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DANCE All ages step out at marathon to fight cancer

Displaying moves from zumba to jazz, Cape Cod performers will dance their way Saturday night toward what they hope will someday be a cure for breast and ovarian cancer.

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Young dancers took the floor last year for the annual Dancing for a Cure Dance Marathon. The four-hour event for all ages takes place Saturday night. CAPE COD TIMES FILE

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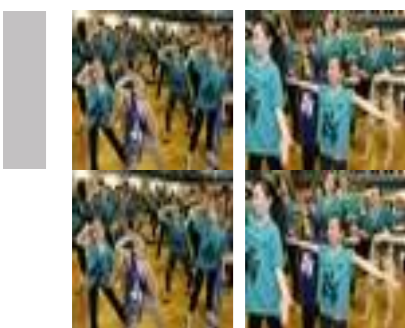
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Young dancers took the floor last year for the annual Dancing for a Cure Dance Marathon. The four-hour event for all ages takes place Saturday night. CAPE COD TIMES FILE



By Rachael Devaney
Contributing writer

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Displaying moves from Zumba to jazz, Cape Cod performers will dance their way Saturday night toward what they hope will someday be a cure for breast and ovarian cancer.

With WFRQ deejay Stephanie Viva on the mic, the **fifth annual "Dancing for a Cure" dance marathon** will provide four straight hours of

If you go

What: "Dancing for a Cure" dance marathon

When: 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday (with a related Zumbathon from 4 to 5:30 p.m.)

Where: Cape Cod Academy (upper schoo...

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open dance and choreographed performances. The benefit will raise money for Friends of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, as well as its Cape Cod outreach program.

The event, according to a press release, is loosely based on dance marathon fads of the 1920s and 1930s and will require that dancers stay on their feet for 20 minute at a time. The intervals will be broken up by water breaks and performances given by featured groups and organizations, including The Academy of Performing Arts, Cotuit Center for the Arts, Center Stage Dance Academy, Dance Designs and Dream Studios Cape Cod. There will also be appearances by the Girl Scouts of America and Big Brothers Big Sisters, as well as a New England Patriots cheerleader.

In addition, a warm-up Zumbathon will precede the main event. Ten area instructors will donate their time before the non-stop dancing begins.

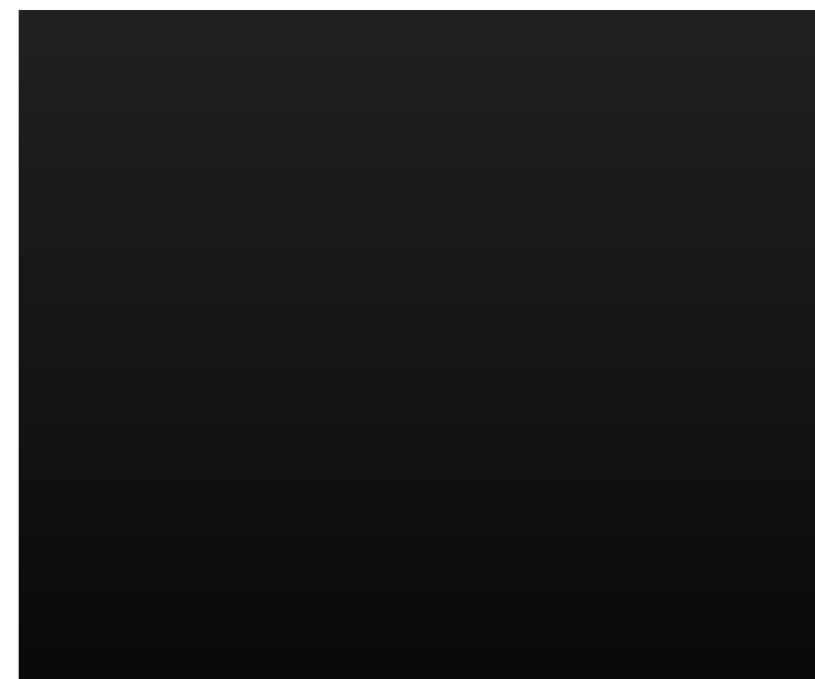
Susan Friedman, who founded Dancing for a Cure in 2006 in honor of her friend Karen Schek (who died in 2012), says the marathon brings "amazing" people together through a passion for dance and the desire to find a cure for cancer. She, designated "dance captains" and others will lead the "nonstop music and dancing" to music that ranges from pop to oldies and even line-dancing tunes.

During the evening, trophies will be awarded, she says, including "tiniest dancer," "best couple," "best male dancer" and even "most energetic."

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"Then, at the fourth hour, the event will close with Donna Summer's 'Last Dance,' and everyone will congratulate each other and go home," Friedman says. "Last year, there were about 300 dancers and this year, we are expecting at least 450 because of the Zumbathon and new groups that will attend."

One dance captain, Shannon Murphy, who has been involved with the event since 2006, says she will travel to the Cape from New York City where she dances with the Joffrey Ballet School - just to be part of Dancing for a Cure. She lost her grandmother and her cousin to breast cancer, she says, and can't think of a better way to honor their memory.

"Dancing for four hours could easily tire anyone out, but it is our job to keep all of the dancers energized, smiling and, most importantly, having fun. The upbeat dance songs and classic line dances help, but I think the fact that everyone attending this event gets to be a part of something so special is what makes it worth it," Murphy says. "At the end of the marathon, there is a feeling of accomplishment that fills the gymnasium but I mostly feel a great sense of hope and community. There is something so powerful about a large group of people coming together for a greater purpose."

While the Dancing for a Cure foundation was established in 2006, Jennifer Rako began the dance marathon in 2011, with proceeds going to Dancing for a Cure. Since 2006, other Dancing for a Cure events and the marathon have raised \$260,000 for Dancing for a Cure to help others in the community who are still fighting.

"We are still in touch with one of the researchers that we donated to and because of our funds, she was able to buy a machine she needed for her research," Friedman says. In addition, a Mashpee High School student had an opportunity to visit and shadow a Dana-Farber cancer researcher who received a large portion of funding from last year's "Dancing for a Cure."

She encourages the community to come together at the marathon for a wholesome night of fun and dancing that will help battle the debilitating disease.

"By the end of the night, my legs are cramping, and my feet and my calves hurt, but it is the most fun I have all year," she says. "The sad reality is that it's hard to find someone that isn't affected by cancer and while it's depressing and we lose a lot of people, we also have this event that inspires a feeling of camaraderie and sisterhood, which is a great and wonderful feeling. So come join us and help us find a cure."

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