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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Optimist International Welcomes New Executive Director**

ST. LOUIS- Optimist International welcomes Ms. Cheryl Brenn as the next Executive Director for the nonprofit, global volunteer organization.

Ms. Brenn currently resides in Clifton Park, New York. She has a master's degree in Leadership and Management and earned the Certified Association Executive designation from the American Society of Association Executives. She has spent the last 14 years of her career with Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY,) where she has held various positions, and is currently the Chief International Programs Officer.

Through her involvement with HOBY, Cheryl has worked with Optimist International in Canada. She also has a long history of involvement with Junior Chamber International (JCI,) where she achieved the distinction of becoming a JCI Senator. At HOBY, Ms. Brenn has had extensive experience in working with various boards, budgeting, volunteer management, team building, fundraising and planning.

Prior to joining HOBY, she was with the New York State School Boards Association for 10 years where she led the organization's membership services and marketing initiatives in addition to large-scale event management. She exudes the kind of optimism and excitement which makes her a great fit with the culture at Optimist International.

"We are thrilled to welcome Ms. Brenn to St. Louis and the Optimist family," current Executive Director Benny Ellerbe said, "With her extensive background in nonprofit work and optimistic enthusiasm, I am confident that I am leaving this position and Optimist International in good hands."

Ellerbe announced his retirement and will be leaving Optimist International September 30, 2021. After a national search with hundreds of candidates submitting for the position, three candidates were chosen for the final interview process. Ms. Brenn will start August 9, 2021. Ms. Brenn stated, "I am delighted to be joining Optimist International and to build on the legacy of community service and the positive impact members have made on our global community." Optimist International Headquarters is located on Lindell Blvd. in St. Louis, Missouri.

Optimist International has nearly 58,000 adult and youth members in upwards of 2,500 clubs in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and throughout the world. Carrying the motto "Bringing Out the Best in Youth, in our communities, and in Ourselves," Optimists conduct positive service projects that reach more than six million young people each year. To learn more about Optimist International, please call (314) 371-6000 or visit the organization's website at [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org).

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