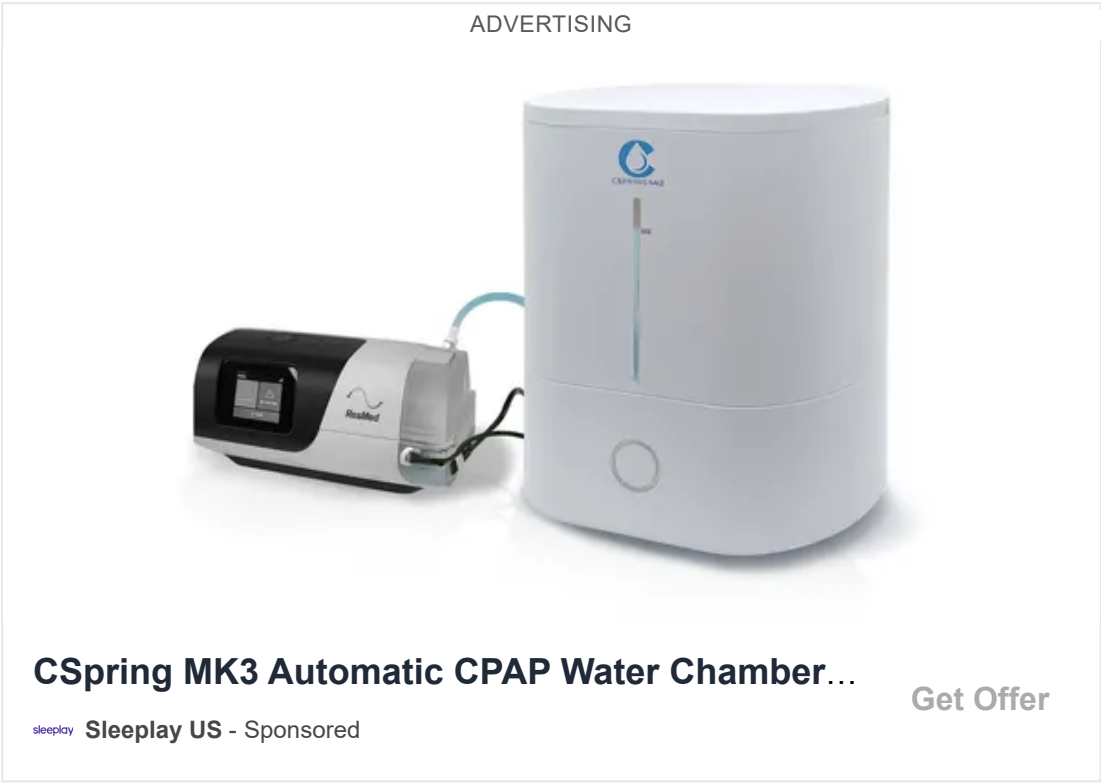


— A hundred young players will go head-to-head — and brain-to-brain — at the Waypoint Foundation Scholastic Chess Tournament in Ephrata on Feb. 1.

This is the 18th year the tournament has been held at Parkway Elementary School, said Troy Pugh, who created and manages the tournament with his brother, Roger Pugh. This year, Pugh said, the foundation has added online registration for the first time. There were 89 players registered Tuesday morning, he said, which is the fastest it’s ever filled up.

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“Usually, we don’t get to 89 until the week of the event,” he said.

The format is the same as in years past, Pugh said. Competitors play five rounds 15 minutes apart in what’s called a Swiss pairing, which means their next opponent is usually about the same skill level as themselves and nobody is eliminated. If more than one player has gone undefeated after five rounds, those players compete against each other until a single winner emerges.

The top prize is \$500, and other prizes are awarded depending on the number of competitors. There is no charge, but due to the limitations of space and equipment, the tournament is limited to 100 players, Pugh said. The foundation will continue to accept reservations, however, and players after the 100th go on a waiting list. Players who simply turn up on tournament day may have a shot as well, Pugh said.

“Usually, we have enough people who just don’t show up so that the wait-listers who come that morning are able to get into the tournament,” Pugh said. “We’ve yet to turn people away.”

The limit is unlikely to change, Pugh added.

“We really don’t have aspirations to make this as big as we can get it,” he said. “We have a great relationship with the Ephrata School District and the facility that we use is just about right for maxing out at 100 players.”

The tournament begins at 8 a.m. and the first round starts at 8:30, according to the Waypoint Foundation website. Each round can last a maximum of an hour, so the foundation provides a free pizza lunch for the players. All Grant and Adams county students from kindergarten through

high school, including homeschoolers, are welcome.

“Last year our tournament became a qualifier for state high school team competition as well as the state elementary individual competitions,” Pugh said. “So the kids in elementary ages that participate, we notify (them) after the tournament whether they have qualified to participate in the state tournament.”

Troy and Roger Pugh started the tournament in memory of their brother, Ryan, an avid chess player who passed away in a car accident in 2001. Chess teaches children to think ahead, Roger Pugh said in an earlier interview, and the lessons learned on the chessboard can be applied in life.

“Each year, especially kids that have participated before, they come with a renewed focus and a renewed enthusiasm to do better this year,” Troy Pugh said. “In most cases, they do. And some of the kids that are the top players, we recognize them from before when they struggled or had a difficult time, but each year, they tend to improve a bit.”

Waypoint Foundation Scholastic Chess Tournament

Feb. 1 at Parkway Intermediate School, 1011 Parkway Blvd., Ephrata

Check-in 7:30-8:20 a.m., first round 8:30 a.m.

Lunch is provided for players only

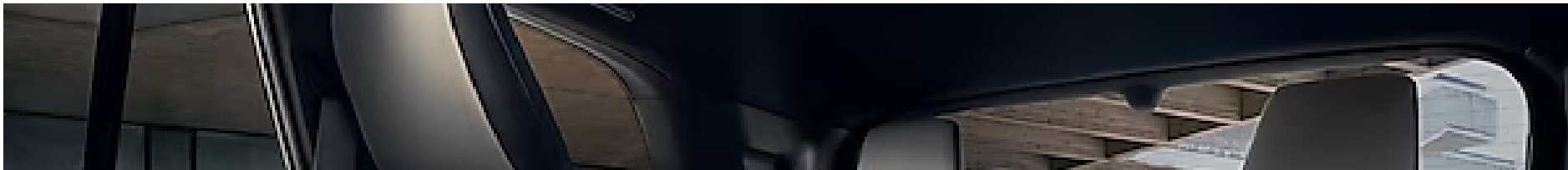
Open to all K-12 students in Grant and Adams counties

No charge. Info and registration: www.waypointfoundation.org



Players face off at a previous Waypoint Foundation Chess Tournament in Ephrata. This year’s tournament is Feb. 1.

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