

**Blitz**

# OFF WE GO



The Vindicator/William D. Lewis

**BIRD BRAIN:** Becca Wagner, 17, removes her 'Big Red' head for a moment to smile in the halls of Canfield High School. The senior will be the school's mascot for the upcoming year.

# Big Red mascot is dream come true for Canfield High senior

*Becca brings excitement, new ideas to her role as the Canfield mascot.*

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CANFIELD — Becca Wagner set a goal during her freshman year at Canfield High School.

It wasn't to become the valedictorian or excel on an athletic field. Her main goal was to don a giant bird costume and dance for the amusement of a crowd.

Mission accomplished.

"It's always been my dream to be the cardinal," Becca said.

Becca achieved her goal when she was announced as the 2008 Canfield cardinal, Big Red.

"I was like a little kid on Christmas when you get that shiny, red bike," Becca said of the announcement. "I kind of ran into the



**A BIRD IN HAND:** Cheerleader Brittany Ruse leads "Big Red" down a hallway of Canfield High School.

halls and kind of screamed a little bit. Then I joined all of my friends and there was a big circle of screaming girls."

Each year, Canfield names a senior as the school's mascot. Becca, 17, said she was hon-

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## CANFIELD

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ored to take part in the tradition of being Big Red. She added that she already has big plans for her new role.

"The little kids are the future of Canfield football, so I'm going to pass out candy to them at the games," Becca said. "I'll also be dancing with the band, be in the student section and tailgating with people before the game."

Not only is Becca ready to take over the traditional cardinal antics, but she's also thought of some new ideas to help with the cardinal mystique.

"This year I have decided that we are going to start a tradition [at Canfield] called the 'Crazy Cardinal Makeover' for fans," Becca said. She explained the event as finding a male and female fan at the game and "turning them into cardinal fans" by painting their faces, spraying their hair and dressing them up in Canfield gear. Becca said she would then take their pictures and put the photos up in the halls of Canfield High School for the season.

Though Becca has big plans for her new gig, she hasn't set anything in stone as far as a routine.

"This is my first year, so I just think of ideas



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**MASCOT CALL:** Becca Wagner, the young woman in the Canfield High School mascot outfit, takes a break from her dream extracurricular activity.

like [the makeover]," Becca said. "But during the game, I'm probably just going to grab some people and run around with them. I'm a spur-of-the-moment kind of girl."

Canfield Athletic Director Greg Cooper said Becca will help the spirit of Canfield through her role as Big Red.

"To have a young lady who really wanted to do this is just great; it's special," said Cooper. "For her to be able to do this, it's going to mean she's going to be good at it because she actually wants to do it. It's a community event because of the people like her that make it a community event."

Cooper said he couldn't think of a better candidate for Big Red than Becca. Becca said she fits

the role because she was “born and raised in Canfield” and is a huge fan.

“I just have so much spirit, it’s out of control,” Becca said. “I’m an insane Cardinal fan ... I love exciting people. I can’t wait to rile people up.”

When she isn’t wearing the Big Red costume, Becca is involved in many facets within the high school. Becca is a senior adviser for the student council, is involved in Key Club, Y-Teens, drama and choir, and throws the shot put as a member of the track and field team.

Becca has gained support from not only Cooper, but also from a former cardinal mascot. Susan Hunter, who graduated from Canfield in 1985, knows Becca through her time as a substitute teacher at the school.

“I think she’ll be great,” Hunter said of Becca. “I think she’s a great choice because she is always very energetic and always has a lot of spirit.”

Hunter and Becca know the importance of what it means to Canfield to be Big Red.

Being the mascot “means you’re representing Canfield and school spirit,” said Hunter. “[Big Red] is more about spirit and fun ... it’s more about energy and working the crowd and being positive.”

Becca said she’s normally wild and crazy anyway, and that being Big Red will only add to that.

“I am the biggest goofball, and everyone knows it,” said Becca. “But the [mascot] head will really just step up my game.”