

Dance for a cure

Dance for a change.

By: Jenna Sackett
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Cancer is one of the worst evils in the world. It's even worse when the person being impacted by the terrible disease is only a child. According to the American Childhood Cancer Organization, "Each year in the U.S. there are an estimated 15,780 children between the ages of birth and 19 years of age who are diagnosed with cancer. Approximately 1 in 285 children in the U.S. will be diagnosed with cancer before their 20th birthday. Globally there are more than 300,000 children diagnosed with cancer each year." The Dance Marathon, and its correlated project, The Mini Dance Marathon, helps spread awareness and raise money for victims of childhood cancer.

The Dance Marathon is very important to Mikayla VanWey, junior, because she was one of the kids diagnosed with cancer. When VanWey was just four years old, she was told she had acute lymphoblastic leukemia. After two and a half years of fighting, she was finally cancer-free. After surviving such a hard time at such a young age VanWey has become very passionate about helping raise awareness and raise money for cancer research.

The Mini Dance Marathons that occurred at Vernon were because of VanWey and her family. Now that we are in high school, there aren't any at our school. But why not? "We talked about possibly

doing one when my older brother Tyler was here, but then the student body didn't seem to want to. Fear of failure I guess. That's why I did the football game. People like football," said VanWey. If we were to have a Mini Dance Marathon VanWey says "We would have to talk to the Mini chair through Dance Marathon and communicate with Semler and directors as well as send Mini Dance Marathon people out to show people how they work,"

This year it's too late to have a Mini Dance Marathon. The big Dance Marathon usually occurs in the first week of February. Now we have almost a whole year to try to fundraise and work out participating in next year's Marathon.

Another way the VanWey's help families affected by childhood cancer is with their non-profit business. The VanWey family runs a completely non-profit photography business for the Dance Marathon for the people who are fighting cancer, were fighting or lost their children to cancer. Her brother, Brenden VanWey, senior, is more involved in the family business.



Hundreds of people come together to raise over \$2,879,755 at this year's Dance Marathon event.

Brenden has been to many dance marathons and has been helping his family with their non-profit, Capturing Hopes, for the last few years. "I move the families from each photographer and check on the photographers," said Brenden. This family is full of love, support, and determination to fight/dance for a cure.

What you can do to change the world and make it a better place? It can be as simple as donating some money, volunteering, making them smile for a picture, or simply just being there to show support. We have the opportunity to help save lives, and all we have to do is dance. So dance.

Robotics on a roll

By: Sydney Burlage @burlage_sydney

The robotics team is on a roll! This year's robotics team has made it to State and has goals to make it all the way to Worlds. To accomplish this goal the team will have to win a big award or win State overall. "Worlds is the next step from State and we want to make it there," says Breckin Bartles, a senior on the robotics team.

The robotics competition season begins in November with 4-5 league competitions through the start of January. Then, on the fourth weekend in January, the big journey to worlds leaps into full swing. The first step is to qualify at the league champs hosted by Marion for the last 5 years. This year, both teams, 5913 and 7110,

made it past this competition to the super qualifier. Only 5913 made it past this stage to head to the Iowa Championships (state), the one thing standing in the way of Worlds. This is the first year that 7110 has made it past the league champs and is a team made up of 90% rookies according to Chris Martin, the faculty advisor for robotics.

The way to win in Robotics is much different than other sports. Martin said, "It's not like you are going head to head with someone and you know you are better so you'll win." You can get awards for having the best engineers notebook, the best community outreach, the robot itself, and many other things. Their robot is how 5913 qualified for state this year. "We just had a really good

day with a lot of good runs," said Martin. The robotics team is also working on their community outreach by doing things like bringing their robots to the cafeteria during basketball games to let others drive and see them.

The robotics teams are a relatively new addition to the many activities at Marion and are only 8 years old, but they are already seeing great success. They have achieved many trips to State and this year have a chance at Worlds that will be held in Detroit in April. There are many challenges, but



Breckin Bartles, senior, is focused on winning the robotics competition at Marion.

Bartles said,
"I just like the competition."