

Bringing Out the Best



Into the Next Century

The Optimist

Summer 2019

A Centennial Celebration
International Convention
Rides Into Louisville





CELEBRATE 100 YEARS!



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QUESTIONS?
Michelle Monhollen
937.221.7118
mmm@shumsky.com



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MISSION STATEMENT

By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities and ourselves.

VISION STATEMENT

Optimist International will be recognized worldwide as the first volunteer organization that values all children and helps them develop to their full potential.

PURPOSES OF OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

To develop optimism as a philosophy of life utilizing the tenets of the Optimist Creed; To promote an active interest in good government and civic affairs; To inspire respect for the law; To promote patriotism and work for international agreement and friendship among all people; To aid and encourage the development of youth, in the belief that self in service to others will advance the well-being of humankind, community life and the world.

THE OPTIMIST CREED

Promise Yourself-

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

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POSTMASTER:

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Dominique Ruedaflores has overcome significant challenges to find success in the Optimist Oratorical program.

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The Optimist

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Managing Editor Benny Ellerbe

Editor Rachel Webb

Graphic Designer Jason Cook

Editorial Office 4494 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Office (314) 371-6000

Fax (314) 371-6006

E-mail magazine@optimist.org

On the Cover

The 2019 International Convention in Louisville was an event that included both hard work and big fun. Turn to page 16 for full coverage.



WRAPPING UP OUR CENTENNIAL YEAR

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 2018-19

President Rebecca Butler Mona



Fellow Optimists, when we kicked off our 2018-19 Optimist Centennial Year together, we set high goals with a primary focus to utilize this unique milestone to unify and energize our efforts to **expand our impact** in support of our core mission: *By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities and ourselves – into the next century!*

As we enter the final quarter of this Optimist year, I'm honored and pleased to share that we've already accomplished many of the things we set out to do – but we are not finished! I'd like to share with you some of those achievements, and what remains to be done.

Louisville Convention Highlights

By the time you receive this magazine, we will have wrapped up our historic Optimist International Convention in Louisville, Kentucky home of our first Optimist International Convention in 1919. And what a memorable Convention it was!

Some of those special memories and keepsakes:

- ***Bringing Out the Best – The First Century of Optimist International 1919-2019***, a book authored by Past International President Dave Bruns;

- ***Celebrating 100 Years of Optimism***, -- a photo-heavy magazine visually depicting the first 100 years of Optimism for all Convention attendees, available to order for your Club;
- **Historical Marker** that was unveiled at the site of our first Optimist International Convention in June 1919 following a “Centennial Walk” through downtown Louisville;
- **Live Timeline** during Opening Ceremonies, highlighting each decade of Optimism;
- **High-profile external speakers:** TV personality (and Oratorical Contest winner) **Monica Hardin** and philanthropic artist **Jeff Hanson** offered keynote addresses;
- **Junior Optimist International (JOI)** delegates joined adult Optimists, offering extra energy and enthusiasm for the future of our great organization.

In keeping with our expanded focus on **Childhood Health & Wellness** and with a desire to leave a lasting impact in Louisville, we commissioned artwork by Jeff Hanson and funded by our Optimist International Foundation for the **Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC)** of Kentuckiana, unveiled during our Convention to serve families of children facing serious illnesses for many years to come. You can read more about this on page 26. In addition, RMHC has been named an endorsed organization for Optimist International, with many opportunities for partnership with Optimist Clubs and Junior Optimist Clubs at a local level. Our Optimist International Foundation (OIF) launched a **\$50,000 grant program** supporting Childhood

Health & Wellness, expanding on the “Spread Relief” program by the Canadian Children’s Optimist Foundation (CCOF).

Expanding Optimist Impact

The Optimist movement continues to expand to new countries, enabling us to serve more children around the world in places like Togo, Nepal, Uruguay and Haiti, and it’s been incredibly exciting to see that energy and momentum. Check out Jim Boyd’s article in this magazine about his travels throughout Asia in May and the excitement about Optimism!

We continue to work toward growth across the United States, Canada and the Caribbean as well, with many new videos and marketing materials provided this year to help tell our

story to prospective members and new communities. More information is available at www.optimist.org/centennial.

I’m asking each of our members to help us in that goal. Together, we can truly expand our positive impact in each community we serve as well as reaching new communities. I encourage everyone to earn the “Promise Yourself” Award. This requires three simple things: be involved in a local Club project, sponsor a new Member, and share your “Optimist Story.”

You and I can truly make a difference – and the kids are counting on us!

Promise Yourself – to make this a year to remember!



NEWS &

Optimists Accomplish P.G.I. Goals

The following Optimists submitted their requirements for achieving Levels VII and X of the Personal Growth & Involvement Program between March 1, 2018, and June 1, 2019:

LEVEL VII

Leslie Dome	NE
Denise Gagnon	QUCE
Michelle M. Kauffold	MI
Connie Krites	OH
Diane Lépine	QUCE
Roméo Lortie	QUCE
Shane Neuman	AMS&NW
Heather Reeves-Ambersley	CAR
Whylna Spence	CAR
William Stone	OH
Linda Wheeler	NE

LEVEL X

Pat Behn	OH
Eric Christian	AMS&NW
Yves Dion	QUCE

LEVEL X CONTINUED

Daniel Fortin	QUCE
Guy Gibson	AMS&NW
Greg Griffin	OH
Edie Harris	AMS&NW
Carolyn Hartwig	STX
Bob Hartwig	STX
Richard Henson	OH
Cathy Hicks	PSW
Tim Hicks	PSW
Robert Meyer	OK
Rebecca Butler Mona	IA
Ardis Moody	NE
Jill Rodgers	NTX
Nancy Ryan	AL-MS
Jerry Stahley	OH
Terry Watson	OK

For more information about the Personal Growth & Involvement Program and the Professional Development Programs offered, visit www.optimist.org

Reel Optimism Winners

Optimist International is pleased to announce the winners of the 2019 Reel Optimism contest.

Adult Category: Optimist Club of Riverside, Ontario

Junior Optimist International Category: Pony Scouts of Bonita, California

Each winning Club will receive a \$1,500 grant to improve their community.

The Riverside Optimist Club is still deciding what to do with their grant, President Dwight Phillips said.

Members of the Pony Scouts are likely going to use their grant award to benefit a horse-rescue organization, said Adviser Deanna Haro.



VIEWS



Volunteers work together to construct the gaga ball pit.

2018 JOI Winners Use Grant for Gaga Ball Pit

The Junior Optimist winners of the 2018 Reel Optimism contest have already put their grant to good use.

The Junior Optimist Club from the Farmington STEAM Academy constructed a gaga ball pit at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Students from the Club completed the project in May with support from the city's Special Services Department and 40 community volunteers.

The Farmington JOI Club's video centered on the theme "Living the Creed," and won the most audience votes for its illustration of the Optimist Creed and the promise to Bring Out the Best in Children. The club is led by Sharon Tonnies and Azize Smidi.

Gaga ball is a variant of dodgeball that is played in a gaga pit. The game combines dodging, striking, running, and jumping, with the objective of being the last person standing. Players hit the ball at each other with their hands, and are eliminated if the ball strikes them on or below the knee.

"Our hope is that this gaga ball pit at Heritage Park will be enjoyed by children for many years to come," said Ken Wasmer, adviser to the Farmington STEAM Academy Junior Optimist Club and President of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Optimist Club.

Currently, 30 students belong to the Farmington STEAM Academy Junior Optimist Club. Student officers include Club President Amatullah Poonawala, Vice President Noah Cahill, Secretary Veer Agarwal, and Treasurer Chase Tonnies.

Photo Credit: Jill Pines, Public Information Officer, City of Farmington Hills, Michigan



Members of the Junior Optimist Club of the Farmington STEAM Academy gather to build a gaga ball pit at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills, Michigan.



The gaga ball pit frame is almost completed.



Iowa Members Make Childhood Cancer a Priority

Members from the Iowa District volunteer to have their heads shaved at the District Convention in August.

Submitted by:
Dave Phillips, Optimist Club of Bettendorf

OPTIMISTS SEEK \$100,000 FOR IOWA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

Optimists in Iowa are seeking involvement for their lofty goal of improving children's health.

The Iowa District aims to raise \$100,000 to benefit the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital. More than 76,000 children from around the country and the world received care at the hospital in 2018. The hospital is known as the home of The Wave, in which fans attending University of Iowa football games turn and wave at children watching from the hospital's windows.

The fundraiser falls under the auspices of the Optimist International Foundation's Childhood Cancer Campaign and Childhood Health and Wellness Programs. Donations will benefit targeted cancer therapy, which tailors cancer treatments to the specific genetics of a patient's tumor; the neonatal intensive care unit, as well as general health and wellness programs.

This year's fundraiser is reminiscent of a similar undertaking by the district during the 2015-2016 year. That year, the Iowa District raised more than

\$50,000 for childhood cancer programs.

As part of the fundraiser's kickoff, 11 Iowa Optimists have offered to have their heads shaved at the Iowa District Convention in August, including District Governor Mark Feilman. OI President Rebecca Butler Mona will present a check for the donations received at a formal ceremony at the hospital in September.

The District's \$100,000 goal is symbolic of Optimist International's Centennial year—\$1,000 per year of OI.

For more information, contact Dave Phillips, at 563-340-6594 or phillips363@mchsi.com.

“

As the Iowa District Chair for the Childhood Cancer Campaign and Childhood Health and Wellness Programs, I offer my heartfelt thanks for your support.

—Dave Phillips

”



Knit One, Purl Two

Submitted by: **Sally P. Mitchell**



Flip Aehnlich never allows her fingers to idle, even at Capital City Optimist Club meetings in Montgomery, Alabama.

P.C. Aehnlich, affectionately known as “Flip” to members of the Capital City Optimist Club and friends in Montgomery, Alabama, has never let her hands remain idle, except when operating the car or motor home with her husband Paul. She is busy doing two particularly helpful community activities.

First, Flip knits, keeping her fingers flying with her inner count of “knit one, purl two,” caps for newborn babies and for infants undergoing treatment for cancer at Children’s of Alabama, a hospital affiliated with the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She has provided more than 500 caps during the past five years, by her own estimation. Flip’s completed caps are delivered to the medical-service providers at the hospital by Optimists Dr. John Steward and David Mills. She also produces booties for patients at the First Choice Women’s Clinic of Montgomery, who are in the process of becoming mothers, as a physical reminder of bringing a new life to fruition.

Flip learned the art of knitting at age 4 by standing behind her mother as she created garments to wear, bed coverings and decorative items for their home. Flip remembers being able to count stitches needed to make a chain and connect one chain to another to

complete the item. These instructions were committed to memory by verbal guidance from her mother.

Flip serves on the Capital City Optimist Club board, helping to guide and make decisions that further the mission of Optimism for new Club Members. These members will participate in fundraising for and implementation of youth projects. She keeps her knitting needles moving, even during meetings.

Flip and Paul belong to an excitingly active camping club, which takes them throughout the U.S. They also actively worship and serve at the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Montgomery. Paul is a military retiree who served in many locations while a member of the U.S. Air Force. They have two sons, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Son John is a business owner in Montgomery while Brian is a bank president in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

The biggest thing that brings satisfaction to Flip through Optimist membership is the ability to see programs that directly benefit girls and boys in communities across the country. Flip and Paul openly express their feelings of being privileged to live in and visit many areas of the U.S. through military assignments, time shared with fellow campers and fellowship with other Optimist Members.

Flip certainly has used her knitting to connect herself and her Club to the community.



Finished products. Flip uses different colors and textures in creating the caps that will give the tiny wearers much needed warmth.

A Burn Injury, a Camp and a Grant

Submitted by:

John Fons, president Sauk Trails Optimist Club

The ball went into the neighbor's yard.

Little Eli Iselin and his twin brother were playing, and the neighbor's dog got the ball. The boys' foster mother didn't like that. She got angry. She took Eli inside and held him while she turned on the hot water. She held him and held him and held him while the scalding water burned his arms. To hide what she'd done, she wrapped Eli's burned flesh in toilet paper. That's how rescuers found him when Eli finally got taken to a hospital emergency room.

Nurses wept. Some of them shouted in anger and frustration, but preschool-aged Eli knew what he wanted to do. Eli wanted to peel the toilet paper and parboiled flesh off his own arms with his own burned hands.

Why?

"Because at that moment," Eli told the Sauk Trails Optimist Club of Madison, Wisconsin, "I knew I was a survivor."

Now Eli wants to be a fire fighter. He stood to tell his story in the presence of professional fire fighters and to receive a \$1,000 grant from the Sauk Trails Optimist Club Foundation to benefit the Summer Burn Camp held each year near East Troy, Wisconsin and sponsored by the Professional Fire

Fighters of Wisconsin, their friends and colleagues.

There's more to the story.

This is the 100th Anniversary Year of Optimist International and each Optimist Club is encouraged to commemorate the century milestone. Sauk Trails Club Members felt honoring fire fighters and emergency medical technicians this year would be a fitting way to salute both their service and a century of Optimism.

The Club sought a list of individuals worthy of commemoration, but the Madison Fire Department responded that they do not typically recognize individuals from their department, because they work as a team.

What to do?

In December, 2018 Eric Salzwedel, program coordinator with the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation presented a compelling program to Sauk Trails Optimists about the Summer Camp for Burn Injured Youth now in its 25th year. His presentation helped shift the Club's focus from individual fire fighters and EMTs to the children they serve. Instead of a plaque or trophy, the vision became a contribution that would help kids like Eli.

Sauk Trails Optimists issued a \$1,000 grant to benefit the burn camp. This contribution improves



Sauk Trails Optimist Club of Madison, Wisconsin presented a \$1,000 grant to burn survivor Eli Iselin to benefit the Summer Burn Camp of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation. Guests of the club included, left to right, Lt. Jimmy Ahn of the Madison Fire Department; Madison Fire Chief Steven Davis, Eli Iselin, and, far right, Eric Salzwedel, Program Coordinator of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation.

the lives of children who had no choice at enduring life-altering challenges, while honoring the fire fighters and EMTs who helped to save those young burn-injured lives.

Eli Iselin attended the special recognition luncheon at the Radisson Hotel on March 27 before the Sauk Trails Optimist Club, joined by Madison Fire Chief Steven Davis; Lieutenant Jimmy Ahn of the MFD; Eric Salzwedel, other guests and most of the Sauk Trails membership. The hushed audience heard Eli's story and gave emotional applause as he received a presentation letter and grant envelope from Sauk Trails President John Fons. The fire fighters then explained their roles and mission, and accepted invitations to return as guest speakers for the Optimists of Sauk Trails.

Honored to be among those who serve others, members of the Sauk Trails Optimist Club are also proud to work together as a team, a team dedicated as Friend of Youth.

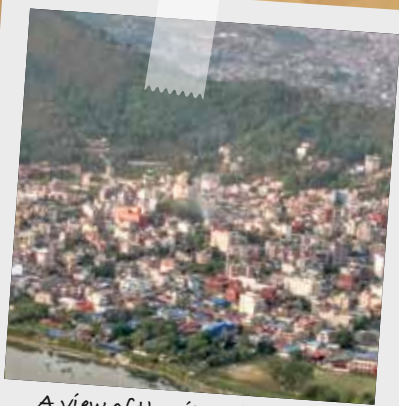
Jim Boyd's Travels to Asia

A photograph of a snow-capped mountain peak, Fishtail Mountain, rising above a layer of white clouds. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The mountain's peak is jagged and covered in snow, with some rocky outcrops visible. The clouds are thick and white, partially obscuring the lower slopes of the mountain. In the background, other mountain ranges are visible, also partially covered in snow and partially obscured by clouds.

*A view of Fishtail Mountain,
part of the Annapurna
Himalayas in Nepal.*

Prologue

21,700 air miles. Four Countries. One former Colony. 11 Days. The Optimist International Asian Tour was all that and much more during the first 11 days in May. Director of Strategic Growth Jim Boyd was asked to travel to Kathmandu, Nepal and then on to the city of Pokhara to help facilitate a two-day conference of Nepalese Optimists. Nepal is fast becoming the center of growth in Asia for Optimist International, where eight new Clubs have formed during the past two years. There is more new Club-development activity underway including a second Junior Optimist Club in Nepal, in addition to the one organized in Pokhara last year.



A view of the city of Pokhara, Nepal

Pokhara, Nepal

More than 60 Optimists attended the Pokhara conference, representing the then seven Clubs serving their specific communities. Seminars included an update on Optimist International programs

available to the Clubs, including the essay and oratorical competitions, Junior Optimist International and Respect for Law. Since the conference, Optimists in Nepal have already held a Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Optimist leaders in Nepal also requested workshops about facilitating expansion of Optimist International in their country as well as elsewhere in southeast Asia.

There is no question Nepal will be the foundation for expansion of Optimist International in southeast Asia. The Optimists there have a great understanding of both the mission of Optimist International and the administrative side of operating a Club. This bodes well for the development of strong new Clubs in the future.

There was also a workshop on the characteristics of leadership: Effective Communication, A Positive Attitude, Passion and Commitment, Innovation and Collaboration. The last of these enabled the Optimists to participate in the

“spaghetti-marshmallow challenge.”

It calls for working together to build the tallest tower out of spaghetti, tape and string that will support a marshmallow perched at the very top.

Optimist International President Rebecca Butler Mona provided a highlight of the two-day meeting on Saturday morning, when she spoke to conferees via the Zoom video-conferencing platform. The experience also let conferees ask questions of the

president, who dialed in from her home in Iowa, linking Optimists across the world.

This was not an all-work-and-no-play stay in Nepal. There was a trip to a small waterfall in the middle of Pokhara, a stop at one of the deepest caves in Asia and a visit to a Japanese Peace Pagoda perched atop a mountain overlooking the city. Trekking up and down dozens and dozens and dozens of steps was challenging, but rewarding, with spectacular views. There was also a trip into the mountains on roads that would scare the daylights out of most drivers. Driving in Nepal is an exercise in patience, endurance, and some luck as many behind the wheel merge at will while traffic signals are hard to come by.



A sign asks for silence at the Peace Pagoda in Pokhara, Nepal

Bangkok, Thailand

The Optimist presence in Asia is not limited to Nepal. By traveling from Kathmandu to Bangkok on May 6, I was able to meet members of the Optimist Club of Bangkok. This Club was organized in 2016 because of interest in the Optimist International Junior Golf Program. The meeting and subsequent lunch allowed for discussion about expanding the reach of the Club beyond Junior Golf. The Optimists in Bangkok are looking at doing a trial run this fall of the Optimist International Oratorical contest, followed by a competition in the spring that could produce an entrant for the World Oratorical Championships.

No visit to Bangkok is complete without stopping at Wat Pho temple, where you can see the



A group of conference participants work to produce a tower of spaghetti, tape and string that will support a marshmallow at the top.

Meeting with members in Bangkok, Thailand





Conference attendees came from all over Nepal to learn about New Club Building and other Optimist programs

Reclining Buddha. Just days before, this was the location for the coronation of the new King of Thailand. If you ever go there, be prepared for heat and humidity, even in the spring when the temperature hovers in the upper 90s and the humidity makes it feel like Florida in the summer.

Macau and Beijing

From Bangkok to Beijing via the former Portuguese colony of Macau, just northeast of Hong Kong, was the final Asian leg of the journey on May 8. The Optimist Club of Beijing was organized in 2018 and has spent much of its early existence helping young people to learn both Chinese and English. This is accomplished using a small toy that children can turn on to hear three- to five-minute stories to help them learn words and phrases. The Beijing Optimists say they have about 700 stories in a library so children who get a "story teller" can download new stories after listening and learning from the initial ones. Several members

were out of the city during the brief one-day visit, however, those who were at the meeting said they already were developing their next project, which they planned to use as a recruiting tool for new members.

Epilogue: Home

The flight from Beijing to Dallas took nearly 13 hours with a three-hour layover before heading home to Des Moines.



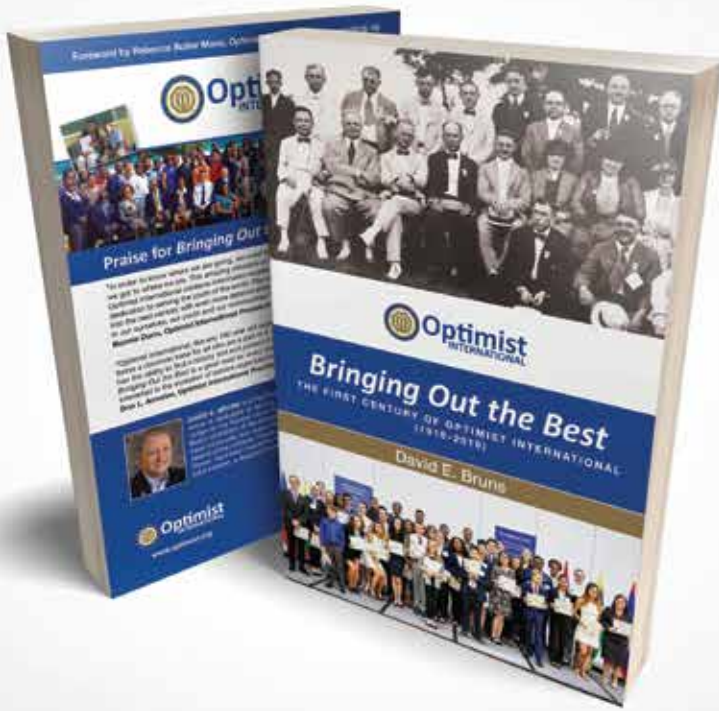
Meeting with members in Beijing, China

This was a trip that was exciting, at times exhilarating, and very exhausting. Recovering from jet lag took more than a week. But it was extremely beneficial from the standpoint of meeting Optimists on the other side of the world, to develop relationships beyond emails and conference calls and maybe most importantly, to get a better understanding of the culture in these countries, which is very different than that of North America. This understanding should serve Optimist International well

as it continues to expand to serve more children in Asia. The journey around the world in 11 days also provided insight about why people who never heard of Optimist International until recently decided to become a member in a Club. Many of them said they joined because of the words of the Optimist Creed and the meaning behind those words. Statements like that provide a true global perspective for the words "Promise Yourself."



Beijing Optimists are using these small toys as "storytellers," allowing young children to download three- to five-minute stories, to help them learn words and phrases



Past International President Dave Bruns has had a busy Optimist Centennial year. He is the author of “Bringing Out the Best—The First Century of Optimist International (1919-2019),” now available from Amazon. He took some time to grant us an interview about his work before the Convention.

Q. How did you decide to take on this project?

A. I was inspired to write this book after hearing historian and author David McCullough speak a few years ago. He noted that “nobody writes letters any more. We’re not going to leave anything like that now for the next generation of historians.” My initial thought was simply to update Of “Dreams and Deeds” for our Centennial celebration since it was written over 50 years ago. When I began my research, it quickly became apparent that a new book was needed because there are many wonderful stories of Optimism that have remained untold over the years.

Q. How did you go about your research? What sources did you consult?

A. To the extent possible, I have tried to pull together information from various sources—such as newspaper articles, magazine articles, books, board minutes, and other materials—written at or near the time the events actually occurred. Although I traveled to St. Louis to do research on several occasions to review historical records and photos, much of my research was done at home using the Internet. In particular, Newspapers.com proved to be a very valuable resource.

Q. What were your biggest surprises when researching the book?

A. Probably the biggest surprise was the wonderful vision expressed by the early leaders of the organization. To me, it is impressive that a small group of independent Optimist Clubs had the foresight to not only want to help their own communities, but also to form an organization



Dave Bruns is a Past International President of Optimist International. He is also a judge on the Kansas Court of Appeals and is a member of the Board of Editors of the Kansas Bar Journal.

that would help communities throughout the world. It is also remarkable that within the first five years, these visionary leaders adopted The Optimist Creed, embraced the noble mission of helping youth, and spread Optimism throughout the United States and into Canada.

Q. What is your favorite Optimist International historical fact?

A. That is a difficult question because I have found so many great Optimist stories. In the book, I have focused on the people and attempted to bring their stories to life. If I can only select one historical fact, it would be the story of how The Optimist Creed was discovered and adopted by the delegates at the 1922 International Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. At the time, the delegates did not even know that Christian D. Larson wrote the Creed. Rather, they simply knew that the inspirational words expressed the values that would unite the Optimist movement. The fact that Will Rogers played a role in helping Optimists find Larson is also pretty cool.

Q. Are you a history buff in general? What are your favorite eras or figures?

A. I really enjoy learning more about the people who came before us. So historical biographies are something I like to read. In particular, I enjoy reading about great leaders and what made them stand out. It is comforting to realize that these men and women were simply human beings who suffered from many of the same problems that each of us must deal

with. I often find that it was a sense of Optimism in difficult times that made them truly stand out and to overcome adversity.

Q. What do you hope people take away from the book?

A. My hope is that Optimists and others who read the book will take away two things. First, I hope those who read the book will feel positive about how far the Optimist movement has come during our first century and be inspired to find ways to make the future even brighter as we enter our second century. In June 1919, we had just eight Optimist Clubs, primarily in the central United States. Today, we have 3,000 adult and Junior Optimist Clubs in 23 nations spread over five continents. A century ago, there were only a few hundred Optimist members—all of whom were men. Now, there are 80,000 men, women, and youth members working together to make the world a better place based on our core values as expressed in The Optimist Creed.

Second, just as I have attempted to "tell the story" of the Optimist movement, I hope that my fellow Optimists will do the same for their own Clubs and Districts. Like David McCullough, I believe it is important to write our history down and to share it not only with each other but also with local libraries and historical societies. It is especially important to record the stories of our past Optimist leaders while they are still with us. I truly believe that Optimists have a story worth sharing.

Enjoy an excerpt from **Bringing Out the Best**

Will Rogers and The Optimist Creed

Upon returning home to California following the 1922 International Convention, Bert Hubbard, charter President of the San Francisco Optimist Club, and Jim Westervelt, Secretary-Treasurer of the Optimist Club of Los Angeles, agreed to attempt to locate the author of The Optimist Creed so that he or she could be appropriately recognized. In the Fall of 1923, Hubbard "discovered" that Christian D. Larson was the author of "Promise Yourself" and also found out about the additional verses. Hubbard informed Executive Secretary Thomas B. Elliott, and he identified Larson as the author of The Optimist Creed in the November 1923 issue of The Optimist magazine.

Hubbard also let Westervelt know that Larson was living in Los Angeles.

According to journalist and author David Crumm, it was Will Rogers—famous comedian and actor—who ultimately connected Christian D. Larson and the members of the Los Angeles Optimist Club. At the time,

Rogers—who was known as “The Cowboy Philosopher”—was celebrated around the world for his positive outlook on life, his belief in the power of positive thinking, and his ability to relate to common people. Rogers became a fan of Larson’s writings because he appreciated the author’s ability to express profound philosophical concepts in practical terms—a talent that the two men shared. After signing a movie contract with Goldwyn Pictures Corporation in 1918, Rogers and his family moved to Los Angeles. It is not known whether Rogers was acquainted with Larson prior to that time. However, it is known that Rogers began attending some of Larson’s lectures after moving to Southern California. Around the same time, Rogers also became friends with several members of the Optimist Club of Los Angeles and was made an honorary member of the club.

One of Rogers’ closest friends in the Los Angeles Optimist Club was the Rev. James Whitcomb Brougher, who served as the club’s chaplain. Like Rogers, Brougher was a renowned humorist, public speaker, and author. Brougher—who was the Pastor of the largest Baptist Church in Los Angeles—gained notoriety in 1920 when he performed the marriage of Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., and Mary Pickford. One of his many acquaintances over his 97 years of life was President Theodore Roosevelt, who called Brougher “a great preacher and a great man.” In 1960, at the age of 90, Brougher—who was still preaching—displayed his wonderful sense of humor on Groucho Marx’ television show, “You Bet Your Life.”

In the early 1920s, Rogers and Brougher made several joint speaking appearances. One of these appearances was at the noon meeting of the Los Angeles Optimist Club held in the ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel on December 6, 1923. As reported in *The Los Angeles Times*, the Optimist Club hosted a friendly “debate” between Rogers and Brougher—billed as the “Battle at Biltmore”—over the question of “whether the films or the preachers were doing more good in the world.” Rogers—advocating on behalf of the movie industry—argued that “it will take three years for the movies to offset what the preachers have done with the heathen.”

As usual, the Los Angeles Optimists recited *The Optimist Creed* at the end of their meeting. Brougher mentioned to Rogers that the Optimists had only

recently learned that Larson was the author. Rogers told Brougher that he knew Larson and would be happy to introduce him to members of the Optimist Club. Although the details are lost to history, Rogers was able to put the Optimists in touch with Larson shortly after the meeting. By the end of the year, Larson had graciously given his permission for the Optimists to use the 10-verse version of “*Promise Yourself*” as *The Optimist Creed*.

In February 1924, *The Optimist* magazine again printed *The Optimist Creed* with attribution given to Larson. Moreover, in recognition of his generosity and inspiration, the Optimist Club of Los Angeles made Larson an honorary Optimist member. At the 1924 International Convention held in Milwaukee, the delegates sent a telegram to Larson thanking him for his magnificent gift to the Optimist movement. For the next 40 years, delegates at each International Convention continued to send greetings to Larson. Today, Larson’s legacy lives on whenever someone reads or recites *The Optimist Creed*.

As for Will Rogers, he continued to support the work of Optimists in Southern California as well as in his home state of Oklahoma. Tragically, he was killed in a plane crash near Point Barrow, Alaska, on August 15, 1935. Throughout the world, motion picture theater screens went dark for two minutes at 2 p.m. on August 22, 1935, in tribute to Rogers. Over 15,000 mourners came to pay their respect to Rogers as he lay in state. Fittingly, it was Rogers’ Optimist friend—Pastor Brougher—who conducted his funeral service.

A few years later, the Beverly Hills-Will Rogers Optimist Club was organized in Rogers’ honor. At the Club’s charter banquet held on January 29, 1939, more than 300 people came to celebrate at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Those in attendance that evening included Roger’s widow, Betty Blake Rogers, and their son, William “Bill” Rogers, Jr.—an actor who went on to serve as a United States representative and was named as the honorary president of the new club. Several years later, Optimist International placed a plaque at the Will Rogers’ Memorial in Claremore, Oklahoma, which reads: “To the memory of Will Rogers who contributed so much to the development of youth throughout the years.”



Available now on
amazon.com

All proceeds benefit the
Optimist Oratorical Contest.

TARGETED RECRUITMENT CALENDAR

The 2018-2019 International Membership Committee is encouraging all Optimist Clubs to participate in “targeted recruitment” each month of this Optimist year. While all Members are valuable; this calendar will hopefully encourage Clubs to look for new Members in areas that they may not have thought of.

AUGUST

Educators With schools getting back into session, speak with teachers, coaches, and administrators at your local schools about joining your Club. These individuals interact with local youth on a daily basis and can be a great asset to your Club through these connections. All educators can join for \$30 for their first year!

SEPTEMBER

Friend of Optimists September is your last chance of the year to get some new Members and hopefully reach Honor or Distinguished Club status! Consider reaching out to local businesses, community leaders, speakers at your meetings, or anyone who says they “don’t have enough time to volunteer”. Friend of Optimists support your Club financially, but many also eventually become active Members!

A CONVENTION 100 YEARS IN THE MAKING



Louisville has hosted Optimist International Conventions before, but the 2019 event took on an atmosphere of both nostalgia and excitement as Optimists celebrated the past and looked forward to a successful future.

More than 1,300 Optimists attended the International Convention in Louisville, including Club Members, Officers, and Junior Optimist International delegates. The event took place June 30 to July 3 at the Galt House Hotel, just blocks from the site of the original International Convention 100 years earlier.

The Optimist Centennial featured heavily in the convention's events, starting with an interactive timeline during the opening ceremonies on Sunday night. Time-travelers inspired by *Back to the Future*, portrayed by President Rebecca Butler-Mona's daughter Amanda, son Alex and husband Mike, guided the audience through the decades of Optimism. Starting with the 1920s, participants appeared in period dress to highlight the successes of Optimism while placing them in the context of world events.

Monday's business session began with inspiration from President Butler Mona. During the 2018-2019

year, Optimist International added 60 new adult Clubs and 40 JOI Clubs, along with expansions in Nepal, Uruguay and several African countries, she said.

"What you do as Optimists absolutely makes a difference, whether it's to one or to many," she said. "Sometimes we get to see the beaming face of a proud child who caught their first fish, or who was recognized as student of the month."

Monica Hardin, a Louisville native, former Miss Kentucky and Oratorical Contest winner, provided the day's keynote address. Hardin said the Convention felt like coming home. She described her similar philosophy to the Optimist Creed when confronting her own life's challenges, including divorce, the death of her mother, and a recent diagnosis of breast cancer.

"We're always going to have obstacles of some sort, but you all choose to face them with Optimism," said Hardin, an anchor at the city's WLKY.

Tuesday's business session featured a multimedia presentation by Jeff Hanson, a Kansas City artist with a business model of "philanthropy first." Jeff and his parents, Julie and Hal, discussed their family's challenges, which included Jeff's childhood cancer



diagnosis and vision loss. However, Jeff persevered as a painter and found success.

“Fanatical optimism wins,” Jeff Hanson said. “Every act of kindness helps create kinder communities, more compassionate nations and a better world for all – even one painting at a time.”

In addition to meeting and having fun, Optimists and Junior Optimists also organized service projects. Optimists collected art supplies for the Cabbage Patch Settlement House, which provides programs and services for children in Louisville to help them build self-esteem and a sense of responsibility. JOI members also made and donated 75 tied-fleece blankets to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kentuckiana.

The Convention also reaffirmed the Optimist International Foundation’s commitment to childhood cancer research. The OI Foundation presented a \$100,000 check to the Johns Hopkins Department of Pediatric Oncology for research in bone marrow cancer. In addition, the Pony Scouts Junior Optimist Club of Bonita presented their own check to Johns Hopkins for \$8,600.

During the closing business session, President Designate Adrian Elcock introduced his family, including his wife Ann, and daughter Sana’a, as well as discussing his family’s background in Barbados. Elcock’s priorities for his year as president include updating Optimist International’s communications and marketing efforts, and a new approach to Club Building.

“My simple theme for 2019–2020 is iImagine,” Elcock said. “We must re-imagine the financial, marketing and operational platforms of Optimist International to become the premier volunteer organization of the world.”

With the Louisville setting, horses and the Kentucky Derby were popular themes. President Butler Mona evoked the Derby theme during her closing remarks, as she thanked members for their hard work and encouraged them to keep it up during the final months of the Optimist year.

“I’ll ask each of you to promise yourself to bring your personal best to everything you do,” she said. “Let’s make the most of our final stretch and leave our mark on history.”





Celebration of the Centennial

Hundreds of Optimists marched through downtown Louisville the night before the opening of the 2019 Optimist International Convention. Temperatures approaching 100 degrees did not discourage the celebration of Optimist International's Centennial.

Optimist Members, Past International Presidents, a drum line and other supporters walked from the Galt House Hotel to the site of the former Tyler Hotel, where the original Convention took place in 1919. There, they dedicated a historical marker that will inform passersby for generations to come of Optimist International's Louisville heritage.

"It's wonderful that we get to kick off our Centennial Celebration in the city that launched our organization 100 years ago," said Optimist International President Rebecca Butler Mona. "This marker will be a reminder of Optimist's strong Louisville legacy for generations to come."

The Past Optimist International Presidents donated the monument, coordinating with the Kentucky Historical Society, the City of Louisville, the Kentucky International Convention Center, the Kentucky Department of Highways, said Past International President Ronnie Dunn, a Frankfort, Kentucky, resident.

"When a historical marker was suggested to commemorate Optimist International's first 100 years, the Past International Presidents immediately took it on as a project," Dunn said. "All of our efforts resulted in a beautiful marker that showcases our wonderful organization!"

The Kentucky Historical Society has placed more than 2,500 historical markers throughout the state since 1948, with at least one in every county. The program is community driven and the society is thrilled to be able to help tell Kentucky's history through the historical marker program by working with communities throughout the Commonwealth, said Alli Robic, community engagement coordinator with the society.

Butler-Mona and President Designate Adrian Elcock unveiled the marker, which sits in front of the present-day Kentucky International Convention Center, 221 S. Fourth St.

Optimists were also welcomed by Louisville Metro Councilwoman Barbara Sexton-Smith and David Beck, President and CEO of Kentucky Venues, which operates the convention center.





A JOI-ful Convention

More than 200 Junior Optimists from around the world joined their adult counterparts for the JOI Convention in Louisville, June 30 to July 2.

Junior Optimists joined the adult group for a combined Opening Ceremony on Sunday, June 30, where JOI members carried flags representing the countries of Optimist International.

After the opening ceremony, the group quickly turned its attention to service. Group members made 75 blankets of tied fleece for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kentuckiana. They also performed the Art with Optimism service project, where they worked on projects with children from the Cabbage Patch Settlement House.

After learning about Parliamentary Procedure from Past Optimist International President

Ken Garner, delegates voted on a Policy for Governance change, participated in breakout sessions, learned about the history of JOI and the

OI Centennial, did icebreakers, and produced more than 20 talent show acts. The 2019-20 JOI Board was elected and finished up with the always popular JOI Banquet and President's Dance.

During the 2019-2020 year, Julia Cooper, of Whitby, Ontario will serve as president and Cole Mullins, of Coronado, California, will serve as past president. They will be joined by Board Members Sophie-Chanel Bourré, of Ottawa, Ontario; Maya Gluck, of Altamonte Springs, Florida; Abigail Proctor, of The Valley, Anguilla; and Alice Potvin, of Métabetchouan, Quebec.

The Pony Scouts JOI Club of Bonita, California also received special recognition for winning the Reel Optimism contest, and also for raising \$8,600 for childhood cancer research at Johns Hopkins Children's Center.

The Junior Optimists also want to express a special thanks to the JOI Committee for making this convention a success: Chair Mark Claussen, Vicky Buteau, Sean Mueller, Donna Priester and Janet White.





PROMISE YOURSELF

BY BEN JOHNSON

Hello! My name is Ben Johnson and I am a fourth-grader at Orchard Park Elementary School in Kettering, Ohio. My favorite after-school club is Junior Optimists!

I love JOI because it is fun and we help other people. One of my favorite parts of JOI is when we help with the Kettering Backpack Program. This program collects and makes bags of food for students who need it for the weekends. Not only does this help others, we always have fun doing it!

My career in JOI has been awesome so far, even though I am only in my first year. We had a Halloween party for our whole school; made Christmas decorations to sell to help the Parent-Teacher Organization; made USA pins for our Veterans who attended the Veterans' Day Program at school; collected items for the homeless to wear in the cold; and participated in the Great Kindness Challenge, where we raised over \$400 in coins for a medical clinic in Liberia. These things make school more fun, and people can meet other people in the school.

Do you see why I love JOI? I think everyone should join.

15TH ANNUAL OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

November 9-10, 2019
ChampionsGate in Orlando, Florida

An invitational event for Boys 11-13, Boys 14-15, Boys 16-18, Girls 11-13 and Girls 14-18 which is ranked by Golfweek, Junior Golf Scoreboard, World Amateur Golf, Global Junior Golf Rankings and is included in the AJGA Performance Based Entry process.

For more information, go to www.optimist.org/golf

FALL JUNIOR TOUR EVENTS

The Tour Events provide additional opportunities to qualify for the Championship. These tournaments are ranked by Junior Golf Scoreboard. These 36-hole events are open to golfers ages 11-18. Qualifier for the 2020 Optimist International Junior Golf Championship. These qualifiers are:

- **August 28-29, 2019** – Kingsville Golf and Country Club in Kingsville, Ontario, Canada
- **October 19-20, 2019** – Green Valley Ranch Golf Club in Denver, Colorado
- **October 19-20, 2019** – Orange County National in Orlando, Florida

For more information on these tournaments, visit <http://www.optimist.org/golf-tour.cfm>.



MEET THE 2019 HUGH CRANFORD ALL-SCHOLASTIC TEAM

Ashley Au
Westerville, Ohio

Blake Brantley
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Charlie Baker
Wayne, Pennsylvania

Community Service Award Winner
Lindsey Thiele
Wahoo, Nebraska

The team receives an automatic exemption into the championship, complimentary registration that includes tournament entry, hotel accommodations and meals plus a \$1,000 scholarship. The All-Scholastic Team named for Hugh Cranford, who served as executive director of Optimist International from 1967 to 1986. He was instrumental in starting the Optimist Junior Golf program. Cranford passed away in August 2014.

ASHLEY AU is a senior at Olentangy Orange High School in Lewis Center, Ohio. Au has maintained a high grade-point average while taking many honors and Advanced Placement courses through her high school years. Au has been involved in many activities at the school and in the community such as National Honors Society, French National Honor Society, French Club and a member of the Varsity Girls' Golf team. She is an outstanding golfer ranked 108 with Junior Golf Scoreboard and has been recruited to attend Yale University starting in fall 2019.



CHARLIE BAKER is a junior at The Haverford School in Haverford, Pennsylvania. He maintains a 4.7 grade-point average, and was inducted into the Cum Laude Society this year. Baker was selected as Germination Fellow – an Intensive Philadelphia Youth Leadership Program during his sophomore year. Since seventh grade, he has been a member of the Math team and received the award for the school's highest score on the National test. Baker studied photography in Iceland with National Geographic for two weeks during his freshman year and worked as an assistant in a photography studio. He is a member of the Varsity Golf team, has won two league tournaments and was named first team all-league for the last two seasons. Last year, he qualified for the Philadelphia Amateur match play tournament and competed in the Honda Classic High School Invitational tournament.

BLAKE BRANTLEY is a junior at RJ Reynolds High School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and ranked in the top 3% in his graduating class. He is a member of the National Honor Society, an Academic All-American and Junior Marshall. He has scored in the top 1% nationally on both the SAT and ACT and plans to study business and law when he enters college. Brantley captains the Varsity Golf team and is the Conference Player of the Year. In his spare time, Brantley volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House, Second Harvest Food Bank, HOPE and Meals on Wheels, while also serving as a youth basketball coach and teaching golf to juniors. Brantley is also the co-founder of the charity Golf Fore Life, which has supported The First Tee Triad chapter with equipment and scholarships for hundreds of participants to participate in The First Tee program.



THE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD GOES TO:



LINDSEY THIELE is a junior at Bishop Neumann High School in Wahoo, Nebraska, and currently holds a 4.0 grade-point average. Thiele serves on the student council and is a member of the National Honor Society. She is on the basketball, volleyball and golf teams. Thiele started a tutoring program at the local elementary and junior high schools for students struggling with reading and phonics. Other volunteer work includes clean up and assistance with recent flood victims in Nebraska, decorating the Senior Care Center at Christmas, helps at the Open Door Mission, which provides food and shelter to the homeless. Thiele also recently volunteered her time cleaning up leaves and raking bunkers after a major storm hit her local golf course.

A Monkey, a Tiger and an Ox

A look at the World Oratorical competition from one of its competitors

By Rachel Webb

Photo credit: *The Ruedaflores family.*



Dominique Ruedaflores delivers her speech in the 2018 World Oratorical Championships at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri.

When Dominique Ruedaflores took the stage at the 2018 World Oratorical Championships, she could have been leading a corporate boardroom, giving a Ted Talk or speaking from the Senate floor. With a smart blazer and unwavering voice, she commanded the attention of the entire room as she talked about the roots of her Optimism.

What the audience saw and heard was a confident young woman as she discussed the traditions of Chinese New Year that are popular in her city of Alhambra, California. The audience also saw her earn a second-place finish and \$17,500 in scholarship money provided by the Optimist International Foundation.

What they did not see was that for much of her life, Dominique has struggled to say her own name. Dominique has a speech impediment that makes it difficult to pronounce several sounds, including B, D, M and G. The difficulty has meant that her mother, Sofiean, often had to introduce her to others, and made it difficult for her to be confident. The World Oratorical competition helped to change that.

“As a public speaker, as an individual and as a student I feel so much more confident in social situations and I no longer have to ask my mom to say my name,” said Dominique, who earns straight As and also plays soccer.

In her speech, Dominique discussed how the philosophy of Optimism intersects with the traditions of Chinese New Year, a time to celebrate good fortune. Under the Chinese Zodiac, each year is associated with a different animal, and people born in that year are said to have the characteristics of that creature. In Dominique’s family, her mother is a diligent, persistent Ox, while her father is a brave and strong Tiger. Dominique was born in the year of the Monkey, said to be energetic and intelligent.

“The biggest supporter in my journey has definitely been my parents. My tiger and my

ox,” Dominique said. “Their love, guidance and support has definitely helped me throughout this whole journey. I don’t know what I would have done without them.”

Sofiean, Dominique’s mother, also noticed the boost in her daughter’s confidence and saw her hard work first hand.

When she learned she was the winner of the regional competition and was moving on to the world competition, she was so excited and nervous at the same time,” Sofiean said. “She knew she was competing with best of best and through many hours of recording and practicing, she really prepared herself mentally and was able to deliver one of her best speeches.”

The Optimist Oratorical competitions were not Dominique’s first foray into public speaking. As an elementary student, she participated in the public speaking competition of Future Business Leaders of America. When she reached the age limit for those competitions, a teacher told her about the Optimist Oratorical program.

The Oratorical program is one of Optimist’s oldest programs, dating back to 1928. Participants start by competing on their local level. Club and zone winners receive plaques and medallions, respectively. Winners at the District level receive scholarships of up to \$2,500. From there, competitors move on to the World Oratorical Championships, held at Saint Louis University, each summer since 2016.

At World Oratorical, winners receive scholarships of \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$15,000 for third, second and first place, respectively, and winners from each region receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Scholarships are funded by the Optimist International Foundation with contributions from donors.

Craig Boring, the Foundation’s Executive Director, said contributions from Optimist Members are vital to the program’s success.

“Dominique is a great example of how the mission of Optimist works at its best,” Boring said. “A young girl with a speech problem, entering the Oratorical Contest, and ending up with significant scholarships for her to pursue her dreams in college. We can all take pride that we help many Dominiques in our efforts.”

Despite the intimidating competition pool, Dominique and others sought friendships and connection throughout the event. Standing in line for pizza, Dominique said she felt too shy to participate in the swirl of conversation around her, but she felt better realizing it was a welcoming group.

“The competition was so much more intense,” Dominique said, of advancing to the World level. “I was very intimidated and very scared, but it was very fun to be in St. Louis, and to experience their food, their culture and their traditions.”

The World Oratorical competition provides an excellent forum for young people to gain confidence, skills and scholarships, Dominique said.

And she’s proof.

“Anyone who is interested in World Oratorical should definitely take the opportunity, because having a safe platform to share your story and views is amazing,” said Dominique, who will be entering 10th grade in Fall 2019.

Editors Note: Due to the timing of this year’s World Oratorical competition, full coverage will be included in our Fall issue. We look forward to seeing what all of our competitors achieve this year.

Dominique Ruedaflores receives her \$10,000 check for earning second place in the World Oratorical Championships. She won a total of \$17,500 in scholarships between local, regional and international competitions.





A Colorful Impression... A Healing Environment



Jeff Hanson is an artist from the Kansas City area with a business model of “philanthropy first.”



Children are invited to touch Jeff Hanson’s artwork. Noah, staying with his family at the Ronald McDonald House while his sibling underwent medical treatment, was the first child to explore the painting.



Jeff Hanson created panels with whimsical designs that would resemble a child’s coloring book.

Optimist International left a colorful impression on Louisville after holding its 2019 International Convention in the city with the contribution of artwork by renowned artist Jeff Hanson at the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kentuckiana.

Optimist International wanted to leave a reminder of its 2019 International Convention on the city of Louisville that fit the Optimist mission, said President Rebecca Butler Mona. She worked with the Optimist International Foundation to commission a painting from artist Jeff Hanson, a painter based in Kansas City who is also a survivor of childhood cancer. Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kentuckiana provided an appropriate home for the piece, as it is a place for families to reside while their children undergo medical treatment in nearby hospitals.

“We are delighted to contribute this beautiful Jeff Hanson Art to brighten the lives of children and families served by the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kentuckiana,” Butler Mona said.

Hanson’s work, Backyard Safari, consists of 24 panels in a vibrant style that resembles drawings from a child’s coloring book, Hanson said at the art unveiling on July 3. He

wanted the work to contribute to the cheerful environment of the Ronald McDonald House, just as his own family’s home provided when he was undergoing chemotherapy and radiation at age 12.

“After a day of medical treatment, I always enjoyed returning home to a cheerful, uplifting environment, to my safe haven,” Hanson said. “My artwork, Backyard Safari, attempts to convey these happy feelings. The adventure of exploring my backyard as a child.”

The piece adorns the wall of a new playroom at the Ronald McDonald House in Louisville, and children are invited to touch the piece to explore its contrasting textures.

In addition to the artwork valued at \$10,000, the OI Foundation also announced a \$5,000 donation to Louisville facility, while Mayghin Levine, the president of the Optimist Club of Louisville, presented a \$500 check from her Club.

“I assure you we will put these donations to good use,” said Hal Hedley, chief executive officer of RMHCK. “We’re going through a major expansion right now. It’s going to cost a lot more money to operate a larger facility, so for gifts like this, we are so, so grateful.”



2019 CLUB GRANTS

The Optimist International Foundation and the Club Grant Committee are pleased to announce the 2019 Club Grant Program winners! The following 20 Clubs were awarded a \$500 matching grant at the International Convention in Louisville.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2019 WINNERS:

Optimist Club of St. Joseph, MO

Hope Totes*

Optimist Club Sussex County, DE

Go Bags

We Care Arts Optimist Club in Kettering, OH

Growing for Good

Optimist Club of Appleton, WI

Summer Send Off Bike Helmet Giveaway

Optimist Club of Plymouth-Canton, MI

Healthy Summer-Healthy Youth Event

Optimist Club of Blair, NE

Youth Gardening Club

Optimist Club of Barstow, CA

Community Backpack Giveaway

Optimist Club of Roseburg, OR

Duffle Bags for Foster Kids

Jackson Optimist Club, MS

YouthMAX: Rise & Shine! Leadership Event

Optimist Club of Las Cruces, NM

My Friend's Place

Optimist Club of Birmingham, AL

Olivia's House Playground Improvements*

Optimist Club of Grand Prairie, TX

Incentive for Improvement in Student Commitments

Optimist Club of Columbus, NE

The Marathon Club

Optimist Club of California City, CA

Cyber Bullying Presentation

Optimist Club of Nebraska City, NE

EDGE Book Grant Program

Optimist Club of Middleton, WI

100 Years of Serving

Optimist Club of Marshall, MO

1st Annual Cornhole for Autism Awareness

Playa Vista Optimist Club, CA

H.A.R.K.! Healing Arts Reaching Kids!

Clinton Mid-Day Optimist Club of MO

Arrows for Adolescents

COCLAD Optimist Club-Kagadi, Uganda

Future Hope for All

* Funded by the Women's Philanthropy Council

THE CLUB GRANT PROGRAM is a yearly program designed to assist Clubs in funding new projects. For more information please visit oifoundation.org or call the Optimist International Foundation office at (800) 500-8130.

Let's Play Together

project proposed by Optimist Club



OmniSpin Spinner

By Nadege Fortier

The Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation is proud to be part of several projects that make a real difference in the lives of youth all across Canada. The Optimist Club of Mitchell, Ontario, earned a Spread Relief grant to help them promote and fundraise for their "Let's Play Together" project. Their goal is to provide accessible and inclusive outdoor playgrounds and splash pad for all children.

The following article was featured in the Mitchell Advocate on March 6, 2019 and was written by Andy Bader. The original text can be found online at <https://www.mitchelladvocate.com>.

West Perth municipal council wholeheartedly endorsed a proposal from the Optimist Club of Mitchell to create what they're calling "accessible, inclusive, multi-generational playground experiences" in Mitchell.

Structured in three phases, Optimist Co-President Sharon Flanagan and Optimist Past President Dianne Josling appeared before council last month to outline their "Let's Play Together" proposal.

In 2015, the club started the West Perth Opti-Challenge baseball program where youngsters from Perth and Huron with various health challenges come to Mitchell's Keterson Park Sunday evenings to do what all children want to do – play.

The new multi-phase play equipment project in their vision is the installation of a "lemon drop" feature at the West Perth splash pad, acquire a stainless steel submersible aquatic wheelchair, and exchange one swing with a bucket seat, for those with disabilities, "who can swing, side by side, with all the other children," Flanagan said. The hope is to install the swing across from the Lions playground equipment at the base of Lions Park. The first phase, which is scheduled to be completed this year, will cost \$10,000, fully funded by the Optimist Club.



Bucket Seat

The next two phases are still being investigated, but with council's endorsement, could be eligible for grant requests, Flanagan told council.

Phase two is a Sway Fun Sensory Glider, which also will hopefully be installed close to the Lions playground as well, plus benches and picnic tables. The glider is a play table with cup holders and wheelchair handholds, and will have enough room for two wheelchairs, or scooters, play wagons or walkers, plus large benches for eight to ten other riders of all ages."



Sway Fun Sensory Glider

This is truly one of the most multi-generational pieces

of equipment that I've ever seen," Flanagan said, saying she and Josling have seen ones in operation in Ingersoll and Woodstock. "They are truly amazing."

The third phase is also subject to fundraising and grant availability, but it's an OmniSpin Spinner, a high-backed piece of equipment that offers children of all abilities valuable inner ear sensory stimulation and encourages interactive play for all ages. The spinner can accommodate eight-to-10 riders with many others around the outside as the "drivers." There are speed controls to control how fast it operates, and is very accessible.

It is projected that this piece of equipment, if it proceeds, would also hopefully be built on the river side of the road over a 50-foot x 25-foot area across from the Lions playground as well, complementing both.

Preliminary planning in consultation with West Perth staff and the Lions Club has been completed."

Our hope is that successful completion of our accessible, inclusive multi-generational project will provide Mitchell with free family fun and continue to showcase our community as a destination where kids of all abilities can play side by side and reach their potential," Flanagan said.



Canadian Children's
Optimist Foundation

Christian D. Larson Partners Membership

715	Nancy Ryan	718	Clint Steele Weirck	720	Lori A. Dehond
716	Jon P. Ryan	719	Jerry Stroik	722	Sally K. Yarber
717	Ocie Larson				

Top Ten as of April 30, 2019

District	Representative	Average Contribution Per Member
East Missouri	Sallie Westenbarger	\$16.74
Colorado-Wyoming	Ron Benson	\$14.67
Arizona	Marcia Aurand	\$14.51
Capital-Virginia	Barbara L. Grizzard	\$11.63
North Texas	Stephanie Sullivan	\$11.26
Alabama-Mississippi	Nancy Ryan	\$11.08
South Texas	Gil Ortiz	\$10.22
New York-New England	Debra Davis	\$9.25
Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern Wyoming	James Rehm	\$9.04
Iowa	Dave Phillips	\$8.78

District	Representative	Total Contributions
East Missouri	Sallie Westenbarger	\$25,813.95
Michigan	Steve Sucher	\$25,513.41
Colorado-Wyoming	Ron Benson	\$20,850.05
Iowa	Dave Phillips	\$18,952.34
GATEway	Kevin Bush	\$17,741.85
North Texas	Stephanie Sullivan	\$15,935.23
South Texas	Gil Ortiz	\$14,729.81
Ohio	William R. Able	\$11,869.00
Alabama-Mississippi	Nancy Ryan	\$11,832.00
Capital-Virginia	Barbara L. Grizzard	\$9,386.00

Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation

District	Representative	Average Contribution Per Member
Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern Wyoming	Tiim Bell	\$34.61
Dakotas-Manitoba-Minnesota	Keith Norman	\$18.95
Pacific Northwest	Earl W. Pollock	\$10.24

District	Representative	Total Contributions
Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern Wyoming	Tim Bell	\$27,136.59
Southwestern Ontario	Jurgen Walther	\$21,147.81
Midwestern Ontario	Warren Bechthold	\$12,773.28



Donor Listings

This is a record of lifetime accumulation levels achieved from January 1, 2019 – April 30, 2019, for individuals and Clubs. This listing is for gifts recorded up to the deadline date for the printing of *The Optimist*.

SILVER BENEFACTOR - \$25,000

EAST MISSOURI
Don and Anita Sievers

INDIANA SOUTH
Breakfast Optimist Club of Indianapolis, IN

IOWA
Optimist Club of Davenport-Quad Cities-Morning, IA

MICHIGAN
David T. Fries

NEW YORK-NEW ENGLAND
Teri L. Davis

BRONZE BENEFACTOR - \$15,000

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST
T G Thomas

SOUTH CAROLINA
Optimist Club of Clover, SC

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO
Ron Huxley

WEST MISSOURI
John W. Baxter

EMINENT BENEFACTOR - \$10,000

ALBERTA, MONTANA, SASKATCHEWAN
& NORTHERN WYOMING
Optimist Club of Calgary-Dinner

ATLANTIC CENTRAL
Kathleen F. Manchec

MARYLAND-SOUTH DELAWARE
Mark W. Harris

MICHIGAN
Stephen A. Sucher

NORTH CAROLINA EAST
Optimist Club of Raleigh-Dinner, NC

WEST MISSOURI
Optimist Club of Jefferson City, MO

DISTINGUISHED BENEFACTOR - \$5,000

EASTERN ONTARIO
Ronald Fournier

GATEWAY
Optimist Club of Trenton-Dade, GA

KENTUCKY-WEST VIRGINIA
Thomas L. Birch

PACIFIC CENTRAL
Optimist Club of Cupertino-De Anza, CA

QUÉBEC CENTER
Club Optimiste de St-Hubert

QUÉBEC WEST
Club Optimiste de St-Jérôme / St-Pierre

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN
Jerry Schewe

HONORED BENEFACTOR - \$2,500

COLORADO-WYOMING
George L. Mills
John P. Oss
Philip Perington

GATEWAY
Allen S. Collier

KANSAS
Kit Kelley

LOUISIANA
Optimist Club of Jennings, LA

MIDWESTERN ONTARIO
Optimist Club of Clinton

NEBRASKA
Optimist Club of Omaha-Miracle Hills, NE

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST
John and Michelle Profant
Northside Optimist Club of Santa Barbara, CA

SOUTH CAROLINA
Robert and Jacquelyn Dadin

TENNARK
Optimist Club of Fort Smith, AR

WEST MISSOURI
Kelly B. Chism

BENEFACTOR - \$1,000

ALABAMA-MISSISSIPPI
Sherrie A. Cook
Angela J. Yates

ALBERTA, MONTANA, SASKATCHEWAN
& NORTHERN WYOMING
Optimist Club of Helena, MT

ARIZONA
Marcia I. Auran
Sandra S. Pickens

CARIBBEAN
Diana P. Morrison

COLORADO-WYOMING
Teresa R. Kearney
Robert and Frances Krech
Jonathan N. Wachter

EASTERN ONTARIO
Daniel Brière

GATEWAY
R.D. McBride
Sally K. Yarber

MICHIGAN
Jo Avriett
Terrence D. Eisen

NEBRASKA
Leslie M. Dome

NEW YORK-NEW ENGLAND
Lori A. DeHond

NORTH TEXAS
Mary L. Curry

PACIFIC CENTRAL
Lawrence Jendro

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST
David Duben
Clint S. Weirick

SOUTH TEXAS
Edwina A. Goll
Kathleen A. Woodruff

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN
Maureen Crombie

WEST MISSOURI
Sandi A. Cox
Debra Wray

WISCONSIN NORTH-UPPER MICHIGAN
Josephine M. Arriola

QUÉBEC CENTER
Club Optimiste de Léry
Béatrice Rossignol

QUÉBEC EAST NORTH-SHORE
André Therrien





"It feels good to finally get my feet wet."



Q: What do you call a snowman in July?

A: A puddle

Q: When do you go at red and stop at green?

A: When you're eating a watermelon.

Q: What kind of dog carries a big hammer?

A: A Labra-Thor

Q: Why do fish swim in salt water?

A: Because pepper makes them sneeze!

Q: Why don't mummies go on summer vacation?

A: They're afraid to relax and unwind!

Q: How do you prevent a Summer cold?

A: Catch it in the Winter!

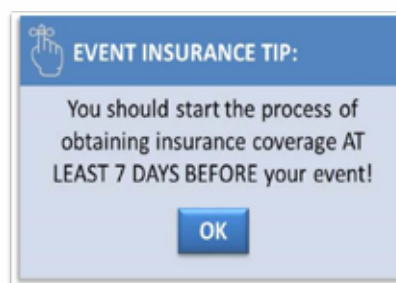
What's Left on Your Event Planning Checklist?

- ☑ Club Event Decided
- ☑ Made Location Arrangements
- ☑ Satisfied Event Insurance Requirements

If you are being required to provide proof of liability insurance or want to add an Additional Insured, submitting a request for a Certificate of Insurance is an easy task to check off your list! Mercer Consumer, a service of Mercer Health & Benefits Administration LLC* ("Mercer Consumer") Optimist International's broker, can help you.

If you're holding an event, simply:

1. Go to oiclubinsurance.com.
2. Select Optimist Club Liability.
3. Click the "Online COI Request" button or click the "Download Now" button to print the COI Request Form.
4. You will receive a confirmation email once your request is received.



Mercer Consumer
Optimist International's
Insurance Broker

Visit oiclubinsurance.com to learn more about the insurance coverages & risk management resources available to your Club!

Insurance to meet the needs for your Club's events provided through Mercer Consumer, including:

- Liability coverage limits up to \$1,000,000 per occurrence/\$2,000,000 aggregate*
- FREE Online Risk Management Resources available (details at oiclubinsurance.com)
- Customizable, \$0 Deductible Accident Medical Insurance for Sports/Fundraiser Participants

* Please note: sports coaches and sports participant coverage is not included with the liability coverage. Please contact Mercer Consumer for assistance.



If you have questions about the coverage or the application process, call the Mercer Consumer Service Center at 1-800-503-9227 (between 8a.m.-5p.m. CT, Monday - Friday).

Note: This is not a complete list of coverages or events.

For more details, visit oiclubinsurance.com, email plsdsteam.service@mercer.com or call 1-800-503-9227.

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The sleeping room rate is \$128 plus applicable state and local taxes
(currently 15%) in effect at the time of check-out.

