



UIDM

DANCER GUIDE

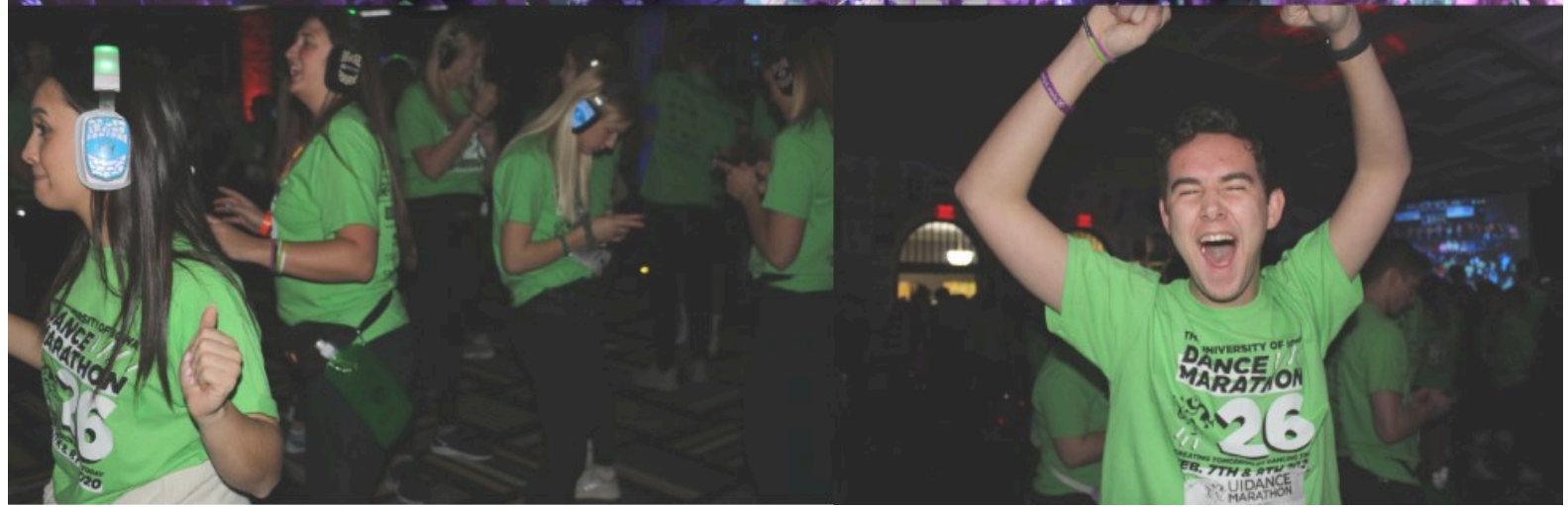


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Organization Statements

Our **Vision Statement** for UIDM 30:

As we celebrate our 30th year, Dance Marathon will reflect on our past and envision our future. Our organization will be driven by a passionate and dedicated community from all walks of life. We will create an environment where our families feel supported, loved, and empowered. Together we will continue to Build Lasting Legacies.

Our **Mission Statement**:

The University of Iowa Dance Marathon creates and sustains special projects to provide emotional and financial support and services for pediatric oncology and bone marrow transplant patients and their families treated at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital.



[Photo ID: DM30 Campaign Release- Building Lasting Legacies]

About UI Dance Marathon

University of Iowa Dance Marathon is the largest student organization at the University of Iowa and the third largest Children's Miracle Network Dance Marathon of over 300 across the nation. Our organization is a year-round endeavor, hosting many events each month including family events, fundraising, and Dancer events. All leading up to our Big Event, which will take place February 2nd and 3rd, 2024.

This past year was the 29th annual Dance Marathon in which we were able to raise over \$1.1 million for our kids and families that we support during our first year back in person. We have raised a grand total of \$34,346,018.69 all for the kids and families we support! The Big Event is 24-hours where students come together to celebrate the children survivors, remember the children who have passed away, and support those currently battling pediatric cancer to find a cure. The Big Event connects Dancers, Leadership Members, and most importantly, Dance Marathon families. We hear family stories, remember kiddos Dancing in our Hearts, and commemorate the year's efforts. Additionally, to participate in the Big Event, Dancers are required to reach their fundraising minimum, but we strongly encourage Dancers to go above and beyond their goals, all in support of our kids and families!



[Photo ID: People holding signs reading \$1,174,008.29]

About UI Dance Marathon

The history of UI Dance Marathon begins in 1994, when a unique and motivated group of students, in conjunction with the Children's Miracle Network, created a Dance Marathon at the University of Iowa. A year's worth of planning and hard work generated an impressive first year total of \$31,000 and included 26 wonderful families. Over the past 29 years, UI Dance Marathon has raised over 34.3 million dollars for the kiddos and families! Visit the website to learn more about the history of DM throughout our 29 years of fighting.



[History of UIDM throughout the years represented by pictures. These photos are from the UIDM Instagram.]

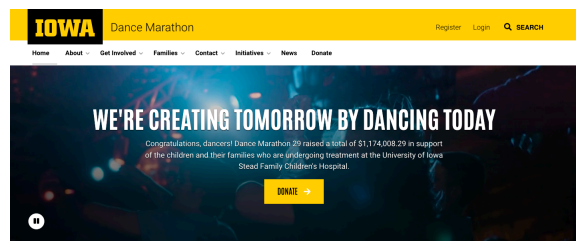
Getting Started with UIDM

UI Dance Marathon Lingo

- ☐ UIDM: University of Iowa Dance Marathon
- ☐ Big Event (BE): a 24 hour celebration in February to recognize all the hard work accomplished throughout the year, and to acknowledge our kiddos' fight against cancer: won, lost, or ongoing. Some say it's the best 24 hours of the year... (it is)
- ☐ Donor: someone who has donated money to support you in your fundraising goals
- ☐ Miracle Group: a group of Dancers and Leadership Members lead by a Morale Captain and a Lime Captain
- ☐ Giving Page: your personal fundraising donation link
 - can be personalized with your story and picture
 - Donors can access this link to donate to your specific account
 - You can find your giving page by logging into <http://dancemarathon.uiowa.edu/>
- ☐ Leadership: the team of students that works behind the scenes to help make UI Dance Marathon happen every year
- ☐ Community Day: a day in which a business donates a portion of their sales to UIDM
- ☐ Active Family: a family with a kiddo currently undergoing treatment on the 11th floor or not yet 5 years treatment free
- ☐ Forever Family: a family with a kiddo who has been treatment free for 5 or more years
- ☐ DIH: Dancing In Our Hearts; a child who lost their battle against cancer
- ☐ University of Iowa Stead Family Children's hospital: the children we fight for visit the 11th floor of the hospital for any and all of their needs
- ☐ Children's Miracle Network: nonprofit organization that raises funds for children's hospitals

Steps to Set Up a Giving Page

1. Go to www.dancemarathon.org and login
2. Scroll down to Dancer Story, right below My Profile
3. Click Edit Story and tell your friends and family why you dance with UIDM!
4. Lastly, this link provides a video showing the steps if needed:
 - a. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y144BrjoT_Q



[Photo ID: Home page on the DM website]

What does a Dancer Do?

What does a dancer do for UIDM?

As a dancer in this organization, you have the opportunity to support families within the Iowa area that have been impacted by pediatric cancer. This support will not only be seen through financial fundraising contributions, but in emotional support as well as we open our hearts to our UIDM Families. Throughout the year, you will be challenged to raise a minimum dollar amount for the kiddos in order to attend the Big Event held on February 2nd and 3rd, 2024! UI Dance Marathon recognizes that this fundraising contribution may seem large, but you will not be doing this fundraising alone! You will have an army of people behind you helping you to not only reach your fundraising goal, but to go above and beyond for our families. UI Dance Marathon promises to provide ample fundraising resources that will fit your individual needs as a philanthropic student on campus. Once you have raised your \$300 (or more!), you will be eligible to attend the Big Event in February! The Big Event is a 24-hour dance party to celebrate the kiddos who have won their battle against cancer, stand by those who are still fighting, and honor those who will be forever dancing in our hearts. This event is the culmination of a year's work, but there are so many different events throughout the year to learn more about Dance Marathon, help with fundraising, and connect with our kiddos, families, and each other! Within your Miracle Group, your Morale Captain and Lime Captain will contact you with information on how to begin fundraising and begin/continue your involvement in DM. They will be your best resources for information about events happening within the organization and to answer any questions or concerns you may have throughout the year. Your Lime Captain and Morale Captain are here to support you in any way throughout the year and during the Big Event.

What your \$300 raised goes towards

Cancer Fears Me chemo caps	\$6.00
Monthly meeting of the sibling support group	\$150
End of Treatment/Anniversary/ Birthday Party	\$45.00
Food and Beverage Carts for Grieving Families	\$75.00/cart
New wig for a child who has lost his/her hair	\$300
Cancer Survivor necklace	\$15
Prepaid Visa gift card to help DM families with treatment costs (food, gas, parking, etc.)	\$250

Fundraising

Fundraising is a major part of your UI Dance Marathon experience. To be able to get into the Big Event you need to raise a minimum amount of money. To reach this goal, along with whatever goal you have set for yourself, you need to fundraise in many different ways. Your Captains are here to help you reach these goals and are a great resource to use throughout the year! Here are a few ideas to get you started along with a link to the fundraising manual.

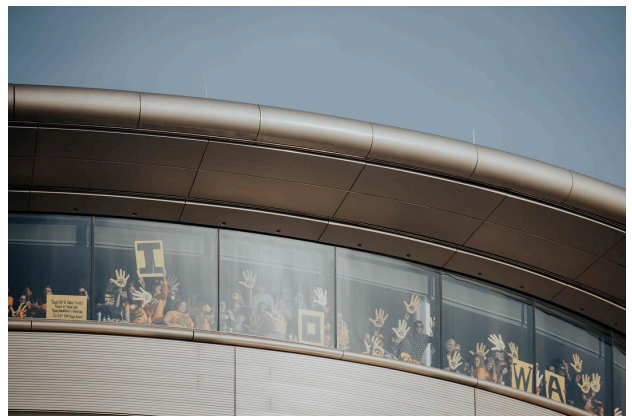
Fundraising Ideas:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a garage sale • Go canning • Take clothes to Plato's Closet • Have a community day at a restaurant in your hometown • Send an Email to past teachers • Take crushed cans to Hyvee • Ask a local school to set up a donation box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babysit and put the money towards UIDM • Shovel driveways in the winter • Have a car wash • Have a bake sale • Ask big companies if they are willing to match donations • Set up a coin wars in local schools • Make a craft/food and sell it
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Fundraising Manual

This link provides you with access to the fundraising manual. This includes many different aspects that are a part of fundraising such as seasonal ideas, templates for emails and text, social media posts, and event specific fundraising ideas!

<https://www.notion.so/DM29-Master-Fundraising-Manual-10ff5765d4ef44449f164cf600d6ba4f>
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CeZlksNYg6D05v9LzPrAf3hHC8VeibhfvrNUYCuQYtk/edit>



[Photo ID: kids waving from the top floor of the Stead Family Children's Hospital]

What is Miracle Cup?

Miracle Cup is a great opportunity for you to get more involved in UI Dance Marathon and bring out your competitive side! Throughout the year you have the opportunity to complete tasks that embody the mission of UI Dance Marathon. By completing these tasks you will be better connected with UI Dance Marathon and earn points to receive incentives at the end of the year!

How it works:

- Miracle Cup will be a competition between each miracle group and all individuals.
 - The top groups with the highest number of total points at the end of the year will receive an incentive at the Big Event.
 - Each month, the three Miracle Groups with the highest percentage of dancers that completed the monthly challenge will get an incentive and/or be recognized at dancer meetings.
- Each month a list of tasks will be announced that dancers can complete. The tasks will be worth anywhere from 1-25 points depending on what it is. There will also be monthly Lime Events for Dancers to attend to earn more Miracle Cup points!
- Dancers will communicate with their captains on tasks they've completed and events they've attended to earn points!

Miracle Cup Showdown is an event in which all of the Miracle Groups come together and compete for Miracle Cup points. There are various games and trivia to compete in with rewards of Miracle points.



[Photo ID: three people dancing]



[Photo ID: person juggling balloons]

If there are any questions please reach out to your Captains, to the Dancer Relations Chair, Kelsey Clarahan, at DM-DancerRelations@uiowa.edu, or the Recruitment and Retention Director, Korie Campbell at DM-RecruitRetain@uiowa.edu.

Event Descriptions:

Our events are another great way for you to get more involved with DM. UI Dance Marathon organizes several events throughout the year. Below are just some of the many events that our organization hosts. We would love to see you at as many events as possible this year!

- **Dancer Meetings:** Dancer Meetings are held each month and are a way to stay informed as a Dancer. It is super important to attend these if possible as there is a lot of important information relayed to you during this time!
- **Day to DM:** Day to DM is a 24 hour fundraising push day in which we raise as much money as possible in just one day. Day to DM is a day to Donate Money, to Deliver Miracles, to Do More, and so much more for our kiddos.
- **Big Event:** The Big Event is a 24 hour celebration in February to recognize all the hard work accomplished throughout the year, and to acknowledge our kiddos' fight against cancer: won, lost, or ongoing. Some say it's the best 24 hours of the year... (it is!)
- **DM After Dark:** This event happens during Onlowa! week. We welcome all the incoming freshmen to join us in some of DMs famous activities such as painting pillow cases, dancing our hearts out, and signing up for DM!
- **Homecoming 5k:** This is an opportunity for you to run a 5K on October 1st at 9:30am. This run will begin in Hubbard Park and will benefit UIDM and Stead Family Children's Hospital.
- **Child Health Day:** National Child Health Day is October 2nd, 2023 (the first Monday of every October), where we show our support of children's health, family, and those that work hard to help them. This event is held to recognize and support all of our kiddos and families, as each child deserves to be the healthiest they can be. There will be opportunities for people to get involved in health advocacy, learn about child health, participate in the blood drive, fundraise, paint pillowcases, see other student orgs, and more!
- **Chicago Marathon:** UIDM partners with the Bank of America Chicago marathon as part of their charity program. Dance Marathon is allotted a number of race entries and these participants get to run the marathon after meeting fundraising requirements. This is a great opportunity to spread our lime with the 40,000 other runners in Chicago.
- **Runway of Hope:** This event will take place at the Iowa Memorial Union during family weekend in November. Kiddos will dress up in amazing outfits and walk the runway with UIDM members!
- **Lime Days:**
 - **Campaign Release:** this event it's the kickoff to the fall semester and DM! We release our campaign for the year and have activities for people to participate in!
 - **Miracle Cup Showdown:** Miracle Cup Showdown is a night in which all of the Miracle Groups compete against one other in various types of activities to earn miracle points (and bragging rights of course)
 - **Dancer Appreciation Event:** This event is all about YOU!! This is a night to celebrate how much each and every one of our Dancers does for our organization.



[Photo ID: UIDM members and families at Camp Wapsie]

- **R&R Hangout Days:** This is a new addition to DM30! These events throughout the year allow you the opportunity to get to know your captains, other leadership, and fellow dancers on a more personal level. These days will be engaging activities that are planned within your miracle group that allow you to interact with your group and have fun at a more relaxed and less DM-focused event.
- **Dancing with the Stars Formal:** This is an opportunity for you and a date or friend to get dressed up, listen to fun music, take lots of photos, enjoy some refreshments, and celebrate being a part of DM.
- **Family Events:**
 - **Fun City:** This is one of our 2 summer family events and it will take place on July 10th. Fun City is filled with lots of activities such as laser tag and arcade games!
 - **Camp Wapsie:** The Camp Wapsie Family event takes place in late August. Families and UIDM members spend the day doing fun outdoor activities.
 - **Blank Park Zoo:** For this fall family event, we will be heading to Des Moines to spend the day with all kinds of animals at the zoo!
 - **Bloomsbury:** This is a Family Event in October that takes place at the Bloomsbury Farm. UIDM members have so much fun joining families as they spend the day doing fall festivities.
 - **Science Center:** This family event takes place at the Des Moines Science center in December. There are so many things for families and UIDM members to explore and have fun together!
 - **Heartlanders:** This family event takes place at the Coralville Xstream Arena in January. This is a hockey game that you are able to attend and watch with some of our UIDM families!



[Photo ID: People dancing in the IMU]

Links and Social Media

Our social medias and website links are great resources for you to stay up to date and informed as well as to stay involved in UIDM!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The DM website: https://dancemarathon.uiowa.edu ➤ Fundraising Manual: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CeZlksNYg6D05v9LzPrAf3hHC8VeibhfvNNUYCuQYtk/edit ➤ Leadership Contact List: https://dancemarathon.uiowa.edu/contact/chair-contact/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Twitter: UI Dance marathon ➤ Instagram: UIDM ➤ Facebook: University of Iowa Dance Marathon ➤ Snapchat: uidancemarathon ➤ Tik Tok: UI_DanceMarathon ➤ Podcast: https://dancemarathon.uiowa.edu/press/podcast/
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Check back throughout the year for updates to the packet and this list

DEI within UIDM

What is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

Diversity refers to all aspects of human difference, social identities, and social group differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, creed, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, religion/spirituality, age, (dis)ability, military/veteran status, political perspective, and associational preferences.

Equity refers to fair and just practices and policies that ensure all campus community members can thrive. Equity is different than equality in that equality implies treating everyone as if their experiences are exactly the same. Being equitable means acknowledging and addressing structural inequalities – historic and current – that advantage some and disadvantage others. Equal treatment results in equity only if everyone starts with equal access to opportunities.

Inclusion refers to a campus community where all members are and feel respected, have a sense of belonging, and are able to participate and achieve to their potential. While diversity is essential, it is not sufficient. An institution can be both diverse and non-inclusive at the same time, thus a sustained practice of creating inclusive environments is necessary for success.

DEI work is important to UIDM. As the largest student organization on campus, we have a responsibility to use our platform to speak out against discriminatory and racist practices as well as educate our members on their biases and privileges. As a predominately white student organization at a predominately[MH1] white institution, we are constantly working to recognize our privileges. In our 27th year, the DEI Committee was created to assist in our goal of educating members, working toward change, and helping us advocate for our families.

Accommodations

- Accommodations Survey: The survey helps ensure Dance Marathon can provide all accommodations necessary to be an inclusive environment for all participants. If someone needs any accommodations throughout the year, please check back for a link to a form that you can fill out!
- Registration Fee Waiver: The waiver gives students interested in participating in DM the opportunity to be exempt from the registration fee. It is meant to ensure the registration fee is not a barrier for someone wanting to participate. You can apply through a short qualtrics form that will be provided on the website shortly!

- Links to report and understand discrimination: This link has resources on campus in regards to sexual misconduct, bias, harassment, equity, and discrimination:
<https://diversity.uiowa.edu/reporting-resources>.
- Land acknowledgement: You can view the UIDM land acknowledgement here:
<https://dancemarathon.uiowa.edu/initiatives/diversity-equity-inclusion/uidm-land-acknowledgment>
- Listening Sessions: Listening Sessions are an opportunity for people, both inside and outside of UI Dance Marathon, to give us feedback and discuss different topics related to DEI. DM30's listening sessions have not yet been decided, but in the past we have had a fundraising roundtable to give people the opportunity to express their concerns.

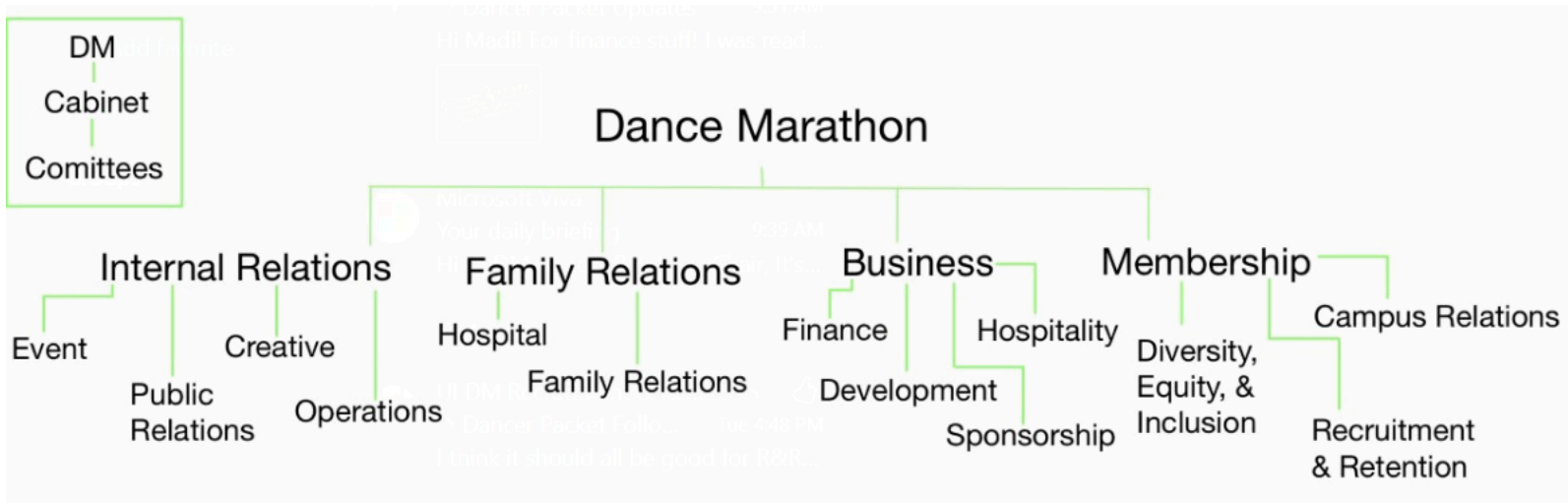
Empowerment Team

- The Empowerment Team is a peer network created of leadership members and dancers who are the voice of diversity, equity, and inclusion within their respective committees. Their responsibilities of the year will be a monthly 1-hour meeting where they will participate in an educational/conversation which is versed around DEI initiatives. Using what they learn in meetings, they will then bring this knowledge into their committees, challenge biases, and ensure that DM will push towards being an inclusive community. Being a part of the Empowerment Team, members will gain knowledge on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives in and outside of our organization, active citizenship, social identities/values, and the privileges they hold/do not hold.
- DM30 Empowerment Team Interest Form can be found here:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfJzWBUgUo1UZHBAvcsBrSRbp-3Vz09vH9H9dT2w0-LKYHr4Q/viewform?usp=send_form



**UIDANCE
MARATHON**

Family Tree of UIDM



University of Iowa Dance Marathon is one big family! Our efforts to support our kiddos on the 11th floor and their families is the consequence of a variety of different people and committees all working together towards a common goal. This diagram illustrates how all of our committees are interconnected within this organization. Each committee belongs to one of our four cabinets (Internal Relations, Family Relations, Business, or Membership). Within each committee, there is a Director who oversees the committee as a whole. Under them there are multiple Chairs. There may be a subcommittee under the chairs, but this is not always the case.

As a Dancer, you are part of the Recruitment and Retention Committee under the Membership Cabinet. The Recruitment and Retention Committee (R&R) has 1 Director and 4 Chairs, collectively known as Hundy. Under the Chairs are Morale Captains and Lime Captains. There is one of each captain in charge of a Miracle Group!

Contact Information:

Our leadership members are always here to assist you in any way you need! If you ever need to get a hold of a leadership member within the organization, this link provides you with the names and contact information of all of our Directors and Chairs.

<https://dancemarathon.uiowa.edu/contact/chair-contact/>

Below is the contact information of all Executive Council Members:

Position	Name	Email
Executive Director	Sushma Santhana	DM-Executive@uiowa.edu
Finance Director	Anna Bright	DM-Finance@uiowa.edu
Development Director	Katherine Yacopucci	DM-Development@uiowa.edu
Hospitality Director	Grace Quast-Villafana	DM-Hospitality@uiowa.edu
Sponsorship Director	David Consuelos	DM-Sponsorship@uiowa.edu
Family Liaison Director	Julia Wendland	DM-FamilyLiaison@uiowa.edu
Hospital Liaison Director	Maddison Smith	DM-HospitalLiaison@uiowa.edu
Event Director	Abby Fox	DM-Event@uiowa.edu
Campus Relations Director	Madilynn Amos	DM-CampusRelations@uiowa.edu
Public Relations/Marketing Director	Brynn Bowers	DM-PublicRelations@uiowa.edu
Creative Director	Amber Gehring	DM-Creative@uiowa.edu
Operations Director	Tessa Haug	DM-Operations@uiowa.edu
Recruitment & Retention Director	Korie Campbell	DM-RecruitRetain@uiowa.edu
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Director	Rita Ordaz	DM-DEI@uiowa.edu

Meet Our Committees

What does each committee do?

- **Executive Cabinet**

- Advisors: The advisors help guide and assist the directors and chairs throughout the year to help plan and execute all DM activities
- Executive Director: The Executive Director oversees and collaborates with all of the other Directors to plan events throughout the organization.

- **Internal Relations Cabinet**

- Event: The Event Committee works to plan and execute UIDM events throughout the year, such as Summer Sendoff, DM After Dark, Campaign Release, Miracle Cup Showdown, Dancer Appreciation, and the Big Event.
- Public Relations (PR): The Public Relations committee is in charge of all things social media. They plan how best to get information across all our online platforms including the website.
- Creative: The creative committee designs merchandise, creates graphics, and takes and edits photos and videos throughout the year.
- Operations: The Operations Committee assists in the execution of all operations and logistics throughout the year and during the Big Event. Operations helps to facilitate the “Disney Experience” for everyone at Dance Marathon events, coordinate volunteers, and assist with sustainability efforts within Dance Marathon year-round.

- **Family Relations Cabinet**

- Hospital: The Hospital Committee leads and organizes all hospital related programming and events including Playtimes, Hospital Parties, Storytimes, DM Diner, and more! The committee also provides volunteers weekly for the 11th Floor of the Stead Family Children’s Hospital.
- Family Relations (FR): The Family Programming Committee facilitates monthly family events for all families to enjoy various activities and connect with UIDM members. The Family Representative programming pairs UIDM students with UIDM families to make personal connections through emails, snailmail, and creating personalized pillowcases for each kiddo!

- **Business Cabinet**

- Finance: The Finance Committee handles all of the donation and tracking information for UI Dance Marathon throughout the year. They cover the operations of all canning events, fundraising opportunities, website and database work, data tracking and matching gifts. If there is money involved, finance takes care of it!

- Hospitality: The Hospitality Committee is in charge of securing in-kind donations for silent auctions, incentives, and food for events. They also set up community days throughout the year.
- Development: The Development Committee oversees and plans many fundraising events for UI Dance Marathon such as Dance Marathon the Marathon, Homecoming 5K, Mini Dance Marathons, Care Packages and Winter Programming.
- Sponsorship: The Sponsorship Committee is in charge of securing monetary sponsors throughout the year.

- **Membership Cabinet**

- DEI: The DEI committee oversees and helps facilitate diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within Dance Marathon. There are a variety of things DEI does throughout the year including various educational activities with the Empowerment Team, creating and overseeing our Strategic Plan, bias training, accessibility at events, advocacy for children's health, and more.
- Recruitment and Retention: R&R is composed of all the Morale and Lime Captains that lead Miracle Groups of dancers with fundraising tips and help engagement within the organization.
- Campus Relations: Campus Relations works to keep communities on campus involved and engaged in Dance Marathon. The groups that they work with are fraternity and sorority life (FSL), student organizations, and faculty and staff.



[Photo ID: members of DM29 leadership]

Dance Marathon FAQs

Isn't Dance Marathon just one day a year?

Definitely not. Dance Marathon is most known for the Big Event in February, but the organization is busy with activities YEAR ROUND. Throughout the year Dance Marathon hosts family events, social activities, and fundraising activities. Dance Marathon is what you make it. You can be as involved as you like—you control your level of involvement! Visit our calendar to learn more about what is currently going on.

Do I have to dance for 24 hours?

Only if you are able! We have an accommodation room at the Big Event for those that need additional support during the 24 hour period, and encourage everyone of every ability level to participate in Dance Marathon. Dance Marathon is a really incredible experience that is hard to put into words until you actually experience it for yourself! During the 24 hours you will experience the highest of highs and the lowest of lows, but it is one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences you will ever have. The event closes with power hour, which is a very high energy, indescribable wrap up of the event.

Who are the families that Dance Marathon supports?

The families that Dance Marathon supports are all children who are receiving treatments right here in Iowa City at University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital. Dance Marathon specializes in supporting pediatric oncology and bone marrow transplant patients. This link will take you to our "Meet the Families" page where you can read the stories of some of our amazing families!

<https://dancemarathon.uiowa.edu/families/meet-the-families/>

What leadership opportunities are there?

There are nearly 300 leadership opportunities within Dance Marathon, and there is definitely something for everyone. All majors can find a place in Dance Marathon that can benefit them!

From being a Morale Captain, on the Business committee, or Family Relations, there is something for everyone! Leadership is usually selected for the next year right after the Big Event in February, HOWEVER this year, leadership applications are going to be opening up to first year dancers! If you are interested in leadership, keep an eye out for the applications.



**UI DANCE
MARATHON**[™]
Creating tomorrow by dancing today.

[Photo ID: Logo for University of Iowa Dance Marathon]

Famspiration

Libby Thulen Family

Dear Dance Marathon Supporters,

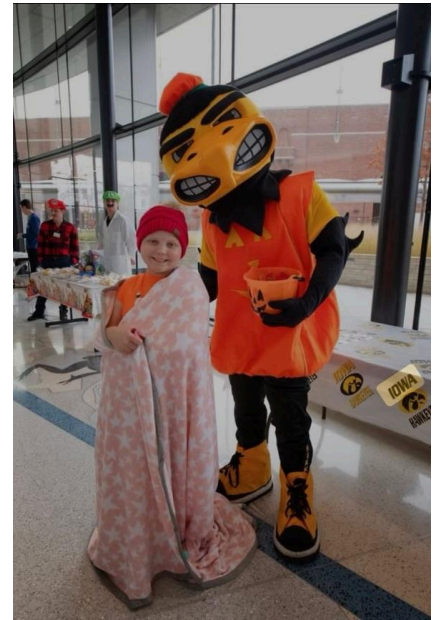
First and foremost, THANK YOU! Thank you for your support to UIDM and for all you do to support patients, programs, students, and staff at the University of Iowa, but even more specifically at Stead Family Children's Hospital.

My name is Nicole Thulen. I am married to Matt and we have two wonderful children. Logan is 16 and Libby is Forever 12. We live in a small town on the Mississippi, in Illinois, about two hours from Iowa City, which is our closest children's hospital. When I received an email from Julia, UIDM 30's Family Liaison Director, about writing this letter, it took some time for me to really think about how I could really put into words how impactful this organization is, but I accepted the challenge, because with UIDM, I honestly don't know how our family would have made it through Libby's Childhood Cancer Journey.

Libby was diagnosed with B-Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia in May, 2018. As you can imagine, the summer months are a lot quieter in the hospitals as most of the students are no longer on campus, but we were still fortunate enough to be introduced to UIDM Leaders while inpatient for about a month total between May and July. Every Wednesday night they would come around and give us gift cards to order dinner out, volunteers would come to the room and play with Libby, who was then 9 years old, to give us a break, or be able to get out of the room for a little bit, and they had so many activities they would come and take Libby to. Talk about a way to keep her mind off just being diagnosed with cancer?!? It was so amazing!

When fall came around and classes were back in session, we were paired with a family rep. Her name was Caitlin. The family rep program allowed us to become so close to the organization and everything they have to offer! Caitlin would come to Libby's clinic visits and would come keep us company if she was inpatient. Caitlin became a big sister Libby never had, and she was over the moon! Logan, Libby's older brother, received birthday cards, Christmas presents and everything else that Libby received from UIDM. This meant so much to our family as Logan was feeling the pressures of being a sibling to a kiddo with the dreaded "C" word. February 2019, we witnessed our first Big Event, and that was the moment we were completely bought into UIDM. To see the smiles, the tears, the hugs and energy in a room full of thousands of college aged young adults is something you just cannot explain. These kids LOVE our kids and there really is no other way to describe it!

Fast forward to July 2020, right in the middle of COVID... Libby took her last Chemo Pills! SHE DID IT! She was done with treatment! Little did we know that five short months later, we would be sitting in Stead Family's



[Photo ID: Picture of Libby Thulen]



Emergency Room being told the dreadful news that Libby had relapsed. Being early 2021, COVID protocols were still in full effect, so visitors were scarce, and this was probably the biggest adjustment for Libby. She was so used to all of her “college friends” being able to come and visit and play and honestly, enjoyed kicking me out of the room for a break! Instead, there were many zoom events and games, facetimes and still, of course, the gift cards so we could venture out and get different local meals from time to time, but one program that UIDM offers to families is one we were not aware of throughout the first part of Libby’s journey. UIDM offers a funeral grant for the kiddos they lose and are now Dancing in Our Hearts (DIH), so when we lost Libby on June 26, 2021, after an almost three year battle to childhood cancer, we saw full circle, how UIDM supports their families!

Asking for donations, money, services, is something that is not the most fun thing to do, yet these young adults continue to push and raise funds for all the kids, whether they are still here on Earth with us, or not. They fight alongside some of the strongest, most resilient kids I have ever met. They hold their hands when they have their port accessed, they give them hugs when they’re sad and have dance parties in hospital rooms when kids ring the bell for End of Treatment parties! The impact this organization has, not only on our kids, but on our entire families is unexplainable.

I was honored to be the final speaker at the Big Event in February 2023, and to stand on that stage and share Libby’s story with the entire organization! There were so many Dancers there who had never been to an event in person and to be the one to get to share their impact with them, even though we lost Libby, meant the world. This organization could have faltered during COVID and not bounced back, but they pushed, and pushed hard, to keep asking for funds for our kids and the programs to support Level 11 at Stead.

In ending, I want to share a couple of things with you that I have learned along the childhood cancer journey, and I know that everyone involved with UIDM feels these same things, every time they see one of our kids battling. First, make sure you stay in today. That is the first thing the doctors tell you when your child is diagnosed with cancer. You cannot change yesterday, and you cannot predict tomorrow, so stay in today and enjoy every moment of it. Sometimes we are just trying to get through the minute, but you always find that way! Second, be KIND! Libby was your typical teenager who had the oldest soul. She would always stick up for the underdog and loved life and every single thing in it. When the hair comes back, people start forgetting that these kids are still battling, sometimes for the rest of their lives, as the treatment they receive is so incredibly hard on their bodies...but regardless of what Libby was going through, she loved fiercely, even when she was hiding to scare you when you came around the corner!

Please know that your generosity to UIDM does not go unnoticed and reaches kids and families from all over who are treated at Stead! We are fortunate to have such an exceptional facility in our back yards to help our kids through some of their worst days, but we are even more fortunate to have the family that UIDM provides when you have to be away from your home and family.

Please remember that what you do does not go unnoticed. Never forget that everyone is going through something and always #lovelibby!

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Nicky Thulen

Libby Thulen, Forever 12



Dancer Calendar

Dates

- August
 - 8/17 (8:30pm) Plant Your Passion
 - 8/19 (8pm) DM After Dark / Campaign Release
 - 8/26 (10am) Camp Wapsie Family Event
- September
 - 9/11 and 9/12 (8pm) Dancer Meetings
 - 9/18 (5pm) Family Rep Interest Meeting
 - 9/18 (6pm) Pillowcase Party
 - 9/19 (8pm) R&R Hangout
 - 9/23 (11am) Blank Park Zoo Family Event
- October
 - 10/1 (9:30am) Homecoming 5K
 - 10/2 Child Health Day
 - 10/3 (8pm) R&R Hangout
 - 10/8 Chicago Marathon
 - 10/16 and 10/17 (8pm) Dancer Meetings
 - 10/22 (11am) Bloomsbury Farm Family Event
 - 10/24 (6pm) Pillowcase Party
 - 10/28 Fright Night with DM
- November
 - 11/6 and 11/7 (8pm) Dancer Meetings
 - 11/14 (8pm) R&R Hangout
 - 11/16 Miracle Cup Showdown
 - 11/28 (8pm) R&R Hangout
- December
 - 12/3 (11am) Science Center Family Event
 - 12/4 and 12/5 (8pm) Dancer Meetings
- January
 - 1/16 (8pm) R&R Hangout
 - 1/19 (4pm) Heartlanders Family Event
 - 1/22 and 1/23 (8pm) Dancer Meetings
- February
 - 2/2 to 2/3 THE BIG EVENT!

Things to do throughout the year

- ☐ Set up online giving page
- ☐ Attend Dancer Meetings
- ☐ Post your giving link on social media for others to access
- ☐ Set and reach your fundraising goal
- ☐ Attend organization events
- ☐ Attend community days
- ☐ Thank your donors
- ☐ Set up a community fundraiser in your hometown
- ☐ Gets your friends involved



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[Photo ID: Logo for The University of Iowa UIDM Dance Marathon]