

## Power Of Purpose

Joe Cornell's Joe's Crew kids raise \$5,100 for Kids Kicking Cancer.



Members of Joe's Crew dance up a storm at their recent fundraiser.

**Lynne Meredith Schreiber**  
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**W**hen Steve Jasgur and Becca Schluskel created Joe's Crew, a leadership initiative for self-selected students in their Joe Cornell sixth-grade dance classes, they hoped 10 kids would sign on.

They were floored when 52 kids volunteered. And when participants raised \$5,100 for Kids Kicking Cancer, the benefiting organization of their Jan. 18 dance-a-thon, Jasgur and Schluskel were thrilled — and proud.

"Joe Cornell is a company of the community, for the community," says Jasgur, company president. "Our Joe's Crew initiative was the perfect opportunity for students to demonstrate social responsibility."

Joe's Crew started this academic year as a way for Joe Cornell students to build leadership skills and give back to the community. The kids opted to dance for an hour straight for pledges and they decided which local children-focused charity to support. The students also guided the planning, budget and promotional efforts for the event.

The dance-a-thon took place at Orchard Mall's Center Court in West Bloomfield. The mall sponsored T-shirts and mall merchants Guys N Gals and Frameable Faces Photography donated 10 percent of the evening's sales to Kids Kicking Cancer. Go Balloonies donated balloons and Carnival Treats donated fresh popcorn to the event.

Raffle prizes for Joe's Crew kids were donated by Zap Zone, Tone E Creative Video, Marvelous Marvin's Mechanical Museum, Frameable Faces Photography and Kids Kicking Cancer.

The top-earning Joe Cornell class was the Monday night Congregation B'nai Moshe group taught by Jared Goldman; they collectively raised \$2,300.

A handful of students raised more than \$500 including Rachel Wasserman (\$600), Blair Bean (\$500) and Caitlyn Newman, Sarah Fradkin and Lexie Kay (\$775 as a trio).

Jared Moss, a sixth-grader at Walled Lake Walnut Creek Middle School, is considering planning an additional fundraiser himself. His mother, Alyssa Moss, said, "He went home feeling very good about himself. Thanks to Joe Cornell for helping to inspire at least one kid."

"It was great for kids that age to see a fundraiser through from beginning to end," says Marcy Wasserman of West Bloomfield, mother of Rachel Wasserman. "I felt great about Joe Cornell wanting to give back to the community — this took a lot of effort on their part to get the kids

together, organize meetings and really accomplish something."

"It was a great event," says Rachel, 12, a student at Orchard Lake Middle School in West Bloomfield. "It was pretty cool that we set a goal of \$3,500 and we way surpassed that. If the next year's Joe Cornell kids get a chance to do this, I would definitely encourage them to say yes."

Blair Bean, 11, a sixth-grader at Warner Middle School in Farmington Hills, agrees.

"I wanted to get involved because I like to help everybody and I want to make a difference," Blair says. "It was fun and I felt really proud of myself. We all did."

The fundraiser began with a group from Kids Kicking Cancer performing martial arts. They were introduced by KKC founder and national director Rabbi Elimelech Goldberg and KKC president Lila Lazarus.

"When others see the heroic focus of even little children, their lives are changed," Goldberg says.

"All of us here at Kids Kicking Cancer are truly touched by the support of the Joe Cornell group," says KKC instructor Peter Davenport, 28, of Southfield. "Our goal at KKC is to touch lives and build relationships, and hopefully we now have a long-lasting one with Joe Cornell." □



Best friends Rachel Wasserman, 12, and Alexis Michaels, 11, both of West Bloomfield

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