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### **Romeoville Youth Cheerleading Brings Home Two State Championships**



The girls that make up the four cheerleading teams of Romeoville Youth Football & Cheerleading (RYFC) had quite the year, culminating in State Titles for the Peewee and Widget age groups. "This has been a special year," said RYFC Vice President Carl Muma. "I think we knew from the beginning that we had a special group of girls. This has been the best we've done in the five years since I've been involved. We've had good teams in the past, but nothing like this as a program."

This season's success is much more than just the championships. Teams must participate in other competitions throughout the year to earn an invitation to the State Finals, which is a three-day

tournament. The better you do in the season competitions, the more points you earn, and the later you perform in finals. This year, all four age groups earned enough points to perform on the last day of finals. That in itself is a great achievement. The girls participated in three season competitions this year and collected nine first place finishes and three second place finishes. At State, the Peewees and Widgets both took first place, the Lightweight took third, and the Varsity placed second.

“As a community, we’re incredibly proud of the hard work the girls and coaches put in this year,” said Mayor John Noak. “We also have to recognize the dedication of the parents. It takes teamwork from every level to build a successful program like this.”

About five years ago, the cheer program started to do things differently. When Cheer Director Tara Gjerde and Assistant Director Lynn Love took over, they changed from just cheering on the sidelines at football games to doing sidelines and competitions. They started training and recruiting coaches and working with the kids on a daily basis. They also built support from the parents, who are heavily involved.

“Next year, the goal is to bring home all four state championships,” stated Muma. “We’ve set the bar much higher after their performance this season. We don’t want to go backwards. We hope people see we’ve got a great program with great coaches and that more kids will want to be a part of it.”

Registration for the RYFC takes place in February, but anyone with questions can call organization President Jennifer Kohhut (708-305-0866) or Vice President Carl Muma (815-210-5227).