

U.P. Students Dance for Needy Children's Health Care

By Josette M. Kloker

A University Park dance marathon to benefit the Four Diamonds Fund was a symbol that people really do care about other people, according to Sherri Carruthers of Columbia.

For 48 hours, more than 1000 feet danced non-stop, while another 1000 provided support to help them keep the beat.

The 12th annual marathon, held Feb. 17, was sponsored by the Interfraternity Council (IFC) at the University Park campus.

"I have a special bond with the Penn State students who dance," said Carruthers, whose nine-year-old daughter Sabrina was diagnosed with leukemia five years ago.

"They are pouring their hearts out to help Sabrina and other children receive the best care possible," she said. "I think of those college students as my own children."

The students endured physical and emotional stress to benefit The Four Diamonds Fund. Established by the university's board of trustees in 1973, the fund helps needy families pay for medical care at The Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Penn State's university hospital.

Since 1977, the marathon has raised more than \$1.8 million, amounting to 65 percent of the fund's operating budget.

This year alone, the marathon raised \$456,617.90, reportedly making it the largest and most successful student-run philanthropic effort in the country.

Terri Timtishin of Sinking Spring, whose five-year-old daughter Sara was also diagnosed with leukemia, said the fund provided much more than financial support.

"Sara was a happy, normal three-and-a-half-year-old child who one day had a fever. I took her to the doctor, and the next thing I knew she was being diagnosed with leukemia," she said.

"I was in shock," Timtishin said. "I could not understand how this could happen to a healthy child."

The Four Diamonds Fund provided a nurse practitioner, child life specialist and social worker that were instrumental in her child's care.

Carruthers said The Four Diamonds Fund's financial support was also critical, given the suddenness of her daughter's illness.

One day Sabrina was ice skating, Carruthers said. The next she began to

run a fever, and by the third, she had lost her appetite and developed black circles under her eyes.

"No one plans for an illness like this to afflict their child," Carruthers said.

Both she and her husband were self-employed with no medical insurance.

"My family would be in a financial bind, if not for The Four Diamonds Fund's help," she said. "I cannot express how much that meant."

Since the majority of money for the fund is raised through the dance marathon, both families took their children to University Park, where they, along with hundreds of students, provided support for the dancers. This support included everything from spritzing water in the dancers' faces to giving foot massages.

"It is touching to see these students stay awake for children they don't even know," said Ms. Carruthers. "I just want to hug them and tell them how much I appreciate what they are doing for my daughter and others."

Timtishin said, "I think it is helpful for the children to be at the marathon to remind the students of how important the event really is."

"It helped to see the children because

I could see why I should keep going, even though I could barely move," said Jessica Brown, a student dancer. "When I think about it, 48 hours of suffering is nothing compared to what the children are going through."

Of the 544 dancers who began the two-day endeavor, only 37 did not complete it. The remaining 507 students defined their own forms of dancing. Whether it was line dances, exercises or jumping rope, they kept moving. When it seemed like they could no longer move, smiles from Sabrina's and Sara's faces seemed to keep them moving.

"With all the depressing stories I hear on the news, it is comforting to know there are still people, like those Penn State students, who want to genuinely help others, with no thought of anything in return but the satisfaction of helping the children," Carruthers said.

According to Catherine Hales, associate director of development at Penn State's university hospital, student participation is not limited to University Park. In fact, students at all campuses are encouraged to participate. For more information about next year's marathon, call 531-8497.

Corporate advertiser to address students

Ross Markwardt, Director of Corporate Advertising and Public Relations Panning of AT&T, will lecture at Penn State Harrisburg on March 22, 1989, under the auspices of the Ambassador Program of the Advertising Educational Foundation.

The Ambassador Program sends high-level, seasoned advertising or marketing executives, like Markwardt, to colleges and universities across the country. The program aims to open up a dialogue with students and faculty about the advertising process, how advertising fits into the economic and social structure of America, and the issues surrounding advertising.

Markwardt's program will include a

detailed presentation to a general audience explaining the role advertising plays in today's society, visits to classrooms to discuss advertising as it applies to particular disciplines, and informal sessions with students and faculty to answer questions about the advertising industry.

The Advertising Educational Foundation is a nonprofit organization supported by agencies, media companies and advertisers, and is dedicated to building a better understanding and greater appreciation of the socioeconomic role of advertising in our lives.

Markwardt is Director of Corporate Advertising and Public Relations planning for AT&T in New York.

Capital Times staff will be meeting on Monday, March 13 at 2:00 p.m. in W-337. Bring your story ideas!

Warning:

Smokeless Tobacco can be Hazardous to Your Health

from Pa. Dental Health Assoc.

It causes addiction, gum disease, tooth abrasion and decay, heart disease and oral cancer. Yet more than 12 million Americans use it, with increased usage among teenagers and young adults. Smokeless tobacco--it will be linked to 29,000 cases of oral cancer this year--one of every three of these people will die. This means that nearly 10,000 people will die each year from one of the most preventable of diseases--oral cancer.

According to the Pennsylvania Dental Association (PDA), smokeless tobacco users have four times the risk of developing oral cancer than do non-smokers. Long-term users of snuff have a 50 times greater risk of developing cancers of the lower lip area and gums than do non-users.

Studies have shown a marked increase in use among male adolescents and young adult males, with more than half starting the habit by age 13. The most popular form of smokeless tobacco in this age group is snuff, powdered tobacco held for long periods of time between the lower lip and gum.

A report of the Surgeon General's Advisor Committee on the Health Consequences of Using Smokeless Tobacco has determined that "the excess risk of cancer of the cheek and gum may reach nearly fifty-fold among long-term snuff users."

Frequently, the only cure for oral cancer is disfiguring surgery, a frightening option.

Oral cancer isn't the only reason to

avoid smokeless tobacco, says the PDA. Increased risk of heart disease, tooth decay or loss, gum disease, heart attacks, strokes, and kidney disease is the result of smokeless tobacco use. During February's 40th observance of National Children's Dental Health Month, focus on these dangers of smokeless tobacco has greatly increased.

Early warning signs of oral cancer in smokeless tobacco users include:

- * mouth swelling
- * a lump on the neck, inside the mouth or near the ear
- * facial or lip sore that bleeds or won't heal
- * a whitish patch on the soft tissue of your mouth (called leukoplakia; 7 percent of these patches will be cancerous.

The PDA warns parents to be alert to signs of smokeless tobacco use in their children. Bad breath and stained teeth are the two most obvious indications of smokeless tobacco use. If parents suspect their children's involvement with snuff or another form of smokeless tobacco, they should immediately schedule an appointment with the child's dentist. A dentist will be able to spot any early signs of precancerous or cancerous conditions.

Smokeless tobacco is not a safe alternative to smoking. National Children's Dental Health Month is a time to stress the benefits of good oral health with Pennsylvania's children. Alerting them to the dangers of smokeless tobacco is one way to ensure healthy smiles for our children.

"ATTENTION - GOVERNMENT SEIZED VEHICLES from \$100. Fords, Mercedes, Corvettes, Chevys. Surplus Buyers Guide. 1-602-838-8885 EXT. A 7136."

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