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**PENN STATE DANCE MARATHON (THON) CELEBRATES 40 YEARS IN THE  
FIGHT AGAINST PEDIATRIC CANCER*****World's Largest Student-Run Philanthropy Program Has Raised More Than  
\$78 Million To-Date***

**(University Park, PA) November 1, 2011** – Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON), the world's largest student-run philanthropy, will be celebrating 40 years of service dedicated to raising awareness and funds in the fight against pediatric cancer in 2012. In 1973, 39 dancer couples participated in the first Penn State Dance Marathon, raising \$2,000. Today, THON is a year-long, student-led fundraising and awareness effort which engages more than 15,000 student volunteers and 700 dancers in the culmination event each February – 46 hour no-sitting, no-sleeping dance marathon in the Bryce Jordan Center. Each year, during one special weekend, the joy, pride and selflessness of everyone involved are on full display as they come together to dance “for the kids.”

“THON has raised more than \$78 million to date in the fight against pediatric cancer,” said Elaine Tanella, 2012 Penn State Marathon Overall Chairperson. “It is the harmony of the countless dedicated students, alumni, faculty, staff, donors and supporters that make THON a success each year, and who play an integral role in our fight against pediatric cancer.”

THON is an integral part of the Penn State culture, engaging thousands Penn State students from across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who work tirelessly for THON while balancing rigorous course loads and the normal stresses of college life. These students plan and run all the fundraising events throughout the year, including the largest 5K in central Pennsylvania, a carnival and a fall picnic for families battling cancer and a 46-hour dance marathon to celebrate lives lost and saved. Because of the effort of these students, THON is able to provide outstanding emotional and financial support to families battling pediatric cancer.

The collective efforts of THON help make it possible for The Four Diamonds Fund, THON's sole beneficiary, to assist children being treated for cancer and their families at the Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital in Hershey, Pennsylvania through superior care and comprehensive support. The Fund provides the ability to offset the costs of cancer treatment not covered by insurance. Additionally, the

Fund hires world-class medical specialists as part of its cancer fighting team. Among these staff persons are oncologists, child life specialists, and clinical nutritionists. The Fund has established multiple research endowments, the results of which have the potential to impact children across the nation. Most recently, The Fund has established a research program that will allow for Phase I and Phase II clinical trials, bringing us one step closer to a cure.

THON creates a unique bond between students and families through the Adopt-A-Family program, which pairs the two in an effort to ensure that no family has to face this terrible disease alone. "The students we have met going through the THON process, share wisdom beyond their years and a desire to make a difference in other's lives," said the Kretz family, part of the 2011 Adopt-A-Family program. "These wonderful young people have taught us a lesson about courage and determination. We are better people because of them. The enthusiasm and hope given to the families from the Penn State students is irreplaceable."

It is this relationship that motivates Penn State students and makes THON an unparalleled experience. Together, these students are making a difference in the lives of children and these families are making a difference in the lives of students.

For more information on how you can get involved or to join the fight to conquer pediatric cancer by making a donation to THON, please visit [www.thon.org](http://www.thon.org). More information can also be found on official THON Twitter ([www.twitter.com/THON](http://www.twitter.com/THON)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/pennstateTHON](http://www.facebook.com/pennstateTHON)) pages.

**About THON**

THON ([www.thon.org](http://www.thon.org)) is the largest student-run philanthropy. It benefits The Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital. The Fund assists children being treated for cancer and their families through superior care, comprehensive support and innovative research. Since 1977, THON has raised more than \$78 million for The Fund and the fight to conquer pediatric cancer.

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