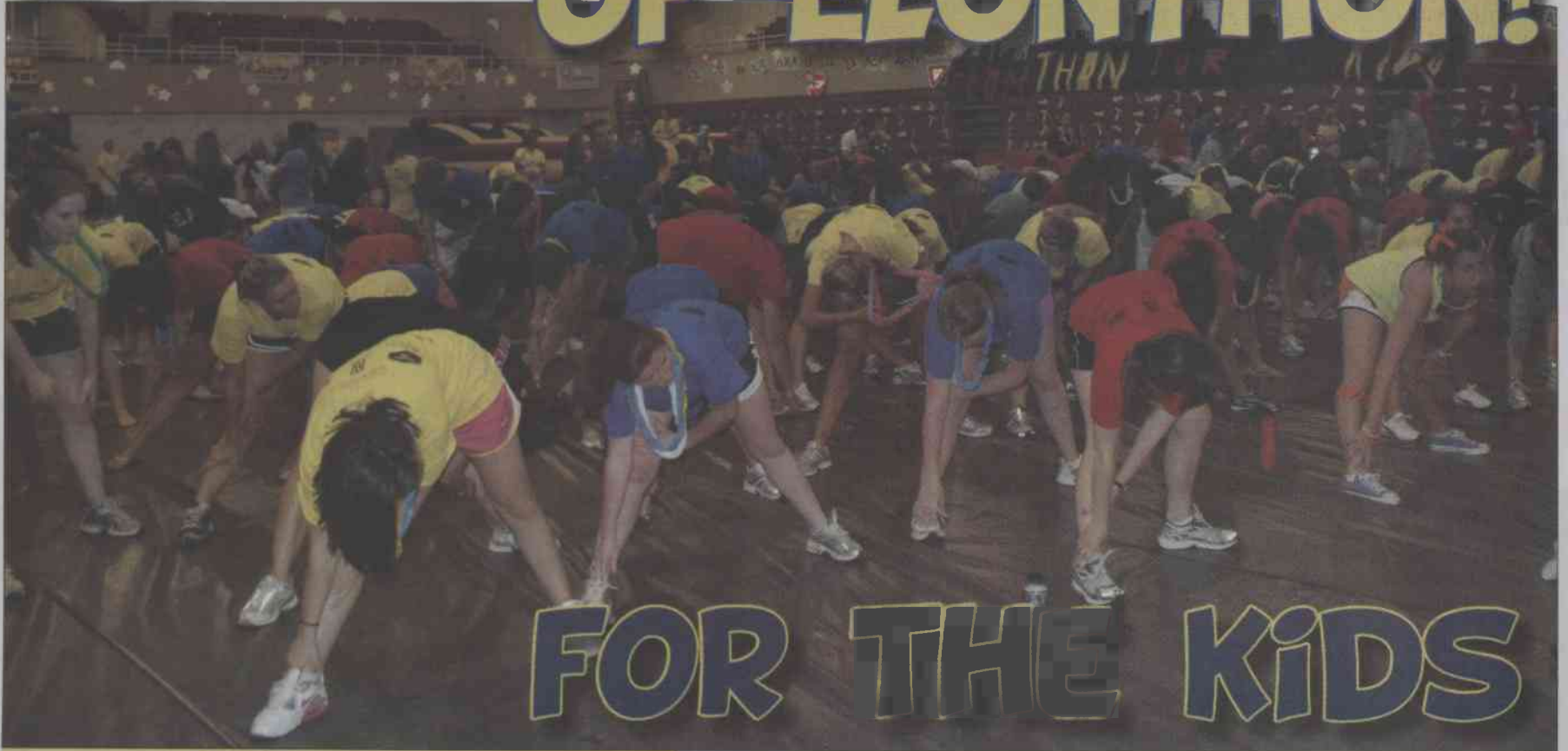


Style

24 HOURS OF ELONTHON!



FOR THE KIDS



Avery Lucas
Reporter

A typical college student stays up for long stretches of time anyway, but rarely for 24 hours straight. Rarer still is a student staying up 24 hours on their feet, dancing the night and day away to support medical research for children. At Elon University more than a thousand students were willing to stand and dance for 24 hours for the cause.

Elonthon is an annual fundraiser where people dance for 24 hours to raise money and awareness for Duke Children's Hospital. Since 2003 Elonthon has been the largest student-run, money-raising philanthropic endeavor on campus with many students working on the event. Morale team, where students cheer on the other student dancers, is one way students can become more involved.

"I signed up for Morale team for two reasons," sophomore Alli Brewer said. "First, the message of Elonthon is an amazing and inspiring one. Second of all, who doesn't want to make everyone smile at an event like a 24-hour dance marathon?"

This year's Elonthon had a total of 1,200 dancers. The dance ran from 6 p.m. April 16 to 6 p.m. April 17. Elonthon had many activities and performers providing entertainment for its dancers, including Sweet Signatures, Twisted Measure and Elon's Finest.

"I chose to do the full 24 hours because I could experience the pain that these kids go through on a daily basis," said Stephanie Lindeman, a first-time 24-hour dancer. "During this time I had to rely on my close

friends to help me pull through, but I can only imagine that it is nothing compared to what these kids go through every day of their lives."

Stories of miracle children from Duke Children's Hospital were told to make the students aware of why they were dancing for such an important cause. During each shift, a parent would stand on stage and talk about their child's illness, how Duke Children's Hospital helped them and how important and helpful Elonthon is to the children who go to the hospital every day.

Since Elonthon is "for the kids," it was only appropriate that many of this year's Miracle Children showed up and even stayed awake for the full 24 hours. Many organizations including the Student Union Board, Intersarsity and Greek organizations sponsored a child, and had a huge banner in his or her honor hanging from the second story of Alumni Gym. Many of the Miracle Children came to Elonthon. A set of twins were celebrating their fifth birthday, and a child cancer survivor performed "Sweet Home Alabama" for the crowd.

At the last shift of Elonthon, members of the event's executive committee announced that there was one final way for the dancers to show support for the kids. Dancers could donate 10 inches of their hair to Locks of Love, an organization that makes real hair wigs for cancer patients. This year, two women took the chance to show their support for the kids and gave away 10 inches of their hair to be made into a wig.

The dedicated committee members, contributors and dancers who came to the event know it's because of one reason only: for the kids.



ALL PHOTOS BY HEATHER CASSANO | Staff Photographer

Top: Dancers participate in a workout session led by Campus Recreation. Left: Josh, a survivor of a rare metabolic disorder, entertains the audience. Above: Elonthon executives open the event with the original Elonthon dance. Right: The Elonthon morale committee pumps up the crowd.

