



## OVERBROOK CHESS CLUB

Overbrook Parent Laura Cooper wanted to make a difference for students at Overbrook who were not involved in athletics or the fine arts. That's why she started the Chess Club this fall.

"During Christmas last year we met up with some friends who were telling us about how involved they were with chess," Mrs. Cooper said. "So we got a book and started to learn. We also went to the Chess Center in Nashville."

Cooper's sons began to love the game so much, she thought it would be fun to start a group at school.

"The Nashville Chess Center was an extraordinary resource," she said. "They so believe in teaching children the game of chess, they support any school program."

The club began meeting after school this fall. Both boys and girls are involved in the club and it is open to all grade levels. Bill Orgain, who is affiliated with the Nashville Chess Center and who is also a goat farmer and cheese maker who lives in Dickson, Tenn., coaches the students in the club. Mrs. Cooper said he has the club members playing at a level that is now way above her abilities.

"The thing I really love about our coach is that he taught the children to do the basic moves but he believes that if you really respect the children, you will teach them how to play the game at a deeper level and how to develop strategies."

While the club is an extra-curricular activity, it has a direct impact on academics. The benefits of learning and playing the game of chess are well documented.

"According to research, test scores improved by 17.3% for students regularly engaged in chess classes, compared with only 4.6% for children participating in other forms of enriched activities," said 4-time World Champion Susan Polgar on her Web site [www.susanpolgar.com](http://www.susanpolgar.com). In approximately 30 nations across the globe...chess is incorporated into the country's scholastic curriculum. Just as athletics are a part of the required agenda at schools in the United States, chess has been that way in the European Nations abroad."