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Dance Marathon 2011 Announces Beneficiary
Bettering the lives of children and families impacted by congenital heart defects.

EVANSTON, IL: - Northwestern University Dance Marathon is proud to announce the Children's Heart Foundation as its 2011 primary beneficiary and, for the fourteenth consecutive year, the Evanston Community Foundation as its secondary beneficiary. The Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) is the only organization focused on bringing health, hope and happiness to children and families affected by congenital heart defects, the most common birth defect in the world and the leading cause of birth defect-related deaths.

NUDM is thrilled to be working with this incredible organization for the second time in NUDM's thirty-seven year history. In 1999, NUDM helped propel CHF to the forefront of congenital heart defect research initiatives and established CHF as the go-to organization for funding of this nature. Following the success of NUDM 1999, \$320,000 was invested by CHF in vital research that has literally saved the lives of thousands of children and greatly improved the quality of life for these survivors. NUDM put CHF on the map in 1999, and in 2011, NUDM once again has the opportunity to enhance the future of this organization by helping to fund more life-saving research and several new projects that educate children and families impacted by congenital heart defects nationwide.

"We couldn't be happier to partner with CHF for Dance Marathon 2011," says Julie Sher, Executive Co-Chair of Northwestern University Dance Marathon. "This is an exciting opportunity to build upon a successful relationship and increase congenital heart defect research, awareness, and support."

CHF has eight chapters across the country and continues to expand its reach. The need for congenital heart defect research remains as urgent and vital as ever with more than one million infant deaths each year due to these defects. Annually, 40,000 children are born in the United States with a congenital heart defect - approximately one in 100 babies, or one child every fifteen minutes. Over the course of the next year, NUDM will work with CHF to build relationships and unite Northwestern's campus through creative and meaningful volunteer opportunities with "Heart Ambassadors," children whose lives have been saved by the groundbreaking research funded by CHF.

"The Children's Heart Foundation is incredibly grateful and proud to be named the primary beneficiary of NUDM 2011," says Bill Foley, Executive Director of the Children's Heart Foundation. "We look forward to working with the members of the Executive Committee, the

Northwestern students and the Evanston community to create awareness regarding the most common birth defect in the (world): congenital heart defects.”

In addition to funding more than \$3.6 million in research conducted by thirty-seven researchers at twenty-seven institutions since its founding in 1996, CHF also developed and published *It's My Heart*, a comprehensive resource book about congenital heart defects given to the parents of newly diagnosed children. With the help of NUDM, in addition to an increase in research funding, CHF hopes to publish 40,000 additional copies of *It's My Heart* to be distributed nationwide in the next year and continue work on an informative documentary to be aired on national television stations.

“CHF has shown through previous grant allocations that their support is continuing to make a significant impact on congenital heart defect medical advances and we are so confident that NUDM funds will be allocated toward very promising research in the field,” explains Catrina Miksis, Sher’s counterpart and Executive Co-Chair of Dance Marathon 2011. “We are excited that all fundraising efforts will make a direct impact on both children affected by congenital heart defects and their families through the organization’s support programs.”

For the fourteenth year, the Evanston Community Foundation (ECF) will be Northwestern University Dance Marathon’s secondary beneficiary. ECF builds and manages its own and other community endowments, addresses Evanston’s changing needs through grants, and provides leadership on important community issues. Thanks to consistent NUDM support, ECF offers more grant dollars than ever and now conducts a number of community programs each year. ECF provides participants in NUDM an unparalleled opportunity to connect with the Evanston community and helps to unite Northwestern University with the city in which it resides.

About NU Dance Marathon

Northwestern University Dance Marathon is one of the largest student-run philanthropies in the world. Since it was founded in 1975, Northwestern students have raised more than \$11 million for thirty different beneficiaries. Last year over 1,000 dancers and committee members raised \$854,396 through fundraising and in-kind donations and NUDM is working toward an even bigger and better Dance Marathon in 2011.

For more information about NUDM’s beneficiaries, please visit the Children’s Heart Foundation website at www.childrensheartfoundation.org and the Evanston Community Foundation website at www.evanstonforever.org. Additionally, for more information about this year’s partnerships as well as Northwestern University Dance Marathon itself, please visit www.nudm.org.

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