

Morale

Objectives:

- **Recruit a committee of morale captains who will share the enthusiasm and excitement for Dance Marathon with all the dancers**
- **Take care of the dancers and keep them motivated and comfortable**
- **Design activities, games and the line dance to keep dancers cheerful throughout the event**

➤ The Dance Marathon Vision

- It is important that you become a resource on everything related to Dance Marathon. You will consult committee members, student organizations, campus administrators and businesses. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the duties and responsibilities of every committee.
- You are a spokesperson for DM. Discuss and represent the views of Dance Marathon throughout the campus and community.
- Make sure that you understand all rules/ guidelines set up by your school, the hospital, and even your community. These will guide you and your members need to understand the importance of following these guidelines.
- The responsibilities of a director are endless and limitless- you must learn to delegate. Many committees will work together to accomplish their responsibilities. Make sure your committee set-up is comprehensive and that one chair is ultimately responsible for each task.

➤ Committee Creation

- Chairs responsibilities can be time consuming. The majority of former Dance Marathon council members say the most important task they accomplished was selecting a strong council. After you relay the Marathon vision, the committee members carry this vision to reality.
- Involve as many people as possible, but make sure to assemble a committee that is dependable and energetic. Search to find individuals that are hard working and able to commit a large amount of time to fundraising for the kids!
- When faced with a great task, many of us find the urge to turn to our close friends. If you feel that urge when it comes to selecting your Dance Marathon council, try to resist it. The committee should be a diverse group that has the drive and determination to make Dance Marathon a hit. Use objectivity in your selection process. Just because someone is a close friend doesn't mean they are a good selection.
- Encourage students of all levels to apply.

➤ Run Committee Meetings

- Once the committee is selected, it is time to bring everyone together. This is a good time to get chairs comfortable with each other. Define expected actions and have them set goals.

- Make the first meeting fun. Conduct some ice breakers and team building games. These activities can immediately make you aware of committee members' personalities and how best to work with them throughout the year. Make the meetings motivational with members leaving feeling empowered to help the kids at Riley.
 - Teach the chairs everything about Dance Marathon. Every member must know all marathon information inside and out.
 - Be the critical eye and ear for your committee. Often chairs have great ideas, but they also have the tendency to get carried away. It is your responsibility to provide members with a reality check and help them design back-up plans.
 - Keep the students on track. Everyone has great stories to tell about the weekend, etc, but you are there for a purpose.
 - As you move throughout the year, you will be able to gauge how often meetings should be held. Some committees hold weekly meetings, some don't. This is up to you, however as it gets closer to the marathon (no less than three months away) each committee should hold weekly meetings.
 - Set your meeting day, time and place in stone. Attendance should be mandatory and it is helpful to send out a reminder one week in advance.
 - Be sure to construct a committee timeline and see that the president receives a copy as well as your committee.
- Design activities, games and the line dance to keep dancers cheerful
- Although Morale is in many ways the part of Dance Marathon that is the most fun, it is also one of the most crucial. Dancers will stay or go depending on how fun Morale is. It is important to start early to brainstorm ideas of games and activities that will add spice to your Marathon (Bungee run, Velcro wall, etc).
 - Once you have brainstormed, create a final list of games and the supplies needed. Work with the Marketing Director to find companies or individuals that would be willing to donate supplies and prizes.
- The Line Dance
- If you don't like country music you can breathe a sigh of relief. This is not the Boot Scootin' Boogie, although you could include parts of that in the line dance. This is something that is unique to your Marathon. The line dance is meant to be fun, upbeat and something everyone looks forward to. Try to make it somewhat easy to learn as you will be dealing with different ranges of personal coordination and rhythm.
 - Your committee can create the line dance or you can have council give their input. For example, the University of South Carolina had each member of their overall committee come up with a 30-second segment to whatever song they chose. Each song segment was spliced together onto one cd and the moves the committee members came up with was the line dance.
 - Whatever you choose, find music that is upbeat and actions/moves that involve light aerobic activity and stretching.

- Everyone on council needs to learn the line dance before Dance Marathon. Riley Families might also want to learn. The line dance is to help lift the dancers' spirits at certain times throughout the Marathon. Work line dance instruction into the schedule (small segments). Some will catch on quickly, and if you repeat it many times throughout the event, everyone will eventually catch on.
- Also, you will need to work with other committees to incorporate theme segments and the line dance into the marathon schedule.

➤ Theme Segments

- Theme segments are one way to add excitement to Dance Marathon. At certain intervals throughout the marathon, dedicate time to a specific theme complete with activities, games, music, food, and entertainment. Work with other committees to work out the details and make it your goal to get all supplies donated.
- One idea for theme segments is to use an overall theme. For example, if your event is 36 hours, Around the World in 36 hours. Dance Marathon could be a journey to a number of different locations, with each theme hour as a different country. Be creative and consider coordinating the segment with the entertainment and food. (See "Theme Segment Ideas" in this section.)

➤ The Morale Committee

- Morale members are more than the event cheerleaders. They are also the dancers' contacts and motivators before the event. Be careful though, while you will want outgoing, energetic people, you also want those who will be reliable and follow through on the assignments you give them.
- Remember, you are the inspiring, motivating group who support the dancers every step of the way! You design activities, games and the line dance- it is your signature at the marathon so be original!

➤ The Information Meeting

- Dancer Recruitment is in charge of organizing a Dance Marathon information meeting. This is where you take Dance Marathon to your fellow students. Morale's role at this meeting is to get everyone pumped up to be a dancer. Your part of the agenda could include a segment of the line dance or even all of it. It is a nice touch if the entire council could do the line dance at this meeting.
- Potential dancers will want to know what to expect during the marathon. This is your big chance to pass your excitement for the Marathon and the reason you are doing it (for the kids!). Explain that Morale is there to help throughout the entire event.

➤ Creating a Schedule

- Morale and other committees will need to work very closely during the Marathon.

Anything planned by Morale that involves bringing dancers together for organized activities impacts the master schedule.

- Creating a schedule is a strategic undertaking. Make the beginning of your Marathon as exciting as possible. The end should be just as big. Save the best activities and entertainment for between the hours of 1 am and 7 am. This is when your dancers will get very tired and will need some major excitement!
- Make sure everyone is constantly updated!

➤ At the Marathon

- Randomly divide dancers into fruit or vegetable, animal, or color groups of equal number with a morale captain over each group. Randomly assigning these groups allows for a mix of males and females in each group.
- Have the captain select a name according to whether the groups are fruits, vegetables, animals or colors. Each group picks the name beforehand and the morale captain and his or her moralers make a flag and come up with a cheer related to their name. At different times during Dance Marathon schedule groups to be in certain areas such as eating, massage/bathroom break, or dancer playground and rotate so every group gets a chance to be in each area.
- For example, at the University of Iowa, Morale captains are given a group of 15-20 dancers. The number of dancers in each group will determine how many Morale captains you need. Iowa has 33 captains because of they have around 600 dancers. The Morale captains meet with their dancers prior to the marathon to motivate them and help them find ways to raise their minimum dollar amount and more.
- This contact from the Morale captains allows for increased dancer retention before and during the event. Three or four Dancer Assistants (moralers) are incorporated and rotated into each group at the event. These individuals help keep dancers motivated and happy.
- If you decide to have your morale groups work rotating shifts throughout your Marathon, here is a successful example:

The Morale groups cover three to five hour shifts several times during the event. Usually a 24 hour event has three Morale teams who dance for four hours two times during the Marathon. If the event begins at 7 p.m., the first team will be at the Marathon from 7 to 11 p.m. and so forth. The easiest segment of Dance Marathon is the first few hours, and the most difficult portion of the event is during the early morning hours. It may be wise to have fewer Morale people at the beginning of the event and have all Morale people during the early morning hours. Also, overlapping the shifts works well.

- Morale members, as well as all other committees, are responsible for every dancer. Keep dancer safety in mind and be sure to take care of the dancers and keep them comfortable. You are the dancers' advocate.

*** Helpful Hints:

- Get morale out to dorms to blitz and promote!
- Master the timeline and the line dance!
- Think of all possible problems
- Have a list of fillers for all the captains
- Have weekly meetings with smaller morale committees

*** Remember:

- Always have a back-up plan!
- Delegate! Do not allow yourself to become overwhelmed.
- Act as a DM role model. You represent DM whether you are meeting with a potential sponsor, briefing campus administrators, or sitting in a class. Encourage all committee members to remember they are also role models; everything they do reflects on DM. Have fun but remember to never jeopardize the perception of your organization.

Do it for the kids!

Theme Segment Ideas

If you decide to go around the world, here are some suggestions:

- Greece - Toga Party
- Jamaica - Limbo Contest
- England - Royal Wedding Reception, wedding cake snack
- Italy - pasta dinner
- Ireland - Jig Caller
- Mexico - Hat Dance, Mexican food
- Germany - Jugglers, Bratwurst (hot dogs) or hoagies and chips

Around the USA:

- Nashville - Square Dance
- California - Beach Party
- Hawaii - Hula and leis, pineapple
- Atlantic City/Las Vegas - Casino Hour
- New York City - apple snacks

Other ideas:

- Your campus - cheerleaders, pep band, athletics, president
- Television - Love Boat, Brady Bunch, MASH, Fantasy Island, Simpsons, Seinfeld, etc.
- Countdown - Travel through the decades, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000. Morale people could wear costumes, teach a dance, serve food and play games from the era.

*** A lip sync or Karaoke contest are a great fit with these theme ideas as is the cook-off idea (See Catering section). Really, anything goes. All that's needed is creativity and ambition. Be sure to work with council members to include theme segments in the master schedule. Keep theme segments top secret. Share them only with the Morale committee, president and a few VP's.

*** If you wish to tie lip sync acts into designated theme segments, work with Dancer Relations to target groups and to assign theme segments. The groups could get really creative with their music, costume, and movements, but be careful not to divulge too much about theme segments. For example, at Penn State usually five to ten people perform in these groups. The group chooses an old or current song, dresses like the actual artists, dances like real performers, and mouths the words.

MORALE 101

17 Ways to Be a Great Moraler

1. Always remind dancers they are dancing for the kids that can't. Focus on the kids!
2. You are at Dance Marathon to serve the dancers. That's the primary role of the Morale committee. Dancers should be treated with respect, consideration, and admiration in return for what they are doing for the kids!
3. When entertaining the dancers, try to make it interactive. Initiate games, tell jokes, and talk with them, not at them. Learn the dancers' names.
4. Try to stay informed about theme hours, games and activities. If you can tell a dancer that something exciting is coming up or is happening somewhere else, they will find the energy to keep going.
5. Be alert and watch for distress signals. Look for such things as tears, disorientation, limping, facial expressions, falling asleep while standing, violence, abnormal talking and self-immersion. If a dancer seems to be in trouble, see if you can talk them through it. If they continue to have trouble or you spot physical difficulties, take them to the Emergency Medical Technicians immediately.
6. Be a happy face for the dancers. Never act bored or tired.
7. Keep the dancers moving, even if it's just swaying from side to side. Encourage dancers to stretch.
8. Don't act reluctant to give someone a massage. Sometimes dancers are too shy to ask. Offer to massage their back and feet. A massage is a great way to alleviate pain! When massaging, always cater to the dancer. What feels good to one person may not feel good to another person.
9. What is the slowest part of your day? How many times do you look at the clock? Watching the clock only makes time go slower. Do not wear watches on the dance floor. Ask any person wearing a watch to remove it. Its better that the dancers don't know what time it is.
10. Put your heart into every conversation and massage. The dancers can tell when you give it your all and it makes a BIG difference!
11. Massage in pairs. One moraler massages and the other moraler supports the dancer to keep their mind off their aches and pains!
12. Keep an eye on dancers that are having a hard time. If you switch shifts or leave the floor, make sure someone knows who to watch.

13. You are there for any dancer who needs your support!
14. Don't cluster with your friends. Go find someone who needs your help and encouragement.
15. Tell the dancers jokes and stories. Try to get them into conversations about things other than Dance Marathon; i.e.: Spring Break, Homecoming, etc. If they do not want to talk, leave them alone!
16. Never talk about sleeping, sitting, or going home while at Dance Marathon. Dancers can hear you and since they can't do any of these things, it may upset them!
17. Never tell dancers what time it is. Although they have some idea what time of day it is, you don't need to give it away. Dancers may become depressed if they find out how much time is left.

MORALE POINTERS

The morale committee is responsible for keeping the dancers cheerful and awake throughout the Dance Marathon. Here are some helpful hints as you work on planning the weekend

- Keep It Simple & Silly!
 - Think of games, events, themes, and activities that are simple to run and are entertaining. Think in terms of children and bring bubbles, cartoons, hoola hoops, finger paints, etc.
- Make sure that all dancers are given attention.
 - Be sure to think of that one person who may have decided to do this on their own and may not have an organization to support them.
- Have a “Bag of Tricks.”
 - Be prepared with a backup plan of activities or new games/toys in case you sense a lull or bad point for the dancers. All the best plans need flexibility. Make sure that someone is designated to make last minute changes... the Morale Director or maybe a “Super” Chair during each shift and communicate with the Entertainment committee You never know when a Band or other entertainment group may be late. ..BE PREPARED
- Train you morale groups.
 - Hold a training session for morale team members. Be sure that your morale teams, who are volunteers, are given guidelines on how to work with the dancers. It is important that they understand basic massage and stretching technique. They need to understand that they are there to support all of the dancers and not just their friends.
- Work with other committees.
 - It is important that you work closely with other committees on the schedule for the weekend. Marketing is important for getting everything on your needs list, so keep them informed. Let Operations/ facilities know if you have any special equipment or cleanup needs during your activities.
- Have FUN!
 - You are the silly, happy committee of Dance Marathon. Be sure to share your enthusiasm with other committees and the dancers.

Activity Suggestions

- Use committee members to form a human tunnel into the Dance Marathon site and cheer the dancers as they come through. This will help boost morale right from the beginning.
- A dancer playground is another wonderful diversion tactic and can be used in facilities with ample space. It is an area where dancers can play games standing up. Following is a list of activities in Indiana University's dancer playground: volleyball, basketball, ping-pong, Trivial Pursuit or other board games, 4-square, Win, Lose, or Draw on a chalkboard, video games, cards checkers/chess, a chalkboard to doodle on, foosball, a roll of butcher paper and colored markers, Nerf football, miniature golf, Frisbee/Ultimate Frisbee and paddle ball.
 - If you have a dancer play land, get tables tall enough for people to play the games so they don't have to bend over. Bar tables work well.
 - In a crowded place, people throwing hard footballs with questionable accuracy might cause some problems; therefore, Nerfs are a good idea.
- TV coverage is a HUGE morale booster. Try to time it right so morale-boosting events such as bands, Riley families, or TV coverage are at low periods.
- Use quotes or letters to inspire dancers to keep going. Encourage friends to write letters and send packages
- Come up with creative ways to get people to keep standing. Exec members walk from one end of the building to the other. By the time they get to the other wall, everyone is supposed to be standing.
- Create a message board at Dance Marathon for people to write notes to dancers. Hang poster boards or butcher paper near the dance floor. Invite everyone to write inspirational, humorous, motivational letters to help the dancers. Messages may be to a particular dancer or to all dancers. Allow dancers time to skip over to the message board and enjoy.
- A Morale Walk is a change of scenery. If there are corridors or rooms leading off your dance floor, decorate them according to themes. Then take either all the dancers or groups of 20 or so on a walk through the decorated areas. Have areas for them to stretch, write their names or something similar in each room. Do not take the dancers outside unless you are sure no one will make a break for it.

- Other Morale ideas can include:
 - Palm Reader
 - Someone who makes balloon animals
 - Comedian
 - Roller blading hour
 - Low Impact Aerobics
 - Square Dance caller
 - Marching band/ Cheerleaders/ Dance Team
 - Low ropes course

- Props for Morale Teams:
 - Kazoos
 - Wigs
 - Paper on walls to write
 - Construction paper
 - Boom balls
 - Magazines
 - Balloons (TONS!!)
 - Costumes
 - Crazy hats
 - Squirt guns
 - Sunglasses
 - Hand held electronic games
 - Comic books
 - Mini trampolines
 - Crayons and markers