



# **NEWSLETTER**

## **News From the President - Stacy Smith** **MCJA: 241 Members Strong!**

Thank you to those of you who continue to renew your memberships year after year and those of you who are new MCJA members. We are an association on the grow. Every week, and recently everyday, we get emails and phone calls from new officials looking for a mentor or an official's training. Our list keeps growing! Thank you to those of you who are offering to mentor and those of you who are helping during the mentoring experience.

With less than two months before the start of the 2009-2010 Competitive Cheer season, there are just a few things we should reflect upon.

MCJA takes pride in training officials and wants these officials to be known as professional. What does it take to be recognized as professional? If you sign a contract for a meet you are expected to honor that contract. If you are directly affiliated with a team or have coached within the last 12-18 months in a certain division, it is probably not ethical to judge those schools. Collaboration is crucial and expected. Mutual support through a professional approach when officiating will improve the quality and direction of cheer as a sport.

Professionalism is not only in the way you dress but in your interactions with others. How you interact with other officials in your crew is important. With so many new faces this season and with us being a part of educational athletics, it is important to offer a hand to each other. You may not know the individual in black and white sitting next to you...but you can offer your hand and introduce yourself. It could be someone's first time at the judging table!

Being approachable is another component to being professional. After all, we are involved in educational athletics. There are many new coaches. There can be different interpretations to some rules. Be proactive and prepared. Learn to de-escalate situations and concerns. Monitor your own emotions. Let it be our goal that when people leave a cheer event, the most talked about things are the athletes' performances.

As we enter this new season, we are not only going to focus on professionalism but also communication. It is the hope of MCJA to frequently share information across the state as often as possible. MCJA will strive to connect and communicate with other regional associations state-wide when there are concerns, clarifications desired or when a clarification has been issued. We want to stay connected with MHSAA, new officials, veteran officials and coaches in competitive cheer. The sharing of information is critical to promote consistency in scoring and interpretation of the cheer manual.

I encourage all of us to do a self-examination of our own strengths, be willing to reach out to new or unknown professionals in competitive cheer and enter this 2009-2010 season with a fresh perspective. Let's walk into gyms and arenas around the state with a new appreciation for the individuals surrounding us, be it a coach, official or athletic administrator. Let us communicate effectively and make this a great season for the athletes that work so hard to provide stunning performances week after week!