

one day, one event, one cause



The committee heads do the morale dance on stage at the start of the event Jan. 14. "It was kind of nerve-racking going up and doing the dance without fully knowing it," Molly Klutts '19 said.

DANCE marathon

The Cafeteria is filled with students in purple shirts hitting beach balls. A vision of neon emerges when the participants wave glow sticks during "power hour." Chants of "FTK!" ring through the halls. The West community came together Jan. 14 and raised \$40,263.22 for kids fighting cancer.

"Everyone is passionate about making a difference for the kids," Hannah Luce '18 said. "And making connections with miracle kiddos is an unforgettable experience."

Dancing for more birthdays, more laughter and more memories is what it's all about, according to Allie Schmitt-Morris '19, Day of Event committee leader.

"The most rewarding part is seeing how dancing for only six hours can have such an impact on families that have a kid with cancer," she said. "Seeing the joy the children feel at this event is priceless," she added.

Still, raising money on such a big stage presented some challenges.

"When kiddos go through rough patches—or they pass away—we all carry a big weight," Maddy Nachtman '18 said. "We fight with these kiddos and we grieve."

Molly Klutts '19, who has attended Dance Marathon since she was in seventh grade, said she looks forward to the event every year.

"It's not only a time where all the families and kiddos are brought together to celebrate one another, but it's a time where we can see all of our hard work paid off," Klutts said.

After exceeding their goal of \$35,000, committee members expressed pride in their accomplishments. They know the funds will help these families immensely.

"The [funds] allow families to worry less about out-of-pocket expenses," Izabel Houselog '18 said. Expenses include parking, meals, bringing presents to siblings, planning activities for siblings during hospital visits, and even funeral expenses.

After hours of preparation, dancing on Sunday was "truly incredible," according to Bri Faulkner '18.

"We worked so hard to have this event come together, and the day itself is extremely special," she said. "I dance so one day we can dance for joy and celebration and not having to worry about cancer."

—By Sidney Kout

"I really believe in the cause and what it stands for and how we can help others just by spreading awareness."

—Mayra DeVries

THE COMMITTEES

In a big change from the past, students headed all nine committees. "I can't express how proud I am of leadership," Molly Klutts '19 said. "It truly takes a lot of work and effort to make things like this happen, and that's one thing I didn't realize when I signed up for leadership." With help from Special Programs teacher Mayra DeVries and counselor Paul Breitbach, students worked together to raise money for children battling cancer. "We have all had to really step up to make Dance Marathon happen," Brooke Goodman '18 said. "There have been some hiccups and stressful situations along the way, but everyone helped each other out and never lost sight of why we do this." Recruitment Committee leader Ellie Kouba, who said she danced for

a bigger girls golf team, described the mid-January event as "really heart-warming and a great way to bring the community together. We recruit dancers and get everybody pumped up for the big event." Securing entertainment—which included a DJ and West's poms team—and inviting speakers fell to committee leaders Klutts and Hannah Luce '18. The speakers came from families who have had a family member battle cancer, including Ernie Found and Craig Schroeder, Flash's dad. "We make the schedule for the big event, along with kiddo posters and family name tags," Klutts said. "We also put together things like slideshows, and anything little that needs to be done to make the big event run smoothly."



MADDY NACHTMAN, CATHERINE COLLINS & IZABEL HOUSELOG



MOLLY KLUTTS & HANNAH LUCE



BRI FAULKNER & GRACE SCHNEIDER



LUMA MAKAWI & ALLIE SCHMITT-MORRIS



LAURA MACHLAB & KARA WAGENKNECHT



BROOKE GOODMAN & KYRA STOLL



CLAIRE RONNEBAUM & DENIZ INCE



CAROLINE YOUNG & ABBY NACHTMAN

PHOTOS BY SIDNEY KOUT

TWO Dancing committee leader Ellie Kouba '19 shows her moves. "The best part is seeing all your hard work pay off."



THREE Luma Makawi '20 and Allie Schmitt-Morris '19 dance to the beat before doing their morale dance. "I've learned that even raising \$50 for a kid can have such a big impact," Schmitt-Morris said.

FOUR Bri Faulkner '18, Hannah Luce '18 and Molly Klutts '19 get together on stage to dance Jan. 14. "The best part is coming together as one big community and showing our support to our miracle kiddos," Faulkner said.

FIVE Brooke Goodman '18 and Colleen Bloeser '18 do the conga line. "I dance for more trips home, double dates and late nights with best friends," Goodman said.

