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Dance Marathon Raises \$50,000 for AIDS Research

By Lydia DePillis
Spectator Staff Writer

AIDS may not be the most visible of diseases, but it was certainly hard to miss the bright red balloons dotting campus this weekend, marking the sixth annual Dance Marathon for pediatric AIDS research in Lerner Hall.

About 60 students spent 28 straight hours in Lerner's Roone Arledge Auditorium, beginning at noon on Saturday. The rules: no sitting (except for meals), no caffeine, and no watches. The perks: free food, lots of entertainment, and the satisfaction of helping a good cause.

Throughout the marathon, dancers were kept occupied with games, theme hours, and motivational guest speakers, including a man who suffered from pediatric AIDS as a child and has lived to tell about it.

"He really put things in perspective," said dancer Seth Berliner, CC '08. "I'm only standing up for 28 hours, and this guy was bleeding out of his pores as a child."

The event raised \$50,448 for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, according to Sasha Feldstein, BC '08 and public relations director for the event. Although less than

the goal of \$100,000, it beat last year's total of about \$35,000.

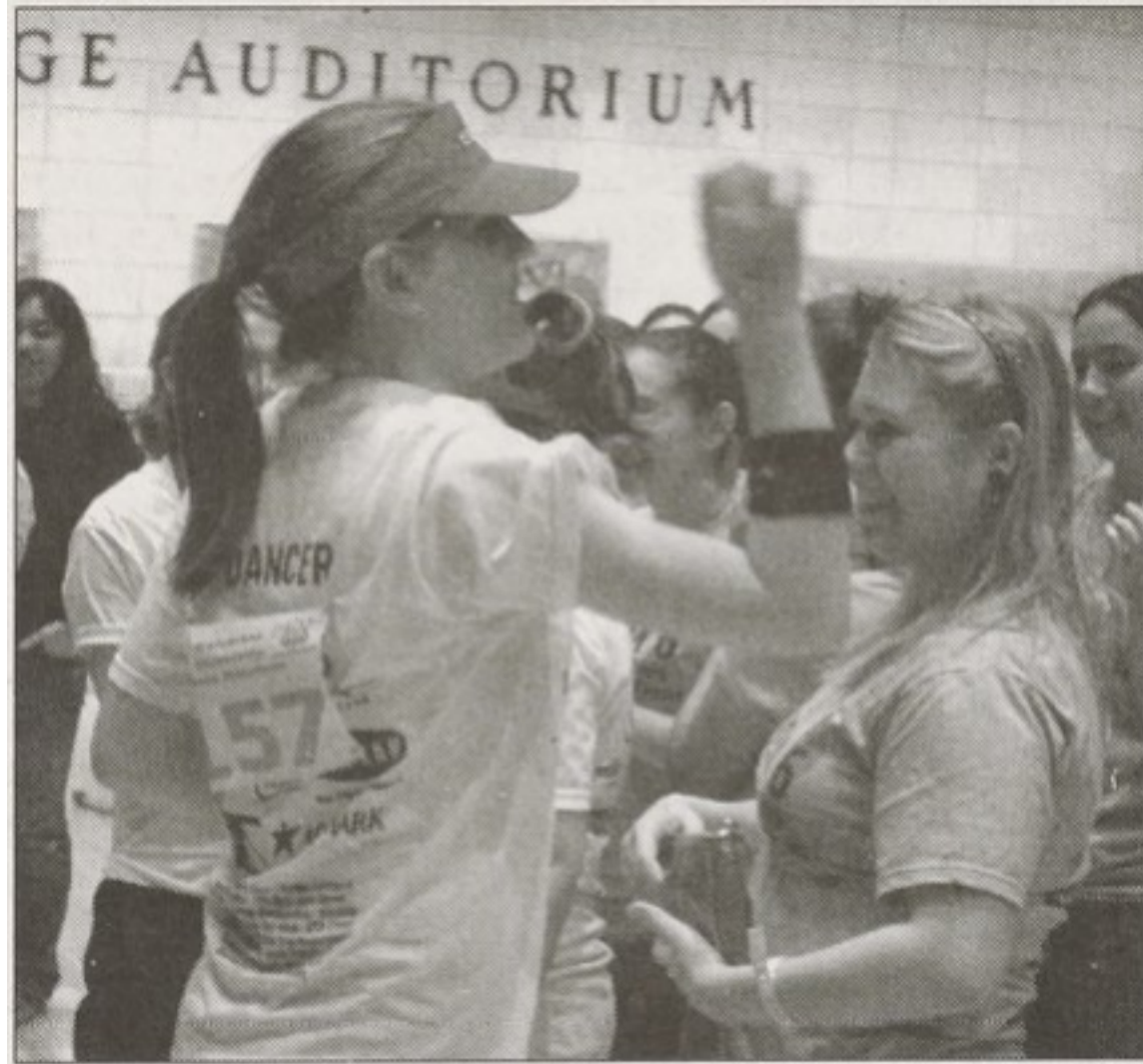
"It's incredible, because we actually had half the number of dancers, but we raised over \$15,000 more, which we think is a huge success," said Feldstein.

Each of the dancers raised at least \$450 from friends, family, and alumni, and many were sponsored by fraternities, sororities, academic departments, and residence halls. In addition, organizers have been working since April to solicit in-kind and cash donations from big-name companies including JetBlue, Aramark, and Kaplan.

The marathon also included a staff of "moralers," students who came in periodically to inject the flagging dancers with new energy. Most of the time, more people were standing around and chatting than actually dancing, and as the marathon progressed, some students even broke down and took out their books to do homework.

But that doesn't mean the students weren't dedicated. Many have come back year after year to participate.

"It's for kids," explained Diana Jose, BC '06, who has taken part in the marathon for four years, as she decorated a T-shirt for the '80s-themed hour. "You're tired and you're sleepy, but children with AIDS have to make that sacrifice every day."



JASON BELLO—STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

After 28 hours on their feet and \$50,000 raised, Dance Marathon participants were tired but enthusiastic.



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