



LET ME RUN

2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Let Me Run family,

“Boys will be boys” is one of the many messages that contribute to destructive male stereotypes. Hearing this over and over as a mother of boys, I knew we were selling our boys — and ultimately society — short. I knew that boys are capable of so much more than our limiting expectations of them and something had to be done. Running felt like the perfect vehicle to foster boys’ emotional and social health because it creates a sense of camaraderie and space for vulnerability. Thanks to the efforts and expertise of many people, Let Me Run started in 2009 in Charlotte, NC.

Now more than ever, our boys need permission to be human. Boys need us to recognize that they need caring, empathy, deep relationships and respect. Loneliness and weak social connections reduce lifespans at a similar rate to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Loneliness has a higher mortality rate than that of obesity, and it’s also associated with a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, depression, and anxiety.

Boys’ school performance, depression, substance abuse, and suicide rates need to change. Boys need to know that it is ok to ask for help instead of suffering in silence. They need to know other ways to express anger and sadness besides violence and aggression. They need to know that career and play choices are not masculine or feminine, but unique to each individual’s gifts.

My hope is that Let Me Run reaches all boys — whether it be a coach, participant, parent, or teacher. Our many volunteers, donors, and dedicated staff share this vision: to allow boys to feel value instead of shame, to feel supported instead of alone, and to be courageous enough to be themselves and live into their full potential. Healthier boys will mean healthier girls and, ultimately, a more peaceful and productive society.

Thank you for taking time to learn how we are preparing boys for the long run.

With deep gratitude,



Ashley Armistead
Let Me Run Founder / Director of Programming



Dear donors, sponsors, and supporters of Let Me Run,

Let Me Run continues to make great strides as an organization. Fiscal year 2018 was our largest year ever, with 5,374 boys participating in the program, an increase of 22% over the previous year. Let Me Run was able to award 22% of the boys participating in the program some financial assistance to join a team. And to serve our boys, Let Me Run engaged 1,800 volunteers in coaching or other events. The program also expanded into 4 new states and served teams across 27 total states this past year. Additionally, Let Me Run continues to grow its race series across the country, hosting 8 of its own 5k races this past year, and we look forward to hosting twelve races this coming year.

An independent study has confirmed Let Me Run is making a significant positive impact in boys' lives, and to continue to build on this impact, this past year we focused on improving our curriculum. The organization is in the process of improving curricula for both the elementary (4th & 5th grade) program and the middle school (6th-8th grade) program with the guidance of veteran coaches and industry experts. We are also excited to announce the launch of our new 3rd grade program. Following a strong demand for 3rd grade inclusion, Let Me Run created a standalone 3rd grade curriculum to honor the developmental needs of 3rd graders, per the recommendation of developmental psychologists. We're looking forward to piloting our 3rd grade program in the fall of 2018 and plan to expand this program offering by the fall of 2019.

Let Me Run starts with running because of its physical and mental benefits. The boys love running and the activities that promote respect, unity, and perseverance, but what they love even more is support, camaraderie, the freedom to be themselves, and the ability to open up. This vulnerability is what builds strong, healthy bonds. It is great to see these boys listen and appreciate the gifts of others, rather than seeing them as a threat. When Let Me Run boys cross the finish line at the end-of-season race, you will see faces full of joy, pride and unrestrained emotion. And our finish line is just the beginning for these boys.

Thank you for your continued support, belief in our mission, and help toward our goal to reach every boy across the country.

Paul G. Martino

Paul G. Martino
Executive Director



Mission

Let Me Run inspires boys through the power of running to be courageous enough to be themselves, to build healthy relationships, and to live an active lifestyle.

Vision

We envision a world where every boy appreciates the individuality in themselves and others.

Credo

LET ME RUN BOYS are courageous enough to be themselves.

LET ME RUN BOYS push themselves to be fit in body, mind and spirit.

LET ME RUN BOYS are loyal friends who encourage and support others.

LET ME RUN BOYS trust that teamwork, unity, respect and perseverance open doors to greatness.

LET ME RUN BOYS are honest with themselves and others.

LET ME RUN BOYS responsibly choose what is right, never settling for what is easy.



“I’ve seen Let Me Run become an important part of my son’s identity and give him the opportunity to challenge himself and lead.”

— Charity Nebbe, Advisory Council Chair for Let Me Run Eastern Iowa Corridor

“I coached Girls on the Run for four years and I love that program. From the very first day of practice at my neighborhood elementary school I had boys coming up to me and asking, “What about us?” The more I thought about it, the more I saw the girls on my teams grow in strength, confidence and kindness, the more I learned about the pressures society places on our boys, the more I realized that I wanted to be part of giving boys the same kind of opportunity to learn, grow and succeed. My resolve led me to find Let Me Run.

Now Let Me Run Eastern Iowa Corridor just completed its third season. I’ve gotten to experience the program as a coach, a mom and one of the founders of our region. I’ve seen Let Me Run become an important part of my son’s identity and give him the opportunity to challenge himself and lead. I’ve seen him make the right choice in a hard situation and tell me that he knew what a “Let Me Run boy” needed to do. I’ve seen the boys on my team come together to support and cheer for each other. I’ve seen them comfort a teammate in tears. I’ve worked with boys who have never been able to participate in a sport or extra-curricular activity before and watched them blossom. I’ve seen boys push themselves and begin to learn what they are capable of. I’m so glad I get to be part of bringing this program to Iowa, and I want boys everywhere to have opportunities like this one.”

— Charity Nebbe, Advisory Council Chair for Let Me Run Eastern Iowa Corridor



Our boys need Let Me Run.

Today's society imposes a limiting set of expectations on boys called the Boy Code.

Coined by Harvard Psychologist Dr. William Pollack, the Boy Code is a harmful false mask of masculinity.

Boys are expected to be and act a certain way within a narrow, destructive definition of masculinity, which limits their potential and individuality.

You've heard the negative Boy Code messages:

- Man up.
- Boys will be boys.
- Boys don't cry.
- Too much testosterone.
- Stop being a sissy.

Traditional masculinity norms like stoicism, toughness, and dominance can lead to our boys wearing a mask of masculinity that makes them seem resilient.

The Boy Code is failing our boys.



Boys are 2 times more likely than girls to be expelled.¹



Boys are 30% more likely than girls to fail out of school.²



Boys are 4 times more likely than girls to be prescribed a stimulant medication for a behavior disorder.³



Depression in males is often masked by anger.⁴



4+ U.S. boys commit suicide every day.⁵

¹ National Center for Education Statistics

² Scholastic.com

³ U.S. National Library of Medicine

⁴ American Psychological Association

⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

BE A MAN MAN UP
BOYS DON'T BE TOUGH
CRY YOU THROW LIKE A GIRL
BOYS WILL BE BOYS
DON'T BE SO SENSITIVE
YOU HAVE TO BE BE
IN CONTROL STOIC
JUST BRUSH IT OFF TAKE IT LIKE A MAN

Society puts him in a box.
We let him be himself.



Groundbreaking Study Proves Let Me Run Increases Social Competence and Fosters Healthy Masculinity

Research confirms nonprofit program creates positive change in boys to a statistically substantial degree.

A recent independent study, conducted by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Institute to Promote Athlete Health and Wellness, finds Let Me Run is making a substantial positive impact in boys' lives. A review of the professional literature revealed UNCG's groundbreaking study to be the first published to examine healthy masculinity in boys, as well as a program's ability to improve it.

Let Me Run is a nonprofit wellness program that inspires boys to be themselves, be active and belong. With a comprehensive curriculum that applies the power of running, the program encourages boys to develop their psychological, emotional and social health, in addition to their physical health. Twice a week for seven weeks, two trained volunteer coaches lead an elementary or middle school team through practice. Designed to amplify confidence, self-expression and respect for others, each practice includes a lesson from the Let Me Run curriculum that incorporates running, games and activities. Each fall and spring season culminates in a 5k race festival that celebrates the boys' personal growth.

The organization seeks to break down negative societal pressures that require males to mask their authentic selves behind a performance of masculinity, in which the most praised emotions are anger, aggression and pride. Phrases like "man up," "boys don't cry" and "stop being a girl" serve as catalysts for this type of destructive macho-masculinity. As described by Dr. William Pollack in his book *Real Boys*, these unhealthy male stereotypes, which Pollack refers to as the "Boy Code," can stand in the way of boys' positive futures and lead to disturbing consequences such as illness, decreased learning potential, addiction, and violence. These often unspoken issues lead ninety men in the U.S. to commit suicide every day, four of whom are boys under the age of 19.

UNCG's study confirms that Let Me Run counteracts these unhealthy societal pressures in finding that Let Me Run:



Significantly improves boys' attitudes & behaviors associated with healthy masculinity



Improves boys' social competence



Increases boys' vigorous physical activity levels



Reduces boys' screen time on school days

The two-season evaluation also showed substantial improvements in Let Me Run participants' ability to express emotions, show affection, build friendships and connect with others.

"Let Me Run nurtures the types of meaningful bonds and connections that can prevent the deadly epidemic of loneliness we're seeing in society today," states Let Me Run Founder Ashley Armistead. According to former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, "loneliness is associated with increased risk of premature death, and the effect on mortality is comparable to [the] impact of smoking or obesity."

Armistead says, "Let Me Run gives boys permission to be compassionate, confident human beings with a full set of emotions. UNCG's study backs our belief that through running and healthy communication, we can challenge society's limiting Boy Code and inspire boys to live into their full, unique potential."

“LMR has empowered our boys to build healthy relationships, share their feelings and **believe in themselves.”**

– Kelly M. Westcott, North Star Elementary School Counselor & LMR Coach

“For the past 7 years I have witnessed the power of running as a coach for our 4th and 5th grade Let Me Run teams. LMR has empowered our boys to build healthy relationships, share their feelings and believe in themselves. At the beginning of each season we have a waitlist of boys wanting to join LMR, and by the end, families are asking how their child can be part of the next team. Let Me Run teaches boys how to set and achieve their goals. In 2017 I achieved a personal goal of completing the New York City Marathon and was honored to do so by representing LMR as a charity runner. Let Me Run boys have been taught skills to get them through their long runs of life and cross the finish line confident and responsible.”

– Kelly M. Westcott, North Star Elementary School Counselor & LMR Coach



Statement of Financial Position

June 30, 2017 and 2018

ASSETS	2018	2017
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 389,739	\$ 223,269
Unconditional promises to give	17,092	20,178
Prepaid expenses	10,327	7,076
Total current assets	<u>417,158</u>	<u>250,523</u>
PROPERTY		
Signage	18,592	14,003
Equipment	1,224	1,224
Total	<u>19,816</u>	<u>15,227</u>
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>11,915</u>	<u>6,531</u>
Property, net	<u>7,901</u>	<u>8,696</u>
OTHER ASSETS		
Website development, net	<u>5,869</u>	<u>9,463</u>
TOTAL	\$ <u>430,928</u>	\$ <u>268,682</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and other liabilities	\$ <u>35,676</u>	\$ <u>8,250</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	284,766	202,008
Temporarily restricted	110,486	58,424
Total net assets	<u>395,252</u>	<u>260,432</u>
TOTAL	\$ <u>430,928</u>	\$ <u>268,682</u>

Statement of Activities

For the year ending June 30, 2018

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
REVENUES AND SUPPORT			
Program tuition and fees, net of scholarships granted	\$ 497,036	\$ —	\$ 497,036
Contribution revenue	254,445	161,923	416,368
5k revenue	88,734	—	88,734
Other income	11,936	—	11,936
Reclassifications:			
Contributions released from time/purpose restrictions	109,861	(109,861)	—
Total revenues and support	<u>962,012</u>	<u>52,062</u>	<u>1,014,074</u>
EXPENSES			
Program services:			
Fall/Spring season	672,105	—	672,105
Camp program	2,359	—	2,359
Management and general	127,626	—	127,626
Development and public relations	77,164	—	77,164
Total expenses	<u>879,254</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>879,254</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	82,758	52,062	134,820
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>202,008</u>	<u>58,424</u>	<u>260,432</u>
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 284,766</u>	<u>\$ 110,486</u>	<u>\$ 395,252</u>

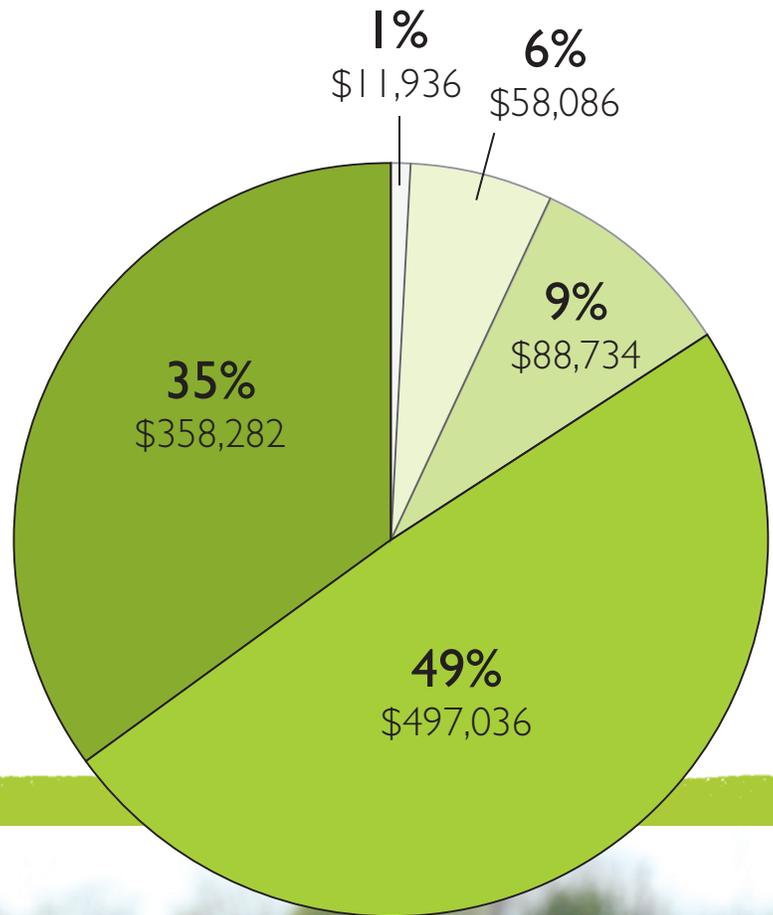
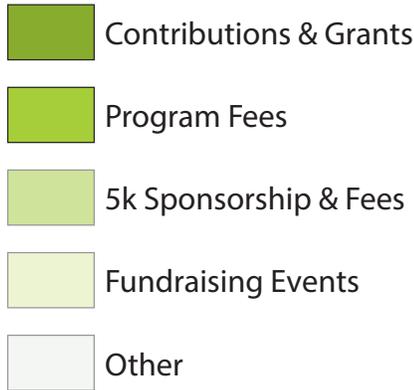
Statement of Activities

For the year ending June 30, 2017

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
REVENUES AND SUPPORT			
Program tuition and fees, net of scholarships granted	\$ 386,547	\$ —	\$ 386,547
Contribution revenue	218,490	40,830	259,320
5k revenue	60,600	6,875	67,475
Other income	8,070	—	8,070
Reclassifications:			
Contributions released from time/purpose restrictions	88,254	(88,254)	—
Total revenues and support	<u>761,961</u>	<u>(40,549)</u>	<u>721,412</u>
EXPENSES			
Program services:			
Fall/Spring season	505,875	—	505,875
Camp program	2,825	—	2,825
Management and general	126,632	—	126,632
Development and public relations	75,624	—	75,624
Total expenses	<u>710,956</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>710,956</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	51,005	(40,549)	10,456
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>151,003</u>	<u>98,973</u>	<u>249,976</u>
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 202,008</u>	<u>\$ 58,424</u>	<u>\$ 260,432</u>

A Year in Review

2017-18 Revenues & Support



2017-18 Program Overview

- Let Me Run served over 5,300 boys in 27 states.
- 2017-18 was our largest year to date with a 22% increase in participants over last year.
- Let Me Run engaged 1,800 volunteers in coaching or other LMR events.
- 22% of Let Me Run boys, who would otherwise be unable to join a team, received some financial assistance.
- Let Me Run hosted eight of our own Let Me Run 5ks this year and look forward to hosting twelve races this coming year.

“Colin has gained so much from Let Me Run. Not only has he become a great runner (7.12 min mile!), but it has taught him how to be kind, accepting and part of a team. ”

— Annmarie Brogan, LMR Columbus Parent and Coach

“When I first heard about Let Me Run, I was very excited for the program for my son Colin. I tried putting Colin in various sports with no success. Colin is on the autism spectrum, and team sports can be difficult. Let Me Run was perfect for him! He can run individually, but still get the feeling of being part of a team.

I was not sure how he would handle it, so I signed up to coach. We started 4 seasons ago, and it has been a truly rewarding experience for both of us! I was amazed at how Colin’s peers took him under their wing and encouraged him. They also helped to keep him on task.

When Colin first started the program, he quickly fell in love! He is the energizer bunny, and this was a great way for him to let off steam after being in school all day. It was also very positive for him because he finally felt like he belonged to a team. He would be so excited for school on Tuesdays and Thursdays because he knew it was the days for Let Me Run. He loved running with his peers.

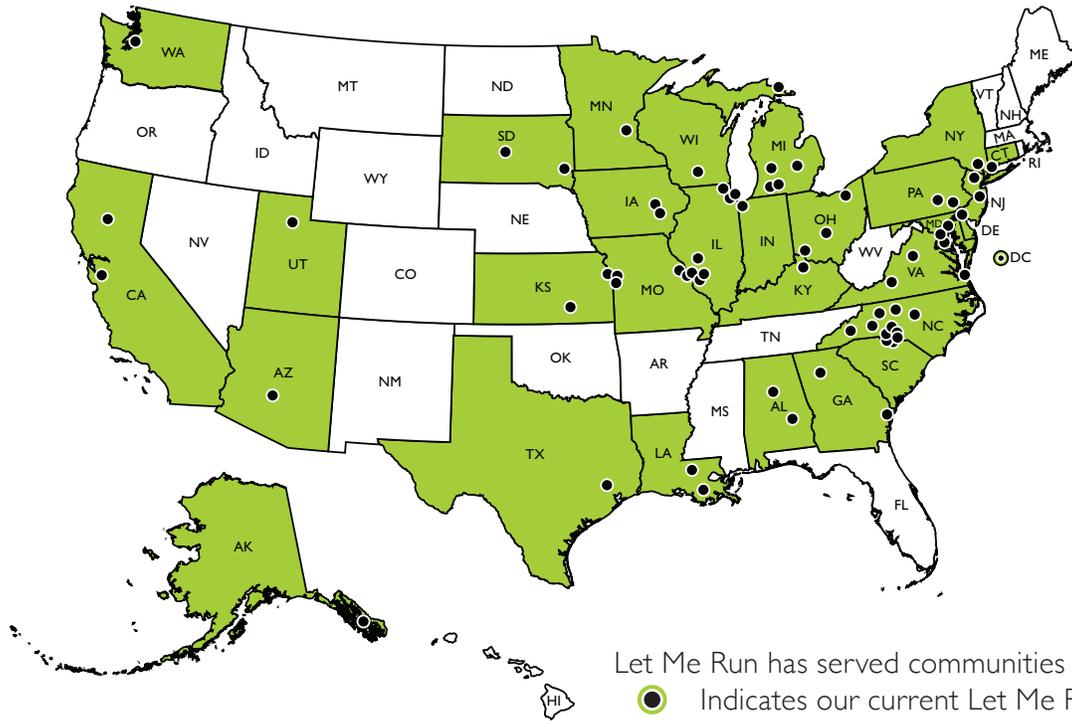
Let Me Run also gave Colin the opportunity to finally be able to win at something and earn a medal. He has not really had an opportunity, and let me tell you, he LOVED winning! But it also taught him how to be a teammate and support his peers. It was so sweet watching him cheer his teammates on!

Another aspect of Let Me Run that really helped Colin was our positive statements cards. At the end of each lesson, the boys get a card with someone else’s name on it and are asked to write one positive statement about the boy. I didn’t think Colin would be able to express himself since he struggles with language, but he amazed me! He at first, took guidance from his peers and quickly learned how to write very endearing cards to his teammates. He was also inspired by all the cards he received.

Colin has gained so much from Let Me Run. Not only has he become a great runner (7.12 min mile!), but it has taught him how to be kind, accepting and part of a team. The program has been very rewarding for both of us!” – Annmarie Brogan, LMR Columbus Parent and Coach



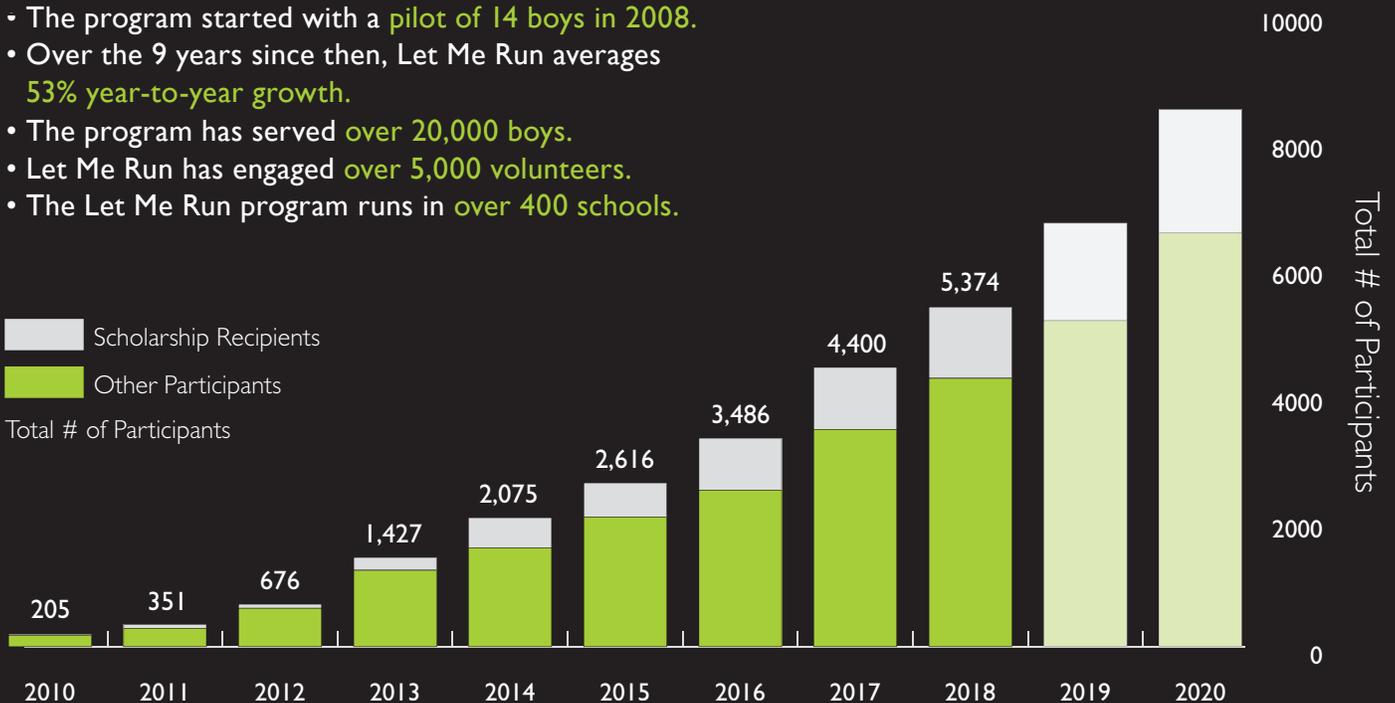
The Let Me Run Footprint



Program Growth & Goal

Let Me Run continues to grow, reach more boys and prepare them for the long run. With your continued support, the organization is on track to achieve our goal of reaching 40,000 cumulative boys by 2020.

- The program started with a **pilot of 14 boys in 2008**.
- Over the 9 years since then, Let Me Run averages **53% year-to-year growth**.
- The program has served **over 20,000 boys**.
- Let Me Run has engaged **over 5,000 volunteers**.
- The Let Me Run program runs in **over 400 schools**.



Let Me Run Executive Staff

Paul G. Martino, Executive Director

Ashley Armistead, Founder / Director of Programming

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