



Students keep on dancing

Henrico school event raises about \$105,000

Sunday, Mar 09, 2008 - 12:08 AM

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They could have danced all night.

And so they did . . . and into the next day . . . and the next night.

About 700 students participated this weekend in the second 27-hour Deep Run High School Marathon Dance, which raised money for 10 area nonprofit organizations.

The event raised more than \$105,000, far ahead of last year's \$71,000.

Just past 7 p.m. Friday, the music blasted, strobe lights flashed and students began pulsating on the floor of the gymnasium at the western Henrico County school. And save for a few snack and rest breaks, games and contests, the dancing didn't stop.

"We had a toga rave at 1:30 a.m.," junior Victoria Ficco said. "It was really fun. They turned out the lights, and we had glow sticks and went wild."

Costume contests were held every few hours, giving students a break from the dance floor to transform into boxes of cereal, monkeys and even Elvis.

After the first 12 hours of dancing, many students were starting to look a bit worn. During a breakfast break, a few put their heads down on tables for a quick nap. But only about 10 dropped out, said organizer Kathleen Bushman, a Deep Run health, physical education and driver's education teacher.

Freshman Tara Myers was trying to develop a taste for coffee, adding multiple sugar packets to a cup. "I think the only way to stay awake is to dance," she said. She pitched the coffee into the trash can.

Her friend Michael Graham said: "I had a lot of energy, but now I'm exhausted. I had a bagel for breakfast; I need the carbs."

Bushman and hundreds of friends, teachers and volunteers made sure students were fed, entertained and safe.

"We could not do this without the volunteers and the donations," she said. Area restaurants and Deep Run parents donated food. The Guitar Center on Broad Street loaned the sound and lighting equipment. Nine of Bushman's friends drove from New York to help, and alumni and parents volunteered with everything from deejay duty to taking out garbage.

A committee of Deep Run students worked for months on the event. "The kids make all the decisions," Bushman said. "They

decide the contests and they select the charities."

Each participant this year was required to collect at least \$100 in pledges. "I like helping out with charities," said sophomore Gavin Anderson, who solicited \$1,700 from family and neighbors.

By midafternoon, students had regained their energy, fueled in part by a steady stream of snacks and loud music.

"It's awesome. I'm not even tired any more," sophomore Hunter Pfister said.

"We're past the point of exhaustion," freshman Sarah Bales said.

So far past that point, she said, that losing another hour of sleep with the change to daylight saving time wouldn't matter at all. Contact Lisa Crutchfield at lcrutchfield@timesdispatch.com or (804) 649-6362.

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