



News Release

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Talbot County Free Library will host the third annual Children's Chess Tournament

(EASTON, APRIL 22, 2022) — Preparations are underway for the Talbot County Free Library to host the third annual Children's Chess Tournament for some challenging and fun activities.

“The children seem to enjoy the experience of learning and playing chess, and that perhaps gaining practice in attention to strategy and problem solving are wonderful skills to cultivate for us all, as well as good sportsmanship,” said Laura Powell, Talbot County Free Library Youth Services Librarian.

The tournament will be taking place on Saturday, May 7 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church of Easton, located at 617 N Washington Street. Kids ages six to 16 are encouraged to register online at the library's website.

Participants will have the opportunity to be placed in 1st, 2nd or 3rd place, as well as win other prizes. Talbot County Free Library Chess Instructor Wala-Neh Labala believes that this tournament is a great opportunity for children to be concentrating on a new hobby that will keep their brain on high alert.

“When people think about chess they often think about a game for adults, however chess is a very beneficial activity for young children as well as teenagers,” Labala said. “The game of chess requires players to not only focus on aspects of the game, but also to monitor for changes which signal opportunities to attack or moments to defend.”

Labala noted that in our high-tech world of video games, many children struggle to maintain sustained attention. That ability provides both a challenge for children ages six to 16 years of age as well as an opportunity for cognitive and behavioral growth if they stick with it.

Throughout the year, the Talbot County Free Library holds afternoon chess classes twice a month, and offers instructional lessons and chess puzzles in between.

When class is in session, the first portion of the class focuses on theory where students complete worksheets and receive instructional lessons. This allows them to learn various chess tactics and strategies and other chess concepts.

The second portion of the class is focused on practice where the participant's theoretical knowledge is challenged with games. This allows them to practice what they have learned.

“As time gets closer to the tournament, my students begin to practice with chess timers so that they can learn how to make the best move under pressure and improve their clock management skills,” said Labala. “So first is the experience of competing, and second is a greater appreciation of the game.”

Throughout his time instructing, Labala has heard many kids say that they do not want to participate because they are not good enough. However, he changes their mind by helping them overcome the fear of competing and looking back on the memory of participating in the class and the tournament.

“Win or lose, just getting the memory of competing is a great experience to have and it encourages students to tackle even greater fears in life,” said Labala. “I desire for participants to take away a greater appreciation for the game. My hope is that from playing live in-person competitive games, participants will find that the game of chess is even more exciting when compared to simple playing online.”

For more information, call (410) 822-1626, or visit www.tcfl.org.

About Talbot County Free Library

It is the mission of the Talbot County Free Library to enrich and renew the lives of the people it serves. There are two locations: The main library in Easton is located at 100 W. Dover St., and the St. Michael branch is at 106 Fremont St. The Maryland Room in the Easton branch holds a voluminous collection of genealogical resources and historical documents. Services at both locations include the circulation of books, DVDs, and digital devices, as well as free Wi-Fi, public computers, exhibits, and programs for both children and adults. For more information, please visit www.tcfl.org. Be sure to like the library on Facebook and follow us on Instagram @Talbotcountyfreelibrary.