

# Dancers stand up for cause

Get help trudging through 24 hours

BY ANDREW SATTEN  
STAFF WRITER

Fresh into the first hour of Dance Marathon, 650 dancers echoed, "We ain't tired of dancing," a line from the event's theme song and dance.

About 23 hours later, the line was repeated, but judging from blood-shot eyes and looks of disorientation, its legitimacy likely had faded for most of those who uttered the catch-phrase.

During the launch of the marathon, UNC men's basketball coach Roy Williams urged the audience to forgo a loud reception to his appearance to conserve energy.

"(Dance Marathon is) something that is special to me, for sure," Williams said. "If it was easy, it would not be special."

Throughout the night, dancers

were inundated by performances, 36 of them by UNC student groups, to keep their minds off their aching feet and on the mission at hand.

Between performances, one of many DJs was sure to be playing a tune from the marathon's eclectic line-up, which spanned from Snoop Dogg to AC/DC. "Carolina Girls" was the first selection of the night, an appropriate choice considering the disproportionately high number of female students who participated in the event.

Junior Mandi Cherry, a two-time dancer, leaned against the wall around 2 a.m. as she flipped through the pages of a novel. Cherry was not alone in her academic pursuits. Throughout the 24 hours, tables along the wall were lined with dancers leaning over and working on homework.

"It's definitely difficult to concentrate, but since I'm going to be so tired when I'm done with this, I'm not going to want to do (homework) this weekend," said sophomore Jessica Wiedey as she studied for her organic chemistry class. "I don't know if I'll retain too much."

Around 6 a.m. dancers saw a change of scenery as they were escorted to a fully lit Kenan Memorial Stadium to sway through a rendition of the alma mater. But 7 a.m. to 10 a.m., the period following the stadium excursion, was a low point in terms of energy and morale.

"Is it bad to, like, lean against tables?" freshman Anne Kinsella asked friends, unsure of what constituted the sitting-standing divide.

Around 1:30 p.m. Saturday, dancers chose between Dance Marathon's featured band, The Embers, and a projection of the men's basketball game against

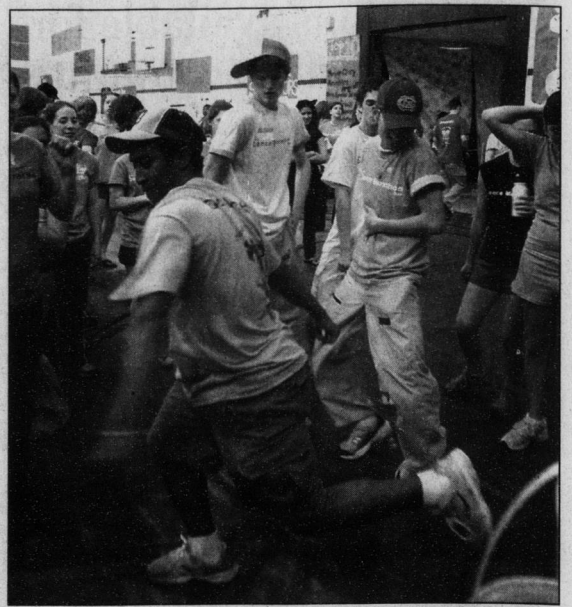
Florida State University. Though the vast majority opted for Williams and the Tar Heels, the game ended in time for dancers to catch The Embers' finale.

During the marathon's final stage, dubbed "family hour," the event's tone shifted. In a segment that brought many to tears, parents of benefitting children delivered a presentation on how the money raised truly affects children and families at UNC Hospitals.

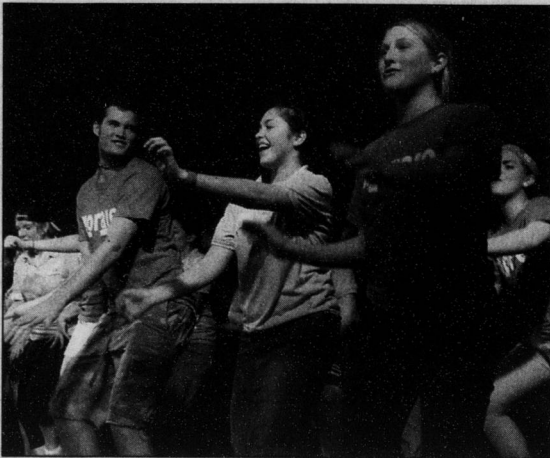
Sharon Kupit, mother of 8-year-old patient George Kupit, spoke on the impact of students pledging to stand for 24 hours. She closed the family hour, saying "Keep dancing on, dancing on."

And the dancers did until 7 p.m., when they counted down the final 10 seconds and collapsed to the floor.

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.



DTH/GABI TRAPENBERG  
Participants in this year's Dance Marathon breakdance as other dancers stop to watch them during DJ time in Fetzer Gym on Saturday afternoon.



DTH/GABI TRAPENBERG  
Morale Committee members Aaron Catrett and Kaylor Russell (right) do this year's line dance with Overall Committee member Stephanie Taylor.

## Costumes help boost marathon morale

Among tactics to motivate dancers

BY NIKKI WERKING  
ASSISTANT FEATURES EDITOR

Junior Jason Hamlin stopped to catch his breath after frenetically dancing to the Pointer Sisters' 1980s classic, "I'm So Excited," in Fetzer Gym at about 5 a.m. Saturday.

He rubbed a sparkling gold ring on his finger as he stood among a group of students wearing a rainbow of T-shirts and others who looked more prepared for the filming of a J.Lo music video than a fund raiser for children. "My bling-bling is itchy," he said, laughing.

Hamlin was one of about 200 moralers participating in this year's 24-hour Dance Marathon, which raised \$170,584.92 for the For The Kids Fund at the N.C. Children's Hospital.

The moralers, who were divided into four groups with six-hour

shifts, dressed in tropical, hip-hop, '80s prom or superhero costumes and mingled among the 650 dancers, encouraging them to dance and play games to get their minds off their sleepiness and aching feet.

The costumes were a new feature in this year's marathon, said Morale Committee Chairman Patrick Murphy. In past years, moralers donned matching T-shirts and wore accessories to fit a particular theme.

"I was extremely impressed with the length the moralers went to to dress up," Murphy said. "It added so much creativity and energy to the marathon that wasn't there before and brought a new level to this year's marathon that helped keep the dancers going."

Another new feature this year was a moraler training session, held a week prior to the event, to help moralers learn about their duties and understand how to handle difficult situations with dancers.

But it takes more than an eye-

"I was extremely impressed with the length the moralers went to to dress up. It added so much creativity and energy."

PATRICK MURPHY, MORALE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

catching costume and a little bit of training to raise the spirits of dragging dancers.

Moralers in oversized basketball jerseys, velour sweatsuits and bandannas started a catwalk and encouraged dancers to shimmy and shake between two rows of other moralers and dancers. Hamlin took one reluctant dancer by the hand and twirled her down the aisle.

Many moralers also carried bags of goodies — including candy, glow sticks, Mardi Gras beads and stickers — for the dancers to help keep their spirits up.

But the times when moralers were needed most were those when sleep-deprived dancers became weary, mostly in the early

morning hours on Saturday, about halfway through the marathon.

As dancers slowly trudged out of Kenan Stadium after a brief stretching exercise around 7 a.m., moralers lined the street, clapping, cheering and slapping high-fives to dancers.

A moraler's voice cracked as she jumped up and down yelling words of encouragement, and a droopy-eyed dancer giggled at her antics as she walked by. Making one dancer happy for that moment displayed what the moralers' jobs were all about: giving dancers the strength to keep on going.

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