

Fourth Quarter 2025 Optimist International Foundation President's Newsletter

SUPERHERO



**Beyond Words: Where
Every Child's Voice Matters**

BAM!

POW!

BOOM!

WHAM!

A Monthly Resource for Club and District Foundation Representatives



OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Mission Statement

Seeking, receiving and managing funds and real personal property for the benefit of Optimist International and its Member Clubs in its charitable, literary and educational activities.

Vision Statement

We envision a Foundation that can provide significant funding for Optimist International's youth and service programs and is proudly supported by individual Optimists, their Clubs, and the community at large.

Tagline

Helping Optimists Help Kids!

Tax and Charitable Status

The Optimist International Foundation is a 501(c)(3) corporation within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. Within 501(c)(3), the Foundation is a 509(a)(3) public charity.

Optimist International Convention

Jacksonville, Florida
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville
June 28 - July 1, 2026

FOMO Newsletter

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Teri Davis

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Image: 2023-2024 Year in Review - Top 10 Achievements from page 8 (Graphics created by Jason Cook)

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Dear Friends,

As we close out the 2024–2025 Optimist year, I want to pause and thank each of you for your **hard work, dedication, and generosity**. Together, we have made this a year of remarkable progress, one where service, stewardship, and Optimism truly went ***Beyond Words: Where Every Child's Voice Matters***.

Please also take time to **thank the donors** in your Clubs and Districts who make this work possible. Their generosity powers scholarships, Club Grants, and programs that impact children every day. Recognition matters, and even the simplest “thank you” goes a long way in showing how much we value their commitment.

As you look to the year ahead:

- Remember that any Club or District can invite a **Board Member to speak** at a meeting via Zoom. We are here to help bring the Foundation's story to life.
- If you are a **DFR** or **Governor**, be sure to connect with your **regional liaison** and invite them to attend one of your District's quarterly meetings for added support and visibility.

We also celebrate and congratulate **Teri Davis** for her inspiring **“Be a Superhero”** themed year as Foundation President in 2023–2024, and for her election to the **Optimist International Board of Directors**. Her leadership has set a wonderful example of service in action. I also know that Fatima Plater will guide the Board well in the year ahead through her theme, **“A Legacy of Giving for the Children,”** continuing the Foundation's mission with strength and vision.

This year is also shaping up to be **record-breaking** for the Foundation. With the rollout of the restructured **Women's Philanthropy Council giving**, membership has soared, and we are on pace to set an **all-time high for unrestricted dollar-per-member giving**. These milestones reflect the incredible energy and commitment of Optimists everywhere.

As for me, my time on the Board concludes at the end of September. I am grateful for the privilege to serve alongside you and to witness firsthand the impact we have made together. Beginning in October, I will continue serving the Foundation through the newly formed **Past Presidents' Advisory Council (PPAC)**, helping to set the vision for how past leaders can continue strengthening our mission.

Thank you again for your support, your Optimism, and your heart for children. It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve you and the Foundation. This year truly went ***Beyond Words***, ensuring that every child's voice matters today and into the future.

Yours in Optimism,

Ben DeRemer
2024–2025 President
Optimist International Foundation

President's Team Messages



What is the advice you would give to someone to become more involved with the foundation?

2023-2024 OIF President · Teri Davis

When I joined this organization 30 years ago I didn't even realize there was a Foundation. I had been a philanthropist for causes I believed in and watched my father, a Rotarian for over 20 years, donate to their Foundation. As I learned more about our organization and the value that the OI Foundation brings to members, clubs and most of all the youth in our communities I started donating by becoming a Dime-A-Day member.

This is the path I have taken over the last 30 years and I would recommend it to anyone that wants to become more involved with the foundation.

- Go to the OIFoundation.org website where you will find so much information including the different levels of giving available at the member and club level.
- Learn about the Grant opportunities for your club that support programs in your communities.
- Become a Club Foundation Rep. There is training provided for this role and it lets you be creative about how to raise money for the foundation through your club members.
- Attend District Meetings and learn about the District Foundation Representative role. Let your Governor know that you are interested in the role.
- Communicate with the OI Foundation Staff to talk about interest in being on one of the many Committees the Foundation has; Women's Philanthropy, Club Grants and Childhood Health and Wellness.
- Finally consider wanting to do even more by talking to Foundation Board members about their role and the ability to shape the present and future of the foundation.



2025-2026 Region Assignments

Southwest Region

2023-2027 OI Past President Director · Ken Garner

South Texas
New Mexico - West Texas
Colorado - Wyoming
TennArk
TexHoma

Middle America Region

2027-2028 OIF President · Jennifer Kendo

Indiana North
Indian South
Illinois
East Missouri
West Missouri
Kansas

West Coast Region

OIF Secretary/Executive Director · Craig Boring

Pacific Southwest
Pacific Southeast
Pacific Central
Arizona
Pacific Northwest
California South

Mid-Atlantic Region

2028-2029 OIF President · Sandy Cyphers

Atlantic Central
Kentucky - West Virginia
Capital Virginia
Maryland - South Delaware
North Carolina East
North Carolina West

Great Plains and Northeast & Great Lakes Regions

2025-2026 OIF President · Fatima Plater

New York - New England
Michigan
Ohio
Southern Wisconsin
Nebraska
Wisconsin North - Upper Michigan
Dakotas - Manitoba - Minnesota
Iowa

Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern Wyoming

Southeast Region

2026-2027 OIF President · Deanna Morrow

GATEway
South Carolina
Alabama - Mississippi
Louisiana
North Florida
South Florida
Caribbean

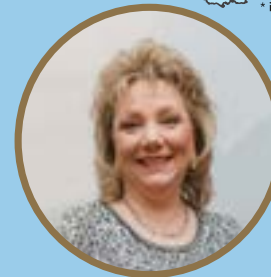
OIF Region Liaisons



Mid-Atlantic and Northeast & Great Lakes Regions

2025-2026 OIF President · Fatima Plater

New York - New England.....Debra Davis
Michigan.....Dan Mills
Ohio.....Bill Stone
Atlantic Central.....Guy Templin
Kentucky - West Virginia.....Tom Birch
Capital Virginia.....Barbara Grizzard
Maryland - South Delaware.....Steven McDaniel
North Carolina East.....Gary Pender
North Carolina West.....Bill Teague



Middle America Region

2027-2028 OIF President · Jennifer Kendo

Indiana North.....Max Soliday
Indian South.....Mike Novak
Illinois.....Sandi Schmidt
East Missouri.....Mary Dewey
West Missouri.....Robyn Leimkuehler
Kansas.....Jim Morris



Southwest Region

2023-2027 OI Past President Director · Ken Garner

South Texas.....Jym Chenault
 New Mexico - West Texas Jim Crowl
 Colorado - Wyoming.....Bob Hamblin
 TennArk Laura Bell
 TexHoma.....Ron Whitaker



Southeast Region

2026-2027 OIF President · Deanna Morrow

GATEway Kevin Bush
 South Carolina.....Chris Bennett
 Alabama - Mississippi Sherrie Cook
 Louisiana.....Kurt Gassen
 North Florida Scott Kaplan
 South Florida.....Raquel Rodriguez
 Caribbean Rose Marie Samuels



Great Plains Region

2024-2025 OIF President · Ben DeRemer

Southern Wisconsin.....Janet McGinty
 Nebraska.....Jeremy Williams
 Wisconsin North - Upper Michigan.....Troy Dostal
 Dakotas - Manitoba - Minnesota.....Donald Berger
 Iowa Mark Feilmann
 Alberta, Montana, Saskatchewan & Northern
 Wyoming Susan Robbennolt



West Coast Region

OIF Secretary/Executive Director · Craig Boring

Pacific Southwest.....Vivian Lawrence
 Pacific Southeast.....Michael Maynard
 Pacific Central.....Richard Jones
 Arizona.....Sandy Williams
 Pacific Northwest.....Michael Gray
 California South.....Robert Fischer



Foundation Event Calendar

16
SEP

25-26 DFR and Governor Training

This first training brings together DFRs and Governors to introduce the theme "A Legacy of Giving for the Children." The session focuses on what the Foundation does, current fundraising programs, available club grants, and resources that help Clubs strengthen their impact.

23
SEP

25-26 DFR Training Part 2 - Reports

This session focuses on roles and responsibilities, a recap of basics, and practical guidance on reporting, the website, and tools available for success. It also highlights why we do this important work and includes closing comments from Foundation leadership.

30
SEP

Year-End for OIF Fiscal Year

September 30 marks the end of the OIF fiscal year. It's the final opportunity for Clubs and Members to make donations that count toward this year's totals, strengthen our impact, and help us finish strong *Beyond Words: Where Every Child's Voice Matters*.

16-18
OCT

OIF Board of Directors Meeting

The first meeting of the 2025–2026 OIF Board of Directors takes place in St. Louis, October 16–18. The Board gathers for a weekend of planning, strategy, collaboration, and leadership development as they set priorities and goals for the year ahead.

1
DEC

Nominations for OIF Board Deadline

If you have served as a District Foundation Representative and maintained President's Club membership for the previous five years, you are eligible to submit a nomination to serve on the Optimist International Foundation Board. Nominations are due by December 1.

2023-2024 Year in Review

The 2023–2024 year was one of energy, generosity, and new beginnings for the Optimist International Foundation. Under the theme “*Be A Superhero*,” Members showed how even small acts of kindness can create lasting change for children and communities.

This year brought both innovation and impact. A new giving initiative, the *Superhero Weekend of Giving*, helped launch the first JOI Summit and gave youth a platform for leadership and growth. The Foundation also introduced recognition for William H. Harrison Society members and engaged in the SOAR planning process, a tool to shape future goals and opportunities.

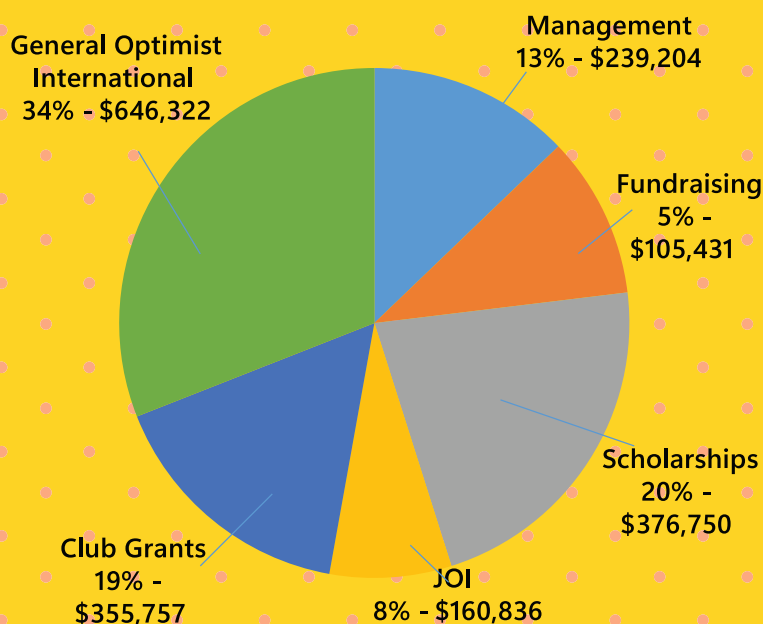
Most importantly, Optimists made a tangible difference through their support: thousands of children and families were reached through Club Grants, the Junior Optimist program received vital funding, scholarships helped more than 100 students continue their education, and the World Oratorical Championship was strengthened with Foundation support.

Together, these efforts reflect not just the work of one year, but the spirit of optimism that continues to guide our mission forward.

BE A SUPERHERO



\$1,884,300 EXPENDITURES



General O. I. Grants:

Childhood Cancer Campaign, Club Campaign Fund, The Optimist, accounting, growth, disaster relief, International development, allocated staff time for programs, training at International Convention, endowment payouts

Management and Operations:

Audit, legal, banking, investment expense, some convention expenses, currency transactions, state registrations

Fundraising:

Recognition program, planned giving, brochures



Helping Optimists Help Kids

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

10

Top

2024

01

Awarded \$61,191 through the Childhood Health and Wellness Program, including Childhood Cancer.

02

Continued to support the ongoing work of the Junior Optimist program with \$160,836 in funding.

03

Assisted Clubs in receiving \$355,757 in charitable contributions for their own local programs through the Pass Through program.

04

Remained a strong supporter of the Optimist Junior Golf program with a donation of \$7,500.

05

Paid out \$110,509 on endowments for community projects and scholarships.

06

Sent 134 students off to college with Optimist International oratorical, essay, and CCDHH scholarships totaling \$252,500.

07

Paid out \$454,096 to Clubs utilizing the Club Campaign program and added an additional \$100,963 in interest to the Club Campaign funds.

08

Supported the OI World Oratorical Championship by funding the U.S. and International Regional winners, plus the first and third place winners in the finals totaling \$55,000.

09

Assisted 320 Optimists to help 20,957 children and their families by awarding 19 Club Grants.

10

Created the Weekend of Giving effort to support the 1st Annual JOI Summit. \$10,000 was given to help start this Youth Leadership Development event.

Fourth Quarter Foundation Talking Points

As we close out the Optimist year, this is the time for **District Foundation Representatives (DFRs)** and **Club Foundation Representatives (CFRs)** to celebrate what we've accomplished together while also preparing for the year ahead. These talking points will help keep Clubs and Members focused on recognizing success, finishing strong, and building momentum for the future—all in the spirit of our theme: *"Beyond Words: Where Every Child's Voice Matters."*

1. Celebrate Donors and Club Achievements

- Recognize **individual Members, Clubs, and Districts** who supported the Foundation this year through Dime-a-Day, President's Club, Women's Philanthropy, 365 Club, or William H. Harrison Society.
- Encourage Clubs to highlight their own donors and **celebrate achievements** at meetings or in newsletters—showing Members that their generosity is seen and valued.
- Share how these contributions have gone *Beyond Words* to create **real impact for youth**, helping ensure that every child's voice matters.

2. Build Momentum for the Year Ahead

- Partner with **incoming DFRs and CFRs** to ensure a smooth handoff and consistent engagement with Clubs as the new Optimist year begins.
- Encourage Clubs to set **measurable giving goals** for next year—whether it's adding new President's Club members, expanding Dime-a-Day participation, or planning a fundraiser dedicated to the Foundation.
- Stress the importance of **early preparation**: when Clubs set goals now, they build momentum that ensures children's voices are heard beyond words well into the future.

3. Finish Strong with Year-End Giving

- Remind Members that there's still time to make a **final gift** before the Optimist year closes—renewing past support or stepping up for the first time.
- Emphasize the importance of **higher-level giving**, encouraging upgrades to President's Club and William H. Harrison Society to sustain scholarships, youth programs, and Club Grants.
- Personally reach out to donors who gave in previous years, reminding them how their **renewed support** helps ensure every child's voice continues to matter.

By carrying out these final-quarter efforts, **DFRs and CFRs** can help close the year with energy, recognize the voices that made a difference, and inspire continued support that carries *Beyond Words* into the future.

Let's finish the year with gratitude for what we've achieved, determination to finish strong, and excitement for the opportunities ahead—because when we go *Beyond Words, every child's voice truly matters.*

J^oif^ul GIVING

Today's Youth...Tomorrow's Leaders



Monthly District Rankings, Achievements, & Shout Outs

As the 2024–2025 Optimist year comes to a close, we celebrate the incredible progress made by Clubs and Districts across the Foundation. From record-breaking **Dime-a-Day participation**, to growth in **President's Club support**, to outstanding **Women's Philanthropy Council increases** and steady **Club giving through Pass-Through and Club Campaign Funds**, Optimists have shown what it means to finish the year strong.

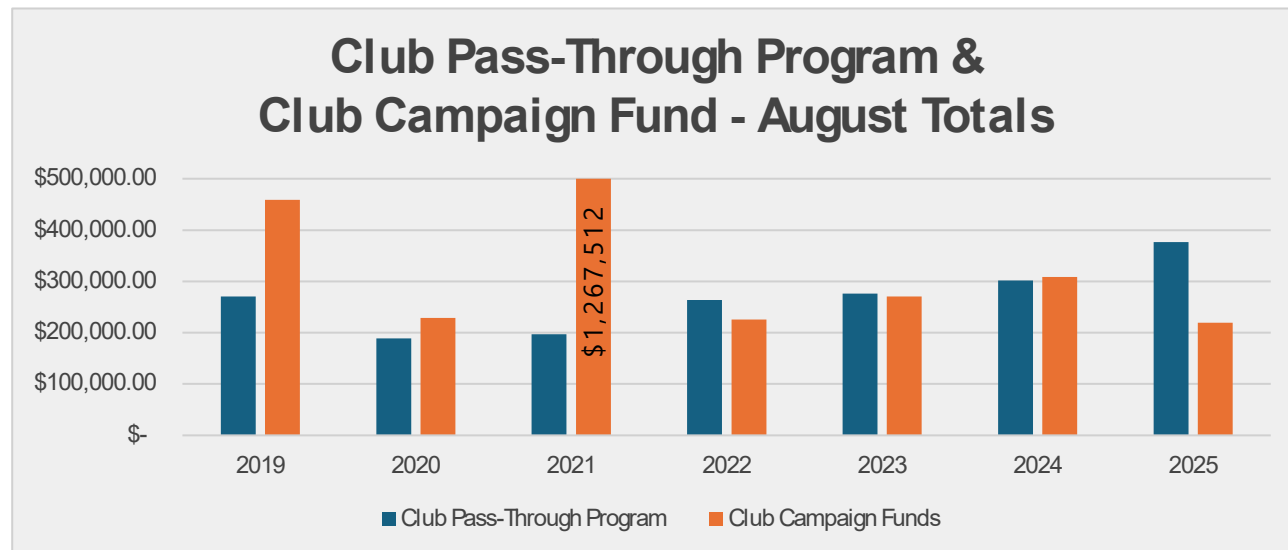
This final set of results before the year-end highlights the consistency, creativity, and commitment that have defined the year. Whether leading in donor renewals, growing membership percentages, or fueling youth programs, every effort has helped carry our mission ***Beyond Words: Where Every Child's Voice Matters***.

A few standout moments:

- **DMM (Sherie Cook)** leads in Dime-a-Day with 241 members, followed by **Michigan (Daniel Mills)** (209) and **East Missouri (Mary Dewey)** (183). **South Florida (Raquel Rodriguez)** posts the largest year-over-year growth, surging +333.33%.
- **Pacific Northwest (Michael Gray)** maintains remarkable momentum in Women's Philanthropy Council growth with a +900% increase year-over-year, with **AMS&NW (Susan Robbennolt)** (+250%) and **Caribbean (Rose Marie Samuels)** (+218%) close behind.
- **Ohio (Bill Stone)** welcomes 9 new President's Club members in August, while **Alabama-Mississippi (Sherrie Cook)** sets the pace in renewals with 27—showing powerful long-term donor commitment.
- **North Carolina East (Bill Teague)** tops unrestricted giving at \$124.01 per member, with **Alabama-Mississippi (Sherrie Cook)** (\$26.50) and **New York-New England (Debra Davis)** (\$22.62) also making an impact.

Thank you to every Club and District Foundation Representative, Club Leaders, and Optimist Club Member for helping make this year one of strength and growth. The numbers tell a story of generosity, but the true measure is in the lives touched and voices lifted.

Let's close the year with gratitude for all we've achieved—**because when we go *Beyond Words*, every child's voice truly matters.**



Top Districts in Dime-a-Day Membership

District	DADs
DMM	241
Michigan	209
East Missouri	183
COWY	172
GATEway	160
Iowa	141
Kansas	138



Historical Totals	DADs	% of Members
August 2019	3,142	6.226%
August 2020	2,579	5.201%
August 2021	2,706	6.095%
August 2022	2,946	6.992%
August 2023	3,100	7.558%
August 2024	3,136	8.352%
August 2025	3,091	8.890%

Membership Percentage Leaders:

Colorado-Wyoming (20.21%), New York - New England (17.29%), Kansas (17.21%), Louisiana (16.49%), DMM (16.35%), and TennArk (15.56%) lead the way in member participation.

Biggest Year-Over-Year Growth:

South Florida leads the way with a +333.33% increase, with AMS&NW (+250.00%), TennArk (+156.41%), East Missouri (+147.58%), DMM (+139.31%), and Indiana South (+121.43%) close behind.

Women's Philanthropy Council Growth

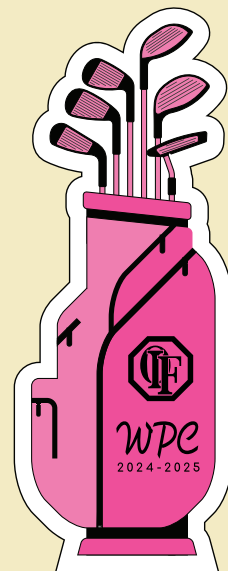
WPC Memberships	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
August Totals	199	206	219	160	164	166	190

Membership Percentage Leaders:

North Florida (4.42%), Arizona (2.09%), North Carolina East (1.79%), and Alabama-Mississippi (1.78%) continue to grow their Women's Philanthropy Council memberships.

Year-over-Year Growth Leaders:

Pacific Northwest maintains the lead with an astounding +900%, followed by AMS&NW (+800%), Caribbean (+218%), and Kentucky - West Virginia (+200%).



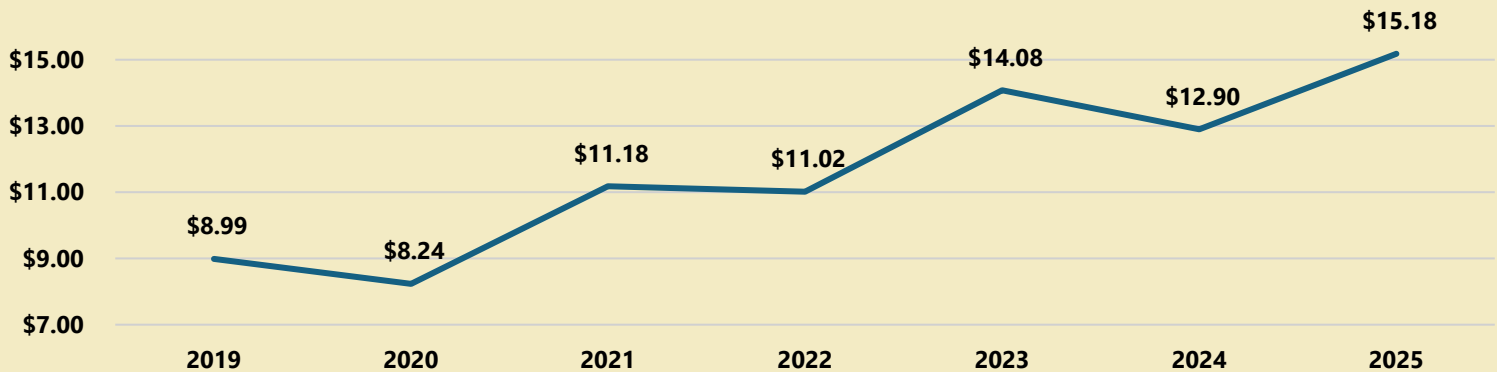
Childhood Health & Wellness and Cancer Campaigns

August Campaign Totals	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Childhood Health & Wellness	\$26,939	\$19,286	\$9,189	\$21,290	\$19,126	\$7,112	\$6,611
Childhood Cancer	\$87,314	\$136,644	\$70,149	\$22,912	\$28,874	\$14,930	\$18,297

Unrestricted Donations by Dollar-Per-Member

District	Dollar-Per Member	District Foundation Representative
North Carolina West	\$124.01	Bill Teague
Alabama-Mississippi	\$26.50	Sherrie Cook
New York - New England	\$26.22	Debra Davis
Capital - Virginia	\$24.85	Barbara Grizzard
AMS&NW	\$13.26	Susan Robbennolt
Arizona	\$22.28	Sandy Williams
Ohio	\$20.55	Bill Stone

Historical Total Unrestricted Dollar-Per-Member (August)



President's Club Recognition

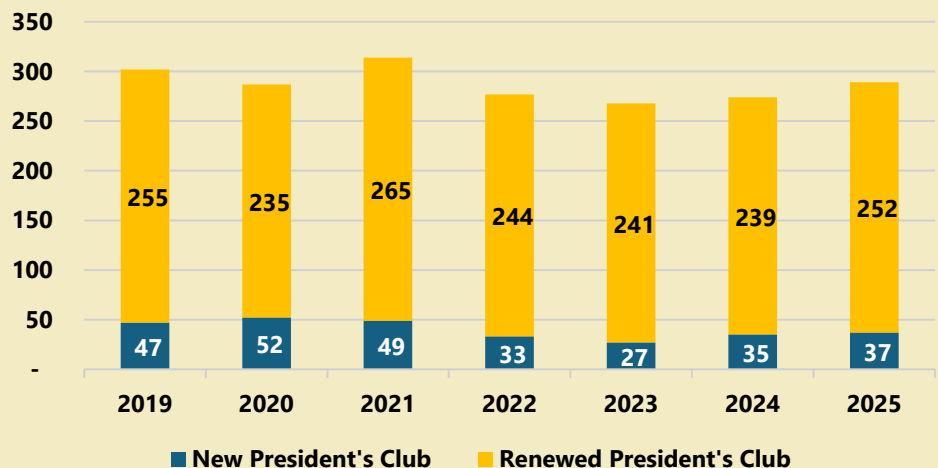
Top New Members:

Ohio is ahead of the pack with 9 new members, with Caribbean at 7. Followed by Indiana North, and Michigan at 3, while West Missouri and Alabama-Mississippi both welcoming 2 new members each.

Renewals Leaders:

Alabama - Mississippi leading the way with 27 renewals, followed by Michigan with 22, and both Ohio and Caribbean at 13, and GATEway at 12 renewals.

Historical President's Club (August)





OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION

SAVE THE DATE!

2026 OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL 108TH CONVENTION

June 2 - July 1, 2026 • Jacksonville, FL • Hyatt Regency Jacksonville



365 CLUB

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