



Four Diamonds forum

THON™ 2006 Raises \$4,214,748.18 For the Kids And Rocks Rec Hall For the Last Time



THON did it again! During the weekend of February 17-19, 2006, Rec Hall's rafters shook and its seams bulged as hundreds of dancers and thousands of volunteers and spectators rocked Rec Hall for the last time, raising a record-breaking \$4,214,748.18 for The Four Diamonds Fund. An additional milestone was achieved as THON 2006 wrapped its arms around

one hundred and sixty Four Diamonds families, which included approximately thirty families who were experiencing this phenomenon for the very first time. Advanced technology brought the weekend highlights to the masses as the students, faculty and alumni of Penn State's telecommunications program worked together to broadcast THON live over the Web. The Webcast recorded 34,000 hits from twenty-seven different countries, which contributed to an eighty-two percent increase in online donations.

After completing forty-eight hours of non-stop music and activities, Evan Jacobs, THON 2006 Overall Chairperson, announced that THON 2007 would be moving to the Bryce Jordan Center, and Rec Hall resounded with the overall support of those on the dance floor and in the bleachers. It was evident that no matter

where THON calls home, people will follow. And they will take with them the THON spirit, which they have lovingly cultivated and safe-guarded for thirty-four years. Thank you and congratulations, THON 2006! You have raised the bar for all of us. Together we will prevail!

Mark your calendars for February 16-18, 2007 and plan to be at the Bryce Jordan Center for THON 2007! New home. Same goal. We will all THON ON—for the kids!



Photo courtesy of Greg Grieco

Save the Date

May 18, 2006

Kuppy's Cruise-in, 4:00 p.m.
Kuppy's Diner
Middletown, PA

May 19, 2006

Scramble for Four Diamonds, 1:30 p.m.
Dauphin Highlands Golf Course
Harrisburg, PA

May 20, 2006

Cycling For Life Tri-County Ride, 7:00 a.m.
Hershey Free Church
Hummelstown, PA

July 30, 2006

Jonathan Grula Memorial Golf Tournament, Noon
Blue Ridge Trail Golf Course
Mountain Top, PA

August 26, 2006

Drew Conney Memorial Golf Tournament, 7:30 a.m.
Fairview Golf Course
Lebanon, PA

For additional community events log onto www.fourdiamonds.org or contact the Four Diamonds office at (717) 531-6086.

Cancer Survivor Reflects on THON Experience

My name is Erik Hosler and I am a senior at Penn State University. This year I was able to dance for a second time at THON. It was an honor to be chosen again to represent the IST (College of Information Sciences and Technology) Student Government. As I try to write my thoughts and feelings after completing my second go-around at THON, I'm at a loss for words even now, almost a month after THON.

I was extremely moved after THON 2006. Since this is my senior year and it's the last year that THON will be held in Rec Hall, THON 2006 was just extra special. I made so many friends and memories that I will be telling people about THON for many years to come.

I have been fortunate enough to be able to see both sides of THON. I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) five years ago, and attended my first THON in 2002. I was initially adopted by the Penn State New Kensington commonwealth campus and got to experience THON by having students dance for me. It was weird, however, because the dancers were my age or just a little bit older. I loved it! I was able to play my trumpet with the Blue Band, a life dream of mine, and just enjoy a weekend where I didn't have to worry about my treatments or the thoughts of being sick. And that is what THON is all about. Beyond the greater goal of raising money for The Four Diamonds Fund, THON serves as a weekend to let kids be kids and allows them to forget about everything that has to do with cancer.

And then there's the other side of THON, which is being a dancer. This was probably the most meaningful and fun thing I have ever done in my life. The emotional rollercoaster that you ride while dancing is something in itself to experience. You have moments of sheer exhaustion, countered by moments of excitement and enthusiasm. These moments of joy and excitement are what I remember the most. During these times I would be playing with all of the little kids, other dancers or the THON moralers, but seeing the smiles on the faces of the Four Diamonds children made every moment of my feet hurting all worth while. The smiles mean that they aren't worrying about anything else, and they are just having a blast.

To sum it all up, being a dancer for THON is the best thing that I have ever done. With my personal experience with cancer, it was just a "no-brainer" for me to dance. After being at THON as a Four Diamonds patient, then as a Penn State student, dancing at THON was on my list of things to do before I left Happy Valley. I think it's great that the THON students take on an annual initiative of this magnitude. Yes, the football team is great and well known, and yes, we have a lot of other things to be proud of, but THON makes me the most proud to bleed blue and white.

Erik Hosler '06, Four Diamonds patient

THON Trivia Question: What is the one thing that everyone at THON has in common? **A SMILE!**



First-timers to THON, Four Diamonds family, Dawn and Madison Hill.



Four Diamonds co-founder, Mr. Charles Millard, THON alumnus and dancer, Mike Cocco, and Chief, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and the Christopher Millard Chair for Pediatric Cancer Research at Penn State Children's Hospital, Dr. Barbara Miller.



THON 2006 dancer, Erik Hosler and TV personality from Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, Mr. McFeely.

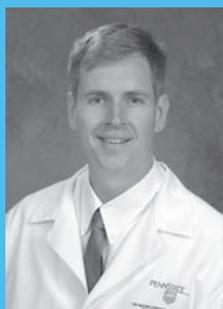
Fighting Childhood Cancer Through Research

Research in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology is making great forward strides under the direction of Dr. Barbara Miller and Dr. Kenneth Lucas, each recipients of a Four Diamonds Fund Endowed Chair. Dr. Miller is Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/



Barbara Miller, M.D.

Oncology, Vice Chairman for Research in the Department of Pediatrics, Professor of Pediatrics and Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and holds the Christopher Millard Endowed Chair in Pediatric Oncology. Her major research focus is in the control of blood cell production, and abnormalities, which result in leukemia and can be targeted for therapy. Dr. Kenneth Lucas is Director of the Pediatric Bone Marrow



Ken Lucas, M.D.

Transplant Program, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Microbiology/Immunology, and holds the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon Chair for Pediatric Cancer Research. His major research interest is the use of the immune system to fight viral infections, which occur during stem cell transplants and to control cancer growth. Both of these investigators are physicians who have spent much time caring for children with cancer. They are dedicated to discovering the causes of cancer in children and developing new therapies to improve cure rates.

Leukemia and lymphoma represent nearly 50% of childhood malignancies. They are treated with chemotherapy regimens, which have high complication rates and significant risks of relapse. Dr. Miller's laboratory currently has four Ph.D./M.D. scientists working with her to understand how blood cells are produced from early stem cells, and how mistakes in this process result in leukemia and lymphoma. Her laboratory is performing novel studies to understand the roles of ion channels in blood cell production and in leukemia and lymphoma. These channels are expressed on the cell surface. They have great potential to serve as targets for new drugs, to improve cure rates in leukemia, and to reduce devastating side effects in children with cancer nationally.

Dr. Lucas's laboratory uses immune cells to fight viral infections and certain types of cancer. His laboratory has developed novel means of isolating and

growing specific immune cells to fight cytomegalovirus (CMV) and Epstein Barr virus (EBV), two of the most serious infections that can occur after a stem cell transplant. Dr. Lucas's group has developed a clinical trial currently being used at Penn State Children's Hospital and a number of other centers throughout the country. These cells are being given to stem cell transplant recipients to learn the best way to use them to protect the patient and improve transplant success. In similar studies, he is examining the effects of giving immune cells to help cure Hodgkin's lymphoma. This will be expanded to other cancers in the near future. His group is also conducting a unique clinical study in which vaccination is used to help control the growth of two common pediatric tumors, neuroblastoma and Ewing's sarcoma, when they become resistant to treatment. This is the only study of its kind in the US, and patients have been referred from throughout the country. This could make a major contribution to the treatment approach to many pediatric cancers in the future.

Both Dr. Miller and Dr. Lucas have been elected to prestigious national research societies, have published their work in internationally recognized journals, and have been awarded grants from the National Institutes of Health and the American Cancer Society. They are extremely enthusiastic about their work to improve the cure of children with cancer and save these children from the hardships of treatment they now experience. The information they discover will be of great and widespread use to the international medical community.





the four diamonds fund
Conquering Childhood Cancer

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Information provided to Penn State Hershey Medical Center and Penn State College of Medicine is kept in the strictest of confidence. Please write to us if you wish to have your name removed from future publications. Upon notification, all reasonable efforts will be taken to adhere to your wishes.

Thank you!

Eat'n Park Caring For Kids Campaign for raising \$30,600 this year for The Four Diamonds Fund. This is the ninth year that marketing manager, Pat Kehew, has led the central Pennsylvania restaurants to another record-breaking campaign. Included in their campaign is the Swatara restaurant's Rooftop event, which was held November 18-20. The rooftop crew braved the elements once again and raised \$9,400 towards their campaign total.



Rooftop team members are pictured left to right, Deb Malley, Pat Kehew, Jayme Weidman, Bethany Clark, and Rita Landvater.

Justin LeFevre Foundation-\$19,000 in support of Penn State Children's Hospital's Pediatric Cancer Pavillion

Jennifer Malloy Memorial Golf Outing-\$8,000

Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts-\$2,824

St. Theresa School-\$2,618

York County Corvette Club-\$2,110 in support of the Pediatric Cancer Research Institute

Manheim Brethren in Christ Church-\$2,533 in honor of Four Diamonds patient, Katelyn Martin.

The Eli Sidler Family, who raised \$1,200 with the sale of t-shirts that were designed by Eli and his father to help raise awareness for the need to find a cure for pediatric cancer.

We would like to offer a special thanks to all those who helped make the **2005 Four Diamonds Holiday Cards** sale such a success: **Fry Communications, Inc.** for once again donating the printing of the cards, the Four Diamonds patients who entered the contest, the volunteers and businesses who helped sell the cards, and a special thanks to our **Four Diamonds friends** who purchased the cards and shared children's holiday greetings with family and friends. With your help, this project raised \$9,792.

We are unable to recognize everyone who has made a contribution to The Four Diamonds Fund in the newsletter, but we want you to know how much your generosity and efforts are appreciated.

