

Scene & Be Seen

Please send us some of your favorite photos from your organization's or charity's best events and fundraisers. They just may make the next issue of SASSY Magazine! We prefer snapshots of people that are full of life and enjoying the moment, so please send them our way: Jessy@MichianaFamilyMagazine.com.

DANCE MARATHON at Saint Mary's is "For the Kids" at Riley

By: Maggie McLaughlin

FTK is an initialism well known among families with children who have been cared for at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. It stands for "For The Kids" and that's what Dance Marathon at Saint Mary's College is for—the kids. For 10 years students here have put on Dance Marathons in the spring, collecting about \$700,000 over that time for clinical care and medical research. This year's event celebrated Riley Kids as "The Real Superheroes."

Families from St. Joseph County and the surrounding area turn to Riley Hospital and its regional clinics more than 5,000 times each year for compassionate care, comfort and support for their children.

Suzanne and Pete Letherman of Granger are the parents of Andrew, Cecilia, Patrick, and Grace, who died in 2003 of spinal muscular atrophy. This was their third appearance at the event. "For young people to be able to think about these children, and invest their time to support such a wonderful cause and organization, it's amazing to us," said Suzanne Letherman.

The 12-hour event included performances by student groups like Saint Mary's a cappella group Bellacappella and the Notre Dame Irish Dance Team. There was also face painting, yoga, a glow rave, and, of course, lots of dancing. Twin eight-year-olds Katherine and Caroline Alderfer of Warsaw agreed that the best attraction was the inflatable bounce house. Katherine has been a Riley kid for more than half of her life for treatment of Juvenile Dermatomyositis.

The marathon culminates with a 25 minute dance routine taught in portions throughout the event. Megan Dolan, a junior biology major, and Caitlin Kielty, a junior education major, choreographed the dance and helped keep energy levels high. Dolan's involvement stemmed from wanting to get involved in "something that could have a greater impact on the world."

Kielty said her favorite part was hearing the families from Riley share their stories. "Their accounts are just so empowering, and really remind us what it is that we are doing, and why our work is so important," said Kielty.

Dance Marathon is more than a one-day event. There are fundraisers throughout the academic year including a 5K run/walk, apparel sales, and Give Back Nights at local restaurants. There are also mini-marathons held at local high schools. The totals are rolled into the grand total announced at Dance Marathon. This year's total raised is \$90,322.

Photos Provided By: Maggie McLaughlin



1.) The Dance Marathon Morale Committee poses like superheroes, which was the theme for this year's event, which celebrated Riley kids as "The Real Superheroes." **2.)** Dressed like superheroes, Dance Marathon attendees and committee members learn the dance routine. **3.)** Suzanne and Pete Letherman, with children Andrew, Cecilia, Patrick, attend their third Dance Marathon to show support for Riley Children's Hospital, where their daughter Grace was treated for spinal muscular atrophy before her death in 2003. **4.)** Attending Dance Marathon are 8 year olds Caroline Alderfer, left, and twin sister Katherine, who has spent more than half her life being treated at Riley for Juvenile Dermatomyositis.