

Spring 2015

The OPTIMIST

Rain or shine –
BE OPTIMISTIC!



OPTIMIST
INTERNATIONAL



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dayna Steele

Success speaker Dayna Steele's core message is a simple one – great success hinges on the things you do consistently every day. What's on your list? Success comes from hard work and ingenuity – it also comes from the actions you put into motion every day. Whether you are part of a large international company or run a small home office, The Daily Success Speaker Dayna Steele has your daily list for success – for stronger leadership, employee engagement, stronger sales, a better workplace, and company growth.

One of the 35 people who inspire us!
– Readers' Digest Magazine

A woman with ridiculously sane advice.
– Foreword Reviews

Good old-fashioned, simple success advice – that works! – ABC News Now



Entertainment: Opening Ceremonies – Appreciation Luncheon – Youth Activities

Members of the local area group Louisiana Kids will keep you dancing in your seats!

Louisiana Kids Inc. is a non-profit 501-C3 organization formed to focus on the raw talents of children three years of age to senior in high school, while using the performing arts as their vehicle to develop self-esteem and character.

MISSION: Sharing our talented gifts for the benefit of others, promoting education, emphasizing family values, celebrating positive, drug-free lifestyles, maximizing and encouraging the highest potential in every child, nurturing fairness, integrity and respect for all.

MISSION STATEMENT
By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in kids.

VISION STATEMENT
Optimist International will be recognized worldwide as the premier 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 accord and friendship among all people; To aid and encourage the development of youth, in the belief that the giving of one's 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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The Optimist

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Managing Editor Dennis Osterwisch

Editor Heidi Schertzer

Graphic Designer GRAFXWORX, Fee McCaskill

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

Office (314) 371-6000

Fax (314) 371-6006

Email magazine@optimist.org

On the Cover

The average Optimist impacts the lives of more than 30 children each year. Have you made a child smile lately?

MEMBERSHIP AS EASY AS 1-2-3



A Message From PRESIDENT KEN GARNER

As we move forward in our quest for 100,000 Members by our organization's 100th year in 2019, I have often considered the obstacles of recruiting Members. Questions arise such as what makes a good Member, who should we be targeting with our Member recruitment, and what should I say to those I consider potential Members for my Club?

When visiting with friends who are not yet Optimist Members, I am usually told that they don't have time for volunteering. Though I try to explain that the time commitment of being an International President may be more than the average Member, it often falls on deaf ears.

Being an active Member can be as easy as 1-2-3. Any Member can give an average of:

1. One hour a month to the business of the Club
2. Two hours to participate in Club meetings and social functions
3. Three hours to participate in service projects

An average of six hours a month will not only positively impact our communities and children, but also each of us individually. As Optimists, we drastically change lives, including our own.

Think about this "easy as 1-2-3" plan and share with those around you as we continue to make history!

All the BEST,

Ken Garner



VOTE ONLINE

For the next Optimist International President, two At-Large Board Directors and your Regional Vice President.

Your Optimist Club will once again have the ability to participate in the election of Optimist International officers by casting its vote online. Voting begins on June 1 and ends June 30. But to be eligible to vote your Club must have a valid email address for your Club President on file with Optimist International. And your Club will need to have all of its financial obligations paid by April 30.

DATES TO REMEMBER

APRIL 30 – Club voting strength is determined per International Bylaws.

MAY – Email is sent to every Club President outlining online voting procedure.

JUNE 1 – Online election voting will open for 30 days.

JULY 1 – Results of elections posted on the Optimist website.

Make sure your Club President's email address is correct in the Optimist membership database to ensure that your Club receives the voting procedures. The Club President or Secretary should:

- Go to www.optimistleaders.org.
- Login with your credentials.
- If you do not know your credentials, click on the "Password Recovery" link.
- Click on your name and confirm email is correct



CLUBS BRING OUT THE BEST IN THE 2015
Reel OPTIMISM
 VIDEO CONTEST

When creating a video entry for the 2015 Reel Optimism contest, adult and youth Clubs were asked to finish the sentence, "Optimists Bring Out THE BEST..." in either a 30 Second Challenge clip or a Club Showcase feature. Optimist International received dozens of amazing submissions and a review panel has narrowed the contest down to the top videos in each category.

With a new, integrated contest hub, votes will be tabulated based on the number of social media shares (Facebook shares, Twitter tweets) a video receives. So make sure to help promote your favorite videos by using the comprehensive social sharing toolbar. Encourage everyone in your Club—in addition to all of your social network connections—to watch the videos and to cast their votes too! Public voting will be open from May 1 to May 15.

During the Optimist International Convention in New Orleans, the winners of each category will be announced on stage. An additional THE BEST Overall Award will be unveiled too. Club grants, courtesy of Optimist International, the Optimist International Foundation and the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation, will be awarded to the category champions and THE BEST Overall Award champion.

Now it is time to choose your favorite Reel Optimism entry, so visit www.optimist.org/ReelOptimism to view the finalists' videos and to cast your vote!

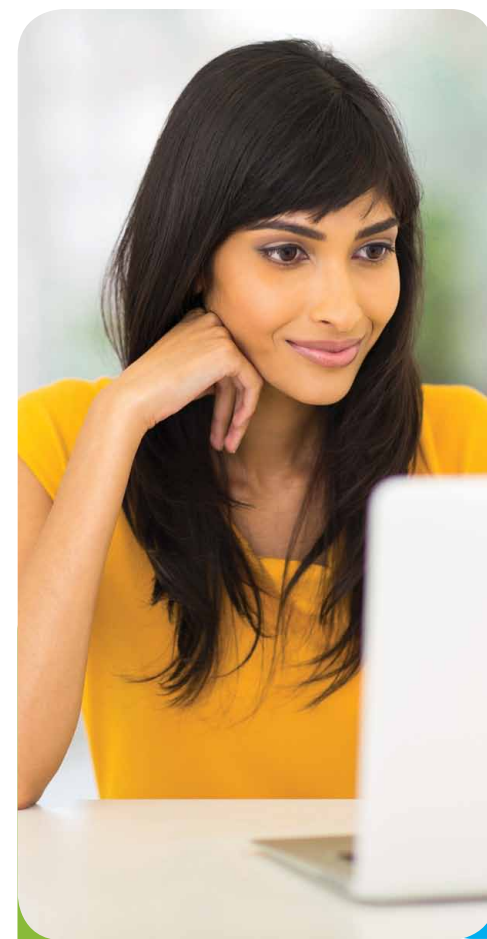


NEW CLUBS BUILT IN 2014-15

We are excited to announce that since the first of October, 21 new Optimist Clubs have joined our organization! Hundreds, if not thousands, of children will directly benefit from these new Clubs. Thank you to both our new Charter Members, as well as our Members who were active in building these Clubs, for making this possible.

- 1 Dynamic Spalding (78582) - Caribbean
- 2 Playa Vista (14028) - Pacific Southwest
- 3 Gateway-Laredo (06354) - South Texas
- 4 Optimist Club Of Crowley (29321) - Alabama - Louisiana - Mississippi
- 5 Yuma Legends Optimist Club (31204) - Arizona
- 6 Saint Paul East Side Optimist Club (35227) - Dakotas - Manitoba - Minnesota
- 7 Club Optimiste De L'U.Q.A.C. (54000) - Quebec East - North Shore
- 8 Atlanta Meet Up Optimist Club (21616) - Georgia
- 9 Club Optimiste De St-Édouard De Maskinongé 2014 (54001) - Quebec East - North Shore
- 10 Déléage 2015 (53001) - Quebec West
- 11 Veterans Empowering Those That Served (Vetts) Of Detroit Optimist Club (17543) - Michigan
- 12 Au Coeur De Montebello (53002) - Quebec West
- 13 Shine Optimist Club Of Canada (45003) - Southwestern Ontario
- 14 The Evening Optimist Club Of St. Joseph, Missouri (36642) - West Missouri
- 15 Pearland Optimist Club, Texas (06355) - South Texas
- 16 Club Optimiste Radisson, Quebec (53003) - Quebec West
- 17 Camino Real, New Mexico (19625) - New Mexico - West Texas
- 18 Hill Country Optimist Club, Texas (06356) - South Texas
- 19 Optimist Club Of The Palm Beaches, Florida (61003) - South Florida
- 20 Optimist Club of Leon, Iowa (40190) - Iowa
- 21 Millennium Optimist Club of Chula Vista, California (41662) - California South

*As of March 3, 2015



REGISTERING CLUB OFFICERS HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER

Optimist Clubs can now register their 2015-16 officers online effective February 1, 2015. A current Club officer will need to login to the Optimist Leaders website and click "Reports" on the right-hand side of the screen. Then click on "Club Officer Elect Report" and you will be able to select the names of the Club Members who will be filling leadership roles during the upcoming Optimist year. If you have questions or need assistance, please call Charlotte in the Member Services Department at (800) 500-8130 ext. 247.

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 December 10, 2014 and February 28, 2015:

PGI LEVEL VII RECIPIENTS

T Donald Brown Jr	SC
Debbie Height	OH

PGI LEVEL X RECIPIENTS

Edward Russell	SC
Joe Lujan	NMWTX
Mike Bevis	OH
George Breaden	SWIS

SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST DEADLINES

Grab a pen and your calendar because Optimist International has some important dates for you to remember!

District Essay Winners Deadline

District Essay winners must be submitted to Optimist International by April 15. The District Entry Form, Winner's Information Form, a copy of the essay and the winner's birth certificate or passport must be sent to the Programs Department.

District Oratorical Winners Deadline

The deadline to submit District Oratorical winners is June 15. The District Entry Form, Winner's Information Form, a copy of the

speech and the birth certificate or passport must be submitted for each of the winners.

CCDHH Winners Deadline

The District CCDHH chair must submit the District Entry Form, Winner's Information Form, a copy of the speech and an audiogram by June 15.

All required documents must be submitted by the due date in order for scholarships to be processed. If you have questions, contact the Programs Department at (800) 500-8130 or via e-mail at programs@optimist.org.

2016 Optimist Regional/World Championship ORATORICAL CONTEST

Optimist International and St. Louis University have partnered to host an enhancement to the Optimist Oratorical Contest and scholarships. Each Optimist District will have the opportunity to send two of their District Oratorical winners to St. Louis to compete with the winners of the Districts in their Region for a

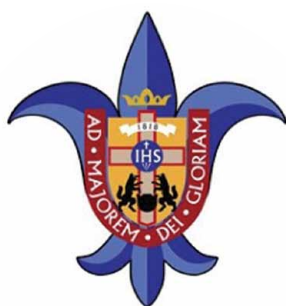
\$10,000 scholarship. The winners of each Region (8) will compete with the winner from St. Louis University's Global Region for a \$15,000, \$10,000, or \$5,000 World Championship scholarship. There is the potential for a student to win \$27,500 in scholarships!

The first annual Regional/World Championship Oratorical Contest is scheduled for Thursday, June 23 and Friday, June 24, 2016. Please keep in mind that the 2015-16 District Oratorical contests will need to be conducted earlier than usual to accommodate this timeframe.



Districts must submit the 2015-16 winners' paperwork to Optimist International no later than May 15, 2016. Start planning now to adjust your Oratorical timelines if your District's contest is held at a third quarter meeting. Districts will be responsible for the expenses to send their two winners to St. Louis, however, remote online streaming is available for those that are not able to attend in person. Whether the

participant performs their speech on site or remotely, all speeches will be streamed online. We hope your District can fund the two winners to travel to St. Louis to experience the excitement of a world-wide competition. Details regarding housing and meal costs will be released in the upcoming months. A workshop will be held at the International Convention in New Orleans this summer for updates on the competition.



**SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY**

With the partnership with St. Louis University, Optimist International is increasing funding for youth scholarships, giving our Optimist organization a higher profile, and Bringing Out the Best in Kids!

YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD

To Be A LEADER

Eldon Newcomb may not be the oldest member of Optimist International, nor the longest serving member of an Optimist Club, but he could well be the oldest serving Club President. Eldon, the current president of the Breakfast Optimist Club of Madison, Wisconsin is 96 years young.

The rewards of volunteering, the value of serving others and the special joy in helping youth became obvious to Eldon while still in his own youth. He was an Eagle Scout who demonstrated outstanding leadership skills at youth camps and summer programs in his native Missouri.

Eldon joined the Optimists in 2010 at the tender age of 91. He immediately got involved in Club activities supporting youth in the Madison area. He has rung bells for the Salvation Army, secured numerous speakers for weekly Optimist meetings and joined our judging team for field events at Special Olympics. One of his special joys has been volunteering as a tutor for middle school kids who are behind grade level in reading. He is not at all afraid of vigorous physical activities – he has helped the past two years as the Club installed over 1,000 seat cushions and chair backs at the University of Wisconsin football stadium as a fund raising project.

When asked what caused him to join the Club at this stage in his life, he noted that: "I had the free time, was drawn by the appeal of the philosophy and the upbeat spirit of the members." He has come to truly enjoy: "the camaraderie, good spirit and can-do attitude of his Club."

As one might expect, his optimism is based in part on a keen sense of humor. When he was approached in 2012 about taking on the position of Club Vice President which normally leads to being Club President in two years, he responded he would be glad to serve, but noting his age and said that "You guys are really optimists!"



A native of Kansas City MO, he graduated from the University of Missouri – Columbia (Phi Beta Kappa) with a degree in Botany. He served in the US Army during World War II doing malaria survey work in the Middle East and Africa. Following the war, he earned Masters and PHD degrees from the University of Wisconsin. He and his wife Joy decided to stay on in Madison where they raised a son and two daughters. Eldon joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin and went on to be a distinguished professor of Botany. He was chairman of the Botany Department from 1984-88. He retired as Professor Emeritus in 1990. He received many accolades throughout his career for his research in cell biology. A special focus of his studies involved using electron microscopy to discover new organelles in plant cells, particularly those involved in cell wall synthesis, and using electron-opaque staining to characterize the enzymatic activities of these organelles. Quite a mouthful, but you would never guess the depth of his genius just by observing his warm smile, and the gracious manner in which he interacts with everyone he meets.

When asked how he manages to have the energy and stamina of a man much younger, he notes emphatically: **"I don't feel my age. I simply feel the same level of energy as those much younger than I am." We should all be so blessed.**



Submitted by G.D. "Corky" Christman, Billings-Heights Business Optimists, Montana

Santa Claus Optimist Holiday

COLORING CONTEST AND CHRISTMAS PARADE

Submitted by Ronald Fuhrman, Santa Claus Optimist Club, Indiana

The Santa Claus Optimist Club held its annual Holiday Coloring Contest for kindergarten and first grade students at Lincoln Train and Nancy Hanks Elementary schools. The colored pictures were judged and the top 10 winners were given the opportunity to ride on the Optimist float in the Christmas Parade. The winners were given stuffed bears and their pictures were displayed at a local restaurant during the parade for everyone to view their creativity.

The float the students rode on in the parade was a deck boat pulled by a pickup. The Santa Claus Optimist chose a dual theme from the Indiana South District Governor, Mike Underwood and Zone 5 Lt. Governor, Ron Fuhrman. The Governor's theme is "Chart a Course" and the Lt. Governor's theme is "I Believe-Kids First-Action"! The banner on the side of the pickup stated "Charting a Course for the Kids". The wheels on the boat were covered with a sign stating "I Believe-Kids First-Action".

The students riding on the boat held signs that represented many of the projects the Santa Claus Optimist Club do for the youth. They included things such as: Essay Contest, Oratorical Contest, Yellig Park Donations, Christmas Gifts for Kids, Octagon Club, Junior Optimist Club, After Prom, Honors Banquet for top 10% of high school students, HOBY, Scholarships, Junior Achievement, Lincoln Heritage Summer Reading, The Way Donations, Boys and Girls State, HHHS Business

Professionals, Internet Safety, Tri-Star Sports, Avenue of Flags, Respect For Law Camp, Special Olympics, 6th Grade Leadership Awards, 7th Grade Banana Splits, Coloring Contest and Junior Golf.

Members of the Santa Claus Optimist Club walked alongside the float and handed out pencils with the Optimist's Club name on them to the kids along the parade route. The float also included Christmas music playing as they walked along.

Each student and teacher at the participating schools was presented with a pencil from the Club for their efforts in the Holiday Coloring Contest. The winners in the classrooms were recognized and pictures were taken.

The Santa Claus Optimist Club feels strongly about their Club and their ability to tie together the District, Zone and Club themes in these two combined projects and do everything possible to "Bring Out the Best in Kids".



We are reminded of how unfair life can be when a child is diagnosed with cancer. A child diagnosed with cancer needs to be surrounded by positive people in a safe environment. That is why Camp Mak-A-Dream, a cost-free, medically supervised camp for children and young adults, is the focus of my optimism.



My interest in Camp Mak-A-Dream started when I was Treasurer of the Montana Certified Residential Specialist Chapter (CRS). My duties included handling funds and fundraising for our designated charity, Camp Mak-A-Dream. When Optimist International launched the Childhood Cancer Campaign, it was natural for me to merge the CRS Members and the Optimists into a fundraising team. Our project has been the Denver Bronco Ticket Raffle for two reserved

seats for a specific game, plus \$1000 travel money. We have raised \$54,235 in the last eleven years.

When asked about the difference Optimists make to Camp Mak-A-Dream, Laura Bianco Hanna, Executive Director of Camp Mak-A-Dream, states "because they generously give of their time and their treasures to make the annual raffle such a success, we are able to continue to provide a much-needed place of rest, hope and friendship for children, teens, young adults and families affected by cancer. Our campers come to us from all across the United States, Canada and many foreign countries and what they experience at Camp Mak-A-Dream stays with them for a lifetime! We consider the Optimists one of our partners in the work that we do."

For more information about Camp Mak-A-Dream or to learn about how your Club can contribute to the camp, visit www.campdream.org.



It's a milestone that is not likely to be eclipsed. Bill Binner has sold his 20,000th ticket to the North Fond du Lac Optimist Club's 44th annual Pancake Day. "I tell people when you buy a ticket from the North Fond du Lac Optimist Club, you're investing in North Fond du Lac," Binner said.

A charter Member of the Optimists, Binner, 77, has been a part of virtually every community project benefiting youth in North Fond du Lac — one ticket at a time. He gives fellow Optimist Members pep talks to help them sell tickets. He speaks about the event on the radio. He believes his efforts and the efforts of the Club help make North Fond du Lac a better place.

Pancake Day was held 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8, at Presentation Parish Center, 706 Minnesota Ave., North Fond du Lac. Tickets were: \$5 in advance, \$6 at the door; \$2 for children. Tickets included all-you-can-eat pancakes and syrup, sausage, applesauce, string cheese, cupcakes, cookies, coffee and milk. The event included a raffle drawing for jewelry, spa package, sports tickets and baskets, gift certificates and hand-crafted wood items.

Pancake Day proceeds help fund community initiatives including an Easter egg hunt; equipment for boys baseball, girls softball and the football team; a DARE program; Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts; cheerleaders; robotics class; and five scholarships to

graduating high school seniors. The Optimist-sponsored Tri-Star Basketball skills competition attracts a number of area students ages 8-13. "All the money raised from the Pancake Day is going back out into the community," Binner said. He estimates he's raised about 25 percent of the proceeds over the years. Glenn Mathes, who serves as chairman, said Binner is a "total Optimist supporter."

Binner said he finds satisfaction seeing kids playing basketball at LeMieux Park or adults enjoying horseshoes and volleyball or taking in a picnic at the shelter. He was there during the 10-year development of North Fond du Lac Optimist Park. Binner remembers when the trees were cut down and work was done to rid the area of poison ivy and oak. A shelter was constructed and the Club helped purchase playground equipment from BCI Burke — a local firm. "I estimated about 4,000 man-hours went into the park — it was just a tremendous effort," he said. "We put in berms and planted plants, helped with the parking lot and landscaped around that."

Ronda Weber, assistant manager at C.W. Smith Jewelers, 603 Wisconsin Ave., North Fond du Lac, said Binner is extremely active in the community. "He does come around every year, and yes, we've been buying (Pancake tickets) for years and years," she said. C.W. Smith purchases 100 tickets, offering them first to employees and then distributing them to community members or needy families. Weber said she and manager Jeanne Weber knew Binner was attempting to sell enough tickets to top 20,000. "We were so excited to be part of that," Ronda Weber said. "We did our usual 100, but we would have done whatever it would have taken." She said she thinks people around the village rallied around Binner so he met his sales goal.

THAT'S
A LOT OF
Pancakes!

Written by Laurie Ritger, Action Reporter Media
Submitted by Jim Scharf, North Fond du Lac Optimist Club, Wisconsin



Village President and fellow charter Optimist Member, Jim Moore, compares Binner to Don Gorske — the Fond du Lac resident who has gained notoriety for consuming an incredible number (more than 26,000) Big Mac sandwiches from McDonald's restaurants. "He (Binner) is unbelievable," Moore said. "I can't even comprehend what he's done."

Binner said when he started selling tickets he thought it would be a good way to promote the Optimist Club and its projects. The first Pancake Day was held Nov. 6, 1971 — it's a date, like many, etched in Binner's sharp memory.

He recalled that the Club was chartered on April 13, 1971 at the former Bernward Hall. He said the newly-organized Club didn't have money for projects, but worked on some free ones. They transported playground equipment from Presentation Parish playground to Lemieux Park. Someone connected to the group — Binner believes it was a priest — suggested a pancake day to raise funds.

He remembers that each Member was expected to sell 45 tickets. For many years, he sold tickets door-to-door. Besides promoting the Club, Binner said it helped him meet new people and introduce himself as owner of Binner Pools. Ironically, the early directive to sell 45 tickets struck him as incredibly daunting. "I thought, 'Boy, how am I going to sell 45 tickets?'" he recalled. His late wife, Susan, had suggested that he meet people in the neighborhood and the first year he sold nearly 200 tickets. He continued with door-to-door sales for 19 years. Over the years, his family helped him and he's made connections with business owners. His family includes his wife, Nancy, four children, four stepchildren and 15 grandchildren.

Binner said in 2013, the Optimists served 1,600 people at Presentation Center and 200 more who took takeout. Binner said his wife sometimes thinks he does too much, but he said it's been a thrill. "I get a lot of personal rewards out of this — it's nice to sell a large number," he said.

I think I have a great and rich and wonderful life.

BROOKLIN KIDS

HELP SCARE CHILDHOOD CANCER AWAY!

Submitted by Sheila Bowness, Optimist Club of Brooklin, Ontario

On October 24, 2014, over 300 children in Brooklin, came together through the organization, encouragement and support of the Optimist Club of Brooklin to help raise funds to Scare Childhood Cancer Away.

Through Club efforts and coordination, local children from fifth to eighth grade were encouraged to become aware of the disease first, and then reach out safely (no door to door solicitation) to friends and family to collect donations. Donations raised were received and their efforts rewarded during a Halloween-themed dance at the Brooklin Community Centre. Children collecting donations in advance of the dance were eligible to win prizes donated by local business in support of the fundraising goal. At the end of the night, the event raised \$3,330 to support the Optimist International Childhood Cancer Campaign (CCC) and the kids had a fun two and a half hour Halloween dance to celebrate.



"More children die of cancer than any other disease today, and the impact the disease has on children and their families can be devastating," Club President Karen Santacona says. Cancer is the number one disease killing children today, taking more lives than asthma, diabetes, cystic fibrosis and AIDS combined. Each year about 10,000 kids are diagnosed with cancer in North America alone, with 30% fatal cases.



The Optimist Club of Brooklin, has been supporting young cancer patients and their families in the community for many years through the Optimist International Childhood Cancer Campaign, and the Club has been active in the community since 1987. Monies raised will help support local initiatives like the Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre in Oshawa, Ontario.

Other programs and service projects that the Club is involved in include The Brooklin Harvest Festival, Breakfast With Santa, Brooklin Optimist Day Camp and many other youth-based activities. For more information about the Club please visit www.brooklinoptimist.org.



[Commissioners Proclaim Forsyth County Day of Optimismst.]

COMMISSIONERS PROCLAIM DAY OF OPTIMISM

By Larry Brown, Sawnee-Cumming Optimist Club

The Forsyth County Georgia Board of Commissioners recently recognized the county's two Optimist Clubs by proclaiming January 15, 2015, as Forsyth County Day of Optimism. The proclamation urges all citizens to "take a moment to think about how they can help the youth of this community." The Clubs are the Sawnee-Cumming and the Forsyth-Cumming Optimist Clubs. The proclamation lauded the Clubs for providing "an

avenue for the local community to offer programs specifically designed for children," and acknowledged that the charitable service organizations "help further the goals of Forsyth County." It cited some of the events and activities hosted by the two Clubs, such as the annual Essay and Oratorical Contests, Junior Golf Tournament, and Track and Field Day. "There is a reason why Forsyth County is the premier location to live in the United States and Georgia," said Russell Thomas, Optimist District Governor and Cumming resident. "It is because the Forsyth County Government and citizens all share common beliefs, values, and optimistic attitudes. We are grateful to the Board of Commissioners, led by Chairman Pete Amos, for recognizing our local Optimist Clubs through this proclamation. This is a proud day for all Optimists and the leadership of Forsyth County."



On a late afternoon in November, the Covington Optimist Club braved the record setting low temperatures to celebrate the achievements of the Newton County Special Olympics Equestrian Team with a cookout.

Along with the Optimists, Teri and Ken Justice, owners of Cottonwood Farm, welcomed 60+ athletes, trainers, horse owners and family to the cookout which was complete with hamburgers, hotdogs and of course, s'mores.

Optimist Members of the newly chartered Ya Ya Xpress Optimist Club were on hand to assist with the setup and serving of the meal.

COOKOUT CELEBRATION

Submitted by Anita Still, Covington Optimist Club, Georgia



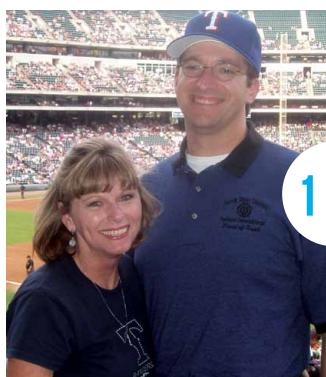
The Newton County Special Olympic Equestrian Team consists of 14 athletes with various special needs and disabilities, but also exceptional talents. Their motto: "When our athletes succeed, attitudes change, communities develop, and health and self-esteem are built!"

The Covington Optimist Club would like to thank Ken and Teri who make a difference in the community by providing a safe place for young riders to learn skills that will improve their self-confidence and ability to communicate.

OPTIMIST COUPLES

Being an Optimist Member provides many positive benefits, such as lending a helping hand to youth, serving your community and gaining leadership skills. But for some Members it means a little more – finding the love of their life who shares a love for Optimism

1 The most famous Optimist couple is, of course, President and First Lady Ken and Patsy Garner. Many years ago, while attending a District Quarterly meeting, a CPA and a banker walk into a bar and unbeknownst to either, their lives were changed forever. Ken Garner and Patsy Hudson were serving as Lt. Governors together at that particular District Quarterly meeting, and were forced to sit beside each other during all General Sessions. The spirit of competitiveness moved them to both be Distinguished that year (Ken claims he "won", as he was Outstanding). The year prior to Patsy serving as Governor, she asked her good friend Ken Garner to run for Governor-Elect and she volunteered to be his New Club Building Chair. They traveled around together during the 2001 year visiting Clubs and adjoining Districts. As Ken began his year as Governor, the soon-to-be couple joined Paul Lucas and Danny Rodgers on a road trip to College Station to plan the next year's Tri-District Conference and to attend the Baylor/Texas A&M Football game. The excitement of the game and the day sparked something between Ken and Patsy for Ken to finally ask Patsy out on their first date. Three years of dating, and one ultimatum later, Ken dropped to his knee and while quoting Proverbs 31:10-31, asked Patsy to be his wife. On April 23, 2015, the Garners will be celebrating ten years of marriage.



2 Ron and Janet Oord Graves met at the Optimist International Foundation's Grand Canyon, AZ trip. After the trip, they communicated daily, visited one another's cities and became engaged at a Michigan District Optimist meeting. Ron is a Past International Vice President and Jan is currently the International Vice President of the Southwest Region. They share the same enthusiasm for bringing out the best in kids and have enjoyed their experience as being Optimists together.



3 Nearly ten years ago in July 2005, Robert Perron and Danielle Dupont attended their very first Convention as a couple in New Orleans, making this coming Convention a special event. They were married in 2007 and enjoy every moment they spend with Optimist friends. Dupont adds, "I guess we can say that Optimist not only gave us friendship, leadership, and personal development, but it also brought us together to find love."



4 Mike and Rebecca Mona met when Rebecca was serving as Lt. Governor for her Zone and Membership Chair for her Club. Mike was a guest at a "NOW" (New Optimists Welcome) meeting. Rebecca says, "Mike recalls that I looked at him and said, 'You WILL join' and then it almost seemed like fate was at work." They had lived about seven blocks away from each other for several years and never met, and then kept crossing paths. A couple weeks later after visiting the Club again, Mike called Rebeca and asked her to lunch because he had "a few questions about the Optimist Club." That was their first date, and Mike did join the Club. About two years later, Rebecca served as the first female Governor of the Iowa District (1993-94), and Mike was the first "First Man" and a great sport. Five years later, they kicked off Rebecca's year as International Vice President by getting married on October 3, 1998 and followed their honeymoon with five District visits. Each District made the Mona's feel very special with wedding cake, gifts or surprises in their room. They've continued to make Optimism a family affair with their children, Amanda (14) and Alex (12), joining their parents at many Iowa District conferences and Optimist International Conventions.

5 Joanne Ganske joined the Cross Plains Optimist Club, Wisconsin as a charter Member in the fall of 1991. While selling t-shirts and refreshments for one of the Club's first fundraisers in June of the following year, she met her future-husband, Dale. They started to date the next day and were married one year later. Joanne jokes, "I always enjoy saying I met Dale on June 13 and married him on June 19, and when folks look surprised, I then add 'one year later!'" Dale and Joanne have been happily married for nearly 22 years.

6 Mike and Lea Goldman met through friends as Members of the Miramar Optimist Club, Florida. They were set up on a blind date in February of 2009 and were married the Friday of the South Florida District Convention in August of 2009. Mike was serving as Governor-Elect of South Florida and was sworn in the next night. Their friends and family that were not Optimist Members were not only able to celebrate their wedding day, but also attend the installation banquet the next night. Mike says, "If I were not a part of this great organization, meeting my wife, Lea, would not have been possible."

7 Patrick and Jenni Hager met when Jenni was 19 years old as a Member of the Ft. Smallwood Club at the 2004 MDS third quarter District conference in Ocean City, Maryland. Patrick was a Member of the Hamilton Optimist Club, along with his father and brother. Being Optimists runs in the family, as Jenni says, "I come from a long line of Optimists; my dad, David Bowman, is the current Governor for the Maryland South Delaware District. My mom is an Optimist, two uncles and one aunt and many, many very special friends." Patrick and Jenni married in 2009 and are now the proud parents of two beautiful daughters, Delaney (4) and Aubrey (2). In September 2014, they worked together to charter the Kent Island Optimist Club, which is where they now live and are raising their family in optimism.



8 Stew and Dianne Mallard ran a baseball program in Chester, Virginia for many years working with kids before moving to Charlotte, North Carolina in 1998. They immediately got involved with Mallard Creek Optimist Club and have been very active in running the Club. With over 400 Members, they serve kids throughout programs they sponsor: JOOI, basketball, baseball, cheer, football, golf and softball along with other community activities.



9 Rick Devolder and Christa MacLaggan met just over a year ago in January 2014. At the time, Rick was Club President for the Optimist Club of Wallaceburg, Ontario, as well as a trustee on the SWONT Optimist Conductive Education Trust Fund. Within a few months, Christa joined the Club and became totally immersed in the work of the Trust Fund. Christa is a retired school teacher and having taught Special Education for 17 years of her 32 year career, she was given an opportunity to return to her years of specialization and offer what she could to Conductive Education camps for children with Cerebral Palsy. Christa says, "I have Rick to thank for bringing fulfillment back into my life by belonging to the Optimist organization and receiving all the benefits of being a Member." Both are widowed and although Rick still works, he gives much of his time to his volunteer work within their communities with the Optimist Club and the Conductive Education program. They love attending Zone meetings to make presentations, haven't missed a quarter board meeting since they met and at the District convention last fall, they found the perfect location for their wedding and the perfect person to marry them – their District Chaplain. They are to be married on the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend this year.



10 In February 2001, Sue Bridgeford met the love of her life through Optimist. She was the Lt. Governor of Zone 1 of the Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern Wyoming District. Her home Club and other Clubs in Great Falls, MT were hosting the 2nd quarter board meeting in February. She met Dan Petersen, who was the President of the Uptown Optimist Club of Great Falls. "The weekend of the board meeting, Dan and I actually got to talking in the Uptown hospitality room and the rest is history as they say," said Sue. Dan became a Double Distinguished President that year which lead to Sue being a Distinguished Lt. Governor. They have been together for 14 years and always celebrate their anniversary on Valentine's Day, as that was close to the date of the board meeting. They have continued to be very active in the Optimist organization, both Members of the Uptown Club now, as well as both of Sue's children, who Dan has been a very active part of their lives. Dan is the current District Governor and Sue is his District Secretary/Treasurer.

11 When Past Vice President Barb Scirto and Sunrise Optimist John Sullivan were married eight years ago, Optimist friends from all over the U.S. and Canada gathered to celebrate the beginning of their new life together. Although in different Clubs, they share their Optimist passion every Monday night from May to September. Barb is the "50-50 Lady" for the Lockport Monday Night Cruise Optimist Club events, and John is the "Grill Master" for his Club selling his famous burgers and hot dogs at the weekly cruises. Elvis is in the park at the largest car cruise of the year, and every year, Barb and John dance in the street as he sings their song "I Can't Help Falling In Love With You!"

12 Bill and Gayle Barr met at the Morning Optimist Club of Auburn Hills, Michigan. Bill joined in September of 1990 and Gayle joined in February of 1993. They were married in October of 1999.

13 Daniel and Robin Rich met at the 2nd Quarter District Conference in February 1994 in Jacksonville, FL. She was visiting from Boston to see her father and stepmother, who were also Optimists. Daniel and Robin's parents were friends, and the two became friends over the weekend. They talked occasionally over the next couple of months after she returned to Boston and the friendship grew. As the 3rd Quarter District Conference drew near, they both planned to attend and see each other again. That weekend it became obvious that they belonged together. Robin moved to Jacksonville four months later and they were engaged four months after that. They've been together for 21 years and married for the past 18 years. They still live in Jacksonville with their beautiful daughter, Micaela, who plans to be an Optimist, too.

14 Ed Murphy and Lisa Meneian met in 2011 in Burnaby. Ed was Governor for the Pacific Northwest District and Lisa was the MC for the CCDHH competition that the Burnaby Optimist Club was sponsoring. Ed met Lisa and her son, Ben, that day. Ben tells Ed that he knew Ed liked his mom because every time his mom came to the podium to speak, Ed would stop talking with him. Ed and Lisa are very grateful that an Optimist International event brought them together.

Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation RESPONDS TO THE CALL

THE STE-FOY OPTIMIST CLUB IS SUPPORTING A HUMANITARIAN AID

A crazy idea? Maybe, but it most certainly is an extraordinary, priceless experience. With the help of their teachers, Ms. Nicole and Ms. Manon, around forty 2nd grade youngsters from Ecole Fernand-Seguin in Quebec city, decided to help for the third straight year forty students and teachers in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade who all live in Puerto Plata. The school clientele is in large part comprised of Haitians who are prohibited from attending Dominican schools.

The objective for these teachers was to sensitize their students as to the abundance that surrounds them, and their good fortune for being able to go to school with all the necessary tools to succeed. They explained to them that this was not the case for all the children of the world, and wanted to help develop awareness and humanitarian values; such as sharing, solidarity, commitment, and respect for differences. In order to foster some commitment to the cause, students are partnered up with a Dominican or a Haitian student to exchange correspondence.

To reach their objective, the youngsters make and sell soap during the school year. This activity allows them to present their project to adults (Club Members), and other students from their school. School supplies were bought for 40 students: notebooks, pencils, erasers, rulers, backpacks. Ms. Nicole and Ms. Manon will make a special trip to personally deliver the supplies to them in mid-February. They will also have a number of tools for the students to use for scientific experiments and will participate in their school life.

The project will raise student awareness about their consumer habits, overall waste in society and other possible living alternatives. The experience will enrich the students and change their outlook to better understand human values, differences, openness toward friends, community and the world.

A sentiment of pride will allow them to feel that together, despite their young age, they can make a difference and help children in need. They will understand that individual or collective mobilization, involves a personal choice that can make all the difference in the world to a person in need.



PLEASE NOTE: In 2013-2014, Ecole Fernand-Seguin received the Toupaix trophy in the Solidarity category, a special prize from the green school group of Brundtland (E.V.B.)! This project sets itself apart among all the schools of the group by transmitting human values such as solidarity, ecology, pacifism, democracy, and openness to others.



Leadership Summits Success for 2015

Summit Training Topics Include All New Content:

On February 21, the first Leadership Summit for the 2015 year kicked off in Anaheim. With 46 Optimists in attendance, the room was full of energy and smiling faces ready to learn how to become a better leader. The one-day training experience covered various topics and provided attendees the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to lead a relevant and thriving group or organization. After the Anaheim Summit wrapped up, attendees raved about the topics, such as "Conflict Resolution," the enthusiasm of the trainers, which included International President Ken Garner, and the networking benefits and opportunities from being in a room full of Optimists. One attendee noted, the Anaheim Summit "Brought Out the Best in leadership through a variety of techniques and strategies for improving our organization for Members, communities, and foremost – youth!" Following the Anaheim Leadership Summit, other successful Summits were held in San Antonio, Tampa, Nashville, and Virginia Beach.

Upcoming Leadership Summits:

April 18, 2015 St. Lawrence Region Leadership Summit

April 25, 2015 Kansas City Leadership Summit

May 16, 2015 Minneapolis Leadership Summit

June 13, 2015 Detroit Leadership Summit

For more information on the 2015 Leadership Summits visit www.optimist.org/summit.



[Anaheim Summit – February 21, 2015]



[Tampa Summit – March 7, 2015]



[San Antonio Summit – February 28, 2015]

SHARE YOUR SUMMIT STORY:

Have you attended one of the Optimist Leadership Summits? If so, we want to hear from you! Let us know about your experience, what you learned, and how you plan to implement what you learned in your Club or District. If you have photos from the event, please share those, too! Send your comments to magazine@optimist.org to be included in future publications of *The Optimist*.



Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation

CCOF CLUB GRANT PROGRAM

NEW CLUB GRANT - 1 WINNER EVERY QUARTER !

The Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation (CCOF) is proud to announce the launch of its own CCOF Club Grant. The Foundation will award 4 grants of 500\$ per year for your community project, that means 1 winner every quarter! Visit our website ccof-foec.org



Thank you 2014
First-Timers!



[First Timers Orientation
to take place Thursday,
July 9, 2015 at 10-11:30am]

NEW ORLEANS LOUISIANA (NOLA) LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL!

YOUR SOURCE FOR CONVENTION INFORMATION

Visit www.Optimist.org/convention to see the agenda and learn more on numerous topics, including housing, travel and rental car discounts, featured events. If you would like information sent to you, e-mail convention@optimist.org or call (800) 500-8130 ext. 221 or 205.

Hilton New Orleans Riverside

Experience the best of the Crescent City. With plenty of amenities and things to do, Riverside is the ultimate in New Orleans accommodations.

Visit www.neworleanscvb.com to discover all there is to know about, see and do in New Orleans. A place where centuries old architecture is the backdrop for a culture so invigorating, it'll rouse your spirit.

Convention is for Everyone

The annual gathering of Optimists is open to each and every Member! There truly is something for everyone. Are you an everyday Optimist from whom others could gain insight? How about a volunteer who has a successful program, Member looking for a unique project idea or maybe a first-time Club or District Officer? Are you thinking about being a Club or District Officer in the future? Then you have something to contribute and something to gain from attending the International Convention! A big shout out to all our first time attendees – hope to see you again in New Orleans!

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to distribute registration packets on Wednesday, July 8, Thursday, July 9 and Friday morning July 10. To volunteer, contact Sherman Phillips at (303) 946-3501 or swphill@comcast.net.

Participate in the fun by serving as a table host or hostess at the "Masked Mardi Gras" Appreciation Luncheon. International Convention Coordinator Lenor Cox is looking for registered Members and guests who would like to volunteer their time. For more information, please contact Lenor at lenor78@hotmail.com.

Roommate Wanted?

If you would like to share expenses with another Optimist Member, please send an e-mail to convention@optimist.org.

If you would like to share expenses with another Optimist Member let us know, we have a list of people looking for potential roommates.

House of Optimism (Exhibits)

Do you know of a not for profit fundraising company that Optimist Clubs would benefit from being present at the international convention? Please send contact information to convention@optimist.org.



Youth Activity Highlights for the New Orleans Convention

THURSDAY JULY 9, 2015

1:30-5PM

Enjoy an afternoon of bowling at Fulton Alley, the newest and most unique entertainment venue that features 12 bowling lanes wrapped in an atmosphere of art, music, craft food & fun.

6-9PM

Friday evening will be a "Get Acquainted Party." The kids, along with their parents, can enjoy an evening full of fun to get to know each other. Details will be available closer to Convention time.

FRIDAY JULY 10, 2015

8AM-4PM

Children ages five and up will walk to and spend a fun filled day at the Audubon Aquarium. The aquarium is one of the top museums of its kind in America. Here the visitor finds 15,000 sea life creatures, representing nearly 600 species, living happily in a state-of-the-art facility. The world-renown Audubon Aquarium is home to fish and sea life of all kinds - and visitors can get up close, eye-to-eye if you please, with some of the most fascinating creatures of the ocean. Lunch will be provided at the aquarium. After lunch, youths will walk to the museums. The younger group will go to the Children's Museum while the older kids take in the D-Day Museum.

SATURDAY JULY 11, 2015

8AM-4PM

Children ages five and up will spend a day exploring the Audubon Zoo, a sprawling 58-acre habitat for more than 2,000 animals, including rare white alligators, white tigers, gorillas, monkeys, and endangered whooping cranes. Transportation from the hotel to the Zoo will be provided, along with lunch.

6-9PM

There will be a youth evening activity held at the hotel, with dinner included.

BUSINESS ATTIRE IS APPROPRIATE FOR ALL SESSIONS AND MEAL EVENTS. BLACK/WHITE BUSINESS OR FORMAL ATTIRE IS APPROPRIATE FOR SATURDAY'S PRESIDENTIAL RECEPTION, BANQUET & BALL – WESTERN THEME, BOOTS AND BLING

TUESDAY, JULY 7:

DISTRICT TRAINER CLASS
VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT AND GOVERNOR-ELECT TRAINING AND DINNER WITH SPOUSES

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8:

CLUB TRAINER CLASS
CREDENTIALS
DISTRICT FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING & LUNCH (BY INVITATION)
REGISTRATION
VICE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNOR RECEPTION AND DINNER INCLUDING SPOUSES (BY INVITATION)

THURSDAY, JULY 9:

CLUB AND DISTRICT OFFICER-ELECT TRAINING
CREDENTIALS
FIRST TIMERS ORIENTATION
FOUNDATION KIOSK
FOUNDATIONS WILLIAM H HARRISON SOCIETY RECOGNITION DINNER
VICE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNOR TRAINING
HOUSE OF OPTIMISM (EXHIBITS)
LT. GOVERNOR-ELECT TRAINING
OPENING CEREMONIES – THEME: JAZZ
REGISTRATION
YOUTH INFORMATION DESK
YOUTH PROGRAM (OPTIONAL)

FRIDAY, JULY 10:

APPRECIATION LUNCHEON
BANQUET COUPON EXCHANGE
CLUB PRESIDENT-ELECT AND LT. GOVERNOR-ELECT BREAKFAST
CREDENTIALS
FOUNDATION KIOSK
HOUSE OF OPTIMISM (EXHIBITS)
JAMBALAYA COOK OUT
REGISTRATION
TOWN HALL MEETING
WORKSHOPS
YOUTH PROGRAM

SATURDAY, JULY 11:

1ST BUSINESS SESSION
CLOSING BUSINESS SESSION
CREDENTIALS
FOUNDATION KIOSK
FOUNDATIONS PRESIDENTS CLUB MEMBER LUNCHEON OR RECEPTION
HOUSE OF OPTIMISM (EXHIBITS)
OLD TIMERS BREAKFAST
PRESIDENTIAL RECEPTION, BANQUET AND BALL

**YOUTH PROGRAM
SUNDAY, JULY 12
OPTIMIST LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**



PRESIDENTIAL BANQUET AND BALL

Entertainment by Optimist International's very own South Carolina District Governor, Marino Garbin

Marino graduated from a prestigious South Jersey high school. He went to Perugia, Italy where he studied the Italian language and culture. He graduated Perugia's Universita per I Stranieri (University for Foreigners) with a degree to teach Italian. He returned to the United States and earned a degree in Broadcast Communications at Neuman College. A lifelong musician, Marino began his DJ career by playing records between band sets. When having DJ's at weddings and parties became popular, Marino became a full time DJ. Along the way, he also managed to work at a radio station and a well-known cable shopping network. With over 20 years of experience, Marino is one of the leaders in the DJ industry.

Purse Snatch

The Optimist International Foundation is in need of purses for the Women's Philanthropy Council annual Purse Snatching at the 2015 Optimist International Convention in New Orleans!

We are asking for donations of purses, handbags, wallets, golf bags, backpacks, luggage pieces, suitcases, and briefcases. Items should be brand new or gently used. Send your bags to the Optimist International Foundation Office: 4494 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108.

All the donated purses will be auctioned off at Convention. Every bag that is donated supports a great cause! The Women's Philanthropy Council increases awareness about the Foundation, raises money to go towards its mission, and funds Club Grants and a Girl's Scholarship every year.

For more information about donating a bag, please contact the Optimist International Foundation via email at oif@optimist.org or call (800) 500-8130.



GOLF RAFFLE

Optimist International Foundation is pleased to announce that tickets for the yearly golf raffle are now available! Adobe Golf has once again provided wonderful prizes for this raffle:

1ST PRIZE: A complete set of custom crafted "Black Lightning" clubs including: three woods, nine irons and putter. The clubs come with a golf bag and the woods come with head covers.

2ND PRIZE: A set of three "X D S React" hybrid rescue/trouble clubs.

3RD PRIZE: A "Crown Regal" 460 cc Driver with graphite shaft and head cover.

Tickets are available in every Optimist International Foundation District now through July. To purchase tickets, please see your District Foundation Representative, visit the Optimist International Foundation kiosk during Convention, or contact the Optimist International Foundation office at 800.500.8130. The drawing for winners will be held during the Optimist International Foundation presentation at the Optimist International Convention. Winners need not be present to be eligible to win!

3RD ANNUAL OPTIMIST LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Optimist International is in the process of selecting individuals to be invited to participate in its third Leadership Academy class. Candidates selected will be invited to attend a one day training program to share their leadership knowledge and participate in an advanced leadership program held on Sunday, July 12, 2015 immediately following the International Convention in New Orleans. As a member of the Leadership Academy, individuals are being recognized for their exceptional leadership skills and as future leaders of the Optimist International organization. Academy finalists will have no other commitments or obligations. For more information and to view past class rosters, visit www.optimist.org/e/member/leadership-academy.cfm.



First of all, I felt honored and privileged to be nominated to attend the Leadership Academy. At the time of the training, I was a candidate for Governor-Elect for the Iowa District for the 2014-2015 Program Year. I welcomed attending the training as I thought it would be very beneficial in preparing to serve as Governor-Elect and then Governor. The training was very relevant and was presented very professionally. I truly enjoyed the training session provided by Ken Garner; he is so passionate and energetic in promoting the growth of our great organization so that the lives of more kids can be enhanced. The training provided helpful insight to the character traits of a good leader and the keys to being an effective leader. It is so essential to the continued viability of our organization that quality training is provided to those individuals who will be assuming leadership positions in the future. My hope for the future is that the benefits of attending the Leadership Academy will be effectively communicated throughout our organization for Members who possess leadership potential to be identified, nominated, and invited to attend future session of the Academy.



DAVE PHILLIPS, OPTIMIST LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CLASS OF 2014

Positions held:

- 2008-2009** Distinguished Club President, Davenport-Quad-Cities Morning Optimist Club, Iowa District
- 2009-2010** Distinguished Lt. Governor, Zone 10, Iowa District
- 2010-2011** Membership Chair, Iowa District
- 2011-2012** Distinguished Lt. Governor, Zone 10, Iowa District
- 2012-2013** Membership Chair, Iowa District
- 2014-2015** Governor-Elect and Leadership Development Chair, Iowa District
- 2010-2011** Builder of Excellence, North Scott Optimist Club
- 2011-2012** Builder of Excellence, River Valley Optimist Club

If you were a Member of the first two Optimist Leadership Academy classes, plan to attend the New Orleans Convention where a special reunion gathering will be held. Details will be sent to each of you.

CHILDHOOD CANCER CAMPAIGN Matching Grants

June is Optimist Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, but this dreadful disease affects children and families every day. Optimists are committed to “providing the care and finding the cure” throughout the year.

Optimist International wants to help your Club or District make a greater impact through the CCC (Childhood Cancer Campaign) Matching Grants program. Any Club or District that sponsors a project which raises funds for a CCC focus is eligible to apply. The application can be found on the Optimist website, www.optimist.org/cccmatchinggrants. Clubs or Districts are asked to complete an application, which asks for an overview of the project, amount raised so far, how funds will be utilized, how the project will impact the community and the anticipated income sources and expenses. Once complete, the application should be mailed, e-mailed, or faxed to Optimist International.

Applications are accepted at any time and reviewed on a quarterly basis. If the grant is approved, an award letter and check for 50% of the funds are sent to the Club or District Treasurer. Once the project has been conducted, the sponsoring Club or District is required to submit the Final Report form. This report asks for the steps involved in the project planning to execution, a final budget and proof of how the grant funds already received have been utilized, such as a copy of the check presented to the recipient, a thank you letter or press coverage. The Final Report is then reviewed by the appropriate Advisory Panel. If approved, the final 50% of the grant is awarded.

The project can be of any size and the CCC Matching Grants program will help ensure a large impact is made! If you have questions, please contact the Optimist International Foundation at (800) 500-8130, the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation at (800) 363-7151 or via email at ccc@optimist.org.



Optimist projects that have received matching grants:

- **Optimist Club of Rochester** - Fund Brighter Tomorrows at the Mayo Clinic, providing emotional outreach program to kids and families, support research at the Mayo Clinic
- **Optimist Club of Del Mar-Solana Beach** - Support Rady Children's Hospital "Hopes" project, providing supplies for the playroom, organizing entertainment for youth and providing wigs for teenager cancer patients, helping with expenses not covered by insurance and offering counseling services
- **Shoals Optimist Club** - Raise awareness and funds for Birmingham Children's Hospital through a 5K and Pet Walk
- **Optimist Club of Grand Forks** - Purchase iPads for children to use during chemo treatments, Provide travel expense support to parents of children receiving treatment in North Dakota or Minnesota
- **Old Town Scottsdale Optimist Club** - Provide travel expense support to parents of children receiving treatment in Arizona, conduct an awareness campaign through the Catfish Rodeo and Kidsfest Outdoor Expo, children with cancer are invited to attend the free event featuring carnival games, live entertainment, face painting and food booths

Ensuring Safe Celebrations to Avoid the Worst

By Nicola D'Elia,
Canadian Service Centre

Many of us are impatient for spring to arrive, but no one is as impatient as those youths who will complete their secondary studies and celebrate their graduation by way of a high school ball.

Yet, it's also a period during when tragic events occur as a result of the recklessness of young drivers when alcohol is involved. Because of this, the Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts Optimist Club and the Val-David/Val-Morin Optimist Club have joined forces to implement an awareness campaign known as "Let's Party Safely". "Let's Party Safely" is held both inside and outside of a high school and involves the enactment of various scenes by youths from the school. It has been presented to over 300 youths to date and is in its fifth edition in 2015.

Actors come from different groups of youths and take part in simulating a graduation ball. Over an entire morning, spectators witness a scene depicting a group of youths, a camp fire, and a typical evening during which these youths drink alcohol and then get into their cars. The next scene takes us outdoors and depicts the tragedy surrounding a car crash due to drinking and driving. An actress was ejected from her car and is now lying in a pool of blood while we witness the distress of this character's friends as they are confronted by such tragedy. Real firefighters, police officers and paramedics join by arriving on the scene of the tragedy. The final scene takes us inside the school where we see a casket surrounded by the victim's friends, portraying the grief the victim's family and friends would be experiencing.

Not only does this activity allow youths to take part directly as actors, it also gives them a voice to share their views and feelings during the activity. It's a method that really raises the awareness of youths by reducing the distance between truth and fiction. The very realistic scenes, real damaged cars, a casket borrowed from a funeral home, as well as real paramedics, police officers and fire fighters, create a shock effect through their raw realism. The testimony of a victim of a real car crash caused by alcohol also adds weight to the reality of the danger youths face during their quest for excitement.

The activity requires several weeks of preparation and begins towards the end of winter. It is presented around the month of May to stick in the minds of graduates prior to their graduation. There is no fee to implement this activity and Optimist Clubs have always benefitted from great visibility via the local media.



Welcome NEW Optimist Members

New Members help Clubs reach more children and provide service to their communities. They lighten the workload, bring new ideas and make activities more fun. Plus, they help ensure a brighter future for their Club. Here are a few of the newest Optimists.



LORENA A. MATARRITA, Pomona Breakfast Optimist Club, California

OCCUPATION: Executive Assistant

REASON FOR JOINING: After completing my graduate studies in Urban Planning, I found I had more time on my hands and I was ready to give back to my community. When our Club's current president walked into my office and asked me if I wanted to join, I said yes without hesitation. The Optimist Club was the vehicle that helped me feel more fulfilled in life. Originally, I saw the Optimist Club as an opportunity to gain leadership experience, but quickly learned it was a place to find wonderful friends and to work directly with community residents, in particular youth.

FAVORITE LINE FROM THE OPTIMIST CREED: To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

GREATEST THING ABOUT BEING AN OPTIMIST: Camaraderie among Club Members and the dedication each individual has for their respective communities.

GOAL(S): To help get the Pomona Breakfast Optimist Club on the map and show the city that the Club is doing their part to improve the community, to be the best Secretary I can for the Club, to gain leadership skills, to encourage our future leaders (youth) of Pomona to be the best that they can be.

FUN FACT: I won the pageant and title of "Miss Pomona 2004" for the City of Pomona.



SUE WALKER, Optimist Club of Halton Hills, ON

OCCUPATION: Social Media Strategist

REASON FOR JOINING: I was asked to join last May to help manage a new project that our Club was involved in; a large music festival. I was the Optimist lead and worked with local youth and the town to create a day long festival that featured six local youth music groups/solo artists and one major headliner. 600 local youth attended the successful event.

FAVORITE LINE FROM THE OPTIMIST CREED: To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

GREATEST THING ABOUT BEING AN OPTIMIST: Working for (and with) the youth in my community, creating opportunities that might not otherwise exist.

GOAL(S): To increase the profile of our group within the community and grow our membership.

FUN FACT: I have a St. Bernard crossed named Pillow.



LEEANNE GILMOUR, Lebanon Optimist Club, Oregon

OCCUPATION: Banking

REASON FOR JOINING: I most recently became employed by Citizens Bank in Lebanon, Oregon. I have been in banking for close to 40 years and have been active within the communities I've worked in. I was a member of Soroptimist International of Albany, Oregon, but unfortunately with my new position, I am farther from the Albany area and will not be as active as I have been able to be in years past. I selected the Lebanon Optimist Club to become my new community focus. I enjoy getting to know other Members of the community and being a part of a worthy cause.

FAVORITE LINE FROM THE OPTIMIST CREED: To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

GREATEST THING ABOUT BEING AN OPTIMIST: I can be involved in my community & make a difference to those around me. Be a positive role model and enjoy the fruits of our Club's labors. Life Is Good - pass it on!

GOAL(S): To become a part of the team and bring new ideas to the Club. To be involved in our community and support our youth for a better community overall.

FUN FACT: I love to host parties and make people happy!

Spring has SPRUNG FOR OPTIMIST GOLFERS



Thousands of junior golfers of all ages make their way to the courses in hope of making it to the big tournament at PGA National Resort and Spa, Florida in July. Every weekend starting in May till the end of June an Optimist tournament takes place in the United States, Canada, Caribbean and internationally. There are 56 qualifiers around the world. To find the nearest qualifier, visit: www.optimist.org/golf-qualify.cfm.

Experiencing the Optimist Junior Golf Championships is a dream come true for our golfers. It will be one of the most positive and thrilling times of their lives. Most golfers attending their first tournament will do whatever they can to return the following year, even playing in multiple qualifiers.

"I am a sophomore at Woodberry Forest School and play on the golf team. I had an incredible experience last summer when I traveled to Florida for the Optimist Junior Golf Championships. I had a great time playing golf with some of the world's best golfers and getting to know them. In five rounds, I played with golfers from four other countries and four other states. It was truly an experience I will never forget. Thank you for everything you did to make the tournament such a success."

- Basil Boyd, Martinsville, Virginia
Class of 2017

Most Optimist Districts help several young golfers advance by covering the tournament's registration fees (which includes housing, meals and golf) for the District's winners in the boys and girls 16-18 age divisions. Many go a step further and choose to sponsor winners in other age divisions as well.

In addition to the District Qualifiers, golfers can compete in the Optimist Junior Tour events held early in the year in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Ft. Worth, Texas and Orlando, Florida. Top finishers of these events also qualify golfers to advance to the Championships. The season closer is the Optimist Tournament of Champions. The best of the best golfers advance to this tournament, which will take place November 7-8, 2015 at PGA National Resort and Spa. Optimist opportunities like these help kids become better people and help them pursue their dreams! Optimist Members are always welcome to attend the Championships to see what make us one of the biggest programs of Optimist International.

OPTIMIST JUNIOR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS
July 16-21, 2015 - Boys 10-11, 12-13 and Girls 10-12
July 21-26, 2015 - Boys 14-15 and Girls 13-14
July 26-31, 2015 - Boys 16-18 and Girls 15-18





2015 JOOI CONVENTION

The 2015 JOOI Convention will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana on July 6-8. Registration for adults and youth is \$199 (lunches and dinners included). Hotel reservations can be made at the Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, LA. To book your reservation or for more information on room types and upgrades available, please call (800) 445-8667 or (504) 584-3959. The sleeping room rates are \$109 per night (plus taxes & fees) for up to two people and \$125 (plus taxes & fees) for three or four people in a room. When calling, remember to mention the dates and group name "Junior Optimist Octagon International." As long as there are sleeping rooms available, the deadline to make your reservation is June 17, 2015.

"Change for Change" CAMPAIGN

By Bud Fletcher, Macon Riverside Optimist Club of Macon, Georgia

The Riverside Macon Optimist Club sponsors a JOOI Club at the Georgia Academy for the Blind. The JOOI Club, named Creative Charity, held a successful "Change for Change" campaign for 30 days. All 125 students participated in the JOOI Club's campaign by donating their change to assist a school for orphans in Uganda. The elementary students collected \$52.23, the middle school students collected \$100.00, and the high school students collected \$114.10, for a grand total of \$266.33. The donations will be used to buy essential supplies for the school, such as pencils, pencil sharpeners, and notebooks. The supplies will be sent to Uganda, along with pictures of the students at the Georgia Academy for the Blind.

JOOI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When I joined JOOI, I had no idea how important leadership and service would be to me. I developed a passion for helping others. That's the beauty of JOOI: being able to care for something and someone bigger than yourself. I also found out that by just being a JOOI Member, I had access to scholarships and a wealth of experience, networks and mentors. This year the JOOI experience has been boosted with more opportunities for our Members, such as awards, leadership aid, training and grassroots support. We're truly "Soaring to New Heights" and you are a part of it!

Yours in Optimism,
Javanni Waugh
2014-15 JOOI International President

MATER DEI HIGH SCHOOL OCTAGON CLUB HITS THE GROUND RUNNING

By Linda Meyers, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Optimist Club of San Diego

In December, O'Hara Wickham, a freshman at Mater Dei High School in Chula Vista, California, and a group of friends formed an Octagon Club sponsored by the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Optimist Club of San Diego. On January 24, the JOOI Club held their first fundraiser after weeks of planning. They partnered with another JOOI Club, The Eastlake High School Octagon Club, and delegated each group specific jobs. With the Disney movie Frozen in mind, the Club's event was a "Winter Princess Ball" for ages 5-12.

They found a local church that donated their hall and began advertising. Working with their sponsor Optimist Club, they contacted friends, family and local business that they frequented. A local beauty shop donated their time to operate Rapunzel's Magical Hair Salon where the little princesses got special treatment. At Elsa's Extraordinary Desserts, they could decorate miniature cupcakes. Anna's Enchanted Crown Making was just that: crowns that they could decorate. A high school student DJ provided music for dancing. A young lady came dressed as Princess Aurora, also known as Sleeping Beauty, to interact with the young princesses and sign autographs.

It was a successful event where nearly a hundred girls became princesses for an evening. The night raised \$2,500.00 for the Childhood Cancer Campaign's Johns Hopkins Research Program.





RENEW, REFRESH & REVITALIZE

Begin now to **Renew, Refresh and Revitalize** your Club to be the best that it can be! What is the 3 “R” program and what can it do for your Club? Experience the results of this program designed especially for your Club IF you:

RENEW: Embrace Teamwork by utilizing all of your resources at your disposal efficiently...**REFRESH:** Take steps to discover improvement opportunities and find new challenges...**REVITALIZE:** Follow-up on the development of your Members – Share information

Adopt the program within your Club by following the steps below to complete the three “R” program to ensure a healthy and stable Club for you and your Members. Your District Club Fitness Advisor stands ready and anxious to help you achieve your Club goals!

Program Requirements

- 1 Club Leadership conducts personal communication with at least 75% of Club Members determining what the Club is doing well and what areas could be improved upon. During this process, you might also find new activities your Club should consider doing.
- 2 Develop an action plan to find ways to improve on what your Club is doing well and also define actions that will be taken to address challenges that your Club is currently facing. Communicate this action plan to all Members of the Club, Zone and District. Plan at least one activity with the help of either your District Leadership Development Chair or your District Membership Chair with the goal of adding at least 3 new Members.
- 3 Share the revised Activities, Goals and Objectives with all Club Members, along with ways they will be accomplished. In addition, participation in the PGI program should be started or continued by at least 60% of the Members advancing at least one level during a year.

Upon completion of this three “R” program, your Club will receive a customized Press Release that can be submitted for use by the local media including pictures. Additionally, information about the Club could appear on social media sites and could appear in “The Optimist” magazine. Find out more about this program by contacting your District Club Fitness Advisor.

SPIRIT

During the month of May, Optimist Clubs will create a widespread spirit of unity bringing together Optimist Members and other community volunteers for a variety of local-based activities, fundraisers and special events. Your Club’s participation in Optimists in Action Month can be as easy as:

- Hosting a community canned-food drive
- Planning a 5k run/walk
- Washing cars at shopping centers or office car lots

Optimist Clubs should contact local media with details about their Optimists in Action Month program. Take photos and videos and share your Club’s program on social media by tagging #OptimistsInAction. After completing your May project, send in your Club’s project details and photos to Optimist International to be featured in a future issue of The Optimist magazine! Stories can be sent via email to magazine@optimist.org or a hardcopy to: Optimist International, Attn: The Optimist Editor, 4494 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108



MAY IS OPTIMISTS IN ACTION MONTH



Optimists have always believed in making a difference - a difference to children, to citizens in need, to fellow Optimists, to themselves. Optimists also believe that the best way to make a difference is through action - positive action. As a result, the month of May has been declared *Optimists in Action* month.



Your source for these limited edition tee’s! Get them while they last! Available in youth and adult sizes.



www.OptimistStuff.com
optimist@shumsky.com
 877.678.2582

As of October 1, 2014, Shumsky is the official supplier for all Clubs in the United States and the Caribbean. Shumsky provides a fresh perspective on how branded items, promotional products and custom-developed ideas can be used to bring out the best in your Club needs. For details, visit Shumsky's new Optimist International supplier at www.shumskyideas.com/optimist or call (877) 678-2582.

Christian D. Larson Partners Membership

582	Will Cale	586	Ron Miller
583	Gary Anderson	587	Beverly Gorrell
584	Hermann D. Rogalsky	588	Roger Grandbois
585	Agostino Amodeo		

Top Ten as of December 30, 2014

District	Representative	Average Contribution Per Member
Maryland-South Delaware	Jack Evans	\$9.01
North Florida	Perry Albritton	\$6.37
Arizona	Kathleen Paulson	\$6.33
Colorado-Wyoming	Steve Gorrell	\$5.21
South Texas	Jose Montoya	\$5.16
Oklahoma	Patricia Thomas	\$5.14
Tennessee	Essie Johnson	\$4.73
Pacific Central	Mary Boglarsky	\$4.67
Michigan	Ray Finocchio	\$4.10
Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern Wyoming	Vince Parker	\$3.64

District	Representative	Total Contributions
Michigan	Ray Finocchio	\$13,358.60
Maryland-South Delaware	Jack Evans	\$11,553.50
Colorado-Wyoming	Steve Gorrell	\$8,516.45
North Florida	Perry Albritton	\$8,207.93
South Texas	Jose Montoya	\$7,603.85
Iowa	Dave Mason	\$6,621.50
Georgia	Joey Richardson	\$5,447.50
Arizona	Kathleen Paulson	\$4,894.45
East Missouri	Sallie Westenbarger	\$4,779.90
Tennessee	Essie Johnson	\$4,310.50

Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation

District	Representative Average	Contribution Per Member
Dakotas-Manitoba-Minnesota	Jo-Anne Pelzer	\$11.83
Pacific Northwest	Peter Smith	\$7.14
Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern Wyoming	Vince Parker	\$32.74

District	Representative	Total Contributions
Central Ontario	Tom and Caryl McNaught	\$6,103.30
Quebec Central	André Picard	\$5,893.50
Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern Wyoming	Vince Parker	\$28,846.41



Canadian Children's
Optimist Foundation

Donor Listings

This is a record of lifetime accumulation levels achieved from October 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 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

ALBERTA-MONTANA-SASKATCHEWAN & NORTHERN WYOMING

Optimist Club of Prince Albert, SK
IOWA

Thomas and Janet Lloyd

PACIFIC CENTRAL

Optimist Club of San Leandro, CA

BRONZE BENEFACTOR - \$15,000

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Optimist Club of Essex, ON

EMINENT BENEFACTOR - \$10,000

ALBERTA-MONTANA-SASKATCHEWAN & NORTHERN WYOMING

Vince Parker

EASTERN ONTARIO

Benoit Paré

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Donald and Cherie Heavirland

DISTINGUISHED BENEFACTOR - \$5,000

ATLANTIC CENTRAL

Kathleen Manchec

Optimist Club of Hummelstown, PA

CALIFORNIA SOUTH

Lucille C. LeMieux

COLORADO-WYOMING

Susan and John Swanborg

DAKOTAS-MANITOBA-MINNESOTA

Optimist Club of Winnipeg St-James, MB

EAST MISSOURI

Martin J. Kehoe

IOWA

Optimist Club of North Liberty, IA

KENTUCKY-WEST VIRGINIA

Philip D. Cashin

MICHIGAN

Patricia Rabaut Miller

NEBRASKA

Delno Salmen

NORTH FLORIDA

Optimist Club of Panama City Beach-

Beach Bay, FL

SOUTH TEXAS

Optimist Club of Galveston-Noon, TX

TENNESSEE

John Johnson

HONORED BENEFACTOR - \$2,500

ALBERTA-MONTANA-SASKATCHEWAN & NORTHERN WYOMING

Glen A. Kreller

COLORADO-WYOMING

Donna L. Priestler

KENTUCKY-WEST VIRGINIA

Sandra E. Ruman

MARYLAND-SOUTH DELAWARE

Michael D. Weston

QUEBEC EAST-ACADIE

Raymonde Michaud

BENEFACTOR - \$1,000

ALBERTA-MONTANA-SASKATCHEWAN & NORTHERN WYOMING

Geneva Sopchyshyn

CAPITAL-VIRGINIA

Ruth Bonneville

CENTRAL ONTARIO

Agostino Amodeo

COLORADO-WYOMING

Tom Overton

Greg Young

INDIANA SOUTH

David Best

IOWA

Dave and Rita Roberts

Optimist Club of Ankeny, IA

KANSAS

Dale E. Fox

MARYLAND-SOUTH DELAWARE

Optimist Club of Lexington Park-

St. Maries, MD

MICHIGAN

Thomas and Cynthia Longhway

MIDWESTERN ONTARIO

Doris Haw

Marg Rapp

OHIO

Nodie Washington

QUEBEC WEST

Gilles Aquin

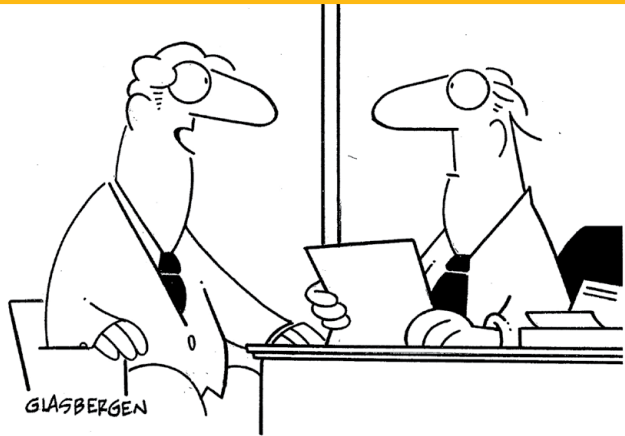
Normand Lussieur

WEST MISSOURI

James M. Ashley

For more information on Optimist International Foundation's Purse Snatch and Golf Raffle to take place at Convention, refer to page 20.

Sunnyside



"I was born May 23, 1987. Since that day, millions of babies have followed me into the world. I'm a natural leader!"



"I listened to a motivational seminar while you were at work and I've decided to become a Great Dane!"

A funeral procession passed by two people standing on the sidewalk. On top of the casket in the hearse, a bag of golf clubs reposed.

"Boy, that guy must have really liked golf," the one fellow said.

"He still does," the other guy said. "That's his wife they're burying and after the ceremony, he is going out to play 18 holes."

Hard up for a place to eat, two salesmen finally stopped at a none-too-impressive restaurant on the main street of a small town. Both ordered iced tea with their meal, one of them adding, "And be sure my glass is absolutely clean."

A second waiter appeared a few minutes later with two glasses of tea. "Here they

are," he said. "Which one gets the clean glass?"

A tenant was angrily complaining to his landlord: "My roof leaks all over and there are broken windows and it has been raining for a week so the floors are all wet and it is ruining the carpeting. I've been complaining about this for months now and I would like to know how long this is going to continue."

The landlord shrugged unconcernedly. "How should I know? I'm not the weatherman."

A small boy looked longingly at a friend's dog. "My mother won't let me have a dog for my birthday," he said.

"Maybe, you are not using the right strategy," replied the pal.

"What strategy?"

"Don't ask for a dog. Ask for a baby brother. Then you'll get the dog."

A married man was trying to get some free advice from his lawyer friend. "Isn't there some way in which a man can avoid paying alimony?" he inquired.

"To be sure," replied the lawyer. "There are two sure-fire ways: he can stay single or stay married."

A mother had been lecturing her small son, stressing that both of them were in this world to help others. The son considered this for some time, then asked, "What are all the others here for?"



GET SOCIAL WITH OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Optimist International utilizes several official social media platforms to help get the word out on important updates, newsworthy events, membership initiatives and interesting topics & tips. Make sure to follow us on your personal social media channels and also connect your Club's Facebook pages, Twitter handles and YouTube channels!



[Facebook.com/optimist.international](https://www.facebook.com/optimist.international)



[@optimistorg](https://twitter.com/optimistorg)



[YouTube.com/OptimistIntl](https://www.youtube.com/OptimistIntl)



[Linkedin.com/groups/Optimist-International-Club-117333](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/Optimist-International-Club-117333)



Celebrate our Heritage...
ASSURE OUR FUTURE...

Optimist International's Board of Directors has set a goal of 100,000 Members by the organization's 100th year (2019). Your Club is urged to do its part in setting its own goal of increasing its membership between now and our 100 Year Anniversary. Help assure that your Club will be "Bringing Out the Best in Kids" well into the future.

