

| OUR OPINION |

Dedication

FSU dance marathon raises \$701,493

There was some serious dancing going on this past weekend at the Civic Center.

Florida State University's annual dance marathon lasted for 40 hours over three days, and when the music finally stopped on Sunday, the more than 1,800 students participating had raised \$701,493.16.

Wow!

The marathon in support of Children's Miracle Network hospitals — specifically, Shands Hospital for Children in Gainesville and the FSU College of Medicine's pediatric outreach program — was the largest, by student participation, ever in the Southeast. The 20-percent gain over last year's total (\$585,000)

was the largest ever by a program the size of FSU's. And having raised more than \$4.5 million in the 18 years it has been holding the dance marathon, FSU now ranks No. 5 nationally among the 200 collegiate programs in the Children's Miracle Network.

The marathon splits students into two 20-hour groups, and the idea is to keep dancing — or at least standing — for the entire 20 hours. There's plenty to keep students energized, with live bands and DJs, fraternity boys dressed as women, a tacky prom dress fashion show and, on a more serious note, moving testimonials from families who have benefited from the money the marathon raises. To see a photo

gallery of the dance marathon, go to: www.tallahassee.com/dance2013.

Sometimes, longtime Tallahassee residents have been known to get a bit exasperated by the presence of tens of thousands of students, who can display a knack for terrible driving and loud parties.

But an event such as the dance marathon reminds us that students are an integral and essential part of our community. And that they care deeply about things that touch our community, enough to work year-round on an amazing charity event.

Congratulations to the organizers and to all who kept dancing. We're certain that even bigger things await next year.