

She read the rules, studied floor plans, identified sections, selected portals, and handed out maps with arrows to guide her battalion. As the doors opened at 1 p.m. on Friday, the students from the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences stormed the Bryce Jordan Center and secured a prime location close to the stage to be able to give the best support to their dancers: Greg Ferro, James Yulich, Andrew Rengel and Seth Kutikoff. With the preparation and discipline of a staff sergeant, Simone Gleicher, EMS Thon Committee Chairperson left nothing to chance on this day and on the months of preparation prior to THON. The result was a record \$55,036 raised for the Four Diamonds Funds and this year's dance marathon.

Hours of preparation and hard work go into this fundraising effort. Greg Ferro, a junior meteorology major was the EMS canning chair this year. "He was a big reason why our total was so high," said Simone. Driving many miles, giving up lots of hours of weekend time to sleep on the floor and stand outside in the cold to collect for THON is all part of the effort. Early on Simone learned that the art of persuasion was a skill she was going to need. "Persuading freshmen why THON should interest them is difficult because they've never actually witnessed it, and it's hard to describe." But canning is crucial to raising a lot of money, and she worked hard to get everyone involved. In addition to canning, additional successful fundraising events such as penny wars, wall of diamonds, and pizza sales were superbly organized by James Yulich, a junior geography major.

The THON experience is not just about bringing in the money. It's also about connecting to the families of those whose lives have been touched by pediatric cancer. "Our THON families make THON what it is," said Simone. The Brewer family was the original THON family for the College. Troy Brewer passed away in 2006, just a few weeks after THON. Many of the alumni that the Brewers knew have graduated, but this year, the Brewer family called a few days before the event and expressed their interest in attending again. "They started the emotion and the spirit behind the College of EMS THON. It was an honor to have them here with us," said Simone.

The EMS THON family for this year is the Woods. They have five children, and nine-year-old Michael is currently cancer free. Lauren Kohl, a sophomore in Energy, Business, and Finance and the EMS Family Relations Chair, was in constant contact with the family. She did a great job communicating to the 100+ students in the various committees by sending biweekly progress reports and letting the committed volunteers understand just what "For the Kids" means to the individual families facing the threat of cancer.

Around 1 p.m. on Sunday, Family Hour takes place. Both the Brewers and the Woods were present, along with the many student volunteers. "This is when the slide show of THON children is played. There are also slides of children who were defeated by cancer. There are tears of joy and sadness. The Brewers were there sharing the tears with us, and the Woods family brought in all of the cheer. The combination was spectacular, and as I looked in the College of EMS crowd, there was not a dry eye to be seen. This is a defining moment of THON, and a good answer to why we THON," said Simone.

The dancers also make THON what it is. Participating in a no-sitting, no-sleeping, two-day dance marathon takes stamina and determination. One of the dancers, Andrew Rengel, said he ended up going 58 hours with no sleep! "All our dancers were absolute heroes, and completely obliterated the challenge presented to them," said Simone.

At 6 p.m. on Sunday evening a lot of talented, hard-working, EMS college students were exactly where you'd expect them to be—sleeping with satisfaction knowing they were in the top five among independent organizations for THON fundraising 2010.