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JUST RUN Wins National Youth Program of the Year
Prestigious award presented at annual Running USA Industry Conference

JUST RUN, the youth fitness program developed by leaders from the Big Sur International Marathon, was named National Youth Program of the Year by Running USA at its recent annual industry conference in New Orleans.

"JUST RUN's involvement in the sport of youth running continues to not only inspire thousands of children to live healthy, active lives, but provides a wonderful model for other teachers and leaders to develop in their communities," said Running USA CEO Rich Harshbarger as he presented the award and a \$5,000 check in front of 700 industry leaders. "This program provides all the components necessary to create long-lasting, healthy change for children within their communities."

Begun in 2004 to combat the childhood obesity epidemic, JUST RUN has positively affected the lives of thousands of children in more than 30 states. Since its inception, 89,000 children in the program have run more than 2.3 million miles in running and fitness activities that span the academic school year. This school year, an expected 20,000 children will participate, logging over 400,000 miles.

"Being recognized by our peers in the running industry is a great honor. This award will inspire us to continue in our vital efforts to promote youth fitness and healthy lifestyles among our youth," stated Susan Love, JUST RUN Program Director.

In accepting the award, Mike Dove, developer of the JUST RUN program, publicly thanked other youth leaders and programs that helped provide the information and inspiration for creating JUST RUN in 2004. These include the New York Road Runners Mighty Milers, St. Louis' Read, Write and Run, and the Crim Festival of races in Flint, Michigan.

The robust youth program which is offered free of charge to any interested classroom, school or youth organization promotes healthy eating in '[Just Taste](#)' and acts of good citizenship in '[Just Deeds](#),' but the primary goal is to get children active. Leaders and teachers who adopt the program organize fun running games and drills for the children and log their miles in a virtual 'Run Across the USA.' Tangible incentives such as tokens and wristbands to mark mileage accomplishments are provided to schools in local counties and are encouraged in schools outside the area.

“In addition to addressing childhood obesity, increased activity has been proven to help children become calmer and more attentive in the classroom, thus facilitating the learning process,” Love said. “Testimonials from several JUST RUN leaders have confirmed this important program benefit.”

[Running USA](#) is a not-for-profit organization devoted to improving the status and experience of distance running and racing in the U.S. through collective marketing and promotions, information and communications within the industry and to national media, services to events and industry members, and the development of American world class stars.

[JUST RUN](#) is a program of the Big Sur International Marathon, whose mission includes serving the community by producing world class events that raise funds to contribution to local charities, and promoting health and fitness.

For information on JUST RUN, including how to start a program in a school or community, contact Susan Love at susan@bsim.org or visit www.justrun.org.