

OCTOBER 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 Columbus Day (US) Thanksgiving (Canada)	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Annual Junior Optimist Billing is sent to Advisors and Sponsoring Club Secretary/Treasurer	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	Halloween	31				

NOTES:

* Access records at Optimist Leaders – www.optimistleaders.org

USING YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

- Go to www.optimistleaders.org and click on “Log-in”
- Select “Login Using E-mail & Password”
- Enter your personal email address as it appears on your club roster
- Enter your password**
- Click the “Log-in” button

* Note: Your password has been assigned to you individually. We encourage you to change your password to something memorable. You may retrieve your password using your personal email address through the instant password recovery function on the login page. Your password retrieval email address must match the information on your club roster in the Optimist International database.

What is Junior Optimist International?

Junior Optimist International is the umbrella organization that links local Clubs to others throughout North America. Much like Optimist International, the Clubs are governed by an International Board of Directors as well as by District officers. Each year, Club Members attend District and international conventions to elect their peers to fill important offices. Administrative support for all Clubs comes from the Junior Optimist Department at Optimist International.

Why Sponsor a Junior Optimist Club?

Sponsoring a Club can be very beneficial to you and your Optimist Club! Many Optimist International leaders have been supportive of Junior Optimist Clubs over the years because long-term involvement with youth embodies the true meaning of our motto, "Friend of Youth."



Junior Optimist International – What's it All About?

Junior Optimist International is the umbrella organization for Alpha, Junior and Octagon Clubs which are youth Clubs throughout the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. They are governed by an international Board of Directors, as well as District and Club officers.

Each Club has an adult that is involved in the day to day operations of a Club. The Club Advisor attends all the meetings and projects the Club does and oversees all aspects of the Club. The Club Advisor does not have to be an Optimist Member and in many cases is a faculty member of a school where a Club exists.

Alpha Clubs are for children ages 6 to 9 years of age. These Clubs focus on learning about volunteerism and teamwork. The Club Advisor plays a large role in these Clubs coordinating simple community service projects and fundraisers. Alpha Clubs do not elect officers.

Junior Clubs are for youth ages 10 to 13. These Members elect officers and plan their projects with a lot of help from the Club Advisor. This particular age group focuses on learning leadership skills and serving the needs of others. This group also does more social events with other Club Members.

Octagon Clubs are for youth ages 14 to 19 and are still in high school or its equivalent. These Clubs should be Member driven with the Club Advisor being available to point to the right direction. This group hones their leadership skills and identifies needs in their local community and plans projects and fundraisers to address those needs. This group works hard and plays hard in various social activities.

Most Clubs are built in schools but do not have to be. There are many community-based Clubs and some Clubs partner with other organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs to form a Club.

An Optimist Club should sponsor Clubs but it is not a requirement. The Members benefit from being mentored by Adult Club Members and it is one of the best ways to have a direct influence in "Bringing out the Best in Kids."

In areas where sponsorship by an Optimist Club is not available, Clubs may be built after receiving permission from the District Governor. These Clubs fall under the administration of the District and are usually built in a school.

The cost for a Club breaks down like this. There is a one-time fee for Enrollment which is \$50.00 when the Club charts along with the following costs. Each year there is a Club Registration fee of \$60 per Club and membership dues are \$10 per year for Junior and Octagon Members and \$8 per year for Alpha Members. Membership dues cap at 50.

Advisors: The Adult Mentor

Tips for Success

The Club Advisor acts as a guiding hand for the Club. An effective Advisor has the energy to help spark the imaginations of the youth Members, the patience to help Members follow through with projects, and the bureaucratic skills to help cut red tape for potential community service activities. In short, the Advisor works closely with the Club Members and provides varying amounts of guidance depending on age and maturity.

Alpha Clubs require more direction than Octagon Clubs, but each level has different challenges and rewards. For the first few meetings, students will look to you for guidance. Encourage the students to work through ideas on their own. Try to keep your role as non-intrusive as possible. You may need to help keep the meeting on track, explain any procedures that the Members do not understand, help publicize events, or help find chaperones or adult participants for projects.

A few guidelines to keep in mind: meetings should last approximately 30 minutes to an hour, Clubs can meet during, immediately after or before school, or on weekends. Try to maintain about 20 Members for effective projects.



Getting Started

Read through the Youth Code on the last page of this handbook. This will acquaint you with what Clubs are all about. If your Club is not a new charter, check to see that you have written bylaws to run your Club. Optimist International will provide you with suggested bylaws, and you can make any appropriate changes.

When Your Club will Meet

Choose a time and day of the week that fits your needs and those of your Members. It is suggested that your Club meet often so Club Members can get to know each other and plan activities together. Occasionally, you may want to meet on some Saturdays for a service project or a social activity. When starting out, keep your activities simple to help build confidence in the Club's accomplishments. As time progresses, you may choose to take on larger activities.

Where Your Club will Meet

The Optimist Club sponsor has probably already made arrangements for your Club to meet at a particular location, such as a school or community center. As an Advisor you will need to find enough space to fit all of your Club Members comfortably, for example a classroom or corner of the gymnasium.

Club Activities in a Nutshell

Planned activities are the heart and soul of every Club. Since there are so many projects a Club can do, it is often difficult for Members to narrow the list down! A simple way to choose projects is to decide what your Club can afford to do and how much work is required to organize the activity. Many Clubs like to invent their own projects or conduct the same projects every year. However, if your Club needs a little imagination boost, a list of projects and fundraisers is available through the Junior Optimist Department at Optimist International.

Community Service

Community Service is the basis of Junior Optimist Clubs. Each Club should plan and complete at least one community service project each year. The project can be anything from visiting a nursing home to cleaning up a beach to organizing a teacher appreciation day. The purpose of your Club is to assess the needs of the community and answer those needs through community service. While on the surface community service sounds easy, sometimes it is difficult to find a project that will make a difference in the community and pique the interest of the Club Members. You will find many community service ideas in this book. However, never underestimate the creative ideas your Club will come up with.

Fundraisers

Don't let fundraisers scare you! They can be a lot of fun. Plan a simple fundraiser for your first time, such as a car wash or a bake sale. Make it clear to everyone that there is a direct relationship between fundraising success and the effectiveness of their service projects. You will find many fundraising ideas in this booklet.

Social Events

You may want to plan a social event to allow the kids to get to know each other or to celebrate Club milestones. "Socials" can be a no-cost activity to the Members. Try a potluck picnic or a trip to a local youth entertainment facility. Your bank account or sponsor Club contribution will probably determine the activity for you. Use your imagination. Remember the more fun Members have, the more excited they will be about every project. All work and no play is no fun for anyone!

Advisor of Excellence Award

Throughout the years, Club Advisors dedicate countless hours to ensuring Junior Optimist Clubs run smoothly and effectively. To honor their commitment to being a “Friend of Youth,” we’ve developed the “Advisor of Excellence Award.”

Club Presidents can nominate their Advisor if she/he meets the following criteria:

1. The Advisor has had at least one Distinguished Junior Optimist Club in the last 10 years.
2. The Advisor has attended at least one Junior Optimist International Convention.
3. The Advisor’s Clubs have submitted all rosters, election reports and dues on time.
4. The Advisor must have been a Club Advisor for a minimum of three years.

In addition, the President must submit an essay of 100 words or less on his/her Advisor’s service to youth and why he/she is deserving of this award.

Prize:

The winner will be selected by the Junior Optimist International Board of Directors, recognized at the Convention and will be honored with a plaque.



Advisor of Excellence Award

Application

Club President or District Officer submitting nomination: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Prov: _____ ZIP/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ Fax Number: (____) _____

E-mail Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Nominated Advisor: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Prov: _____ ZIP/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ Fax Number: (____) _____

E-mail Address: _____

Number of years served as an Advisor: _____

Names of Clubs served: _____

Which of these earned Distinguished status? _____

Cities and years of Junior Optimist Conventions attended: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

President's or District Officer's essay on why his/her Advisor has earned "Excellence" status (100 words or less):

Nomination forms and essays due no later than May 30.

Optimist International
Junior Optimist Department
4494 Lindell Boulevard
Saint Louis, MO 63108
Fax: (314) 371-6006
junioroptimist@optimist.org

Club Chair Evaluation Form

Year _____

District Number _____ District Name _____

When did/will you charter a Club? MM/YY _____

We are most interested in an Alpha Junior Optimist Octagon Club

I did did not receive any written information directly from the District chair.

Comments on planning guide and materials: _____

I liked the following things about my involvement with a Club: _____

I feel the following should be addressed to improve the overall administration: _____

Any procedures you would like to share with other chairs that worked well for your Club: _____

This form should be submitted to:

Optimist International
 Junior Optimist Department
 4494 Lindell Boulevard
 Saint Louis, MO 63108
 Fax: (314) 371-6006
junioroptimist@optimist.org

Why Should You Join?

Junior Optimist Clubs provide a cool way for you and your friends to help solve real problems facing your hometown and links Members of all Optimist Clubs throughout North America and around the world. An adult Optimist Club sponsors Junior Optimist Clubs, which live by the motto "Friend of Youth," consisting of adult business and community leaders who want to help youth in their hometowns. Clubs perform community service projects just like adult Optimist Clubs. All Clubs share the same mission, "Kids Helping Kids," and students like you organize and run the Clubs.

So What's the Catch?

There isn't one! Clubs are run by kids, for kids. We want to help your communities and improve your own skills while you're at it!

Learnin', Servin' and Having a Blast

Every summer, Members from your hometown and all over the world come together to get to know each other, share ideas and talk about tough issues facing teens today at the International Convention. The agenda varies, but you can be sure you'll make great friends and take home new ideas to improve your leadership, public speaking and team-building abilities.



Members describe the youth convention as tons of fun and claim it's one of the best parts of joining! When you come to convention, you'll check out area attractions with fellow Members, you'll have a chance to strut your stuff in the talent show and you can boogie down at the President's Dance. You'll attend enlightening workshops, hear first-rate motivational speakers, elect international officers and have a voice in planning the future.

The Annual Junior Optimist Convention is generally held in July in conjunction with the Optimist International Convention. Please go to junioroptimist.org for additional information.

Money for Nothing Scholarships

Well, almost nothing! Junior Optimist offers scholarships for stuff you want to do anyway – such as building new Clubs and doing excellent community service projects. Here's the skinny: if you're a District Governor you can compete for thousands of dollars of awards to use for college expenses. Anyone can become a District Governor, so read up on the District structure and organize a District convention in your area. And if you're not a Governor, you're not left out! The Members of Excellence Scholarship allows Club Members who are dedicated to serving their Club and community an opportunity to be rewarded for their hard work. Also, Members may compete in a speech or essay contest sponsored by a local Optimist Club and you can win up to a \$2,500 scholarship at the international level. For scholarship and contest information, contact the Programs Department at Optimist International (800) 500-8130, ext. 201.

Well, What are You Waiting For?

Are you ready to start a Club? All right! You'll need 8 interested kids, a location to hold your meetings and lots of energy and enthusiasm.

Tricks of the Trade!

The More the Merrier. To keep your Club active and strong, you'll need to recruit new Members. You'll need new Members to replace those who move away or graduate. If your Club is tired of doing the same old service project, but can't seem to think of anything new, or if your Members want to tackle bigger projects, but don't have the manpowers, then you need to recruit new Members! Start by telling your fellow classmates, teammates and friends about your Club activities. Invite them to a Club meeting so they can see your Club in action. Follow up with an invitation for membership.

Who Runs the Show?

You do! Club Members run their own meetings, plan events and elect all officers. As a Member, you'll make almost all your Club's important decisions! You will decide where and how often to meet. Most Clubs meet in a central location. Popular sites include schools, community centers and churches. Many Clubs meet as often as once a week; other Clubs meet only once a month. Some Clubs, such as computer Clubs, plan activities and projects via e-mail and get together to perform activities on weekends or school breaks. You'll decide which service projects you want to do – from fundraising to tutoring – you, and the rest of the Members, run the show!

Can Anyone Belong?

Junior Optimist welcomes everyone from ages 6 through 18! For younger students, Alpha Clubs (ages 6 to 9) provide simple and fun activities parents and younger kids can do together. Middle school and junior high students join Junior Optimist Clubs (ages 10 to 13) for more involved and independent activities. High school students fulfill community service graduation requirements, improve their hometowns and develop skills for college or careers by joining Octagon Clubs (ages 14 to 19.)

Benefits of Membership

Junior Optimist lets you make a real difference right in your hometown and helps kids be a strong force in their communities. You can change the world – start with your corner of it!

Membership Offers

Fun!

You'll get to know other kids in your school and community! You'll do great things for your hometown and have a fantastic time doing it. If your town has an Alpha Club and a Junior Optimist or Octagon Club, the transition from elementary school to junior high, or junior high to high school will be much easier. You'll have a built-in network of friends and partners in service.

Skills and experience!

You'll develop leadership skills at local, regional and national levels. The skills you learn now will help you grow and make your next step – whether it's junior high, high school or college – much easier. You can fulfill community service requirements for graduation and build impressive credentials for college and a résumé. You'll learn about citizenship, teamwork, communication and organization.

Experience other cultures!

Members come from all 50 states, several Canadian provinces and even the Caribbean. You'll share unforgettable experiences that you'll always treasure.

Networking!

You'll meet adults in your community who care about kids and want to make the world a better place. These adults help you with service projects and fundraisers. You'll meet people who will be great resources as you apply to college or seek a job. Optimist Members write outstanding letters of recommendation for potential employers, scholarships and colleges. Activities provide great stuff for the elusive "experience" spot on job and college applications!



The Club's Action Plan

This important section includes resources to give you all the materials needed to make sure your Club gets seen and heard. Under each goal, you will find a list of support materials available from the International Office for you to use throughout the year.

Your goals this year should include the following:

- To provide support to your Club Members and District leaders
- To promote Club sponsorship to your Optimist home District
- To recruit new Members
- To encourage graduating Members to join an Optimist Club
- To increase Club visibility and name recognition locally, regionally, and internationally
- To promote the Club to local business and political leaders

Good luck this year! If you ever have any problems, questions or great ideas remember that Members, the Board of Directors, the Clubs Committee and International Staff work together as a team to provide the best possible resources and services to our Members.

Goal 1

Provide Support to Members and Clubs

Most of the answers to frequently asked questions can be found in this program guide. If you can't find the answer to a question, try contacting another Officer, your District Governor, your Board representative or the International Office staff.

Hint: E-mail your questions to other Members or the International Office (juniroptimist@optimist.org). It is the best way to get a quick, thorough response from your fellow team Members.

Hint: Encourage your fellow Members to explore juniroptimist.org. Most publications are available for downloading.

Goal 2

Promote Club Sponsorship

Encourage your fellow Members to share their successful fundraising ideas, community service projects and the dedication of their Members with their sponsor Club. If sponsor Clubs hear the success stories of their Clubs they will be more likely to sponsor more than one Club. Let the Junior Optimist Department know what your Club is doing. We love to highlight Club projects in *The Torch*, *The Optimist* magazine, and on our website. When Members call and ask why they should sponsor a Club, we tell them about the successes of our Clubs. Optimist Members want to hear real stories of active Clubs before they invest time and money. Suggest that key Members of your Club make themselves available for Optimist District workshops and other Optimist events.

Hint: Dress in business attire (suit or dress) and wear your lapel pin at all times while on Optimist visits.

Hint: Ask other Club officers, Advisors, and sponsors to send the Junior Optimist Department copies of newsletters so staff knows what is going on.

Hint: Encourage Club and District officers to attend Optimist Club meetings, Optimist zone meetings and Optimist District conferences. Members at Optimist meetings may inspire adults who have always thought about starting a Club but never have.

Hint: Encourage Members to write articles for *The Torch* and send them to the International Junior Optimist Clubs Department. And remember, pictures are worth a thousand words.

Goal 3

Recruit New Members

Dedicated Members make Clubs productive and ensure the tradition is kept alive. Therefore, it is so important that new Members are recruited into each Club every year. Share your secrets of successful recruiting with Club and District leaders.

Hint: Have membership applications on hand at all times. Be sure a meeting time, place and date is noted on each application before handing them out.

Hint: Create a contest with prizes to reward Members who have recruited the most Members or new Clubs.

Hint: Understand and be prepared to explain the awards, which recognize membership growth at both the Club and District level.

Goal 4

Recruit Graduating Members into Optimist Clubs

Graduation is a time of new beginnings, but the lessons learned should not be forgotten. Graduating Members of Junior Optimist make great Optimist Members, as after all, they have been a part of the Optimist Club family for quite some time. Hold a special meeting to wish graduating Members good luck. Don't forget to invite Optimist Members, parents, teachers and Advisors. All of these people have contributed to the success of each individual graduating.

Hint: Remind sponsor Clubs that they can invite graduating Members to join their Club during this last get-together (they can even ask parents, teachers, etc., to attend an Optimist meeting).

Hint: Keep a record of graduating Members and send their addresses to Optimist International. Staff can then invite these former Members to attend and help at the annual Convention.

Hint: Send press releases to local newspapers, television and radio stations about each and every Member, Club accomplishment and project.

Hint: Make sure your Club takes part in other community events. Volunteering time at county fairs, festivals and other events lets adults see Members at work. It is also a great time for people to ask, "Now, what is Junior Optimist again?"

Hint: Wearing Club T-shirts can help advertise. Encourage Members to wear Junior Optimist T-shirts during projects, Club meetings and District conferences.

Hint: Do you have a community spotlight segment on your local news broadcast or cable access channel? If so, invite the press to your next big event. Or better yet, volunteer to appear on their broadcast in person!

Hint: National coverage is also wonderful. Do you think you have what it takes to plaster the 'faces' of Junior Optimist across the United States and Canada? We have enclosed a sample press release. Use the letter as a guide to reach news shows or your local newspaper. Always send a copy of your letter and any response back to the Junior Optimist Department at the International Office! (Please see a sample press release on the following page.)

Goal 5

Increase Club Visibility and Name Recognition Locally

Club Members work hard to make the world a better place...so why doesn't anybody know who we are? Help spread the word to youth who aren't Members, their teachers and their parents!

What are we?

A community service youth membership organization with Clubs and Districts all over North America.

Help your Club get the word out about Junior Optimist – in your schools, churches, community centers, shopping malls and libraries.

Hint: Submit articles to your school paper and radio stations. Not only does this help teachers and students understand the mission, it provides a great recruiting tool for new Members.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

New Junior Optimist Club Announcement

The Optimist Club of _____ is honored to announce that a new Junior Optimist Club has been chartered at _____. Junior Optimist International, the youth club's component of Optimist International, one of the world's largest service club organizations. Junior Optimist has a membership of more than 15,000 students in over 500 Clubs throughout the United States, Canada and the Caribbean.

[Add a quote from a Junior Optimist Member or Officer]

[List a few projects in the works]

To learn more about Optimist International and Junior Optimist Clubs, please call (800) 500.8130 or visit junioroptimist.org.