

# Dance Marathon at FSU raises \$2,152,382.19 for Children's Miracle Network

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(Photo: Andrew Salinero/FSView)

After a year of fundraising and a 40 hour marathon, Dance Marathon at Florida State University has raised \$2,152,382.19 for the Children's Miracle Network, surpassing their goal of \$2 million. At the Total Reveal Ceremony which began at 3pm March 4th everyone's hard work finally paid off, beating last year's grand total by \$322,214.91.

"It's surreal," said Dance Team Captain Shannon Glassner, when asked about passing their goal of \$2 million. "We've been working a year for this number and every single person in this room has been a part of this. It's amazing when the miracle families look at that and know that their kids and other kids are going to be helped by this."

Dance Marathon originally started 23 years ago in 1996, and was one of the five founding Children's Miracle Network Dance Marathons. FSU has raised almost \$10 million since its inception and uses the money raised to fund research at children's hospitals, cutting-edge technology and patient care. In 2017, Dance Marathon at FSU raised \$1,830,167.28 "For The Kids," but the fundraising goal this year was to shoot for the stars and hit \$2 million for the first time and Dance Marathon surpassed their goal reaching \$2,152,382.19.

"The weekend was a lot harder than I had anticipated, but it was really cool to see how many people came out," said Devyn Wallin, a first year dancer at Dance Marathon. "Within a few hours of texting my family members, I was able to raise money and people were excited to donate to something like this."

Every year 50 percent of the money raised from Dance Marathon is donated to UF Health Shands Children's Hospital in Gainesville, and the rest is donated to Florida State's College of Medicine's Pediatric Outreach Programs. A portion of this money is given to Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH).

Around this time every year, Florida State University comes together to put on the annual Dance Marathon at Donald L. Tucker Civic Center. Dance Marathon at Florida State, a Miracle Network Dance Marathon, is where over 1,800 students stand and dance on their feet for the 40-hour event in order to raise money for various local beneficiaries including Children's Miracle Network Hospital, Shands Children's Hospital, and the FSU College of Medicine.

"It's amazing these people have been standing for 42 hours, others for 20 hours and we're all here for the same reason," said Samantha Nuñez, an internal team member. "Watching that number go up was probably the best experience of of my college career."

The actual marathon only lasts a weekend, but students have spent countless hours fundraising. Dance Marathon at FSU connected with local business to create fundraising nights at chains, like Chick-Fil-A, which was able to get the greater FSU population involved.

After a long year of hard work, fundraising for Dance Marathon on and off campus, FSU students were ready to put their game faces on and get down to business at the Civic Center, standing for those that can't. The forty hours the event takes place are split into two shifts, garnet and gold, so more dancers have the chance to participate in the iconic weekend.

"Every team has been assigned to a Miracle Family and they get to hear from those families and that is what makes Dance Marathon so special," said Azia Williams, FSU DM Public Relations Coordinator. "You get to hear from the direct beneficiary and the people you raised all the money for and that's something you don't get to do a lot of the time with other philanthropies."

The energy in the room was incredible as students flooded the dance floor wearing costumes, talking to friends and dancing the night away. Once you stepped inside the Civic Center, it didn't matter what organization the students were affiliated with, because the mission of the night was to raise awareness and money "for the kids."

“Dance Marathon is an opportunity for college students to really understand the impact that they can have on the world around them,” said Madison Walsh, DM FSU Marketing Captain. “It’s completely changed my life and has given me something I am so passionate about and get to work towards every day and be a part of.”.

Throughout the night and into the early hours of Saturday morning, dancers, volunteers, miracle children and their families participated in numerous competitions and games that would keep them awake and excited throughout the event. There was also an escape room, interactive reflection wall and an opportunity to talk to the Miracle Kids and their families. Throughout both shifts, students perform the seven minute long choreographed line dance they all learn during the marathon.

For every \$100 a dancer fundraisers during the event, the dancer is permitted to hit the spirit gong.

“I want you guys to hit that gong as many times as you can tonight,” said Marshal Fisher, one of the many Miracle Kids at Dance Marathon.

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