

Drill team dances through Del Norte with clinics

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Dozens of children in neon T-shirts too long for their height danced around to Bruno Mars's voice blasting from an iPhone speaker into the football field.

The Drill Team Del Norte saw a large turnout Tuesday for their biannual Kids Dance Clinic at the Del Norte High School football field.

Over 40 children, from kindergarten through eighth grade, attended the event from 5:30-7 p.m.

Led by drill team members, kindergarten through third graders learned simpler, age-appropriate routines. The fourth through eighth graders learned a more complicated hip hop routine.

"It makes me happy to share dancing. It's a passion of mine to share that and maybe spark some of that," said Lylee Diehl, a sophomore at Del Norte High.

Attendance fluctuates each year, but this year organizers were surprised by how many children showed up, according to Melanie Clifton, the team's coach. "I think it really depends on the weather," Clifton said. "So, this is actually a really good turnout for us."

The children learned their routines, then performed them during the Friday football game, the last home game of the season.

The clinic is one of the drill team's many efforts to raise money throughout the year for their annual dance camp. Every summer, the team takes a trip to a college campus, stays in the dorms, and learns dance routines

they then perform during the varsity basketball season. Last year, the team went to Long Beach State University.

“It’s a big opportunity for the members to go to a university... It gives them that sparkle in their eye when they see what dorm life could be like, going to college, especially for some who may or may not have decided to go to college,” Clifton said.

“It creates memories. For a lot of these members, this is their family.”

Since the travel costs add up, team members raise money with candy bar sales, beef stick sales, bake sales, car washes and, yes, dance clinics. They offer two dance clinics yearly, one for football season and one for basketball season.

The next dance clinic will take place Feb. 4, before the final home basketball game on Feb. 6.