

Run Like a Girl

by Jennaye Derge

Since 1996, the nonprofit organization Girls on the Run has inspired and empowered hundreds of thousands of girls ages 8 to 13 to be healthy and confident through running. In addition to the physical fitness aspect, Girls on the Run strives to address the whole girl: body, mind and spirit. The program also helps teach valuable life skills such as determination, how to foster healthy relationships and teamwork. The organization, which is based out of Charlotte, N.C., hosts programs in 225 cities throughout the country, including Durango. Each fall, girls involved in the program gather regularly after school for camaraderie as well as training, with the goal of ultimately running a 5k. Last Saturday, the season culminated with this year's 5k, held at Fort Lewis College. About 400 girls from across western Colorado descended on the campus to show the world what they're made of, all while wearing tutus, capes and other assorted costumery. In the end, everyone was a winner, and everyone left with a smile.



The Ska crew, from left, Dave, Mac and Julie Thibodeau, and Arlo Grammatica burn off some carbs.



A runner raises her arms in victory in Saturday's 5k, in which, careful viewers will note, everyone was "No. 1"



Tutus recommended, but not required.



Nola Burnite makes a determined dash to the finish.