



2016-17 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,

This was a very exciting year for Let Me Run. It was our largest year ever, with 4,420 boys participating in the program, an increase of 27% over the previous year. Let Me Run had teams in 23 states and engaged 1,200 volunteers in coaching or other Let Me Run events. Twenty-two percent of the boys participating in Let Me Run received some financial assistance to take part in the program. Let Me Run continues to grow its race series across the country and hosted five of its own Let Me Run 5ks this year and anticipates doubling that this coming year.

We received affirming results this year from our two-season evaluation, which studied the effect of the program on the lives of the boys we serve. This recent independent impact 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 significant positive impact in boys' lives. The evaluation highlighted substantial improvements in Let Me Run participants' ability to express emotions, show affection, build friendships and connect with others.

Let Me Run started because society is failing our boys by pushing them to fit into the "Boy Code." It forces boys to hide behind a false mask of masculinity, in which the most praised emotions are anger, aggression and pride. The Boy Code stands in the way of boys' positive futures and leads to disturbing consequences such as illness, decreased learning potential, addiction, and violence.

Let Me Run challenges these negative pressures and is making a difference in the lives of our boys, as well as our communities. Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission.



Paul G. Martino
Executive Director



Joel B. Thomas
Chairman, Board of Directors



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.



“Over the years of my involvement, I have seen the positive difference in the boys through their participation in the LMR program. They have grown in so many ways.”

— Dan R., LMR Coach & School Psychologist

“I am now entering my sixth year coaching Let Me Run. When the school principal asked me to help out with this new program Let Me Run, I had no idea this would have such a positive impact on my life. Over the years of my involvement, I have seen the positive difference in the boys through their participation in the LMR program. They have grown in so many ways; they build confidence, improve their self-esteem, and in many cases, find a place to “fit in.” In my role as a school psychologist, I frequently recommend LMR to many parents of students I have evaluated.

“Psychologically speaking, the LMR program offers the unique opportunity to tie-in the physical to the social-emotional development of young boys, which is often not possible in elementary schools. The boys feel more confident in school, wear their LMR shirts with pride, show others how to do things outside their comfort zone, and take more active roles in the school and community.” — Dan R., LMR Coach & School Psychologist



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.

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

HUMAN UP.

**Society gives boys a destructive definition of masculinity.
Let Me Run gives boys the freedom to be themselves.**



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

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."

“The Let Me Run program is what our children need. We need to teach our children to be well. We need to teach them how to take care of themselves, so they can help take care of others.”
— Abby F., LMR Parent

“I have two children: Ben (11) and Charley (7). Ben is athletic, kind, funny, caring, empathetic and sensitive. He first started the Let Me Run program last spring. We were thrilled to find a program that encourages emotional expression, while incorporating running into it. We know firsthand how important it is for boys to 1) get exercise and 2) learn how to express their emotions. The inability to do so can lead to stress, sickness, disease, addiction, and violence. Those who know my husband Ned and I, know that we try to lead by example with healthy habits, exercise, and emotional wellness coaching at home. However, I feel that it can be even more influential when it comes from people other than parents. Coaches can have a monumental impact on young boys. We've seen it firsthand.

“Like many, I have a family history of mental illness, including anxiety and depression. I lost a young cousin, an uncle, and most recently, my father — all as a result of mental illness. Now, more than ever, I see the importance of teaching emotional wellness to children at a young age. It is critical that we equip them with the tools needed to cope with the challenges of life. Whether it be a broken relationship, a trauma, a job loss, or the loss of a loved one — boys need the ability to express their emotion in a positive and constructive way. I've experienced how running, distance running in particular, can help transform one's life. The countless emotional, physical, and spiritual health benefits of running have lead me down a path of greater emotional health and happiness.

“Let Me Run was such a positive program for Ben in so many ways. It's what our children need. We need to teach our children to be well. We need to teach them how to take care of themselves, so they can help take care of others.” — Abby F., LMR Parent



Statement of Financial Position

June 30, 2017 and 2016

ASSETS	2017	2016
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 223,269	\$ 233,312
Unconditional promises to give, net	20,178	23,034
Prepaid expenses	7,076	405
Total current assets	<u>250,523</u>	<u>256,751</u>
PROPERTY		
Signage	14,003	7,256
Equipment	1,224	697
Total	<u>15,227</u>	<u>7,953</u>
Less accumulated depreciation	6,531	2,556
Property, net	<u>8,696</u>	<u>5,397</u>
OTHER ASSETS		
Unconditional promises to give, net	—	2,429
Website development, net	9,463	7,766
Total other assets	<u>9,463</u>	<u>10,195</u>
TOTAL	\$ <u>268,682</u>	\$ <u>272,343</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and other liabilities	\$ <u>8,250</u>	\$ <u>22,367</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	202,008	151,003
Temporarily restricted	58,424	98,973
Total net assets	<u>260,432</u>	<u>249,976</u>
TOTAL	\$ <u>268,682</u>	\$ <u>272,343</u>

Statement of Activities

For the year ending June 30, 2017

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
REVENUES AND SUPPORT			
Fall/Spring Season tuition and fees, net of scholarships granted	\$ 378,312	\$ —	\$ 378,312
Summer Camp tuition and fees	4,380		4,380
Scholarship contribution revenue	38,525	37,830	76,355
Contribution revenue	179,965	3,000	182,965
5k revenue	64,455	6,875	71,330
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>

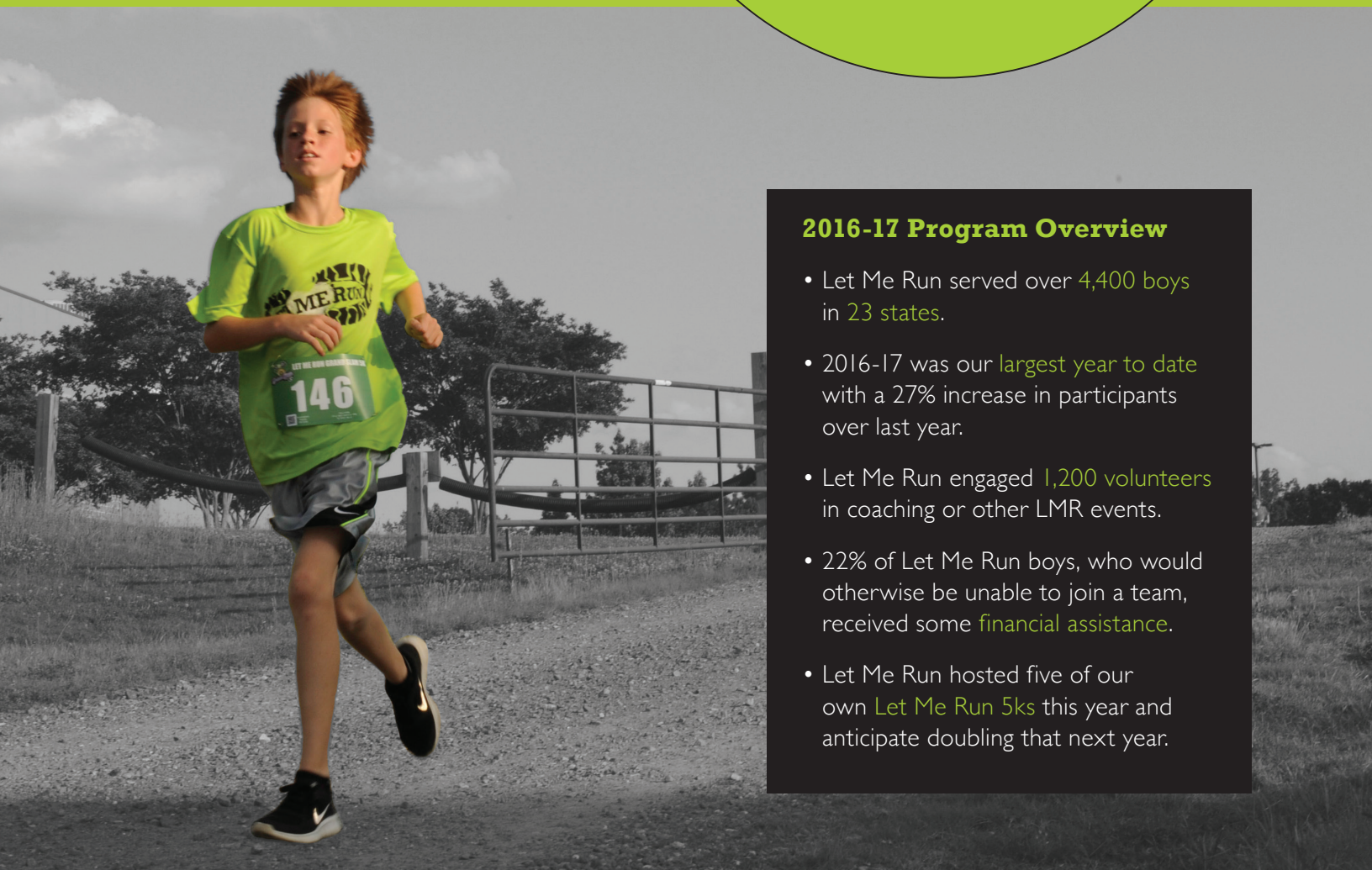
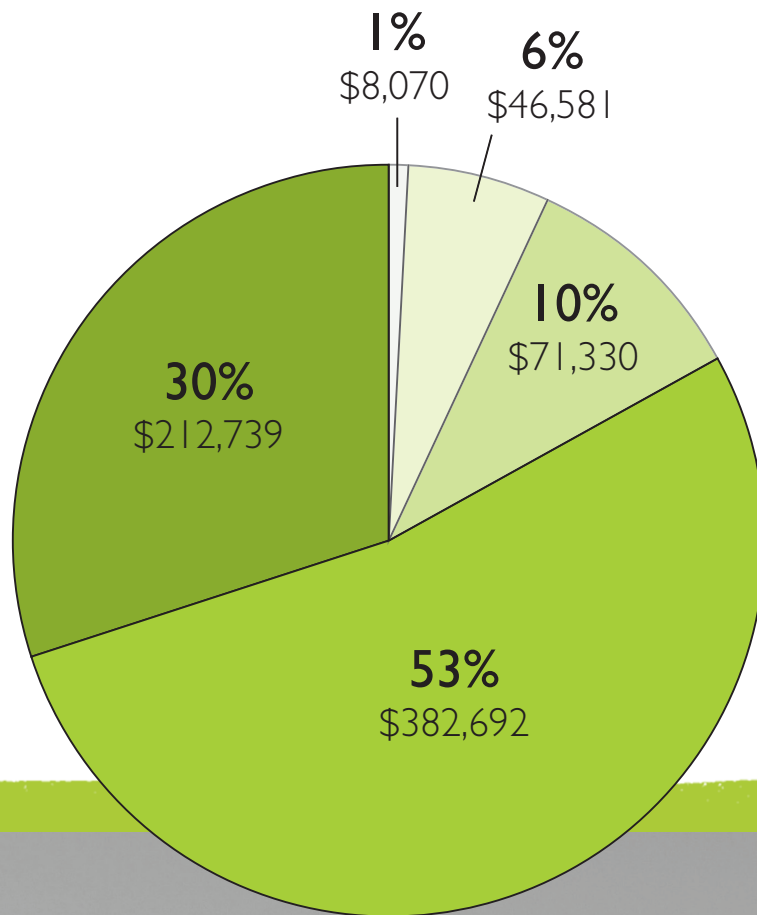
Statement of Activities

For the year ending June 30, 2016

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
REVENUES AND SUPPORT			
Fall/Spring Season tuition and fees, net of scholarships granted	\$ 280,211	\$ —	\$ 280,211
Summer Camp tuition and fees	3,665		3,665
Scholarship contribution revenue	34,615	39,202	73,817
Contribution revenue	102,585	19,174	121,759
5k revenue	36,977		36,977
Other income	5,530		5,530
Reclassifications:			
Contributions released from time/purpose restrictions	54,449	(54,449)	
Total revenues and support	<u>518,032</u>	<u>3,927</u>	<u>521,959</u>
EXPENSES			
Program services:			
Fall/Spring season	324,315		324,315
Camp program	4,202		4,202
Management and general	124,730		124,730
Development and public relations	32,016		32,016
Total expenses	<u>485,263</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>485,263</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	32,769	3,927	36,696
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>118,234</u>	<u>95,046</u>	<u>213,280</u>
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 151,003</u>	<u>\$ 98,973</u>	<u>\$ 249,976</u>

A Year in Review

2016-17 Revenues & Support



2016-17 Program Overview

- Let Me Run served over 4,400 boys in 23 states.
- 2016-17 was our largest year to date with a 27% increase in participants over last year.
- Let Me Run engaged 1,200 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 five of our own Let Me Run 5ks this year and anticipate doubling that next year.

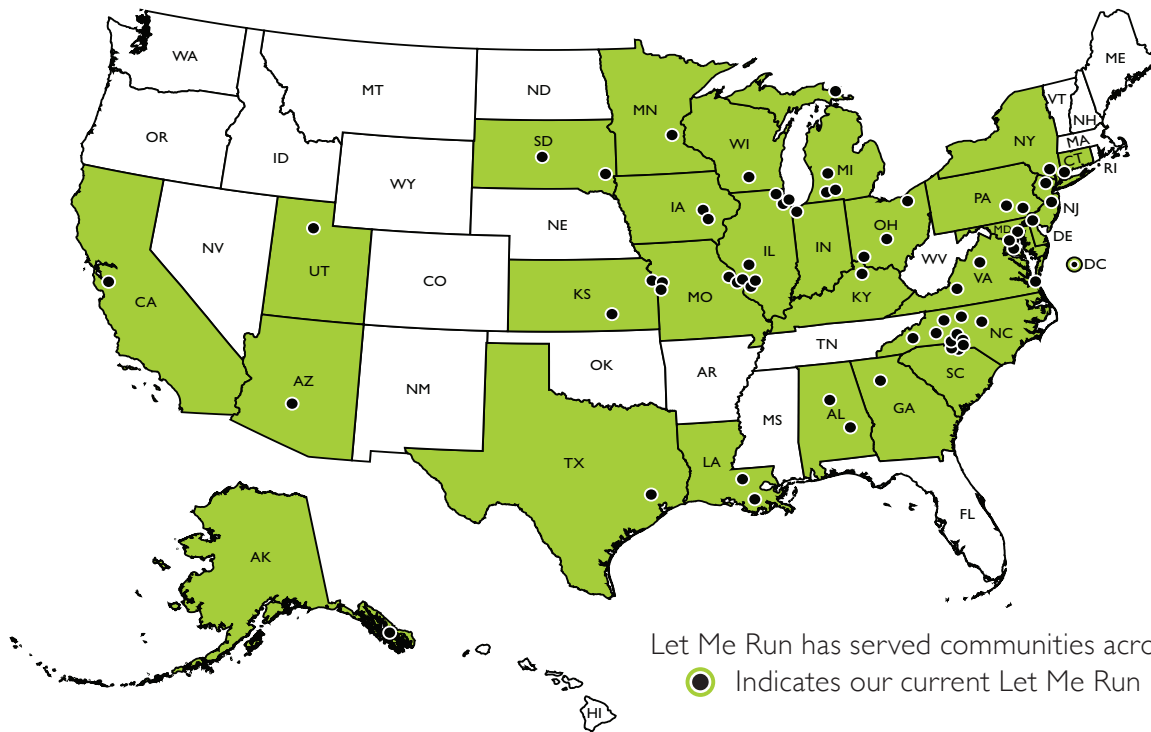
“You may not be the fastest on the team, but you can still **work with others to get better. I tell my teammates good job when they pass me and high-five them.”**

— Pernell, 6th grade Let Me Run boy

Pernell was a 250lb. 6th grader, who was reluctant to join the Let Me Run team at his school with his younger brother because he thought the other kids on the team would make fun of him. His teachers and coaches assured him that would not happen on a LMR team. Pernell received a scholarship to participate in LMR and on the first day of practice, his teammates did not pick on him. They picked him up by encouraging him and running with him as he finished his final lap. Pernell soon felt comfortable enough to consistently give his best effort and encourage the other boys on the team as well. At the end of the season, Pernell beat his 5k race goal time by 7 minutes and was given the Let Me Run Boy Award by his teammates for demonstrating the characteristics taught in LMR. Later in the following summer his mother reported to the coach that Pernell prefers to drink water over soda, and he also wants her to walk with him every night. Mom reports that he has lost 30 pounds since starting Let Me Run.



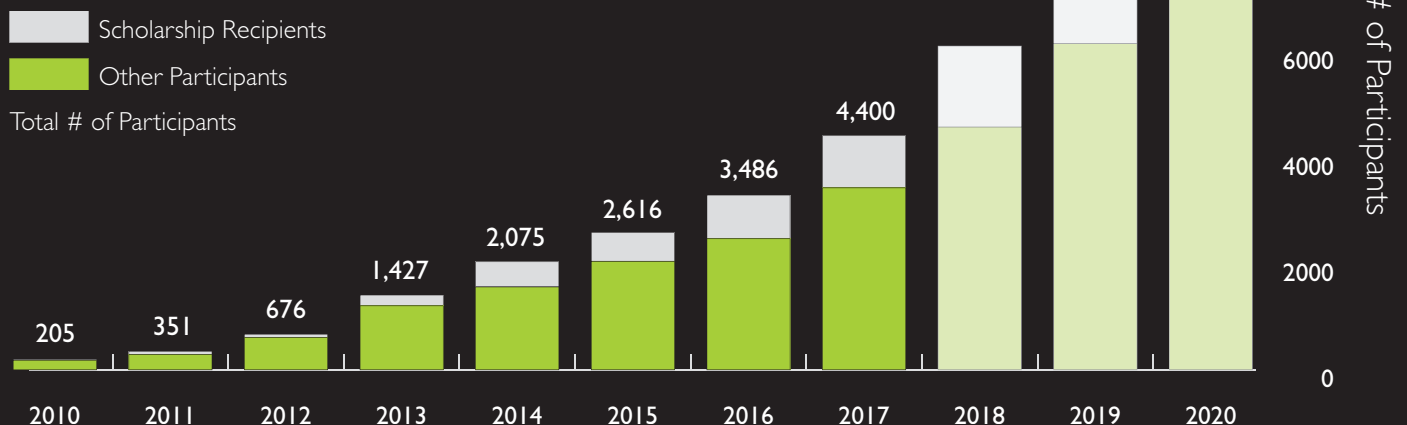
The Let Me Run Footprint



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 8 years since then, Let Me Run averages **58% year-to-year growth**.
- The program has served **over 15,000 boys**.
- Let Me Run has engaged **over 3,500 volunteers**.
- The Let Me Run program runs in **over 350 schools**.



Let Me Run Executive Staff

Paul G. Martino, Executive Director

Ashley Armistead, Founder / Director of Programming

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