

## Deneen Young - Co-Ambassador to Black Girls RUN! Inspires Others to Run the Cupid's Chase 5K

Every year the Community Options annual Cupid's Chase 5K Run serves to spread and support the mission of the organization and bring inspiration to all who participate, attend, or even simply read about or hear of the race. All of the runners deserve recognition for their participation in helping support an amazing mission. However, there is one woman in particular whose story is perhaps even more inspiring than usual and she definitely stands out from the crowd.

Deneen Young ran her first race last year. That race was Cupid's Chase and she plans to run it again this year, February 9, 2013. Of course at some point all runners run their first race, but this moment in Deneen's life was a massive success. Before Deneen even saw herself running in the race, she was 257 pounds and five feet tall- and although she had always convinced herself that she was happy the way she was, deep down she knew she wasn't always all right with it.

It took her uncle asking her the tough question, didn't she want to live to see her grandchildren, for her to realize that she needed to make a big change. Deneen, wife and mother to a 12-year-old daughter and a 17 year-old son, remembers, "My response to my uncle was that I want to see my *great* grandkids."

Her first step was to undergo a vertical sleeve procedure, also known as a sleeve gastrectomy, to reduce her output of ghrelin, a hormone that signals hunger to the brain. But that was only the first step of many; Deneen had to make some major lifestyle changes, she had to start eating better and exercise more. She started off walking and then eventually, running, which she wasn't able to do when she was obese.

Running became her passion and today, after dropping 130 pounds in less than two years, completing two half-marathons, and serving as a co-ambassador to Black Girls RUN! (a running group that encourages African-American women to get healthy and keep moving and to be the number one resource for all things regarding health, fitness and running-related), Deneen says her life is completely transformed. She's inspired her son to run cross country and her daughter is happy that her mom is able to do more with her, but her success and inspiration have reached far beyond the scope of her family. Last year the numbers of the Philadelphia chapter of Black Girls RUN! were about 300-400, this year they are over 4,000! This year, there will be many women from Black Girls RUN! who will be experiencing their first race ever (and some their second) on February 9, 2013, and Cupid's Chase is happy to be a part of their success!

For more information about Cupid's Chase or to register, please visit:  
[comop.org/cupidschase](http://comop.org/cupidschase)



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"The national web site is [www.blackgirlsrun.com](http://www.blackgirlsrun.com) however, our daily communication is via our Facebook page but no men allowed :- ) ... We have many success stories within the Philadelphia chapter alone; my faith, determination, hard work and BGR continues to save my life as well as so many others. Cupid Chase was my first race ever and this year there will be many that will experience their first race ever too--I am HYPE! We are all so excited to be part of the movement Black Girls RUN! paying it forward to support so many to add years to their lives"

- Deneen Young