



# Dance Blue

University of Kentucky  
Dance Marathon

Dear [school here],

DanceBlue began just over 6 years ago from the inspiration of Jarrett Mynear, a very passionate and admirable cancer patient, and out of a vision from two passionate advisors. We've been doing High School Mini-Marathons for the past 3 years. We would like to offer you an opportunity to become involved and help make this DanceBlue the best yet!

The following packet explains DanceBlue as well as the idea behind the mini marathons. It is our hope that these marathons, modeled after our 24-hour dance marathon at UK, will continue to demonstrate to high school students the importance of helping the fight against pediatric cancer here in Lexington.

This year we hope to expand the fight against childhood cancer throughout Kentucky. We feel that these mini marathons will help to further develop DanceBlue and to spread awareness throughout the Kentucky commonwealth.

Countless students have experienced the fulfillment and reward they you experience through participation in DanceBlue. It is important to remember that there is still a great deal of planning and hard work associated with accomplishing our end goal. It is our goal, as the DanceBlue mini marathon team, to help you along the way and assist your students and faculty, while allowing them to create a marathon that is uniquely theirs. We have discovered that every bit of hard work is well worth it in the end.

Our vision is to partner with Kentucky high schools to further expand awareness, fundraising, and support for DanceBlue's mission of fighting childhood cancer. We feel that high school students will also benefit greatly from participation in this event. Over the past few years, we have watched our entire culture of students change. Here at UK, DanceBlue has brought hope, motivation, and unity to our campus. The impact DanceBlue has had on UK students is unexpected, and truly unique.

We appreciate your support in the fight against childhood cancer. Every year DanceBlue provides necessary funds for numerous services in the UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic. On top of providing thousands of dollars toward cancer research, the funds raised make a difference in the lives of children and families every day. We would like to thank you for your support and dedication to DanceBlue.

For the Kids,

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Maggie Smith—High School Mini Marathon Coordinator, [Magnolia.smith@uky.edu](mailto:Magnolia.smith@uky.edu)

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## **Why do we 'DanceBlue'?**

### **An Introduction**

In the fall of 2004, several UK student organizations responded to an organizational forum to explore the possibility of starting a dance marathon at UK. The forum was led by Jennifer Mynear, whose son, Jarrett, energized and inspired the recent overwhelming community support in renovating the UK Children's Cancer Clinic. Jarrett, who died in October 2002 at age 13 after an 11-year battle with cancer, made an indelible impression across Kentucky and our nation. Jennifer's mission was to involve college students in a most endearing crusade, both to the state of Kentucky and to her own heart: childhood cancer. Prominent leadership groups across UK's campus were inspired to recruit organizers for this new cancer campaign, and met enthusiastic support at all levels. Organizers found a welcome home for this new event at the UK Center for Community Outreach. DanceBlue 2009 alone raised over \$600,000 towards this worthy cause. Each year DanceBlue has remained the largest student-run philanthropy in the state of Kentucky. More than just a fundraiser, DanceBlue remains centered on the children and families of the clinic through events, volunteering, and interaction with the families throughout the entire year.

### **DanceBlue Mission**

It is the mission of the University of Kentucky's DanceBlue to create a multi-faceted organization that operates through the support and leadership of the students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community. The organization strives to enhance the lives of children and families suffering from childhood cancer through the Golden Matrix Fund, and therefore serves the Bluegrass by assisting those treated at the UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic. Furthermore, DanceBlue aims to establish a continued tradition, invoke appreciation and involvement, and ultimately create something greater than oneself.

### **Explanation of the Fund**

All money raised by DanceBlue directly supports The Golden Matrix Fund. The Golden Matrix Fund was created to benefit the University of Kentucky Pediatric Oncology Clinic patients and families. Childhood cancer not only affects the child physically, but also creates many emotional and financial difficulties for the entire family. Children who are cancer patients make routine visits to the hospital and have to undergo countless tests and procedures on a regular basis, all the while trying to fit in with their peers. Families affected by childhood cancer are faced with countless added stressors to their daily lives: paying medical bills, obtaining transportation to and from hospital visits, taking time off work to care for their children, and the emotional effects on other siblings. The Golden Matrix Fund is used to alleviate some of these issues that childhood cancer can create. The fund helps the families of the UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic receive better care, better support, less financial burden, and give patients back their childhood. As the fund has grown over the years, it now also supports pediatric cancer research and specialized clinic staff.

## **Dancer Information**

### **Who does the fundraising?**

All individuals who wish to be dancers in the mini dance marathon will do the fundraising. Each dancer may solicit funds from parents, friends, family, or any other available resource. Students who raise \$50 may participate in the mini dance marathon.

### **How much money does each dancer have to raise?**

Each dancer is asked to raise \$50 to participate. All of this money goes directly to the Golden Matrix Fund. Dancers are encouraged to raise money exceeding the amount required to dance. We encourage each high school to give awards to the top three money-raisers. Dancers are also asked to pay a \$10 dancer registration fee that covers t-shirts and other supplies for the marathon. This money does not benefit the Golden Matrix Fund and should not be taken from funds solicited for the Golden Matrix Fund.

### **What is a dancer?**

A dancer is a student who participates in the 6-hour or 12-hour Dance Marathon at your school. A dancer is someone who does not sit or sleep for hours to represent the daily struggle a child with cancer goes through. Each dancer is there for the full event, as well as any orientation activities that occur prior. It is up to the individual school to set the maximum number of dancers allowed. Each school reserves the right to have dancers sign a waiver and to enforce their school's code of conduct.

### **How do dancers handle the money?**

Dancers may accept cash or check donations. Students will need to submit at least \$50 two weeks prior to the marathon to register as a dancer. It is recommended that your school set up a non-profit account into which you can deposit funds raised by students. After the conclusion of the mini marathon, your school should write one check to DanceBlue.

### **What is required of a dancer?**

1. Meet fundraising requirements.
2. Register as a dancer two weeks prior to the date of the marathon.
3. Attend the mandatory Dancer Meeting (date to be decided by your school)
4. Full adherence of all school rules throughout the marathon.
5. An awesome attitude for the kids!

## Fundraising

Dancers are encouraged to be creative when soliciting funds. Here are some suggestions of effective fundraising methods.

### Letter Solicitations

Sending family and friends a solicitation letter is one of the most effective and easy ways you can help the kids and DanceBlue! You can tailor these letters to target your specific contacts. Send these letters to as many people as possible (family, friends, friends' parents, co-workers, neighbors, and alumni of your organization, etc.). Accompanying the letter should be a smaller envelope with your address already printed on it for easy return mailing, and for extra appeal include a personalized note as well. It is also very important to follow up every donation received with a thank you note.

Letter solicitation is commonly overlooked, but is a source of great profit for many students. Send as many letters as your organization can. And remember; always be kind, polite, and sincere. You'll be amazed by the results!

At the end of this packet you will find a sample letter, below are suggestions for writing your own personal letter!

**Compose a one-page letter.** Write your own as if you are sending it individually to a close friend. Use a computer. Copy it twice. Adjust one copy to be sent via email; the other for regular mail.

**Both versions should begin with a quick apology for the impersonal nature.** Include a preface that as a friend, you thought they would be interested in this important cause.

**Send it to EVERYONE who has ever sent you something!** For the emails, blind copy (bcc) them all. They don't need to know who else is receiving your note. This can result in more than 100 emails.

**Balance fact with feeling.** Include what DanceBlue is, what it means to you, where and when it is, where the money goes etc.

**Early on, make the ask.** Don't limit your donors but ask for a specific range. Ask for \$10, \$20, \$50 or whatever their budget will allow.

**Give a 10 day deadline for response.** People respond when there is a sense of urgency. Tell them to write the check to **UK DanceBlue** and send it to your address.

**Write up envelopes for everyone who will not receive an email.**

**Copy the letters and before stuffing them into the envelope,** handwrite in colored ink, on the top of the letter the person's name and a quick personal line. Sign it to add the personal touch.

### **Mail the letters.**

#### **Door to Door Solicitations**

Door to door solicitation is going from house to house in neighborhoods requesting pledges or donations. If students go door to door, they need to use DanceBlue pledge books. Pledge books can be picked up in the CCO. Door to door solicitation can be done anywhere, however favorable places include your home area where you know people and will be recognized, and in and around Kentucky. The more likely that people will know about Dance Marathon, the more likely you will be successful.

When going door-to-door, look presentable, be courteous, and remember to smile! Introduce yourself, and tell people that you are a student and are raising money on behalf of the UK Dance Marathon on behalf of the Golden Matrix Fund. Continue to tell them about your mini marathon and DanceBlue. Always stress that it raises money for children with cancer at the UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic and supports cancer research. You should always bring your student ID when soliciting in a door- to-door fashion.

It is encouraged that you accept checks made out to UK DanceBlue to ensure financial integrity, but cash is also acceptable.

It is imperative that when going door to door that you go in groups. Please do not risk personal safety by going alone!

#### **On-Line Donations**

Donations can also be made online. Visit the web site [www.danceblue.org](http://www.danceblue.org) to find the link and more information about making a donation. Keep in mind that these donations will not go directly to your total, but will still be helping the overall cause.

## **Sample Advance for a Mini-Marathon**

### **90s Hour**

#### **Music**

- Bye, Bye, Bye – N'Sync
- Baby One More Time – Britney Spears
- Everybody – Backstreet Boys
- MmmBop – Hansen
- Genie in a Bottle – Christina Aguilera

#### **Activities**

- Fresh Prince of Bel-Air Theme Song Contest!
- MC Hammer Dance-Off

#### **Crafts**

- Scrunchie Decorating

### **Step Up Hour**

#### **Music**

- 1,2 Step – Ciara
- Walk it Out – Unk
- Snap Your Fingers – Lil Jon
- Low – Flo Rida
- Cyclone – Baby Bash

#### **Activities**

- Performance by school or UK Step Team
- Teach Cupid Shuffle and Superman dances

#### **Crafts**

- Decorate socks for children's hospital

### **County Fair Hour**

#### **Music**

- Our Song – Taylor Swift
- I Like It, I Love It – Tim McGraw
- Cotton-Eyed Joe
- Before He Cheats – Carrie Underwood
- Summertime – Kenny Chesney

#### **Activities**

- Teach a Line Dance
- Ring Toss
- Duck Pond
- Sack Race

#### **Snacks**

- Goldfish
- Potato Chips
- Popcorn

**Leadership Outline**

The following is just a suggestion of how you might set up your student mini marathon committee. It will require hard work and commitment from not only the leadership team, but also from committee members and volunteers. We recommend at least these basic committees and a 5-10 person committee for each chair (excluding the Overall Chair).

**Overall Chair**

The overall chair is responsible for the overall planning and fundraising process leading up to and including the dance marathon. The Overall Chair plans and leads meetings, facilitates goal setting, creates the calendar and is responsible for facilitating the overall functioning of the mini marathon. The Overall Chair is also responsible for creating and maintaining an operational budget, including all individual committee budgets. The Overall Chair is responsible for all communication between the mini marathon committee and the school, as well as communication with the DanceBlue mini marathon coordinators.

**Marathon Programming and Logistics**

This committee is responsible for planning and programming all of the details of the actual marathon event. They are responsible for everything from food, to music, to the line dance, to t-shirts. This committee is encouraged to seek input from the mini marathon coordinators. They will also be responsible for arranging volunteers for the marathon event.

**Fundraising/Treasurer**

This committee/individual will work closely with a faculty advisor. They are responsible for setting up the time, date, and location for the submission of the registration fees. This position must keep impeccable records and be very organized. The treasurer is also responsible for the grand total and overall reveal.

**Dancer Recruitment/Promotions**

This committee is responsible for advertising and promoting the dance marathon to the student body. They will work to promote leading up to the event and encourage student participation. They will be responsible for dancer registration (two weeks before the marathon) and dancer check-in at the marathon.

## **DanceBlue Assistance**

### **Prior to the marathon:**

The mini marathon coordinators will be available for bi-weekly meetings with the mini marathon leadership team. It is their responsibility to respond quickly to emails and phone calls from the high school students. They will serve as advisors to the mini marathon leadership team. DanceBlue cannot provide any monetary assistance, but we will assist with effective methods for soliciting donations and money-saving techniques in the planning of the marathon.

### **Dancer Registration:**

Mini marathon coordinators will be available for assistance during the dancer registration deadline. Registering dancers can be hectic, and the coordinators will be there to ensure this process goes smoothly. They will help organize and keep record of funds. They will also assist with dancer check-in at the beginning of the mini marathon.

### **At the marathon:**

At least ten DanceBlue committee members will help as volunteers at the mini marathon. DanceBlue committee members will also help with morale and motivation throughout the marathon. Your mini marathon will require more volunteers and chaperones than what we are able to provide. We hope that the staffing of the marathon will be a joint effort of our committee members, parents, faculty, and staff. DanceBlue is not liable for the students attending the mini marathon.

## **Leadership Team Contact Information**

**Maggie Smith**

**High School Mini Marathon Coordinator**

**[Magnolia.smith@uky.edu](mailto:Magnolia.smith@uky.edu)**

**(270) 316-4361**

**Jasmine French**

**High School Mini Marathon Coordinator**

**[Jdfren2@uky.edu](mailto:Jdfren2@uky.edu)**

**(859) 312-1377**

**Kelsey Giurgevich**

**High School Mini Marathon Coordinator**

**[Kegiur2@uky.edu](mailto:Kegiur2@uky.edu)**

**(859) 537-7035**

**Clay Stanley**

**DanceBlue Overall Chair**

**[Overall@danceblue.org](mailto:Overall@danceblue.org)**

**(502) 592-9189**

<Name of personal contact (always use a person's name to make more personal)>

For the past three years UK DanceBlue has hosted a 24-hour dance marathon benefiting the Golden Matrix Fund. The Golden Matrix Fund aims to provide support for the patients, families, and staff of the UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic. Additionally, half of all money raised for the Golden Matrix Fund goes directly to cancer research. UK students are dedicating much personal time and effort to the crusade against childhood cancer.

This year, Kentucky high schools are joining the fight against childhood cancer. Through hosting their own mini dance marathons, high school students are contributing their time and efforts to this great cause. All funds raised by these high schools will benefit the same great cause as DanceBlue. This opportunity for high school students is unlike any other in the state. The UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic has seen quite an improvement in support and treatment they are able to provide as a direct result of funds provided by DanceBlue. DanceBlue strives to focus on the families and patients of the clinic. This support is meaningful to the students and families. While we focus on the families, the financial support is also necessary for the clinic to provide the best treatment possible. Last year through hard work and the generosity of Kentuckians, DanceBlue hosted its sixth marathon at UK, raising over \$670,000. Since its inception, DanceBlue has raised over 2 million dollars for the UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic. Each year, the UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic sees 2,500 patients and is the only facility of its kind in the region. The clinic sees at least one new family each week, 55 percent of which are on Medicaid, a minimal level of coverage when facing the diagnosis of cancer. Almost all children treated at the clinic are entered into clinical trials since, unlike adult cancer, every case is rare and difficult to diagnose and treat.

While enriching the lives of the children with cancer is the number one priority of DanceBlue, the financial issues associated with the treatment of the disease does not go unnoticed. The success of the event is made possible by the charitable contributions and commitments of individuals in the Lexington and the greater Kentucky community. Here lies another beautiful aspect of DanceBlue- Kentuckians helping to support fellow Kentuckians. The Golden Matrix Fund directly supports the children and families in Kentucky and therefore tangibly affirms the generosity of contributors like you.

I sincerely hope you will take time to contribute to the Golden Matrix Fund through **<your high school>**. Any donations you would like to make would be greatly appreciated. Please make check donations payable to <your high school's account>. If you'd like more information on DanceBlue 2010, please see our website at [www.danceblue.org](http://www.danceblue.org) where you can also submit donations electronically.

For the Kids,  
<Participant's name>

Dear Parents,

We would like to introduce ourselves as the University of Kentucky DanceBlue Mini-Marathon Coordinators. DanceBlue is a yearlong fundraising effort, benefitting UK's Pediatric Oncology Clinic. The yearlong fundraising culminates in a 24-hour no sitting, no sleeping dance marathon. The first marathon, in spring 2006, raised \$123, 323 with 180 dancers participating. This past February, marking the sixth dance marathon, 600 students danced the night away to raise over \$670,000. In just six short years, DanceBlue has raised over 2 million dollars. This money benefits cancer research as well as specialized clinic staff, who help with the emotional difficulties of childhood cancer.

DanceBlue continues to grow exponentially on campus every year. We are now looking to expand and further involve communities throughout Kentucky. We have seen the change this cause has made in countless college students' lives and in our campus as a whole. We would like to share this lasting impact with Lexington high school students. It is our hope that the mini marathon will make as great a difference in your school and your students as it has here at UK. The dance marathon at the University of Kentucky brings together more student organization and students than any other event of its kind. We have experienced the connection this event brings to such a variety of students. DanceBlue has become an integral part of student life on campus.

Our job as the DanceBlue mini marathon coordinators is to bring the mission of DanceBlue to your high school and to assist your students in creating their own mini marathon. The idea is for high school students to create their own dance marathon. They will host a 6-hour or 12-hour mini marathon, also benefitting the UK Pediatric Oncology Clinic. Having experienced many of the challenges associated with planning such an event, we will be available to offer advice and guidance; however, we feel that it will be most beneficial for your student to take ownership and make this event his/her own. Your child's participation is sure to be beneficial in ways you never anticipated.

We hope that you will consider encouraging your child be a part of DanceBlue at their high school. We additionally will be looking for parent volunteers for the mini marathon event and hope that you will consider donating your time. With the help of area high schools and our yearlong fundraising effort at UK, we hope to see DanceBlue continue its unparalleled growth. We hope that your student's high school will be able to quickly get a mini marathon program underway. We will have more information to follow with volunteering and fundraising opportunities.

For the Kids,  
Maggie Smith, Jasmine French, and Kelsey Giurgevich  
DanceBlue Mini-marathon Coordinators