



Eat Run Play GROW

2017-2018 Annual Report

& Year in Review

Grass Root Outreach Within

Our mission is to make a positive difference in children's lives by increasing opportunities for healthy living.

**GROW healthy kids,
GROW healthy
communities**



GROWCentralFlorida.org

Our Story

In 2009, our founder Colleen Gonzalez realized that not all schools could afford a school running program. Schools needed to have enough funds and volunteers to sustain such a program, and many schools lacked these resources.

After establishing a running program and supporting several schools, Colleen established GROW to provide resources for running programs at low-resource schools throughout Seminole County.

Since then, GROW has expanded and supports other grass root efforts that foster children's health and overall Well-being.

Please join us on our journey and help keep the good GROWing!



Elementary Cross Country Running

5,182 children age 5-12 registered to participate in this sport at no cost to their families or their schools.

- GROW supported 48 volunteers in 35 schools
- On average, students received 1 hour & 20 minutes additional physical activity beyond normal school hours
- Participants had the opportunity to participate in eight running meets that were held on Saturdays between December & February
- GROW makes sure that program participants have all the durable goods and resources they need for their teams. These include shirts, shoes, and items needed for events.

Play Space Revitalization

During the 2017-2018 school year, GROW revitalized two spaces for children and teens. The Home Depot in Lake Mary supported these two projects.

At Idyllwilde Elementary School, GROW supported the PTA's efforts to renovate a playground and a basketball court.

In Sanford, GROW worked with local law enforcement to transform a boxing gym into a fitness center available to local teens for free.



Recess Toys for Schools



During the 2017-2018 school year, GROW partnered with the Lake Mary High School Problem Solving Incubator (PSI High) program. Students in this program identified stress & anxiety as major problems that they face. To proactively address these problems, teens pinpointed positive ways to handle stress such as exercise, yoga, therapeutic coloring, comfort animals, journaling, biking, and walking. To support these teens, GROW worked with community partners on a pilot basis to host a successful "Family Engagement" event to support students' stress reduction efforts. GROW's goal now is to raise needed funds for six similar events during the 2018-2019 school year.

In April of 2017, recess became mandatory for all elementary children in Florida. Due to growing student populations, at many playgrounds students face lines to use the large play equipment. As a result, teachers also encourage children to engage in "imaginative play".

During the 2017-2018 school year, GROW furnished three schools with recess toys for such play. Quality recess toys help children to have physically active and enjoyable recess periods. With GROW's support, teachers need not buy such toys themselves, as many had been doing.

Family Engagement



Neighborhood Outreach



Inspiring youth to be active over the summer can be a challenge. Low-income parents lack the means to enroll their youngsters in summer sport programs. To help these families, GROW partnered with the Seminole County Sheriff's Neighborhood Outreach division to outfit patrol cars with soccer balls and basketballs. This allows deputies to connect with kids while out on patrol, befriend them, and give them balls for summer fun!

During the 2017-2018 school year, GROW has supported Grass Root Volunteers who want to exceed expectations and defy odds. These include:

- Helping Layer Elementary PTA & Student Counsel with installation of two ball toss hoops when no funds were available at the school
- Providing School Resource Deputies & Coaches with over 50 pairs of new shoes and socks for students
- Mentoring and supporting the Milwee Girls Engineer Club with the "sport shoe engineering project"
- Supporting *The Healthy Running Series* (Orange & Seminole) with needed durable goods and resources for their programs
- Supporting small 5k events with needed durable goods and resources

Grass Root Outreach Within



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of Central Florida



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Thank you community partners!

Your collaboration, comradery & support helps us GROW the good!

- Orlando City Soccer Foundation
- FL Department of Health
- Action for Healthy Kids
- FL Hospital Mission Fit
- Oranole Foundation
- FL Blue Foundation
- Sports 4 the Kids

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