Students participate in the seventh annual Dance Marathon in the CRC on Feb. 20. The marathon featured more than dancing this year with video games, sports competitions and a competition to see who could stand up the longest.

By Julia Turner
Contributing Writer

After what has seemed like weeks of nothing but rain, snow, then rain again, the sun-shining exuberance of Saturday, Feb. 20 stands out like a patch of daffodils in a mud pit. However, for the people assembled on the fourth floor of the CRC at 5 p.m. the weather was not the only reason the day stood out among others; it was also the day of Tech’s seventh annual Dance Marathon.

Dance Marathon (DM) is a national nonprofit organization that raises money for Children’s Healthcare Network (CHN). The goal of the night is to dance for the kids who can’t dance for themselves.

Here at Tech, the night consists of watching the stories of the CHN’s Miracle Children, learning the year’s “morale dance” and playing games and competing in sports tournaments, among other activities.

The view from above the CRC’s basketball court showed swatches of purple, green, yellow, blue and pink bunting and bobbing around the basketball courts while music from radio station WBTS 95.5 The Beat blasted from speakers by a stage set up in front of the ping pong rooms. The colors represented the different DM teams, five in all, and from balloons that several people were playing with in the down time.

“We’re going to pop them when we start, and one of them has our miracle child’s name in it,” said Amy Rankin, a second-year Bio who was the one of the morale leaders for Team Yellow. Rankin decided to be a morale leader after coming to Dance Marathon last year and loved watching the morale leaders get everyone pumped up and reach the morale dance.

This dance, though not similar in choreography, is a common theme at Dance Marathons around the country.

“Every school’s [event] looks a little different, but the Morale Dance is universal. At the National Conference everyone performs the same so the other schools can see it,” said Zack Johnson, the National Director of DM.

Leslie Vaughn, third-year Bio, and Bradston Henry, fourth-year ME, were in charge of this year’s dance and served as morale team captains.

“We oversee the morale team leaders, there’s about two to three of them per team and we’re kind of like the face of the event,” said Vaughn.

Despite the title of the marathon, dancing isn’t all that goes on during the night.

There was also a band, dodgeball games, tug and a cornhole tournament. DM also offered participants a chance to participate in Dance, Dance Revolution and compete against other participants in Guitar Hero.

‘Apparently DM has a way of inspiring people, no matter their original reasons for coming to the event,” said Vaughn.

Daniel Gallagher, a second-year ChemE and BME, also decided to get more involved with the planning process after coming last year. He helped to organize the fundraising that the steering committee does throughout the year like tailgates during the football season.

“This year, they even got together with the DM planners from UGA for a tailgate: ‘Teaming Up for the Kids.’ In addition, the committee organized an Open Mic Night and a Steak and Shake Night to help raise more money.

The committee’s hard work throughout the year as well as the efforts of everyone who came to the big night definitely paid off.

“We ended up raising $15,669.77, which is almost $4,000 more than last year,” said Ashleigh Griffin, a fourth year CE and Executive Director of the steering committee.

Organization Spotlight: Badminton Club

Badminton Club offers opportunities for every student interested in badminton to uncover individual potential in badminton. Contact: cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/badminton

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Students recognized for changing communities, world

Jibril Leigh, second-year CE, and Jennifer Chirico, graduate student Environmental Policy, student were accepted to the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU) in recognition for their steps to creating change in the world and their communities.

The Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU) recognizes the work that students like Leigh and Chirico complete and allows world leaders, Nobel Prize winners, college students and administrators to come together, discuss and implement innovative projects to help alleviate pressing social and environmental problems.

According to the website, www.clintonglobalinitiative.org, the CGIU is singularly different from other organizations in that it “requires each member to make a specific commitment to Action.” Commitment to actions can affect either a campus or any community or particular population.

“The Objectives of CGIU are to get people, younger generations from all over the world together, work together and communicate together. It’s also to share others difficulties and successes and see feedback and connect student, faculty, and administration,” Leigh said.

Leigh wanted to come up with a way to improve education in his home village in Gambia, Africa by giving students in his village adequate transportation to and from school.

“I wanted to make a difference at home,” said Leigh, “[I] created bike sharing program to allow them to travel to school on time and return back dark. It also motivates them to go to school.”

He believes that if one improves the education of children, their livelihood will improve as well. Leigh, a former construction worker, came to Tech in order to learn how to better benefit his community. His acceptance to CGIU is an unintended consequence of his goals to benefit his village.

The objective of CGIU is to get youth involved in helping a community to increase awareness for a social issue.

“I want to increase awareness of waste management issues in the Pacific Ocean by developing a short documentary,” said Chirico.

RHA raises watt waste awareness

Andrew Nelson
Staff Writer

Following Tech’s trend of sustainability innovations in practice and building design, the Residence Hall Association’s (RHA) improvement committee has announced this year’s round of Wasted Watts—a competition among residence halls to lower their power consumption.

“One of the biggest issues that we’re looking at is how to get people to use sustainable practices in their daily lives and apply that on a larger scale so that small drops in the bucket are a valuable contribution,” said Parul Kapur, second-year ME and RHA vice president.

The goal of Wasted Watts is to educate and build student interest and support in sustainability, as well as improving transparency with energy usage on campus.

This is the second Wasted Watts competition, and the key improvement this year is electronic measurement; last year, power consumption was recorded manually by reading the meter on each building.

Jibril Leigh plans to increase awareness about poor waste management in the U.S.

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A few more factors were changed for this year's program, including the duration (increased by three hours) and a new dance-off competition.

The participants could choose to take a number and try to stay on their feet for the entire ten hours of the night. Those who remained standing competed at having best mastered the morale dance. The winner, Will Hacken, a fourth-year EnvE, won two AirTran tickets for his stamina.

In accordance with Dance Marathon procedures, all $15, 669.77 will be going to Hugh Spaulding Hospital.

The increase in donations and numbers was not only limited to the university; many other schools with non-traditional ways use Tech as an example for campuses to show how the event can work. "It would be better if we presented ourselves as an example," said Griiner, "we definitely have to stay (or have their parents tell) their stories.

“Two-thirds of those children are able to make it to Tech’s Dance Marathon every year; some of them are the ‘Miracle Children’ that Children’s choose every year while others are ones that volunteer to his village’s children with feasible transportation to school.

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GTPD plunges into giving back to community

By Chris Russell
Online Editor

This semester, the Georgia Tech Police Department (GTPD) is giving back to the community in more ways than usual. The Georgia Special Olympics are coming up in May, and the GTPD is playing a big part in fund raising for the charity.

“We want to embrace the Georgia Tech community in our efforts for this heroic event and welcome and encourage everyone to participate, whether it’s a monetary donation or a volunteer effort to help us raise money for Special Olympics. We are here to give back, as well as to protect and serve the members of the Georgia Tech community and we welcome everyone’s participation,” said Regina Rogers, Captain of the GTPD’s Administrative Services Division and the officer organizing fund raising and volunteer activities for the department.

On Feb. 20, Rogers took part in SOGA’s “Freezin’ for a Reason” Polar Plunge at Lake Lanier when the recorded low for the day was 24 degrees. Over 150 “plungers” from ten police departments and five civilian organizations took part in the event.

Before the day was over, they managed to raise over $40,000 for SOGA.

According to a statement on SOGA’s website www.specialolympicsga.org, “All proceeds collected by ‘plungers’ will benefit the athletes of Special Olympics Georgia.”

Prizes were awarded for the oldest plunger, youngest plunger, best group plunge, and best costume, among others. Rogers herself won an award for the individual to raise the most at the event. Other events currently in the works include Cops on Donut Shops, an event where police from across the state climb onto participating donut shops and remain for an entire weekend.

“Cops on Donut Shops [has] volunteers, police officers or [civilian] participants, sit on top of a Krispy Kreme Donut shop until money has been raised to get them down. We’re working on participating with the City of Atlanta Police Department to coordinate our efforts. [The] event will be taking place April 30-May 2, 2010,” said Rogers.

GTPD will also be hosting the “Jail ‘n’ Bail.” Volunteers—be they students, faculty or campus dignitaries—will be “arrested” by the GTPD and held until their friends and coworkers have raised enough in donations to pay their “bail.” According to Rogers, the event is currently slated for sometime in May, though a final date has yet to be set.

Aside from fundraising, the GTPD will also be helping with the festivities during the Special Olympics. The GTPD’s SWAT team will be taking part in the torch relay before the games start, and officers from the department—as well as other departments across the state—will be volunteering during the events.

This year, the games are set to take place on Emory University’s campus from May 21-23.

Students are welcome to get involved in any way they can.

“Prevention Officer Candy Walcott has been meeting with some of the Greek organizations to get them involved, [but] we’re still working on that. We’d like to get them involved in the Car Wash effort as well as the Jail ‘n’ Bail event, whereby they can help us serve ‘warrants’ on campus dignitaries and help them raise their ‘bail’ money to get released,” said Rogers.

SOGA’s website also encourages people interested in helping to sign up as a volunteer.

A statement on their website said, “Special Olympics Georgia…would not be able to carry out its mission of providing sports competitions to those with intellectual disabilities without its volunteers. With only a small staff of full-time employees and over 500 sports competitions throughout the year, it takes a large and dedicated volunteer force in order to make our program a reality.”

Founded in 1970, the Special Olympics Georgia (SOGA) website describes the Special Olympics organization as “the first—and still the only—organization to offer training and competition for people with intellectual disabilities.”

SOGA’s first games were held in 1970 and involved 500 athletes in a set of track and field events. Today, over 22,000 athletes take part in many different events throughout the year and are offered year-round training.

SOGA is largely a volunteer-driven organization, with most of its funds coming from law enforcement organizations across the state or private donors. A list of other fund raising events and volunteer opportunities can be found online.
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