

Spring, 2008

Dear Parents,

I have realized that parents want to know who is coaching their child! Here is some information about me: my background and my philosophy as a cheerleading coach.



## **BIO**

I began my education at Divine Child Elementary School. I often refer to myself as a "lifer" because I attended DC for 12 years. While at the high school, I was on the JV and Varsity Cheer Teams and I also ran Track. After graduation, I attended Madonna University where I earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and Sociology with a Secondary Teaching Certificate. I currently teach in the English Department at DCHS.

I have been a cheerleading coach for nine years (2008-2009 will be my tenth). I began coaching at St. Robert Bellarmine in Redford and then moved on to coach at DC, where I have been for the past eight years. I have coached or assisted with every level, 5<sup>th</sup> grade through Varsity, but my true passion is 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Divine Child has always had an extremely powerful cheerleading program and I look forward to carrying on that tradition this year and for years to come.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

It is often said that, "cheerleading is the fastest growing sport in the United States." I believe that to be accurate. Luckily, I have been able to watch this sport grow through the last twelve years. To explain further, and as most know, Divine Child Cheerleading is recognized around the state of Michigan as being strong in tradition and talent. Collectively, DC supports four cheer teams every year. Last year (2007-2008), those teams consisted of 71 cheerleaders. There are not many schools in the state that can say the same about the strength of their program.

### **The Cheer season**

Divine Child Cheerleading is split up into two seasons, Sideline or Football and Competitive or Basketball. Our sideline season begins with try-outs in May and continues until the first weekend in November. Competitive season follows with try-outs in November and continues through the end of March. While on the Junior High Cheer Team for the sideline season, cheerleaders attend camp in July at Lawrence Tech University, cheer at home and away football games, and compete in November at the CYO Fall Championship. During competitive season, cheerleaders cheer at home boys and girls

basketball games and compete up to four times at various schools in the metro-Detroit area. At the end of the season, the cheerleaders compete at the CYO Championship. Last year, the DCJH team was runner-up.

### **What does it take to be a cheerleader?**

So, how does one become a cheerleader at Divine Child? Well, the best place to start is in the elementary school. As a coach who has been around for awhile, I look for a few things when selecting my team. We start with the skills, which are taught on day one. While at try-outs, athletes are taught a short sideline cheer, jumps (toe touch, herkies, hurdlers, and pike), splits, heel stretches, tumbling (walkover and handspring), and stunting. Athletes are expected to try-out in pairs on days two and three, and are expected to perform all skills, even if a few of those skills require a spotter.

Next, I want to see potential, a positive attitude, and a willingness to learn and grow as a leader and a teammate. Cheerleaders are expected to "lead crowds," but they are also expected to lead their classmates and the community with their attitudes. This comes as a surprise to most girls that try-out for cheerleading, but my coaching staff and I can sense an athlete's attitude from the moment that they walk through the gym doors.

### **Commitment to the sport**

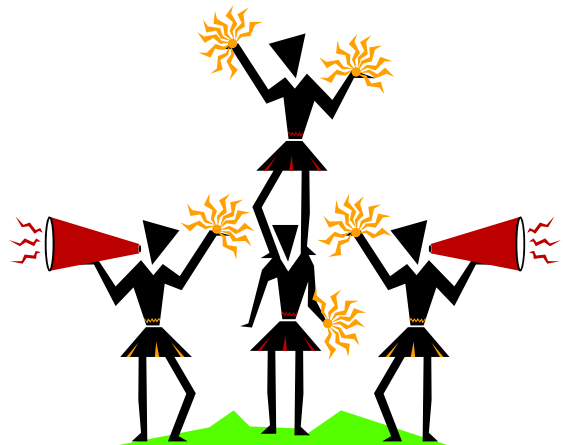
After three days of try-outs (sideline or competitive), my coaching staff and I meet with the cheerleaders and the parents. We explain the many aspects of cheerleading, including cost, time commitment, and support. Typically, the cheer team

practices three times a week, attends gymnastics once a week, and cheers at a game or competes each weekend. It is a big commitment, but if you ask any of the girls involved, they will tell you that it is definitely worth it.

### **More than just talent**

As a cheerleading coach, I truly believe that it is my responsibility to instruct girls to believe that they are more than just talent. They are role models, leaders, and the future of Divine Child High School. I am responsible for providing a safe outlet for girls so that they feel as though they can and will be successful. I can honestly say that cheerleading helps athletes to be stronger individuals, who know what they want out of life and know the ways to achieve their goals. They will know how to work with people, communicate, and complete tasks because cheerleading is the epitome of a "team sport."

A cheer team is not successful unless all of the members are present. Each girl is a necessity and that is reinforced daily. Cheerleading builds individuals who are athletically sound and mentally tough. I



hope that after reading this information that you will encourage your daughter to try-out for the cheerleading team. I can assure you it will be a decision that she will not regret.

Cheerfully,

Head Coach Angela Kraetke and the DCJH Coaching Staff

Do you still have questions?

Email those to: [kraetkea@divinechildhighschool.org](mailto:kraetkea@divinechildhighschool.org)