

# THE SPOTTER

## THE "OFFICIAL" NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CHEERLEADING COACHES' ASSOCIATION

Happy Tax Day! I have always found that to be an oxymoron, but now that I work in an office with accountants, I see it differently. And just like that, my perspective is different, which seems to be a theme in my life these days.

Be sure to read Sarah's article a couple of times today, then come back and read it again in the future. If you're starting to think about State Championships...read on!

~ Kenna

### SNEAK PEEK OF WHAT'S INSIDE:

*Gratitude -- pg. 1*

*Gratitude (con't.) -- pg. 2*

*State Ready? -- page 2*

*Competition Team Tryouts*

*-- pg. 3*

*State Ready? (con't.) --*

*pg. 3*

### Lessons in Gratitude

- When I called to check in on my paternal grandparents, I would ask my grandfather how he was doing, and his response would always be the same, "Well, I woke up today, so I'm great!"
- Rachel Hollis has 1.8 million followers on Instagram and has built an empire with her popular journals and mindset training by asking you to start every day with five things that you are grateful for.
- When I write, coach, or speak, I often reference being CheerFULL vs Cheerempty.

In all of the above references, I want to clarify a point. It does not mean everything is perfect for my grandfather, Rachel Hollis, or Sarah Buss. It means that we all find the value and importance in identifying the good in every day, even though every day may not be good.

Right now, we are all having to learn how to be gentle with ourselves and give and allow grace to enter in. Anxiety is high with an uncertain future of not only what tomorrow's press conference, weather, and mailman/Amazon delivery guy (Bless them by the way!) will bring, but what will next week, this summer, and next fall look like? During this time I need you all to remember you are loved and valued no matter how you feel right now. When down, I have always found comfort in the quote, "The things you take for granted are the things other people are praying for. Be thankful for all the positive things you have in your life." That always changed my perspective. (Continued page 2)

## Gratitude, Continued....

Let your GRATITUDE be your compass. Your work dress code is sweatpants. Your children are home. You have time to read. You can now add "Zoom meeting tech" to your resume under skills. You don't have to rush anywhere. You can start a dream board on Pinterest. You can take a long walk without asking. You are safe. You can office from the couch, your favorite window, or snuggled next to a dog or human. You have friends and family who are like you, yearning for contact, so now you have more time than ever, so you should FaceTime, call or write them. You can pick up a new habit or skill, like meditating, yoga, or baking the perfect pie crust. You can finally print and sort all the pictures off your phone into a Shutterfly book or prints for your frames. Find the silver lining,....because you woke up today!

You can also create gratitude. This perhaps, more than ever, would be the time to pick up a pen and write letters to those whom you consider your inner circle, those that you admire from afar or even to surprise someone who would not be expecting a letter from you. And if words to construct a page-long note isn't your thing, send a text. **Showing gratitude creates gratitude.**

To clarify again, gratitude isn't about perfection. It is being thankful for the moment, the simple things and the big things. The way a friend hugs you and holds tight, when your mother kisses your cheek when saying goodbye. It could be finding the lid to the Tupperware on the first try or the fact that someone other than you changed the toilet paper roll that day instead of leaving the cardboard tube on display as if it's art. Maybe the things that you have gratitude for are some of the things that you miss right now the most? That is ok. Just the act of acknowledging it and how much you appreciate something or someone is a positive action.

Regardless, **gratitude is free and something no one can quarantine you from.** So I urge you all to take some time to practice identifying it, giving it, sending it, and living with its warm comfort that there is so much good to be thankful for despite these current trying times. I'm grateful for you, always and forever and no matter what.

Warmly,

~ Sarah Buss, Central District Rep.

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*Best Coaching Advice was from my husband: If you are going to take teams into the world of competition, get used to being disappointed. There will always be calls you don't like or fully understand. Learn! Find the positive and share it! Move ahead. The sun will come up tomorrow.*

*~Jeanne Ehn, Executive Director*

## How to Know If You're Ready for State

~ Melissa Hatfield, All State Director

November may seem like it is a long way off, but now is the time to start thinking about the ICCA State Championships. Now, this doesn't mean you have to pick your competition team, have choreography done, or have your music all set. This just means that you should starting to think about what your process will be to make sure you are getting your team ready and prepared for a great State Championship experience.

If you are a new coach, start to familiarize with what the State Championships have to offer. If you have a very experienced team and you are ready to jump in right away, look at the Cheer/Dance division that your school size fits in to. If you're not that brave, starting with the Time Out division might be the way to go. Young teams and new coaches who want to get into the "groove" have found that starting with the Time Out division is a great way to start competing. The kids can see what it takes for a longer, more skill-filled routine, and as a coach, you can start to estimate the time commitment running a competition team would take.

Some coaches have competed for years, and ICCA thinks that is wonderful! You need to assess your team and see what their strengths and weaknesses are. Do you have a squad that can do any stunt you throw at them, or a team that can tumble circles around everyone else? Where is your team going to shine and where will you need to work with them a little more? Have a timeline of when things need to be checked off the list. Are you going to have certain pieces of your routine done by certain dates or how are you going to practice? Daily, every other day, etc....? (Continued page 3)

# How Do I Do Competition Team Tryouts???

~ Jeanne Ehn, Executive Director

This is a year of firsts. One of the above tryout options would work, but consider this option instead this year. Make this a year of giving opportunity! A very wise person told me, "Opportunity is one of the greatest gifts we can give to those we teach and coach." So what does this mean? - When someone shuts the door of opportunity, it opens the door for another to have an opportunity. Think of it this way:

- Opportunity leads to learning and skill improvement.
- Opportunity leads to friendship. Old friends sure, but most importantly, new friends. Friends and fun! Those friends can turn out to be lifelong friends. Or even a friend that someone can turn to get help in times of need. How many times do kids just want to have fun with their friends? This is an opportunity of friendship.
- Opportunity leads to greater understanding and leadership. It goes from the understanding of skills, to helping another person, to understanding a person's personality, to literally understanding the purpose of "giving opportunity" (what you are doing as a coach). All of which gives the opportunity of leadership. Helping others understand.
- Opportunity creates risk, followed by joy. Many times we are afraid of the opportunity to try something new (the risk). However, as understanding happens, risk is replaced with joy and new learning. Some might say, "We can still fail." Yup, that is true, but even in failure there is learning. Think about learning to ride a bike or learning to tie shoes. Fail, fail, fail, and suddenly there is success! As a coach you help cheerleaders to take a risk, to understanding, and to learning. YOU as a coach, can't be afraid to fail. Give the opportunity!
- This is an Opportunity of a greater purpose. Think of this entire Covid-19 situation. These are times of different thinking and trying new things. The first couple weeks we were so worried about what was going to happen in our home, going to work, educating children, being stuck inside, etc. Things are slowly changing to new and different perspectives. Learning has a new look. We are learning we can do the quarantined thing with success. The opportunity to make a change to how you pick a team is now. Cutting cheerleaders only creates hard feelings as much as we want to believe it does not. It leads to confidence being destroyed. This year, take advantage of this new opportunity to give a greater purpose to your cheerleaders. Forget about losing and think about winning opportunities. There are things many to win.

How to pick squads? In two simple words - don't cut. Not cutting will lead to opportunity. As a coach commit to giving a place for everyone who wants to participate in competition. Next, be honest with the entire squad and parents by giving them the plan of opportunity! Cheerleaders (with parents' approval) who want to be involved sign up to be considered as a competitive team member. As a coach, you have that list. Instead of having a specific tryout, the tryouts happen everyday at practice. Coaches see what skills are developed for each individual. Find a place for everyone. Why cut a few? Max your team sizes. When one division is full, move to the next, etc.

Right now there are some screaming RUBRIC and choreographing the routine. Both are issues to deal with. My guess is 95% of you could name 75% of the team right now. If there is room in the division team, don't cut but fill it. Take the stress off yourself and the kids. Fill it and DO NOT cut it later. Set up the choreography date and give opportunity. If you have more cheerleaders than a division allows, max fill and then move on to the next division. For the record, it is perfectly fine to have high expectations. Bring everyone along and don't leave anyone behind. There are few greater things than hearing, "I never thought we could do this, but WE DID!"

Make this a year of opportunity. A year of building skills and learning. A year for friendship and fun. A year of leadership and less stress. Make this a year of risk, understanding, and joy. Make this the year of greater purpose. I'm not talking about cheerleaders now; I mean you as a coach. Give yourself the opportunity, too. "Opportunity is one of the greatest gifts we can give to those we teach and coach." You will find it is a gift for yourself as well

.I'm cheering for ya!

~Jeanne

## Ready for State (continued)

As a coach, I think it is important to make sure your team is READY to make the commitment. You can work as much as you want to, but if your team is not on board, the experience won't be what it should be. Stay on board with progressions and work on perfecting skills before making them too hard. Make it fun!

Some suggestions are to have help picking out music, "show off" some of the routine at football games, have team bonding, but also work hard at practice. Practices should be focused and everyone needs to be present, including YOU!

Summer will be here before we know it and then you will have to start to prepare for making a decision about State Championships. Why not work on things now for a better experience later? Good luck!!