



ALEX BENSON | IDS

Students dance during the 2009 IU Dance Marathon, which lasted 36 hours.



THOMAS MILLER | IDS

Isaac Knost pulls the microphone from his father, Michael Knost, on Saturday in the HPER gymnasium during the IU Dance Marathon. Isaac's mother, Elizabeth Knost, frequently updates friendsisaac.org with information about Isaac's condition.



PATRICK CRAIG | IDS

Riley kid Emily Eger dances to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" at the Riley Kid Talent Show on Saturday at the IU Dance Marathon.



THOMAS MILLER | IDS

Junior Andrew Johnson displays his "For the Kids" hair at IU Dance Marathon on Saturday in the HPER gymnasium. Johnson was a member of the morale committee.

» MONEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the funds raised at IUDM benefit the Ryan White Center for Pediatric Infectious Disease at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

For those in attendance, the event meant claiming temporary residence in the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation gymnasium and staying awake for almost the entire weekend — a task not easily accomplished.

"There are ups and downs. It's hard, especially when there is a lot of down time," said sophomore dancer Logan Stohle, after 25 hours. "My feet hurt, but

the end is near."

Dancers and committee members spent the weekend dancing, playing games and listening to inspirational stories from the 40 to 45 families of current and former Riley Hospital patients who were at the event.

"Even the stories that I know by heart still affect me," said senior Dayna Sheinberg, director of dancer relations. "I still cry; I'm still so inspired." Many of the IUDM activities were designed to further inspire the dancers. An "Inspiration Tent" highlighted the lives of Riley patients such as Ryan White, an AIDS victim who died at age 18 and for whom IUDM was originally created.

There were multiple performances, including Straight No Chaser, speeches from surprise guests such as IU men's basketball coach Tom Crean and a talent show put on by the Riley children, where the kids lit up the stage with dance, song and even karate.

"The talent show was the most memorable part," junior IUDM committee member Katie Sauter said. "All the kids came up and it really reminded us of why we are here."

At the close of IUDM, Crouse took the stage for the last time and asked the younger dancers to carry on the dance marathon legacy, specifically the legacy left behind by his sister,

Ashley Crouse, who was killed four years ago in a car accident while serving on the IUDM executive board.

Members of the audience tearfully promised to oblige.

"I want to help carry on Ashley's legacy," Sauter said. "I am in Kappa (Kappa Gamma), and my sister was (also) at the same time as Ashley. I feel a special connection to this."

IUDM means a great deal to many students on campus, but it means an even greater deal to the children it benefits, Sheinberg said.

"I would do this every weekend if I could," she said, "especially if it would mean helping the kids."

» KIDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Meredith Alexander, Casey Crouse, Stacie Thornburgh, Vincent Buckner and his mother Rose Black, Morgan Dale, Varney Venal, Patrick Malone, Lauren Brucker, Chris Myers and countless others.

The list of Riley kids, IUDM committee and executive board members and dancers themselves with inspiring stories is comprised of many, but they all share a singular commonality.

They all have the passion, commitment and drive to stand on their feet for 36 hours straight despite the desire to fall asleep standing up, despite the hunger pains seizing their stomachs and despite the need for a special kind of mental athleticism and endurance.

This is all for the kids.

It is for 13-year-old Morgan Dale of Linton, Ind., who was sent to Riley from Bloomington Hospital three days after birth because of a blood clot in her heart.

Riley has saved Morgan Dale's life three times, said her mother Shany Dale, providing her with a valve transplant and a heart transplant at seven weeks old, followed by another in 2006.

Shany Dale called the college generation of IUDM participants positive role models for her daughter and other families with children to look up to. Because of their example, Morgan Dale said she wants to become a pediatrician, dedicating her life to the people who have saved her life.

"There's a misconception of what Riley kids are really like," Shany Dale said. "People think of the kid with the IV pole and in the wagon or in the wheelchair. You can't tell just by looking at someone who is a Riley kid. They are able to surprise you and show you what they can do."

Stacie Thornburgh, 26, of Indianapolis, has attended IUDM since it started. Like Morgan Dale, she too has persevered because of Riley and still considers herself a Riley kid. She has survived more than 350 surgeries for

various brain and heart conditions and requires a service dog to aid her in day-to-day activities.

In speeches addressing a fatigued yet upbeat crowd, Riley kids and their families spoke on how IUDM has bettered their lives by giving the doctors that care for them a chance to do so. Conversely, as much as the Riley kids gave credit to the dancers for helping provide them another chance at life, they too acted as "healers" to the dancers during the marathon.

HEART AND SOUL OF IU

Tables are broken, floors are sticky with spilled caffeine and a handful of Ace playing cards are glued down to the spills like yesterday's failed poker match.

UGG boots, Tootsie Roll Pops, half-empty bottles of Smartwater and crushed pretzel sticks lie in the wreckage outside.

The conditions that occur from more than 1,000 students establishing a temporary residence in a gymnasium are most evident in the men's locker rooms. After 24 hours, the restroom floors are flooded with toilet water and sticks of gum soak up the drips of partially turned-off faucets in the porcelain sinks.

Several men are stretched across wooden benches long enough for one 7-foot-tall adult, catching Z's away from the organized chaos outside.

Senior Lauren Brucker, who is the director of monetary corporate relations, has been participating in IUDM since her freshman year. She takes advantage of small moments throughout the dance marathon to reflect on what she's helped to create.

"I go to the stairs leading to the upper gyms and look out at all the people down below," she said, describing her pride. "It's just good to get away sometimes, and I take a deep breath and I see the heart and soul of IU."

Rose Black is the mother of 29-year-old Vincent Buckner, a Riley kid who was born with cerebral palsy. In reflection on the

SEE KIDS, PAGE 8