

IMPACT

REPORT



Featuring Aiden
of the Owen Bonn Family

THON[™]
2022

Our Mission

*D*ear THON Supporters,

In 1973, a light was kindled when a group of thoughtful students came together to hold the first THON Weekend at Penn State University. Around \$2000 was raised by 100 committed students. Since then, a community of hundreds of thousands of students, donors, alumni, and supporters from all over the world have amassed to continue to spark light and provide hope to children and families impacted by childhood cancer. Over the past 50 years, Penn State THON™ has raised over \$203 million and served more than 4,800 families at Penn State Health Children's Hospital.

My name is Lily Pevoto and I serve as the Executive Director for THON 2023. Since becoming a THON Volunteer, I've had the privilege of meeting Four Diamonds families and learning more about each of their unique stories. Through these past four years, I feel lucky to be able to put a face to the impact that THON and Four Diamonds have had in the past 50 years. From watching CJ Ford ring the bell on Zoom when he finished treatment, or playing a scavenger hunt with the Bonn Family at Harvest Day, or watching Aubrey Evans participate in the Kids Fashion Show from across the country, these moments showed me the importance of continuing to cultivate happy memories for children and teens impacted by childhood cancer.

As a supporter of THON, you are providing more precious childhood memories for children and teens at all places in their journey with childhood cancer. It means that you are committing to standing by families through darkness and cultivating more moments of light. Being involved in THON means that you are joining a community of passionate individuals who are fighting for the day we dance in celebration of a cure for childhood cancer.

Growing up is a beautiful thing – let's fight for it.

For The Kids®,

Lily Pevoto

Lily Pevoto

THON 2023 Executive Director



THON is a student-run philanthropy committed to enhancing the lives of children and families impacted by childhood cancer. Our mission is to provide emotional and financial support, spread awareness, and ensure funding for critical research—all in pursuit of a cure.

THON's 50th Anniversary

Bill Lear was a senior in college looking for a way to give back to his community, inspiring him to create the first annual Penn State Dance Marathon to raise money in the fight against childhood cancer. The event was a competition of who could dance for the longest continuous amount of time, and after about 30 hours, the students raised over \$2000. Those first participants had no idea that their fundraiser would grow until it became what we now know as THON™: the largest student-run philanthropy in the world.

Over the decades, THON Volunteers have poured themselves into spreading the philanthropy's mission on a global scale. As they did, the Penn State community and the THON Community became synonymous. We no longer dance in competition among ourselves, we collaborate to make our dancing more impactful. In collaboration, we develop support systems and friendships that deepen our connection to our community.

THON is now home to over 16,500 student volunteers, each of whom offers their own unique talents and perspectives to support families impacted by childhood cancer. The bonds that families and students create through THON have been cherished for years.

These memories and relationships provide a continuous source of inspiration, enabling THON to expand upon itself year after year. In the last fifty years, THON has raised over 200 million for Four Diamonds, now our sole beneficiary. The difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic during THON 2021 allowed our community to prove its resilience and passion by transforming challenges into opportunities. In 2022, we returned to in-person THON revitalized, valuing our community more than ever and utilizing our renewed momentum to continuously support our families.

Amid our jubilant return to in-person events, the THON Community was struck with another tragedy: the passing of Four Diamonds co-founder Charles Millard. As we forged ahead in this unprecedented year, Mr. Millard's legacy served as a reminder of what a person can do when dedicating themselves to others for decades.

Thanks to Charles and Irma Millard and thousands of others like them, the past half century has been a period of incredible growth and companionship, giving THON the resources and motivation needed to achieve unimaginable new heights.

The next half century begins now.



Total Reveal, THON 2004

THON IS HOME

Bringing THON Back In-Person

During a year of global disappointments and setbacks, the THON Community displayed its resilience and innovation. We took the lessons of the virtual year and prepared ourselves to apply them to a new challenge: a return to in-person events in an uncertain environment. Our community was faced with many hurdles, but we inevitably proved that our virtual year came with countless opportunities to improve. We returned to an in-person THON more brilliant and unified than ever before, simultaneously bringing THON to the world as we brought THON home.

In-Person Interactions With Families

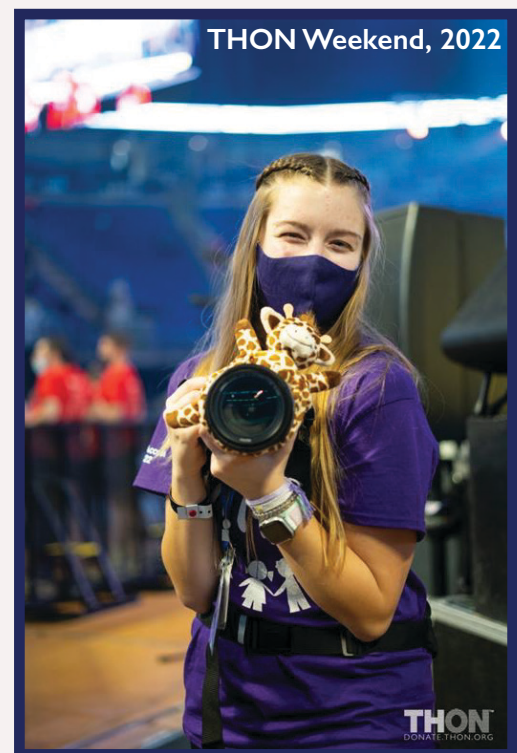
Tessa Beauchat, Family Relations Director

Our families have been anxiously awaiting the return of in-person events! While they appreciated the opportunities to stay connected virtually when we could not be in the same place, some experiences are not ones that can be directly translated online. Being able to finally greet a family after communicating online for over a year is an example of the full circle experience that this year has brought for many of our volunteers.

Updating the THON Community

Megan Dalo, Public Relations Director

Ensuring that the entire THON Community was well informed throughout an unprecedented year was made possible by utilizing a variety of communication platforms that relayed clear and effective updates to each stakeholder group. Public Relations adapted to the constant updates by maintaining open lines of communication with THON's Executive Committee and the University. Audiences were reached through a range of outlets, allowing the spread of key information that enabled THON Weekend to take place in a safe and exciting manner.



TIMELINE FROM 2022

July 1, 2021 - Start of Fundraising Window

October 3, 2021 - First in-person gathering with our families

August 23, 2021 - THON Store Re-Opens

October 28, 2021 - THON Weekend announced to be in-person



100 Days 'Til THON, 2021

Ensuring Safety

Tyler Saiers, Event Safety Director

The Rules & Regulations Committee works to ensure no harm ever comes to any person as part of a THON event. This year, THON remained committed to ensuring the health and safety of our families, volunteers, and spectators and enforced a zero-tolerance policy for all COVID-19 guidelines. Rules & Regulations took on new responsibilities including verifying vaccination statuses and enforcing proper masking throughout the Bryce Jordan Center as well as modified practices to our floor capacity and building management systems.

Reopening The Stores

Justin Kauffman, Merchandise Director

With the in-person THON Store in the HUB closed during 2021, the store's online presence grew exponentially, creating an opportunity to optimize our business practices. We soon realized that we needed to become more organized and grow as a business, and reopening became a learning experience for all of us. Now, we're responding to the demand of our customers and creating a greater understanding of our business!

Shifting Strategies

Shayne McKernan, Operations Director

In order to navigate the information gap going from a completely virtual year to an in-person year, the 2022 Operations Director stressed the importance of education for Captains and Committee Members.

OPP Captains were given a Guide to being a THON Captain and each week would participate in a Knowledge Program to learn about their role throughout the year and during THON Weekend. The Operations Committee also participated in numerous tasks similar to what they would be doing THON Weekend. Additional BJC Tours were also added to increase education among all Captains and Committee Members across THON.

November 4, 2021 - Charles Millard's Passing

February 18-20, 2022 - THON Weekend

February 16-18, 2022 - All Student Volunteers receive COVID-19 tests days leading up to THON Weekend

The Smith Family

And their paired organization Penn State Equestrian Team (PSET)

The Smiths were paired with PSET (Penn State Equestrian Team) back in 2018, right before THON Weekend. They have always been more than a pleasure to work with, they are such a great family it's impossible to not enjoy being around them. Alexis, our THON kid, and we are so happy to say that she has been cancer free since May 4th of 2019. She is always so much fun to be around and it has been so cool being able to be with her as she has gone through life. It is even cooler that she is a fellow Penn Stater since she is attending Penn State Mont Alto. We always look forward to being around the Smiths since as was stated before they are such a great family to work with and we are beyond grateful that we were paired with them.

An Interview with Penn State Equestrian Team (PSET):

What is your favorite memory with the Smith family?

Every interaction with the Smith family has always led to a good memory so it is hard to choose only one. One of the top memories though would have to be having the privilege of attending Alex's graduation. The reason why this in particular is an org favorite is that a High School Graduation is such an important part of one's life, so it was an honor to be able to help celebrate that milestone with her and her family. Additionally, it was a cool experience since we were able to then welcome her as an official Penn State Student, which was something that everyone at PSET was pumped about, even our members who were not able to make the graduation.

How has the Smith family impacted your THON experience?

The Smith family has impacted our THON experience by always being such a great family to work with since they always bring around this great energy with them. Additionally, while the message of THON has always been something very important to PSET, getting a family we could help and provide support to really helped our org understand the spirit and importance of THON first hand. This helped motivate our org to always strive to be able to provide more support to every family we have the privilege of being paired with.



What have you learned from the Smith family?

We learned from the Smith family that even when times are tough, there's always a light at the end of the tunnel and that we should always stay positive. The Smiths are representative of qualities we should all want to have. They persevered through really difficult times and if they can do that we can as well. We also learned that while an organization can truly make an impact on a family, the Smiths have left an everlasting imprint on each one of our members, both old and new.

How has the return to in-person events impacted your organization and your relationship with the Smith family?

The return back to in-person events was so easy with the Smiths and our organization. All of the members of the equestrian team stepped up during COVID, we kept in close contact with Alex by holding endless Zoom meetings- we decorated gingerbread houses together all from our own homes and had so much fun, especially during the holiday season. Alex loved playing the app "Among us", so we all would spend time together (virtually of course) and play the game on our phones. During THON 2021, we all zoomed together and were able to participate as a team. Thankfully, we now have been able to see Alex in person. We were honored to be invited and attend her high school graduation. We were also able to go visit her at college last year, now she is going into her sophomore year. She is now involved with THON as a Penn State student and still comes to events with our team. We are so proud of her!

An Interview with The Smith Family:


What is your favorite THON memory?

Our favorite THON memory was the day we entered the BJC for the first time. The atmosphere, the energy, the kindness of the crowd was overwhelming.

How has PSET impacted your family?

PSET has impacted our family by providing support and companionship to our daughter while she was going through her treatment for leukemia. They showed up at numerous events, including her high school graduation, to help celebrate her achievements and to keep up her spirits. The return to in-person events has allowed us to become reacquainted with so many precious friends that we came to know over our daughter's treatment.





“I am so inspired
by all that the college
students do for THON.
When I grow up, I want
to dance at THON so I
can help families too.”

Sarah Zeisloft
Age 9



Supply The Fight

THON's ever-growing base of innovative volunteers continuously enables our organization to develop new, creative initiatives aimed at enhancing our overall impact. One such initiative that has been a source of pride lately has been the Supply the Fight initiative, led by the Supply Logistics Committee.

The Supply the Fight initiative is a collection drive for supplies that are crucial to THON's success but are often hard to obtain. These supplies are requested from across the 16 different committees and help ensure the success of THON events throughout the year. Such supplies may include construction materials, craft supplies, trash bags etc. This initiative was developed to reduce THON's internal costs and ensure our ability to use 96 cents of every dollar to directly benefit Four Diamonds families.

Students, alumni, and the THON Community at large are encouraged to donate items through the annual THON Supply the Fight Amazon registry or at the THON Office. Through a gamified point system, donors can compete for lucrative prizes such as priority entrance to THON Weekend. THON 2022 saw a total of 426 items donated, amounting to \$7,768.60 of expenses saved and redirected to families!

Every dollar or minute donated to THON is incredibly valuable, and through multi-faceted forms of fundraising and campaigning we are able to refine our processes and deepen our impact. As we do, we keep our families at the heart of everything, so that one day all these efforts can culminate in an end to childhood cancer.

Most Donated Items *Supply The Fight 2022*

Garbage Bags
Duct Tape & Transparent Tape
Table Cloths
Children's Books
Hand Sanitizer & Disinfectant
Crayons & Markers
Construction Paper



Our Global Impact

THON's mission is to not only provide emotional and financial support to kids and families, but also to support pediatric cancer research with the goal of improving care for kids around the world. Penn State THON has contributed more than \$203 million to our sole beneficiary, Four Diamonds and partner in the fight, Penn State Health Children's Hospital.

Penn State Health Children's Hospital is a member of five national and international research consortia, allowing for participation in large trials and work with numerous patients. These groups connect doctors and scientists, promoting collaboration to create new treatment methods. This knowledge impacts hundreds of other hospitals and patients around the country and the world.

"We believe philanthropy can ultimately help accelerate the timeline for clinical research and help our investigators discover and get treatments to patients faster," explains Dr. Vyas, Department Chair of Pediatrics at Penn State Health, "Everyone benefits from a higher level of collaboration, and we are grateful to the generous donors who make this lifesaving work possible."

Four Diamonds and Penn State Health Children's Hospital are strengthening their commitment to conquering childhood cancer with the development of the Four Diamonds Center for Childhood Cancer Innovation. This center will work to enhance patient care, competitive research grants, and collaborative opportunities between the Division of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology and Penn State Cancer Institute. Through these developments, funds allocated to research will allow us to make greater strides in our quest to conquer childhood cancer.



Photos provided by: Four Diamonds



OUR COMMUNITY

Since 1973, THON has become a worldwide community of volunteers, supporters, and donors. The highlighted countries represent locations where there has been at least one donation to THON in the last two years. As our community continues to expand, we progress towards our goal of finding a cure for childhood cancer.

THON Legacy

The Souren Family

Is there any better legacy to share with your family than one that allows you to witness what happens when determined people come together for a unifying cause? The Souren family doesn't think so. Combined, they have decades of diverse experience as THON Volunteers and Spectators.

John Souren ('90) attended THON Weekend every year as a student and still proudly keeps a magazine that was distributed during THON Weekend 1990. After graduation, he met his future wife Karin and decided that the perfect date night activity would be to take her to see THON Weekend. The cause became a mutually important part of their lives, so important that they wanted to transfer the passion to their kids. "We wanted them to see the mission and show that there are people in need," John explained.

John and Karin's passion was only enhanced in their children Johnny ('21) and Anna ('23), who first attended THON Weekend while it was held in Rec Hall. Johnny was involved in THON all four years that he was a student through the Kinesiology Club, where he assisted with fundraising efforts and served as Primary THON Chair, VP of Philanthropy and Family Relations Chair, and finally, as President of the club. During his senior year, he also danced in the virtual THON 2021 from his apartment. Even as a graduate, he keeps in regular contact with the families that his club supported, never missing a chance to wish someone a happy birthday or good luck.





Anna's personal THON experience began by tagging along with her brother Johnny and the Kinesiology Club. Her favorite THON memories are holding the club's letter in the stands while she was still in high school and supporting her brother while he danced virtually. While she loved sharing her THON experience with her brother, Anna decided that she also wanted to forge her own path. She volunteered as a Committee Member for two years, working on Rules and Regulations her sophomore year and Dancer Relations during her junior year. Anna was ecstatic to be selected as a Product Design Captain on the Merchandise Committee for THON 2023, where she will get to use her creative background as an Art Education major to contribute to an organization she is passionate about.

The Souren family understands that involvement in THON doesn't have to end with graduation. Johnny still contributes to the fundraising efforts of his friends and former club, while John volunteers as the Dance Marathon Alumni Interest Group's Technology Director. This position allowed John to tour the floor for the first time at THON Weekend 2022, where he was excited to see Anna as a Dancer Relations Committee Member.

John's favorite THON memories aren't of his own time as a student but are of when his children each individually told him that they wanted to get involved. 'We did our best to highlight it as parents, and it meant so much when it stuck,' he beamed.

For families like the Sourens, THON is so much more than just a weekend or just a club. For them, THON is family, THON is unity, THON is home, and THON is something worthy of a legacy.

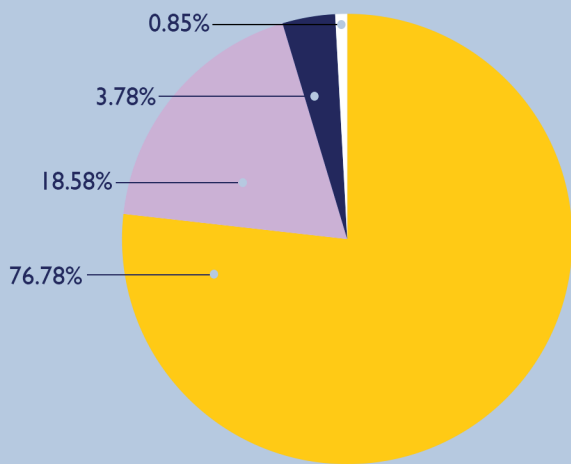
THON™ 2022

Summary of Fundraising Activities

TOTAL: \$14,461,477.03

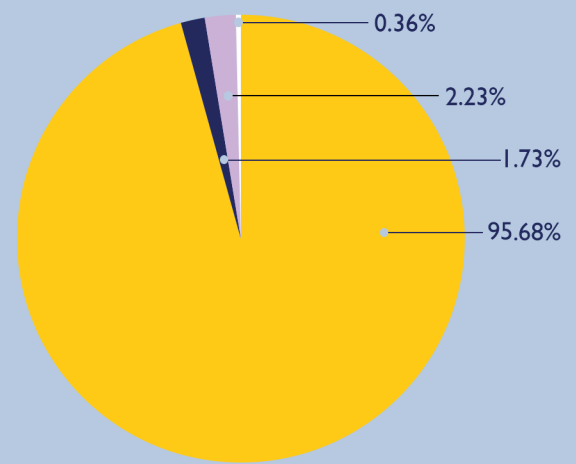
The following information is an official Summary of Fundraising Activities for the THON 2022 fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022.

Sources of Funds



- Gifts from Individuals**
Canvassing solicitation, Lion Line, online donations, and personal checks
\$11,104,058.62
- Corporate Donations**
Gifts from a corporation, foundation, or small business; matching gifts
\$2,686,604.73
- Fundraising Events**
Alternative fundraisers, hospitality promotions, THON 5K, and THON Raffle
\$547,184.91
- THON Store**
Profits from the sale of official THON merchandise
\$123,628.77

Uses of Funds



- Four Diamonds**
Total contributions made to Four Diamonds
\$13,846,633.53
- Development**
Direct mailing campaigns, donor stewardship initiatives, printed THON informational material, credit card fees
\$322,489.22
- Event Management**
Pre-THON events, THON Weekend
\$250,222.20
- Operations & Administration**
Office equipment, postage, space usage, other general administrative expenses
\$51,457.87

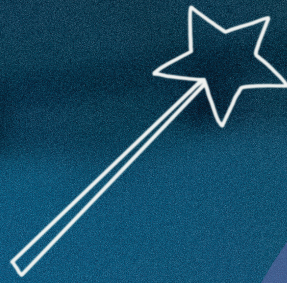
In the 2022 fundraising season, THON raised
\$14,461,477.03



95¢ of every \$1
donated directly benefits
Four Diamonds



In the 2022 fundraising season, THON spent
just **5¢** to raise every \$1



“Chris said that...
if he died, he’d come
back as a wizard and
make people well.
You’re doing that.
You’re making his
wish come true”

Charles Millard
Co-Founder,
Four Diamonds



Christopher
Millard



THON™

