

**New York Road Runners Foundation (NYRRF)** was originated in 1998 by New York Road Runners (NYRR). The foremost running organization in the world, NYRR's premier event is the ING New York City Marathon. The Foundation carries out NYRR's youth services mission by establishing running-based programs that promote children's physical fitness, character development and personal achievement in under-served communities. Our programs currently serve more than 50,000 children a week in almost 250 schools and community centers. Having proven successful in New York City, programs are now being established across the United States and Africa.

**Mighty Milers** is NYRRF's signature program and provides a simple introduction to lifelong fitness which enables schools and youth organizations to engage large numbers of children in multi-disciplinary activities that fight obesity, improve health, and enhance personal development. The school-based program combines daily aerobic activities with personalized goal-setting, nutrition, academic, and health education components available at-site and on-line. This fusion of physical activities with life lessons derived from participation makes children's program experience enjoyable, memorable, and meaningful.



**Mighty Milers** motivates and teaches children to run and/or walk a minimum of a half mile, three to five times a week, and to set a cumulative goal of running 26.2 – 104.8 miles (one to four “marathons”) each program cycle. Children earn an incentive for approximately every 10 miles completed and a keepsake medal for each “marathon of miles” they accumulate. Classes and schools also receive rewards for their collective achievements, which reinforces the use of goal-setting while fostering teamwork and cooperation. All program activity is recorded in the Mighty Milers Database, which generates a personalized web page for every child. The database provides expansive programmatic, administrative and reporting capabilities and will yield a trove of data for collaborators and supporters.



### ***The Challenge***

The United States is confronting a devastating obesity epidemic. The primary causes of childhood obesity – lack of physical activity and poor diet – continue to permeate youth culture and will diminish hundreds of thousands of additional lives and cost billions of additional dollars if ignored. Consider the following:

- Inactivity and poor diet will soon overtake smoking as the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

- More than 700,000 New York City residents have diabetes, most of whom suffer from type 2 diabetes, a devastating disease primarily caused by lack of physical activity and poor diet;
- Type 2 diabetes is expected to afflict *one in three* American children born in and after 2000;
- The medical cost of treating diabetics *in New York City* is almost **half a billion dollars** a year; the human toll and loss of workplace productivity is incalculable;
- Overweight youth who are 10 to 15 years old have an 80% chance of becoming an obese adult by age 25;
- 43% of all NYC elementary school students are overweight or obese;
- Student-teacher ratios for physical education in New York City are an estimated 730 to 1.

## How We Help

Mighty Milers is available free of charge to schools and community centers at which 50%+ of the children qualify for Free or Reduced Price Lunch and new sites are engaged via direct promotion (phone, email, print) and word of mouth. Once a site is engaged in the Mighty Milers program, NYRRF sends in a team to train the teachers and on-site coordinators, mark out a course, and set up the administration of the program. We leave behind **Mighty Milers in a Box**, a kit which contains everything the on-site coordinator needs to establish the program including a tool for measuring distance and other start-up materials. We follow up with weekly calls and bi-monthly visits and trainings to provide the ongoing support to ensure excellence in our programming. School is also available from NYRRF staff via phone and email and we guarantee a response within 24 hours.

NYRRF's train-and-support technique empowers schools and members of the community to be "Champions of Children's Fitness" and even to use the mileage attained by the children as a fundraising tool – a wonderful alternative to selling candy and a great way to promote children's health throughout the neighborhood. All of our efforts are designed to help sites institutionalize the program, and we've maintained full support at every **Mighty Milers** site for as many years as the program has been appropriately implemented. Combined with the database, our program methodology makes **Mighty Milers** easily replicable at schools and community centers throughout the state and insures the program's quality control.



**Mighty Milers** delivers an uplifting, personalized experience that teaches children to be physically fit for life. Despite the pervasive spread of obesity throughout society and its devastating consequences for both our society and our economy, NYRRF is committed to providing our dynamic programs to 100,000+ children by June 2009. For more information or to support our innovative efforts, please visit [www.nyrrfoundation.org](http://www.nyrrfoundation.org) or contact [ecarr@nyrr.org](mailto:ecarr@nyrr.org).