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Jensen, struck Whitney in particular.

"She told me that she was special because she had cancer," Whitney said. "But I told her that it's even more special that she beat cancer."

Throughout the course, girls learn healthy eating and exercise techniques along with healthy doses of positive reinforcement.

The program received rave reviews from parents and girls alike.

"You can just see how well the girls get along, and the coach (Whitney) is just wonderful," said Lynn Merlone, of Romulus, mother of Alexis Stambeck. "I'd recommend it to every age group."

Richard Cooper, of

Geneva, said he liked the

character-building that his granddaughter, Abbigail Kine, experienced.

"It gives her well-rounded skills that will help her become a good citizen," he said.

Between sips of ice water, the girls themselves endorsed the program.

"It's cool because Coach Whitney teaches us that we're all different and that makes us beautiful," said Samantha Seil, 12. "Plus we get to exercise and learn how to live healthy."

After the first successful Girls on the Run course, Whitney is hungry to expand to Waterloo and Geneva, she said. Although much of her training and certification was underwritten mostly by ITT Goulds and the Delta Kappa Gamma women educators society, Whitney still needs more money to start the two other chapters.

"Instead of reaching 30 girls, I'd like to work with 150," Whitney said. "These are all beautiful girls who haven't been told that often enough."

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