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Chess for Success “Girls Play Chess” Tournament

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This Saturday, April 11th, over one hundred K-8 grade girls from around the state will gather for a girls only chess tournament at Tobias Elementary School in Aloha. Each spring Chess for Success produces a special tournament just for young ladies. This creates a place where girls can play chess free from the pressure that is often present in a co-ed environment. The “Girls Play Chess” tournament shows young girls that you do not have to choose between being smart and being cool. Chess teaches all of the higher-level cognitive skills needed to solve a math problem, read with comprehension or formulate a scientific hypothesis. Girls who play chess score higher on (math and reading) state standardized tests than their peers and have an increased interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. Nationally, the number of girls playing chess is strikingly low, sitting between 5-10%. The Chess for Success program is made up of 34% girls and plans on continuing to increase female participation.

*Excellent photo opportunity!

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Chess for Success (CFS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to help children develop the skills necessary for success in school and in life through learning chess. Do not be fooled by the name, Chess for Success is not a chess program; rather it is an educational program that uses chess as its vehicle to teach children higher-level thinking skills. Teachers are the front line staff, coaching the clubs and driving home the importance of the cognitive and analytical skills that come naturally when playing chess.

Chess for Success sponsors schools in the neediest communities. On average, 74% of students in CFS schools qualify for free or reduced lunch programs (a standard indication of poverty). Chess for Success serves 49% minority students and 34% of participants are girls which is four times the national average. The program is offered at no cost to students and their families. It only costs CFS \$150 per child each year to run the program. This includes fifty hours of chess, a stipend for the coach, a chess set for each child to take home, a student designed club t-shirt, chess books for the school library and free entrance into all Chess for Success tournaments. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the average after-school program costs \$1,000 per child per year.