

Teddi

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Junior Alyssa Williams gathered four of her friends and they attended as a group.

"I came two years ago because I met [event chair] Meg Seely when I was a camper at Camp Good Days," Williams said. "I did it last year and I was pretty excited. I didn't have anyone with me, so I danced by myself and this year I thought, I have a lot of good friends at my school, so why not invite them?"

A family affair

Freshman Cecilia Christopher became involved with the Teddi Committee because she has a family history with the event. Her father, Gerard Christopher, a member of Fisher's class of 1983, attended the first Teddi dance.

"I have heard about it since my early childhood. At that time it was a competition and my aunt and my father won. I always thought that it was a great way to raise money, dance for 24 hours and raise money for Camp Good Days and Special Times."

Gerard also attended this year's dance.

"It was exhausting, but it was worth the effort to raise the money for Teddi especially since I had fun doing it," he recalled of the inaugural Teddi event. "I was on the prize committee and I enjoyed telling people about the Teddi dance and why we needed the prizes. This was to encourage more dancers because at that time the dance was not well known."

"For me, this is beautiful."

One attendee of the dance made his trek a little farther than students who ventured from their dorms or travelled from surrounding communities.

Andrei Venturini, a philosophy professor at the Camila Castelo Branco University in Sao Paulo, Brazil, has been living with Fisher professor and Teddi adviser Bob Costigan in order to learn English. When Costigan told him about the dance, he decided to attend.

"For me, it is very important to be here. I want to help too," Venturini said.

"For me, this is beautiful. I see the accomplishments of everyone, the students, other people, and professors. Quite frankly, I wasn't expecting that people would recognize [the cause]. When you, the students, think about other people, for me, it's a revolution. To me this is beautiful. It's very different. It's a source of inspiration. I don't have the words. It is beautiful."



Nicole Russo

MTV's Diem Brown speaks about her experiences with cancer.

Feeling the love

The Teddi Committee, which had over a hundred members, works throughout the year to plan the dance and events leading up to it.

Members of the committee were visible out on the dance floor throughout the night in their bright green committee T-shirts. Two members who were particularly visible were senior

Jessica Johnson and freshman Tom Whalen, who sported dozens of signatures on their shirts as the designated "hug people."

"A hug person finds everybody possible that needs a hug and gives them one, and they have to sign my shirt," Johnson, who volunteers at Camp Good Days, said. "I haven't even gotten in the door yet, and I'm already getting hugged by everybody."

Whalen was enthusiastic about his job.

"The best part about being a hug person is I get to hug everyone, and they all get to feel all the love from me," he said



Kyle Hayes

Sophomore Michelle Miller waits to reveal her hair after donating 12 inches to Locks for Love.

Dedications

Several members of the women's basketball team appeared at the dance after their game on Saturday, as the dance was dedicated to Michael Napoleone, the younger brother of their teammate, junior Ashley Napoleone. Michael passed away in December 2006, following a battle with cancer. The Napoleone family spoke of their memories of Michael at the dance.

Dedications to Stephen Taylor and Breanna Bartelli, both Camp Good Days campers who passed away, were also made. Mervis shared memories of Stephen, who was an honorary coach at Fisher football's annual Courage Bowl, with dancers. Seely spoke on behalf of Breanna's mother, who was not able to attend the dance.

Sharing their talents

Several groups made appearances at the dance, contributing their talents to the night. A Jazzercise group led a warm-up at the beginning of the event on Friday night, and Fisher's Gospel Choir performed at the opening ceremonies.

The dance group Arts In Motion (AIM) performed on Saturday night, and the Fisher Dance Team led a warm-up on Saturday morning after breakfast.

Several local bands and artists, including the Shakin' Bones, Fishbone Soup, Ryan Dilmore, and the East Rochester All-Stars, featuring Fisher sophomore and saxophone player Joel Vickers, also performed.

Another special guest made an appearance at noon. Diem Brown, a member of the cast of MTV's *Real World/Road Rules Fresh Meat Challenge*, spoke to dancers during lunch. Brown, is a cancer survivor.

"[SAB] gave me some information about the camp and what it does for the kids, and I believe in that mentality," Brown said. "Bringing that childlike spirit back to them, and that's something I really, really admired. It's not money, it's your time. Group efforts raise more support than just giving a check. I was ecstatic when they let me be a part of it. Fisher is amazing. This school is so alive and everyone is really excited about the kids."

A gift of a smile

For the eighth year, Locks For Love, an organization that collects hair for wigs for children with cancer, collected hair at the Teddi

dance. Twenty-two people, ranging from three to 44 years old, combined to donate 382.5 inches of hair. Combined with hair collected at Fisher prior to the dance, 689 inches of hair were collected this year. This greatly exceeded the goal of beating last year's collection of 481 inches.

Nine-year-old Marissa Reseizo donated ten inches of hair.

"I wanted to see a kid smile like me," Reseizo said. "My mom told me there were a lot of people who had cancer, so I decided to just do it because I wanted to help."

A special presence

The annual balloon launch, to commemorate those who died of cancer, was held at 5 p.m. Dancers gathered at the football field, each holding a balloon. Postcards were attached to the balloons explaining why they were being released. They also included mailing instructions for Camp Good Days and instructions to return the card if it was found.

No pink balloons are released, and no pink decorations are used at Teddi, but every year, a single pink balloon appears somewhere at the event. Pink was the signature color of Teddi Mervis. This year, the pink balloon floating alone near the ceiling of the SLC.



Kyle Hayes

Mary Ciesinski and Megan Seely speak during closing ceremonies.

The homestretch

The final hour of the dance was designated as committee hour; members of the committee sported tie-dyed Teddi T-shirts.

Following the last dance to the song "The Dance" by Garth Brooks, everyone gathered near the stage for closing ceremonies.

"How do we even begin to say thank you?" senior Chair Meg Seely said. She went on to thank the dancers, committee, volunteers and staff who helped make the event happen. "None of us can do it alone. It's like that in life and it's like that at this dance."

The final amount of money raised was also revealed on stage by the children from Camp Good Days. The children turned around revealing amounts of money written on their shirts.

Seely and Ciesinski were both on the verge of tears after the reveal.

"I am in total shock right now. I can't thank you all enough. This is amazing," Ciesinski said.

Mervis, also moved to tears during closing ceremonies, echoed this advice.

"Remember how good you feel right now, because what you did came from your heart. The greatest gifts we can give one another are our love and our time, and you've given both," Mervis said. "The good feeling that you have the way you feel about yourself right now is a high no substance can give you."

"On a daily basis, you see good things and not so good things," Mayor Duffy said of the city of Rochester. "To come out and see what you guys did tonight, it's an amazing thing."

"I will say without any hesitation that Teddi Mervis is in heaven looking down and smiling because of what you did."

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Chairs discuss Teddi 25 and years to come

STAFF WRITER  
KEVIN FULLER

Before the Annual Teddi 24 Hour Dance for Love commenced for the 25th year the Courier sat down with senior Chair Megan Seely and junior Co-Chair Mary Ciesinski to discuss this year's dance, how they got where they are and where they hope to take the dance in the future.

How are the two of you directly involved with the Teddi Dance for Love?



Megan Seely (MS): I joined the committee my sophomore year. I was asked to be co-chair the following year. I volunteered at Camp Good Days [and Special Times] for one week, which was super fun. I am chair this year.

Mary Ciesinski (MC): I am a junior and I will be chair next year. That is how the progression goes. You are co-chair your junior year and they ask you to come back your senior year and chair.



Is there any specific thing that made you become involved with Teddi?

MC: It was the only thing I wanted to do when I got to Fisher. I worked the camp and have a close connection with the campers.

Is meeting the kids of Camp Good Days the most beneficial part of the Dance?

MC: That is what we are trying to stress to the committee. When you meet the kids, it means so much more.

This is the 25th year of Teddi, like you said. Are there any special plans for this year?

MS: There are a lot of things that are different. It is being held in the Field House (in the Student Life Center) instead of the varsity gym. There is a basketball game going on Friday and Saturday.

MC: Which will be really crazy. Dr. Buttino who started the Dance is coming back this year, which means a heck of a lot. We have gotten a huge alumni draw because he is coming back. This year our honorary chair will be Mayor Bob Duffy, which is a really big deal.

How many people are involved with coordinating Teddi?

MS: We have us and about 14 captains that help coordinate the event.

MC: Then we have a committee of about 100 people.

MS: Yeah, we also have Teah Terrance and Bob Costigan as our advisors. They are very supportive and help us out a lot.

MC: We have a lot of clubs that help us out with financial things.

MS: So basically there is like a million people involved this year.

How does the donation system work? How much will it cost me if I want to dance?

MC: We actually changed the requirement for how much money it cost to dance. It used to be \$50. We dropped to \$25. For college students who don't have much money, \$25 isn't too much.

How does it work beyond the minimum? Is it just flat donations?

MS: They (dancers) get a little folder with information. There is a donation sheet so you can right down the person's information. You bring cash or check to the dance. There are awards for teams who raise the most money. We have had individuals raise as much as \$1200 to \$2000.

MC: We have a lot of groups with big donations this year.

Is Teddi 25 going to be the biggest year yet?

MS: It's a huge year.

MC: It's a special year too. This past week camp lost one of its best campers. Stephen "Skippy" Taylor was honorary coach to the courage bowl last year and this year we are doing a special dedication for him.

What are your special connections to Teddi?

MS: Like I said it was the only thing I wanted to do when I got to Fisher. It was my dad's stipulation for me going to this \$30,000 a year school. My father did Teddi when he was at Fisher and wanted me to follow in his footsteps.

What is most satisfying about Teddi?

MS: The last hour is the most satisfying and so emotional.

MC: Yeah, seeing the kids means so much. It is so satisfying that the kids get to watch.

With such a large event to plan, how long does Teddi take to organize? One year?

MC: You got it.

MS: We get a week off and we pretty much spend that entire week talking about what we can do to make Teddi better.

MC: We are always trying to make it better.

What are the plans for the future? Where do you guys go from here?

MS: We want to see what we can do to get more people involved. Being the 25th year we are bringing a lot of people back. We need to keep those people coming back.

MC: We need to just ask ourselves, "How can Teddi be around for 25 more years?"

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