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TopCats Join Open House at New Foster Home

[James, East Coast Correspondent](#) | Published on Feb 4, 2012

By Brittany Penland

[The Charlotte Observer](#)

As part of their work with community organizations, two Carolina Panthers cheerleaders helped promote an open house for a new residential foster home Saturday.



The TopCats cheerleaders visited

Jyra's Angels, a foster home in Concord that will open shortly to serve the needs of six teenage girls.

The home was established by Shemeca Dogan to create a positive and healthy lifestyle for young women ages 13 to 18. "It's a residential foster home, and I want these girls to feel like they are at home," Dogan said.

The three-bedroom home is decorated with inspiring quotes, flowered shower curtains and purple bedspreads. Dogan said she will begin

searching through foster care applications from the N.C. Division of Social Services in the next two weeks to select girls to live there.

At the open house, cheerleaders Jenny, 23, and Kiswuana, 22, (they are contractually forbidden from giving their last names) spoke about being positive role models.

“It’s important to never give up,” said Jenny. “You are going to face hard times, but you have to stay motivated.”

They also spoke about body image and leading a healthy lifestyle. And they signed photographs for \$5 each that will benefit Jyra’s Angels.

Their first guests at the open house were members of a youth cheerleading team from Salisbury.

“I’m just looking forward to having fun and learning about cheerleading,” said Chanel McManus, 11.

The team’s cheer coach, Katrina Oliver, said she brought her team to visit the TopCats so they could learn how to follow their dreams. The youth squad also performed two cheers in front of the TopCats.

The open house is one of 150 community appearances the TopCats make throughout the year, said Riley Fields, the Panthers director of community relations.

“Whether it’s making hospital or school visits, supporting community and corporate events or through the TopCats’ own outreach programs, the squad helps the team connect with fans throughout the year,” Fields said.

During football season, the women spend up to 20 hours per week working as TopCats, which includes practicing twice-a-week, attending football games and making appearances – on top of their regular jobs .

“My most memorable event was going to Levine Children’s Hospital during Halloween and dancing for the kids in the lobby,” Jenny said. “I will never

forget that.”

During their Jyra’s Angels appearance, TopCats also talked about the Junior TopCats program, which invites 300 girls ages 7-14 from across the Carolinas to team up with the Panthers cheerleaders and participate in three cheer clinics. Participants also can perform a halftime routine during an NFL game.

“I hope our girls at Jyra’s get to participate in things like Junior TopCats,” Dogan said. “I know I’m not going to be their parent, but I want them to be involved in positive activities in the community.”

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