

■ WHEELING

WPHS Cheerleaders Raising Money With First 'Little Miss/Mr.' Contest

By JOSELYN KING
Staff Writer

Wheeling Park High School cheerleaders are working to help a youngster to become the first "Little Miss" or "Little Mr." at WPHS, and raising money for their cheering program in the process.

There are 15 cheerleaders on the square, and each has paired themselves with a youth that is a candidate in the contest, explained cheering coach Shawna Shepherd.

Each twosome is working on a project to raise money for the cheering program, and the young candidate garnering the most money takes the crown.

The winner will be announced during the WPHS-Brooke football game on Oct. 22.

Proceeds raised will be used to pay for the cheerleaders' competitions, uniforms and choreography.

Shepherd said most of the cheerleaders and their partners are writing letters to businesses and friends asking for donations, utilizing online fundraising resources or organizing raffles.

But cheerleaders A.J. Walters and her teammate, Mirabella Seabright, a first grade student at Steenrod Elementary, are high-kicking their efforts to drum up support. They also saw the fundraiser as an opportunity to help a community organization.

From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, Walters and Seabright will be at Quaker Steak and Lube at The Highlands for a "coats and coins" event.

They are collecting new and gently used coats that will be donated to those in Ohio County Schools who need them, and to the Youth Services Systems Freeze Shelter.

In addition, they will be accepting coins to benefit the cheerleaders.

"They wanted to give back as well as fundraise," Shepherd explained of the duo. "And Quaker Steak will be donating 10% of their profits to the cheerleaders."

"Mirabella will be at the event collecting coins. So when you're looking for coats to donate, check the pocket for coins and donate it to the 'Little Miss.'"

Those interested in contributing coats or coins but cannot make the event should Venmo their coin contribution to @Fawn-Thomas-3, or call Thomas at 304-281-0077.

The cheerleaders selected their teammates from those attending their cheering camp in early August, and participants are between the ages of 5 and 12.

Shepherd said if the program goes well this year, it may be expanded next year to contain more age groups.