Eric Liesman had a dream. Like many young people do, he saw a movie and wanted to be just like the hero. Was it one of the Avengers? Maybe James Bond? No, the movie that inspired 10-year-old Eric Liesman was The Queen of Katwe, about a girl in Africa who learns to play chess and becomes a world-class competitor. Eric’s dream was to learn to play chess like Phiona Mutesi.

With the St. Charles City-County Library, finding a way to learn was simple. Eric started attending the Saturday Morning Chess Club at the Middendorf-Kredell Branch (the same Library where he had originally checked out The Queen of Katwe movie). Saturday Morning Chess Club is a regular event at the Library where players of all ages and abilities gather to play and practice the game. This chess community is very welcoming, and they were happy to work with a new player like Eric. The group meets at the Library every week, and Eric and his dad, Steve, enjoy learning and playing there with other chess enthusiasts.

The Liesmans have other interests besides chess. Steve and his wife, Stefanie, are also involved in a charitable organization called Joy in Haiti. Joy in Haiti supports an orphanage, a church, and a school in the impoverished nation of Haiti (off the coast of Florida in the Caribbean).

Joy in Haiti plans regular trips to Haiti to help work, teach, and spend time with the young girls in the Joy in Haiti-run orphanage, House of Joy. For the next trip, the entire Liesman family planned to travel to Haiti with the organization. One day, while playing chess at Saturday Morning Chess Club, Eric and Steve came up with an exciting idea. During their upcoming mission trip, they would teach the girls at House of Joy how to play chess. They committed to spending many of their Saturday mornings at the Library practicing their game, and started buying extra chess sets to take on their trip.

A few months later, Eric and Steve introduced the game of chess to children at the House of Joy Orphanage and the New Christian School of Tabarre in Haiti. Despite language barriers and very different ways of life, chess helped connect the Liesman family with their new friends, and the lessons they learned at the Library made it possible. Before returning home, Eric presented the students with the extra chess sets and encouraged them to practice so they could play together again someday.

Eric Liesman had a dream, and the St. Charles City-County Library provided the resources to make his dream a reality. Seems like a story that would make a great movie.

The St. Charles City-County Library District is your Kaleidoscope of Discovery. Over 2 million St. Charles County residents visit our 12 branch locations each year. Every day the Library is changing and evolving, offering new services and exciting events and classes for all ages, expanding the eLibrary collection, and enhancing our customers’ Library experience. For the latest on what’s happening, visit the Library website youranswerplace.org

####