

WELCOME

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

2024



Optimist
INTERNATIONAL

WELCOME

to *Optimist International*

**Welcome! Bienvenue! स्वागत है أهلاً وسهلاً ようこそ Merhba! ;Bienvenido! स्वागतम्
Maligayang pagdating! 환영합니다 ยินดีต้อนรับ Karibu! স্বাগত Welkom!**



A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

I am so glad you have chosen to become an Optimist!

My journey to optimism began with my parents, who taught me the importance of hope, even in the face of adversity. I have carried this lesson with me throughout my life, and it has been instrumental in my success as a teacher, principal, and now, as President of Optimist International.

I believe that optimism is a powerful force for good in the world. It can help us to overcome challenges, achieve our goals, and make a positive impact in our communities.

I encourage you to embrace optimism in all that you do. Together, we can bring out the best in youth, communities and ourselves!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Oord Graves".

Jan Oord Graves
2024-25 International President

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome to Optimist International!

As a new member, you are joining a global network of volunteers committed to making a positive impact in their communities. We are a diverse group of people from all walks of life, but we are united by our shared belief in the power of optimism.

I encourage you to get involved in the many programs and activities that your local Club has to offer. You will meet new friends, make a difference in the lives of others, and become the best version of yourself in the process.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl S. Brenn".

Cheryl Brenn
Executive Director

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Optimist
INTERNATIONAL





LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Leadership Development area incorporates many things that provide benefits to our Members. Webinars are offered on topics that are relevant to both personal development and Club Management. Members are invited to participate during the live session or the recording can be reviewed at the Members convenience.

The Optimist Institute provides opportunities for Members to build skills that will help build their resume and make them more competitive in their respective career fields. There is information for Members about leadership, from determining what type of leader they might be to how to have those “crucial” but necessary conversations. For Members who choose to serve in various leadership positions within the organization, there are training sessions for the office that they choose to hold as well as the opportunities to serve in positions that they would have never dreamed of.



OPTIMIST INSTITUTE

The Optimist Institute is an online learning system that offers free access to all adult and college members of Optimist International. Our goal for implementing this new system is to expand our focus of bringing out the best in youth, community, and ourselves to include easily accessible learning & development options for members. We want to empower our members with the tools and knowledge they need in order to meet their goals in their Clubs, Districts, and personal lives. The Optimist Institute provides an engaging and learning-rich environment that can be accessed anytime and anywhere via the Internet. It's easy-to-use and course choices can be customized to meet each of our members' learning & development needs. The Optimist Institute allows for all our training materials to be stored in a centralized area so Members can access the most up-to-date information. Members must register once with the Optimist Institute, and then renew their subscription annually on or after May 1 of each year.

By becoming an Optimist Member, you have free access to this wonderful system. Contact your Club President, District Leadership Development Chair, District Secretary, or District Governor, or email institute@optimist.org for registration instructions.

For any questions regarding the Optimist Institute, please email institute@optimist.org



@optimistinstitute



@optimistinstitute

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- Optimist New Year
- Q1 Oct/Nov/Dec
- President's Message



FEBRUARY

- Optimist Day
- Random Acts of Kindness Day
- Leadership Development Webinar
- IRS Annual Filing due for all U.S. Optimist Clubs, the IRS annual 990 series returns are due
- Junior Optimist Reading Month
- Registration and housing open for the 2025 International Convention



DECEMBER

- Optimist Junior Golf: Hugh Cranford All Scholastic Scholarship Application opens
- Club of the Year submissions due



NOVEMBER

- Optimist Junior Golf: Tournament of Champions
- World Kindness Week and Day
- Giving Tuesday
- Leadership Development Webinar
- Optimist International Board of Director's Meeting
- Vice President Elect Retreat

JANUARY

- Q2 Jan/Feb/Mar
- MLK Day of Service
- International Quality of Life Month
- International Day of Education

MARCH

- Optimist International Board of Directors Meeting
- Regional Vice Presidents and Governors-Elect Conferences
- International Day of Happiness
- OIF & CCOF Club Grant deadline
- Leadership Development Webinar

OF EVENTS

APRIL

- Q3 Apr/May/June
- Deadline for Districts to submit Winners for Essay Contest
- National Volunteer Week
- Global Youth Service Day
- Leadership Development Webinar(s)

MAY

- International Day of Families
- Optimists in Action Month
- Optimist Junior Golf: Hugh Cranford All Scholastic winners announced
- Leadership Development Webinar(s)
- Deadline for Districts to submit winners for Oratorical Contest
- Early bird registration deadline for International Convention



JUNE

- Webinar: Everything You Need to Know before Attending the International Convention 2025
- National Children's Day
- Optimist International Board of Directors Meeting
- Deadline for Districts to submit Winners for CCDHH
- Deadline for Clubs to submit winners for Visual Arts Competition
- Optimist International Convention



JULY

- Q4 July/Aug/Sept
- International Day of Friendship
- Junior Optimist International Summit
- World Oratorical Contest
- Optimist International Junior Golf Championship



AUGUST

- National Nonprofit Day
- International Youth Day
- District Conventions



SEPTEMBER

- District Conventions
- International Literacy Day
- Leadership Development Webinar
- International Day of Charity
- Deadline to submit Club Pride Report
- National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
- Celebrate Community
- Closing of the Optimist Year



FOUNDATIONS



**OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION**

Optimist International Foundation (OIF) was established in 1971 exclusively for the charitable, literary and educational purposes of Optimist International, a community service-based organization committed to creating a more optimistic future for young people through innovative programs. OIF works with Optimist Clubs located in over 2,000 communities in the United States and the Caribbean.

The Foundation has grown steadily since 1971 and is recognized as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

The Foundation's Board of Directors grants funds to Optimist International each year for the development and improvement of International programs. Programs funded by the Foundation serve 1.5 million children annually. Optimist International Foundation depends on the support from Optimist Clubs and individual Members, the general public, businesses and corporations.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.oifoundation.org/>



**Canadian Children's
Optimist Foundation**

Founded in March 1988, the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation is a Canadian charity recognized by the Canada Revenue Agency. Formerly known as the Optimist International Foundation of Canada, it only serves the interests of Canadian Optimist members.

All monies raised will remain in Canada and are distributed for purposes of funding, including OI Scholarships, Youth Club (JOI), OI Programs and Activities, and the Optimist training offered to volunteers.

For more information, please visit: <https://optimistfoundation.ca>

JOIN US IN ST. LOUIS

July 17-18, 2025

Saint Louis University
St. Louis, Missouri



OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
ORATORICAL
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Each Optimist District 1st place winner will compete at the Optimist World Championship Contest.

The 1st place winner for each of the nine World Regions will be awarded a \$5,000 scholarship. All nine winners of the World Regional contests will be eligible to compete in the World Championship Contest with awards for first, second, and third place of **\$15,000**, **\$10,000** and **\$5,000**, respectively.

For more information on all scholarships, visit
www.optimist.org/scholarships



OPTIMIST JUNIOR GOLF



One of the largest and most prestigious junior golf events in the world. A unique opportunity for junior golfers from around the globe. Each year junior golfers, ages 10-18, participate in Optimist sponsored events. With more than 50 qualifying tournaments, Optimists reach out into their own communities to involve children in the game of golf. The best of these golfers, along with international golfers from around the globe, advance to the Optimist International Junior Golf Championship, which is held at Trump National Doral in Miami, Florida.

Junior golfers and their family enjoy golf, parent-child tournament, off-course activities, meals and housing all on one property. Nationally ranked by Junior Golf Scoreboard, Golfweek, Global Junior Golf Rankings, and World Amateur Golf and included in the AJGA Performance Based Entry Process. The Optimist Championship attracts over 30 College coaches each year.



Optimist Junior Golf offers five (5) \$1,000.00 Scholarship Opportunities for boys and girls ages 16-18 each year through the Hugh Cranford All-Scholastic Team. Golfers must apply and complete essay by April 1. Junior golfers selected to the team will receive an automatic exemption into the championship, complimentary registration which includes tournament entry, hotel accommodations and meals plus \$1,000.00 scholarship.

In the fall, the Optimist Tournament of Champions is an invitational and known for its strength of field and highly ranked as well.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OPTIMIST JUNIOR GOLF PROGRAM, PLEASE VISIT:
<https://www.optimist.org/golf>



JUNIOR OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Junior Optimist International Clubs date back to the 1920s, and following growth across local communities, the international organization was established in 1988. We currently have over 400 JOI Clubs with over 8,000 members. It is the umbrella organization which links the local Junior Optimist International Clubs and Members to others throughout the world. Much like Optimist International, Junior Optimist is governed by an International Board of Directors, as well as District Officers. From the Club level on up, Members have the opportunity to develop leadership and teambuilding skills all while helping communities. Each year there is an International Convention, which gives Members the opportunity to share in the decision-making

Junior Optimist International Benefits the Community.

process of the organization, meet young people with similar interests and goals, grow from training seminars.....and have fun!

Students who are involved in Junior Optimist Clubs learn about and practice good citizenship, teamwork, communication and money management. There are opportunities for personal growth and leadership positions at Club, District, and International levels. Junior Optimist Clubs create

an increased number of young volunteers within the community. They can provide an interesting forum in which to address youth related issues, and it serves as an excellent training ground for future community leaders.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE JUNIOR OPTIMIST PLEASE VISIT:

<https://www.optimist.org/joi/>



COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Looking for a way to get your local community involved with your Optimist Club? For more ideas and projects to build a stronger, connected community, visit www.optimist.org/communityactivities.

Optimist International Visual Arts Competition

This exciting competition is designed to encourage and celebrate youth visual art skills and gives the youth we serve another outlet for their creativity! The contest will be held at the club level and international level. The topic this year is *Bringing Out the Best*.

Optimists in Action Month

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

Optimists Spark Fun in the Park

A global integration of youth and adults working together. Working with other optimists, your club can create a fun day at the park for the camaraderie of the community while providing an avenue for meaningful interaction and care for children with differing abilities at all levels.

Photography Contest

Host a local photography contest to provide an avenue for a student's artistic expression through photos that illustrates/exemplifies one of the ten verses/lines of "The Optimist Creed."

Youth Appreciation

How do we thank thee? Let us count the ways! Optimist Clubs recognize local youth for their efforts in the arts, athletics, academics, and community service work. Youth Appreciation is the perfect opportunity for Optimists to make a difference in their community and demonstrate the Optimists' commitment to young people.



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Join us annually to participate in the informational, exciting, and networking opportunities at the 4-day annual international convention:

- Interactive training and workshop sessions provide personal and leadership development.
- The Community Improvement Expo provides an opportunity for philanthropic companies and individuals to gain exposure to the 40,000 plus members of the organization.
- Networking provides opportunities for members to collaborate with like-minded people on developing best practices on how to improve the community in which you live.
- Being held in a different city every year provides mystery and excitement of getting to know all about someplace new.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, YOU CAN VISIT:
www.optimist.org/convention**

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

optimist.org

CONNECT ONLINE

Optimist International is active on several social media channels to provide Members with the latest content and news about our organization. Whether you're looking for information or inspiration, following us can help connect you to Optimist International and Optimists around the world.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR
THE LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS!



Visit our CLUB DIRECTORY, to find out what Clubs are doing in your area. Click on the state that you are in and you will find a list of Clubs in the cities around you.

You can click on the Club you would like to get more information on, and if you would like to connect with them contact membership@optimist.org.



(800) 500-8130
4494 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108.

OUR HISTORY



The original members of the 1916 Optimist Club of Indianapolis, Indiana

The Optimist International Organization was founded at a convention in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1919, uniting various local and regional clubs, the first of which was founded in Buffalo, New York in 1911. At the convention, the first official charter of the international organization was awarded to the club in Downtown Indianapolis, Indiana which was founded in 1916.

The turn of the century was a turning point in the organization's storied history. Following the International Convention in Reno, Nevada, the inaugural Optimist International Junior Bowling Championships (OIJBC) took place there. Junior bowlers battled for the right to be called "Optimist Champion."

In July 2001, Optimists found themselves seated in the White House, pledging to support U.S. President George W. Bush's goal to mentor one million children. Optimist International President

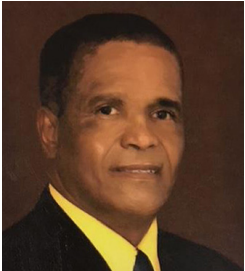
Bob Garner called the meeting "yet another sterling example of 'Optimists Bringing Out the Best in Kids.'"

Also in 2001, Optimist International introduced the Childhood Cancer Campaign to provide awareness and support of children battling cancer and the challenges their families face. In 2004, the organization made a \$1 million commitment to Johns Hopkins to underwrite a research focus.

In 2005, the Optimist Junior Golf Program expanded to include the Optimist International Tournament of Champions for top-performing junior golfers ages 14 to 18. On October 1, 2006, the first female international president in Optimist history, Ronnie Dunn, took office for the standard one-year term. In October 2007, Theo Golding of Jamaica became the first international president from outside of Canada or the United States.



Ronnie Dunn, the first female president elected to a major international service organization. (2006-2007)



Theo Golding, first international president from outside of US and Canada. (2007-2008)

There are currently more than 40,000 individual members who belong to more than 2,000 autonomous Clubs. Optimists conduct more than 50,000 service projects each year, serving six million young people. Optimists also spend \$78 million on their communities annually.

Optimist Clubs are dedicated to “Bringing Out the Best in Kids” and do their part through community service projects.

Since each Club is autonomous and run by members in their community, Optimists have the unique flexibility to serve the youth of their area in any way they see fit. Optimist Clubs see a need in their community and react to it.

Optimists strive to live up to their name and maintain an upbeat attitude, which they try to pass along to the children they serve. The words of The Optimist Creed are well known to Optimist volunteers and beyond. The creed gives volunteers a focus for personal improvement as they work to better the world around them.



1959



1968



1977



2017



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.





OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

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