

# Living

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# Girls on the Run



Chaselyn Ward, Bailey Bullard, Annela Tiffany and Ahjanae Baldwin run across the ball field at Cerro Gordo Elementary School in a Girls on the Run activity. Organizers hope the nationwide program will expand through Columbus County.

is

really fun...



Kloey Nance, left, and Jessica Griffin enjoy one of the girls' favorite parts of Girls on the Run: running!



Bullard and Annela Tiffany run arm-in-arm, just for fun!



Autumn Tiffany leads the pack of Girls on the Run.



Teacher Mary B. Waddell, right, made the mistake of lying down for a rest after the run and became a fun target for the girls and their water bottles.



Coach Rachel Smith whispers a phrase in Julissa Galaviz's ear. The phrase was repeated in an exercise illustrating the harmful outcomes of gossip. Below, Dashuana Brown shows how "you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube," and how gossip can't be undone.

A new program in Columbus County has girls at Cerro Gordo Elementary School running, jumping and exercising – and having a blast while doing it.

"My boys (students) are so jealous," said fourth-grade teacher Rachel Smith, about the Girls on the Run program she brought to the school this spring. "They see the girls having so much fun, they want in on it."

Tough luck, as this program is just for girls. Developed in Charlotte in 1996, it has since spread in "councils" that organize teams throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Girls sign up and pay a fee for after-school activities that involve life lessons, exercises, and, of course, running. Each program ends with a 3.1-mile "graduation" run, like the Farmers Market Fun Run these girls will participate in May 21.

The council in Wilmington oversees

teams in Columbus County, and will help anyone interested in forming a team. Contact information is below.

Most teams, which are for girls ages 8-11, are in elementary schools, but churches can also offer the program.

Girls enjoy the exercise and games, but most of them say they like being together and working as a team through the challenges the activities offer.

They like it so much that middle schools can also offer a program called Girls on Track.

There is something for boys also, called Stride, which interested teachers can bring to their schools. If that program is as popular as this one, then boys may write things similar to what Julissa Galaviz and Autumn Tiffany wrote for their cheering activity: "Girls on the Run is really fun – ta-da!"

## Get your girls on the run

Contact Rachel Smith at [Columbusruns@gmail.com](mailto:Columbusruns@gmail.com), or Margie Butts or Amber Rogers at the Wilmington Family YMCA, at (910) 251-9622, ext. 224, or visit [girlsontherun.org](http://girlsontherun.org).



Photos by Mark Gilchrist

# Ta-da!



Girls meet on the lawn of Cerro Gordo Elementary School to start the day's activities with a character-building discussion. At right, Brinkly Arnold celebrates.