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## Marathoners boogie down for a good cause

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• Published: February 14, 2011 2:00AM

Born three-and-a-half months early and weighing only 1 pound, 4 ounces, the prospects for Alyssa Mann's survival were slim.

But thanks to the Children's Miracle Network and Shands Children's Hospital, the 14-year-old was able to dance Sunday. The Manns were one of about 40 families that came to share their stories at Florida State University's 16th annual Dance Marathon, a 40-hour charity event in which students stay on their feet for 20-hour shifts.

"A thank-you is not enough," said Alyssa's mother, Tina Mann. "If it wasn't for what they did, the money they raised, she wouldn't be here today."

Themed Party with a Purpose, the three-day event at the Civic Center ended Sunday.

"Being here has changed my perspective," said dancer, Delta Zeta member and FSU freshman Megan Dees. "Seeing these kids and hearing their story is something I'll never forget."

More than 1,500 dancers participated in the event, raising more than \$486,000 for the Children's Miracle Network.

The more than \$2.8 million raised over the years has also helped Shands Children's Hospital and FSU's College of Medicine.

Coloring stations, four square games, food, standing computer and study stations and a lot of entertainment helped keep the students awake and on their feet. The highlight, though, was the nearly 10-minute synchronized dance that took place every hour.

"You have to take it hour by hour and always have a buddy," Dees said about how to get through the event.

Dancers each raised at least \$300 to participate.

Visitors were also allowed in at \$5 to get on the floor or \$3 to get to a gate near the floor.

"I think it shows that people are here for a cause and students are willing to give up their weekend for it," said Kiara Provenzano, dance marathon public relations assistant.