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2016 Summer Camps and Activities for Kids

THE GAME CHANGER: Teaching Children to Play – and Win – in Life

written by COLLEEN ANN MCNALLY | photos courtesy of ALAN BROOKS PHOTOGRAPHY



ORRIN "CHECKMATE" HUDSON teaches children how to play chess as if his life depended on it, and that's no exaggeration.

"The life I save may be my own," the fast-talking, two-time World Open Speed chess champion said. In one breath, he will tell you a tear-jerking comeback story of a would-be juvenile delinquent. In the next, he'll be belly laughing at his own wise crack. He knows when to use both the stern voice and jovial sense of humor to not only grab the attention of students he mentors, but to leave a lasting impression.

"My goal is to teach a million young people," Hudson said, who made this his sole mission after founding Be Somebody, Inc. in 2000. The nonprofit organization is more than halfway to that goal, using numerous tools, including the game of chess, to promote self-esteem, responsibility and analytical thinking among at-risk kids.

THE FIRST MOVE



Why chess?

"Six major words: Take time to think things through," Hudson said. It's true that parallels can be made between the twoperson game played on a black and white checkered board and the way people approach tough decisions in life. Both take patience, thorough thinking, mental concentration and focus – or one mistake could end it all.

The reality of loss hit him hard when watching the news one night, 16 years ago. As he watched a heartbreaking story about seven fast-food employees robbed and killed for \$2,000 in the cash register, something within Hudson triggered. Since then, he has spent time traveling to schools or teaching from his training center in Stone Mountain to help prevent the repetition of similar headlines.

"I believe the only way to fight is to use your head. Brains before bullets – think it out, don't shoot it out," he said with a rhythm to his voice that gave me the sense this phrase has been repeated countless times. The way he sees it is, if he doesn't take the time to spread this message, how else can he hope to ensure that others, including himself, won't be the next victim of a tragic news segment?

He chose the name "Be Someone" from the advice Abraham Lincoln's mother told her son before he ran for president, and it has become one of his many mantras that guide him and those he mentors.

Still, Hudson's passion for sharing his expertise at chess traces back even further. The longer we chatted, the more glimpses I gained into his complex childhood in housing projects, growing up in and out of foster homes as the seventh sibling of 13. Later, James Edge, a white teacher in an all-black high school, helped Hudson realize his own potential when Edge taught him the game of chess.

"I started making better grades. He turned my whole life around," Hudson said. "I'm living my dream because a teacher took the time to teach me something that was not on the school agenda."

PLAYING ALONG

The chess champ has made a habit of doing just that. Hudson will challenge anyone age 4 to 104 to a match. In fact, he seems to thrive off challenges, and the bigger the better. He has repeatedly led students to Atlanta Public Schools chess championships and been on call in the middle of the night to sign court papers.

"My most famous [success] story is that a kid almost went to jail and the judge gave him one more chance to get his life correct," Hudson said. "I found out about the story and went to the school to work with him and coached him to win a state championship."

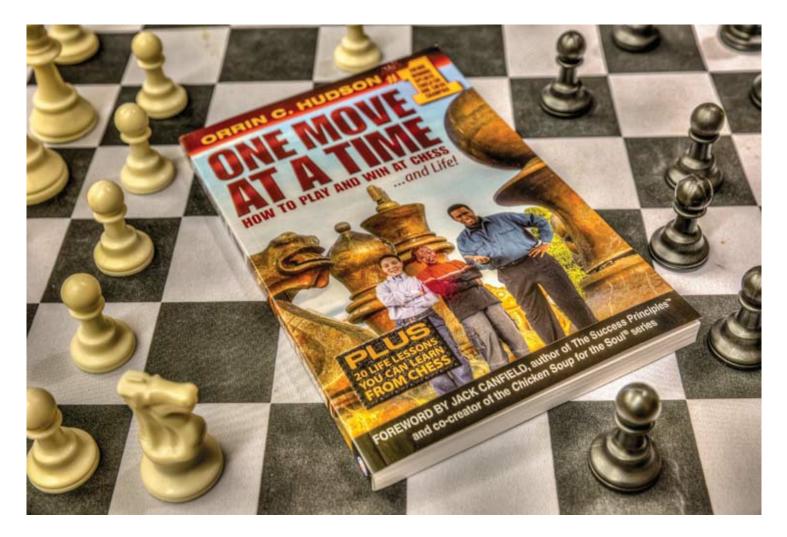
To imagine how he makes moves like this, first forget any image of chess as a quiet, stationary activity. Hudson's high-energy approach involves techniques like a life-size board and pieces to get students in the game and a catchy rap song he wrote, with lyrics –and good morals –likely to be stuck in their heads.

Even his conversational speech is full of mnemonic devices and popular culture anecdotes, from Donald Trump to Atlanta Hawks stars that surely help make connections for younger audiences.

"I'm on a mission to teach young people that the new currency is KASH," Hudson said, rattling o one of many quirky mottos. "K for knowledge, A for attitude, S for skills and H for habits. Once you get this KASH, no one can take it away from you. I'm committed to teaching young people how to KASH in."

The money motif is appropriate as one of Hudson's favorite topics, and most rewarding parts of his newfound profession, is a discussion on adding value. "Always give people more value than they are giving you," he said.

WIN BY CHOICE



Hudson pushes students to out perform and outsmart the competition, reminding them often how each move matters. Positive benefits for students include improved grades, prolonged attention spans, enhanced ability to think strategically, a desire to compete in a positive atmosphere and improved team-building skills.

Hudson said kids leave inspired and motivated to apply their newly acquired skills from the game board to a boardroom someday. Hudson has made his own headlines on news networks on the national level, published a book, earned award recognition from the FBI and the nickname "Checkmate" from Jane Fonda, who endorsed his methods through her work with the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention. His "Win by Choice" program is mobile, so Hudson is often hired for corporate presentations and motivational seminars, private coaching sessions, parenting or teacher workshops and chess camps.

Hudson has a unique ability to breakdown patterns and decision-making in a way anyone –even those who have never played chess before – can understand. Checkmate!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

besomeone.org

A Summer to Remember

Whether school's already out or you're in the final countdown, we've got you covered with a wide range of unique summer activities and camps for children, young and old. While "camp" may conjure cabin nostalgia for many of us, these local daytime options cover interests from art to computer coding, as well as put the "active" in activities with sports. We won't tell your kids how much they are actually learning if you don't, but we can't say the same for

leaders like Orrin Hudson whose chess camps send kids back to class with a leg up and memories they'll be eager to share.

HORE'S A QUESTION

ASK AWAY

Here's A Question all began around Atlantan Scott Bowen's family dinner table with kids ages 11, 9 and 4. "My wife and I were looking for ways to engage our children in conversations that gave us a deeper understanding of their hearts and minds," Bowen said."We've found in our family that even simple questions can lead to great conversations. It has been fun to see our kids enjoy asking and answering these questions.

We've gained a better understanding of how they see they world and what makes them who they are. Our hope is that the book adds value to your family time and you enjoy it as much as we do." The book is available now and might be the answer you've been looking for to turn off the television during meals or keep ear buds at bay on your next road trip. *heresaquestion.org*

Serve It

DATES: Multiple weeks offered, 9 a.m. to noon AGES: 5 to 16 COST: \$200 per week LOCATION: Falls of Autry Mill, Johns Creek

All skill levels are welcomed at this tennis camp taught by certified instructors, including Julius Robinson, current director of junior programs for The Falls of Autry Mill Tennis Club. This camp is unique because it caters mainly to beginners and recreational level players; and has a very relaxed and fun atmosphere. The kids start each day with light conditioning, focused development, team-building activities and competition, then end it with fun summer games and daily swimming. Registration deadline is 8 p.m. the Thursday before a session starts. 404-291-4550, *fallstennisclub.com*

Learn to Code

DATES: Multiple weeks offered AGES: 7 to 14 COST: \$269 for half day and \$499 for full day LOCATIONS: Kids 4 Coding Center, Roswell; Gwinnett Technical College, Alpharetta and Lawrenceville

Kids 4 Coding, a leader in technology and design education for youth, offers camps grouped by age and offered at three locations in North Atlanta. Camp fees include a T-shirt, healthy snacks and certificate of completion. Space is limited. Camper to instructor ratio is nine to one. Campers bring their own devices, or rentals are available. Programs are offered in:



Game Design, Programming, Robotics, Minecraft, Mobile Design, 3D Design, 3D Modeling and Animation, Mobile App Design and Web Development. 770-642-0004; *kids4coding.com*

Make a Mess

DATES: Multiple weeks offered, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. **AGES**: 5 to 12 COST: \$175 per week for members, \$200 per week for non-members **LOCATION**: Hudgens Center for the Arts, Duluth Print, paint, draw, sculpt, sew, throw, hammer, carve and glue! The Hudgens Center for the Arts offers seven weekly fine art camps for budding young artists. Each week is an all-new experience themed with different projects and activities. Each weekly session will conclude with a Fabulous Friday Art Exhibition where the budding artists showcase their works created during the week of discovery. 770-623-6002, *thehudgens.org*

Be an All-Star

DATES: June 5 through 10 AGES: 7 to 17 COST: \$300 (scholarships available) LOCATION: Camp Dream, Warm Springs

The BlazeSports America All-Star Summer Camp offers a weeklong overnight camp experience providing kids with a physical disability the chance to learn, play and participate in a variety of adaptive sports and recreational physical activities. Both ambulant and those who use a wheelchair will have the opportunity to participate in archery, kayaking, rock climbing, swimming, track and field, wheelchair basketball and much more! Kids eligible for camp must have a physical impairment such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, acquired brain injury, dwarfism, amputation, spinal cord injury, visual impairment or other related physical disabilities. BlazeSports All- Star Summer Sports Camp is held in partnership with Camp Twin Lakes. 404-270-2000, *blazesports.org*

Plant Seeds for Learning

DATES: Tuesdays through Oct. 25, 10 a.m. to noon AGES: Pre-schoolers COST: Free LOCATION: Avalon Plaza, Alpharetta

Parents and caregivers are invited to bring their tots for playtime and weekly surprises including face painters, storytellers, magicians, zoo animals and more. *experienceavalon.com*

Express Yourself

DATES: Multiple weeks offered between May 31 to Aug. 5 AGES: 6 to 14 COST: \$200 for half day and \$350 for full day LOCATION: Art & Beyond, East Roswell

Let your young artist create and express themselves! Art & Beyond o ers 10 weekly themed summer arts and crafts camps for children. Each week there is a di erent theme that guides the art projects. Led by professional teachers, campers will create a variety of artworks including but not limited to drawings, paintings, clay, sculpture, printmaking and collage. Each Friday will culminate into a mini art show showcasing the art created that week at camp. Supplies and T-Shirt are included. *aandbartstudioalpharettaga.com*

Be Part of a Tradition

DATES: May 31 to July 29, except for the week of July 4 AGES: Varies per camp COST: Varies per camp LOCATION: Pinecrest Academy Campus, Cumming



Pinecrest Academy has been hosting summer camps for more than 15 years on the 68-acre campus. Camps are always open to all, and there are more than 40 camps available for children and teens of all ages, including Atlanta Braves Baseball, NIKE Basketball, Archery, Babysitting, Band, Cheer, Computer, Drama, Driver's Ed, Karate, Musical Theater, Pre-school Art, 12 different science camps, Spanish, Sports Performance, Summertime Fun, Volleyball, Wrestling and many more. Your child will experience a great camp program that will build virtue, confi – dence and friendships while teaching new skills in a faith-fi lled environment. Please see the Summer Camps registration page on the Pinecrest web site for details. New camps are added daily, so check back often! 770-888-4477, *pinecrestacademy.org*

Make History

DATES: Multiple weeks offered, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
AGES: 5 to 10
COST: \$110 for half day, \$160 for full day
LOCATION: Heritage Sandy Springs Museum, Sandy Springs

Heritage Sandy Springs is excited to announce their popular bi-monthly American Girl Club is now a summer camp! These programs expose participants to the unique historical perspectives of the American Girl Dolls through crafts, food and games. For those who have attended our programs before, the summer camp sessions are all new, providing more in-depth content and even more interaction. Each day will highlight a di erent American Girl and feature activities related to the time period in which she lived. Deadline for registration is June 3. 404-851-9111, *heritagesandysprings.org*

Find Animals and Art

DATES: Multiple weeks and mini camp offered **AGES**: 5 to 11 **COST**: \$285 for full week, \$165 for mini camp **LOCATION**: FarmHouse in the City, Roswell

Come see what all the parents and kids rave about each summer! A day with the lovable animals and creative art projects at Farmhouse in the City will create memories for a lifetime. They have a different theme each week of the summer. Each camp day includes mixed media art projects like canvas painting, watercolor painting and pottery. On the last day of camp, you and your family will enjoy an art show to view all of your child's masterpieces. Additional siblings that attend receive a 10-percent discount, and after-camp care is available for \$10 per day. 770-587-3001, *farmhouseinthecity.com*

Dance, Dance, Dance

DATES: Multiple weeks, depends on age and experience level
AGES: 2 to 4, 5 to 7, 8 and up or 12 and up
COST: \$285 for full week, \$165 for mini camp
LOCATION: Atlanta Ballet Buckhead Centre, Atlanta or Powers Ferry Centre, Marietta

Atlanta Ballet's Centre for Dance Education – one of the top 10 dance education facilities in the country – continues to set a high standard for excellence as it returns for another season of day camps. 404-303-1501 or 678-213-5000, *centre.atlantaballet.com*

Roll, Race, Play

DATES: Open daily, hours vary AGES: Varies by activity COST: Varies by activity LOCATION: Slingshot Entertainment, Norcross

The first of its kind, Slingshot is the largest indoor entertainment facility in Georgia. Spark some friendly competition and try your luck at the bowling lanes, go-kart track or American Ninja Warrior-inspired obstacle courses for both adult and junior ninjas. 678-585-2268, *slingshotplay.com*

Let Creativity Rule

DATES: Multiple weeks offered, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
AGES: 6 to 11
COST: \$300 for members, \$400 for general public
Location: High Museum of Art, Midtown



Spend the summer in our creativity lab exploring art, getting messy, and having a blast. Sign up now for your chance to flex your art muscles in one of our awesome weeklong camps. Each session has four camps per week based on age group and art theme for Crafty Creatives, International Art Stars, Watercolors, Tempera, and Oils... Oh, My! And Delve into Design. Need extended childcare for the week? Add on After-Care separately for this session. After-care is from 4 to 6 p.m. daily. There is a \$50/per week additional charge for after-care. 404-733-4586; *high.org*

Think Ahead

DATES: Multiple weeks offered

AGES: 5 to 14

COST: Full-day camps (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) are \$495 per week, and half-day camps (9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) are \$250 per week. MODA members receive 10-percent discount.

LOCATION: Museum of Design Atlanta; The Lovett School; Georgia Institute of Technology; First Presbyterian Preschool (Varies depending on session)

Children who attend campMODA learn to use Design Thinking in connection with science, technology, creativity, engineering and math skills to solve real world problems. Hosted each summer by Museum of Design Atlanta (MODA), each campMODA 2016 session features one of these exciting themes: Making with WeDos, littleBits and LEGO Bricks; Designing with Minecraft; LEGO Robotics – NXT; Astrophotography or Wearable Technology. 404-979-6455, *museumofdesign.org*