

Chess CAN Truly Make a Difference in a Child's Life!

The 2008 Idaho Novice Chess Championship (sponsored by the ICA) held this past weekend had an additional reason to be proud this year.



Cherry Gulch School wins at 2008 Novice State Chess Championship, Emmett, Idaho

For the first time ever the event included a team of boys from an Emmett boarding school. Cherry Gulch is a private school which has both an academic and a therapeutic focus for boys ages 10-14. This first year of the school's chess team, coached by Daniel Vellotti, consisted of boys from all over the United States, who are looking for ways to build and enhance their positive life skills and experiences.

All of the students who played in this past weekend's event had no previous exposure to chess or chess tournaments, and they have only been learning to play since this past summer. Yet they were able to finish with the 2nd Place Overall Team Award in the 7-12 section of the championship and many received individual awards in both the 8th and 9th grades, as well.

These boys communicated very clearly both during the competition and afterwards that they were so impressed with the positive, enthusiastic, and complimentary focus that the tournament had for all of the players. Each one felt that the the ICA had provided a fun, safe, and purposeful environment, which brought out the best in building both their chess **AND** (perhaps most importantly) their life skills.

Chess has helped teach these boys the values of maturity, self-discipline, independence, and critical thinking. The school players and staff would like to thank both the ICA President (Jeff Roland) and the Scholastic Trustee (Dick Vandenburg) for providing a forum that allows youth to build positive relationships and enhance their teamwork skills.