

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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BY JULIANNA GOLDMAN

Spectator Staff Writer

It certainly is not Dick Clark's 60-minute American Bandstand. And when they say "No sleeping, no sitting, no kidding," Scott Wolf, Brooke Shields, and the coordinators of Columbia's first ever 28-hour Dance-a-Thon are completely serious.

Registration for the Columbia University dance marathon, benefiting the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, begins today. The marathon will start at 12 p.m. on Feb. 10 and will go until 4 p.m. on Feb. 11.

"This is the first philanthropy event at Columbia to incorporate every single person [in the University]," said Kyle Pendleton, coordinator of Greek Affairs and overall supervisor of the marathon. "Students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the Columbia Community will all be involved."

With Wolf and Shields as honorary co-chairs, and other celebrity appearances in the works, the potential is there to attract the attention of a wide range of Columbia students.

“They are the people who make this event famous on campus and to our corporate sponsors,” said Laurie Mendelsohn, BC '01, and coordinator of the Dance-a-Thon.

According to Mendelsohn, the organizers let the community know that “this is not just any other event. It is huge.”

The dance marathon at Columbia became a reality when Neta Alomar, BC '00 and former-president of Kappa Alpha Theta, came to Pendleton wanting to do a

project that would unite everyone on campus.

Pendleton had just received a letter from the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation asking Columbia to take part in a dance marathon of some sort.

Capitalizing on the perfect timing, Alomar and Pendleton decided to take the idea to the Inter Greek Council.

The initial organization was on a “grassroots level,” Pendleton said. “We contacted people we knew, students we had worked with, got [the Columbia College Student Council] on board, SEAS on board. It snowballed over the summer.”

With a committee of over 20 students, the organizers aim to raise \$50,000 for the Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

“I think it’s getting a lot bigger, it has taken off a lot faster,” Silverman said. “It’s just going a lot better than I thought it would, and I am pretty excited that a lot of people have already gotten involved.”

Last year, Pennsylvania State’s 30th annual dance marathon raised 3.5 million dollars for the Foundation.

“It’s the first year, so we’re starting small for this huge event,” Pendleton said.

Pendleton added that to his knowledge, Columbia is the only Ivy League school ever to organize a dance marathon.

The goal, according to Pendleton, is to have between 150 and 200 dancers.

But if students think that they can just show up on the 10th, and dance for 28 hours, they need to think twice. Although dancers will only be doing about 10-15 minutes of dancing each hour, they are not permitted to sleep, or even to sit during the marathon.

According to the marathon rules, the marathon will last 28 hours in order to “help students who participate more fully grasp what it is like to be an ill or disabled child. Surely these children experience moments when minutes seem to pass like hours. And the children afflicted with HIV cannot simply walk away from growing tired, pain they may experience, or limits placed upon them.”

ALICE! will be working with the dancers by training and educating them for the physically and mentally exhausting 28 hours. They are planning an energy-promoting menu for the event, and even a dinner on Feb. 9 filled with carbohy-

drates.

Dancers will not be the only people actively participating during the 28 hours. "Moralers" will work 3-hour shifts to keep the dancers enthusiastic.

"Every person on campus can sign up for a spot to be a moraler," Mendelsohn said. "They get a pass for a 3-hour time period, and are there to boost everyone's energy. That's one way that we are trying to get everyone involved on campus."

Because of safety rules, there are a limited number of dancers permitted. "We're actually hoping for the most part that students aren't going to be involved in the dancing, so what we are trying to do is to get students to back each other and sponsor each other," Mendelsohn said. "There are all sorts of prizes that we are going to have for groups that raise money. All the groups that we have spoken to want to sponsor a dancer. Between now and the events, [campus groups] will have fun fundraising activities too."

In order to get more people involved, the committee is holding a dance marathon information session tomorrow at 9 p.m. in 517 Hamilton Hall.

"We hope to get as many people involved as possible," Silverman said. "I think a lot of people will want to because it's for a good cause and a really great event. It should be a campus unifying event, [and] it should be a lot of fun."

'This is not just any other event. It is huge.'

—Laurie Mendelsohn,
BC '01, Dance-a-Thon
co-coordinator