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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Paramount High Alumni Return Home to Inspire Jackson Middle School Students to Complete 5K Run

Paramount, CA – Using teamwork to inspire healthy lifestyle choices, two Paramount High School Class of 2009 graduates returned to Leona Jackson Middle School as volunteer coaches for Girls on the Run, an after-school program geared toward empowering young girls to make positive choices in their lives while they train for a 5K run.

Gabby Robles and Letti Sandoval met with 15 Jackson fourth- and fifth-graders twice a week for 10 weeks as they prepared for a 5K run at Dockweiler State Beach on Dec. 11.

"This was such an amazing experience for us, to be able to come home and meet these extraordinary girls and work with them," Robles said. "Our goal was to teach skills that will allow them to process their emotions in a positive way, work as a team and support each other."

Girls on the Run is a national nonprofit organization that emphasizes empowerment and responsibility for pre-teen and teenage girls. Each after-school practice doubles as a life lesson for the participants, using positive reinforcement to build the stamina needed to complete a three-mile run.

Robles was introduced to Girls on the Run in 2016 by another Paramount High grad, Nataly Barragan. Robles volunteered to coach a group of Compton students before bringing the idea to her former Hollydale School math teacher, Kelly Anderson, who is now principal of Jackson. Anderson enthusiastically approved the idea.

Likewise, Barragan had independently enlisted Sandoval to volunteer for the program, and Sandoval worked with Long Beach students before teaming with Robles to return to Paramount.

"This was very meaningful to me," Sandoval said. "These girls gave us so much energy. They inspired us. It was great to see what they took away from the practices. I feel that if I can make an impact on just one girl, then she can take that and make a positive impact on someone else."

- MORE -

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On the day of the run, the Jackson students met with their coaches at Dockweiler and were introduced to more than 1,600 other Southern California girls who had completed their training.

"It was great for the girls to see how big it was and how they were part of something that had impacted so many of their peers," Robles said. "It was wonderful to see the girls supporting each other."

Family members and friends cheered the girls on during the race. Afterward, the girls received commemorative medals and reflected on what they had accomplished.

"We thought it was going to be hard but we helped each other keep going," fifth-grader Briahnnna Cebreros said.

"Girls on the Run taught us to be who we want to be," fourth-grader Iris Moreno Zarinana said.

In February, Robles and Sandoval will be back on the Jackson campus with a new group of girls, training for a 5K run and helping them find their inner strengths.

"It is so inspiring when distinguished alumni give back to their community," PUSD Superintendent Dr. Ruth Pérez said. "Gabby and Letti are inspirations to us all. Thank you to them and Kelly Anderson for helping bring Girls on the Run to Paramount."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

012617_GIRLSONTHERUN1: Former Paramount High graduates Letti Sandoval and Gabby Robles stand with Leona Jackson Middle School students prior to the "Girls on the Run" 5K at Dockweiler State Beach on Dec. 11. As volunteer coaches for "Girls on the Run," Sandoval and Robles spent 10 weeks training 15 Jackson fourth- and fifth-graders for the run while empowering the students to make positive choices in their lives.

012617_GIRLSONTHERUN2: Using teamwork to inspire healthy life choices, former Paramount High graduates Letti Sandoval and Gabby Robles returned home as volunteer coaches for "Girls on the Run," a non-profit organization that emphasizes empowerment and responsibility for pre-teen and teenage female students, motivating 15 Leona Jackson students to think positively and establish goals, while training for a 5K run at Dockweiler State Beach on Dec. 11.

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