

## Junior League of Toronto trains At-Risk Teen Girls for 10K Run

*JLT Kickstart for Health inspires Toronto youth to make healthy lifestyle choices*

**May 1, 2008 - Toronto, ON** - As the starter's gun goes off this Sunday, May 4 at the *Sporting Life 10K*, it will signal the beginning of a major milestone for a group of young women from the *Sistahood Program* at the **St. Alban's Boys and Girls Club** in Toronto. These teenagers have spent the last four months training for a ten kilometer run as part of the **JLT Kickstart for Health** program to encourage healthy lifestyles and fight obesity among Toronto youth.

The **Junior League of Toronto (JLT)** provided volunteers as inspiring role models, who met weekly with the girls and a professional coach to train all winter long, through the ice and snow. To compliment the training program, the girls also participated in nutrition and related workshops.

"The goal of our healthy lifestyle programming is to engage youth in healthy behaviours to counter the growing trend of obesity," states Elisa McFarlane, President of the Junior League of Toronto. "This running program, part of our **JLT Kickstart for Health** initiative, provides the perfect pairing of youth in need with health & wellness learning and motivated, trained volunteers to act as mentors and role models."

Perhaps more than ever, the future of Canadian children is being threatened by the growing trend of obesity and declining health. In fact, estimates show that between 1981 and 1996 the number of obese pre-teen children in Canada tripled. Research shows the problem is even more pronounced among underprivileged children and teens - and this is where the Junior League of Toronto's [JLT Kickstart for Health](#) programs can have the greatest impact.

In addition to the clear health benefits of training for a ten kilometer race, the girls have gained a number of other valuable experiences from setting and meeting goals, to developing friendships and experiencing a sense of belonging.

"I've really enjoyed my experience in the running program - it's really great to be a part of two generations coming together to achieve a common goal. And seeing our progress each week **motivates me to keep going**," said Adrienne Clark, a member of the Sistahood Group at St. Alban's Boys and Girls Club. "*JLT Kickstart Running Program* is really positive for youth. It gives young people a chance to gain a role model, get good advice and even meet new friends."

Since 1926, the **Junior League of Toronto** has made a positive impact on the quality of life for thousands of Greater Toronto Area residents. The JLT mission challenges its members to improve the community through effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. By contributing millions of volunteer hours and more than \$4 million of monetary support to more than 400 community programs & projects, the JLT takes a hands-on approach to help community organizations move forward.

Contact: Martha Garriock, **JLT Kickstart for Health** Chair at 416-485-4218 ext XXX  
or e-mail [info@jltkickstart.com](mailto:info@jltkickstart.com)

Media info: Elisa McFarlane, **Junior League of Toronto** President, at 647-407-3496

For more information, visit the **Junior League of Toronto** website at [www.jlt.org](http://www.jlt.org)