Iowa State Organizations Practicing Sustainability Through Nourishment

Iowa State University has a vibrant community of clubs and organizations that go beyond conventional boundaries, channeling their passion into meaningful actions, particularly in the realm of nourishment. Nourishing ourselves extends beyond the realm of food; it encompasses the multifaceted aspects of our well-being. Cultivating meaningful connections with others and engaging in activities that bring joy and fulfillment. In the exploration of Iowa State University’s sustainability-minded student organizations, two are highlighted in this month’s issue as we delve into the inspiring endeavors of Dance Marathon and Blood Drive, shedding light on their unique approaches to fostering a nourishing campus culture.

Nourishment Through Dancing

Dance Marathon at Iowa State extends support to families and children who are currently receiving or have received treatment at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital. Annually, they organize a “Big Event,” inviting students, families and children to come together and celebrate the successful fundraising endeavors of the past year.

Dance Marathon at Iowa State was made possible through the Miracle Network Dance Marathon, a widespread international movement, engaging over 400 educational institutions in the United States and Canada to raise funds for their local Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. Students diligently fundraise throughout the year, collectively contributing over $350 million since 1991, while gaining essential skills in fundraising, peer management, delegation, and philanthropy. Last year Dance Marathon at Iowa State received the 2023 Campaign Activation Award from the Miracle Network Dance Marathon!

The first Dance Marathon event at Iowa State was held in the spring of 1998. The 10 hour-long event was sponsored by the Greek Interfraternity and Panhellenic Governing Councils and held in the basement of State Gym. Much has changed since that first Dance Marathon. Today, Dance Marathon at Iowa State holds a 15 hour-long celebration of life at the Memorial Union, utilizing multiple spaces, and supporting over 40 families from across Iowa annually. Through fundraising initiatives and meaningful connections with these families, their goal is to alleviate challenges faced in families’ journeys.

Iowa State Dance Marathon nourishes relationships and the well-being of families, kiddos and the community. Although they cannot heal or cure their sicknesses, Dance Marathon’s goal is to support these families’ mental and emotional states through fostering a safe space.

This year, Dance Marathon’s campaign theme is “For Better Tomorrows,” urging our community to join in the collective effort for more birthdays, graduations, miracles and overall improved futures. In addition to their philanthropic mission, they aim to foster a sense of community among fellow Iowa State students. Dance Marathon serves as a unifying force, bringing people together and shedding light on the pressing issues faced by families the student organization supports.
Every year, Dance Marathon contributes to a dedicated project at the Children's Hospital. Previously, their fundraising efforts have supported various areas, such as the hemodynamics floor and the children's playroom. This year, they are proud to announce that their organization has the honor of sponsoring the Wags and Waves program, specifically dedicated to the Stead Family Children's Hospital's newest facility dogs, Nacho and Corrin. These two dogs have undergone rigorous training to assist pediatric patients. Collaborating with child life specialists, Nacho and Corrin visit patients, providing additional encouragement to aid in their healing process.

Beyond events, Dance Marathon is dedicated to combining fundraising efforts with community outreach, creating a positive impact not only in Ames but also beyond. Their members actively volunteer at Iowa State athletics concession stands, tour hospitals, participate in benefit events and engage in various activities that contribute to the well-being of our community.

The “Big Event” this year will take place on February 10 from 10:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. To assist in the nourishing impacts Dance Marathon provides, text ISUDM24 to 51555 to get registered to volunteer. For more information on Dance Marathon, visit the Iowa State Dance Marathon website.

While Dance Marathon focuses on fostering emotional well-being for families navigating childhood illness, Blood Drive contributes directly to physical well-being by facilitating vital blood donations.

Blood Donations Providing Nourishment
By playing a direct role in nourishing individuals in need, Iowa State Blood Drive aligns perfectly with this month’s theme by publicizing, encouraging and facilitating blood donations. Recognizing blood as a crucial element in sustaining life, their contributions become essential for supporting patients undergoing medical treatments, surgeries or facing various health challenges. The act of donating blood emerges as an impactful way to nurture the health and well-being of others in our community. It encapsulates the essence of giving and sustenance, fostering a shared sense of responsibility towards the nourishment of fellow community members.
Iowa State Blood Drive takes great pride in orchestrating two blood drives every semester, an endeavor that stands as their most gratifying experience. Observing the culmination of combined efforts and the tangible impact on the community is truly fulfilling. Additionally, their partnership with the esteemed organization, the Red Cross, presents a significant opportunity for them in completing events and connecting donations to areas of need. In 2022, the Red Cross provided nearly 4.5 million blood donations and more than 1 million platelet donations to help people who face serious injuries, surgeries, childbirth, anemia, blood disorders, cancer treatments and more. Being involved with an organization that consistently brings about life-changing impacts enables them to forge valuable connections and play a modest yet meaningful role in contributing to positive change.

The Blood Drive team’s journey is influenced by a dedicated assembly comprising 17 executives, three directors and around 65 committee members. Each member plays a crucial role, engaging in diverse responsibilities such as securing sponsorships from companies, setting up information tables across campus and local venues like HyVee, overseeing marketing initiatives, establishing connections with campus organizations and collaborating with professors.

Rooted in a shared passion for blood donation, Blood Drive’s goal is to spread this commitment, nurturing a culture of awareness and active engagement.

The Iowa State Spring 2024 Blood Drive will take place on March 4-6 from 10am to 5pm. For more information about volunteering and donating, visit the Iowa State Blood Drive website.

Endless Opportunities of Nourishment

Iowa State University has a thriving community of organizations that are dedicated to sustainability through nourishment. Through their distinct approaches, these organizations channel their energy towards the common goal of providing nourishment and support to individuals facing health challenges. In their unique ways, both organizations reflect the spirit of community engagement, promoting a shared responsibility for the nourishment of our community.

In addition to these highlighted organizations, there are a diversity of additional organizations creating an impact on our campus community and throughout communities locally, nationally and internationally that provide nourishment. For a complete list of Iowa State clubs and organizations, visit the Iowa State Student Organizations website.