

Girls Gotta Run Foundation, Inc. (GGRF) Annual Report 2007

Introduction

The Girls Gotta Run Foundation is a volunteer organization created to raise money, in part through the sale of art, to buy athletic shoes for Ethiopian girls who are training to become professional runners. Training to be athletes allows them to stay in school, avoid early marriage, and gain personal independence.

GGRF was inspired by the December 2005 [Washington Post](#) article by Emily Wax called "[Facing Servitude, Ethiopian Girls Run for a Better Life.](#)" Wax reported, "In Ethiopia, getting an education is a true marathon. Girls' enrollment is among the lowest in the world and women and girls are more likely to die in childbirth than reach sixth grade..." She also noted that Ethiopia has the highest rate of vaginal fistulas¹ in the world and one of the largest caseloads of AIDS, forcing many girls to quit school to care for sick or widowed relatives.

Today, because "seven of the 10 top-earning athletes in Ethiopia are women," some girls and their parents have begun to see careers as professional runners as viable options in a country where "girls as young as 12 can be sold as brides by parents desperate for dowry payments." Many who train in order to stay in school and keep their options open, can, with the help of caring others, overcome many of the obstacles in their way. Getting athletic shoes, however, because they are so expensive, is very difficult. Inspired by their spirit and determination, and moved by their plight, a group of artists and committed others came together in early 2006 to form an organization to raise money to buy shoes for the girls; the Girls Gotta Run Foundation was born.

Achievements

In our second year,

1. The Internal Revenue Service certified us as a charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
2. We took steps to trademark our name and logo.
3. We did extensive research into ways to identify/ target girls in Ethiopia and into the most economical and efficient means of providing them with athletic shoes.
4. We connected with other charitable groups working in/for Ethiopia whose missions are similar or compatible, e.g., Ethiopia Reads, A Running Start, The Children of Ethiopia Education Fund, and others.

¹ A vaginal fistula is a tearing of the vagina during childbirth that requires painful, usually unavailable, reconstructive surgery.

5. We supplied athletic shoes for the girls in a program sponsored by The Tesfa Foundation in Ethiopia.
6. We mounted three art exhibits: an exhibit at the Phoenix Gallery in Chelsea, New York City; an exhibit at the Yoga Nine Studio and Store in Smithville, New Jersey; and our 2nd Annual Holiday Exhibit at the Modern Times Coffeehouse of Politics and Prose in Washington, D.C. We made arrangements for an exhibit to be held at the Mansion at Strathmore in North Bethesda, Maryland, in Spring 2008.
7. We made invited presentations about Girls Gotta Run at two colleges: Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and the Community College of Baltimore County, Essex Campus. We made an invited presentation to the Women's Caucus for the Arts at their annual Holiday Members Brunch.
8. We began and made substantial progress on a Girls Gotta Run DVD, scheduled for completion in 2008.
9. We filed an application for inclusion in the Catalog of Philanthropy.
10. Our work was publicized through articles in "Art'ishake" and "Tadias" online magazines, as well as an article in the Spring 2007 Northland College Magazine.
11. We created a Girls Gotta Run flyer and supplied copies to organizations requesting information about us, including the Young Women's Leadership Conference held at UDC in June 2007.
12. We developed more and stronger ties with the local and international Ethiopian communities and with international development specialists.
13. We continued to market our products through our online store.
14. We expanded our group of artists to include several members of the local Ethiopian arts community and some New York City-based artists.
15. We expanded our group of supporters and advisers
16. We initiated efforts to secure college interns for 2008.
17. We raised close to \$6,000.

Summary and Plans

Studies show that educating girls benefits both families and the greater community by contributing to increased economic productivity, lower infant mortality and morbidity, and longer life expectancy for both men and women. By providing money for athletic shoes, Girls Gotta Run gives Ethiopian girls the chance to improve not only their lives, but also their families and community.

Plans for 2008 include:

1. Setting up a long term agreement with Team Tesfa; assisting in promoting and supporting the team's growth;
2. Pursuing other projects that support girl runners, based on ongoing research into opportunities in Ethiopia and working closely with our advisers and supporters in the international development and running communities;
3. Completing the trademark registration process;

4. Developing more and closer ties with running communities and working with them to raise money to benefit GGRF;
5. Working to attract major corporate sponsors and art buyers, including but not limited to arts organizations/companies and shoe companies/stores;
6. Mounting additional local art exhibits;
7. Promoting art exhibits in other parts of the country and world;
8. Making additional presentations on college campuses and to civic groups;
9. Working more closely with the Ethiopian arts community and with related charitable organizations such as the Fistula Foundation;
10. Continuing to promote our art and product sales through web-based marketing; working to make GGRF a significant web presence for donations;
11. Applying for grants and funds from appropriate philanthropic organizations;
12. Attracting more media coverage;
13. Completing, releasing, and promoting the Girls Gotta Run DVD;
14. Continuing to develop and expand our membership base through and beyond the arts and running communities.

Prepared by:

Dr. Patricia E. Ortman, Director
Girls Gotta Run Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.girlsgottarun.org/>

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