



**Finding Our Stride:  
A School-Based Running Initiative  
Sponsored by the Children's Fund of the Upper Valley**

**We currently fund roughly 220 runners, with programs at six schools in Vermont:**

Bethel Elementary School, Bethel VT  
Chelsea Public School, Chelsea, VT  
Newbury Elementary School, Newbury, VT  
The Newton School, Strafford, VT  
Tunbridge Central School, Tunbridge, VT  
The White River School, White River Junction, VT

**And five in NH:**

Canaan Elementary School, Canaan NH  
Claremont Middle School, Claremont, NH  
Enfield Village School, Enfield, NH  
Indian River Middle School, Enfield, NH  
Mount Lebanon School, West Lebanon, NH

We plan to add 5-10 schools to our program in the spring of 2018.

We work with school leadership to design a program that works best for each school. If a school does not have a middle school program, we can help create one. If there is no Girls on the Run (GOTR) program, we help create a co-ed elementary school program. If the school has GOTR, we can create a program for elementary school boys. The principals recruit teachers as coaches and we fund coaching stipends (\$500-600 per coach per season). We may also fund, as needed, bus transport to local trails or running locations; t-shirts for the runners; healthy snacks; equipment; and new running shoes for kids who cannot afford them (need determined by school leadership).

**Criteria for school selection:**

- Need, based mainly on a minimum of 30 percent of school population meeting free and reduced lunch. Percentage of children with an IEP/504; homeless population; ESL students also taken into account.
- We must have a “champion” for the program within each school; typically the school principal; often a team of principal, guidance and teachers. We have learned over time that recruitment and retention of coaching staff from within the school is critical to sustainability.

**Program Goals:** Our long-term goal is to have successful running programs at every needy elementary and middle school in the Upper Valley.

**Collaboration with the community:** Each of our teams participates in a community-based run once per season. In the fall, all teams run in the CHaD Hero event to benefit the Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth. We ask each runner to set a goal of raising at least \$10 for the children served by CHaD. In the spring, teams participate in a variety of events, including the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run; the Tuck School Run for the Veterans; the Bradford Race to the Top to benefit the Bradford Conservation Commission; and more. These events help our runners to develop a sense of a community beyond themselves, and to know that they can help other children to thrive.

**Measurement of Outcomes:** We survey all participants in each of our running programs at the beginning and end of the season, to better measure our impact with respect to our three goals of building fitness, teamwork and self-esteem.

**Sustainability/funding:** We believe in building sustainable programs. We work with schools that are comfortable with a pledge of our support for a maximum five-year timeframe. Once we have worked with a school for three years, we begin helping them to pursue other funding strategies: for example, applying for funds within the school budget; applying for other local grants; or partnering with other local business and philanthropic leaders. We currently enjoy funding partnerships with In The Arena; Saucony’s Run for Good program; the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation; and Positive Tracks.

**Contact Information:**

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