



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

**FitSpirit welcomes Olympic Gold Medalist Tessa Virtue as its new mentor for 2019**

**TORONTO, January 24, 2019** – FitSpirit is proud to announce that Tessa Virtue, 2018 Olympic champion and one of Canada’s most celebrated figure skaters, will join the organization as its annual mentor for 2019. Every year, the organization partners with a professional athlete to act as a mentor for the FitSpirit community. Last year, FitSpirit received the generous support of Isabelle Charest, who passes the torch to Tessa for this upcoming year. Tessa hopes to show young women how sport can help build their self-esteem and confidence while still having a good time, she expressed that, “as an athlete I know firsthand how vital it is for young women to stay healthy and active.”

FitSpirit, soon in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, has evolved into a community of young girls and women all working towards a common goal: to help Canadian girls discover the benefits and fun of being physically active.

Research suggests that one out of two girls give up sports when they hit puberty and nine out of 10 girls fail to meet the Canadian exercise guidelines by the time they graduate high school. As an inspiring figure for many young women, Tessa will be at the forefront of the campaign to encourage teenage girls to feel empowered within their school communities. She joins forces with Claudine Labelle, president and founder of FitSpirit and Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, official spokesperson for FitSpirit, to support the FitSpirit mission. These three women of influence will work together to increase public awareness around teenage girls dropping out of sports at a young age.

“We know from research that many young women stop playing sports during their early teenage years and understand this can have a larger impact on them later in life,” said Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, “through FitSpirit, girls will develop healthy habits that will last long into adulthood.”

The activities of FitSpirit are supported by an engaged and inspiring community of over 700 representatives in schools and more than 150 FitSpirit Ambassadors. Ambassadors are dynamic, passionate women who motivate teenage girls to be physically active, showing them how fun it can be to stay active and get moving on a daily basis. Acting as accessible and inspiring role models, the Ambassadors work to share their stories through motivational conferences, events and other promotional activities. Tessa will be a key person championing more ambassadors to get involved.

“FitSpirit is dedicated to encouraging young women to stay active through building self-esteem, supporting each other, pushing one’s limits and having fun,” said Claudine Labelle, president and founder. “Tessa embodies every one of those things and we know she’ll inspire girls across the country.”

Through its unique approach, FitSpirit partners with schools to help identify barriers to physical activity and establishes solutions to engage girls in a more tailored, customized experience. The organization provides schools with the necessary tools to effectively implement a program, from a motivational conference to ambassador led physical activity sessions to celebration events, FitSpirit school programs offer tools to ensure all partners are successful in execution and that the good work becomes embedded into the school program moving forward. Students and parents are encouraged to get involved and share the opportunity with their school or school board.

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### **About FitSpirit**

Founded in 2007, FitSpirit is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping teenage girls discover the fun of being active with friends and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. FitSpirit creates programs and activities for girls 12 to 17, introducing them to physical activities and helping them discover the benefits for their health and well-being of being active over the long term. Since its start, FitSpirit has reached more than 150 000 teenage girls in Quebec and Ontario. Learn more at [fitspirit.ca](http://fitspirit.ca).

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