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Governor Mifflin gears up for mini-THON fundraiser

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By Heather Tyrrell, News Editor

Timothy Hartung, a 2010 Governor Mifflin graduate and cancer survivor, provided some motivating words to students during a mini-THON kickoff rally on Jan. 14.

The mini-THON involves students participating in an overnight fundraiser at the high school in which they can dance, swim, play games or engage in other activities that keep them awake for the entire event in support of children that have been diagnosed with cancer.

Every hour they perform the traditional THON song and dance made popular at the THON celebrated at Penn State, according to a press release from Governor Mifflin.

This year's mini-THON will be held from 7 p.m. on Friday, March 4 to 7 a.m. on Saturday, March 5, at the intermediate school. mini-THON has raised about \$55,000 in the last two years. The goal for this year is \$35,000.

Money raised at the big event and other fundraisers throughout the winter will be donated to The Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital. The fund supports children at the hospital that have been diagnosed with cancer.

Hartung founded the mini-THON fundraiser at the high school two years ago as a graduation project. In 2007, he was diagnosed with Leukemia during his freshman year of high school.

Hartung said he had become familiar with The Four Diamonds Fund after his time spent in Hershey.

"Mostly my insurance covered everything," he said. "It helped cover my co-pays. It really took a load off of my mind and my parents' minds."

As Liz Angstadt, a committee member for mini-THON/the Student Government Association, introduced Hartung, the students cheered him on.

"So many kids and families out there are supporting what you are doing," Hartung said. "All of the kids up at Hershey, all of the families up at Hershey love what you are doing. They may not actually be there, but they are cheering for you every minute. Every dollar counts that you guys raise."

"The faculty out there...we need your help also," Hartung added. "I know you've done great in the past two years also. You guys are making a difference and I know you guys can get that \$35,000."

The mini-THON committee told students they could purchase Diamond cards at the school and the cards will be displayed in the cafeteria. The class with the most Diamonds wins a prize.

Students are required to obtain a minimum of \$50 in pledges to participate in mini-THON.

Angstadt said other fundraisers for mini-THON include a handball tournament, java huts (coffeehouse style events featuring musical performances) and a club carnival.

She said a lot of students get involved in the fundraiser and mini-THON has had a good turnout in the past.

"I feel really great helping kids that have cancer," adding that Hartung is one of the people that really inspire her.

In addition to Hartung's speech, students watched a video about the background of The Four Diamonds Fund during the rally.

The SGA is looking for corporations to sponsor the purchase of Four Diamond Fund t-shirts for students to wear.

SGA Adviser Nancy Brady said if the planning committee can find a sponsor for each grade, that would help defray costs.

To make a donation, contact Brady, 610-775-5089.

Director of Public Relations Keri Morton said the high school was unable to hold its winter dance this year which usually raises money for the t-shirt purchases.

About The Four Diamonds Fund

Christopher Millard, a 14-year-old suffering from cancer, came up with the idea of the diamonds in his story about fighting against evil and his disease. The diamonds represent courage, wisdom, honesty and strength.

For more information about the fund, visit <http://pennstatehershey.org/web/fourdiamonds>.

URL: http://www.berksmontnews.com/articles/2011/01/17/southern_berks_news/news/doc4d34a952355f6987165725.prt

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