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JM Dances to Defeat ALS

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Photo Andy Scheck

ethnic, or socioeconomic boundaries.

For the Leadership students the project was an opportunity to learn about ALS, how to make event planning decisions, and how to raise money. "We decided on a Hawaiian theme for the dance and made all the decorations," explained one of the students, "in order to save money, (another student) burned a CD with songs that others submitted; that way all the money collected from the dance can be donated."

The Dance to Defeat ALS raised \$4,000 for the ALS Association.

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The Leadership Class at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School recently organized a "Dance to Defeat ALS" - a fundraiser supporting the ALS Association's research efforts to find a cure for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Entry to the dance, and a pink ALS wristband, was gained by students or parents making a donation to the ALS Association.

The Leadership Class at Joaquin Moraga (JM) is composed of 19 students. As part of their curriculum, the students decide on projects they want to support. One of these students, Oliver Ousterman, lost his father to ALS four years ago. "There are medications to help slow down the process," said Ousterman, "but nothing has been found yet to stop it."

Jerry Gruen, who teaches the Leadership Class, explained, "Often referred to as Lou Gehrig's Disease, ALS is a progressive, fatal, neuromuscular disease that slowly robs the body of its ability to walk, speak, swallow and breathe. The life expectancy of an ALS patient averages two to five years from the time of diagnosis." Every 90 minutes someone in the United States is diagnosed with ALS, and every 90 minutes someone will lose the battle against this disease. ALS can strike anyone, anywhere in the world, and has no racial,