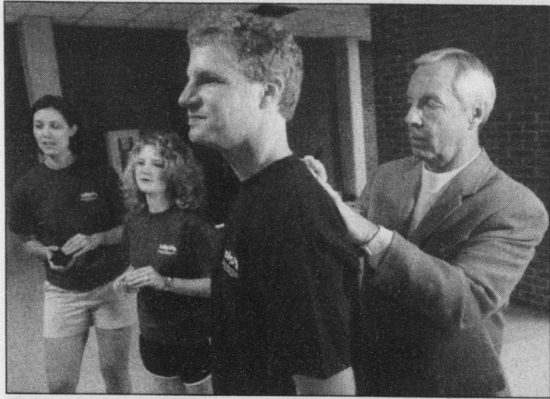
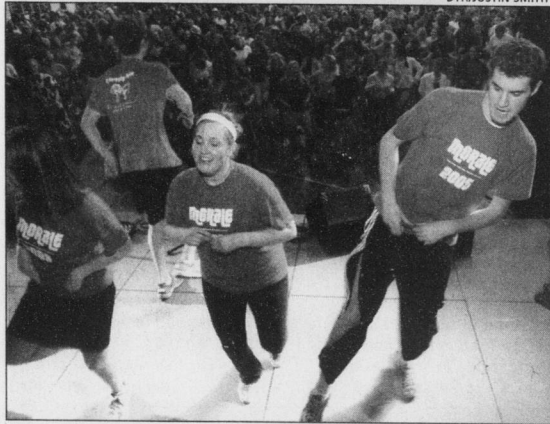


unc dance marathon

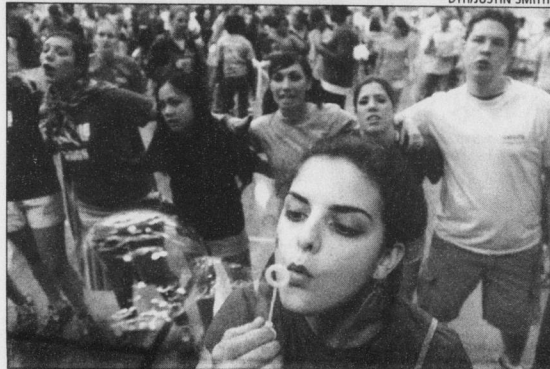
2005 Feb. 25-26



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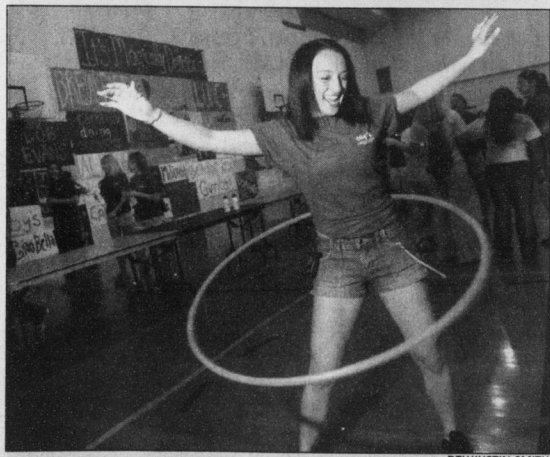


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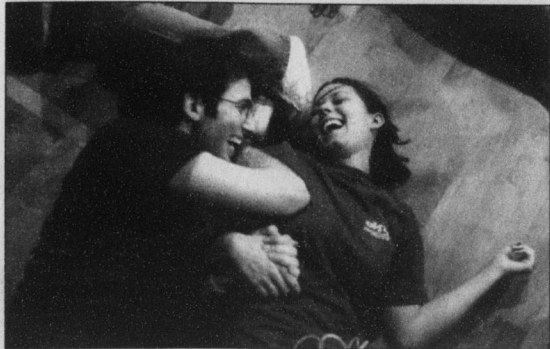


DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

2,000
participants
184,872
dollars raised
24
hours standing



DTH/JUSTIN SMITH



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

"Service is an essential mission of all universities. Chapel Hill is a model"

UNC EPITOMIZES

BY KIRSTEN VALLE
STAFF WRITER

Long before Dance Marathon and UNC Habitat for Humanity thrust public service into the campus spotlight, UNC established a commitment to serve, an obligation to act as a University of the people.

That commitment has evolved and expanded, but it remains central to UNC's mission, which states, "The University exists to ... improve the condition of human life through service and publication; and to enrich our culture."

Provost Robert Shelton said progress relies on public service. "Steps forward ... happen because we interact with others," he said. "Service is a way of interacting."

Over the years, service has assumed a tangible form on campus. The Carolina Center for Public Service, created in 1999, arose "out of the feeling that wonderful things were happening across the University, but there was not a cohesive unit," said Director Lynn Blanchard.

"Public service is an integral part of this University," she said.

The center works closely with campus groups, including two of the most visible: Dance Marathon and UNC Habitat.

"The important thing about both of those events is that it is not just the event, but the work done all year leading up to it," Blanchard said. "The events really per-

sonify what Carolina students can do."

Dance Marathon fulfills UNC's mission to serve by helping people across the state, said Overall Coordinator Julia Shalen.

"The (N.C. Children's) Hospital supports the whole state," she said. "We are given the chance to help those people."

This year, the Marathon raised about \$184,872. Since its inception seven years ago, it has collected more than \$850,000.

As the largest student fund-raising organization on campus, Dance Marathon uses many volunteers, Shalen said. Members of the overall committee devote about 15 hours per week, while other volunteers contribute anywhere from one day per year — as dancers — to 10 hours per week, she said.

"It is definitely worth it," she said. "I wouldn't do it if it wasn't."

UNC Habitat also personifies UNC's mission to serve. "It is absolutely necessary for students to be involved in public service," said Jessica Jerald, community outreach coordinator.

"Oftentimes, students are solely involved in academic work. It's important to be well-rounded and give back to the community."

The more than 2,000 students registered in UNC Habitat raise money and build houses for the less fortun-

nate locally and internationally on

Honduras, said Blitz Build Coordin

"Habitat is a really well-known o

said. "But also, it's a physical activi

doing something tangible to help

just raising money."

Despite the visibility of Dance

Habitat, other campus organizati

mitted to service, Blanchard said.

"I hate to name any because yo

leaving out a great organization," s

Of the nearly 600 student organ

about 50 identify themselves as ser

One such group is APPL

Program, which incorporates ser

work. "Public higher education is

support," said Assistant Director L

"This is a wonderful way to give

that has been very supportive of us

UNC is ahead of other area univ

ment, said John Barnhill, executive

Carolina Campus Compact, a coaliti

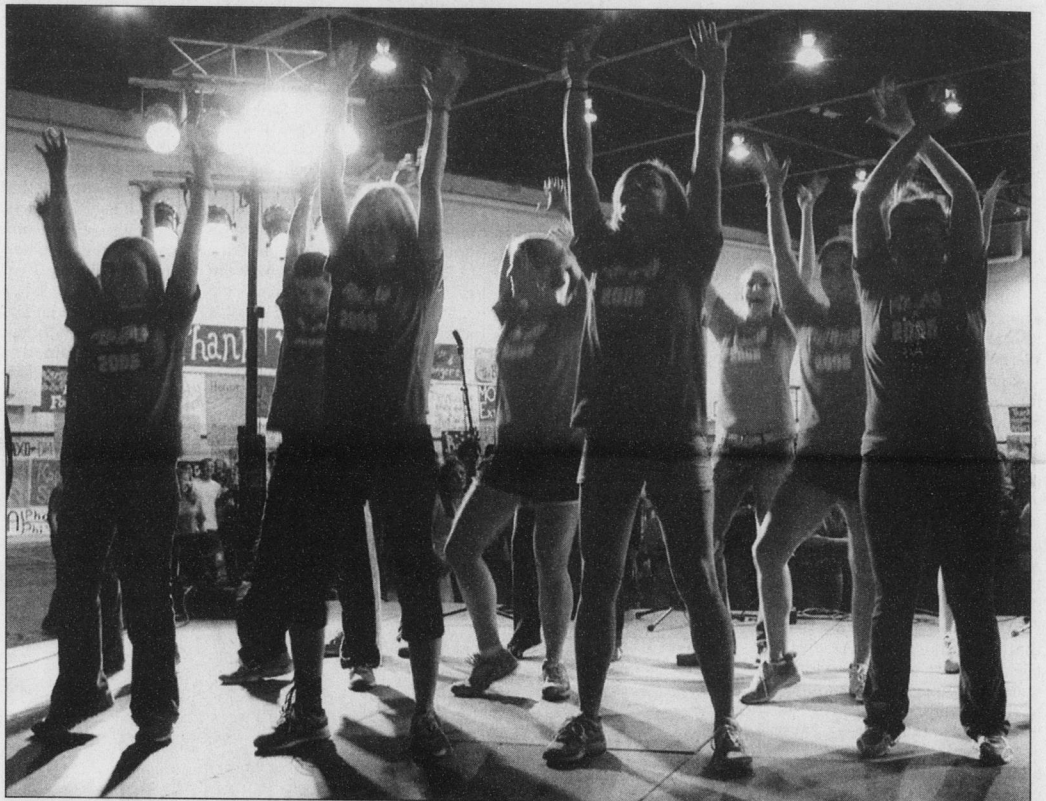
university presidents and chancello

port community service.

"Service is an essential mission o

said. "Chapel Hill is a model cam

mission."



DTH/JUSTIN SMITH

Participants in the Dance Marathon, a 24-hour fund raiser for the N.C. Children's Hospital, kick off the event Friday. The Marathon raised about \$184,872 this year and also donates money to the For the Kids Fund, which helps pay for expenses not covered by medical insurance.

Donations enrich lives of children battling diseases

BY SARAH SCHWARZ
STAFF WRITER

The automatic doors of the N.C. Children's Hospital swoosh open, and Regina Samulski strides through in a bright blue T-shirt with the word "dancer" across the back, a souvenir from last year's Dance Marathon.

This day, like each before it, has been a long one for Regina, a senior in high school. She wakes up at 5:30 a.m. to begin her treatment, takes two different medicines, grabs breakfast and makes it to school on time for class.

Diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at age 7, Regina always has fought to be just like everyone else, said her mother, Theresa Samulski.

Regina and her family have been involved with Dance Marathon since it began at UNC in 1999. They have seen the sixth-floor video-game station and the less quantifiable benefits of the money raised by the marathon.

"As the parent of a child who's been in and out of the hospital, I sense that many people expect it's no big deal. You start to get the feeling that no one cares anymore," Theresa explained. "But then there are people who are willing to stand on their feet for 24 hours for families like us."

Alison Ross, chairwoman of the hospital committee, has come to know the Samulskis and has become their official family buddy.

"We really value our relationships with the families because it's all about the kids," she said.

At 5 p.m. Saturday, many of the families who have been aided by donations from Dance Marathon took center stage at the event. To Ross, it is the most gratifying hour of the 24-hour event. "It's the best time to me — it reaffirms everything you've been through for the past 22 hours," she said.

Regina has experienced the family hour from a different perspective. "Every year at family hour, it's really touching to look out into the crowd and see most people with tears in their eyes," she said.

Of the more than \$180,000 Dance Marathon raised this year, 70 percent will be passed on to social workers, who decide based on established standards where the donation should be spent. The rest will be used on projects endorsed by the entire Marathon

committee, Ross said.

That 30-percent portion is called the For the Kids Fund, and it helps with costs not covered by medical insurance. In the past, proceeds have helped families pay phone bills or occasionally substitute hospital food with a Wendy's hamburger — something for which Rosetta Risinger is thankful.

Risinger's daughter, 13-year-old Amanda Morphis, is in and out of the hospital so often for her cystic fibrosis treatment that she gets tired of the hospital food. Funds raised by the Marathon paid for a meal from Wendy's for Amanda.

Inside the hospital, contributions have helped establish a video-game station, movie rentals on every floor and a playroom.

All of these improvements have given children like Regina a sense of hope again. She checks into the hospital for three to four weeks each year to receive treatment, leaving behind school work, marching band, Habitat for Humanity and her social life.

Regina handles the disruption without a glitch. "I jump right back in," she said.

Her involvement with Dance Marathon has made Regina excited about the prospect of college. "I've met a bunch of college-aged people and been able to hang out with them and find out what college life is like," she said.

Her favorite subject in school might be anatomy, but she doesn't plan to be a doctor — Regina said she already has spent enough time in hospitals.

Sally Pinon, in attendance at Dance Marathon to support families who have been helped by the fund, said she was pleased to see so many students there. She also went to N.C. State University's marathon earlier this month and was impressed with the support there.

"This is the one time that it doesn't matter if you go to N.C. State or UNC, everyone's hearts are in the same place."

Staff Writer Allison Rose
contributed to this article.
Contact the Features Editor
at features@unc.edu.