in the Corvallis area are from relatively privileged families, the more privileged families seem to be more receptive to the idea of participating than those of more modest circumstances. As Tammelin et al.'s (2003) study of physical activity and

social status reveals: lower social class of the childhood family was associated with physical inactivity in adolescence. It is a possibility that language is a barrier for some low-income families, or that families in need may not be aware of funding opportunities available through the program. This not to say that less privileged families do not participate in the program currently, but it seems that the program is better received by families of higher socio-economic standings. Considering the literature on social status and physical activity, girls from lower affluence may benefit from participation in the program to a greater extent than girls from a more affluent background (Bungum 1999, Broderson 2007, Kimm et al., 2002) It is likely that this segment of the populations is not receiving the same positive reinforcement for physical activity and decision making from home. Promoting program diversity can occur in how the program is presented at the schools, to which audience the program is presented, and in the discussion of cost and availability of funding opportunities.

Organization

On a local level, a few parents and all coaches commented on the organization of Girls on the Run Willamette Valley®. Though they all mentioned that communication and organization within the program was improving, they felt it still needed to be addressed. Coaches, aside from perceiving a lack of adequate information from the local program council, feared that parental frustration with the lack of organization would hinder the growth of the program. The initial coaches' training offered was found to be helpful, though not yet completely sufficient.

Similarly, parents commented that some interactions felt “last minute” and unorganized. The lack of initial program organization and event preparation created a

sense that the time of the coaches and of the parents was not fully valued by the program coordinators. One parent gave a specific example regarding the organization of the running buddies at a 5K race; from the parent's perspective, no consistency with the running buddies was evident. Her daughter took pictures with one running buddy, and then was given a different buddy later that morning for the actual race. In the parent's mind this haphazard manner of operation created unnecessary apprehension for her daughter. Though many aspects contribute to the organization of a program, the perception, tone, and value of a program are often set by the presentation of the program. Presenting it in an unorganized fashion, or what is perceived as unorganized, may deter some families from continued participation as well as word-of-mouth recommendations to other parents.

An additional concern expressed was the developed level of rapport between parents and coaches throughout a season. One parent commented that rapport was high with coaches in one season and relatively low the next. Another parent expressed her daughter's enjoyment of the coaching staff the first season she participated and then slight disappointment with the next season's coaching staff. Coaches felt this sentiment as well. A few coaches articulated they had developed little interaction with parents throughout the program. Rapport with coaches appeared to be the component contributing to parents' overall opinion of the program's success. Parents who highly valued the program spoke of a rapport developed with coaches; these were also the parents who were involved in furthering the discussions and encouraging their daughters to participate again. Conversely, parents who developed low levels of rapport with coaches seemed to have a lower opinion of the program and its benefits. One particular

parent was highly unaware of the discussion within the group, was unaware of his daughter's running progress, and ultimately she did not participate in the final 5K. This family did not return for another session of Girls on the Run® and expressed disappointment with the perceived benefits of the program.

Rapport emerged as an important theme in the analytic process. Although not all interview participants commented specifically on rapport, it clearly served to delineate between the parent who expressed extreme satisfaction with the program and the one who expressed disappointment with the program. This finding was triangulated through the comments of the coaches who expressed similar sentiments.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings from the interviews yield several opportunities for improvement for the success of Girls on the Run Willamette Valley®. The first and simplest component to address in program implementation is encouraging the development of rapport between coaches and parents as well as improving communication and feedback given to coaches. Secondly, the overall program organization is on its way to being stronger, but added emphasis on efficient organization will also help the perception of the program within the community. Thirdly, the issue of generating awareness and sustained support for the program is a foreseeable obstacle. As the program seeks to grow geographically in the Willamette Valley, continued support from parents and community members will be essential to further program development. Last and probably most difficult to address, implementing a system to assess the given objectives in a valid and reliable manner would be beneficial to measuring girls progress and tracking program success.

Developing Rapport

Encouraging the development of rapport can occur in two ways: encouraging coaches to seek out interactions with parents, and encouraging parents to seek out interactions with coaches. Both can be successfully used within this program. At the coaches training, prompting coaches to initiate a weekly email or bi-weekly update about practices and upcoming discussions can aid in bridging this gap. One coach who used this system mentioned that this helped her develop a rapport with parents. Additionally, an information session prior to the season may help parents and coaches' establish effective communication from the beginning. All parents commented that papers sent home are often lost, or packets become separated. An initial parent information session can help

parents fill out needed forms and paperwork in a timely manner as well as introduce parents to their girls' coaches prior to the season. Preliminary meetings can serve as an initial meeting between parents and coaches and can be the first step in developing rapport between the two. Opening meetings, facilitated by coaches, could be held at the child's school either before the session begins or following the first practice. This would enable parents and coaches to be more in sync regarding the program and may also help parents to feel more comfortable with the program and coaches. Though challenges can occur when attempting to encourage meeting attendance, having a date and location set in advance can give parents the opportunity to make schedule changes and may increase attendance at meetings. For example, when printing the KidSpirit™ brochure or Girls on the Run® information pamphlets, an initial parent meeting date should be included. Distributing all the necessary information in advance can help parents plan for upcoming meetings and events.

Parents also commented that they were not at practice, so other than what their child reported, they had little indication of what was occurring. Continual updates from coaches to parents can help alleviate this issue. Prompting parents about the daily discussion topic can help them feel more connected to the program. As the program refers to it, coaches can use the "Car Ride" questions by emailing parents a question they can ask their daughters on the car ride home about the practice or discussion. By including parents in their daughters' progress through the curriculum, they are more capable of assessing the strides their daughters may be making by participating in the program. Witnessing this progress as the season progresses may help them establish or sustain a higher value of the program. Developing an intrinsic value may encourage

continual participation and help parents in the decision of whether or not to sign their daughter up for an additional session of Girls on the Run®.

Improving Communication

Improvements in communication pertain directly to further development of rapport with parents, as establishing this is the first step in bridging the gap in communication. By developing rapport, initial communication is initiated. One manner that can still be addressed is the timing of communication. Alerting parents well in advance of upcoming events can help families plan and arrange their schedules ultimately increasing attendance. Including meeting and event dates in the semi-annual KidSpirit™ brochure is one opportunity to improve communication with parents.

Additionally, communication between the program council and coaches can be addressed. Coaches express frustration in their ability to reach or get through to the girls. Even though their role is highly appreciated by parents, being unaware of their value to the program and the girls can lead to frustration. By establishing training sessions that speak directly to this issue, program directors can encourage coaches' persistence. The discussion coaches have with girls are likely to occur in other facets of the girls' lives, however persistence from many fronts may be a successful way to reach the girls. Though discussion topics may have already been addressed at school or home, continuation from an outside role model was a component of the program that is highly valued by the parents. Coaches should know that though immediate results may not arise, their role in the process is highly valued by the parents. A celebration or "thank you" get-together at the culmination of a season might be one manner that appreciation for coaches can be conveyed.

Also important to coaches' perceived value, marketing the program specifically to girls who are at a greater risk for inactivity and risky behaviors may be a step that program administrators can take to alleviate this problem. Coaches feel that, for the majority, the girls in the program are already highly active. Marketing the program so it speaks to a more "at risk" or inactive audience can encourage a greater spectrum of girls' participation in the program. Encouraging classroom teachers or school principals to be active in promoting the program within the school as well as recruiting and recommending diverse and in-need individuals to participate may also be one way this can be achieved.

Additionally, communication with coaches should be timely and complete. Relaying relevant information to coaches in advance (ideally at the beginning of the season) can help them plan their time accordingly. All coaches commented that the coaches' training was beneficial, yet it was not completely sufficient. Information was not entirely relayed to coaches. Fleshing out the coaches' training to incorporate communication tools and ideas for developing rapport may make this training more complete and useful to the coaching staff. Additionally, providing coaches with positive and constructive feedback via observation may help coaches feel more comfortable and valuable to the program. One or two scheduled observations of new coaches by program facilitators or veteran coaches can continue to improve communication and expectations between the program facilitators and coaches as well as reinforce the value coaches bring to the program.

Generating Program Awareness

Though the national curriculum is a 12-week, 24 lesson program, Girls on the Run Willamette Valley® has chosen to administer 20 lessons in 10 weeks. As a campus program, 10 weeks coincides with the university quarter-system. One comment expressed was that 10 weeks was not enough time to change the behaviors of the girls who may not be receiving reinforcement from other sources such as home or at school. “[The girls] may need more guidance to continue physical activity. They may not go out on their own and do it quite yet; they need more exposure than just one 10-week session.” As parents expressed, activities often overlap. The beginning of one season coincides with the end of another, so extending the program sessions may not be a viable option. Additionally, 10 weeks fit well into the Oregon State University quarter system, enabling more OSU students and affiliates to participate as coaches and running buddies. Thus, Girls on the Run Willamette Valley® and the program council director might promote involvement in the program for more than just one Girls on the Run® season to fully meet program objectives in sustaining physical activity for the lifetime.

Promoting successive program involvement can be difficult considering the vast number of activities in which kids are engaged. In talking with parents, as their daughters are participating in Girls on the Run®, they are also involved in activities such as AYSO soccer, ballet, children’s choir, gymnastics, horseback riding and theater. Scheduling appeared to be an issue with families. Successive participation can be encouraged, however, by helping parents establish a value in the program. Similar to the idea of motivating girls to active, parents will value a program to a greater extent if they are psychologically engaged in that program. Including parents in the process and

encouraging them to witness the potential changes in their daughters is a relevant starting point. The parents of girls who repeated Girls on the Run® showed a much higher level of engagement than the parents whose daughter did not repeat the program. With the goal being to maintain current participation, perceived value of the program seemed to be dependent on parental engagement. Helping parents develop a higher engagement level with the program may contribute to the value they believe the program has, and ultimately whether or not they enroll their daughter for another session of Girls on the Run®.

Measurable Objectives

The most challenging component to address from the interviews is that coaches did not seem know if the program was meeting its objectives. Parents interviewed were not familiar with the objectives. The national objectives are outlined on the Girls on the Run® webpage, and according to the national council, a survey is implemented to measure their stated objectives (for specific objectives see Appendix C). However, this information is not made available to the coaches before the next Girls on the Run® season begins. Using the survey that is already developed, while also encouraging the national council to report results and findings, can help in the assessment process. Assessment is necessary as it gives weight to the program and can be used to demonstrate progress. In encouraging parents to value the program, statistics could be given to parents at the end of each session indicating the progress that their daughter achieved regarding the program objectives, as well as her progress in physical activity. Objectives that are specific and measurable can aid the program's development of a returning clientele.

Additionally regarding the national survey, if the curriculum objective is to target and prevent risky behaviors, a study on past Girls on the Run participants may be beneficial in determining this. Tracking previous participants can provide substantial evidence as to whether or not the program is meeting its objectives. Has the program substantially benefited the girls by preventing “risky behaviors” and are the girls currently active and participating in healthy levels of physical activity? The answers to both questions could potentially increase the credibility and merit the program sustains in the field of the health sciences.

CONCLUSIONS

Societal changes are occurring in how individuals engage in activity and prioritize their time, and unfortunately, declining involvement in physical activity can hinder long-term health and wellness. Preventing long-term health problems rather than treating the symptoms is one way to combat sedentary lifestyles and the resulting diseases. Girls on the Run® offers an excellent opportunity to prevent problems related to sedentary lifestyles in adolescent girls. The program incorporates components that researchers deem essential to developing and sustaining motivation in physical activity. Ideas related to self-competency, using peer support and facilitating enjoyment are essential in motivating adolescents to be physically active (Weiss, 2000). Girls on the Run® uses and incorporates the essential components into the curriculum and lessons it facilitates to adolescent girls, but without awareness and parental value in the program, maximal participation may not be achieved. In speaking with local coaches and program parents, most parents are pleased with the program and the benefits their daughters accrue; however, this perceived value can be strengthened. Encouraging parents to establish or further an intrinsic value of the program may convince parents to continually enroll their daughters in the program as well as promote the program to parents of other adolescent girls.

Developing a value for the program can occur through establishing rapport between parents and coaches, which can be achieved through the organization and presentation of the program in an efficient and succinct manner. Additionally, setting specific and measurable objectives with methods for assessing the objectives can help track progress and changes in the girls. The structure of the program aligns with research-

based methods of motivating girls to be physically active for their lifetime, but if parents do not value the program, the tactics employed by the program and through the curriculum will achieve results that are less than optimal.

Girls on the Run Willamette Valley® has the unique opportunity to target and affect a large number of girls. The program seems to have a receptive audience in the Corvallis area and with minor adjustments in delivery and infrastructure the program can build and grow. Establishing a strong base of efficiency, communication, and delivery will enable the program to facilitate numerous programs at every school in the area and eventually reach out to the rest of the Willamette Valley. The number of girls affected by the program will grow, the number of girls learning and developing a value for physical activity will grow, and the number of girls who mature into adults who value and appreciate the role of physical activity in their overall health and well-being will grow.

FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED

The most logical extension of this research would be to conduct interviews with the girls who participate in the program. Program participants were excluded from this research data primarily because of the extended IRB reviews required for children. Though interviewing the girls would have been beneficial to this research, the timeline and extended review prevented the sample from being included in the data collection. Parents and coaches were interviewed in this study, but the opinions, ideas, and perceptions of the girls in the program are directly related to their continual involvement as well. As all parents stated, one of the major priorities in choosing an activity program for their children is the child's interest. Parents may encourage one activity over another, but

ultimately the adolescent is the one participating; her value of the program is directly related to sustaining participation through multiple sessions.

Additionally, further research would be essential in the assessment and measurement of stated objectives. Though the national council uses a survey to measure objectives, developing an assessment tool to evaluate specific, measurable local program objectives would help track the girls' progress in the physical, cognitive, and affective domains. One idea is to encourage the national council to implement a system in which survey results are shared with local councils, coaches and ultimately parents. Showcasing to parents the progress that their daughters are making by participating in the program is one way to encourage them to develop an intrinsic value for the program. With intrinsic values comes continual support and consecutive participation in Girls on the Run® seasons.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Coaches Interview Guide:

1. How is the program doing? Is it meeting its objectives? In what ways?
2. What is the parental feedback you have received about the program? Do they value the program? Any inclination into why they do or do not value the program?
3. What are some strengths and weaknesses of the program?
 - a. How can it improve upon weaknesses?
4. What impact does the program seem to be having on students?
5. What do the girls seem to enjoy about the program?
6. Have any girls or families left the program or not returned for another season? What were the reasons they gave for leaving?
7. Do you feel the program is effective in targeting positive peer relationships?
 - a. How is it effective/ineffective in targeting this?
8. Do you feel the program is effective in targeting girls' enjoyment levels?
 - a. How is it effective/ineffective in targeting this?
9. Do you feel the program is effective in targeting girls' self-efficacy?
 - a. How is it effective/ineffective in targeting this?
10. Do you get a sense that parents value these qualities of the program?
 - a. What might they value more?

APPENDIX B

Parent Interview Group Guide:

1. What types of after school program have you been pleased with? Why? What types of after school programs have you been displeased with? What were those programs lacking? (Examples: STARS, Corvallis Parks and Rec., children's symphony etc.)
2. When you are thinking about choosing a program for your children to participate in, what factors are you considering? (Probe on possible factors: cost, convenience, location, type of activity, sport vs. academic vs. arts, physical activity)
3. As you think about physical activity programs, what are your priorities?
4. Does this program that targets both activity level as well as personal development contribute to or appeal to you? (Objectives of the program: run 5K, positive female peer relationship, self-esteem building, education and prevention of risky behaviors, goal setting, team building)
5. In what ways is this program would be beneficial to your child? If at all?
6. How might the program be packaged to better meet you needs? (Probe on cost, days of the week, times of the year, location)
7. If we can increase awareness about the program, how might we do so?

APPENDIX C

The Girls on the Run Program Mission

To educate and prepare girls for a life time of self-respect and healthy living.

About

Girls on the Run© is a life-changing, experiential learning programs for girls age eight to thirteen years old. The programs combine training for a 3.1 mile running event with self-esteem enhancing, uplifting workouts. The goals of the programs are to encourage positive emotional, social, mental, spiritual and physical development.

Objectives

The Girls on the Run objective is to reduce the potential display of at-risk activities among its participants. The goal is fewer adolescent pregnancies and eating disorders, less depression and suicide attempts, as well as fewer substance/alcohol abuse problems and confrontations with the juvenile justice system.

Vision

- * To support a network of Girls on the Run sites across the country
- * To provide quality and life-changing programming for girls and women, and to provide quality and life-changing experiences to the women involved in the delivery and development of the program as well
- * To support an intensive, nationwide, media campaign that will provide positive, healthy images of girls and women
- * To promote an environment that allows girls and women to reach their full potential
- To constantly strive to improve itself by staying open-minded, trusting and flexible, even in the business world
- * To enhance the lives of all involved in the program
- * To influence literally hundreds of thousands of girls and women in the next 30 years by establishing Girls on the Run sites around the country and the world
- * To be a foremost expert on ways to raise and support a healthy girl in these ever-changing times
- * To assist in nothing less than a complete transformation in the way girls and women perceive themselves and their place in society.

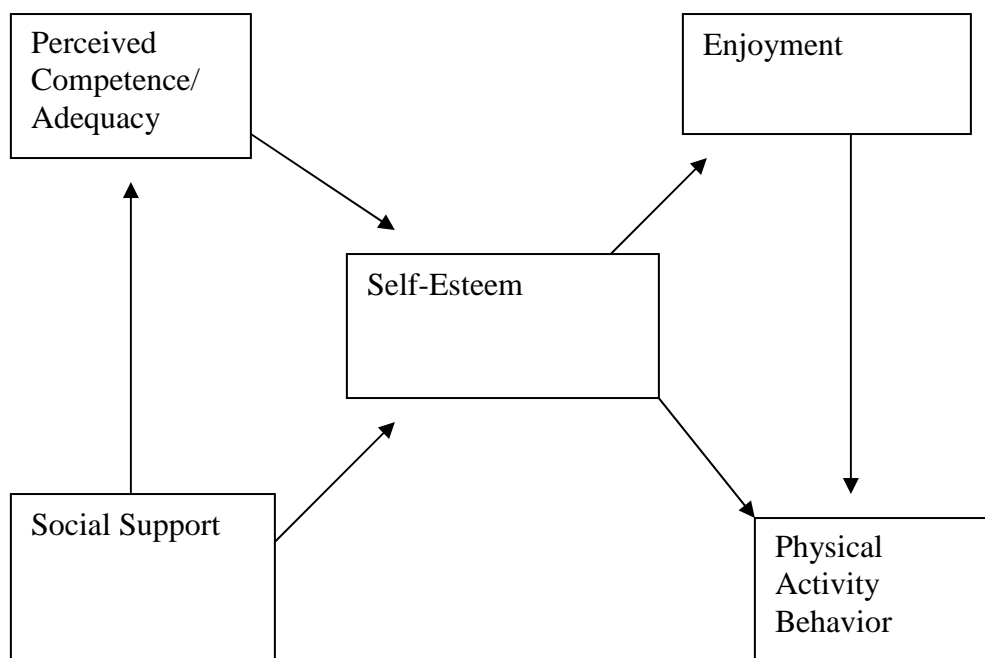
Figure 1: 1985 Obesity Trends

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 2: 2007 Obesity Trends

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Figure 3: Model of Global Self-Worth
Susan Hater's (1987) customized for the physical domain (Weiss, 2000).



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