

Heart & Sole is Girls on the Run's new program for middle school girls!

At Girls on the Run, we believe that adolescents have amazing gifts and strengths to cultivate! Heart & Sole creates a positive, structured space for middle school girls to learn about themselves, explore new ideas, cultivate empathy, strengthen connections and develop skills that will help them as they move through adolescence and beyond.

The Heart & Sole curriculum was developed by Girls on the Run International to meet the unique needs of middle school girls. **Rich with themes girls can relate to, the curriculum addresses the whole girl—body, brain, heart, spirit and social connection—and builds important life skills.**

How does it work?

Heart & Sole is a 10-week program with a small team of 8-15 girls.

The program teaches life skills such as:

- Team-building
- Creating a support system
- Boundary setting
- Making connections & friendships
- Goal setting
- Problem solving
- Emotional regulation
- Standing up for themselves and others
- Self-care
- Overcoming obstacles
- Decision making
- Asking for and providing help

The “Girl Wheel” is the central concept of the program and focuses on the whole girl. In each lesson, girls participate in activities related to the Girl Wheel components: body, brain, heart, spirit and social. The wheel helps demonstrate the parts of themselves that impact their lives, their families, their schools and their neighborhoods. Girls learn to use the Girl Wheel to identify areas of themselves they'd like to nurture and ways they can contribute to change around them. Another element of Heart & Sole is the concept of small acts of kindness as a way to help girls develop their empathy and recognize their power to make positive change. Girls also use a Heart & Sole journal for reflection and goal tracking.

Heart & Sole is accessible to all girls regardless of athletic ability or fitness level and considers the range of ages and varied experiences of middle schoolers. Physical activity is a core element of the program and includes strength and conditioning appropriate for this age group. The season concludes with the Girls on the Run 5k, a celebratory event that underscores the confidence, competence, connection, character and caring they've been developing in the program and gives them a tangible sense of goal setting and achievement.

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