

THON & THE FOUR DIAMONDS FUND

THON™



the four diamonds fund

at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital

CONQUERING CHILDHOOD CANCER



The Penn State Dance Marathon, affectionately known as THON, is the largest student-run philanthropy in the world. THON is a yearlong fundraising effort, culminating in a 46-hour no-sitting, no-sleeping dance marathon. The mission of the Penn State Dance Marathon is to conquer pediatric cancer by providing outstanding emotional and financial support to the children, families, researchers and staff of The Four Diamonds Fund.

The partnership between THON and The Four Diamonds Fund began in 1977. Over the past 33 years, THON has donated more than \$69 million to The Fund. Thanks to the support and dedication of THON, no child diagnosed with cancer at the Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital has ever been turned away by The Four Diamonds Fund. The Fund offsets the cost of treatment that a family's health insurance does not cover as well as non-medical costs, including food, housing and travel expenses. Furthermore, The Fund supports a medical team comprised of pediatric oncology specialists, a music therapist, a nutritionist, nurses, a psychologist and researchers, in addition to other hospital staff including child life specialists and social workers.

Charles and Irma Millard founded The Four Diamonds Fund in 1972 after they lost their 14-year-old son, Christopher, to cancer. The Fund's name comes from a story Christopher wrote, *The Four Diamonds*. Christopher believed that the four "diamonds" – Courage, Wisdom, Honesty and Strength – were necessary traits to overcome cancer. Today, the mission of the The Four Diamonds Fund is to conquer pediatric cancer by assisting children treated at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital and their families through superior care, comprehensive support and innovative research.

Since The Fund was established, survival rates for some cancers have increased to 90 percent due to continuous support of pediatric cancer research. Each year, THON is the largest donor to The Four Diamonds Fund, raising more than \$7.83 million in 2010.



Special events leading up to THON weekend help inspire, inform and unite student volunteers, the Four Diamonds families and supporters by spreading the spirit of THON year-round.

THON

February 18-20, 2011

THON 5K

October 17, 2010

The THON 5K has grown into the largest 5K in central Pennsylvania.

Thousands of runners and volunteers gather to raise awareness and funds for THON.

100 Days 'til THON

November 10, 2010

100 Days 'til THON is a university-wide celebration that encourages student involvement and generates excitement for the Dance Marathon.

Road to THON Celebration

January 27, 2011

This event celebrates the spirit of THON through the recognition of exceptional volunteers and donors. This special occasion also features speeches by THON organizers and distinguished guests.

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THON TailGreat & Halftime Show

November 6, 2010

The Penn State football game and pregame Tailgreat featuring THON help raise awareness about pediatric cancer, THON and The Four Diamonds Fund.

Family Carnival

November 7, 2010

The Family Carnival is filled with activities and games for the Four Diamonds families. The THON 2011 logo will be revealed at the end of the event.

FUNDRAISING

Each year THON's fundraising window opens on Oct. 1. From this date through THON Weekend, Penn State students raise money for The Four Diamonds Fund through various fundraising methods, including:

Canning – Canister solicitation, or canning, is a profitable source of fundraising for THON. During four predetermined weekends, an average of 269 organizations send students to surrounding cities and states to stand with cans and collect spare change to help kids fight cancer.

Canvassing – Students reachout to nearby communities to request donations and distribute solicitation cards. These solicitation cards include instructions about online giving.

THONvelopes – Letter solicitation, also called THONvelopes, is one of the easiest and most popular ways to fundraise for THON. Students send letters to family and friends asking for donations.

THONline Fundraising – THONline Fundraising takes THONvelopes to the web. It allows any THON supporter to send emails to family and friends requesting donations. These messages also help to spread awareness about pediatric cancer and The Four Diamonds Fund. THONline fundraising helped online donations exceed \$900,000 for THON 2010.

FACTS & FIGURES

- ❖ More than **15,000 student volunteers** work year-round to make THON possible.
- ❖ Of received donations for THON 2010, **92.49 percent** were allocated directly to The Four Diamonds Fund after accounting for events management, THON Store inventory, development, operation and administrative expenses.
- ❖ **Fourteen committees** plan and execute all aspects of every event leading up to and during THON Weekend.
- ❖ Penn State students fundraise for the chance to be one of the **708 dancers** who stand on their feet for **46 hours** during THON Weekend.
- ❖ Across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, **20 Penn State campuses** participate in THON.
- ❖ THON 2010 benefitted from the fundraising efforts of **350 student organizations**. This number continues to grow each year.

THON MILESTONES

- ❖ 1973: The first Penn State Dance Marathon is held in Penn State's HUB-Robeson Center, raising more than \$2,000 for charity.
- ❖ 1977: THON makes its first donation to The Four Diamonds Fund. This partnership becomes permanent the following year.
- ❖ 1979: THON moves to Penn State's Mary B. White Building, where it continues to grow for years.
- ❖ 1992: THON raises more than \$1 million for the first time.
- ❖ 1999: THON moves again, this time to Penn State's Rec Hall where it would remain for the next seven years. Also this year, THON pledges \$5 million over five years to establish a research center at the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. This pledge would be fulfilled two years early.
- ❖ 2004: THON pledges \$10 million over six years to create a new Pediatric Cancer Pavilion at the Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, promising to revolutionize family-centered care for the kids of The Four Diamonds Fund.
- ❖ 2007: THON celebrates its 35th anniversary of existence and its 30th anniversary in partnership with The Four Diamonds Fund in its new permanent home, the Bryce Jordan Center. For the first time in its history, THON raises more than \$5 million.
- ❖ 2010: THON raises \$7.83 million, bringing the overall total to more than \$69 million donated to The Fund.

For more information, please visit our Web site at <http://THON.org>.

Become a fan of THON on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/PennStateTHON>

and follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/THON>.