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## **Cherry Gulch wins back to back State Chess Championships**

Cherry Gulch Chess Club accomplished the remarkable feat of winning first place at the Idaho State Chess Championships in both 2008 & 2009 in two separate divisions. The Cherry Gulch chess players learn to use all the critical thinking benefits of chess to make good decisions in their daily lives. These skills include patience, planning, concentration, teamwork, problem-solving, and improved communication skills. Daniel J. Vellotti is currently the Chess Coach for Cherry Gulch School. Daniel's therapeutic approach and empathetic nature make him a perfect fit for Cherry Gulch!

Daniel enjoys working with the students closely to help them to develop not only their chess skills, but also their life skills. A native of California, Daniel moved to Boise, ID at the age of 9. He fell in love with chess soon after moving here when he discovered a chess set in his grandmother's closet. Soon after he started competing in local chess tournaments, Daniel was winning first place in all the Boise tournaments that he entered.

Daniel started competing throughout the state and won the State Championship title a record three times. He continued to compete nationally becoming a champion in many different prestigious tournaments throughout the country. Daniel became a well-known representative of excellence in academic achievement for the state, and soon had a large following of students who were looking for a local role model.

In May of 2000, Daniel established a chess coaching company and discovered his true passion of motivating and inspiring students through his original and interactive "Success In Chess" Training System. Vellotti's Chess Kids has become extremely popular and successful throughout the Treasure Valley. His outreach and enrichment teaching program is designed to teach a love and appreciation for the game of chess and along with all the academic benefits and life skills that go along with it.

Daniel is a regular presenter at the gifted conference Edufest, and his company was recently nominated as a "Parent's Picks Choice" by Nickelodeon for best Children's Programming. He is a prolific published author of chess workbooks, and he has also served as the President of the Idaho Chess Association.

Daniel's other interests include organic gardening, sketch artistry, and white-water rafting.

His tremendous ability to connect with students of all ages includes his own sons, Carl and Luke, who are following in his footsteps. 10 year old Luke is a three time National Chess Champion and 2009 member of the All-American Team for chess. Luke, currently classified as an official Expert of Chess, is the highest rated player in Idaho- including

both children and adults. He is also a very popular assistant of Vellotti's Chess Kids performing "chess magic" for all the students by doing simultaneous chess exhibitions, speed chess, and blindfold chess. Carl is also a State and National chess champion who helps instruct for Vellotti's Chess Kids in group classes. He additionally offers private chess lessons, and has produced several student champions of his own.

You may read more about Daniel and his family in the following links to news articles:

- ["Boise Boy Invited to World Championships"](#) (2008)
- ["Second-Grader Dominates..."](#) (2007)
- ["Chess prodigy competes for Idaho's best"](#) (2007)
- ["Vellotti's Chess Kids Students Best in Country"](#) (2006)
- ["Daniel Vellotti trains future chess whizzes"](#) (2005)
- ["Checkmate!"](#) (2004)

Cherry Gulch is a ranch-style, therapeutic boarding school designed specifically for 10 - 14 year old boys. Cherry Gulch's supportive, encouraging and respect-based approach is designed to build students up—rather than tear them down. Cherry Gulch is passionate about providing early intervention and prevention to help boys reach their full potential and become well-rounded, pro-social young men. We are dedicated to providing outstanding therapeutic and academic services to students and their families. This is accomplished in the context of a safe environment working toward "Building Brighter Tomorrows for the Boys of Today."