

A running start

"Looking good — but not feeling good" (Jan. 21) highlights the rampant body image issues in our society, especially among females. As a board member and volunteer coach with Girls on the Run St. Louis, I feel compelled to seek our community's support to combat this issue. Let's reach young girls to prepare them for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. Let's avoid personal trainers having to readjust adult women's attitudes about their body.

Girls on the Run's mission is to have a positive impact on girls across the St. Louis community by combining health and wellness education with a goal-oriented running program. The program encourages positive emotional, social, mental, spiritual and physical development.

We reach girls during critical years of development, from ages 8 to 14. Studies show that around fifth grade, girls tend to go to a place we call "The Girl Box." The Girl Box is where girls feel they are valued more for their appearance, who their friends are and what kind of clothes they wear as opposed to the strength of their character. This is the age to develop skills to handle these issues to help each girl stay out of the box.

Girls on the Run is designed to empower young girls to believe in themselves and embrace their full potential as they become adults. We are a non-profit supported by the St. Louis community. Help us help these girls have an empowered body image so they both look and feel good.

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