



Grandmaster Ron Henley (left) shares strategies with new players and Mayor Mike Ryan (right) during a City of Sunrise free open play chess session.

Sunrise Over Scholastic Chess: A City Project

By **MICHAEL RYAN, MAYOR OF SUNRISE, FLORIDA**

The City of Sunrise, Florida is home to the 20,000 seat, world class entertainment venue known as the BB&T Center where the NHL Florida Panthers call home, one of the largest malls in the nation visited by millions each year, and headquarters for many companies in our bustling corporate park.

Sunrise, with 87,000 residents, is also home to 11 public schools where thousands of students are educated each day—eight elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. Our schools are part of the Broward County Public Schools, the sixth largest school district in the nation.

What's missing? Scholastic chess.

There is no need to recite the mountain of literature supporting the direct correlation between scholastic chess and development of academic prowess in young students. We know the facts and it makes common sense. So we, in Sunrise, set out on a journey to bring chess to the community and classrooms.

One challenge, the City does not control the education of our children. Because there is a separately

elected school board, the City does not designate where our children go to school, the curriculum or the budgetary priorities. Therefore, our plan to introduce chess would require a cooperative and grassroots approach. Fortunately, our superintendent of schools understands the academic benefits of scholastic chess.

Our journey began when, as a PTA president at an elementary school, I helped start a chess club. Even though I am a casual player at best, a dynamic teacher and I worked together to build a fledgling chess club for that particular elementary school. We were soon overwhelmed by the number of students who wanted to participate.

A couple of years later, after I was elected mayor, we began working on a plan to promote chess in our community. We made some important first moves to prove there is a strong interest from parents, students, teachers and schools in developing scholastic chess:

- Two years ago, each of the 11 public schools received 20 chess sets for the purpose of starting a chess club. Most schools started a chess club that

first year. However, one limitation was that after-school clubs, by design, eliminate participation for many students who would otherwise be interested and who would benefit.

- After giving the chess clubs some time to grow, the City Commission held a year-end “Champions of Chess” tournament for the students and schools. Now into the third year, this fun and free “tournament” has prizes for the elementary, middle and high school winners.

- In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, Broward Chess Club and local restaurants, we developed “Family Fun Chess Nights”. Held at local restaurants, this has brought business together with players and families. When we introduced “bughouse”, we brought a new level of excitement to young players and families.

- Local organizations began “adopting” the after-school chess clubs. Building a bond between the community and the clubs has proven to be an important part of the grassroots effort.

- We invited additional schools outside the geo-

graphic borders of the city of Sunrise into our chess network.

• The City Commission created a free city program of open chess play every Saturday morning. This allows students (and adults) of all ages and talents to play in a fun and supervised environment. Importantly, our City staff has been quite enthusiastic about this program. We were amazed at the number of children who attended even though they did not know the first thing about chess, proving parents want their children to learn chess. We just need to give children exposure to the game and the opportunity to learn.

Then, with the building interest in our community, we pressed forward to bring chess into the classroom and curriculum.

Through a grant from the America's Foundation

for Chess "First Move" program and with gap funding from our police department, we initiated a pilot program for the first time in our school district—establishing chess classes in every second and third grade classroom for three of our eight elementary schools. The program is designed to track academic benefits and gains. We are confident once the other elementary schools, teachers and parents see the benefits of this pilot program, we will expand the program to more schools next year.

We keep looking for new ideas to expand the opportunity for chess. The United States Chess Federation staff and advisors have been a great resource to learn about successful strategies from other communities. While we have further to go towards the goal of putting chess permanently in our academic environment, we think we are making the right moves.

For more information on chess in Sunrise, go to www.sunrisefl.gov/chess or e-mail the mayor at mryan@sunrisefl.gov.

Adventures of the Mind Looking For More Chess Players

Adventures of the Mind is a different kind of summer camp—one that helps high-potential teens explore their futures, including career paths that stoke their intellectual and creative passions. For a student to be accepted to the program is to achieve de facto national recognition given the in-depth nature of the selection process, world class stature of the mentors, and the intellectual rigor of the program. Next summer, gathering on the Los Angeles campus of our academic partner Occidental College, our 200 talented teens will meet dozens of adult achievers at the top of their respective fields, tour area colleges, go behind the scenes at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and explore their famed facility on Friday, June 20th while meeting their top scientists. Curiosity: The Mars Exploration Program is based at JPL.

Adventures of the Mind—often referred to as a mentoring summit because of the high ratio of mentors to students—happens June 15-22, 2014. Our students will investigate one of the major societal shifts shaping their futures: Now that technology has made information instantly accessible, what you know is not as important as what you do with it! As a result, young people need to think critically, collaborate effectively, and communicate persuasively. As they explore these skills, they will have at their sides an all-star faculty of mentors: tech entrepreneurs and Pulitzer-winning writers, astronauts and archeologists, Nobel-winning scientists and public servants, many of whom are also professors from leading universities.

In seminars, workshops and informal gatherings, these mentors will share their own triumphs, setbacks, and lessons learned, with the goal of inspiring and better preparing the next generation of thinkers and leaders. And we have seen how these messages are taken to heart.

We need your assistance to ensure a diverse and talented class of 2014. Please nominate two students aged 15-18 whom you believe have the intellect and imagination to be worthy of this honor. Nominations must be completed on our website: adventuresofthemind.org. (Select the 'Nominate' button and log in with the e-mail address at which you received this letter and password mindtrek2222.)

We hope you will nominate students you feel will both benefit from this program and also contribute to this stimulating environment that inspires campers to achieve. We are especially interested in welcoming young people who may not fit the traditional standards of academic excellence. For students who qualify for financial aid, we offer full scholarships—covering lodging, meals, events, materials and books—funded by generous individuals and foundations. We also have transportation grants available. There are a limited number of scholarships and grants per state, so please submit your nominations at your earliest convenience.

Accepted students will receive a formal letter of invitation accompanied by general program information. We will select the first half of the class by December 15, 2013, and the remainder by April 15, 2014.

FACES ACROSS THE BOARD

AT THE U.S. CLASS!

By AL LAWRENCE



MIKE AND ERIC INGRAM

TEXAS

Father-son finish

USCF's recent rating-formula adjustments make it a great time to go for the next level. Father-and-son team Mike and Eric each gained over 100 rating points at the U.S. Class Championships in Houston. Mike, a software developer from Austin, won the class A plaque. Twelve-year-old Eric, who attends chess camps organized by Gary Gaiffe, tied for second in the class D section. "We've been playing in tournaments since Eric started elementary school," Mike said. "My wife Claudia, Eric, and I have enjoyed traveling to national scholastic events, including Super-Nationals V in Nashville."

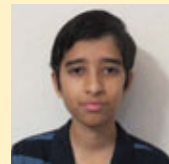


JIE AND KEVIN LIU

TEXAS

Joined the party

Neither Jie nor his son Kevin, 8, knew how the pieces moved until 2011. "Kevin and I were in Sunday school where he learns Chinese," Jie said. USCF Senior Director Rob Jones waived them into his chess class. "It was like he was inviting us to a party and felt sorry for us missing all the fun!" At the U.S. Class, Jie won the class B championship with a 5-0 sweep and saw his USCF rating top 1900. Kevin gained 44 points—and he had previously qualified for the World Youth Championships. They credit the Dallas Chess Club and Kevin's trainer GM Babakuli Annakov for their quick progress.



KARTHIKEYAN LAKSMAN

INDIA

Going home to see Vishy

Karthikeyan, 13, started playing three years ago at home in Chennai, India. On a two-month vacation to see his father in Irvington, Texas, he played in a half-dozen Lone Star tournaments, climbing to a rating of 1834. The U.S. Class was his third event—and he won clear first in the C section with a perfect score. Now headed home, he'll take the trophy back to show at his school. "I'll probably go to some of the Anand-Carlsen match, since it's in my home town."

Write to faces@uschess.org.