



2008-2009: Making Great Strides

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From our founder: A big year!

ONE YEAR AGO, I quit my job as a physician assistant to work on GO FAR. I was scared to death. I had been a practicing PA for more than 22 years. Despite my love for medicine and the steady paycheck, I had a nagging feeling that I should take a chance, jump out of my comfort zone.

I founded GO FAR in 2003. It was cruising along, growing at a rate I could maintain. But I felt restless about it. After talking with my husband, friends, and colleagues, I made the leap to volunteer full time on the program.

Just as I left my job last spring, of course, the economy started to tank. Everything started to feel wrong about my decision. Was I being tested? Was this a chance to prove that when life hits a brick wall, sometimes you just have to put on climbing gear and forge over the top.

I landed on the other side and haven't stopped moving. The learning curve is huge. Starting a nonprofit, forming a board of directors and continuing to find ways to grow GO FAR in a shaky economy have all been challenges. It really is about the people you meet along the way. GO FAR has grown stronger because of individuals who have stepped forward. It's people like Anneli Bennett, the physical education teacher at Southwest Elementary. She brought a record 180 kids (some of them are pictured above) and their parents to our spring race, which was a unique partnership with the United Healthcare NC Marathon in downtown High Point.

As we consider other ways to grow and improve the program, I try to keep my eye on the goal – getting kids active and helping them find the tools to live healthy, productive lives free of chronic disease. It's a team effort.

— Robin Lindsay, Founder and President, Go Out For A Run



Our Mission

GO FAR (Go Out For A Run) is a comprehensive fitness program for children which promotes physical activity, healthy eating, and good character.

The GO FAR program empowers children to make healthy lifestyle choices that they may integrate and sustain throughout their lives. Additionally, GO FAR teaches children to set and reach goals and complete a 5K road race.

Our Goals

- To get children active
- To help reduce the incidence of childhood obesity and its complications
- To teach children about healthy eating habits
- To teach children the importance of good character and how it applies to success in life
- To teach children how to set and achieve goals and complete a 5K road race

2009 PROGRAMS

Academy for Life
Transformation, High Point, NC,
Mr. Sowers

Archdale, NC, Parks/Recreation
Tanya Works

Archdale Trinity Middle
Archdale, NC, Cindy Clodfelter

Bnai Shalom Day School,
Greensboro, NC, Shayna Dege

Colonial Heights, VA, Rec/Parks
Kimberly Trotter

Forsyth County, NC, Schools:
Marvin Ward Elementary
Katie Garcia
Old Richmond Elementary
Abby Knox
Southwest Elementary
Katie Chamra

Guilford County, NC, Schools:
Allen Jay Elementary
Allen Johnson
Colfax Elementary
Judy Fowler
Ferndale Middle
Jay Stewart
Florence Elementary,
Leane Dennis, Tim Cook

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(2009 PROGRAMS, CONTINUED)

Jamestown Elementary

Cheryl Albrecht

Johnson St. Global Studies

Michelle Bode

Mendenhall Middle

Alexandra Riddell

Millis Road Elementary

Nate Reeser

Moorehead Elementary

Vicky Schrock

Northern Elementary

Cindy Reno

Oak Hill Elementary

Daniel Inman,

Margret Ann Rierson

Pierce Elementary

Stephen Foulks, Cristy Gibson

Sedgefield Elementary

Lori Kirk

Southwest Elementary

Anneli Bennett

Highland Elementary

Sanford, NC, **Matthew LeMoyne**

High Point, NC, Friends School

Ellen Foster

High Point, NC, Parks/Rec

Kahalilah Coleman, Beth Farrell

Vandalia Presbyterian

High Point, NC, **Chrissy Tatum**

Waccamaw Intermediate,

Pawleys Island, SC, **Tim Carnahan**



How we got started

IN 2003, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT Robin Lindsay was working in a High Point, NC, health practice where she evaluated young adults. What she saw alarmed her: increasing numbers of her patients, who should have been in prime health, were overweight and showing signs and symptoms of chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, joint problems and depression.

A runner, Lindsay decided to share her passion for the sport with kids. She knew that reaching children at a young enough age is key to developing good diet and exercise habits they can maintain all their lives. And running is an accessible, low-cost sport in which each individual can set goals and make progress.

Lindsay launched GO FAR in one elementary school with 16 children. The program has grown to reach more than 1,000 children annually in three states, taught by volunteer coaches at elementary and middle schools, churches, and parks and recreation programs.



Simple, accessible, fun

THE GO FAR PROGRAM is based on a ten-week curriculum that has been written and updated in consultation with educators, nutritionists, and other health professionals. The target age range is fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade youth.

Each of the 20 lesson plans includes tips on healthy eating (including a snack) and fitness, discussion of a character trait (such as perseverance, self-discipline, good sportsmanship), and walk/run training. The children are given a log book to record their activity and set personal goals.

GO FAR programs are led by a volunteer coach, often a physical education teacher at the school or a parent volunteer. The program culminates with a 5K race, complete with timing clocks, finisher medals, and lots of celebration.

With the start of the 2009-2010 year, we hope to begin conducting pre- and post-program evaluations and continuing evaluation to measure changes in fitness and lifestyles of the program participants and their family members.

ALARMING TRENDS

Over the last 25 years, the rate of obesity in the U.S. has doubled for kids ages 6 to 11 and tripled for teens.

Obesity in childhood is associated with hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea, and psychosocial and orthopedic problems.

Overweight teens have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

Childhood obesity is an epidemic in NC, where more than one in four 12- to 18-year-olds and one of every five kids ages 5 to 11 are overweight.

Source: Duke University Health System, 2004 NC Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System

CONTACT US

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Tell me more: GO FAR FAQs

WHY RUNNING?

Running is highly accessible, for children and their parents — all it requires is a pair of shoes and the outdoors. Anyone can make progress, from walking to running. And it's a sport you can do for a lifetime.

WHY FOURTH- THROUGH SIXTH-GRADERS?

These students are old enough to set goals, understand simple training concepts, and start to make some choices about food and activity levels. They are young enough that new, healthy habits can help them avoid chronic diseases in the future. They're also young enough that they haven't been cut from teams or otherwise made to believe that they can't be athletic or active.

IS THE PROGRAM EXPENSIVE?

No. GO FAR is designed to keep costs minimal. The curriculum costs less than \$100 per program. Race fees for participants are just enough to cover costs for T-shirts, timing, and medals. GO FAR organizers are seeking corporate sponsorships and grants to help expand the program, especially to underserved youth populations, at little to no cost.

DOES IT WORK?

So far we only have anecdotal evidence from the participants and their families who write to tell us how much they love running; the volunteer coaches who see the difference in the GO FAR kids' fitness levels in their physical education classes. With the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, we will begin to collect data and evaluations to help us measure the program's effectiveness.

HOW CAN I HELP?

In any number of ways. Parents and/or runners can start new GO FAR programs at a local school or rec center, or offer to help a physical education teacher launch the program. Businesses and foundations interested in promoting physical activity and character building in youth, and fighting childhood obesity, can support our nonprofit organization through funding and in-kind donations.

'GO FAR has been a tremendous life-changing, positive force in our lives.'

— *Mike Hassett, shown in May 2009 with son, Timmy, now in ninth grade*



It's not just for the kids

TIMMY HASSETT CAME HOME from school one day in fifth grade with a flyer about GO FAR. He told his parents he wanted to try the program. To support his son, who had a disappointing experience trying football, Mike Hassett set out for one- and two-mile weekend runs with Timmy— no small feat for a man who had never exercised, was 50 pounds overweight, and smoked cigarettes.

Father and son ran the GO FAR 5K and both fell in love with the sport. Tim now runs cross-country for Northwest High School. Mike is a two-time marathoner.

"Timmy felt great, and I found the ingredient that was missing to help me gain a healthier lifestyle," Mike Hassett says. "I've never stopped running since and have constantly set higher goals for myself." This spring, Mike ran the NC Marathon while his wife and two sons ran the GO FAR 5K (Timmy placed seventh overall).

"GO FAR has been a tremendous life-changing, positive force in my life and has helped Timmy become a more confident and conditioned athlete. It's a program that should be in every school."

MORE KUDOS



"These children work hard toward a goal and through a structured, supervised program, they make friends, become more fit, and gain self-esteem."

— *Christie, a Colfax Elementary mom*

"GO FAR keeps kids in shape. You can keep kids healthy and they can have fun at the same time."

— *Grace, 4th-grade participant*