

Cheerleaders get a kick out of this clinic

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

GENEVA — Underneath their smiling faces and enthusiastic chants, cheerleaders invoke a work ethic not unlike the teams for which they root.

This frequently overlooked factor was evident on Monday, Oct. 26, when 41 young girls attended a four-hour cheerleading clinic at DeSales High School, 90 Pulteney St.

"I went out to pick up the pizza, and when I came back the girls were sweating pretty good. They really got a workout," said Andrea Evangelist, the clinic coordinator.

"A lot of the girls thought it would be fun, but didn't think it would be that much work," added Kathleen Lamson, a DeSales cheerleader who assisted at the clinic.

The event was geared toward girls in grades 5 through 8. They came from three Catholic elementary schools in the Finger Lakes area: St. Francis/St. Stephen's, 17 Elmwood Ave., Geneva; St. Michael's, 320 Main St. S., Newark; and St. Mary's, 16 Gibson St., Canandaigua.

This is the second year the clinic has been offered. According to DeSales cheerleading Coach Ted Russell, the program was initiated in the fall of 1991 "because we had just ordered new uniforms and we needed to do a fundraiser. Then we had such a good response that we decided to do this again."

With assistance from all 23 DeSales varsity cheerleaders, last Monday's clinic was divided up into four stations: jumping drills, gymnastics, sideline cheers and dance routines.

Many of the younger girls who took part are cheerleaders for their winter CYO basketball teams at St. Francis/St. Stephen's, St. Michael's and St. Mary's. Other clinic participants were attempting organized cheerleading for the first time.

The morning workouts were followed by a pizza luncheon, which signified the festive atmosphere that was



Erin Lanphean of St. Mary's School, Canandaigua, was among 41 Catholic school students in grades five through eight who participated in an Oct. 26 cheerleading clinic sponsored by the DeSales High School varsity cheerleading squad.

S. John Wilkin/Photo intern



DeSales freshman Kathleen Lamson helps Julie Faben of St. Mary's School, Canandaigua, with a few moves from a new routine.

mixed in with all the hard work. Julie Faben, a 10-year-old fifth-grader from St. Mary's, said her favorite parts of the clinic were "the gymnastics and pizza."

Evangelist noted that organized clinics such as these can produce positive long-term effects for the DeSales cheerleading program, since many who participated in the clinic might eventually attend the Catholic high school in Geneva.

"They get to know the DeSales cheerleaders and start to follow them," said Evangelist, whose daughter, Mackenzi, cheers for DeSales.

Russell added that the experience helps younger girls decide whether they want to continue to pursue cheerleading.

"They find out that cheerleading is not an activity that anybody can do; you really have to be an athlete," Russell remarked.

A teacher at St. Michael's, Russell has built an outstanding program at DeSales. The Saints cheerleaders won the Finger Lakes West title last winter, and went on to take third place in the Section 5 Class DD "cheer-off."

"These girls do take their cheerleading pretty seriously," said Russell, who was named sectional Coach of the Year last season.

Lamson has been able to view the clinic from two perspectives: she participated last year as a student (she was a St. Francis/St. Stephen's eighth-grader at the time), and has now assumed the role of clinic assistant.

"High school cheerleading is a lot different from grammar school," concluded Lamson, a 14-year-old DeSales freshman.

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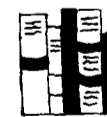
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