

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Pointers for new dance team parents

Have you ever said, "Well, if I had known ahead of time..."? Since you may be new to the dance team experience, we, as "seasoned" parents, would like to share some things that we have learned. We hope our experience will help make your first year on the Cougar Stars go smoothly.

Being on the Cougar Stars is a major commitment of time and energy for your daughter and, at times, for parents as well. It's an exciting time - watching your daughter perform, achieving her best, although at times, you may wonder, "How much more can we cram into one week?" Take the opportunity to become a part of this phase of her life. Become involved...make some marvelous memories together. Share these years, and enjoy them!

HOW CAN SHE DO EVERYTHING?

Helping your daughter juggle everything: grades, practices, performances, social and family events

We found these "stress-minimizing" suggestions helpful in staying on top of everything that needs to be done.

1. Help your daughter stay organized. Invest in an inexpensive monthly planner and encourage her to write **everything** on her calendar - assignments, as well as school, dance team and social obligations. Each team member is required to maintain a team notebook. Inside this binder should be all handouts that are given.
2. Mrs. Watassek gives the girls monthly calendars. These calendars contain all sorts of info that you need: rehearsal and performance dates, birthdays, and social events. You can also find the monthly calendars on our website. Print one out and put it on your fridge for reading while you're standing there trying to decide what to cook for dinner.
3. Other handy information to watch for is the weekly calendar. This calendar contains the more specific information about what to wear, special clothes for the day, rehearsal and performance times and locations. These

calendars are to remain in your daughter's notebook. You should have no problem finding the information if she is staying on top of her organization.

4. Self management is a "biggie." If she doesn't already budget her time wisely, this is the perfect opportunity to learn and practice self management. For example, suggest to your daughter that she take advantage of time between school and other commitments to knock out some of the shorter homework assignments; encourage her to pack her school and dance team bag in the evening before going to bed. Her wise management of time will become a major asset when things become the busiest.
5. Encourage your daughter to keep up with her school work and not get behind in assignments. Tutorials are offered at school. Take advantage of them. If there is a potential problem in a subject, tutorials can often help before her grades slip below passing. When there is a borderline grade situation, sometimes showing up for tutorials carries weight with teachers. It shows the teacher that your daughter cares about that subject. However, tutorials should not be scheduled during rehearsal times.
6. If she receives a failing grade, she becomes ineligible to perform. This is a major disappointment, especially at contest times, when she has put so much time and energy into learning, practicing and polishing routines.

UP AND DOWN WE GO

Dealing with moods

1. Support your daughter, and encourage her to keep going when the "going gets tough." The toughest times are in October around week 9 or 10 of dance team and in February and March during dance contest season. At some point every young lady will have something she just absolutely "hates" about dance team. The life lessons to be learned during this time are so critical ~ responsibility to the team; commitment; perseverance; the list goes on.
2. Expect mood swings, especially during contest season when they work so hard and there is so much to do. The girls get very tired and cranky!

3. Encourage your daughter to work as "part of the team."
4. Encourage your daughter to be constructive and positive in her ideas and suggestions; offer encouragement and support to other team members. It often helps them find the good in the situation.
5. If your daughter does a solo, encourage her to work on her own at home so that she will be most confident when performance time arrives. Help remind her that dance is different from sports in that by competing, the performer is soliciting an adjudicator's opinion. Not every judge will love every style or every performance. It is all part of the game!
6. A special tip for parents of girls who do solos: they never start working on their solos as soon as we think they should!!

EAT AN APPLE INSTEAD

Keeping a healthy dancer

1. Make sure your dancer eats healthy food and takes vitamins, especially during the winter dance contest season.
2. She needs to drink a lot of water - don't live on sodas.
3. Your dancer needs to get plenty of rest when she can. This is true all the time, but especially during contest season.
4. Insist that your daughter take a water container filled with water to outdoor practice. Buy a good container with a handle. During those hot practices, she will be glad she has her own water (she may not admit it, but she will). Fill the container with lots of ice. She can put it in her dance locker during the day and then fill it with water just before she goes out to practice.

DO WE NEED ALL THIS STUFF

Uniform tips and handy stuff to have in a drill team bag

1. Wash most drill team items in cold water with mild detergent. Hang to dry. This makes the items last longer and they won't lose their color so quickly. The field uniform pieces with sequins are NOT washable - you will need to have it dry cleaned when necessary.
2. Very fine grade sandpaper will do a good job of cleaning the makeup off the field uniform hat. Gentle use of sandpaper is advised. The string on the hat is washable.
3. You will probably have to replace tights, jazz shoes and toe undeezs during contest season. There will be an opportunity to do this through the directors; please do not go out and purchase them on your own as the color of the shoes makes a HUGE difference on the contest floor.
4. Have your daughter put her name or initials with permanent marker on the tag inside everything that you have bought. The school owns the field uniform and team costumes, so don't write in those.
5. The field uniforms remain at school. From time to time, we will allow them to go home to be washed.

The Bag

The Cougar Stars drill team bag is an amazing thing. You thought it was just something else to purchase. In fact, at times, it contains your daughter's life. Occasionally, take a trip through it. Look for all those notes about events and calendars she meant to give you. During your daughter's drill team life, this bag will go almost everywhere she goes with everything she needs in it.

1. The drill team bag is washable by hand with warm water and mild soap. Hang to dry. After a few football games and contests...these bags can get a little smelly!

2. Essential items for the drill team bag: hair brush, Kleenex, feminine products, deodorant, scented body spray, container of bobby pins, safety pins, hair nets, drill team makeup, drill team poncho.
3. Several handy things to also keep in the drill team bag (these are all optional): band-aids; bottled water; extra pair of socks; extra pair of tights.

I NEED GIFTS FOR TOMORROW

Ideas and tips for gifts

From time to time, the girls will exchange gifts for one reason or another. Please know that they are always told about this several weeks in advance of the event. Stay on top of them to communicate to you ahead of time instead of the night before.

1. Holiday Party / Progressive Dinner ~ we do a gift exchange; everyone brings a gift that is under \$15.
2. Nationals Contest ~ the girls will exchange gifts with their roommates
3. Officers give gifts periodically throughout the year...officer parents, all of these will be decided on at officer retreat. Make them purchase them early.
4. There will be certain times throughout the year that the parents will provide gifts for their daughters. These will be communicated ahead of time.

OTHER STUFF YOU WONDERED ABOUT

More FYI for Moms and Dads

1. Come to as many performances as you can. Believe it or not, the girls look up in the stand for you. It means a lot to them if you are there, even though they never mention it.
2. Plan to attend dance contests in the spring. Bring the families - grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, cousins...everybody!! The girls love to know you are all out there watching them dance their hearts out!

However, be prepared for the entry fee for every person attending. The entry fee generally runs \$5-\$15 / person.

3. Purchase Cougar Stars paraphernalia. Wear them to the games, contests, and other events. This helps to promote team spirit. It's great to help find each other in large crowds at contests and your daughter can always find you when she needs more money.
4. To earn points toward a letter jacket, a rating of Division I must be received on a solo.
5. Solos are optional but worthwhile, if your daughter is interested. If she desires to audition for officer, she is required to do a solo at designated contests and to receive a Division I rating on her solo at one of the contests Mrs. Watassek advertises.
6. Doing a solo can become expensive. Each contest has an entry fee (\$25-\$100); this fee is the responsibility of you (or your daughter if you wish). In addition, she must provide her own costume. The costume can be as extravagant or plain as you wish. She does not have to have a different costume for each contest. Borrowing a costume from other members or renting one from Mrs. Watassek is an alternative to purchasing one for yourself.
7. Sometimes solos are performed at contests where the whole team does not perform. In this case, you are responsible for providing your daughter's transportation to and from the contest.
8. **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS!** If you or your daughter has a question, the first source of information should be her Officer. If they can't answer your question, the Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel will be glad to help. Tremendous sources of knowledge are the booster club board members. Most frequently, they have the answer and if not you can always call the dance room or e-mail Mrs. Watassek.
9. Take lots of pictures. Capture the moment on film then share them with others. You will have no trouble getting the girls to pose for you. We will

be asking for pictures from every team member throughout the year. You will definitely want to make sure you have some to contribute.

TIME AND FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED

Committee and other stuff for parents

The best way to know what is going on is to get involved and become part of the "action". The Cougar Stars parents are one of the most active parent groups at CRHS. Cougar Stars Booster Club is known as an enthusiastic, fun organization that accomplishes a lot in support for the dance team. Each parent is a vital part. Cougar Stars Dads are important helpers and are always invited to join in the fun. We've had a number of Dads help decorate the dance room for contests, glue sequins and head pieces and build props. This organization is very "parent friendly" and we can not succeed without participation from everyone! Remember, if things need to get done and parents aren't there to help, it is your daughter who loses out.

MOST IMPORTANT

This booklet was compiled from the thoughts of many of our parents. These quotes seem to sum up our thoughts:

"Most important thing of all - HAVE FUN!"

You are important to your daughter and the team. Never underestimate your part! Have a great time!"

"You will enjoy being a part of the Cougar Stars as much as your daughter. Drill Team NEVER ends."

Having my daughter on the Cougar Stars has been a wonderful experience. It's a fun group of hardworking girls and supportive parents. Enjoy the years...they are gone before you know it!"