

## **Dance Fund-raiser for Camp Ta-Kum-Ta set for Friday**

The St. Albans Messenger, Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004

On Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> over 30 local partner dance enthusiasts will perform in a dance demonstration showcasing their favorite dances during a fundraiser for Camp Ta-Kum-Ta, Vermonts' camp for children who have, or have had, cancer. The dance showcase fundraiser will take place at the Elley -Long Music Center at St. Michaels College in Colchester, VT. The show will begin at 7:00, and will be followed by a brief lesson in Waltz, and open dancing until 10pm.

Camp Ta-Kum-Ta is a week-long residential camping experience for children, ages 7 to 17, who have, or have had, cancer. Founded in 1984, Camp Ta-Kum-Ta is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year of serving Vermont children. Camp Ta-Kum-Ta was named when children talked about the Camp in a clinic waiting room at the hospital. One child was too young to attend, and said in frustration, "but I wanna camp ta come ta." That child's wish became the camp's name, Ta-Kum-Ta, and that child is a long-time camper who is now a Camp staff member. Camp TaKumTa is funded entirely by private donations, is staffed completely by volunteers, and offers its programming at no cost to the children.

The fundraisers' organizer, Kevin Laddison of St. Albans, knew nothing about Camp Ta-Kum-Ta last year. "Last February I heard about a fundraising dinner-dance, and went just for the dancing. While there I met a previous Ta-Kum-Ta camper, and a couple of the volunteer staff and learned about the camp. It struck a cord with me because I have a friend in Connecticut whose daughter is a survivor of childhood cancer, and I know it would have meant a lot to both of them if they had access to such a wonderful opportunity. I wanted to do something to support Camp Ta-Kum-Ta and decided to organize a dance related event to raise funds for the camp."

Laddison approached other local dancers and dance instructors with the idea of putting on a showcase demonstrating their favorite dances, and over thirty people volunteered to perform in the show, with many others offering to work behind the scenes. Although most of the dancers involved have been dancing for years, some like Joyce Sweetser have only been taking classes since April. Sweetser said she is participating in the showcase because she feels she's been very fortunate and blessed in her life and this fund-raiser is something she can do to give back to our community and to promote a great cause, Camp Ta-Kum-Ta.

The cause is more personal for Emily Hackett and David Fortin. Although they are getting married the week following the showcase, they decided to become involved with the Camp Ta-Kum-Ta fundraiser in part because of Hackett's relative, Elaine Adel Kotoch. Elaine had been battling cancer for four years when she died on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 at the age of 16.

Based on the support shown for this fundraiser among the partner dance community Laddison plans to continue this event in future years.

Tickets are \$20/person and are at [www.Flynntix.org](http://www.Flynntix.org), and will be available at the door. Further details about the Showcase can be found at [www.firststepdance.com/news/takumta.php](http://www.firststepdance.com/news/takumta.php), or by calling Kevin Laddison at 802-598-6757.