

Feb 22, 2006 GOTR-Chicago Names New Executive Director

Chicago, IL - Kelly O'Brien was announced today as the new executive director of Girls on the Run® (GOTR)-Chicago by the organization's board of directors.

"We are thrilled that someone with Kelly's background and experience has joined GOTR-Chicago," said board chair Theresa Gannon. "Under her leadership we are certain that we can expand our programs and reach more girls."

O'Brien has more than 15 years experience in nonprofit management and public health policy. Most recently she was Vice President at the Chicago-based public affairs consulting firm Wilhelm & Conlon Public Strategies, where she advised nonprofit clients on advocacy, fundraising, relationship building and organizational development.

Her professional past includes a range of positions in the nonprofit and public sectors, including Associate Executive Director of Public Affairs at the American Public Health Association (APHA) in Washington, DC; Director of Government Affairs for the nonprofit group Partnership for Prevention; Health Policy Assistant to U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-IL); and Program Analyst in the Office of the Director at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). She has a master's degree in Public Administration.

O'Brien, who grew up in Aurora, IL, and started running when she was a girl, is a Chicago Marathon regular.

"This is really a dream job for me," said O'Brien. "The opportunity to combine my professional skills with my love of running and belief that physical activity can truly change the way you see and feel about yourself is exhilarating. I'm as excited about coaching and mentoring the girls as I am about growing the organization."

O'Brien succeeds Betsy Armstrong, who is joining GOTR's international headquarters organization to build a nationwide Team Tiara charity runner fundraising program—a concept she developed as the chapter's executive director.

"It is rare that you find someone who is both qualified to lead and passionate about the mission," said Terri Rivera, incoming GOTR-Chicago Board Chair. "Kelly's personal commitment to GOTR just shines right through."

Girls on the Run - Chicago uses the power of running to educate and inspire girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. It is an innovative health education and wellness program that uniquely combines training for a 5K event with life-changing, self esteem enhancing lessons that encourage healthy habits and an active lifestyle in 8-12 year old girls. Girls learn to stretch themselves - physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally - and in the process, are inspired to a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. For more information about GOTR-Chicago, see www.gotrchicago.com.