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USC DM Executive Board Member Dancing For A Memory

(COLUMBIA, S.C.)- There are many reasons why we choose to volunteer. Sometimes it is a requirement for another organization; sometimes, it is just to become more active in the community. Or sometimes, volunteering is something you've just always done- a tradition. However, for sophomore University of South Carolina student Melissa Brantley, becoming involved in USC's Dance Marathon was not only a tradition, it was in her blood.

When Dance Marathon was first held at USC, there was one student in particular that made a significant difference to the event. "William Eli Busbee, my cousin, was on the organizational committee for the very first Dance Marathon at USC," said Brantley. "He held the position of Corporate Sponsorship Chair." During the time that Brantley's cousin was Corporate Sponsorship Chair, he set the bar high for future students that would hold this responsibility.

"He ended up raising \$10,000 from donations, advertisements, and sponsorships," said Brantley, "which was the highest amount of money raised by any single participant in the event." Due to Busbee's hard work, along with all other participants at the first event, USC DM set a high precedent of success for future participants.

Shortly after his time at USC, Busbee was unexpectedly diagnosed with cancer in early 2002. After a courageous battle, Busbee passed away less than a year later. After his passing, USC Dance Marathon honored Busbee by creating the William Eli Busbee Award. Each year, the individual participant who raises the most money for the event is presented the award during the closing ceremony.

A year after Busbee's death, his younger brother Brantley Busbee participated in Dance Marathon in honor of his brother. That year, Brantley Busbee raised the most money out of all of the participants, and was presented his brother's award by his parents at the closing ceremony.

As a freshman at USC in 2009, Brantley continued her family's tradition. "I was privileged to also receive this award," said Brantley. "As such a close relative to two young men who had such an impact on this event and on the lives of others, I wanted to continue in their honor by raising as much awareness as possible about Dance Marathon."



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Dancing For A Memory

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In keeping with tradition, Brantley is also currently serving as the 2010 Corporate Sponsorship Chair for the Executive Board of Dance Marathon. She hopes to not only raise money for the event in any way possible, but also to spread awareness of it through social media sites, local community networking and personal contact with community members. "I realize the economy makes giving tough for many, but every time I get discouraged or nervous about this year's event, I think about Will's willingness to care for others," said Brantley. "I know that whether we reach our overall goals or not, the efforts of thousands of university students together for one cause would mean the world to him."

BASIC FACTS

EVENT: USC Dance Marathon, benefiting Palmetto Health Children's Hospital

WHEN: Starting Friday, Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. and ending Saturday, Feb. 20 with a closing ceremony beginning at 6 p.m.

WHERE: Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center

SOCIAL MEDIA: www.twitter.com/uscdm
www.facebook.com/uscdm2010

For more information contact Dance Marathon's Media Relations Chair, Kayla Hildreth, or go to: www.uscdm.org or www.palmettohealthfoundation.org.

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