

Expansion of the Run Hard Running Team to Combat Childhood Obesity and Promote Character Development

Run Hard Running Team (Run Hard) is a program that is implemented by Crossover Athletics, a non-profit, youth-serving organization founded in 2006 that uses endurance principles to teach life skills to students in grades two through eight. The program has two seasons per year and meets afterschool two days a week to train students to complete a 5K race at the end of each season. Students are taken through an eight-week curriculum that pairs a weekly running skill with a life skill. Students experience the effort that is required to complete endurance tasks while also being taught the effort that is required to build and maintain positive character by focusing on nine core areas of character development and completing weekly objectives. Childhood obesity and character development are major issues in America. According to the Center for Disease Control, 20.5% of youth age 12-19 and 17.7% of children age 6-11 in the United States were obese in 2012. Research also shows that participants are able to transfer character lessons they learn in athletic programs to other areas such as school or relationships. The board members of Run Hard Running Team believe that if students are introduced to running at a young age, they will develop an interest and love for the sport that will continue into adulthood, thus helping to counteract obesity while developing positive character traits. With this in mind, Run Hard Running Team is currently seeking additional funding and dedicated partners to begin expansion into three new regions. The organization has developed a program that is successfully reaching students in local communities, seeing positive results from participants, and is in high demand in areas across the United States. Having seen ten years of consistent growth and with its brand value at an all-time high, Run Hard is once again poised for expansion.

Organization Description

Run Hard Running Team (Run Hard) is a program that is implemented by Crossover Athletics, a non-profit, youth-serving organization based out of Lexington, South Carolina. Being an avid runner, Jesse Harmon developed Run Hard as a means to use running and endurance principles to teach life skills to students in grades two through eight. The program has a spring and fall season that meets afterschool two days a week to train students to complete a 5K race at the end of each season. Students are taken through an eight-week curriculum that pairs a weekly running skill with a life skill. Students experience the effort that is required to complete an endurance task while also being taught the effort that is required to build and maintain positive character. Run Hard focuses on nine core areas of character development by completing weekly objectives. The nine core areas are positive peer pressure, perseverance, wise choices, work ethic, leadership, teamwork, honesty, respect, and honor. At the end of the eight-week season, runners compete in the Run Hard 5K, with an optional adult running buddy. The race is officially timed and awards are given to top participants. In 2015, Run Hard served over 2,000 students in six states. Additionally, Run Hard partners with over fifty elementary schools and three homeschool groups. The program cost is \$85 per student with some scholarships available, based on family income. Volunteer runners in the community teach weekly afterschool sessions. New curriculum is created each season so that runners do not repeat the curriculum if they complete all fourteen seasons of the program. In addition to awards for placing in the 5K, runners are also given badges for each season they successfully complete. Run Hard Running Team serves students at the direction of its board of directors. There are seven board members who volunteer to lead the direction and growth of Run Hard. These board members are a group of community leaders with diverse professional backgrounds. Run Hard Running Team has three

full-time employees, four part-time employees and hundreds of volunteers. The full-time employees include the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operations Officer, and a Local Area Director. The part-time employees include a fund development officer, social media director, and other Area Directors. In 2015, the Run Hard Running Team annual budget was \$415,000. Run Hard currently receives many requests each month, from across the United States, to start a program in a school. The organization is currently unable to fulfill most of these requests due to lack of resources. The limiting factors for growth are cash and Local Area Directors.

Proposed Needs

Childhood obesity and character development are major issues in America today. As with any issue that effects children and youth, the community should take some responsible for contributing to solutions to these issues. According to the Center for Disease Control, 20.5% of youth age 12-19 and 17.7% of children age 6-11 in the United States were obese in 2012. The board members of the Run Hard Running Team believes that if students are introduced to running at a young age, they will develop an interest and love for the sport that will continue into adulthood, thus helping to counteract obesity while developing positive character traits. Run Hard Running Team targets youth in grades two through eight using an endurance-based program that addresses youth obesity and encourages character development. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that schools adopt a health plan for their students (Hauser-Cram et al., 2014, p. 425). This plan is called a Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP). A complete CSHP includes eight components to reach its goal of developing healthy students, one of which is physical education. This component recognizes the link between early education and skill development and a lifelong participation in physical activity. Studies show that when youth participate in healthy activities they are likely to continue those healthy habits later in life

(Hauser-Cram et al., 2014, p. 526). Another study examined the impact of an urban sports program whose goal was character development and life skill development in youth (Bean, Whitley, & Gould, 2014). The researchers were interested in what ways participants perceived that they were influenced by their program involvement, in relation to life lessons they had learned. In this study, 13 females and 10 males were assessed, using a qualitative interview guide. Results showed that participants indicated that they were able to transfer the lessons they had learned in the athletic program to areas such as school or relationships. One of the more significant findings is the predictability of obesity in adulthood, based on the weight of a child. Approximately 83% of overweight youth grew up to become overweight adults (Herman, Craig, Gauvin, & Katzmarzyk, 2009). This statistic speaks to the importance of offering youth programming in early childhood that can counteract obesity. In 2016, researchers conducted a group-randomized study of physical education programs. One of their goals was to verify if incorporating a life skills program into a physical education program would show a gain in life skills and executive function. The study compared ninety students, ages 14-15 years that participated in either a traditional physical education program or one that included a life skills component. Students were evaluated before and after intervention on life skills such as communication, problem solving, decision-making, and self-regulation. The team determined that including life skills training in a sports education context did produce a positive increase in life skills among participants (Pesce et al., 2016).

Project Description

Run Hard Running Team is currently seeking additional funding to expand into three new regions. The organization has developed a program that is successfully reaching students in local communities, seeing positive results from participants, and is in high demand in areas across the

United States. In an effort to maximize student impact, the participant cost is low and approximately 15% of participants receive scholarships based on their family ranking in the HHS Poverty Guidelines. While current local areas are successful and profitable, the organization does not have sufficient capital to expand into additional regions. These identified regions for expansion are Augusta, GA, Greenville, SC, and Tampa, FL. Run Hard has chosen these areas based on participant demographic, identification of a Local Area Director, and community interest. To insure program success, the Board of Directors, along with the CEO, has developed clear policies for program expansion and a franchise agreement that identifies responsibilities of new Local Area Directors and the Run Hard Running Team parent organization. This expansion will begin in the fall of 2016 with a grand opening in the new communities for the spring season of 2017. With an infusion of start-up capital, Run Hard Running Team believes that these areas will be self-sustainable within one year and will be able to produce a lasting impact in these local communities for years to come.

The key component of the Run Hard program expansion is the identification and funding of three new Local Area Directors. In anticipation of expansion, the Run Hard CEO and Board of Directors have identified three new Local Area Directors in the new communities. These directors have all participated in the Run Hard Running Team program in the past as volunteer coaches for the student program. This participation allows the proposed directors to fully understand the expectations of managing successful programs. It also makes them uniquely qualified to support volunteer coaches in the proposed areas, as they are aware of the support that they needed when they served in the volunteer position.

To clarify expectations of The Run Hard Running Team organization and the Local Area Directors, Run Hard has developed a franchise agreement. This agreement will be need to be

reviewed by outside legal counsel for accuracy and consistency to make sure that the organization is properly protected during the expansion.

In addition to Local Area Directors, Run Hard will expand its website capabilities. Run Hard currently has a solid website with impressive traffic analytics. However, as the program expands into new communities, the website will need to be slightly reorganized to maintain its ease of use for participants. As all participants register via the online registration system, new account creation and web training will also need to be conducted for Local Area Directors. Additionally, Run Hard will expand the sponsorship area of the site to continue to recognize funders who support the mission of the organization.

As Run Hard moves into new areas, it will be important that the program is properly marketed to the local administrators and parents. Run Hard will need to develop new print marketing materials that are area-specific that the Local Area Director can distribute to potential schools and parents. Additionally, Run Hard will need to increase its social media presence in the new areas. Run Hard currently employs a part-time employee that is responsible for social media. This position will need to be expanded to include area-specific posts on all social media outlets that Run Hard currently utilizes.

Each Run Hard season ends with a local area 5K race for participants and an optional adult running buddy. Run Hard will need to secure additional materials for implementing the Run Hard 5K. These materials include, but are not limited to, an inflatable start/finish line, coolers and hydration equipment, official timing equipment, tents, tables, teardrop banners, and audio/visual equipment. Run Hard will also need to create a 5K route that will be certified so that the course can be used for community 5K races as potential fundraising events.

Run Hard currently subcontracts with an individual for accounting services. With three

new areas, Run Hard will increase the amount of accounting services it needs to accomplish normal business accounting tasks. Run Hard estimates that the amount of accounting services will increase by approximately 30% in the first year of the implementation of the new plan.

As a youth serving organization, Run Hard is careful to manage the safety of its participants. With the creation of three new areas, the organization will need to increase its liability insurance coverage to accommodate the new participants. Additionally, Run Hard will need to increase the budget for background checks on volunteer coaches and other adults who may have direct contact with Run Hard participants.

Lastly, Run Hard will need to increase its offerings in the area of training. Since volunteer coaches and Local Area Directors are responsible for the safety of the participants, and for ensuring correct program implementation, Run Hard will offer three additional training sessions, in the new local communities. These training sessions will require printed materials, travel costs, and background checks for additional directors and volunteers.

Evaluation

A Run Hard board member will direct an evaluation of the new programs and serve as the evaluator. The Run Hard volunteer coach at each individual school will administer a survey. Desks are available for use at all of the locations. The area director will be responsible for gathering and distributing supplies for each of the schools. These supplies will be distributed to the coaches at the mandatory coaches meeting at the beginning of the season. Supplies will include surveys, written instructions, a list of students whose parents have consented to participate, pencils, a folder, and two binder clips. Run Hard will provide administrative support to compile the survey results, as directed by the evaluator. Results will be distributed electronically.

The main instrument used for evaluation will be the *Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development*, developed by the Colorado Trust. The outcomes in this toolkit were “based on a synthesis of research on surveys used to measure assets and positive youth development in the United States; a review of the positive youth development literature; the logic models from 35 ASI grantees; and surveys and focus groups with youth-serving programs” (The Colorado Trust, 2004). These surveys were then tested in four after school programs that serve a diverse population of youth, ages 8 through 15 years. The survey questions measure 45 youth outcomes that comprise 8 outcome sets. Those sets are academic success, arts and recreation, community involvement, cultural competency, life skills, positive life choices, positive core values, and sense of self. It has been determined that these outcomes correlate well with the outcomes being evaluated for the Run Hard Running Teams.

Each outcome domain in the toolkit was evaluated using a reliability analysis to determine the internal consistency of the outcomes. Internal consistency is how well the different questions measure the same concept. The outcome domains used in the toolkit all have an alpha coefficient of .74 or greater, while .70 is typically required before a scale is widely used.

The survey will be quantitative with fixed-response options and will not exceed two pages. The surveys to be administered were developed to be age appropriate for students from fourth to ninth grade with little help from an adult administrator. Run Hard participants in fourth through eighth grade will read the survey individually and answer questions on their own with the opportunity to ask questions to the coach for clarification. However, since Run Hard Running Teams begin in second grade, surveys will be administered differently for second and third grade students. These students will use an answer sheet to fill in responses, but the questions will be

read aloud by the coach. Questions will be encouraged to be asked aloud, so that the rest of the group can benefit from the responses.

Organizational Capacity

Run Hard Running Team has a track record of success. The organization has successfully completed ten seasons of the program and has increased participation every season. In 2015, Run Hard served over 2,000 participants and partnered with over fifty elementary and middle schools. Run Hard has a strong reputation in local communities and is becoming a leader in the national running community. Last year, Run Hard partnered with over 10 community races in local communities to help them fundraise for local charities. The staff boasts over 30 years of combined youth development and running management experience and generated over \$400,000 in total revenue. Run Hard also received over \$100,000 in sponsorships and grant funding within the last calendar year. These funds are managed by the Run Hard accountant and are reviewed annually by an external auditor.

Sustainability

Run Hard has developed a proven business plan for sustainability. To date, every new local area has become fiscally independent within 12 months of creation. Since Local Area Directors are paid based on a percentage of participation fees, there is little risk to start a new area. Also, since Run Hard is a successful national brand, local businesses are excited to partner with the organization and support youth in local communities. Our fees are low and our brand value is high. By investing in Run Hard staff in the start-up year, funders guarantee sustainability by funding the period of time with low participant fees. After the first year, program costs are minimal and participant fees cover the scalable cost of the program.

Budget Narrative

	In Kind	
Personnel <u>Local Area Director</u> X 3 12 month commitment (\$20,000/year). The Local Area Directors have agreed to work 1/2 of the year in a volunteer capacity to help generate funds through participant fees.	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
<u>Accounting</u> This will be an increase in accounting services by 30% of the current agreement		\$2,000.00
<u>Social Media</u> Social Media services will increase for the three new areas: including Facebook, Twitter, and InstaGram marketing		\$3,000.00
Legal Fees To evaluate the franchise and expansion agreement		\$2,000.00
Website Expansion For ease of use to incorporate new areas and increase areas for sponsorship recognition		\$6,000.00
Marketing Materials X 3 Area-specific brochures for distribution in schools to participants. 2,500 brochures X 3 areas. (\$300/area)		\$900.00
5K Race Materials X 3 Start/Finish Line = \$600, Hydration supplies = \$325, Timing Equipment = \$450, Banners = \$525, Audio/Visual Equipment = \$700		\$7,800.00
Liability Insurance and Background Checks Liability Insurance increase = 100 participants X 3 areas X 2 seasons X \$2 = \$1,200 Background Checks = 6 background checks X 3 areas X \$15		\$1,470.00
Trainings Printed Materials (policies, curriculum) = \$125 X 3 areas		\$375.00
Travel Cost X 3 Three hotel rooms (\$125/night) Three Per Diem Food Days (\$28/day) Mileage (.55/mile X 1,620 miles) (not X 3. Total mileage)		\$1,350.00
	\$30,000.00	\$54,895.00
Total Project = \$84,895		
Total Funds Requested = \$54,895		

2016 Run Hard Running Team Board of Directors

Bradley Barringer	104 Raymond Circle, Lexington, SC 29072
Hank Burriss	416 W. Main St., Lexington, SC 29072
Luther Harmon	562 Kaymin Hill Court, Lexington, SC 29073
Alex Huggins	123 Flutter Dr., Lexington, SC 29072
Toby Kirkland	434 Shore Rd., Gilbert, SC 29054
Kevin Wood	127 Chadwick Trail, Lexington, SC 29072

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **JUL 14 2009**

CROSSOVER ATHLETICS
108 ROSEWOOD LN
LEXINGTON, SC 29072

Employer Identification Number:
80-0266880
DLN:
17053048118009
Contact Person:
CARLY D YOUNG ID# 31494
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500
Accounting Period Ending:
December 31
Public Charity Status:
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
Form 990 Required:
Yes
Effective Date of Exemption:
September 26, 2008
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Addendum Applies:
No

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined that you are a public charity under the Code section(s) listed in the heading of this letter.

Please see enclosed Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

Letter 947 (00/06)