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Teens launch Dance-A-Thon as fundraiser for hospice

Hema Easley
The Journal News

A newly formed teen group is planning a unique fundraiser next month to benefit United Hospice of Rockland and encourage young people to become volunteers.

Youth4Hospice will hold the first ever Dance-A-Thon for the hospice March 14 at the Rockland Country Day School in Congers. The event is open to all high school students from Rockland, Westchester, Bergen and Orange counties who collect a minimum

of \$25 in sponsorships.

The idea for the Dance-A-Thon emerged soon after Youth4Hospice was formed a couple of months ago by Allie Denburg and Jamie Etkind, students at Clarks-town North High School.

Both wanted to be involved in community service and help the hospice, because they have a keen appreciation for the work the hospice does for the terminally ill and their families. Their mothers work for the hospice.

"My dad told me about dancea-thons held in the '80s to raise mon-

ey for various causes, and I thought it might be a fun way to benefit a local cause and involve kids in our community," Denburg said.

The hospice has embraced the concept, hoping it will bolster teens' interest in the hospice and nonprofits in general.

The teen group, which currently has about a dozen members, meets every Sunday to plan the fundraiser. They also help with office work at the hospice and other hospice events.

"I am delighted to have a proj-

ect that involves teenagers," said Amy Stern, executive director of the hospice. "I hope this becomes a springboard for other volunteer projects for the hospice, not just fundraising."

United Hospice of Rockland is a resource for palliative care, bereavement support and end-of-life issues. It provides care for patients with advanced illnesses and helps them pass the last days of life with care and comfort.

To encourage participation in the Dance-A-Thon, Youth4Hospice is hoping that the hospice will

offer community service hours as an incentive to teens who get sponsorships. Many schools have community service requirements for their students.

The group has put the suggestion before the hospice, which is considering it.

Students who raise \$50 or more will be entered in a raffle for a grand prize. The three highest fundraisers will also get prizes.

Reach Hema Easley
at heasley@lohud.com
or 845-578-2442.

If you go

What: Youth4Hospice Dance-A-Thon

Where: Rockland Country Day School, 34 Kings Highway, Congers.

When: March 14, between 7 p.m. and midnight. Snow date is March 29.

Registration for the Dance-A-Thon is limited to the first 250 people. Students may call 845-634-4974 for sponsor forms or more information.