

Bishop Walsh cheerleader stands out

For 17-year-old Charlotte Thomas, the best part of being a cheerleader is supporting other students - both the players in competition and fellow cheerleaders.

"I really love that we're always there for them," said Thomas, a senior at Bishop Walsh School in Cumberland who first began cheering at age 7. "The players say we get them motivated."

Thomas is active in many aspects of cheering, particularly tumbling, dance and serving as a base for stunting. She knows the other squad members rely on each other.

"It's your job to catch the other person," she said. "You can't get scared and leave. It's not about you."

Kathy Blados-Wolfe, Bishop Walsh's cheerleading coach, said Thomas is a "very smart leader" who listens before making a judgment.

"She is a quick learner and the other members of the squad look up to her," the coach said.

Thomas is the co-captain of the squad. She joined other members this summer at the Universal Cheerleaders Association Summer Camp at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Thomas was one of a few participants chosen for the "Pin it Forward" award that honors a cheerleader for demonstrating leadership, spirit and commitment to excellence.

A parishioner of Ss. Peter and Paul in Cumberland, Thomas attended Catholic Heart Work Camp this summer in Boston, where she spent a week working on home repairs for the poor. She participates annually in Bishop Walsh's "30-Hour Famine" to raise awareness on world hunger.

A member of the mock trial team, Thomas also is secretary of the National Honor

Society and a member of the French and art honor societies. She holds a 4.1 grade point average and has applied to several colleges with hopes of studying biomedical engineering.