

UMass Dance Marathon Supports Baystate Children's Hospital



The mission of UMass Dance Marathon (UMDM) is to encourage collaboration among students, UMass Amherst, and the Amherst community by raising both awareness of and funds for Baystate Children's Hospital in connection with Children's Miracle Network. Through uplifting and interactive events, UMDM fosters a yearlong celebration for Baystate Children's Hospital. UMDM has been active at UMass for the past 16 years. Formerly known as FTK (For The Kids), UMDM rebranded in 2021 to highlight the main event (dance marathon) and connect to other Dance Marathon programs across the country. The national Dance Marathon movement was started in 1991 at Indiana University in honor of Ryan White. Ryan committed to attend IU, but tragically passed away the summer before his freshman year following a blood transfusion that was contaminated with HIV. His friends started a 12-hour fundraising event that has grown into a national movement hosted by Children's Miracle Network, involving over 400 college and high school programs. In the 16 years of the UMass official Dance Marathon program, almost \$2

million for Baystate Children's Hospital has been raised. The last 2 years have been virtual dance marathon events, but on April 9, 2022 they gathered in person at the Mullins Center at UMass campus for a 12-hour dance marathon! There were 1,138 participants registered and 29 teams, raising \$110,130! A BIG thanks to ALL the UMass student leaders, especially **Rylee Marchand**, student President of the UMDM Executive Board, the participants and teams who raised money and danced their hearts out for Baystate and **Mia Gorecki**, Special Programs and Events Coordinator for Children Miracle Network Hospitals at Baystate Health Foundation, whose support helped make the UMDM a success!