

IMPACT REPORT

Harvest Day 2024:
Pictured is Rylie Eichlerberger
of the Jaxon Eichlerberger Family

THON™
2024

OUR MISSION

Dear THON™ Supporters,

The story of THON is one of hope; a never-ending story that continues to be written in pursuit of a final chapter – a cure. As we look back on the impact of this organization and its mission, it never ceases to amaze me at what a group of students can accomplish in the fight against childhood cancer. Since 1977, through passion and dedication displayed by our 16,500 volunteers and our thousands of supporters across the globe, THON has raised **over \$236 million** for Four Diamonds and supported **more than 4,800 families** at Penn State Health Children’s Hospital.

My name is Keegan Sobczak, and I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director for THON 2025. I have had the incredible privilege of experiencing this organization through many lenses. I have been a committee member, a primary chair, a dancer, a captain, and a director on the Executive Committee. Each experience has given me the unique perspective of how this organization operates across each facet. Each experience has also granted me the opportunity to see and feel the impact of our mission firsthand. Whether jubilation while sitting under a parachute with a child at Family Carnival or being uplifted by the simple act of a water gun fight at THON Weekend, our mission extracts a myriad of emotions while also reinforcing what we can do in the fight against childhood cancer – **give more back.**

In each iteration of THON, no matter how different a year may seem, there is a constant string tying them all together – the desire to end childhood cancer. As THON continues to grow and find new ways to further our mission of providing emotional and financial support to our families affected by childhood cancer, we also look back in recognition and pride of all we have been able to achieve thus far in this pursuit.

United behind this common goal and purpose, **the THON Community is unstoppable.** Our fight to slay the dragon of cancer is unwavering. With supporters like you, we can progress one step further in this battle. We do not know which dollar will be the one to find a cure for childhood cancer, but with your support, we will be even closer to finding the answer.

Until the day we dance in celebration, we will dance in the pursuit of a cure.

For The Kids®,

Keegan Sobczak

Keegan Sobczak
THON 2025 Executive Director



FROM VISION TO ACTION: DEI ADVANCEMENTS

DEI PROGRAMS

The DEI Programs Focus Group develops programming and facilitates discussions for THON Committee Volunteers. These discussions aim to raise awareness and deepen understanding of DEI topics, promoting the growth of DEI within the THON Community. Each program focuses on a specific DEI topic and includes related resources or activities, followed by collaborative discussion questions.

ACCESSIBILITY

THON continually strives to enhance accessibility and inclusivity for its volunteers and supporters, addressing areas such as facilities, language barriers, sensory experiences, and available accommodations. By collaborating with various Penn State offices, including the Student Disability Resources Office, THON has increased accessibility through measures such as expanded captioning and improved accommodation request processes.



ORGANIZATION RELATIONS

The New Organization Mentorship Program fosters relationships between established and newer organizations. This program has helped bring organizations from various cultural backgrounds into our fight against childhood cancer, ensuring they have opportunities to find a home within the THON Community.

DEI PROJECTS

The DEI Projects Focus Group was introduced to THON for the first time in 2024. It brings together captains from each committee to develop projects and actionable steps aimed at promoting inclusivity throughout the community. These meetings provide an opportunity for collaboration and help ensure that change is implemented in a comprehensive and holistic way.



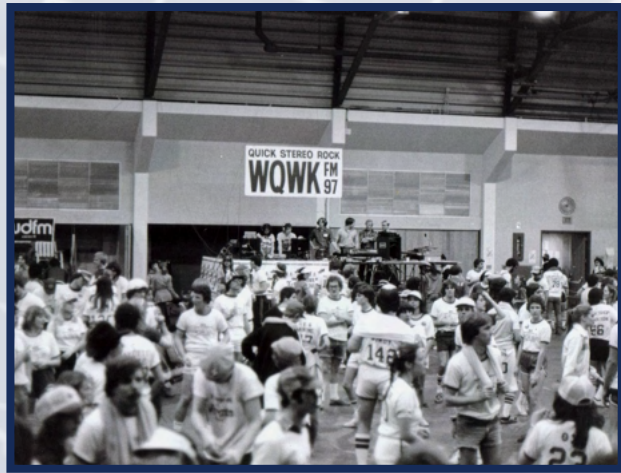
FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The On-Shift Shirt Recollection initiative, led by the Supply Logistics Committee, originated from the DEI Programs Focus Group. This initiative was designed with a focus on sustainability and reducing internal costs for volunteers. After THON Weekend, volunteers can donate their shirts for future redistribution. Once an adequate supply is collected, the initiative will ensure that every volunteer can represent their committee without the burden of additional costs.



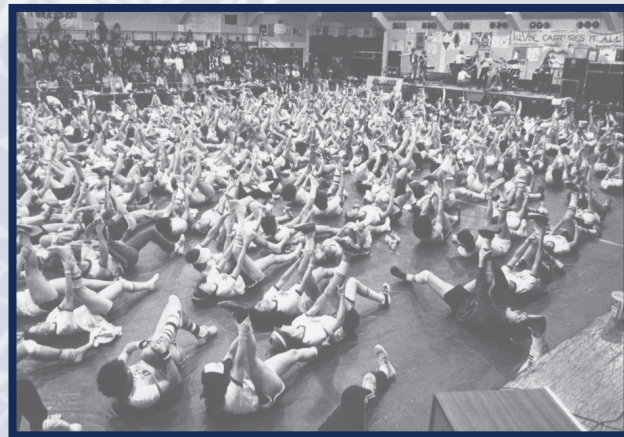
THON IS HOME

1973-1978



78 dancers participated in the first Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon in 1973, raising over \$2,000. The **HUB Ballroom** was the home for THON Weekend from 1973-1978.

1979-1998



In 1979, THON had been paired with Four Diamonds for two years and its popularity had grown. THON Weekend found a new home in the **Mary Beaver White Building**, which could accommodate the increasing capacity demands.

1999-2006



THON Weekend continued to grow, and a new home was found at **Rec Hall** in 1999 to accommodate even more dancers, families, and supporters. For the first time, supporters around the world could watch the livestream on THON.org.

2007-Present



THON Weekend moved to the **Bryce Jordan Center** in 2007 for its 35th anniversary. The BJC currently serves as THON's home for participants, families, and alumni.

A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE

The “word wall” at Penn State Health Children’s Hospital was designed by staff as a space for patients to celebrate their journey at the Infusion Clinic upon its opening in 2013. THON was a primary contributor to allow infusions to be conducted within the walls of the hospital. At the conclusion of their treatment, patients ring the bell and leave their physical mark on the clinic by dropping beads into the featured word. This celebrates the significance of their achievement, and provides a light of hope for others from other patients, families, hospital staff, and visitors.



The first word chosen by the hospital staff was “Inspire”. This was a fitting inaugural word to represent the inspiration each bead and bell ring provides to all who see and hear it. This first word was completely filled with thousands of beads by 2023.

Just like the fight against childhood cancer, the word wall is not finished. The second iteration of the word is “Conquer”. Each potential bead will continue to fuel our combined mission to find a cure to one day dance in celebration.

“As former THON students, ourselves, we came full circle when our little boy was able to ring his bell on the 100 Days ‘til THON 2024. Sean started his journey in 2021 with a lot of support from family, the staff at Hershey Medical, and the THON Community, and those same people were there to see him conquer and celebrate, which meant the world to us.” - Melissa Grindle (Sean Grindle Family)



THE ADLEY GORDON FAMILY

And their paired organizations, Chi Phi and Phi Sigma Rho benefitting THON

Chi Phi and Phi Sigma Rho benefitting THON have been paired for two years and were paired with the Adley Gordon Family in 2023. Chi Phi and Phi Sigma Rho love spending time with Adley, her brother Mayze, and her parents Kira and Chad at THON events and throughout the year. Adley rang the bell on June 10, 2024!

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ADLEY GORDON FAMILY:

How has your relationship with your Chi Phi & Phi Sigma Rho impacted your family?

How could it not impact our family? The love, support, and willingness to always be there gives us comfort. During a cancer diagnosis you lose friends and gain friends that you would have never known before. When Adley was diagnosed, we never thought we would meet a great group of amazing individuals like you.

What is something this year that you're looking forward to with Chi Phi and Phi Sigma Rho?

[We are] beyond pumped for THON Weekend. Adley missed last year because of some complications in treatment. We are ready for THON Weekend and helping all the families and children faced with childhood cancer.



AN INTERVIEW WITH CHI PHI & PHI SIGMA RHO?

What is your favorite memory with the Gordons?

On June 10, 2024, our organization was invited to attend Adley's bell ringing ceremony. We met all her friends and family at the hospital in Hershey to cheer her on and celebrate her huge accomplishment of beating cancer! It was so inspirational to see Adley's strength throughout the two years we have been paired with her and this moment was a culmination of all her and her family's hard work. After her bell ringing, we went to Hershey Park and spent the rest of the day riding rides with Adley, her brother Mayze, and her parents Kira and Chad. This was a cherished memory for our organization to have with the Gordon Family.

What have you learned from the Gordons?

We have learned about the strength to fight and friendship. In their journey, they have been inspirational through every step of the way. Adley is a little warrior, and she is one of the strongest little girls we know. From spending time with her and the family, we have been with her through the big steps she's faced through treatment, and she has always come out stronger. Since being paired with the Gordon Family, we have made a lifelong connection. THON's mission has brought us so close to help spread awareness and help the children. Friendship and family are so important to the Gordon Family, and they opened their little family to the entire Phi Rho and Chi Phi organization.

How has your time with the Gordons impacted your organizations?

The Gordon Family loves everything to do with THON. They are always interested in any opportunity that comes their way and will always work to bring awareness to this cause. THON itself is an amazing experience in any way you get involved, but experiencing the passion behind it alongside the Gordon Family is a blessing. They bring support and love into everything that they do. It has always been a positive experience with them at all our events.



“ One person can change so many lives. All the volunteers definitely changed my life and my family’s. It’s all worth it in the end, when you know that you just changed someone’s life and they are forever grateful. ”

*-Devin Pulaski,
Devin Pulaski Family Story*



SWIM FOR A CURE

THON NATION VOLUNTEER RAISES NEARLY \$70,000

Holly Maitland-McKenna ('87), a swim instructor at Penn State Harrisburg, didn't know much about THON during her time as a Penn State student but became connected with THON Nation in 2012 after hearing about Penn State Harrisburg benefitting THON. "I said, 'Well, what can I do to help?' and since I was teaching swimming, I said, 'How about I do a swim-a-thon?'" Maitland-McKenna said. From there, Swim for a Cure was born. Maitland-McKenna swam 12.5 miles for 15 hours in 2013 and raised \$1,768. Ever since, Maitland-McKenna has hosted a swim For The Kids® and is just over \$30,000 from her goal of raising a total of \$100,000!

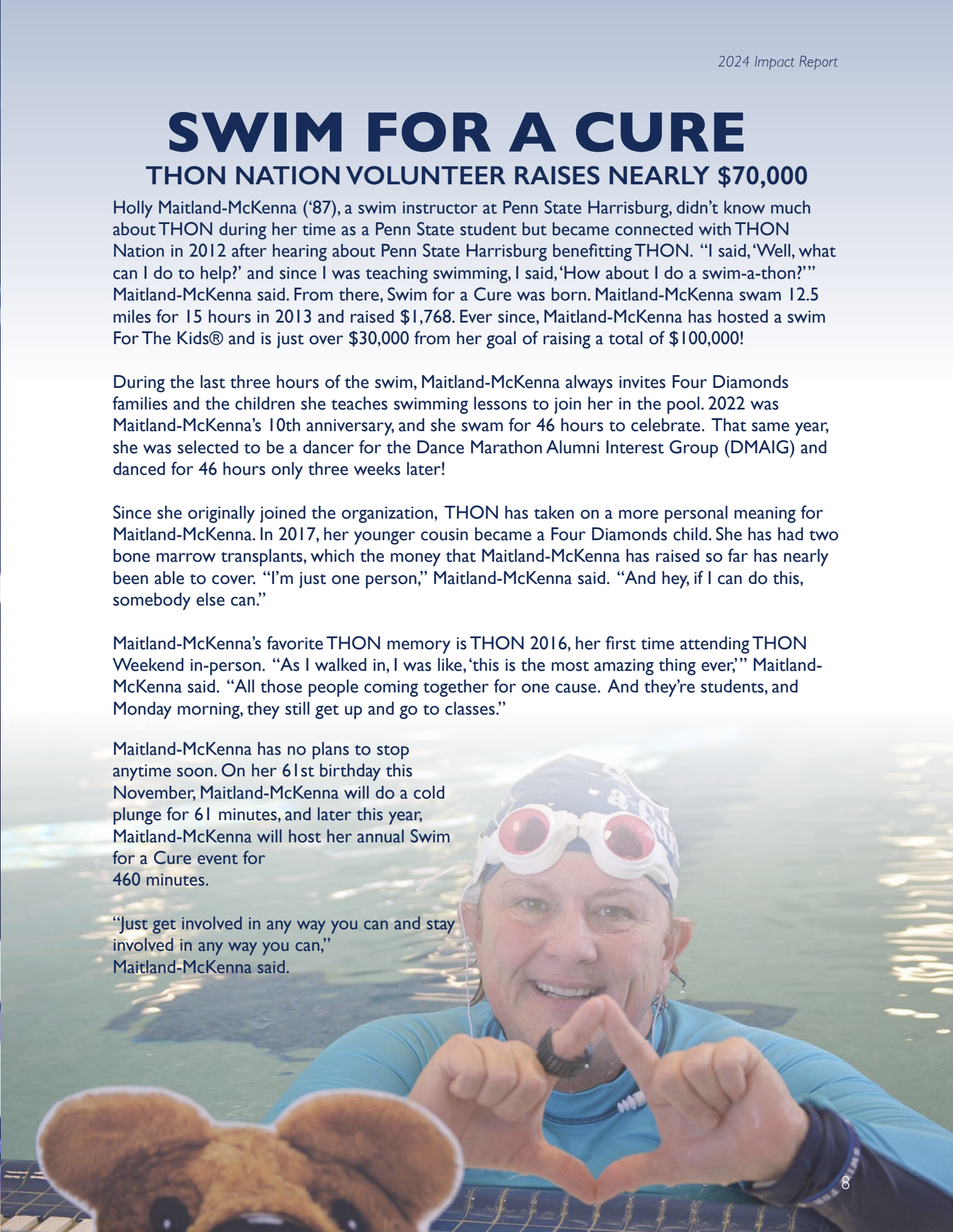
During the last three hours of the swim, Maitland-McKenna always invites Four Diamonds families and the children she teaches swimming lessons to join her in the pool. 2022 was Maitland-McKenna's 10th anniversary, and she swam for 46 hours to celebrate. That same year, she was selected to be a dancer for the Dance Marathon Alumni Interest Group (DMAIG) and danced for 46 hours only three weeks later!

Since she originally joined the organization, THON has taken on a more personal meaning for Maitland-McKenna. In 2017, her younger cousin became a Four Diamonds child. She has had two bone marrow transplants, which the money that Maitland-McKenna has raised so far has nearly been able to cover. "I'm just one person," Maitland-McKenna said. "And hey, if I can do this, somebody else can."

Maitland-McKenna's favorite THON memory is THON 2016, her first time attending THON Weekend in-person. "As I walked in, I was like, 'this is the most amazing thing ever,'" Maitland-McKenna said. "All those people coming together for one cause. And they're students, and Monday morning, they still get up and go to classes."

Maitland-McKenna has no plans to stop anytime soon. On her 61st birthday this November, Maitland-McKenna will do a cold plunge for 61 minutes, and later this year, Maitland-McKenna will host her annual Swim for a Cure event for 460 minutes.

"Just get involved in any way you can and stay involved in any way you can," Maitland-McKenna said.



THON LEGACY

THE BEAUREGARD FAMILY

Emily Beauregard knew what THON was from a young age through her mom and aunt. Her parents met at Penn State, and she is a fourth-generation Penn State student. It was no wonder that when Emily set foot on campus, she decided to get involved in THON.

Emily is the second-year president of the special interest organization, DASH, which she represented as a dancer in THON 2024.

“I was always amazed by the impact it had on so many families and how it was completely student-led. I also wanted to dance, just like my mom and aunt did,” Emily said.

Emily is not the first in her family to dance during THON Weekend—her mother and aunt both danced while they were Penn State students.

Nancy Beauregard, Emily’s mother, first became involved in THON as a first-year student at Penn State Greater Allegheny in 1983. Greater Allegheny held a 24-hour dance marathon, and the winning couple would go to University Park to dance in THON Weekend. In 1984, Nancy and her partner raised the most money and were selected to dance.

Despite having strep throat, Nancy and her partner danced for 48 hours and came in first place for Commonwealth Campus fundraising!

“It was so inspiring being at the University Park marathon seeing all the families there and knowing what their kids were going through motivated me to push through to the end,” Nancy said.

Nancy danced again in 1986 as a “little sister” for Alpha Chi Sigma fraternity.

Nancy has stayed involved in THON as an alumnus by donating each year. When Emily became a student at Penn State, she was elated to see her daughter become involved in THON. She hopes that current and future THON Volunteers will remember why they THON.

“Never lose sight of why you are there. So many children and families have been helped over the years by THON, and it makes you proud to know that you are part of such a wonderful event which helps so many.”

Sharon Osborn, Nancy’s sister, and Emily’s aunt, participated in THON in 1978 and 1979. One of her favorite memories is the leg massages at the end of the break and dancing with the Nittany Lion.

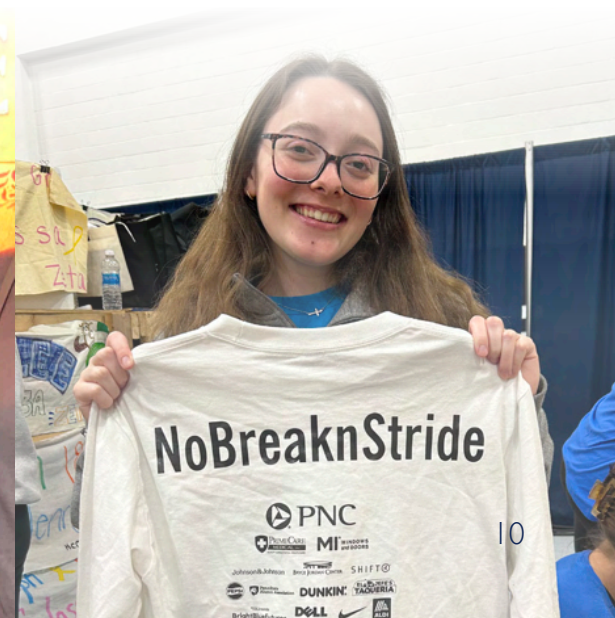
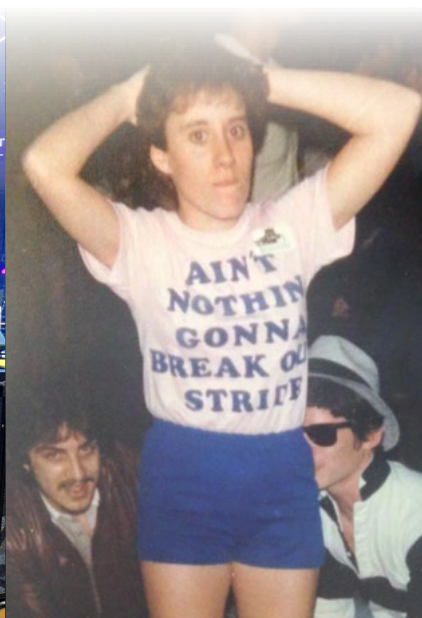


Emily’s THON involvement brought Sharon back to the cause. She knows that current volunteers like Emily will continue THON’s legacy and dance until there is a cure.

“It is Emily’s enthusiasm and commitment that have rekindled my interest and support for THON all these years later. With students like her leading the way, I know we are in good hands,” Sharon said.

Emily knows that she would not have made it through THON Weekend without the support of her family. On the back of her shirt, Emily wore the words “**NoBreaknStride**,” an homage to the theme for THON 1986.

THON is not just a weekend, an event, or even a generation. The Beauregard Family has left its mark on the organization and will continue to pave the way for future generations of THON Volunteers.



SPREADING HOPE ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA & BEYOND

THON's partnership with Four Diamonds has helped to spread awareness about childhood cancer and ensure funding for critical research efforts that bring hope to children and families around the world. The collaborative effort between Four Diamonds and THON allowed Penn State Health Children's Hospital to bring Dr. Giselle Saulnier Sholler, an internationally known physician-scientist, and her research consortium to Hershey.



Dr. Giselle Saulnier Sholler

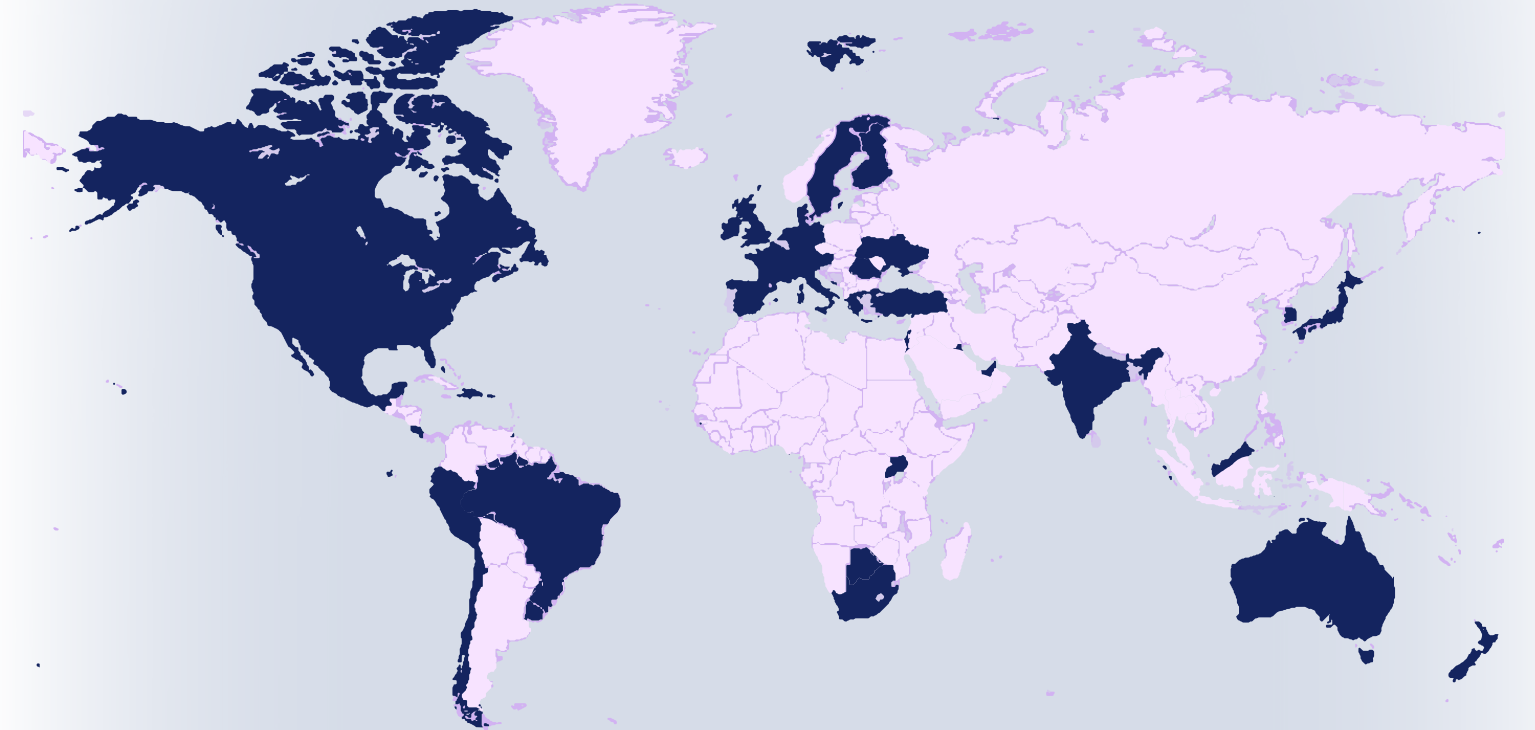
Bringing Dr. Sholler and the Beat Childhood Cancer Research Consortium to Penn State Health Children's Hospital and partnering them with Four Diamonds allows for significant steps forward in our quest to conquer childhood cancer.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the first drug—based on Sholler's research and clinical trials she led through the Beat Childhood Cancer Research Consortium — to reduce the risk of relapse for pediatric high-risk neuroblastoma patients.

Research by Dr. Sholler and others at Penn State Health Children's Hospital provides hope to childhood cancer patients across the globe. Together, we will find a cure for childhood cancer.



SUPPORTERS AROUND THE WORLD



Australia, Bahamas, Bermuda, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guam, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Puerto Rico, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORTERS PROVIDED:

- 151 Hours** of Child Life Support
- 45 Weeks** of Art Therapy
- 23 Hours** of Four Diamonds Research
- 9** Small Research **Experiments**

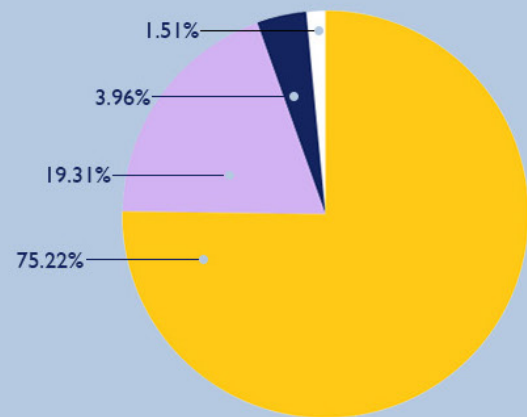
THON™ 2024

Summary of Fundraising Activities

TOTAL: \$17,624,051.89

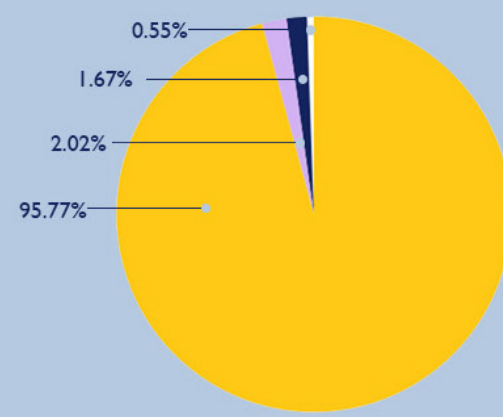
The following information is an official Summary of Fundraising Activities for the THON 2024 fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024.

Sources of Funds



- Gifts from Individuals**
Canvassing solicitation, Lion Line, online donations, and personal checks
\$13,257,007.73
- Corporate Donations**
Gifts from a corporation, foundation, or small business; matching gifts
\$3,402,691.06
- Fundraising Events**
Alternative fundraisers, hospitality promotions, THON 5K, and THON Raffle
\$697,506.67
- THON Store**
Profits from the sale of official THON merchandise
\$266,846.43

Uses of Funds



- Four Diamonds**
Total contributions made to Four Diamonds
\$16,878,175.93
- Development**
Direct mailing campaigns, donor stewardship initiatives, printed THON informational material, credit card fees
\$355,461.83
- Event Management**
Pre-THON events, THON Weekend
\$293,608.84
- Operations & Administration**
Office equipment, postage, space usage, other general administrative expenses
\$97,084.85

In the 2024 fundraising season, THON raised **\$17,624,051.89**



96¢ of every \$1 donated directly benefits Four Diamonds



In the 2024 fundraising season, THON spent just **4¢** to raise every \$1

“

You can't really describe how that makes you feel as a parent, but it was a huge weight lifted off our shoulders that he was going to get the care he needs, and it was not going to change our lives financially. It is just an amazing, amazing feeling that I just can't describe. It was a huge sense of relief for us. ”

- Amy Newswanger,
Weston Newswanger
Family Story



THON

STAY STRONG



Use this to fight CANCER

#FightCancer

made by a 5th Grader

THANK YOU

For HELPing

KIDS in Need FIGHT
CANCER

Just keep drawing



You.

Got this nothing
can't get you



THON
BRAVE

THON

48 hours
stay
Awake

GO PENN
STATE