



October 2017

THON 2017 PENN STATE DANCE MARATHON FACT SHEET

The Issue – Pediatric Cancer

Cancer is the leading disease killer among U.S. children. Approximately 16,000 children are diagnosed with cancer each year (this includes kids 0-19), and 10,380 children under the age of 15 will be diagnosed this year. Cancers that affect children most commonly include acute lymphocytic leukemia, brain cancer, neuroblastoma and other central nervous system tumors.

Although survival rates vary per type of cancer, an estimated one in five children will lose their battle with cancer. The causes of most childhood cancers are unknown, and, for the most part, these cancers cannot be prevented. Despite the recent advances in pediatric cancer, there is plenty of work still to be done.

Our Solution

THON is a year-round fundraising and awareness campaign for the fight against childhood cancer. These efforts culminate every February in a 46-hour, no sitting, no sleeping, dance marathon. THON's sole beneficiary, Four Diamonds, not only covers treatment costs for pediatric cancer patients at Penn State Children's Hospital, but Four Diamonds also benefits children everywhere by supporting cutting-edge research to find improved treatments and a cure. Since 1977, Penn State students have raised more than \$136 million "For The Kids," and last year, THON donated 96 cents of every dollar raised directly to Four Diamonds at Penn State Children's Hospital.

As an organization, THON is inspiring a generation of young adults to get involved and empowering themselves and their community to take action.

Every year, more than 16,500 Penn State student volunteers dedicate over 5,000,000 hours to THON, making it the largest student-run philanthropy in the world. Penn State students are united in their commitment to the cause – finding a cure for childhood cancer. THON is determined to spread its mission even further in 2017. With the passion of our student volunteers and the renewed and growing support of our generous donors, THON will continue to work toward its goal of making a difference in the life of a child.

Work Being Done – Four Diamonds

The Four Diamonds mission is to conquer childhood cancer by assisting children treated at Penn State Children's Hospital and their families through superior care, comprehensive support and innovative research.

Each year, Four Diamonds provides direct support to approximately 600 children with cancer – 100 who are newly diagnosed and 500 who are continuing their fight. Four Diamonds helped more than 3,700 children and families last year alone and supports a diverse platform of childhood cancer research at Penn State Children's Hospital, seeking improved treatments and cures to benefit those around the world.

Four Diamonds makes it possible for 16 specialty care providers to be available exclusively to serve the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of its patients and families. These care providers include child life specialists, social workers, music therapists, a clinical nutritionist, a psychologist and pastoral care.

For the sixth consecutive year, Penn State Children's Hospital was recognized as one of the top 50 hospitals in the nation for childhood cancer care, in addition to five other specialties in U.S. News & World Report's 2016-17 rankings. Because of the community's steady and generous support, Four Diamonds has been able to assist 100 percent of the childhood cancer patients who have been treated at Penn State Children's Hospital.



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Impacts – THON by the Numbers

Since 1977, THON has been positively impacting their community. Students have raised more than \$136 million, and donate 5,000,000 hours planning and raising money annually. More information that highlight the reach and impact of THON:

- 4,400 donation boxes for THON 2016 placed around the country.
- 351,000 people receive a THON mailer every year.
- THON has supporters in all 50 states.
- 46,800 water and Gatorade bottles are consumed during THON 2016 weekend.
- 500+ donors are contacted weekly by THON volunteers.
- 50 fundraising events held nationwide by THON Supporters in 2016.

History of THON

Over the last 40-plus years, THON has changed in size, scale and reach to become the event it is today. More information about the history of THON below:

- 1973, first ever THON raises more than \$2,000 for charity.
- 1977, THON's partnership with Four Diamonds becomes permanent.
- 1984, Penn State Dance Marathon was noted for being the largest of its kind.
- 1992, THON raises more than \$1 million for the first time.
- 1998, the first year the world had access to THON through live video and thon.org.
- 1999, THON pledges to donate \$5 million over five years to establish a research center at the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center – the pledge would be fulfilled two years early.
- 2004, THON pledges \$10 million over six years to create a new Pediatric Cancer Pavilion at the Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, promising to revolutionize family-centered care for kids.
- 2007, THON makes its big move to the Bryce Jordan Center and raises more than \$5 million for the first time.
- 2013, the free-standing Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital opens, in part due to THON's \$10 million 2014, THON raises more than \$13 million.
- 2016, THON has raised more than \$136 million for Four Diamonds at Penn State Children's Hospital.

CANCER CANNOT Campaign

In 2015, THON launched the #CancerCannot campaign to better spread the word about THON's work and to encourage broader participation on social media. In relating to a larger to community – including anyone that's been affected by cancer – THON can show the world how students are taking action in the fight against childhood cancer.

Last year, the #CancerCannot hashtag trended nationally throughout THON weekend. By encouraging volunteers and supporters to share on social media what cancer cannot take away from them they have posted pictures of their friends, family and themselves and their experience with cancer.

Cancer Cannot Poem:

**Cancer is so limited...
It cannot cripple love.
It cannot shatter hope.
It cannot corrode faith.
It cannot eat away peace.
It cannot destroy confidence.
It cannot kill friendship.
It cannot shut out
memories. It cannot silence
courage.**