

ChessFest News

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Katie Dellamaggiore, featured speaker at ChessFest

“BLINDFOLD CHESS” to be held at Chess Plaza during ChessFest XII

UT Dallas Grandmasters Cristian Chirila and Julio Sadorra will show their skills playing blindfolded against challengers in the Chess Plaza located between the Student Services Building and Lot F from 11 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, March 5. This free event features the UT Dallas Chess Program’s giant chess set called “Chess Grande.” From noon to 1 p.m., UT Dallas Pan American Chess Champions will direct the large pieces to illustrate some of the famous end games in chess history. This is a chance to meet members of the elite UT Dallas Chess Team. Free and open to the public.

For information: Jim Stallings, 972-883-4899 or Tom Koch, 972-883-4951.



UT Dallas Chess Team Grandmaster Julio Sadorra (seated and blindfolded at right) competes at Chess Plaza against challengers who can see the chess board and the giant wood-carved chess pieces.

Producer of popular chess documentary ChessFest speaker

The *12th Annual ChessFest* at the University of Texas at Dallas will showcase **Katie Dellamaggiore**, a documentary producer and director who created the award-winning film *Brooklyn Castle*. The film is about an intermediate school in Brooklyn, N.Y. that follows the school’s chess team members for a year and documents their challenges and triumphs on and off the chessboard.

ChessFest is a celebration organized annually by UT Dallas’ Eugene McDermott Library and the UT Dallas Chess Program.

The free, public presentation by Dellamaggiore will be 7 p.m., Wednesday, March 6 in the library’s McDermott Suite. Her topic is “The Making of a Chess Documentary.” She will receive the 2013 UT Dallas Chess Educator of the Year Award after the lecture.

The public is invited to a movie screening at 2 p.m. and a reception beginning at 6:15 p.m. A light buffet will be provided. If you plan to arrive early for the movie showing or reception, please RSVP **Jim Stallings** at james.stallings@utdallas.edu or call 972-883-4899.

Brooklyn Castle, Katie’s feature directional debut, is one of the best reviewed films of 2012 by Rotten Tomatoes and is a NAACP Image Awards nominee. Dellamaggiore was named the Best New Director for *Brooklyn Castle* at the Brooklyn Film Festival. The pro-

See a free special showing of *Brooklyn Castle* in McDermott Library MC 2.524 2-4 p.m., March 6

duction won the Audience Award at its debut at the SXSW Film Festival in Austin, TX. Katie has appeared on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, CBS This Morning, The Steve Harvey Show, NPR, CNN, MSNBC and FOX News Channel.

“Katie has shown considerable enthusiasm in sharing this film with educators,” Stallings said. “She has become involved with the Afterschool Alliance about the need for chess programs in schools.”

Sixty percent of the Intermediate School 318’s students are from poverty-line families and cuts in budgets have put the program on a shoestring. Yet, over the last decade the school has triumphed over programs with older competitors and means. The school has won some 26 national titles - more than any junior high in the nation.

“It’s no longer a question, but a fact that kids excel when they’re given the opportunity to explore their potential through expanded learning opportunities after 3 p.m.,” Dellamaggiore said. “Looking specifically at chess at 318, there was one thing Coach **Elizabeth Spiegel** said that really stuck with us and that was the idea that chess offers kids an opportunity to understand what it takes to get really good at something if they work hard at it.”

Dellamaggiore’s work has appeared on MTV, A&E, HBO/Cinemax and VH1. In 2010 she and her husband, Nelson, co-founded television and film production company Rescued Media.