

Campus News

THON: An Insider View

By Kalleen McLaughlin - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - kmm6325@psu.edu

It's an exhilarating semester for THON! Many updates coming your way and if you didn't know by now, THON is a group for the kids fighting pediatric cancer. THON has raised over \$78 million for cancer since it started in 1973.

I talked to THON member Amanda Rase-ly, who gave me some insight into THON and what it means to her.

"You could explain what THON is and what it's about but the emotions are just something you have to feel for yourself and I don't think you can really feel the full effect until you go to THON and you see for yourself what almost a year's worth of hard work and dedication looks like. All the dedication and commitment that the students put in throughout the year really make all the difference and it helps kids all over." She also says her experience as a dancer at THON was 'the best weekend of my entire life' and that finding the cure for cancer hits home for her. "I had a grandfather die of cancer and that's what really motivated me when I would get tired dancing last year. I danced in memory of my pop pop and in hope of finding a cure so that no one has to lose someone as special to them as he was to me. He'll always be in my heart."

As you can see, THON is a very important organization, that its members take very seriously. The members of THON were supposed to have a canning weekend over winter break, but because of weather inclement, they had to cancel the event. "The canning weekend being cancelled put a downer on the THON community", Amanda says, "but I feel like that just gives more motivation for us to raise even more money this coming canning weekend and to try and get as many people to donate as much as we possibly can from now till THON to help make up for that lost weekend."

Determination is what helps THON raise as much as they do. Amanda kept quiet about some of the exciting things coming up for THON, but she let me in on some upcoming events. She tells me they have a canning weekend coming up, the Date Auction on February 14th in the Lion's Den during common hour, where you can bet on a person

to be your date for the Dancer Sendoff Pep-rally on February 16th. The Dancer Sendoff is a "send-off" pep-rally for the dancers before they leave. They also have the Dancer's Retreat February 3rd-5th, where the dancers will be able to meet other dancers from the other campuses. Then the long awaited THON weekend is February 17th-19th.

Of course, Amanda was tremendously eager for THON weekend, and told me a little bit about the dancers this year.

"They're both such good kids and they really take THON to heart and are so involved. I'm so proud of them for stepping into such a big role; standing on your feet for 46 hours isn't just a walk in the park but I'm very happy that it was the two of them to take that challenge."

Amanda also says that her heart really goes out to one of the dancers, Sean.

"He has more of a connection with THON than any of the rest of us do. Like myself, he graduated from Springfield and was involved in the mini-THON that we do there but what connects him to THON is his little sister. A few years ago his sister was fighting one of the same battles that the kids of the Four-Diamonds Families, and many other children around the world, are fighting right now. She thankfully made it through and won her battle. To know a precious, innocent, little girl, especially if it was my sister, that had to deal with something so horrible, really touches my heart and for him to do this for his sister really just shows what kind of kid he is and how dedicated and caring he really is."

Amanda says the other dancer, Nicole, is the sweetest girl you'd ever meet. She explains that Nicole was extremely helpful last year and "after hearing her dancer application essay, you could automatically see how dedicated she was and how she would really put the time and effort into what you need to do to be a THON dancer."

It seems THON weekend this year will be a huge event! We wish the dancers the best of luck and hope they reach their goal! Thanks Amanda for giving me all the details!

Bottle for Bottle, 8500 and Counting!

By Rob Ewing - Lion's Eye Campus New Editor - rte5016@psu.edu

In America, more than 22 billion plastic water bottles are purchased every year. Even more astonishing is the fact that only 17% of those bottles ever make their way to a recycling center.

During the renovations of Brandywine's Lion's Pit in the summer of 2011, a new water bottle refilling station was installed just inside the doors leading to the athletics wing. This is the first of its kind to be installed on campus, and judging by the "bottles saved count" that the machine keeps, student response has been overwhelming.

The filling station calculates the "bottles saved" based on the amount an average size plastic water bottle holds. Since the installation less than a year ago, Brandywine students and staff have managed to save nearly 8,500 plastic bottles. Lined up end-to-end, those bottles would reach roughly 5,618 feet. To put that in perspective, that's more than six times the length of the ocean liner Titanic. Empty, those bottles would still total 236 pounds of plastic.

"The purpose of the filling station is to reduce the number of plastic bottles purchased and discarded as part of a campus sustainability act," Says Lisa Yerges, Director of Business Services at Penn State Brandywine. "I haven't heard any feedback but I'm presuming that the response has been positive given its utilization."

Supervisor of Maintenance for Brandywine, Tony Montagna, says that Penn State in general is spearheading the energy program for all campuses, and that all projects ranging from construction to fountain replacement, the problem of sustainability is addressed.

"At the time our campus has undergone Penn State's Guaranteed Energy Saving Project, which includes replacing all light fixtures with energy saving bulbs. Additionally, toilets and sinks were changed to 'low flow' to save on water. These changes occurred in 2008. The only building that was not renovated was the Main Building which had some of these changes in the 2010 renovation (offices and restrooms).

Montagna added that the remainder of the building will be completed during the 2012-2013 renovations.

As for plans to install any further filling stations on campus, the idea has not yet crossed the drafting table.

"We don't have any immediate plans to add additional filling stations, though this is something the Student Facilities Fee Committee can take a look at and consider funding in the future, especially given the heavy utilization of the new station," says Yerges.

Questions or comments on the Campus Sustainability initiative can be forwarded to Lisa Yerges at lyerges@psu.edu.

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