



**Junior Optimist International was officially formed in 1988. 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 process of the organization, meet young people with similar interests and goals, grow from training seminars.....and have fun!**

**Participation in Junior Optimist International gives young people the opportunity to serve their communities. Students who are involved in Junior Optimist Clubs learn about and practice good citizenship, teamwork, communication and money management. They feel good about themselves and have high self-esteem. Membership in Junior Optimist Clubs helps to develop friendships with others who share the same interests. There are opportunities for personal growth and leadership positions at Club, District, and International levels. Junior Optimist exposes Members to Optimism as a philosophy of life, provides Members with an improved sense of kindness, increased awareness for those in need, and a better sense of coping with cultural diversity. It also provides members the opportunity to complete community service hours required for graduation.**

### **“Junior Optimist International Benefits the Community”**

**Junior Optimist Clubs create an increased number of young volunteers within the community –volunteers who will help to improve the quality of life. They can provide an interesting forum in which to address youth related issues. Junior Optimist International serves as an excellent training ground for future community leaders.**

### **“Community Service”**

**The real purpose of Junior Optimist International Clubs is Community Service. Each Club is free to choose service projects, which fit the needs of the community. Some examples of projects are: environmental clean-up, Christmas caroling, peer tutoring, visiting nursing homes, helping with Special Olympics, cleaning up parks or school grounds, Toys for Tots, sponsor a book drive, and collecting food and school supplies to donate to area shelters or food banks.**

## **“Fees and Dues”**

**There is a one-time charter enrollment fee of \$50.**

**These fees cover costs of processing, start-up materials, membership cards, Officer and Member certificates, insurance and postage.**

**International dues of \$10 for Junior High and High School Members and \$8 for Alpha Members (cap at 50 Members for dues). There is an annual Club fee of \$60/year and the billing cycle is once a year in October. For new Clubs, dues are prorated quarterly. These membership dues help defray Junior Optimist International administrative costs such as Club and District awards, scholarships, supplies and mailings, *The Torch*, training modules and the International Convention and insurance.**

## **“International Support”**

**The web site, [junioroptimist.org](http://junioroptimist.org) is a very valuable resource. The site contains information about programs, forms and brochures available for download, the information newsletter, “*The Torch*” and the International Convention. Each Junior Optimist International Club receives weekly emails with information updates and motivation. The Planning Guide has all the information needed to start a Club, leadership job descriptions, club action plans, community service and fundraising ideas, reporting forms, award applications...and lots of fun ideas and motivation. We also have dedicated and knowledgeable staff in St. Louis to give support, information and guidance.**

**We have the awesome opportunity and responsibility to affect the direction of our future by touching the lives of our children. Junior Optimist International is a great avenue to do just that!**