



City of Chicago



R2015-443

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	6/17/2015
Sponsor(s):	Ervin (28)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Congratulations extended to students and faculty involved in chess programs at Marshall Metropolitan High School and Faraday Elementary School for outstanding achievements
Committee(s) Assignment:	

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the game of chess is intricate and intellectually demanding, thus developing one's critical thinking skills, patience, and strategic planning;

WHEREAS, in April 2014 Bobby Blankenship, then an 11th grader at Marshall Metropolitan High School, was undefeated in the in the 2014 U.S. Chess Federation K-12 Chess Tournament in San Diego, California, after winning a 1st place medal in the Illinois state finals; in that national chess tournament, the combined team of Bobby and Michael Hobbs added another national trophy, a team trophy, despite only two of them playing for Marshall;

WHEREAS, that great success was followed by another excellent showing by the Marshall chess team in December 2014, when 11th graders, Devell Conway and Xavier Francher, won 2nd and 3rd place national trophies at the U.S. Chess Federation K-12 Grade Chess championships in Orlando, Florida; and

WHEREAS, again in April 2015, three more national trophies were achieved in Columbus, Ohio at the U.S. Chess Federation National High School Chess Tournament when 11th grader, Michael Hobbs, won the individual national trophy; and the Marshall team composed of Charlie Wiley, Corey Benamon, Jeremiah Townsend, Xavier Francher, Devell Conway and Bobby Blankenship earned two more national trophies;

WHEREAS, a total of seven national trophies have been won from 2014 to 2015, in a span of one year, by the Marshall Metropolitan High School chess team, that the City Council has been advised of these magnificent achievements by Alderman Jason Ervin of the 28th Ward;

WHEREAS, the chess program was started at Marshall Metropolitan High School in 2005 by math teacher Joseph M. Ocol, whose main goal was only to keep kids in school after school, and who continues to guide and mentor the high school chess players as an after school program to this day;

WHEREAS, Coach Ocol's program was expanded in 2010 when his students began to mentor students of Faraday Elementary School; and in 2014 when the program went further south to Earle STEM Elementary School;

WHEREAS, despite the limited funding provided to the chess team, the Marshall chess team still has managed to get to the top eight of Chicago Public Schools chess teams; and among the top eight, only Marshall is a non-selective enrollment school, a truly neighborhood school, and the only school with a population of less than 800 students;

WHEREAS, the community served by Marshall and Faraday faces many economic and social challenges: the overwhelming majority of families live below the poverty line and most families simply cannot afford to support extracurricular activities for their children;

WHEREAS, the Marshall and Faraday students take time to practice chess only by mentoring each other because, unlike other schools that serve more affluent communities, Marshall and Faraday lack the funds to hire grandmasters as chess instructors or to compete in more tournaments which require money to participate in;

WHEREAS, the chess standouts at Marshall and Faraday get little or no recognition from the public at large. Colleges and universities overlook their intellectual acuity and accomplishments, thus offering very little incentives, scholarships, or financial aid to these chess players: for the past two years, only Mr. Marty Grund, a non-Chicagoan, and the Internet Chess Club have taken up the cudgel of providing whatever they can support to the Marshall chess team;

WHEREAS, the chess program at Marshall and Faraday has taught students not just chess but also self-confidence and a desire to serve others by sharing their knowledge to others; that, despite the daily struggles they cope at home and the challenges they face in their communities, these students still managed to shine given the opportunities to shine.

WHEREAS, these kids belong to some of the poorest families in Chicago; most of them have been raised by single moms who barely have jobs to support their families; though the funds were barely enough, still they determined to make the best of what they were provided;

WHEREAS, yet unlike other students, these kids barely have write-ups on bad behavior because they avoid trouble and they avoid getting themselves involved in gang or drug-related activities in their communities;

WHEREAS, the students have exemplified that it is the stamina of character that will sustain them in their daily lives; that they have not just been chess players but they have also been mentors to others; that the chess mentoring program of Marshall and Faraday has been going on for the past five years now, as they try to be part of the generation that could mold the character of this nation;

WHEREAS, all Chicagoans should be proud of the accomplishments of the Marshall chess team and the Marshall school administration -- not for the five national trophies that they have attained this school year-- but for the stamina of their resolve to use chess to mentor other kids and inspire them to become productive citizens -- as they try to make the best of what they have in making this world a better place to live; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this 17th day of June, 2015, do hereby congratulate Bobby Blankenship, Devell Conway, Michael Hobbs, Xavier Francher, Charlie Wiley, Corey Benamon, Jeremiah Townsend, Coach Joseph M. Ocol, Marshall School Principal, Dr. Lori Campbell, Faraday School Principal, Dr. Tawana Wilks-Williams, Mr. Marty Grund and the Internet Chess Club, and all the participants in the chess programs at Marshall Metropolitan High School and Faraday Elementary School for their outstanding achievements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on all Chicagoans to join in celebrating the continuing success of these students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call on admissions officers of colleges and universities to increase their own appreciation and understanding of the struggles that such great competitors have waged to achieve such great accomplishments, and to open avenues of opportunities for them, and for corporate entities and citizens to help the Marshall and Faraday chess teams avail of funding to continue their quest of saving lives, instilling discipline and making a difference in the lives of students;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that suitable copies of this Resolution be presented to Dr. Lori Campbell, Dr. Tawana Wilks-Williams, to Mr. Marty Grund and the Internet Chess Club, to Mr. Joseph M. Ocol and to all the members of the Marshall chess team, as a token of our esteem and appreciation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Ervin', written over a horizontal line.

Jason Ervin
Alderman, 28th Ward

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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'W' or 'V' shape with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.