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Dance Marathon Reaches Out to Children

BY HOPE GLASSBERG

Spectator Associate News Editor

With two weeks remaining until the second annual Columbia University Dance Marathon, dancers and organizers are preparing for the fundraisers in ways other than practicing their hottest dance moves and convincing corporations to sponsor them.

Preparations for this year include participating in activities that will bring together dancers and children in an effort to give the marathon a personal touch.

One hundred dancers will participate in the 28-hour marathon that will take place from 12 p.m. on Feb. 9 to 4 p.m. on Feb. 10 in Roone Arledge Auditorium and benefit the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

Chair Will Hunter, CC '02, said this year's marathon will be different because it will encourage interaction between the dancers and children with AIDS or HIV. The children, who live at the Incarnation Children's



Center located on West 172nd Street, will be able to watch and participate in the dance marathon. The center opened in 1989 and is New York City's only residence that is exclusive-



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ly for HIV-infected children.

"We're working with [the ICC] to organize a program to have a few of the dancers go with the kids to the Museum of Natural History or on some kind of field trip," Hunter said. "It's a huge difference from last year."

Jieun Sung, SEAS '03, who will be dancing on behalf of Columbia Special Events,

more personal, worked with dancers and kids.

children with

AIDS this summer and said these activities will be beneficial.

"Maybe some people haven't had personal interaction with [children with HIV and AIDS], so this will give them the opportunity to see where their money is going," Sung said.

The marathon will also encourage bonds between dancers. According to Sushil Cheema, CC '04, co-chair of dancer relations, one problem with last year's marathon was that dancers didn't get to know one another prior to the marathon.

"We want to do as much as we can in order to allow the dancers to get to know one another," Cheema said.

Organizers of the dance marathon have kept busy throughout the past few months with their efforts to publicize and organize the event and raise funds.

Hunter has been working with other members of the marathon

other member of the marathon steering committee to get money from corporate sponsors. He added that since Sept. 11, soliciting private donations has been easier than getting corporate sponsorships.

"It has been harder to get money from corporations," Hunter said.

Hunter expects this year's marathon to be just as successful as last year's event, which raised over \$100,000 for the Foundation.

"Most of our work over the break has been PR work. We've helped dancers get closer to raising their \$500 minimum by notifying their local newspapers and radio. We've also tried to make sure we have entertainment lined up and solidified," Hunter said.

Eric Nies of MTV's *The Grind* and *The Real World*, *Party of Five*'s Scott Wolf, and former Miss America Kate Shindle are scheduled to attend. DJs from the Roxy and DJ Chip Duckett, who deejayed at last year's event, will entertain dancers during the marathon.



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The Dance Marathon hopes to be more personal, with stronger bonds between dancers and kids.