



Inside This
Issue
~
THON
Center
Spread

The Lion's Eye

Vol. II, Issue 3.

Penn State Brandywine

Media, Pennsylvania

March 17th, 2010

Celebrating Women's History Month

By Jennifer Santangelo
Lion's Eye Staff Writer
jms1084@psu.edu

Women's History Month is celebrating a birthday this year! It may seem odd that a "month" can have a birthday, but that is exactly the case. Women's History Month is turning 30 this March. As a matter of fact, Women's History Month wasn't even always a month. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued a Presidential Proclamation declaring the week of March 8, 1980 as Women's History Week. Then in 1987, Congress expanded the week into a month. As a result, we now know each March to be Women's History Month. Women's History Month wasn't always called that either. It has its own history, traceable back to its roots which began in 1909. On March 8, 1857 Women in New York City staged a protest over unsafe working conditions. This protest gave birth to "International Women's Day," which was first observed in 1909.

There will be many celebrations and observances across the nation in remembrance of Women's History Month. According to the National Women's History Project, the theme for the 2010 30th Anniversary celebration is "Writing Women Back into History." As stated on their website:

"It often seems that the history of women is written in invisible ink. Even when recognized in their own times, women are frequently left out of the history books...less than 3% of the content of teacher training textbooks mentioned the contributions of women and when included, women were usually written in as mere footnotes. Women of color and women in fields such as math, science, and art were completely omitted."

Dr. Phyllis Cole, head of Women's Studies here at Penn State Brandywine agrees. "Women haven't been absent from events through time and around the world; they've been made invisible and we need to recover a fuller truth. But even more, Women's History Month is important because we can't understand women otherwise. Where we are today has been made possible by others, and finding out how this happened is worth at least a month every year" she notes.

While women rightfully deserve a place in history, there is another reason for people to observe Women's History Month; that is because without the sacrifice of a woman, none of us would be here. Observe Women's History Month to honor your mother, grandmother, aunt or some other significant female role model. Teach a child about the sacrifices and accomplishments of women. That lesson can be learned by looking to great historical females such as Amelia Earhart, or someone as simple as the single mom working two jobs. Women are 158 million strong in the United States alone, and 82.8 million of us are mothers.

"Love Belongs Here;" THON Raises \$7.8 million for Childhood Cancer



THON members Nancy Perone, Martina Delgado, and Alexandria Morson hold up their THON poster and let their supportive spirits shine. Over 50 Brandywine THON members traveled to University Park for THON weekend. Photo courtesy of Christina Felizzi.

By Christina Felizzi - Editor-in-Chief - clf5050@psu.edu

Do you think you could endure 46 hours straight of constant dancing? In the name of pediatric cancer, two of Brandywine's own dancers and 700 other dancers withstood the 46 hour dancing-weekend, raising \$7,838,054.36 for Penn State's THON organization and The Four Diamonds Fund.

THON is a Penn State exclusive, student-run philanthropy, the largest in the world, which aims to raise money each year to find a cure for pediatric cancer. Almost 40 years ago, the first Dance Marathon was held and the 34 Penn State students involved raised an impressive \$2,000 in 1973 for childhood cancer. Each year since then, THON continues to raise more money for the cause, recruiting more members and awareness along the way. At THON 2010, held at the Bryce Jordan Center at University Park, the organization is now comprised of 15,000 student volunteers, 300 Captains, 3300 Committee Members, 700 dancers, and has raised more than \$61 million.

These funds are donated to The Four Diamonds Fund, which pledges to assist children treated at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital and their families to fight pediatric cancer "through superior care, comprehensive support, and innovative research," as stated on THON's official website.

The Four Diamonds Fund was founded in 1972 and has supported over 2,000 families from neighboring states, mainly from Pennsylvania, and nearly 100 new families receive funding from The Four Diamonds Fund every year. A heart-warming story lies behind the name of the fund in which 14 year old Christopher Millard, being diagnosed with cancer, created a tale about a knight who must find the four diamonds to be freed from an evil sorceress; Courage, Wisdom, Honesty and Strength. The diamonds represent the traits Chris believed one should have to conquer cancer; the fund was founded shortly after he died.

Brandywine's two dancers, Mar-

tina Gill and Sean O'Connor, persisted through dance marathon with dedication and enthusiasm. They sported prideful Penn State attire throughout the weekend, in particular wearing their THON t-shirts and having Penn State athletes sign them. Like other THON dancers, Gill and O'Connor were not permitted to know the time and some of their moralers even changed the time zone on their cell phones, just in case. The dancers were provided with tons of food, from soft pretzels to water ice, and lots of liquids throughout the 46 hours.

Although Gill and O'Connor, among other dancers, did not "dance" the entire 46 hours, they did have to remain on their feet at all times. Prior to THON weekend, the dancers were encouraged to get plenty of sleep, exercise, eat a balanced diet and cut down their caffeine intake three weeks before the event. Despite the tiresome marathon, there were numerous activities to keep the dancers energized such as an hourly line-dance, quiz game, giant game of Jenga, baby powder slip 'n' slides, water gun fights, giant bouncy balls, live entertainment performances, and much more.

Other Brandywine THON members kept their two dancers going too from the stands, with cheering and words of encouragement. For some members, it was their first time experiencing THON and for others, it was another highly anticipated event. Senior Rahel Teklegioris and THON member reflects on her fondest memory of the weekend. "The best part of THON for me was during the final hours when the whole stadium was singing 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' with our arms clasped," says Teklegioris. "It was amazing how the journey of THON could bring an entire stadium of strangers so close together."

Brittany Walker, another Brandywine THON member, commented that listening to the families' stories was the most touching aspect of THON. "The best part of THON for me was family

Walker states. "This is where we heard personal stories from the Four Diamonds families. Even though the reveal of the total (amount of money raised) is a major part of the weekend, hearing the stories of the children who are still fighting cancer and the stories of those who weren't so fortunate, reminds me of why I THON, why I go out canning, why I am so passionate about this organization and why this is so important. It's more than a dance marathon - we're saving lives!"

Martina Delgado and Nancy Perone, also THONers, feel similarly about their memorable experience. "The best part of THON for me," says Perone, "was actually getting to see all of the kids that we were helping. They came out on stage during the final four hours and I cried like a baby." And with a personal reflective statement, Delgado says, "It's what we breathe, it's what we speak, it's what we do. I believe THON weekend cannot be described, only felt."

This year's THON theme was "Love Belongs Here" and every time THONers would raise their arms to the sky, forming a diamond-shape with their index fingers and thumbs, representing The Four Diamonds Fund, this theme would resonate throughout the stadium. Despite the weakened economy, THON members still manage to exceed their funds every year - nothing stands in the way of fighting for hope and love.



THON member Percy Van Duke shows his support from the stands for the Dancers, sporting a Brandywine THON t-shirt. Photo courtesy of Christina Felizzi.



A child of the Four Diamonds Fund sits atop a proud Dancer's shoulders on the floor of the Bryce Jordan Center. Photo courtesy of Christina Felizzi.