

*ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA*



PROGRAM GUIDE FOR  
TEACHERS, COACHES, AND  
PROGRAM DIRECTORS

[www.RRCA.org](http://www.RRCA.org)



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## Introduction



# ***KIDS RUN THE NATION®***

A PROGRAM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS,  
COACHES, AND  
PROGRAM DIRECTORS FROM  
THE ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA



## Inside

- ♦ Helpful information
- ♦ Weekly lesson plans
- ♦ Running activities
- ♦ Tips for motivating kids
- ♦ Additional resources



In 1986, in response to the growing national concern for children's health status in the United States, the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) launched its children's running program. Developed by a team of experts, including Olympic marathoner Don Kardong, the program included a 60-page "Teacher's and Coach's Curriculum Guide" and a 20-page booklet about running designed for children and parents. These materials have continued to be a sought-after resource for over two decades, with the RRCA circulating thousands of copies of the materials.

In 2008, the RRCA introduced the revised kids' running materials, now known as the **RRCA: Kids Run the Nation Program®**.

The **Kids Run the Nation Program** is a gender-inclusive, turnkey program designed to meet the physical activity goals outlined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which can be found on page 5.

We invite teachers, coaches, and program directors to use these materials in the classroom as part of a before- or after-school program, or to develop community-based youth running clubs or programs. You don't have to be a runner to host this program. You only need to be someone interested in helping children get the exercise they need to be healthy.



# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION

- ♦ HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE  
P. 3
- ♦ RRCA **FUNDAMENTALS** OF  
YOUTH RUNNING  
P. 4
- ♦ USDA SCHOOL WELLNESS  
POLICY  
P. 5
- ♦ VOLUNTEER NEEDS &  
ACTIVITY AREA  
P. 6

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ♦ STARTING A YOUTH RUNNING  
CLUB OR PROGRAM  
P. 27
- ♦ RESOURCES FOR YOUTH  
PROGRAMS  
P. 28
- ♦ PRINTABLE AIDS  
P. 32

## LESSONS

1. CONCEPTS OF WALKING, JOGGING,  
RUNNING, AND SPRINTING P. 7
2. CONCEPTS OF WARM-UP, PACING,  
COOL-DOWN, AND STRETCHING P. 9
3. PHYSIOLOGY AND GOOD FORM P. 13
4. GOAL SETTING P. 15
5. KEEPING A RUNNING JOURNAL P. 17
6. HEALTHY EATING FOR LIFE P. 19
7. RUNNING SAFETY AND HYDRATION P. 21
8. RUNNING IN A KIDS' RACE OR  
FUN RUN P.23
9. RUNNING AS A SPORT AND  
RUNNING HEROES P. 25
10. KIDS RUN THE NATION PROGRAM  
REVIEW P. 26





## SAMPLE WEEK FOR THE PROGRAM

### Monday

Lesson with  
corresponding  
running activity

### Wednesday

Review concepts  
from Monday's lesson  
with corresponding  
run

### Friday

Preview next lesson  
and repeat Monday's  
corresponding  
running activity

Continue until the last  
lesson plan is presented.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The “Kids Run the Nation Program Guide” is designed to help teachers, coaches, and program directors develop youth running programs that can be implemented as a physical education or classroom wellness curriculum, a before- or after-school program, or a community-based youth running program. The term *program* is used in this guide to refer to all of the above. The term *teacher* is used in this guide to describe the responsibilities of a teacher, coach, or program director. The term *student* is used to describe participants.

The emphasis of this program is on participation and developing a healthy lifestyle, as opposed to the competitive aspects of running. However, this guide touches on aspects of competitive running in the last lesson. This program is also designed for your participation. It is important to model good behavior by participating in the activities with the children.

The “Kids Run the Nation Program Guide” is divided into 10 lesson plans. Each lesson plan can be taught during a one-hour class period over a 10-week time frame, with 20 minutes of instruction followed by 30 or more minutes of running. During the period of program instruction, participants should engage in running activities every other day to instill the concept of regular physical activity.

## CORE OBJECTIVES

Develop new cognitive, physical, and social skills:

- ♦ **Cognitive:** Develop an understanding of a running program. Students will be able to name the basic muscles and bones used when running.
- ♦ **Physical:** Develop the ability to walk, jog, or run for 30 minutes several days a week. Students will demonstrate proper running form and stretching techniques. Running activities in this guide should be done for at least 30 minutes; higher grades should do the activities for 45 minutes to an hour.
- ♦ **Social:** Develop character skills, such as encouraging your friends, keeping a positive attitude, setting and achieving goals, and understanding the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

## RRCA FUNdamentals of Youth Running

The Road Runners Club of America promotes the following guidelines for youth running. These guidelines are based on the developmental principles that guide training and racing for young distance runners outlined in the book *Training for Young Distance Runners* by Larry Greene, PhD and Russ Pate, PhD, published by Human Kinetics.

- **Make running fun:** First and foremost, running should be fun. Do not use running as a punishment. Encourage children to participate and try their best.
- **Emphasize good technique:** Teach youth good form early and help eliminate bad habits, such as excessive arm movement, twisting of the upper body, or overstriding.
- **Focus on participation and self-improvement:** In grade school, running should be about participation and developing a healthy lifestyle, not about being the fastest kid in the school or program. Save competition for middle and high school students.
- **Consider individual differences:** Avoid a one-size-fits-all running program. Accommodate ability differences within the group. Children mature both physically and emotionally at different rates, and this factors into their ability to participate in running.
- **Limit systematic training and competition before puberty:** Before puberty, children are rapidly growing and changing. Excessive, systematic training may interfere with normal growth and cause injury in a child. Between the ages of 3 and 9, encourage regular exercise, which can include organized running for fun as outlined in this program guide. Around the age of 8 to 12, children may enjoy participation in a more organized running program with a more systematic training environment that lasts two to three months. Around the age of 12 for girls and 14 for boys, key developmental changes enable students to slowly increase training distance and duration, leading to participation in a systematic and competitive training environment.
- **Increase running workload gradually:** Running workload includes volume (distance), intensity (speed or effort), and frequency (number of days a week). As with adult running training, children should start a running program with a low volume and a low intensity, and they should limit frequency to a couple of days a week. Workload should increase over the duration of the program, but it should remain appropriate for the individual student.
- **Participate in age-appropriate running events:** Running in a kids' fun run or youth track event can be a great experience for kids. For children 4 and under, focus on "dash" events that range from a few yards to 400 meters. For children 5 and over, kids' fun runs that are a half to 1 mile long may be considered, but allow for a combination of running and walking. Children ages 6 and over may want to participate in a 5K run, but allow for a combination of walking and running. Children ages 12 and older may want to participate in a 10K to half marathon event. Children 18 and older may want to participate in a marathon or farther distance. These are general guidelines, and the distance a child can physically and emotionally tolerate depends on the individual; however, longer distances (10K and over) should wait until after puberty.

# U.S. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES



In an effort to increase physical activity levels of all American youth, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released the report in 2013 entitled, *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Midcourse Report: Strategies to Increase Physical Activity Among Youth*, as a five-year follow-up to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, which outlines that children need 60-minutes or more of physical activity per day.

The report outlines key findings from intensive research that provides evidence-based recommendations for focusing more efforts on increasing physical activity opportunities in schools and childcare centers. The school setting holds a realistic and evidence-based opportunity to increase physical activity among youth. The report further outlines that running is a beneficial form of exercise for kids.

## ADOPT A WELLNESS POLICY

- Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness.
- Include nutrition guidelines that promote student health and help reduce childhood obesity.
- Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons charged with the responsibility for the wellness policy.

## ADOPT A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN

- Provide opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities.
- Teach students the importance of energy balance through healthy eating and regular exercise.
- Ensure students' regular participation in daily physical activity.
- Teach students the short- and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

## GOALS OF A WELLNESS POLICY

- 1 Establish healthy eating and regular exercise habits
- 2 Reduce childhood obesity
- 3 Prevent lifestyle-related chronic disease





# VOLUNTEER NEEDS & ACTIVITY AREA

We recommend one adult per 15 students maximum under age 6, and one adult per 20 students maximum over age 7. Consult with your local childcare regulations concerning any additional child-to-adult ratios for programs. If you have more program participants, you will need to engage additional program volunteers.

You may have a quarter-mile track available, which is the perfect area of activity for the upper grades (3 to 6), **but it is not required**. For the lower grades, you may want to use a small area on the playground, in the gymnasium, or a multipurpose room. Shorter running areas for kindergarten through second grade allow for positive reinforcement when the student is counting the number of times a running distance is repeated. If a track is not available, a running area or track can easily be marked off on a playground with cones or distance markers or use cornstarch to make lines in the grass for a track. The area should be a circle or oval approximately 220 yards and up to a quarter-mile that allows for continuous running, jogging, or walking.

An area can be calibrated by using a bicycle with an odometer. GPS devices or online mapping tools can assist with marking your course and approximating the distance of your course. Devices used to measure a soccer or football field may also be used. Check with your local high school to see if a coach can lend you a measuring wheel. If no other measuring device is available, simply measure the length of your stride and count paces to determine distances.

## Teach the rules of the track

- Run the same direction as everyone on the track.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Do not push one another.
- Be careful when passing a friend; tell them you are passing and pass to their right.
- Stay positive, have fun, and try your best!

## TEACH THE “WHY RUN?” CONCEPTS

### Running is a sport for all ages.

There are running programs for kids and adults. People learn to run at an early age, and many continue to run well into their 70s and beyond. Running is a sport in which everyone in the family can participate.

### Running is the most accessible sport.

No matter where you live, work, or go to school, there are areas that are safe for running. Running clubs, youth running programs, and events can be found in nearly every city in the United States.

### Running is the perfect exercise.

35 minutes of running three to four times a week will result in improved physical fitness. Running strengthens the heart, lungs, and major muscles of the body.



# LESSON 1

## CONCEPTS OF WALKING, JOGGING, RUNNING, AND SPRINTING



### OBJECTIVE

Students learn the concepts of walking, jogging, running, and sprinting.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Kick off the first lesson of the program by explaining to students that they are beginning a 10-week running program that will help them develop a lifelong love of running and a healthy and fit lifestyle. Tell them that what they learn over the next 10 weeks can be used for the rest of their lives.

Ask students what they know about running. Ask them if their parent(s)/guardian(s) run or if older siblings run. Talk to them about your running experience, but remember to keep the discussion positive. Base the complexity of your discussion on the age group of the students.

Explain to them that this program is a noncompetitive program, meaning the program is not about racing each other during the running activities.

Review the language arts concepts below and to the right.

### CONCEPTS

**Walking** - Moving over a surface by taking steps with the feet at a pace slower than a run.

**Jogging** - Running for sport or exercise at a steady slow trot.

**Running** - Moving swiftly on foot so that both feet leave the ground during each stride.

**Sprinting** - Moving rapidly or at top speed for a brief period of time as in running.

Show students an example of each and ask them to demonstrate these concepts.

### KEY CONCEPTS:

- **Competitive** – based on the word **compete**: to vie (race) with another for a prize or to win
- **Noncompetitive** – not to compete or race against one another

### SPELLING

- ♦ WALK
- ♦ JOG
- ♦ RUN
- ♦ SPRINT
- ♦ WALKING
- ♦ JOGGING
- ♦ RUNNING
- ♦ SPRINTING



## RUNNING ACTIVITY

Have students go to the track or designated running area. Take 10 minutes to do some warm-up activities such as marching in place, jumping jacks, and more to get everyone warmed up. Review the concepts of walking, jogging, running, and sprinting. Explain that every beginning running program starts with a combination of walking, jogging, and running (this applies to any age or grade in school).

**Tips for motivating kids:** Focus on fun, lead by example, and encourage success by teaching children to try their best. Never use running as a form of punishment. Remind them it is okay to walk.

### FOR EARLY GRADES (K–2nd)

Provide the following instructions: “We will count to 20 three times. The first time we will count to 20 while *walking* 20 steps. The second time we will count to 20 while *jogging* 20 steps. The third time we will *run* 20 steps while counting.”

Note: Adapt the length of time according to the ability level of the class or individual.

### FOR MIDDLE GRADES (3rd–5th)

Provide the following instructions: “When I blow the whistle (or say *go*) you will *walk* for 45 seconds. Then I will blow the whistle again, and you will *jog* at a slow pace for 30 seconds. Then I will blow the whistle again, and you will *walk* for 45 seconds. Then I will blow the whistle again and you will *run* at a faster pace than a *jog* for 45 seconds.”

Note: Adapt the length of time according to the ability level of the class or individual.

### FOR UPPER GRADES (6th–8th)

Provide the following instructions: “I will blow the whistle every minute. Begin by *walking* the first minute. When you hear the whistle blow, *jog* for a minute, and on the third whistle, *run* for a minute.”

Note: Adapt the length of time according to the ability level of the class or individual.

### FOR ALL GRADES

Repeat the walking, jogging, and running cycle depending on the age level and ability of the group for the duration of the 40-minute running period. Allow and encourage the children to drink water as needed. Allow children to walk during the jogging/running portions as needed, but encourage them to try to jog or run a portion of the activity. Choose a short distance and, as the final running phase, instruct the students to *sprint* (run as fast as they can) the selected distance. Allow time for a short walking cool-down after the sprint.

After the running activity, return to the classroom or have a seated discussion outside. Quiz the students about how they felt during the various segments. Some students may respond that they ran too fast and had to walk or stop for a break during the running segment of the activity. Remind them that if they slow down during the running phase, they will be able to run or jog for a longer time.

# LESSON 2

## CONCEPTS OF WARM-UP, PACING, COOL-DOWN, AND STRETCHING



### OBJECTIVE

Students learn the elements of a running program: warm-up, pacing, cool-down, and stretching.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Review the high points from the last lesson and introduce the concept of “good form”. Remember, good form needs to be taught and reinforced. Discuss how the heart and lungs reacted during the walking, jogging, running, and sprinting phases. Most students should report that their heart rate and breathing increased. This helps lead into the concepts of lesson 3.

### WARM-UP

Inform students that all good running programs start with a warm-up. A warm-up is important because it gets the body ready for exercise. Remind students that in the last lesson, each running activity started with the walking phase. This was actually a warm-up that prepares our bodies to start the jogging phase.

### PACING

Pacing is a continual flow of movement that is experienced while jogging or running. *Pace* is defined as running at the same speed over a period of time. Explain that pacing allows students to run farther or longer without getting out of breath or having their heart rate get too high. Explain that all students run at a different pace. Encourage them to find a jogging pace that is comfortable for them.

### COOL-DOWN

After jogging or running, inform the students that cooling down is important. During the cool-down phase, breathing and the heart rate should slow down. It is a good time to drink water. The cool-down can be a slower pace of jogging or walking, or a combination of both.

### STRETCHING

Why stretch? Like running, good stretching form is an important part of a running program.

- ♦ **Stretching can increase flexibility.**
- ♦ **Stretching can improve the range of motion of your joints.**
- ♦ **Stretching can improve circulation.** Stretching increases blood flow to your muscles, and improved circulation speeds recovery after running.
- ♦ **Stretching promotes better posture.** Frequent stretching keeps your muscles from getting tight, allowing you to maintain proper posture.
- ♦ **Stretching can relieve stress.** Stretching relaxes muscles that often become tense during times of stress.
- ♦ **Stretching helps prevent injury.** Preparing your muscles and joints for running can protect you from injury, especially if you have stiff muscles or joints.



## GOOD STRETCHING FORM

- ♦ **Warm up first.** Stretching your muscles when they are cold may injure them. Stretch after you exercise; your warm muscles are more receptive to stretching.
- ♦ **Target major muscle groups.** For running, focus on the calves, thighs, hips, and lower back.
- ♦ **Do not bounce while stretching.** Bouncing is known as *ballistic stretching*. It can cause small tears in the muscle, which cause pain and can actually make you less flexible.
- ♦ **Practice static stretching.** Slowly go into the stretching position using a fluid motion and hold the stretch.
- ♦ **Hold each stretch for at least 20 seconds.** It takes time to lengthen tissues safely. Have the children count slowly out loud as they stretch each muscle.
- ♦ **Practice pain-free stretching.** Students should feel tension in their muscles when they stretch. If it hurts, they have pushed the stretch too far.
- ♦ **Breathe.** Do not hold your breath when stretching. Instruct the students to take deep breaths in and out while they are slowly counting.

For more information about stretching, visit [www.mayoclinic.com/health/stretching/HQ01447#](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stretching/HQ01447#)

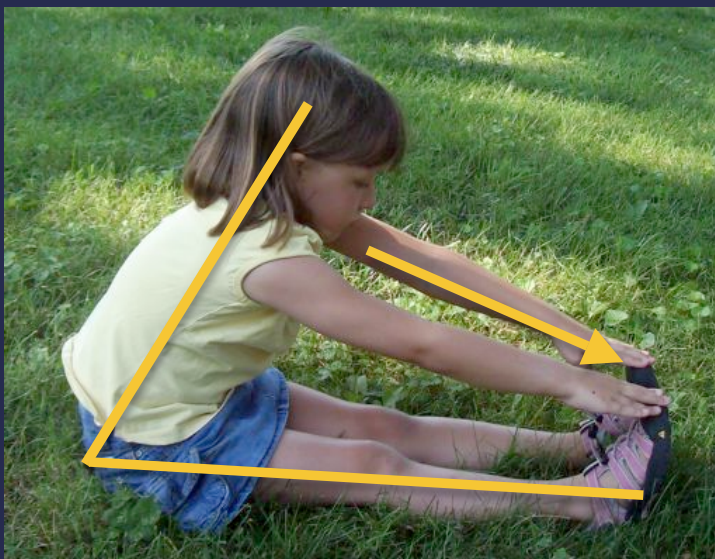
## STRETCHING EXAMPLES:

### Calf Stretch



Calf stretch: Have children stand with one leg straight and one slightly bent. Lean toward a tree or bench to stretch the calf. Remind children not to lock their knee on the stretch.

### Seated Hamstring Stretch



Seated hamstring stretch: Have children sit and try to touch their toes or beyond. Remind them not to lock their knees during this stretch, but keep them slightly bent.



## STRETCHING EXAMPLES

## Hamstring Stretch



Top left: Stretch the hamstrings by leaning forward and touching your toes. Tell the children, “Don’t lock your knees. Keep them slightly bent.” This also stretches the lower back.

Top right: Stretch the quadriceps by lifting the leg toward the rear and gently grab the ankle, pulling the foot into the gluteus. Keep a straight back. Opposite knee should be slightly bent. Students may need to hold a chair back for balance.



Bottom left: Seated thigh stretch. Have children sit with legs bent so soles of the feet touch. Slowly lean forward to stretch the inner thigh muscles.

Bottom right: Side stretch helps the muscles used for breathing. Stand with a straight back, head high, and place the arm behind the head. Lean to the side. The opposite arm should be at the side and move down, but the hand should not go below the knee. Children should not lean forward or backward, only to the side.



## RUNNING ACTIVITY

Have music or a whistle available for this activity. Have students go to the track or designated running area. Lead a five-minute warm-up with activities such as high knee marching, giant steps (extended walking stride), side steps, etc. Follow this with a few minutes of easy walking. Review the concepts of walking, jogging, running, and sprinting by having the children demonstrate a half lap or more of each. Be sure to finish with a short sprint so you can move into the concept of pacing.

## PACING

For younger grades, instruct the children to count four steps out loud, clapping on the fourth step. Repeat this for a minute. Then have them clap on the sixth step. Then have the children jog slowly and tell them to count each time their foot hits the ground up to a certain number, such as 20 steps. Remind them to slow down if they are running at a fast pace.

Older grades may better understand the concept of pacing. Have them jog at an easy pace for a few minutes. Do not run them to the point where they feel they have to walk. Give them a time or distance goal that they can accomplish at an easy jogging pace. Model pacing by running with them and remind them not to run faster than you.

Play a game of musical laps, and explain it is like musical chairs, but a little different. Explain that you will play a song and that if a child finishes a lap or a specified number of laps before the song stops, they are running too fast. Try the exercise again and remind children to slow the pace as needed. Encourage them not to finish before the song ends; they will need to pace themselves during the song.

Have students continue with a combination of walking for a few minutes followed by jogging for a few minutes. Tell them that when the music starts or you blow the whistle, they should jog at their easy pace. When the music stops or you blow the whistle again, they should start walking. Make sure the music rhythm is not too fast.

Pacing is a difficult concept to teach, but you can outline it by mixing in a combination of walking, sprinting, and slow jogging so students can feel the differences among the activities.





# LESSON 3

## PHYSIOLOGY AND GOOD FORM



### OBJECTIVE

Students learn about basic physiology and good running form.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Start the lesson by reviewing the concepts learned in weeks 1 and 2: walking, warm-up, jogging, pacing, running, sprinting, cool-down, and stretching. Remind the students that this is a 10-week program and review the weeks on a calendar. This helps reinforce the idea that running can be a regular activity, and it also teaches the concept of the days of the week and weeks in a month to younger grades.

To start lesson 3, talk about how running is good for all parts of the body. Discuss the concepts of basic anatomy: **organs**, **bones**, **joints**, **muscles**, **tendons**, **blood**, and **skin** (see blue box to the right).

Next, discuss what parts of the body are primarily used during running. Quiz the students to see if they understand that all parts of the body are used during running.

Discuss the important organs used in running including: the heart, lungs, and skin. Share pictures of these organs with students and show where they are found in the body. Talk about how the heart pumps blood, the lungs breathe air in and out, and the skin keeps the body cool by sweating. For older grades, discuss more advanced concepts of anatomy and physiology.

Discuss the important leg muscles, bones, joints, and tendons used during running. See page 32 for printable pictures you can use when discussing the leg muscles, bones, joints, and tendons.

For more great basic anatomy facts visit,  
[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

### BASIC ANATOMY

**Organs** are a group of tissues that perform a specific function. For example, lungs are organs that help us breathe.

**Bones** are the hard parts that form the skeleton of the body. There are many bones of different shapes that make up our skeleton. Bones, such as the rib bones, protect organs.

**Joints** occur where two bones meet. The knee is a joint.

**Muscles** are the bundles of tough tissue that pull on a particular bone, body part, or substance of the body to make it move.

**Tendons** are tough, cord-like tissues that connect muscles to bones.

**Blood** is essential for good health. It carries important nutrients through the veins and arteries to all parts of the body (organs, bones, muscles, etc.) and removes waste from the body.

**Skin** is the outer covering of the body that protects our organs, muscles, bones, and more. It also regulates our body temperature.

## GOOD RUNNING FORM

Although running, for the most part, is a natural activity for children, good running form should be taught. When teaching the concepts of good running form, start at the top and work your way down.

**HEAD:** The head should be in the “neutral position.” Don’t look up, side to side, or down at your feet. Look forward with the face relaxed. Have children stand looking forward and talk about head position.

**SHOULDERS:** The shoulders should be relaxed but not hunched forward. The shoulders should not move much during running, but they should also not be tensed up.

**STOMACH AND BACK:** The back should be in an upright position and not hunched over or leaning forward. The stomach should be pulled in. Have children stand up straight (tall back) and suck in the tummy, but not too much. Good form is when the tummy is in line with the rib cage.

**ARMS AND HANDS:** Bend the elbows at a right angle at the side, but do not lock them in this position. Keep the arms close to the body. The arms should not swing drastically back and forth. This is a waste of energy. The hands should stay in line with the forearms but not clenched in a fist. The hands should be cupped loosely. Have the children demonstrate this position.

**LEGS AND FEET:** The hips should be forward and in line with the shoulders. The legs do most of the work in running. Knees should point forward and not rise above hip level. Feet should face forward.

## RUNNING ACTIVITY

Repeat the running activity from page 8. Before students start the walking phase, ask them to place two fingers on their neck to find their pulse. Note their resting heart rate. Talk about how the heart beats slower when they are resting. Review good form concepts. Start the walk, run, and jog phase, and tell them to focus on how their breathing changes during these phases. Have them check their heart rate following their run and note the change in heart rate between resting and exercise.

Head in neutral position

Arms bent close to body  
Cup hands slightly

Knees & feet facing forward





# LESSON 4

## GOAL SETTING



### RUN YOUR CITY, STATE, OR COUNTRY

Geography runs are a great multidisciplinary curriculum opportunity. They link your running program to other topics you are teaching in the classroom. The goal of a geography run can be to teach geography, history, geology, measurements, and more.

To develop a geography run, work with the students to select a route on a map through your city, your state, the United States, Europe, etc. Determine the distance of the route and translate that into the number of laps or miles the class will need to run.

Collectively count and log the laps or miles run by the class, and plot that along the selected route or distance. Discuss the corresponding starting and ending points on the map and related facts.

Use a mapping tool like [www.gmap-pedometer.com](http://www.gmap-pedometer.com) Create a route and determine the total mileage needed by the group to complete the route.

### OBJECTIVE

Students learn how to set goals to apply to a running program (and life).

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Review the high points from the previous lessons. Tell the children that you have introduced them to the most important elements of a good running program. These include noncompetitive running, good form, warm-up, paced jogging, and cool-down with stretching multiple days a week.

### GOAL SETTING

Explain that goal setting is a lifelong activity that is not specific to running, but can be applied to many activities in life. Goals help define what is important and they help students set priorities. Discuss the difference between a wish and a goal. “I wish I was a professional athlete” vs. “I want to be able to run for 20 minutes without walking.”

Discuss the different types of running goals:

- Running without stopping for a period of time, or
- Running without stopping for a certain distance, or
- Running a certain distance over a period of time (also called a speed goal), or
- Training to finish a running race.

Determine if the class has a collective goal, such as to run a collective marathon or to run collectively across your city, state, country, etc. Determine how many loops of your track make up a mile, so children can utilize a punch or sticker card to count the laps they run (see page 30 for printable cards). Perhaps your goal is for the group to train to run a 1-mile fun run or run a local 5K event. Work with the group to determine your collective goal.

Set up your Kids Run the Nation online mileage log to begin tracking your group’s progress. Details about this free mileage log are found on page 30.

### Good goal setting includes

- Setting a starting point and a desired ending point
- Developing a plan that includes how to measure progress
- Staying positive and focused on the end goal
- Coming up with a plan to overcome challenges to success



### START A RUNNING JOURNAL

Work with each child to outline a personal goal, such as the number of laps to run by the end of the program, or discuss a group goal. For example, plan for the class to run laps collectively equal to the distance across your town or your state during the rest of the program. Tell them that goals should be measurable and attainable.

Introduce the idea that students will keep a running journal to document their progress toward their personal goal or the class goal. Write the goal on the first page of a journal. Write how many weeks the students will work to achieve their goal. A journal can be a running-specific journal, a small spiral notebook, or several sheets of paper stapled together.

### RUNNING ACTIVITY

Discuss the distance of one lap around the course or track and how many laps would make a mile. For the warm-up, tell the children the number of laps to walk as opposed to having them walk for two minutes. Outline that running duration can be measured using time, distance, or both. Next, tell the children the number of laps to run or have them tell you how many laps they think they can run/walk in 30 minutes. Make sure the number of laps is realistic for the students. Younger grades may be able to only run one to two laps of a track. Some students will need to do a combination of running and walking. Encourage them to keep moving (walking) if they need a break from jogging.

To keep the activity fun and not just a lap-running exercise, have each student ring a bell as he or she completes a lap or provide them with a clue to solve a puzzle by the end of the run. For example, if you give them four laps to run, give clues like big, gray, tusks, and Africa after each lap. The puzzle answer at the end of lap four is *elephant*. Consider tying the puzzle in with another concept you are teaching in school, such as geography, history, etc. Pass out Popsicle sticks to each child for each lap they complete or give them stickers to place on an index card or hole punch the index card to help them keep track of their laps. Have them count the items they have at the conclusion of their 30 minutes of running. Document their laps in their journal.



After the jogging phase, tell the students how many laps to walk for the cool-down. Quiz them to see if they can add the total number of laps completed with the warm-up, run, and cool-down. Ask them to remember this number for next week. Follow up the cool-down with a few brief stretches.

# LESSON 5

## KEEPING A RUNNING JOURNAL



### OBJECTIVE

Students learn how to keep a running journal.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Review the elements of a good running program: warm-up, paced run with good form, cool-down, and stretching. Ask the children to review either their personal running goal or the class goal established in the last lesson. Ask the students if they remember how far they ran last week. Mostly likely, they will not remember. This is a good opportunity to highlight the importance of this lesson, keeping a running journal.

### KEEPING A RUNNING JOURNAL

If the students can't remember how many laps they ran last week, tell them one of the reasons to keep a running journal is to write down how long or how far they run each day. Tell them to also keep track of how many days they rest (non-running days) so they can make sure they get at least three days of running a week.

Explain that many runners keep a journal of their daily running exercise. Some runners also write down how they felt about the run, what the terrain was like (hilly, flat, track run, etc.), and more.

Outline the elements of a running journal found in the blue box to the right. Discuss the elements of a journal and why it is important to document these items.

On the next page, there is a sample journal entry to share with your students. Using the printable journal pages can serve as a spelling and handwriting exercise. There are blank journal pages on page 34 that can be reproduced for your program. Consider introducing older participants to the Kids Run the Nation online running log.

### KEY CONCEPTS

- Journal – a record of ideas, experiences, or reflections for private use
- Log – a record of performance

### ELEMENTS OF A RUNNING JOURNAL

- ◆ Name
- ◆ Time of day the run occurred
- ◆ Weather conditions
- ◆ Distance or duration (time) of the run
- ◆ Thoughts about the run
- ◆ Terrain
- ◆ Body monitoring

While there are many online running journal or log programs that can be used to reinforce computer skills, this journal lesson can also be used as a spelling and handwriting exercise.

### JOURNAL ENTRY SAMPLE

DATE: September 15

TIME: 3:30 PM

WEATHER (circle one or more): sunny, cloudy, hot, cool, rainy, windy, other \_\_\_\_\_

DISTANCE OR TIME RUN: 10 laps in 30 minutes

THOUGHTS ABOUT MY RUN: It was really hot outside today. I drank a lot of water after I ran. I stretched after I ran. It felt good, but I sweat a lot. I ran on a track so it was flat.

### RUNNING ACTIVITY

Review the running activity from Lesson 4 and repeat for this lesson. Be sure to allot enough time for the students to record the number of laps in their journal.

After the jogging phase, tell the students how many laps to walk for the cool-down. Quiz them to see if they can add the total number of laps completed with the warm-up, run, and cool-down. Ask them to remember this number for next week. Follow the cool-down with a few brief stretches.

If your class has a collective mileage goal to run your city, state, etc., be sure to share a fact about a location on your run for each lap. Work with the students to not only log their personal distance but also log the results of the class as a whole. See if they can repeat any of the facts you shared on each lap.



# LESSON 6

## HEALTHY EATING FOR LIFE



### OBJECTIVE

Students learn the concepts of healthy eating for life.

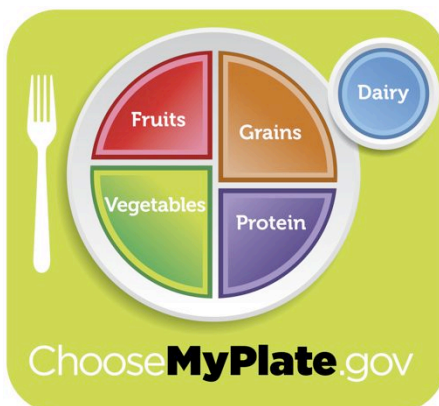
### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

There are many great resources for teaching the topic of nutrition and healthy eating. This lesson provides you with a general outline of important concepts.

Discuss with the students that a healthy diet is an important aspect of a running program. Without good nutrition, the body does not work well. You can take this opportunity to briefly review the parts of the body used in running and instruct the children that the body needs vitamins and minerals, carbohydrates, protein, fat, and water to work.

Inform children that need to eat a variety of foods and limit junk foods each day. This is a good opportunity to introduce **MyPlate** launched by the USDA in 2011. Learn more about MyPlate at [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)

The MyPlate icon is meant to serve as a daily reminder about what foods should be included with each meal and to translate the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans into easy-to-understand recommendations. Grains, fruits, and vegetables cover about three-fourths of the plate, and illustrate the recommendation that 45–65% of calories come from carbohydrates, such as whole grains that contain no added sugars or saturated fat.



Tips for healthy eating:

- Make half of the plate fruits and veggies
- Vary the types of fruits and veggies
- Eat lean protein
- Eat whole grains

### Scientific Concepts

**Carbohydrates** are molecules of sugar that provide energy. Carbohydrates are found in a wide variety of foods, such as breads, rice, milk, potatoes, and more. The body breaks carbohydrates into the sugar the body needs for energy.

**Proteins** are fundamental building blocks of the body. They are essential in the diet to provide energy and aid in the development and repair of muscles. Protein can be found in meats, eggs, beans (legumes), milk, and more.

**Fat** in the body protects your organs and keeps your body warm. In the diet, fats provide energy. Eating foods with a small amount of fat is definitely part of a healthy diet.

### Energy Balance: 101 Curriculum

Find an outstanding Energy Balance curriculum developed by the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation and Discovery Education at [www.TogetherCounts.com](http://www.TogetherCounts.com)

## ENERGY BALANCE

Students have traditionally been taught basic nutrition, but an important missing component has been the concept of energy balance. *Energy balance* can be summed up as Energy Balance = Energy in – Energy out. “Energy out” includes the basal metabolic rate (BMR), which is the amount of energy used to live (breathing, heartbeat, sitting, etc.). Energy out also includes the energy needed for daily activity (walking to class, cleaning your room, etc.) and exercise (your running program).

“Energy in” comes from the foods consumed on a daily basis. If you consume too much food or put too much “energy in” and have too little “energy out,” your energy equation will be out of balance. The extra “energy in” can turn to fat in the body.

## RUNNING ACTIVITY

Place cones into the shape of a circle with one cone for each section noted from [www.chooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.chooseMyPlate.gov) on the previous page. Have the students run the cones and identify the food groups associated with the sections of the plate. For example, at one cone the students will yell “whole grains,” “breads,” or “pasta.” As they move to the next cone, they would yell “fruits” and then “vegetables” for the next cone. Have the children call out different varieties of fruits and vegetables. Place one cone farther away from the circle to signify “junk foods.” Have the students run to the distant cone to symbolize extra energy needed to burn off junk food and to limit junk foods on their plate.

You can also play a modified version of “Red Light, Green Light” called “Healthy Food, Junk Food.” Show a picture of a healthy food, green pepper, for example, and encourage the children to run, representing that this food makes the body work better. Show pictures of junk foods, red candy, or a red soda can, for example, and have the children stop running, representing that this food will not make the body work well.

If you have plastic toy food, conduct a relay run, passing off the toy food. Instruct the students that the passing of the healthy food to each other symbolizes the importance of sharing healthy living concepts with other people. Have the students yell, “Eat healthy, pass it on” at each hand-off during the relay.

If your class has a collective mileage goal of running your city or state, share an important fact about a location on your run at the end of each lap. Be sure to work with the students to not only log their personal distance, but also log the results of the class as a whole.

## ENERGY IN – ENERGY OUT = ENERGY BALANCE



# LESSON 7

## RUNNING SAFETY AND HYDRATION



### OBJECTIVE

Students learn about running safety and good hydration.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

In addition to the important concepts outlined in the previous lessons, runner safety is extremely important to teach to children. To start the lesson, talk about the basic concepts of pedestrian safety. Review basic road signs such as stop signs, yield signs, and crosswalks, and discuss how cars and people should react to these signs. Printable copies of signs can be found on page 35. Review the concepts of stop, look both ways, and listen when crossing roads. This is also a good time to include a brief review of “stranger danger” concepts when running outside. This is especially important for older grades where children are more likely to be allowed to go out and run on their own. Review the following basic RRCA Safety Tips with the students that they should follow:

- ♦ Don't run with headphones.
- ♦ Run with a group, friend, or family member whenever you can.
- ♦ Always tell a parent, a teacher, or a friend your running route.
- ♦ Run with identification.
- ♦ Run in familiar areas.
- ♦ Run on sidewalks as much as possible.
- ♦ Run facing traffic if you have to run on the road.
- ♦ Cross the street at designated crosswalks.
- ♦ Wear bright clothing.
- ♦ Dress appropriately for the weather.

Visit the RRCA at [www.rrca.org/education-advocacy/](http://www.rrca.org/education-advocacy/) to download the RRCA safety tips, including hot and cold weather running tips, trail running safety, and more.

### Pedestrian Safety



Stop at all stop signs to be sure it is safe to cross a street.



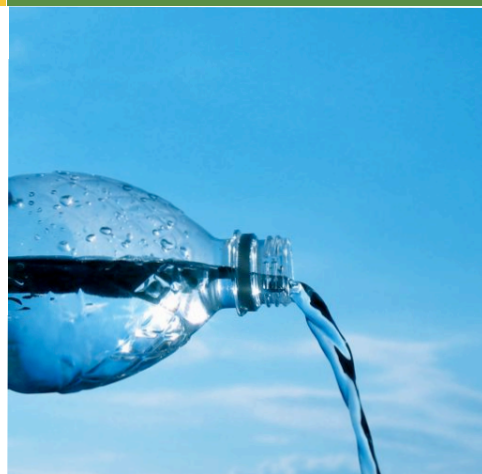
Yield to all oncoming traffic. They may have a stop sign, but you should be sure they stop before you cross a street.



Cross the street at designated crosswalks. Be sure to obey crosswalk signals.

## HYDRATION

Discuss the fact that the body is made up primarily of water (70–75% is water), and water is an important element of a healthy body. Use three cups of water and one cup of dried beans to represent the human body. This helps the students understand the concept that three-fourths of the body is water. Discuss the importance of drinking water throughout the day and, more specifically, before, during, and after exercise. This is important because the body loses water when it sweats and when you breathe out. Have children breathe on a window or mirror to see the water that is exhaled. Explain that when a body has adequate water you are *hydrated*. Drinking water is an important way to keep the body hydrated.



Review the term *dehydration* and explain that this is when the body does not have enough water. Pour one of the glasses of water out to show that it is missing from the body. Dehydration negatively affects how the body works. You can teach the students how to check their own hydration. Tell them if their urine is really yellow, almost like the color of apple juice, then they should drink more water. This may provoke a giggle response from the students, but it will teach them the important concept of body monitoring.

This is a good time to talk about sugary sweet drinks like colas, juices, and sports drinks. Talk about how these drinks have a lot of calories, many have caffeine, and many have a high level of sodium. Cola drinks can actually lead to increased dehydration. Some students may be interested in energy drinks. There has been limited research on the use of energy drinks by youth, but experts recommend that kids avoid energy drinks. Encourage the students to drink several glasses of water each day and eat a balanced diet to ensure proper nutrition and hydration.

## RUNNING ACTIVITY

Start the lesson with a trip to the water fountain, or have cups or bottles of water available for the students to ensure they hydrate before, during, and after their run. Consider ordering Kids Run the Nation water bottles to give to students. To reinforce the concepts of pedestrian safety, create an obstacle course. A course can be as simple as a chalk drawing on a closed section of a parking lot or on an outdoor basketball court. Get creative and make stop signs, yield signs, crosswalks, etc. You may want to use cones, swimming noodles, and other items to develop your course. Have the students navigate through the course, incorporating a combination of running, stopping, jumping, and walking. Instruct them to follow the safety signs, stop at stop signs, and slow down and look both ways at yield signs.



If your class has a collective mileage goal to run your city or state, share a fact about a location on your run for each lap of the course. Be sure to work with the students to not only log their personal distance but also log the results of the class as a whole.



# LESSON 8

## RUNNING IN A FUN RUN OR KIDS' RACE



### OBJECTIVE

Students learn about etiquette, tips, and strategies for running in a race or kids' fun run.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Running in a kids' fun run can be a great experience and might be one of your running goals for the group. Perhaps your group goal was to run the collective mileage for a marathon and finish the program with a 1-mile run fun for each student. Perhaps your goal is to train students so they can run in a community- or school-organized 5K event.

Review the RRCA Race Day Tips for Youth Runners with students. These tips are also outlined in the "Kids Run the Nation: A Running Guide for Kids" booklet. You are encouraged to provide copies of this booklet to the students in your program.

### RRCA Race Day Tips for Youth Runners

- ◆ Use the bathroom before you start your race.
- ◆ Listen carefully during the pre-race instructions and follow the rules of the race.
- ◆ Line up at the start with your age group.
- ◆ Younger kids should line up behind older kids if the race does not have age-group starts.
- ◆ Pace yourself.
- ◆ Do not go out too fast at the beginning.
- ◆ Save some energy for the end.
- ◆ Stay on the race course while running.
- ◆ Do not push slower runners out of your way.
- ◆ Pass other runners safely.
- ◆ If you need to tie your shoe or stop for any reason, move to the side of the race course.
- ◆ It is okay to walk during a running race.

### Hosting a Fun Run

Hosting a local kids' fun run or race can be a great experience for students in your program.

All phases of your event will benefit from advanced planning. Allow a minimum of 6–12 months advance time to plan the event. Follow the steps below when planning your event.

**Date Selection:** Select a date that does not conflict with other events in the area.

**Site Selection:** Outline a suitable location for your event with parking, facilities, and other amenities.

**Meet with Local Authorities:** Authorization from local authorities must be obtained long before the event date.

**Course Design:** Design your course and check with the local authorities to avoid permitting problems.

**Insurance Coverage:** Secure insurance for the event early in the planning process.

**Key Race Personnel:** Select key race personnel such as the volunteer coordinator, the start and finish line coordinators, and others.

Learn more at  
[www.RRCA.org/event-directors/](http://www.RRCA.org/event-directors/)

Share the RRCA FUNDamentals of Youth Running at this point in the program.

## Special Considerations for Youth Runs

The RRCA recommends that anyone wanting to put on a local kids' run should purchase the book *Organizing Running Events* by Phil Stewart. You can order the book online at [www.rrm.com/orders/orderpp.htm](http://www.rrm.com/orders/orderpp.htm)



We recommend if you host a youth run to consider making it a kids-only race so parents can volunteer and cheer on the participants. If you host a run that includes youth and adults, emphasize that the goal is for youth participation as opposed to being a competitive adult race.

Even if your event is youth only, you will want to have multiple starting waves to ensure that younger children do not get knocked over by older children in the rush at the start. Create waves that allow older children to start first followed by younger children. If adults are included in the race, have them start after the youth start. Then they can catch up with their child on course. Youth wanting to run with a parent can start during the adult start.

When putting on a youth run, safety is the top priority. Ensure your course is designed with youth in mind. You will need plenty of course marshals to keep children on course. Try to keep the course relatively flat, as most children are used to running on either tracks or flat playground areas. Have a well-thought-out plan for connecting kids with parents at the finish line.

## RUNNING ACTIVITY

Review the running activity from Lesson 4, and repeat it for this lesson and the remaining lessons in the program. The goal at this point is for students to be running regularly and logging their laps run during the class period. Be sure to allot enough time for the students to record the number of laps in their journals or on the online mileage log.



Having informal baton runs or relay races adds variety to the running program at this point. It also encourages students to cheer on their friends and celebrate the fun of running as a group or a team.

# LESSON 9

## RUNNING AS A SPORT AND RUNNING HEROES



### OBJECTIVE

Students learn about the sport of running.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

#### HISTORY OF THE SPORT OF RUNNING

Although the focus of this program is to teach running as a healthy lifetime exercise, running is also a popular sport with a long history. The origins of competitive running date back to the sixth century BC, with the earliest written history of competitive running dating back to 776 BC as part of the Olympic Games. If you are looking for a lesson that spans many periods in history, consider a lesson on the history of the Olympics, the marathon, or the legend of Pheidippides.

[www.marathonguide.com/history/olympicmarathons/prologue.cfm](http://www.marathonguide.com/history/olympicmarathons/prologue.cfm)

#### RUNNING AS A SPORT

There are a wide variety of racing opportunities in the sport of running. There are events referred to as *track & field*, also called *athletics* in the modern Olympics. Track events are typically run on a 400-meter outdoor oval running track. There are a variety of distances raced as part of track running competitions. Discuss the various distances as part of a math lesson.

**Road racing** is also popular, and these races range in distance from 1 mile to 100 miles or more. Races beyond the official marathon distance of 26.2 miles are considered ultra-running events. Road races may be measured in either miles or kilometers. This is a good opportunity to introduce the two systems of measurement.

**Cross Country** running is a very popular competitive sport that typically starts in middle school. Cross Country is one of the fastest-growing competitive sports for youth.

USA Track & Field is the governing body for track & field, road running, and Cross Country running. For more information, visit [www.USATF.org](http://www.USATF.org)

### Distance Running Heroes

Throughout the history of running, there have been heroes of the sport. Heroes are people who not only excel at the sport, but also invest their time to make the sport a success.

Information on the following Distance Running Heroes and other important running heroes can be found at [www.RRCA.org/about/history/hall-of-fame/](http://www.RRCA.org/about/history/hall-of-fame/)

**Billy Mills** – 1964 Olympic Gold Medal winner in the 10,000 m and Native American

**Frank Shorter** – USA Gold Medal winner in the 1972 Olympic marathon

**Joan Benoit Samuelson** – First-ever female USA Gold Medal winner in the 1984 Olympic marathon

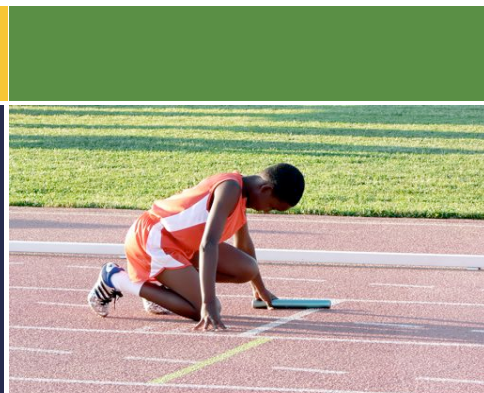
**Deena Kastor** – USA Bronze Medal winner in the 2004 Olympic marathon

**Meb Keflezighi** – USA Silver medalist in the 2004 Olympic marathon



# LESSON 10

## PROGRAM REVIEW AND HOW TO CONTINUE THE RUNNING PROGRAM AT HOME



### OBJECTIVE

Students are able to outline the concepts learned from the program.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Use this lesson to review the important concepts taught during the Kids Run the Nation Program. This is a great time to present the students with their “Kids Run the Nation: A Running Guide for Kids” booklet to send home as a free gift to reinforce the continuation of their running program. It is also a great time to present them with a Kids Run the Nation backpack tag or t-shirt if your program is sponsoring these items.

- Review the important differences among walking, jogging, running, and sprinting. Review the importance of good running form.
- Review the important parts of the body used in running.
- Review the concepts of warm-up, pacing, cool-down, and stretching. Ask the students if they think it is easier to run now compared to when the program started. Reinforce the concept that running several days a week will make it easier to maintain their running program throughout their life.
- Review the concept of goal setting. Talk about how goal-setting techniques used for their running program can be applied to other aspects of their life. Talk about the goals set as a class and discuss if they were achieved or not. If they were not achieved, discuss why and how, the importance of realistic goals, and how a goal can be adjusted so success can be achieved.
- Encourage students to keep up with their running journal and provide them with additional pages. Solicit feedback on the journal-keeping exercise.
- Review the important concepts of healthy eating habits, focusing on the energy balance equation and limiting junk foods in the diet.
- Review the important concepts of pedestrian and runner safety. Discuss the importance of good hydration.
- Have students share their running journals with the class.



# Starting a Kids Run the Nation Program

## THE BASICS

A school-based running club is a great way to engage students in a healthy activity that is fun and social. There are different ways to form a youth running club or youth running program. First, an adult running club can offer the program to youth members as a program of the club. If an RRCA member running club supports a youth program, those program activities are covered under the umbrella of the adult club and therefore covered under the club's insurance through the RRCA. If an adult club has a youth program, those youth runners should be "junior members" or "family members" of the club.

A youth running club or program can be formed as an independent, youth-only running club. These clubs are typically formed as nonprofit running clubs with a governing board of parent volunteers. A local school, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), or community group such as a YMCA or other group may form a youth running club. If a group of parent volunteers or a PTA or after-school program elects to develop a youth running club, they may join the RRCA as a club member and be eligible for benefits, such as federal nonprofit tax-exempt status, liability insurance, accidental medical coverage, directors and officers insurance, sexual abuse coverage, and more. A youth running club would follow the same procedures for developing a running club and pay the same fees that an adult club would on an annual basis. A school can also implement the Kids Run the Nation program as a before, during, or after-school program.

Anyone may use the royalty-free, RRCA trademarked name, *Kids Run the Nation*, along with the Kids Run the Nation logo, found online at [www.rrca.org/services/rrca-branding/](http://www.rrca.org/services/rrca-branding/). There are no burdensome royalty fees or training fees to brand your program as *Kids Run the Nation*. This program has been designed to be a turnkey program so you can focus on getting kids running. The only thing we require is that your program is insured through the RRCA (or another provider), all parents sign a waiver for all participants, and you screen your program volunteers.

You can run this program several times throughout the year by offering a fall, spring, and summer program. You can extend this program beyond 10 weeks if your class has a distance goal or race your students are working toward.

## PARTICIPANT/PARENT & VOLUNTEER WAIVERS

As the leader of a Kids Run the Nation program or youth club, you need to make sure you have a list of the names of participants and emergency contact information for their guardian(s). RRCA club members are not required to supply contact information for youth members to the RRCA national office, but program directors have a duty to have this information on file for their club or program. No child should be allowed to participate in your youth running club or program without a signed waiver of consent from a parent or legal guardian. For Kids Run the Nation programs run by schools, review your school's waiver or permission form requirements.

The next page is a sample waiver that youth running clubs or programs should adopt. You can print this waiver, include your program name, and have parents sign copies for your records. You can also use this waiver as a template to create a specific waiver for your program.

# Participant/Parent Waiver

## Kids Run the Nation Program Waiver

I, the undersigned, am the parent or legal guardian of the minor child whose name appears below. I know that running is a potentially hazardous activity. I know that the minor child should not run unless medically able. I agree to abide by any decision of the program director relative to the minor child's ability to safely complete the risks associated with running in this program including, but not limited to: falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather, including high heat and/or humidity, traffic and the conditions of the road or track, all such risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts, on my behalf and the minor child's behalf, waive and release the (running club or responsible entity's name) \_\_\_\_\_, the Road Runners Club of America, its officers, directors, agents, employees, sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising out of the minor's participation in this event even though that liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons named in this waiver. I further authorize and empower the program director to consent to and authorize any medical care or treatment for the minor that may appear reasonably necessary as a result of emergency, accident or illness of the minor whether occurring before, during or after the event. I grant permission to all of the foregoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, recordings, or any other record of this for any legitimate purpose. I understand that personal music players are not allowed for use in this program, and I will ensure the minor abides by this guideline.

**Minor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Sample Budget & Supply List

## SAMPLE BUDGET

This program is designed to be an affordable program run by parent volunteers, volunteer coaches, or as a classroom or other after-school program activity. We recommend a \$25-35 per-participant fee if your program is organized outside the classroom. You need a little seed money to get supplies for your program based on the recommended supply list. Your participant fee should cover items you will provide for your students in the program.

<b>Income</b>	
\$30 per student for 20 students	\$600
<b>Expenses</b>	
RRCA Dues & Insurance for 20 students as needed (does not include D&O insurance expense)	\$298
Kids Run the Nation back pack tag - \$1.25 per student	\$25
Kids Running Booklet - \$1 per student plus shipping	\$25
Kids Run the Nation Shirts - \$10 per student	\$200
Other Supplies for program	\$50
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$600</b>

If you decide your program will culminate in a race, you may include the race entry fee as part of your program fee or have parents register their child for the race separately and pay the race entry fee at that time. We recommend a separate registration for a race to ensure a race-specific waiver is signed by the parent.

## RECOMMENDED SUPPLY LIST

- Clipboard and printed emergency contact information for parents
- Cell phone for emergency calls
- Plastic bin for storing supplies
- Popsicle sticks, index cards, single hole punches, stickers, or chains and charms for handing out during the lap counting process ([www.FitnessFinders.com](http://www.FitnessFinders.com))
- Kids Run the Nation back pack tag (optional)
- Kids Run the Nation shirts (optional)
- Kids Running booklet (optional)
- Orange cones or signs for marking a course if no track is available
- Running logs and pens for students to log their progress on paper
- Whistle or bell for getting students' attention
- Music player for playing music during warm-ups and pacing lessons
- Cups or bottles for water – consider ordering Kids Run the Nation water bottles. We have a black & white logo already created for printing on bottles.
- Other supplies as needed for the lessons



## RRCA: Kids Club Online Services

The RRCA has partnered with *RunClubSignUp.com* to launch the new Kids Club management system, which includes an online registration system, participant management tools, and the Kids Run the Nation mileage log. Program directors can track students' running progress in the Kids Run the Nation mileage log for individuals or as a group. All youth program directors are encouraged to use this tool to manage their programs. The program *does not* have to be branded as a Kids Run the Nation program to use the Kids Club management system. The system is free of charge if you do not charge a fee for program participants. If you charge a fee for participants, a small credit card processing fee applies for online registrations.

Find information, including detailed instructions, about using this system and the Kids Run the Nation mileage log at

[www.rrca.org/programs/kids-run-the-nation-program/program-directors/](http://www.rrca.org/programs/kids-run-the-nation-program/program-directors/)

## Criminal Background Checks

### RRCA CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK GUIDELINE

The RRCA has a guideline encouraging the practice of criminal background checks for coaches, assistant coaches, volunteers, parents, and employees engaged in working with youth (legal minors) or handling funds on behalf of a club or event.

Criminal background checks should be performed on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The president of a running club or event or a duly authorized official should manage any criminal background check procedure on behalf of the club, event, or youth running program. The results of the criminal background checks should be kept strictly confidential and only authorized individuals should have access to the reports.

If a background check discloses a criminal conviction for a violent crime against a person, including a sex offense, within a 20-year period, this person should be disqualified from working with youth.

The RRCA has a partnership with the leading criminal background organization, the National Center for Safety Initiatives. To learn more, visit [www.ncsisafe.com](http://www.ncsisafe.com), and tell them the RRCA sent you.

The RRCA has additional information about screening volunteers, along with a sample policy for developing an abuse reporting procedure at [www.RRCA.org/programs/kids-run-the-nation/program-directors/](http://www.RRCA.org/programs/kids-run-the-nation/program-directors/)

# Additional Resources

## APPLY FOR A KIDS RUN THE NATION GRANT

In 2007, the RRCA developed the Kids Run the Nation Fund to assist running clubs, events, and schools that currently have a youth running program or are interested in implementing one. Grants are awarded on an annual basis through an application and selection process overseen by a volunteer selection committee.

**Criteria for a Kids Run the Nation Grant** The total amount granted from the Fund is determined on an annual basis. Running clubs, events, or other organizations with the IRS 501(c)3 designation are eligible to apply. Elementary and middle schools that provide an organized before or after-school running program are eligible as well.

For more information about the grant criteria, application deadline, and application form, visit

[www.RRCA.org/programs/kids-run-the-nation-fund/](http://www.RRCA.org/programs/kids-run-the-nation-fund/)

## PRINTABLE LAP COUNTING CARD

Copy, print, and cut the following lap counting cards for your program participants. Have them hole punch or mark each square for each lap they run to help you log program miles.

### KIDS RUN THE NATION

EIGHT LAPS = 1 MILE



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### KIDS RUN THE NATION

EIGHT LAPS = 1 MILE



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### KIDS RUN THE NATION

EIGHT LAPS = 1 MILE



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### KIDS RUN THE NATION

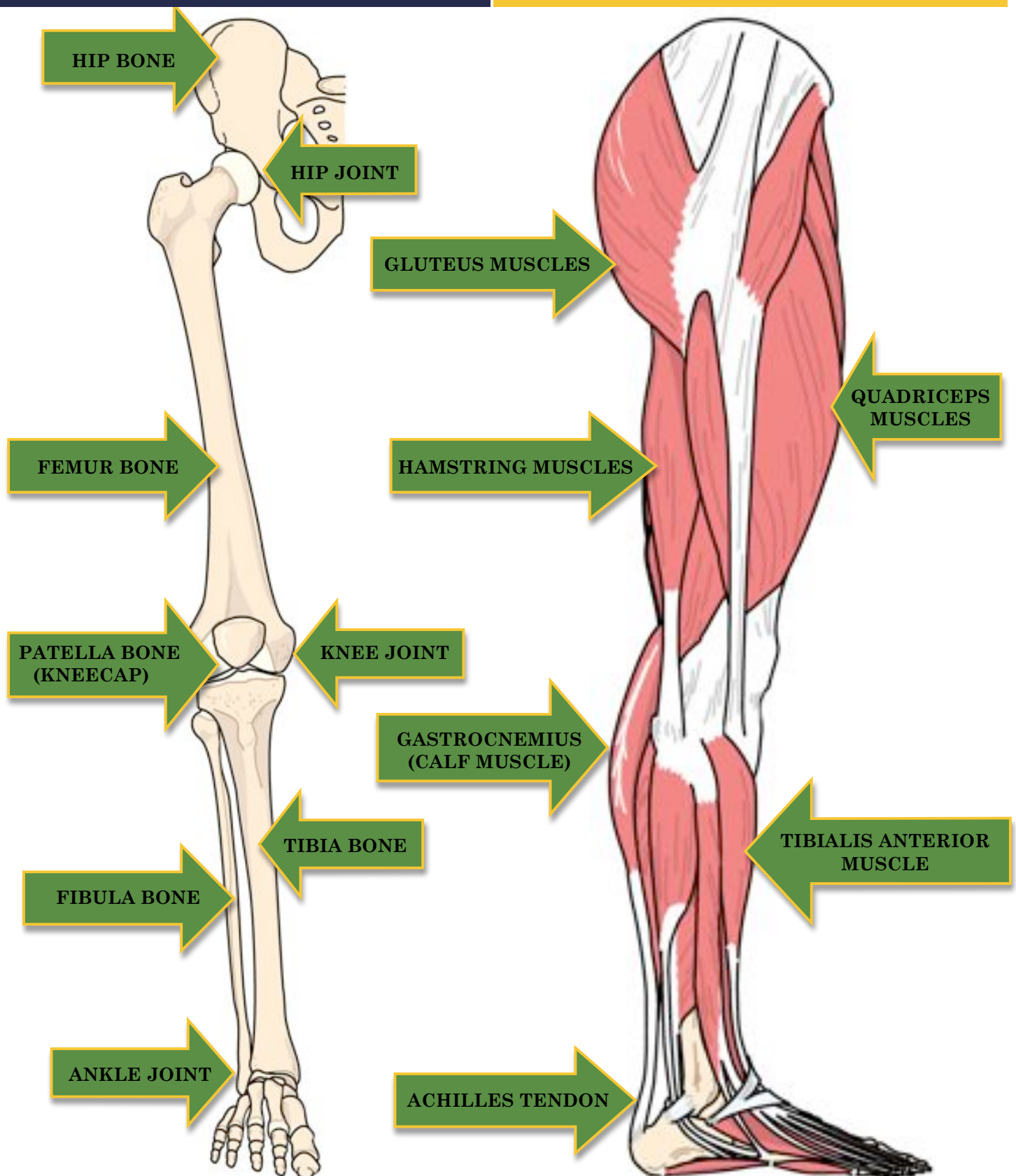
EIGHT LAPS = 1 MILE



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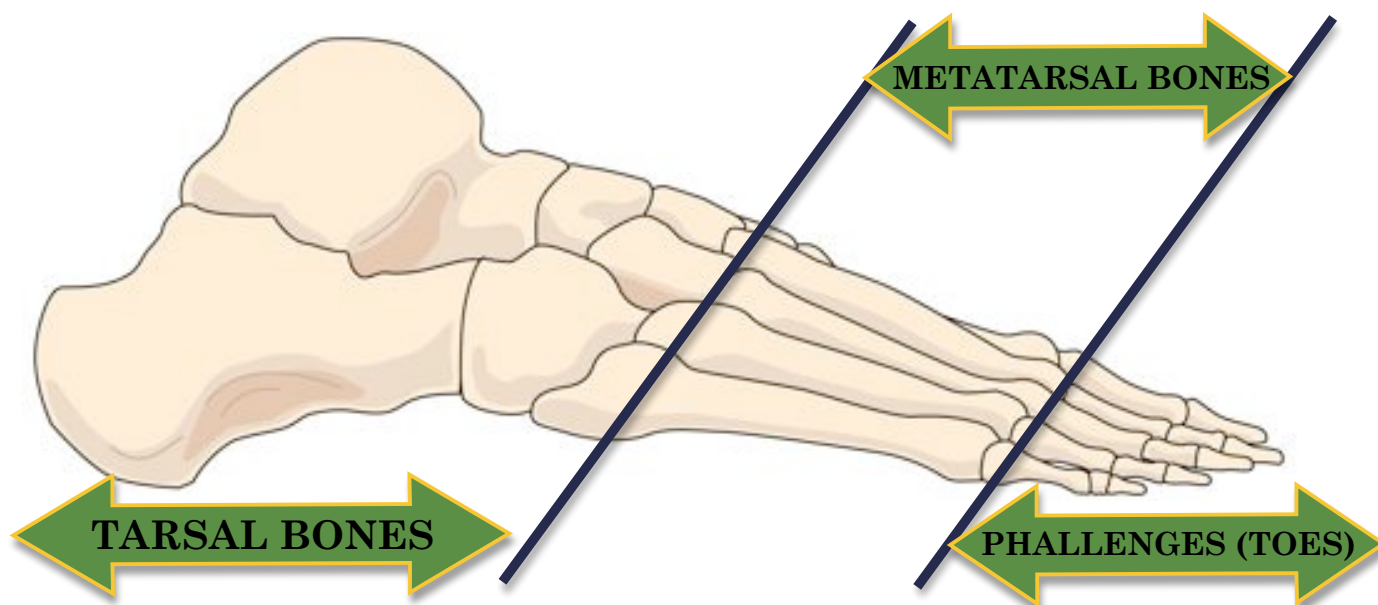
## BONES & JOINTS OF THE LEG

## MAJOR MUSCLES & TENDONS OF THE LEG

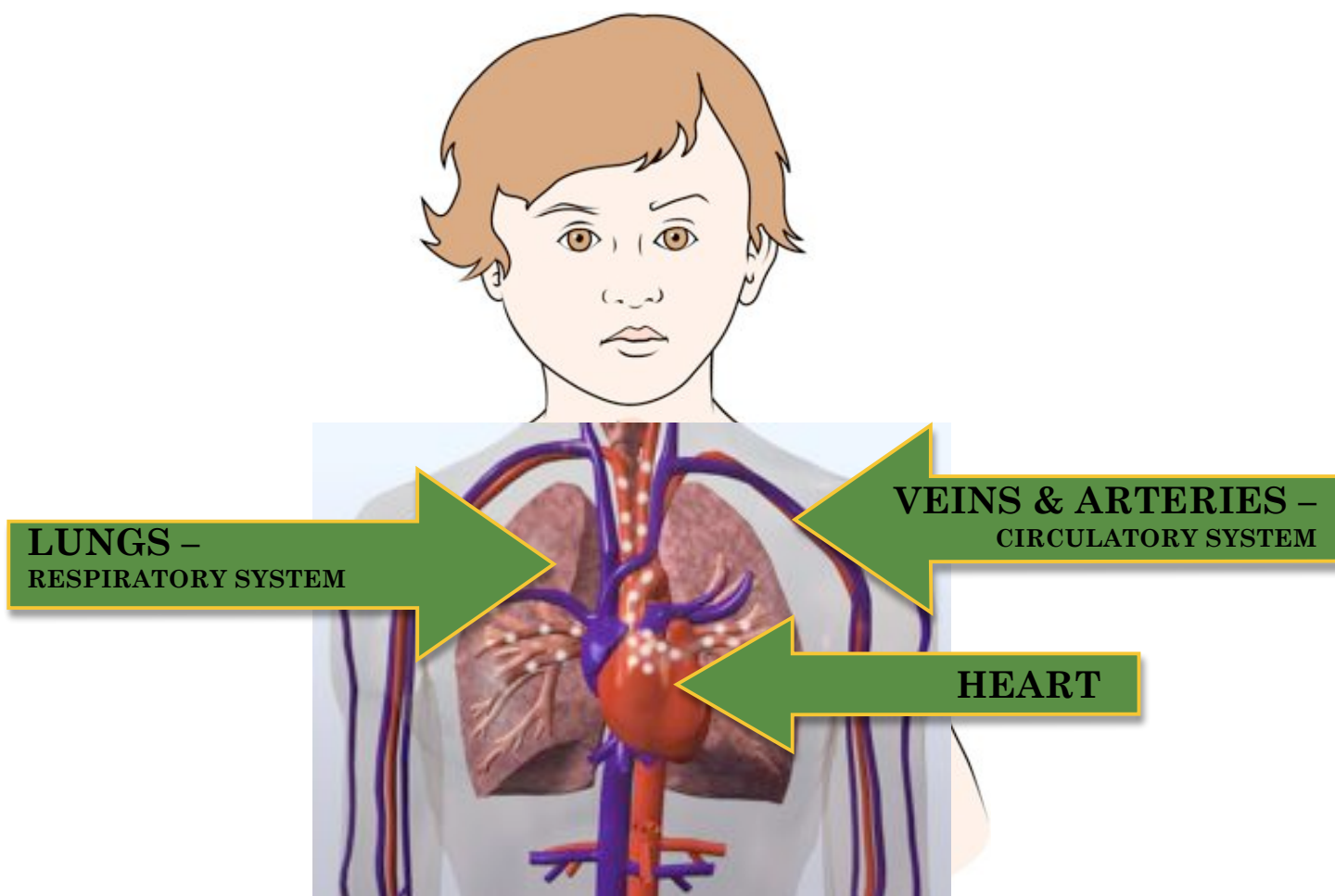




## MAJOR BONES OF THE FOOT



## IMPORTANT ORGANS AND SYSTEMS USED IN RUNNING



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

WEATHER (circle one or more): sunny, cloudy, hot, cool,  
rainy, windy, other \_\_\_\_\_

DISTANCE OR DURATION OF RUN: \_\_\_\_\_

THOUGHTS ABOUT MY RUN: \_\_\_\_\_

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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

WEATHER (circle one or more): sunny, cloudy, hot, cool,  
rainy, windy, other \_\_\_\_\_

DISTANCE OR DURATION OF RUN: \_\_\_\_\_

THOUGHTS ABOUT MY RUN: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Acknowledgments

The “Kids Run the Nation Program Guide” was written and designed by Jean Knaack, RRCA executive director, for the Road Runners Club of America. It is based on “RRCA Children’s Running: A Guide for Teachers & Coaches,” first printed in 1986.

The Road Runners Club of America would like to thank the following people for their contribution to the Kids Run the Nation Program. Joyce Rankin wrote the original “RRCA Children’s Running: A Guide for Teachers & Coaches.” Rankin was a teacher with a love for running. The “Kids Run the Nation Program Guide” is based on this original work. Don Kardong has been a driving force behind the RRCA’s children’s running materials since the mid 1980s. Kardong is an Olympic marathoner-turned-teacher who now directs a little race in Spokane, WA that has nearly 50,000 participants per year. David and Sharlee Cotter made a major financial contribution in honor of Hank and Nancy Taylor to the RRCA that launched the Kids Run the Nation Fund.

The “Kids Run the Nation Program Guide” was reviewed by Don Kardong, Cassie Dimmick, MS, RD, LD, CSSD, and Arlington County Public School physical education teachers Bobbie Pew and Meredith Grasso.

**Third edition proofread by:** Red Ink Editorial Services, Madison, WI

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The printing of the “Kids Run the Nation Program Guide” was made possible by contributions to the RRCA from generous donors. We thank our partners, government entities, and educational institutions for allowing us to share their websites as additional resources. We would also like to thank every person who organizes and implements youth running programs and events around the country. Thank you for teaching our children the value of incorporating running into a healthy lifestyle.

**About the RRCA:** Founded in 1958, the Road Runners Club of America is the oldest and largest national association of running clubs, running events, and runners dedicated to promoting running as a competitive sport and as healthy exercise. The mission of the RRCA is to promote the sport of running through the development and growth of running clubs and running events throughout the country. The RRCA supports the common interests of runners of all abilities during all stages of life by providing education and leadership opportunities, along with programs and services that benefit all runners.

# Program Notes



# RRCA: KIDS RUN THE NATION<sup>®</sup> PROGRAM GUIDE