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Persuasive Essay

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Dancer's Against Cancer

One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. Breast cancer is a disease in which cancer cells form in the tissues of the breast. The damaged cells can invade surrounding tissue, but with early detection and treatment, most people continue a normal life. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women and the second leading cause of death among women. Each year it is estimated that over 220,000 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 will die. Although breast cancer in men is rare, an estimated 2,150 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and approximately 410 will die each year. Most everyone knows someone with cancer or at least affected by cancer.

I support breast cancer through a non-profit organization, Dancer's Against Cancer. DAC uses the art, beauty, and energy of dance to reach into our local communities and encourage the understanding and support of breast cancer awareness. Their mission is to help raise cancer awareness and give back to the smaller community based organizations. Dancers Against Cancer hosts shows in cities inviting the local talent to host a benefit show. The proceeds that are raised from admission tickets, silent auction, and donations are given to a local cancer support or research group.

Dancers Against Cancer was formed in 2006 by a dance educator, Jody Isenhour. Starting at a young age, Jody has been dancing throughout her life. After accomplishing her Bachelor's Degree in Ballet Pedagogy, Jody went on to successfully run her own school of dance in Oklahoma. At the age of 39, Jody was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Jody's Story

First you or a loved one finds a lump. Fear sets in. A mammogram is performed and you are told there is a suspicious area and they want to perform an ultra sound. The ultra sound is performed and again you are told it doesn't look normal and they want to perform a needle biopsy. A biopsy is performed and you know in your heart what it is, but you wait and you wait and you wait. Finally you get a call; it is cancer, and you cry and you cry and you cry.

Judy Isenhour is a cancer survivor. Despite the challenges of breast cancer, Judy kept a positive outlook. Instead of being defeated by cancer, she chose to make a difference. To help start the Dancers Against Cancer organization, Jody teamed up with Jessica McCarroll. A graduate with her Bachelor of Science degree in Dance Management, Jessica learned about managing non-profit organizations in college. She understood the importance of cancer awareness because breast cancer and other types of cancer had affected members of her family and friends. Together, Jody and Jessica decided to use dance as their way to encourage others to join in their support of breast cancer awareness.

Dancers Against Cancer has traveled across the United States to towns in the following states: Iowa, Oklahoma, Illinois, Texas, and Indiana. At these DAC events, anywhere from \$2,500 - \$9,000 have been raised. The money raised in a town is donated to a local organization of the host's choice. For example, Des Moines, IA raised \$5,000 and chose to give it to the Children's Cancer at Mercy Hospital. Dancers Against Cancer is working on planning more shows in states such as Florida, Maryland, and Arizona.

The dance competition, Talent On Parade, also supports Dancers Against Cancer. In each city that Talent On Parade holds a competition, they also host a dance down in which the

dancers pay ten dollars to participate. At the competition's National Finals, Talent On Parade presents Dancers Against Cancer with a check of \$10,000 that was collected from the dance downs throughout that competition season. Another supporter of DAC is a studio in Missouri, Bordeau Dance Studio. Every year they hold a dance-a-thon which donates about \$1,500 to Dancers Against Cancer. The funds from Talent On Parade and Bordeau Dance Studio are used to help offset travel and other expenses as well as people that reach out to DAC in need of help. As a total, Dancers Against Cancer has an annual revenue ranging from \$28,000 - \$30,000.

How can you help Dancers Against Cancer? In support of Dancers Against Cancer, you can donate money, sell DAC shirts, host a dance-a-thon, or host a show. If you would like to be a host or hostess for a show in your community, contact Jody Isenhour or Jessica McCarroll. You will need to find a venue that provides a stage for the Dancers Against Cancer event, preferably at no charge. Then, create and send a list of local dance studios, school dance teams, and dance companies that you think would take part in the DAC event to Jody or Jessica. Dancers Against Cancer will use the list to call or email the dancers to see if they are available to perform at the show. As a host or hostess, you need to contact local businesses to help get silent auction items and door prizes for the DAC show. By helping Dancers Against Cancer organize a show, you can raise thousands of dollars for a cancer support group or hospital in your area.

There are many organizations and charities that support breast cancer because it affects so many women and their families. Some well know organizations include The Breast Cancer Research Foundation, National Breast Cancer Coalition, BreastCancer.org, and the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade. These charities are very successful, but I would choose to support Dancers Against Cancer. Through a DAC event, you can raise money to be given to a specific cancer benefit in your area. When you donate to large foundations, it is not always clear how your

money will be used. With Dancers Against Cancer, you take part in planning and raising the donations as well as choosing which hospital or support group in your community to give it to.

In 2011, I participated in a Dancers Against Cancer show in Des Moines, IA. Having been in competition dance for many years, I had already participated in the dance downs at Talent On Parade, so I was glad to know we were asked to perform for a local Dancers Against Cancer benefit. I remember the DAC show being an overall great experience from the dressing rooms to the stage lighting. Those things were not what made the event important though. The dancers performing and the money spent on shirts were what contributed to raising money for breast cancer awareness.

I love to dance, and I always enjoy performing. I especially appreciated dancing at the Dancers Against Cancer event because I felt like I was giving more than a performance. In my opinion, that is the true intention for dancing, and why dancers continue to love what they do. When trying to explain my thoughts, this quote by Aubrey Lynch comes to mind: “To touch, to move, to inspire. This is the true gift of dance.” I believe dancing and sharing the art of dance can bring hope to others. People affected by cancer need that hope and inspiration that their lives can improve. That is why I believe Dancers Against Cancer is an organization unlike the others.

Along with my love for dance, I have another connection to the Dancers Against Cancer organization. Eight years ago, my grandpa, Bob, was diagnosed with CLL- bone marrow cancer. He has had many treatments, and so far, that is under control. With the exception of the negative effects of the treatments he received, my grandpa continued to live a normal life until recently. My grandpa was diagnosed with neuroendocrine cancerous tumors one month ago. On Wednesday, February 27, 2013, he had a five hour surgery to remove the 2 tumors. Thankfully,

the surgery went well, and we hope that he continues to progress. My grandpa's cancer has changed my grandparent's and my family's lives, and it is not always easy for him to cope with. Even so, he has not given up hope, and he has received much support. He has always been a funny guy, and cancer hasn't stopped him from telling jokes. My grandpa has not lost hope, and we will continue to pray for his recovery.

Dancers Against Cancer was founded by Jody Isenhour to help spread the hope and support for conquering breast cancer through the love of dance. Jody's husband once said, "There was a reason you had breast cancer". If Jody hadn't had cancer, Dancers Against Cancer would not be in existence today. I believe that DAC should be supported because the events provide for local organizations and support is shown through love for dancing. Dancers Against Cancer is a great opportunity to unite so many people, and I hope in time it can reach people across the country.

"We dance for laughter,
We dance for tears,
We dance for madness,
We dance for fears,
We dance for hopes,
We dance for screams,
We are the dancers,
We create the dreams."

