



Girls on the Run program among four recipients of grant money

By Adam MacInnis & The Herald

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Running is a lot like life, Lindy Morris said. You keep putting one foot in front of the other until you reach your goal.

As program director for Girls on the Run of the Tri-county, Morris has helped more than 500 girls between the ages of 8 and 13 in York and Chester counties develop skills for running and life since the fall of 2003.

Now with the help of a grant from the York County Community Foundation, the program will be able to reach even more.

Girls on the Run recently was approved for a \$10,000 grant through the foundation. They were among four of seven applicants approved this month to receive a total \$25,000 in grants.

The other organizations each receiving \$5,000 are:

• Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation, an advocate for protection of the Catawba River, its lakes, tributaries and watershed. Money will be used to monitor Lake Wylie's water quality, to support a Lake Wylie neighborhood watch river patrol, and to educate decision makers on water allocation issues.

• Catawba Care Coalition, which provides medical care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS and educates to prevent the spread of HIV. It plans on creating an HIV prevention awareness campaign to reduce the risk of HIV and STD infections in York County.

• Nation Ford Land Trust, a group that conserves open land, farms, water, historic and recreational sites. It plans to hold a community forum to foster planning and collaboration among regional planners.

Grant money came from the community fund and the Environment and Conservation Endowment.

"We're very proud of the grants that we did choose, and we're very proud of the amount we were able to give," said Bernard Ackerman, foundation chairman.

Charles Robinson, grant committee chair, said one thing they looked for was whether the money would have a local impact.

"We wanted to invest dollars where we could get the biggest bang for the buck," he said.

For Girls on the Run, the money means the program can be offered to additional girls who might not be able to pay the joining fees, Morris said.

The Girls on the Run of the Tri-county -- an offshoot of a national program -- has 19 sites around York and Chester counties and about 236 girls enrolled.

The program runs after school twice a week for 12 weeks in the fall and spring. Girls

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Girls on the Run recently was approved for a \$10,000 grant through the York County Community Foundation.

learn about values, working as a team and dealing with problems such as gossip.

"They're trying to figure out who they are and they kind of lose themselves sometimes," she said.

At the end of the program, the girls take part in a 5K (3.1 mile) race. All who cross the finish line get a medal.

The program has a sliding fee scale based on the parent income. Scholarships are available.

"I've never turned anyone away for financial reasons, and I never will," Morris said. "We will find a way."

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