



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Some 10,000 teenage girls take part in major running challenge
FitSpirit's active lifestyle program is trending among teenage girls

Montreal, May 14, 2015 – Although 96% of teenage girls fail to complete the required daily amount of physical activity as recommended by Health Canada, mostly because they are afraid of being judged by their peers or have poor self-esteem, a new kind of energy is spreading throughout schools in Quebec and Ontario, where the FitClub program developed by the FitSpirit foundation has fostered genuine enthusiasm for an active lifestyle. This year 10,000 participants signed up for the 8- to 10-week training program that targets teenage girls exclusively—that's fifty times more participants than when FitClub launched in 2009.

Even though teenagers represent the least active segment of the Canadian population, the FitSpirit movement is gaining traction in schools across Quebec and Ontario.

“We have passed the 10,000 mark for the number of participants enrolled in the FitClub program. In fact, since the program began in 2009, registration has doubled every year. It's wonderful to see them all cross the finish line on the day of the run, but beyond the success of the event and the training program leading up to it, what really makes us happy is knowing that 70% of these girls will continue to engage in physical activities after FitClub is over. For us, this is a clear indication that the appetite for physical activity is measurable and increasing. That is what motivates us to continue to develop these kinds of initiatives directed at teenage girls and contribute to improving statistics for this age group,” explains Claudine Labelle, FitSpirit's founder and president.

Today's event saw more than 2,700 students complete the FitClub challenge, running a distance of either 5K or 10K in Montreal's Parc Maisonneuve. “I would like to congratulate the FitSpirit team which has contributed to making our society one in which young women are healthy and in shape. Their involvement has enabled teenage girls to overcome certain hurdles to physical activity and to discover the fun and the benefits it provides on a daily basis,” explains Julie Dostaler, Executive Director of *Québec en Forme*.

This was not only a festive occasion but also a unique opportunity for participants to help one another and share a memorable experience. And there were celebrities on hand to cheer them



on, notably the actor Catherine Proulx-Lemay, herself an avid runner, and Olympic beach volleyball player Marie-Andrée Lessard. This special event wrapped up with an electrifying performance by the Quebec pop-rock sensation *Final State*.

Some noteworthy numbers

As of 2015, FitSpirit has touched the lives of a record 95,000 girls by virtue of the programs it has offered since it was founded in 2007.

FitClub participants are on the rise

In 2015, almost 10,000 girls will have participated in a run organized by FitSpirit or one of its partner organizations.

In 2014, 6,268 girls took part in a FitSpirit run. Previously, there were 2,100 girls in 2013; and 1,125 in 2012.

Number of schools involved

In 2015: 160 schools (90 in Quebec and 70 in Ontario)

In 2014: 90 schools (60 in Quebec and 30 in Ontario)

In 2013: 54 schools (45 in Quebec and 9 in Ontario – there was a teacher's strike in Ontario that year.)

A telling fact: 99% of the schools registered for FitClub come back for more the following year.

Background on FitSpirit

FitSpirit is a non-profit foundation whose mission is to help teenage girls discover the enjoyment and the advantages that come from taking part in physical activity in an environment that is positive, rewarding and open to everyone. We believe this knowledge will allow them to develop a healthy lifestyle based on realizing their own potential. Since it was established in 2007, FitSpirit has helped 95,000 teenage girls in Quebec and Ontario get up and get moving. FitSpirit's activities are made possible thanks to the generous support of its founding partners, Saputo and TELUS, as well as its Quebec implementation partner Québec en Forme.

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