

Alton High School Cheerleaders Launch Fundraiser

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - Alton High School's cheerleading team is asking the community for help as they fundraise for new uniforms and tumbling mats.

"They deserve the best," head coach Megan Hodge said of her cheerleaders. "These kids are putting in the effort. They could be out running around with their friends, but instead they are working really hard because all of them have a goal to go to college and cheer. They're very dedicated."

There are 34 athletes in Alton's cheer program. The team works year-round, with practice three or four times a week on top of football and basketball games. They also compete on weekends starting in November. Some of them have been cheering since sixth grade.

"We literally lift each other up," Hodge joked. "We spend so much time together that we're just a huge family. All of my kids are very close. They're all best friends, and they are so committed."

Hodge explained that the cheerleaders have had the same uniforms for six years. Additionally, the varsity team has "some of the most advanced tumbling that Alton's seen in quite a few years," so she wants to aid their progress with new tumbling mats.

The fundraiser started on Aug. 16 and will run through Sept. 13. The team hopes to raise \$10,000, which will get them about halfway to their goal. New uniforms and tumbling mats will cost approximately \$22,000.

Hodge knows it's a big goal, but she hopes they're able to reach it and provide the students with new equipment. She is incredibly proud of her team and looks forward to the year ahead.

"I tell them I have hundreds of sons and daughters at this point, because every year my new kids that come in are like my children," Hodge said. "And I always tell their parents, you guys pretty much share these kids with me. They're my children, too. I love them to death. They are wonderful, every single one of them...It is absolutely a family."

Those who want to donate can do so at [this link](#) or find the fundraiser on the team's [Instagram profile](#). For more information about the cheerleading team, visit their [official webpage](#).