

December 5, 2015

Mr. David Mehler  
President, US Chess Center  
410 8<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Mehler:

Without the US Chess Center I would not be in college now. My younger brother and I were brought up by a single mother disabled by arthritis. I attended Ballou High School, a school with a low graduation rate and better known for our outstanding marching band than for academic achievement.

As a sophomore I was attracted to the chess club you volunteered to teach every week in our school library. From there I learned about the chess classes offered on Sundays downtown and I appreciated your offer to subsidize my transportation costs to attend. With your encouragement I won the DC High School Championship and through your help of finding the funding to do so I represented the District in the Denker Tournament of High School Champions.

Prior to these experiences I expected to graduate from high school and enlist in the Air Force. You expressed confidence that I would be able to earn a scholarship to attend college before embarking on a military career. The experience my mother and I had in flying across the country to play in the chess tournament changed my ambitions. I earned a spot in the Stanford University college session, took as many AP classes as I could and was then provided with a full four-year scholarship to attend The George Washington University, where I am a now a sophomore.

Without chess, I would not have discovered my options and would not have made the academic decisions that are changing my life. During this holiday season, I wanted to express my appreciation.

Sincerely,



Tai'Lon Jackson  
The George Washington University  
Class of 2018