

2019-2020 Annual Report

# Chess Girls DC



A place where Girls learn to intellectually challenge the world



# Chess Girls DC

CHESSGIRLSDC.ORG



The Chess Girls DC program develops a solid foundation of Chess knowledge taught in a way that prepares girls to apply reasoning and practice effective thinking.



## The Chess Girls DC Team

The Chess Girls DC team consists of David Bennett, National Chess Master, Fiona, Lam Chess Expert, Akshita Gorti, International Women Chess Master and Robin Ramson, Founder and Executive Director



Fiona Lam serves as creative Director of Media and guest speaker *She is a former competitive chess player (two-time National Girls 16 & Under Champion and a five-time Maryland Girls Champion). She enjoys organizing activities to encourage girls to play chess and build skills along the way that are useful in academic and professional endeavors.*



Akshita Gorti, Womens International Master serves as an education consultant and guest speaker



Coach & National Master David Bennett



Robin Ramson,  
Founder

## Our Team

The Chess Girls DC team also consists of junior leaders who teach the beginners using chesskids.com. Our junior leaders have traveled across the country competing in national tournaments and have a strong chess foundation.

### Anna Miller



### Sarah Ramson



## Chess Girls DC history

Chess Girls DC nonprofit organization was launched 7 years ago in response to scientific evidence that self-confidence plays a tremendous role in a girl's approach to course work that requires higher level thinking skills and challenging circumstances. Scientific studies show that, *confidence in one's abilities has a significant impact on learning, performance and leadership* on many levels. Self-belief about one's ability determines how well students motivate themselves and persevere in the face of difficulty.



## 2019 Golf Fundraiser

With the support of Ben's Chili Bowl Education Foundation, Chess Girls DC hosted a golf fundraiser. The donations from the tournament assisted Chess Girls DC to secure accommodations to host chess tournaments through out the season. Donors received commemorative chess sets.

Chess Girls DC program presented a computer to a student in Ward 8 who consistently participated in the all girls chess tournaments and the coed chess tournaments hosted by Chess Girls DC.





## 2019-2020 Classroom pre-quarantine

Our class lectures were guided by Coach and National Master David Bennett and Robin Ramson. Chess Girls DC was honored to receive visits by guest lecturers, chess expert, Rochelle Ballantyne, Women International Master Akshita Gorti and International Master Adu Oladapu representing Nigeria, Africa.

# 2019 Regional All Girls Chess Tournament

Chess Girls DC annually hosts a one of a kind multi regional all Girls Chess tournament each year. Since 2017 the event has increased registration by 50 percent each year. Students travel from North Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Through the generous support of our community partners and private donors, Chess Girls DC has been able to offer a scholarship to girls in the District of Columbia with a United States Chess Federation membership. This event is a high level tournament endorsed by the United States Chess Federation and might be cost prohibitive to travel to compete





# 2019-2020 Local All Girls Tournament

Chess Girls DC hosted it's local all girls chess tournament at the Pepco Gallery. Students met other girls around the city who played chess.



## Coed Chess Tournaments

In 2019 to early 2020 Chess Girls DC hosted eight coed over the board chess tournaments and two online coed Chess tournaments. Chess Tournaments provide a tool for girls to learn how to confidently resolve challenges with male counterparts.

Girls benefit from learning and competing in chess because it teaches girls how to resolve situations in a tactical manner. Hopefully improving their mental dexterity for the corporate world.



# Chess Tournaments

During the course of the 2019- early 2020 tournament season, Chess Girls DC served over 300 students, providing travel assistance and scholarships to attend tournaments locally, regionally and nationally. Chess Girls DC donated chess equipment to Eastern High School and many students across the city including in Wards 7 & 8.



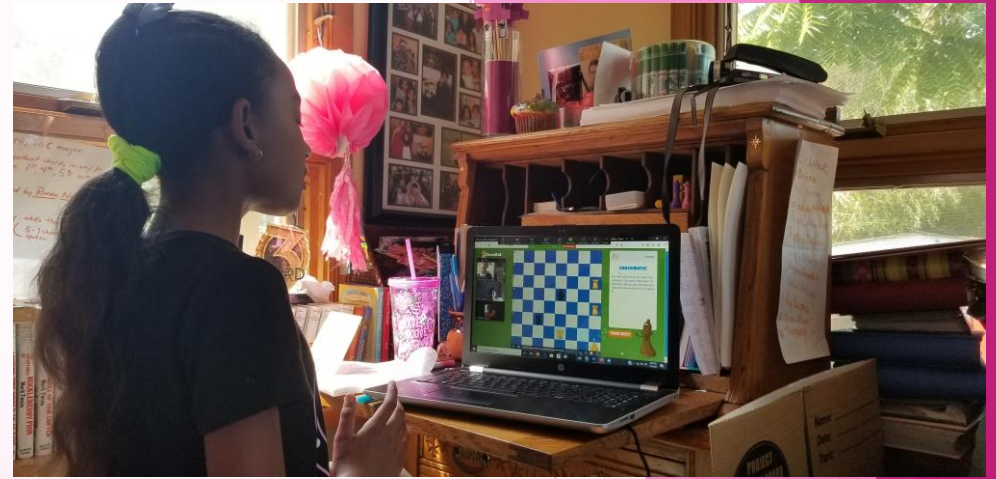
## Early 2020

Chess Girls DC is especially proud of the increase participation of high school girls in chess tournaments. High school girls have been a particularly challenging audience to connect with.



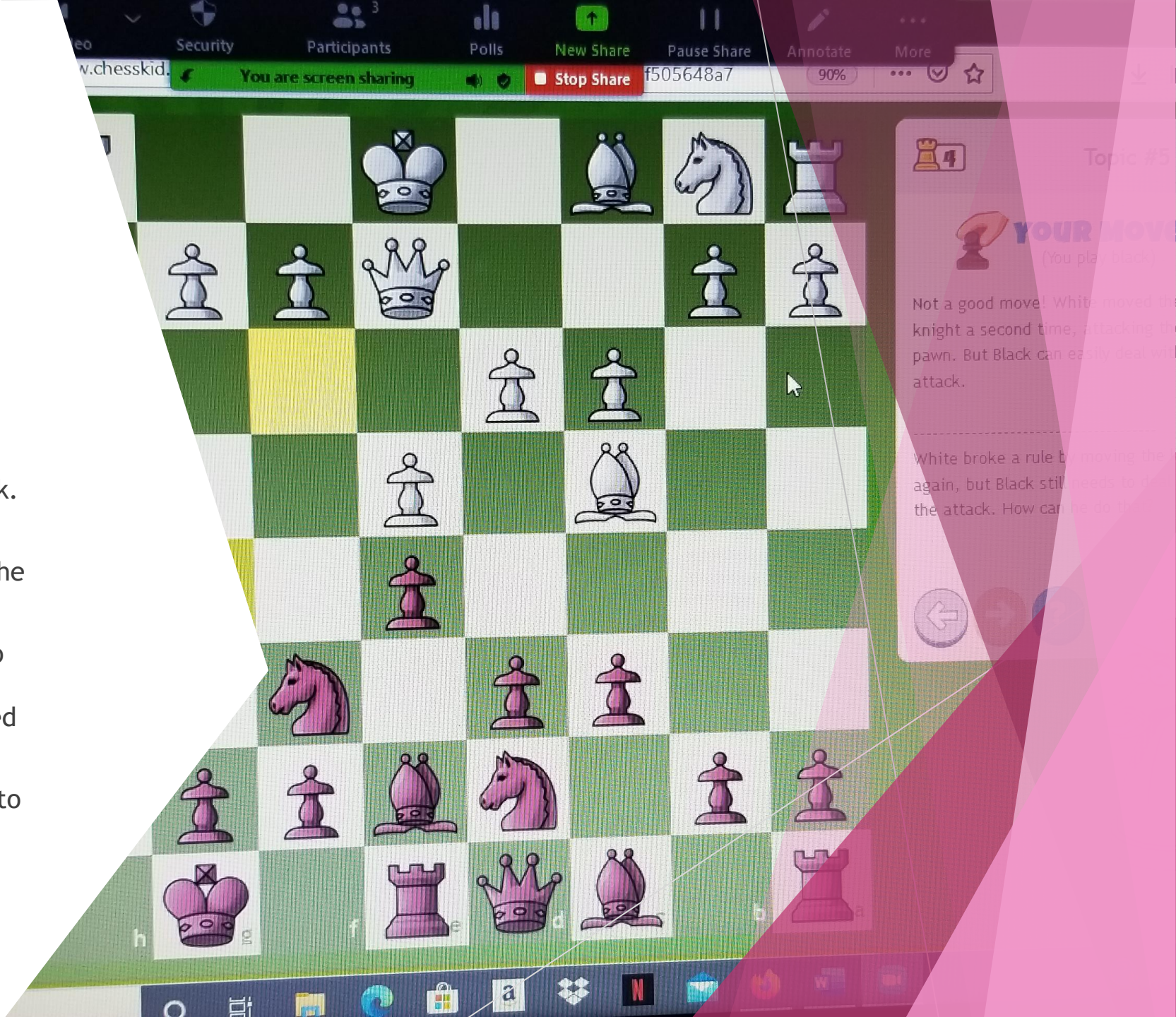
# Pivot and Grow

In March 2020, Chess Girls DC normal programming was interrupted by the COVID Pandemic. During the pandemic the Chess Girls DC students moved to an online program. Using Zoom platform, workbooks and chesskids.com students continued to pursue their education in Chess. In addition to Coach David's instructions our junior class leaders guided class discussion. Technology actually improved our education base and removed geographical barriers for student who were interested in joining from outside our region.



# Pivot and Grow 2020 Chess education online

- ▶ Each student received an independent online study program guided by Chesskids.com.
- ▶ By mail or drive by pick up students received a full-sized chess set and workbook.
- ▶ Students participated in a 90 minute class on Saturdays and a 90 minute class during the week.
- ▶ The classes were composed of a lecture to support the workbook and a competitive reinforcement activity. Students participated in online tournaments weekly.
- ▶ Chess Girls DC mailed recognition awards to students on a weekly basis.

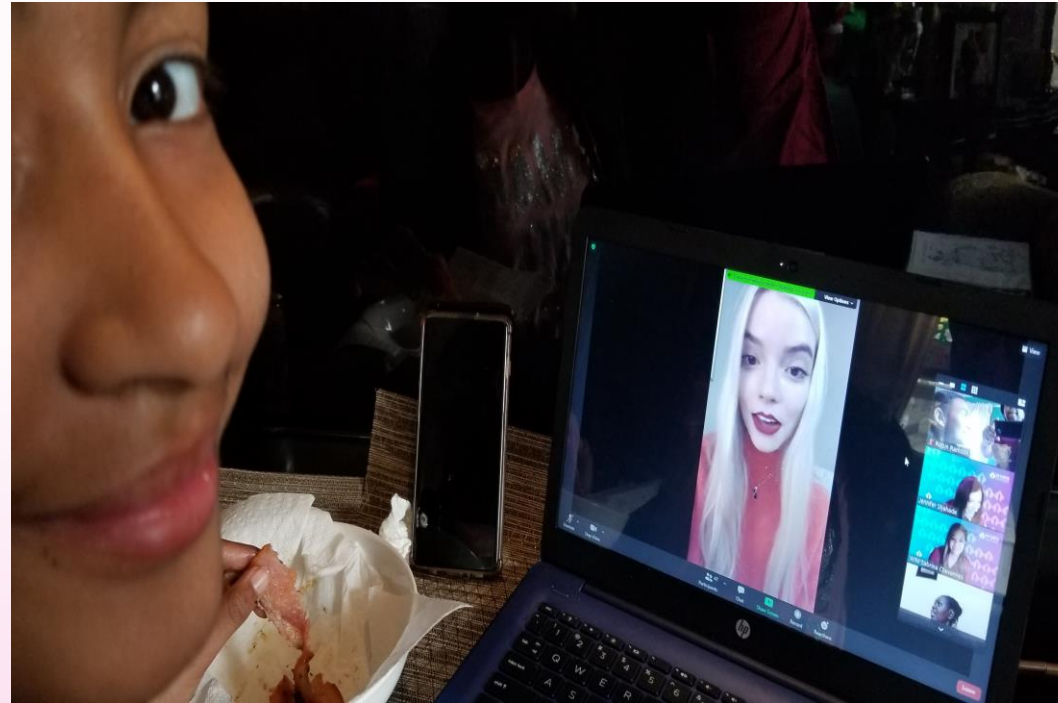


## Pivot and Grow Guests speakers online

Students had the opportunity to meet guests who starred in movies about chess to discuss pros and cons of plot.

Previously, the students met Phiona Mutesi of the Queen of Katwe.

This year in 2020, students met the actress Anya Taylor-Joy (Beth Harmon, main character) of the movie the Queens Gambit. Although she does not play chess, she spoke to the girls about everything she learned in the movie to portray a famous chess prodigy.



## Pivot and Grow

As Chess Girls DC continued it's online program guest speakers joined coach David Bennett to teach the class.

Chess Girls DC greeted Women's International FIDE Master Sanjana Vittal, Chess Expert Aasa Dommalpati and Womens International Master Akshita Gorti. The guest shared their experience moving towards their goals, study habits and tournament experiences.



**FIDE & National Master  
Sanjana Vittal**



**Women Candidate Master  
Aasa Dommalpati**



**Womens International  
Master Akshita Gorti**

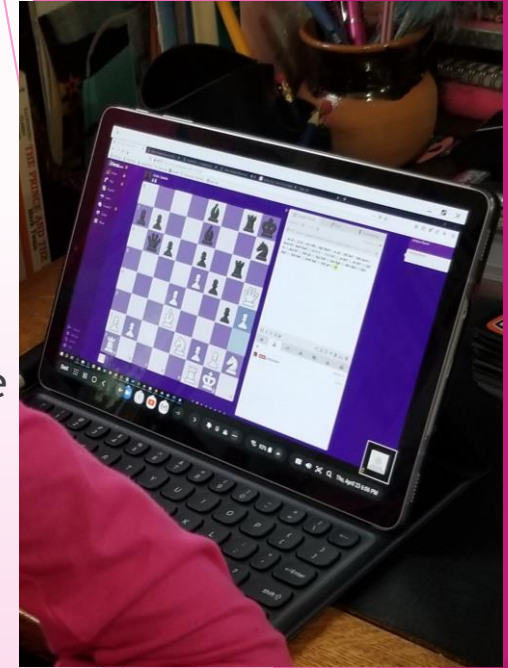
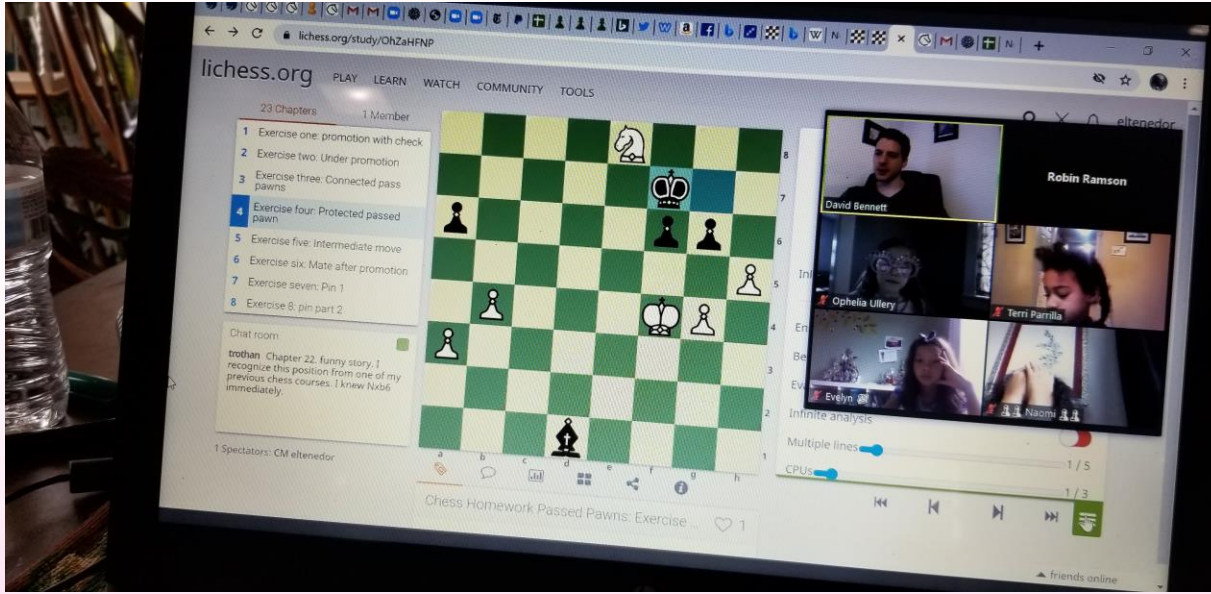


# Tournaments Pivot and Grow

▶ During the pandemic students connected using online chess programs. Chess Girls DC added the Zoom meeting platform to it's program. Tournaments provide an exercise to execute the skills acquired online.

▶ Adding technology allowed Chess Girls DC to increase the student who participated because they were not limited to geographical barriers.

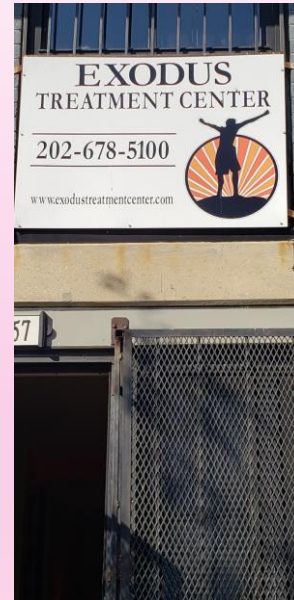
▶ Chess Girls DC hosted three online Chess tournaments during the end of the 2020 season. Awards were mailed to students.



# Community Outreach

Beginning in March and continuing through the 2020 season, Chess Girls DC gifted over 481 chess sets to students and their families in Washington,DC . In an effort to stimulate productive thinking, eliminate idle mindedness and avoid depression. The back packs were filled with a full size chess board, chess pieces, a chess book and a 20 ounce water bottle.

During the 2020 pandemic season, 81 chess sets were mailed to families in March. Chess Girls DC conducted a weekly distribution campaign to allow families to drive by and pick up sets. Volunteers also distributed over 500 aluminum water bottles to the homeless persons to assist with food insecurity. Families were also invited to join Coach David Bennett for free lessons at no cost.



# Chess Meet and Greet

With the support of parents, students had an opportunity to meet in October. Unfortunately, we were unable to resume in person classes. Students received mid semester awards for their persistence and determination to grow in their chess education.



# Special Events

# The Chess Girls DC Empowerment Weekend



**CHESS GIRLS DC**  
**EMPOWERMENT WEEKEND**  
 2020 ONLINE GIRLS CHESS TOURNAMENT  
 #CHESSGIRLSTAKINGOVERDC  
**STAY FEARLESS!**

Chess Girls DC hosted it's annual All Girls Regional Tournament online in November 2020. It was bigger and better than ever. Technology allowed more girls to participate nationally and more guests to engage. The weekend hosted over 100 girls over the weekend from the United States, Africa and Canada. Chess Girls DC gave scholarships to all District of Columbia girls who were residents.

The event consisted of a weekend 3 days of Chess competition and 8 female chess masters. The guests spoke to the girls between tournament rounds to empower the girls to think strategically and learn from their mistakes.

## CHESS GIRLS & WOMEN EMPOWERMENT WEEKEND

**November 6, 7, 8, 2020**

**REGISTER AT CHESSGIRLSDC.ORG**

**JOIN US FOR 3 DAYS OF CHESS TOURNAMENTS AND INSPIRATION**

Our 4th annual all Girls Chess Tournament continues. Join us for 3 days of Chess tournaments and Inspiration via Zoom and Chess.com, Friday, November 6, 2020 Fun Blitz Tournament after Inspirational Q&A with Chess.com, with WIM Ivette Garcia. Saturday, November 7 we will double the fun with 4 rounds of Chess and our Zoom party room (just for fun) between rounds. Sunday, November 8, Chess inspiration and virtual awards ceremony. First place in each section will receive a platinum membership to Chess.com. Everyone will receive a tournament gift by mail. Plaques for Blitz winners. Awards for top 5 place in each section of general rounds. Open section for women and girls will award gift cards for (1st \$100, 2nd \$75, 3rd \$50.00). Team awards. Teachers please submit names by Thursday, November 5, 2020. Full details at chessgirlsdc.org

**All times are Eastern Standard**

**FRI 5PM NOV 6**

**SAT 9AM**

**Round one starts 10 AM**

**SAT 10AM ROUND 1**

**SAT 12PM ROUND 2**

**SAT 2PM ROUND 3**

**SAT 4PM ROUND 4**

**SPECIAL SIDE EVENT**  
 SUN 11AM NOV 8

**SUN 1PM NOV 8**

**WEEKEND SCHEDULE**

Sarah Ramson, Mistress of Ceremony  
 Chess.com Q & A by WIM Ivette Garcia  
 Strategic Advice to make playing Chess online easy  
 Warm up & fun Blitz tournament at 6 pm. Awards for top five players in each section

Welcome 9am to 9:50 Anna Miller Mistress of Ceremony  
 Zoom Party Room Guest: WGM Claudia Munoz  
 Chess Inspiration Topic: Open with Confidence

Chess Inspiration in Zoom Room after Round 1 is approx at 11:20am to 11:50a  
 Chess Inspiration: "Without error there can be no brilliancy"  
 Guest: AASA DOMMALAPATI

Round 2 / 12pm to approx. 1:20  
 Zoom Party Room after Round 2 at 1:20 to 1:50pm  
 Chess Inspiration Topic: Stay in the Game  
 Guest Speaker: WFM Sanjana Vital

Round 3 / 2pm to approx. 3:20p  
 Zoom Party Room 3:20pm to 3:50  
 Chess Inspiration Topic: The Great Come Back  
 Guest: WIM Akshita Gorti

Round 4 starts at 4pm to  
 Zoom Party Room 5:20 Guest: Fiona Lam  
 Chess Inspiration Topic: How to stay positive

**CROSS CULTURAL SESSION**  
 US Chess & Kenya Chess Girls MEET AND LEARN

**US and Kenya Girls Meet Through Chess Blitz at 11 AM EDT-12:30 EDT** Our initiative, Kenya and US Chess Girls Meet Through Chess continues with our first blitz tournament, featuring live commentary by WGM Jennifer Shahade (contact jshahade@uschess.org for more info and to register to play)

Virtual Awards Ceremony Zoom Party Room  
 Sarah Ramson Ramson, Mistress of Ceremony  
 Chess Inspiration What / How can I learn from my online games?  
 Guest Speaker: Alice Dong

**DETAILS AT CHESSGIRLSDC.ORG**

# 2020 Girls Empowerment Weekend

The Chess Girls Empowerment weekend was the first of its kind. Two students from Chess Girls DC served as mistress of ceremony. Sarah and Anna also provided tournament director assistance to the participants. Winners of prospective categories received plaques via mail. Everyone received a beautiful medal to commemorate the Chess Girls Empowerment weekend.



Sarah Ramson,  
Mistress of Ceremony



Anna Miller  
Co-host



Commemorative medal for each student, team awards and certificates were mailed to participants





## End of the year Honors and Recognition

First and foremost, we recognize every effort a girl puts forth in the pursuit of learning chess. Unlike traditional chess classes every girl receives a mid-semester recognition award for performance at whatever level she is currently working at. She receives a trophy or medal at the end of semester for individual performance in tournaments at her level.

Due to the pandemic, we were unable to host a recognition event at the end of the year. Parents drove by to receive gift bags.



# 2019 Tournament for students with disabilities

Through the generosity of donors, Chess Girls DC provided financial assistance to travel to the International Chess Federation Tournament for students with disabilities. She was accompanied by her family and a member of Chess Girls DC, Sarah Ramson. She was greeted by Mr. Robert Katende, the Executive Director SOM Chess Academy and the real life coach behind the inspiring story of the Disney movie, Queen of Katwe.



## Community Outreach

Finally, the year ended with an interview on Fox 5 network. Due to the popularity of the Queens Gambit movie the interest in Chess has increased. The students spoke to the interviewer about what they enjoyed most about playing chess and how Chess has helped them deal with quarantining. The students encouraged the audience to start playing chess to improve their mental acuity during the pandemic.





# Metrics for tracking program impact

▶ The metrics Chess Girls DC uses to track the effect of the program and its impact.

## ▶ 1. Non-cognitive Factor Scores

▶ There has been a lot of research recently to support the validity of non-cognitive skills in students as being good evidence of a successful program. These skills, resiliency, motivation, and confidence especially in social settings, provide information. All of the fore mentioned are skills developed as you progress learning and improving in Chess. The skills suggest the ability to cope and thrive in the face of negative events, challenges or adversity. This is the goal of Chess Girls DC program.

## ▶ 2. Degree of extra-curricular Engagement

▶ We know from research that students engaged in extra curricular activities are much more likely to persist and be successful. Continuous engagement in Chess Girls DC shows the determination to improve.

## ▶ 3. Level of Classroom Engagement and Academic Performance

▶ Tracking what's happening inside the classroom is an important metric to utilize for understanding the individual student. Much of the research around student success in the classroom is based on course engagement and performance.

▶ *Class absences.* Our attendance list, shows consistent attendance with 95 percent of the participants

▶ *Milestone assignments.* 80 percent of students move beyond the beginning stage of our curriculum within the first 3 months. 20 percent move to the advanced level with in the first two months.

▶ *Mid-term performance* and participation in chess events. Our research shows that 98 percent of students are brave enough to engage in chess tournaments even if they are not beyond the intermediate level of our online curriculum (Queen level on chesskids.com)

▶ We typically don't know a lot about the student outside of basic demographic info and previous history reported by parents on registration. We attest that our program has a huge positive effect on students because we have a core 20 students who register consecutive semesters over the last 7 years. Due to the community engagement of Chess Girls DC program girls participation in Chess tournaments (girls and coed) in Washington, DC has increased 75 percent. Parents report that the only reason students stop is due to schedule conflicts on Saturdays which are highly competitive time wise.

▶ Reference :<https://www.anthology.com/blog/seven-key-metrics-for-tracking-student-success>



## Chess for Girls of Incarcerated Parents “The art of stopping to think”

- ▶ *Chess Girls DC Nonprofit Organization is seeking funding to support a program to teach Girls of incarcerated parents. Girls in K-12 grades would benefit greatly from the tactical training that Chess provides. Being able to stop to analyze the consequences of actions may prevent girls of incarcerated parents from making some of the mistakes that their parents made.*
- ▶ *As a mechanism of change, Chess Girls DC believes if a girl develops a strong sense of confidence through the consistency of incremental wins and losses provided through chess tournaments via chess education, it will enable her to advocate for herself and to strategically plan towards a positive outcome of her long- or short-term future. Her intellectual ability to challenge her environment will flourish and it is less likely she will fall into the societal traps of patriarchal oppression.*



## Center for Intellectual Engagement

► *Our vision for the program involves over the board in person instruction for the girls, in a classroom located in Ward 7 or 8 preparing them for tournaments. Students will learn how to notate their moves. Students will be taught how to record chess coordinates for correspondence chess and play chess via online platforms.*

► *Chess can be used as a family strengthening activity. It is a vehicle to reduce stress because children may not want to talk about the circumstances around the current environment. Chess is an equalizer in which students can connect with their parents on a completely neutral platform. Children of incarcerated parents have a higher chance of experiencing stress, trauma, and stigmatization, which may cause behavioral and emotional problems. Chess is an intellectual sport, like the national Spelling Bee contest, ability to win at Chess brings great pride as a reward. You do not have to be athletic or need expensive equipment to participate.*

*Currently we are in the process of locating real estate to establish our Center for Intellectual Engagement. If you are interested in serving on our advisory board please contact Robin Ramson, Executive Director Chess Girls DC*



## What's next in 2021 ?

Chess Girls DC program will continue to teach via online platforms until schools return to regular session in Fall 2021. Chess Girls DC expects to return to Catholic University classroom space in Fall 2021.

New programming includes a pod cast about great leaders have the same skills as great chess players. We are seeking female leaders in the business community to interview.

After the decline of the pandemic, we hope to prepare students to represent Washington ,DC in regional and national tournaments.

We will continue to raise funds to support the increase of administrative costs such as payroll, insurance, website, technology services, tournament management, awards, tournament accommodations and office equipment. Postage has been a huge hit to the budget.

We are watching the commercial real estate climate to secure an accommodation that would host a chess center "Center for Intellectual Engagement". Securing a regular space would improve our ability to control the cost to accommodate classes and tournaments at an affordable rate, which is one of our biggest challenges.

We are also seeking persons interested in creating a campaign to attract girls who are physically disabled to Chess Girls DC

In addition to a program to teach girls of incarcerated parents. Chess can be an effective tool to support relationships during the emotional challenges that affect families when a parent is incarcerated.

You may contact Robin Ramson at [chessgirlsdc@gmail.com](mailto:chessgirlsdc@gmail.com) with your inquiries.

*Thank you for your support*

**HER  
CHESS  
ENCOURAGE**

*Dream BIG.*

**Chessgirlsdc.org**

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