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Dance Big Red raises nearly \$50,000 for Norton Children's Hospital

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Western Kentucky University students raised \$49,774 on Feb. 26 to support pediatric heart care at Norton Children's Hospital during the annual Dance Big Red event.

Similar to last year's event, Dance Big Red was held virtually over Zoom and Facebook Live for the safety of all attendees amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to co-chair Briley Barks, the goal for the seventh annual student-led dancing fundraiser was \$40,000.

With more than 400 registered participants, along with sponsors, families and community members, the fundraiser topped the group's initial goal.

"Seeing that we raised \$10,000 over our goal, it just swells my heart that we could raise that money for those sweet kids," said Barks, a WKU senior.

The event is usually held in-person and takes place for an entire night. Due to the virtual setting amid the pandemic, Dance Big Red was condensed this year to a four-hour fundraiser.

Dance Big Red has held various fundraising events throughout the year, including spirit nights at local restaurants and its first-ever online auction.

The executive members planned a virtual Ted Talk series called "All Talk, No Dance," reaching more than 200 students, to give awareness to their mission due to limited in-person campus outreach. Organizers also participated in a virtual tour/presentation of Norton Children's Hospital last summer.

"The passion among the WKU student leadership planning Dance Big Red 2021 was evident as their vision and drive pushed the virtual event forward once again," Norton Children's Hospital's Western Kentucky Communication Project Manager Dana Matukas said in a news release. "Since the inaugural event, Dance Big Red has raised over \$330,000 for Norton Children's Hospital. Dance Big Red will forever be part of the family at Norton Children's Hospital. Their dancing is saving lives."

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