

Girls Gotta Run Foundation, Inc.

Annual Report 2011

Background

The Girls Gotta Run Foundation, Inc. is an all volunteer charitable organization created to raise money to support impoverished Ethiopian girls who are training to become professional runners. Training to be athletes allows them to stay in school, avoid early marriage and childbirth, 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. GGRF was founded to assist them.

Our Mission

The mission of GGRF is to provide funds for the purchase of athletic shoes, training uniforms, food ("calorie money") and other training-related expenses, such as transportation, as well as to subsidize coaches' salaries.

Our Teams

GGRF works with local partners in Ethiopia. In 2011, we continued to support Team Tesfa, the Simien Girl Runners, and the young women of Running Across Borders. We provided support for a new initiative: the Transitions Charity. We further developed our relationship with Joseph Kibur and the YaYa Village.

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

TEAM TESFA



Team Tesfa, including the newest members, the girls of the Transitions Charity, and GGRF volunteers Joanna Johnson, Helen Bradshaw, and Marco Degasper, December 2012

Team Tesfa. We continued to provide support for and promote Team Tesfa, the core team of which stabilized at 20 girls and young women (from an original four), providing funds for shoes, clothes, food, and coaching subsidies. The team had some significant athletic successes, including Chaltu Tafa winning first place among the women at the Flag Day 8K and the women's 6K team winning the second division trophy at the Addis Ababa Cross Country Club Championship Races.

Transitions Charity. We provided support for the establishment of an Ethiopian-based charity, Transitions Charity, which three of the original Team Tesfa members founded to rescue homeless teenage girl runners and oversee and mentor their education and training. The girls become members of Team Tesfa. For more information, please see <http://patriciaeortman.com/girlsgottarun/teamtesfa/transitionscharity.pdf>

SIMIEN GIRL RUNNERS



Simien Girl Runners Mihawet, Tigist, and Setachew in their GGRF t-shirts, December 2011

Simien Girl Runners. We continued to provide informal support for and promote the Simien Girl Runners, a team of 10 girls in Debarq, in the Simien Mountains. Our goal was to support them through high school so they did not drop out to get married and start having children at too young an age. All 10 girls on the team have graduated from high school. One is in college, one is working full time at the Simien Lodge, two have graduated vocational school and the others will graduate vocational school in the spring of 2012. Happily, an Ethiopian businessman has come forward to invest in the creation of a co-ed running club/team in Debarq for 30 runners and the Ethiopian government has dedicated funds to support, through the local Sport and Youth Office of Debarq, 30 more. Three of the Simien Girl Runners have been chosen to be a part of the new club, the Ultimate Plan Athletics Club, and five of the girls have been chosen to be included in the group of 30 being supported by the Sport and Youth Office.

RUNNING ACROSS BORDERS



RAB athletes tend to their studies and food preparation with GGRF Volunteer Marti Miles. (Photo by Matt Andrea.)

Running Across Borders. We continued to provide support for the first five female athletes in the Running Across Borders program. It was a big year for the RAB girls. Placing so well in so many of their individual races, Dunkane, Hana and Halima were all signed by Ethiopian domestic race clubs where they now earn salaries and can and do support themselves! Dinkinesh won prize money in five international races and has been signed by a sports management group. Seada has not been offered a club, but it is possible she will be in the future. The support of GGRF and RAB has been instrumental in getting them to these positions, and we are all so proud of them all! Under these circumstances, we are happy to say that charitable support by either organization is no longer necessary. It is possible that some of the girls will work with RAB Sports Management in the future.

Ya Ya Village. We kept in touch with our newest partner, Joseph Kibur, owner and developer of the Ya Ya Athletics Village (<http://yayavillage.com/>) and monitored progress on the construction, which lasted most of the year. The village “soft opened” in early December. We began discussions about the nature of the requirements and processes for selection for scholarships for Ethiopian girls to attend the training program, which is targeted for initiation as soon as possible in 2012.

Financial Resources

GGRF solicits funds from private donations, local groups and the international community both in the U.S. and Ethiopia. In 2011, despite the ongoing difficult economic climate, we raised \$11,797.00. We expended \$11,035.00, thus essentially breaking even.

Fundraising Activities

We published 22 issues of “**Running Matters**,” the GGRF newsletter, keeping supporters well informed about organizational developments, the accomplishments of the GGRF athletes and volunteers, and soliciting donations.

We assisted and coordinated with supporters who engaged in fundraising efforts on our behalf, including Sasha-Vanessa Brenes (yoga class), Herron Young (high school fundraiser), a GOTR team at Riley Elementary in Novi, MI (community service fundraising project), and the Curves gym in Cleveland Park, D.C. (art exhibit).

We resumed our partnership with DC Road Runners in the annual Larry Noel Race and secured sponsorship by the Chevy Chase Running Company for the event.

We made significant progress on planning for a GGRF 5th Anniversary Birthday party to be held in 2012.

We investigated several foundations for possible grants in an effort to identify possible funder(s) for (a) paid position(s) for GGRF.

We investigated online fundraising sites and made initial decisions regarding which appear as if they may work best for GGRF. We joined Grassroots.org (<http://www.grassroots.org/>) and Network for Good.

Public Relations/Outreach

We published 22 issues of “**Running Matters**,” the GGRF newsletter, keeping supporters well informed of organizational developments and accomplishments of the GGRF athletes and volunteers.

In March, a Girls Gotta Run video **won second place in The Girls Effect’s “Unleashing the Girl Effect” contest**. The video was chosen as one of only three finalists in the challenge. The three finalist videos were posted on The Girl Effect's Facebook page, and people voted by “liking” the one they wanted to win.

Kayla Nolan presented a paper about her experiences with the teams during her summer 2009 field research in Ethiopia at the [Women's Sport in Africa](#) conference in Oxford, England. She presented another version of the paper at the Sport and the Global South Conference sponsored by the Academy of International Sport at George Mason University in November. She also submitted the paper to an professional academic journal.

Garrett Ash presented “Supporting Impoverished Ethiopian Girls Who are Training to be Professional Runners: Successes, Challenges, and Future Directions,” about Girls Gotta Run’s work at the Sport and the Global South Conference sponsored by the Academy of International Sport at George Mason University in November. The presentation was co-written by Garrett, Malcolm and GGRF Executive Director Pat Ortman and the co-authored paper of the same title will be included in the collected proceedings of the conference, which will be published.

GGRF Advisory Board member **Gaby Grebski**, Team Liaison, was able to visit the teams in Ethiopia for the third summer in a row. This year she was able to visit all three teams again: Team Tesfa, Running Across Borders and the Simien Girl Runners. She was able to meet again with Joseph Kiber and tour the construction site of the YaYa Athletics Village.

We arranged for visits, both short and long term, by several additional GGRF volunteers to Ethiopia and the teams. Visitors included Marco Degasper (Italy; long term, two visits), Joanna Jaworski (Poland, short term), Helen Bradshaw (U.S., long term), Matt Andrea (U.S., brief), and Kebe Tesfaye (U.S., brief)

We wrote supporting letters of recommendation for Helen Bradshaw to receive a Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation 2011/12 Public Service Fellowship so she could volunteer for GGRF on the ground in Ethiopia for 3 months and arranged for her to do that from November 2011 to

February 2012. We also arranged for GGRF t-shirts for all the teams to be printed and sent with her as Christmas presents for the girls and GGRF volunteers.

We solicited Tadias Magazine to publish an article in March by Advisory Board member Kebe Tesfaye about her meeting with Team Tesfa during her visit to Ethiopia earlier that year: <http://www.tadias.com/03/06/2011/my-dream-came-true-meeting-the-girls-gotta-runs-girls-in-ethiopia/>.

We responded to a request by George Washington University to feature an article about GGRF Executive Director Pat Ortman in their Summer/Fall edition of Mount Vernon Today: <http://mvtoday.gwu.edu/2011/spring-summer/articles/a-lifetime-empowering-women.html>.

We participated in the Non-Profit Expo at the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum on September 14, 2011. <http://www.sewallbelmont.org/programs/non-profit-expo-learn-about-board-service/>.

Volunteer and Advisory Board Member Activity/Organizational Development

Marco Degasper. In January Marco Degasper joined the Volunteer/Advisory Board as Special Liaison to the Simien Girl Runners. He visited the team twice in 2012, including a long term stay in January and several days in November. After his first stay, he created a special presentation about Ethiopia and the team which he presented to a group of about 200 interested people in his home town of (Italy). He collected donations and took the money with him on his second trip in November. Additionally, he created a GGRF running tour of Ethiopia which is being offered in November 2012, which he will lead and which is open to all GGRF supporters and interested people. While there in November he also was able to meet up with Helen Bradshaw and Joanna Johnson for a visit to the Team Tesfa girls. For photos of Marco's first visit to the Simien Girl Runners, see <http://www.patriciaortman.com/girlsgottarun/teamggr/2011-marco-training/index.html>

For photos of his and Helen's visit, see <http://www.patriciaortman.com/girlsgottarun/teamggr/2011-advisoryboard-visit-simiengirlrunners.pdf>

Kebe Tesfaye. In January, long time GGRF supporter and Advisory Board member Kebe Tesfaye was thrilled to be able to meet, at long last, and visit with, the Team Tesfa girls, while she was in Ethiopia on other business. Tadias magazine featured Kebe's visit, with photos, in an article: <http://www.tadias.com/03/06/2011/my-dream-came-true-meeting-the-girls-gotta-runs-girls-in-ethiopia/>

Joanna Jaworska. In June 2011 GGRF volunteer Joanna Jaworska conducted a mathematics workshop over several days for several members of the full RAB team. She started with a review of basic mathematical skills and then progressed to calculation of living costs. Specifically, the athletes learned to calculate weekly and monthly expenses for food shopping, transportation, and

medicine. The athletes were taught to do these procedures both by hand and using Microsoft Excel.



Matt Andrea visited the Running Across Borders girls for a day in late Summer, along with Marti Miles, **Munit Mesfin** and her son. This photo by Matt is of Marti and Munit. **Marti Miles**, who lives in Ethiopia, continued to assist and mentor the RAB athletes the entire year (see also photo on page 3), as well as provided invaluable assistance to newly arrived GGRF volunteers, including Helen Bradshaw.



Gaby Grebski. In this photo, GGRF Advisory Board Member/Volunteer/Liaison to the teams was able to make a visit again this year in August. Here she is with original Team Tesfa member and Transitions Charity Co-Founder Amsal, Tesfa Foundation Chief of Staff Menna, and original Team Tesfa member and Transitions Charity Co-Founder Meseret.

Joanna Johnson. In November, Joanna Johnson, recipient of a 2011-2012 Watson Fellowship for Independent Study and Travel, joined the Advisory/Volunteer Board as an Ambassador at

Large. She is spreading the GGRF word and recruiting supporters in France during her two month stay (December 2011-January 2012), will then do so for four months in Norway, and upon her return to the States in June, continue to do so here. She was also interviewed by a French reporter about GGRF, who will be including a section about GGRF written by Joanna, in an article in an international journal about running in Ethiopia, scheduled for publication in January 2012. She has been granted a free entry as a “fast runner” for the Rotterdam Marathon, which will be her marathon debut, on April 15, 2012 and plans to make it a fundraiser for GGRF.

Kayla Nolan. In November, Kayla Nolan joined the GGRF Advisory Board as Director of Outreach, Research and Development and began full time volunteer work to build a foundation for seeking grants, to research possible grantees, and to write grants to provide support for a paid GGRF Executive Director in 2012. She has gotten intimately acquainted with the staff and capabilities of the Foundation Center in NYC and taken most, if not all, of the short courses they offer, to learn as much as she can about the grant seeking process. She has also done initial research and analysis of new website possibilities for GGRF, met with several key GGRF supporters in the NYC area and established connections with several additional possible supporters.

Helen Bradshaw. In November, Helen Bradshaw, recipient of a Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation 2011/12 Public Service Fellowship traveled to Ethiopia for a three month stint as a GGRF volunteer. She stayed first with the Running Across Borders girls and began tutoring the Team Tesfa teens before heading to the Simien Mountains to visit the Simien Girl Runners. Upon her return to Addis, she has been continuing her work primarily with the Transitions Charity teens and Team Tesfa. She has also done special projects for GGRF as needed. To read all about her adventures and see photos, visit her blog: <http://helenbradshaw.blogspot.com/>

Summary

Through financial grants, services and in-kind contributions, we provided material goods and services for 42 runners. We have learned through our partners that running has a positive impact on the lives of the girls. They stay in school. They have higher self-esteem, are more committed and disciplined, and experience themselves as more empowered.

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 to support Ethiopian girls who are training to be runners, Girls Gotta Run gives them the chance to stay in school, enhance their future opportunities, and improve not only their lives, but also their families and community.