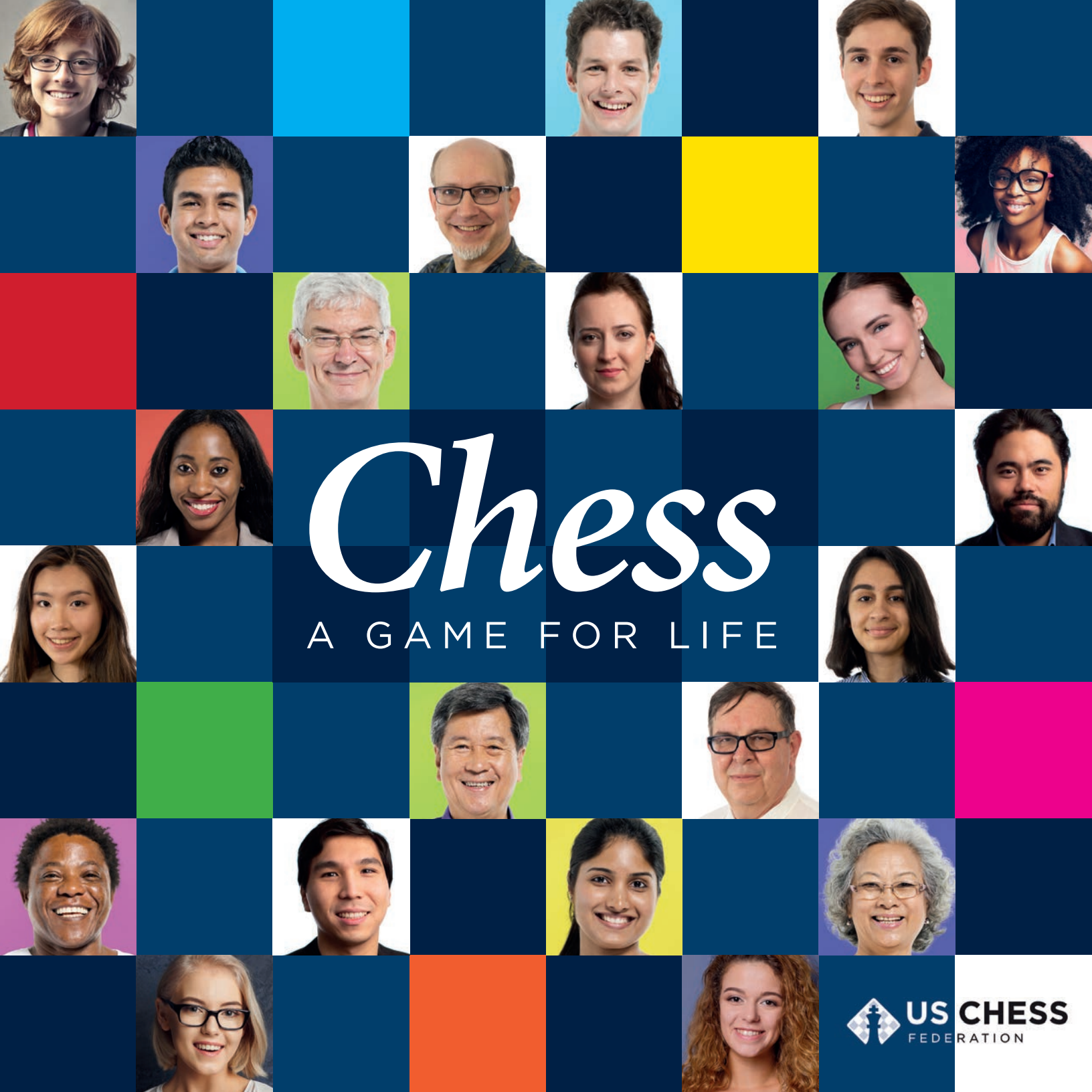

Chess
A GAME FOR LIFE
US CHESS
FEDERATION

CAROL MEYER
US CHESS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's not uncommon for someone to describe a battle that involves strategy as a real "chess match." The reputation of chess as a thinking person's game has been one factor contributing to its staying power through the ages.

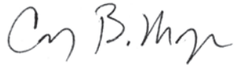
Another is the universality of the game. You can travel to any community in the United States or abroad—urban or rural, low-income or wealthy, native or immigrant—and find a group of chess players. Within the framework of chess, players are able to communicate even in the absence of a shared language.

Yet another factor in the timelessness of chess is its appeal to people of all ages. Young players can acquire valuable life skills as they learn chess, and aging adults can play to maintain mental agility. The rewards of chess extend to the full range of players—from small children to centenarians.

At US Chess, we are advancing new programs to grow the game among groups of people not currently well-represented within our organization. Please read on to learn more about US Chess and why we are so passionate about this ancient game and its benefits.

Chess is not only a game for the ages, it's a game for life.

Warm regards,



> *"Other girls at my school definitely look up to me because I play something unique or different than what girls usually play."*
>
> *~TIFFANI M.*, GIRLS IN CHESS *VIDEO*

THE US CHESS MISSION

Empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess.

With close to 95,000 members, US Chess facilitates connection among clubs, scholastic programs, and individuals across the nation. We are the official governing body and charitable organization for chess players in the United States.

An estimated 70 million chess enthusiasts in the United States have yet to join—or hear of—US Chess. We want to reach out, extend an invitation, and ensure that chess is fully recognized nationwide for its benefits as an invaluable tool for education, recreation, and rehabilitation.

The pages ahead showcase our current priorities at US Chess:

- **A Seat at the Chess Table** celebrates the inclusivity of chess.
- **Girl Power!** shows how the Women in Chess initiative is ensuring equal opportunity.
- **Building Minds** conveys the advantages of chess for school-age players.
- **Seize Your Potential!** is one account of how a chess community can help at-risk kids.
- **Seniors and Chess: A Great Match** honors the mutually beneficial relationship between US Chess and our most experienced members.

If you're not yet a member of US Chess, please accept our invitation to join the community. If you would like to support the work of US Chess to bring the benefits of this extraordinary game to all kinds of people, the **How to Give** section outlines giving options. You may also visit online at *uschess.org/donate*.

TANI'S STORY

Case Study: The Transformative Power of Chess

When Tanitoluwa Adewumi and his family fled Nigeria in 2017, he was seven. Fearing Boko Haram insurgents, Tani's parents and brother sought asylum in the United States, and when they arrived in New York City they found their way to a homeless shelter.

Tani was enrolled in second grade at P.S. 116, where one of the teachers showed Tani's class how to play chess. He was captivated by the game and urged his mother, Oluwatoyin Adewumi, to ask if he could join the chess club.

When Mrs. Adewumi emailed the club to express her son's interest, she explained that she could not afford the fees because their family was living in a homeless shelter. The chess coach, Russell Makofsky, waived the fees and welcomed Tani into the club.

IMPROVING WITH PRACTICE

Tani started working chess puzzles and practiced chess on the computer in the evenings. On Saturdays he attended a free three-hour practice session in Harlem. He loved playing chess!

Within one year, Tani took first place in the K-3 section at the 52nd annual New York State Scholastic Championship. He was up against the best players in the state in his age group—several of whom came from schools with elite chess programs and private coaches.

TANI MAKING NEWS

Then *The New York Times* picked up the story of Tani and his family. Several readers offered housing, legal, and educational support, and within a week the family moved out of the shelter into a modest apartment near Tani's school.

Around that same time, a GoFundMe account raised more than $250,000 within a few days. With that money, the family has set up the Tanitoluwa Adewumi Foundation to help other African immigrants who are struggling in the United States.

Tani's love for chess and his persistence in improving his skills brought opportunity to his whole family in ways they might never have imagined possible. His story is a remarkable account of how the game of chess and the chess community can play a significant role in transforming lives.

PHOTOS: BETSY ZACATE

A SEAT AT THE CHESS TABLE

The game for all

Few organizations can match the diversity of our community and the gratifying sense of inclusion that comes with it. While the cognitive benefits of chess have long been recognized, its unique power to bring together disparate groups of people has not been fully appreciated until recently. Walk into most chess clubs today and expect to see children playing adults, men playing women, and many other matches that cross ethnic and social divides.

That's because the chessboard is a level playing field. While skill is essential for winning, anyone can play and improve. Advancing in chess is based purely on merit. Age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, income, background, physical disability—even common language—are all irrelevant.

Much like playing the game, being a member of the US Chess community isn't conditional on what you have, where you live, or your physical abilities. An affinity for chess is the qualifying factor.

Everyone can have a seat at the chess table. And everyone is welcome in the US Chess Federation. We believe the culture of inclusion is our unique strength and advantage.

> *"US Chess provides the opportunity for anyone to join the competitive chess community and feel the comfort of belonging to a larger group."*
>
> ~DARRIAN ROBINSON, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

GIRL POWER!

Calling women and girls to claim their place in chess

In the past, playing chess has been predominantly a man's world. We're pretty sure that says more about the past world than it does about chess. That was then.

In 2015, US Chess established the Women In Chess Initiative to proactively invite females into the game. Some examples of our progress to date are on the facing page.

Chess is beneficial for girls and women for all the reasons it's beneficial for boys and men. It's valuable as a gateway to STEM fields and as a model for life skills. It fosters focus, critical thinking, self-confidence, and the importance of hard work.

We're looking forward to the day when women fully claim their place in the game and know that all the benefits of chess are theirs for the taking.

Progress to date in advancing the cause of Women's Chess:

- **Female membership** in US Chess has increased to 13,000—up 70% since 2009. Still, only 14% of the membership is female, so we are working diligently to welcome more girls and women.
- **US Chess Women** received a $100,000 gift from the Saint Louis Chess Club that is being used for the US Chess Women's Grant program, Top Woman Player program, and girls- and women-focused programs nationwide.
- **Girls Club** rooms have been established at US Chess scholastic national events and other regional events.
- We created the **Women in Chess** page on our site as a source for news, tournament and event information, and opportunities for females in US Chess. (Visit *uschesswomen.org*)
- **Girls' and Women's events** have increased awareness of chess opportunities.
- **We've received great press.** In recent years, *Sports Illustrated, The New York Times,* and *The New Yorker* ran features about women and girls in chess.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF *60 MINUTES*

"We donate to US Chess in honor of dad and hope that chess will continue to grow in popularity with today's youth."

~SONYA SCHUSSEL

SEIZE YOUR POTENTIAL

Chess can be a lifeline for at-risk kids.

A PERSONAL STORY FROM BILL BROCK, PH.D., C.P.A

The moment my father was committed to a mental institution was the moment my happy childhood crumbled. I was nine. My parents divorced, and mom moved us to Shamokin, Pennsylvania, where she worked third shift as a nurse's aide to support four kids. We had to live with my grandparents for a while and then in public housing. We bought groceries with food stamps.

But Shamokin had a chess club.

This was 1970, and Bobby Fischer's championship run was drawing increasing numbers of casual players to the game. I hadn't been able to figure it out on my own, but at the Shamokin club, the adults were willing to teach kids, and I was in.

They mentored us, played matches with us, and took us to tournaments. Within a couple years, I was the strongest player in town and one of the strongest in the region. They seemed really proud of my friend Dan Polastre and me, and they put us on boards one and two in intercity matches—probably a bit before we deserved it—and that really built our confidence.

Today, lots of at-risk kids have it much worse than I did. In many cases, the local or scholastic chess club can throw them a lifeline—like it did for me—by offering mentoring and a real sense of belonging. Also, chess fosters cognition; it's a constant toggling between concrete and intuitive thinking, and it helps kids understand the direct path between choices and consequences.

For me, the game of chess was a fun and painless introduction to critical thinking, and a few years later, I was accepted into MIT. It's hard for me to imagine where I'd be without the chess club in Shamokin. Supporting US Chess helps ensure that young people in need will have similar opportunities today.

BUILDING MINDS

An educational game

The reputation of chess for enhancing cognitive skills makes it a natural fit as a collaborative tool in education. Chess develops a capacity for concentration, the ability to reason, and an aptitude for problem solving—all transferrable skills that can benefit students for a lifetime. By playing chess, kids learn the cause-and-effect element of logic, and this helps them to see that their choices have consequences.

PLAYING CHESS ENHANCES EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Belonging to a chess community can give kids a safe, friendly environment with caring adults and mentors. Built into chess culture is the opportunity for learning to win and lose well—in a supportive setting. While winning makes children feel proud of themselves and builds their confidence, learning to lose well means being able to cope and move on successfully when things don't go their way. Both contribute to success in life. Additionally, many educators have reported behavior improvements in kids who spend time learning to play chess in the classroom.

Many schools across the nation have extracurricular chess clubs and, in some cases, chess coaches and teachers are an integral part of the curriculum. Supporting existing programs and casting the vision for more ways school-aged people can experience the benefits of the game is a top priority of US Chess.

Chess teaches foresight, by having to plan ahead; vigilance, by having to keep watch over the whole chess board; caution, by having to restrain ourselves from making hasty moves; and finally, we learn from chess the greatest maxim in life—that even when everything seems to be going badly for us we should not lose heart, but always hoping for a change for the better, steadfastly continue searching for the solutions to our problems.

~BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

SENIORS AND CHESS: A GREAT MATCH

Aging adults and US Chess count on each other.

While modern research substantiates the importance of mental and social activity for seniors, chess has been the loyal facilitator of both all along.

Playing chess is calisthenics for the mind. It actively engages the brain and has been shown to strengthen reasoning and retention in aging adults. Additional research has linked chess to lower rates of dementia in active players. Chess is also a social game. It offers a ready excuse to get together with others, and it can provide opportunities for tournament competition and travel as well.

But not only is chess good for seniors, seniors are good for chess.

Seniors remember Bobby Fischer and the 1972 World Championship match that captured the nation's attention. They were there when chess moved to the forefront in popular culture, and they have comprised a significant demographic of US Chess membership through the years.

Their dependable, loyal support lends stability as we continue to evolve into an organization that welcomes everyone into the community, and their skills, experience, and wisdom remain fundamental to the identity of US Chess.

> *"A quite impressive body of evidence now supports the idea that challenging the brain sustains the brain."*
>
> ~DR. GERALD M. LEVITT

WHY I GIVE: PERSONAL STORIES

"When my daughters started to outgrow other games, I introduced them to chess. I hadn't played in 25 years and wasn't even sure I remembered how all the pieces move. My grandfather had taught me when I was a kid, and I have a favorite picture in my home of the two of us playing chess—taken in 1977, the year before he died. The girls enjoyed it, and within a couple months I was coaching the chess club at their school. Since 2008, I've taken all three of our kids to more than 200 US Chess rated tournaments. I became Scholastic Director in Maryland and a tournament director at most of the K-12 tournaments in our state. When kids know the tournaments are rated, they are even more motivated to try their hardest. For me, it's especially heartwarming when I see a grandparent walking a child to the board for the start of a game. I volunteer my time and give to US Chess because chess is a wonderful way for parents to connect with their children and for grandparents to connect with their grandchildren."

~JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER V

PHOTO: AL LAWRENCE

"US Chess has given us the opportunity to give back to the young persons in our chess community. Chess is a life skill that fosters our goals as educators and teachers. We are pleased to donate because the mission statement aligns with our desire to expand the scholarship offerings to our very talented young players."

~DEWAIN AND SUE BARBER

"I invest for a living, and numerous are the intersections between playing chess and investment trading. The self-confidence gained from the artful execution of chess strategy by tactics becomes a transferable lesson in many of life's pursuits. As a sponsor for chess, it is the rent on the planet to give back in a mission that contributes success to my endeavors."

~CHUCK UNRUH

"I made a memorial gift to US Chess not only to honor the lives of chess players no longer with us, but also to enable US Chess to continue to change lives."

~JEAN HOFFMAN

"Our motivation for giving to US Chess is to see its core mission carried out. We believe chess is vitally important in empowering and educating one's mind for a lifetime of learning as well as the social interaction. It has been especially motivating and inspirational to see the underserved and underrepresented benefit from its transforming effects. We love paying it forward."

~DAVID & MAUREEN GRIMAUD

"In life, as in chess, forethought wins."

~CHARLES BUXTON

HOW TO GIVE

Five ways to partner with US Chess

Your tax-deductible gift to the US Chess Federation supports our mission to empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess. Here's how you can give:

1. **Cash Donation:** Make a gift to the general fund or specify the program you wish to support. It's easy to give online at *uschess.org/donate*.
2. **Annual Gift:** Your annual gift to US Chess sustains our programs and initiatives.
3. **Employer Matching Gift:** Many organizations offer to match employee donations to charitable, nonprofit organizations. This doubles or sometimes triples the gift, and it's often as simple as filling out a form. Please inquire at your employer's human resources office about a matching gift program.
4. **Major Gift:** Donations of $5,000 or more create momentum for our programs and can leverage additional support when combined with matching or challenge gifts. These may be directed to your area of choice or to the general fund.
5. **Planned Gift:** Designating a gift to US Chess in your will is one of the most important gifts you can make. It's a legacy to the community for generations to come. You don't need to be rich to make a planned gift.

If you would like more information about making a gift to US Chess, please contact us by emailing *development@uschess.org* or calling 931.787.3429.

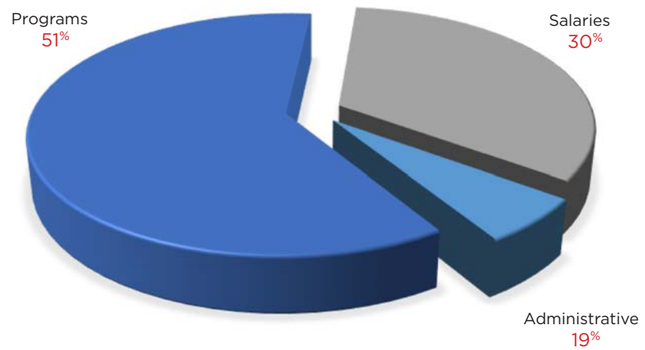
Where do membership dues go?

Membership dues cover US Chess operating expenses. This includes rating system maintenance, tournament planning, publication of *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids*, and general costs such as employee salaries and office expenses.

Donations to US Chess are the sole sustaining force behind the initiatives that are bringing the benefits of chess to more and more people. These programs are made possible by your generous support.

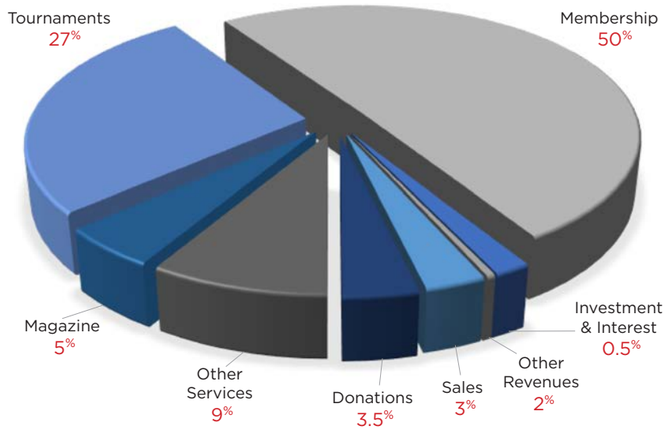
When you give to US Chess, you're making a move that gives people access to the transforming power of the game.

Fiscal Year 2018-19: Expenses



Programs (direct expenses excluding salaries)
Salaries (both administration and program staff)
Administrative (expenses that support operations)

Fiscal Year 2018-19: Revenue



YOUR MOVE

Help us share the transformational power of chess.

We are expanding the programs that are bringing more chess opportunities to individuals and communities, and we need the financial support of people like you. Your gift to US Chess will make a tangible difference in someone's life.

Here's what your gift can do:

- **Sponsor** US Chess memberships for at-risk youth who want to play chess competitively.
- **Support** a chess club at a Title I school.
- **Sponsor** Ladies Knight chess classes at one of our nonprofit affiliates.
- **Sponsor** a girls club room at one of our national events.
- **Fund** a college scholarship for a deserving chess playing student.
- **Provide** chess sets for senior centers and retirement communities.

You may specify the initiative you wish to support, or you may prefer to make an unrestricted contribution and have us direct it to the area of greatest need.

GM FABIANO CARUANA

PHOTO: DAVID LLADA

US CHESS BY THE NUMBERS

US Chess membership is **CLOSE TO 95,000**.

That number includes:

120 GRANDMASTERS

122 INTERNATIONAL MASTERS

13,000 FEMALE MEMBERS IN US CHESS

677 MASTERS

2 US CHESS MEMBERS ARE **100 YEARS OLD**

1622 EXPERTS

32 WOMEN INTERNATIONAL MASTERS

845,134 RATED GAMES PLAYED IN 2018, MOST RUN BY LOCAL CLUBS

76,000 RATED PLAYERS

243 SENIOR MASTERS

17 WOMEN GRANDMASTERS

12,171 TOURNAMENTS HELD IN 2018

71,000,000* ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHESS ENTHUSIASTS IN THE U.S. WHO HAVE NOT YET JOINED US CHESS.

*YouGov study

US CHESS
FEDERATION

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

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