

Family Movie Nights Spark Meaningful Family Dialogue

(NAPSA)—Disney’s “Queen of Katwe,” now available for home viewing, is the perfect film for family movie night and can spark important family conversations. In addition to providing a captivating, funny and heartwarming glimpse into the lives of children in current-day Africa, it also has the advantage of providing valuable life lessons that can help open your children’s minds to new ways of approaching problems and inspire them to try new challenges that can expand their skills for navigating the world.

“Queen of Katwe” is based on the true story of Phiona Mutesi, a courageous young girl from the slums of Africa who sells corn on the streets of rural Uganda and whose world rapidly changes when she’s introduced to the game of chess. As the movie unfolds, it presents a wonderful example of how mastery of the game of chess helps Phiona become a champion in the game of life. (Phiona, now 20, hopes to earn a college degree and continue to study chess in the hope of becoming a Grandmaster.)

What makes “Queen of Katwe” different from other inspirational stories is its setting. As Phiona dreams of a better life, she must face the possibility of not making it out of the slum. And even if she does, she’ll have to navigate in a world she has no idea existed. Most audiences will never experience her world or even know there is such a place or that kids manage to grow up and thrive in such dire circumstances.

Adding to the realism are the actors and their backgrounds. Madina Nalwanga, who plays Phiona, is herself from a Ugandan slum, and director Mira Nair, very familiar with the environment, having lived nearby, shot the film mostly in the Katwe slums. Over 100 Ugandans worked as extras in the



Madina Nalwanga, as the Ugandan chess champion Phiona, can teach your kids many lessons.

film’s street scenes, 80 of them without any prior experience with, or in front of, cameras. David Oyelowo, best known for playing Martin Luther King, Jr. in “Selma,” is the charismatic chess teacher who understands the vulnerabilities of his young charges and knows how to lift their diminished spirits while teaching them how to win.

Here are a few things that Phiona learns along the way that children can universally relate to as they watch the film. These points would also make for great family discussions that encourage kids to connect the concepts to their own challenges.

— **Learn to use your mind.** The movie shows how chess teaches the children to make a plan and focus on that plan as they move forward. It is not just about winning. The purpose of the competitions is really to learn strategy and reasoning to overcome challenges in life.

— **Do not be too quick to give up.** Instead, stay focused on the destination and let the journey unfold. It’s easy to get discouraged when something dreamed for looks as though it’s slipped away. The important thing is to concentrate on the goal no matter how you’re feeling in the moment.



Phiona’s triumph at chess can thrill your family as it did her friends and fellow students.

— **Where you come from does not define where you’re going.** Phiona shows us it ultimately doesn’t matter where you’ve come from. It can actually be a positive thing for your dreams to exceed your current ability to achieve them.

— **Losing is part of life.** While feeling defeat is normal, don’t succumb to those feelings. It’s about what you can learn from the loss. As David Oyelowo’s character, Katende, advises Phiona, “Losses happen to everyone. But then you reset the pieces and play again.”

— **Never compromise integrity to win.** Staying true to your values and your morals is what will take you far in life, and open up doors no one can close. Too often, we’re paying attention to what everyone else is doing. “Queen of Katwe” proves that winning is not about compromising to fit in. It’s about showing up, being true to yourself and doing what you do best.

Such considerations paired with the crowd-pleasing victories, comedic moments, and approachable, family-friendly tone of the film enhance the impact of the film’s life lessons and encourage kids to come up with their own.