

# 2025 Application for the Inspiration Award for Principals, Coaches, ADs, and Community Supporters

Application Due date- November 14th

Name

Dr. Rob Spencer

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Cell number

(770) 827-5336

High School with which you are associated

Seckinger High School

What do you do for this school?

Teacher / Head Competitive Cheerleading Coach

Rob Spencer- Seckinger HS- coach

Nominated by: Wayne Brooks [wbrooks@jcass.us](mailto:wbrooks@jcass.us)

Rob inspires others through his excellence. He has really set the bar for standards in competition cheer throughout the years. I know most coaches look up to him as a pioneer in the sport, and he just encourages all of us to be our best each year. I have had the privilege of doing stunt clinics with him, and he inspired my team and me to be the best we could be, and it helped us achieve higher placements than we had had before. He is a fantastic coach and person.

## GHSA Inspirational Award 2025-26

Dr. Rob Spencer – Head Coach – Seckinger High School

### My Story...

My mother was a ninth-grade dropout who became pregnant at the age of 15. She married soon after and gave birth to my oldest brother at 16. By 18, she had a second child but soon after, she found herself alone. Her husband was sentenced to eight years in a local prison for breaking and entering and assault with a deadly weapon. With no job, no education, and no job skills, my mother fell on hard times.

She found temporary support and comfort with an old neighborhood friend. She stayed with him for about 6 months until she found out she was pregnant once again. Nine months later, I would enter the world. Born out of wedlock...a bastard child, I would begin my journey through life.

Out of desperation, my mother made a difficult decision. She left my two older brothers in the care of their grandmother, packed up our beat-up old Chevy, and set out for California, hoping to start a new life. With me lying across the front seat, she drove across the country, stopping in small towns to earn whatever money she could. She took whatever work was available cleaning houses, working as a waitress or janitor anything to scrape together a few dollars. When she had enough for gas, she'd grab me and we'd hit the road again.

It took weeks, but my mother made it to California. She was out of money and desperate for help. She met a man who owned a local barber shop who was willing to lend a hand. He offered a deal: she and I could stay with him as long as she kept up the house and ran errands. For the next few years, we lived with this stranger while my mother worked to get back on her feet.

Eventually, she met someone and got married. I was three and a half years old. We moved out of the barbershop owner's home and into an apartment. My new stepfather was an eighth-grade dropout who could neither read nor write. He struggled to hold down jobs in manual labor, and we found ourselves bouncing on and off welfare, regularly evicted from one shabby rental to the next. My mother would have two more children with him.

By the age of nine, I began to realize that our lives were far from normal. We were constantly on the move, often getting kicked out of wherever we were staying. Sometimes, we would split up and stay with friends or relatives until my stepfather saved enough money to rent a place. We slept in cars on abandoned lots for weeks at a time. We washed up in gas station bathrooms before school. We stayed in rundown \$10-a-night motels that were filthy, to say the least. We rode our beat-up bikes for miles just to get to school. Life was hard and I was angry most of the time.

In my family, school wasn't a priority. The unspoken expectation was to drop out by 15 or 16 and get a job. Passing classes or learning anything at all was optional. For my mother, school was nothing more than free babysitting. It meant someone else fed and watched her kids while she



**SECKINGER**  
HIGH SCHOOL  
Athletic Director / Assistant Principal  
Kelli Poff

**To Whom It May Concern,**

It is with great pride and appreciation that I write this letter of recommendation for Coach Rob Spencer, our Competition Cheerleading Head Coach at Seckinger High School.

When I accepted my first role as an Athletic Director, I was tasked with hiring head coaches for every sport as we prepared to open a brand-new high school in Gwinnett County. I will never forget my very first interview in that role—Coach Rob Spencer. From the moment we sat down, it was clear that I was speaking with someone special. His insight, passion, and vision for what our cheer program could become left a lasting impression on me. I walked away from that conversation not only confident in his abilities but wiser for having listened to him.

Coach Spencer's resume speaks volumes. He is, without question, one of the most decorated competition cheerleading coaches in the state of Georgia, with multiple region and state championships to his name, 19 & 10 respectively. However, what truly sets him apart is his ability to build programs from the ground up. He has successfully established and led three different cheer programs, each time laying a strong foundation for long-term success. Anyone who has ever started a new school, team, or program understands the challenges and the level of commitment required to do so at a high level—and Coach Rob has mastered that process.

As we launched Seckinger High School, I knew our competition cheer program would require patience, vision, and a leader who could inspire and guide student-athletes through the growing pains of a new beginning. Coach Spencer was the perfect fit. His expertise, steady leadership, and genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of young people made me confident that our program was in the best possible hands. I was thrilled to hire him and even more proud to announce to our community that we had secured a Hall of Fame-caliber coach to lead our SKG cheer program.

Since day one, Coach Spencer has exceeded every expectation. He brings a quiet confidence and humble demeanor that instantly earns respect. He embodies the values we hold dear at Seckinger—what we call *The Seckinger Standard*. He has worked tirelessly to ensure our competition cheer program is not only respected but also competitive. Yet, beyond the accolades and hard work, it's the intangibles that truly define him.

Coach Spencer's calm presence, even in the most challenging situations, is a source of strength for his athletes. His thoughtful approach to leadership and unwavering commitment to doing what's right have made him a mentor not only to his team but to fellow coaches and staff as well. I've witnessed firsthand his integrity and compassion, especially when navigating difficult decisions involving student-athletes. His ability to lead with empathy and fairness is a testament to his character.

Coach Rob is fully invested in Seckinger High School and has become an integral part of our community. His influence reaches far beyond the cheer mat—he inspires excellence, builds character, and fosters a culture of respect and accountability. We are incredibly fortunate to have him on our team, and I am honored to recommend him without reservation.

Sincerely, Kelli Poff

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kelli Poff'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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stayed home and got an early start on drinking. Cigarettes, beer, and other drugs were constant fixtures in our home. While we often lacked food, we never ran out of beer or cigarettes.

My oldest brother would drop out in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. My second oldest brother would somehow make his way through a remedial track and graduate from high school at the age of 20. My two younger brothers would drop out in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and get involved with local street gangs. They would be in and out of juvey and then prison most of their teenage and adult years. Meth addiction really held them back as they battled just to survive.

Dysfunctional would be an underrepresentation of my family life as a child and teenager. Everything was harder than it should have been. You never knew where you were going to sleep or if you would have dinner that night. Emotional, mental, and physical abuse were normal. The thought of coming home was uncomfortable and always made me feel uneasy. I would rather be anywhere else than at home. When high school rolled around, that would change for me.

I thank the good lord every day for sports in general but more specifically, for high school football. I can say without a doubt that football saved me from a life of impoverishment, despair, and hardship. It gave me a foundation to stand on, a family I could count on, and coaches who were father figures to me when I need one the most. Football taught me accountability, hard work, and leadership. It gave me an outlet of physicality that I really needed to stay out of trouble. Most days, I woke up angry and football practice was just what I needed. Hitting and getting hit were wonderful forms of therapy. I loved the contact, and I loved football!

I am incredibly thankful for Coach Jack Ashby. He was our defensive coordinator, and he was the dad I wished I had. I looked up to him and his guidance was impactful in my growth and development. I learned under his tutelage that you are stronger than those things around you. That you can overcome extreme obstacles when you are focused, determined, and you surround yourself with strong reliable people. He gave me hope that there was a world out there where people who are marginalized and lived on the periphery of society could break free and live happy successful lives.

Academically, I was far below average. I graduated with a 1.96 GPA and couldn't even write a basic paragraph. I hadn't taken core classes like chemistry that would prepare me for college. But despite all of this, I was optimistic. I believed college could change my life. I always listened intently as Coach Ashby told stories of playing football at Arizona State University, and I dreamed of following in his footsteps.

A week after graduating from high school, my mother kicked me out of the house. I had \$12, a driver's license, and a small sack of clothes. I grabbed up the few things that she had thrown out into the front yard and walked down the road to start a new life. I did not know where I was going or where I would end up, but I left with a smile on my face. This was the greatest gift my mother ever gave me! I was now free to surround myself with positive people that wanted to be successful. It allowed me to avoid environments filled with drugs, crime, gangs, negativity,

hopelessness, and despair. I felt as if I was finally freed from the shackles that bound me to a life I did not want. I was free to become the person I was meant to be.

I fought hard to get through college. Paying every penny along the way and struggling with every class. My first year was filled with remedial classes to help me prepare for regular college courses. I was slowly digging out the academic hole that I had made for myself in high school. I did not mind the extra classes and time though; my new environment would inspire me. I would not be denied!

After eleven long years of school, I finally finished with three degrees from the University of Georgia...a Triple Dawg! I earned a Doctorate degree while studying Coaching Expertise. All of my past experiences, school, and coaches training set me up to do what I love. To be a coach that made a difference in the lives of young people. I wanted to give back what I had received as a young person. Maybe I could be someone's Coach Ashby!

Over three decades of coaching, I've worked with hundreds of student-athletes. I've been blessed to win many region and state titles, but my greatest joy has come from building teams, shaping lives, and inspiring young people to be the best version of themselves. I want them to know that a bigger, brighter world is out there. That they are stronger than whatever obstacles lie in their path.

In the end, I hope I'm not remembered for wins or championships, but for the lives I helped shape.