

Illinois District Optimist Land of Lincoln Bulletin



February 2025

Hello, Illinois District Optimists!

I hope this finds you well and that you are enjoying this Winter time of year.

We are already approaching the halfway point of our Optimist year and we have gotten off to a great start!

I would like to personally thank those that have made the time to attend our October and January Conferences! I hope you enjoyed the Friday Evening Hospitality gatherings and I hope you have had the opportunity to take new ideas, concepts and activities back to your club members!



Our October Conference featured presentations from Sandy Doyle, VP for the Middle America Region, Nancy Roach-Wilder, Governor – Elect, Sam Meier, Oratorical Contest Chair, Ron Elvin, Essay Contest Chair and Charles Mayhew, Poster Contest Chair.

In staying with my theme of "Strong Members Build Strong Clubs and Strong Clubs Build A Strong District" we have been able to focus on Member Reflection at our October Conference and our January Conference with a focus on Club Reflection.

Also at our January Conference, we heard from Sandi Schmidt on OI Grants and District Grants, James Patrick Schmidt on maneuvering the OI and Optimist Leaders Websites and Nancy Roach-Wilder presented on "Ready, Set, Connect."

Our April Conference will be April 11 and 12 at the Holiday Inn and Suites in East Peoria. This 3rd Quarter Conference is my favorite of the year because it showcases some of our brightest and most talented youth in the State with our Oratorical Contest, Essay Contest and Poster Contest. If you have not had the opportunity to attend a conference this year, this is the one to be at!

Please consider sharing your thoughts and ideas on topics for presentations at conferences or volunteer to make a presentation yourself on a topic that you think others may enjoy and learn from.

Thank you for all that you do as an Optimist! Together, we can continue to build stronger members, stronger clubs and a stronger District. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions. mscappel5321@gmail.com (note this is a NEW email and should be used for all email communications). You can always call or text me at 618-401-0993

Sincerely,

Mark



We welcome the following 10 new members who have joined Optimist International since our last bulletin in November. Welcome to the Optimist Family!

New Member	Club	Sponsor
Erin Doerr	Des Plaines	Teri Gutow
Amy O'Leary	Glenview	Karen Paszkiewicz
Roger Clawson	Moline Breakfast	Patrick Wendt
Dale Keppy	Moline Breakfast	Joe Moreno
Peggy S. Bowman	Moline Breakfast	Leroy Trout
Jeffrey Kroeger	Quincy	C.E. Archer
Mary Demers	Quincy	C.E. Archer
Jarrett Estes	Millstadt	Mary C. Hensel
Maria Carson	O'Fallon	Connie Pellock
Craig Baumberger	Greenville	Larry Kleiner



A **BIG** congratulations to the **Highland Optimist Club** who earned the honor of Distinguished Club for the 2023-24 club year. To receive such an honor a club must Complete all of the requirements for Honor Club PLUS add at least 15 Net new members during the club year. (For a list of honor/distinguished club requirements, see the Illinois Directory, page 22)

Way to go Highland!



2025 IL District Optimist Club Grants

Three grants in the amount of \$750, \$500 and \$250 will be awarded at the 3rd Quarter IL District Optimist Conference to be held April 11-12, 2025 at the Holiday Inn & Suites in East Peoria, IL.

Eligibility: Any Illinois District Optimist Club is eligible to apply for a grant for a new or existing service project.

1. The service project must be conducted between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025.
2. Club dues must be current as of March 1, 2025.
3. A representative from the club must make a 5-10 minute presentation at the April 12th District 3rd Quarter Conference.
4. Conference attendees will vote on which clubs will receive the grants. Most votes - \$750 grant,
second most votes - \$500 grant and third most votes - \$250 grant.
5. An application for the grant will be included in the 2nd Quarter Illinois District "Land of Lincoln Bulletin" and will also be emailed to each club president.
6. **Club Grant Application is due by March 28, 2025.**
7. Notification of grant application acceptance will be done by April 1, 2025.
8. Winning club grants will be required to submit an article with pictures to the "Land of Lincoln Bulletin" after completion of project.

2025 Illinois District Optimist Club Grant Application

Club Name _____

Club President _____

Name of Project _____

Short description of project

I certify:

- 1) That my club dues are current as of March 1, 2025.
- 2) That my club will send a representative to present our project at the 3rd Quarter IL District Optimist Conference, April 11-12, 2025 at the Holiday Inn & Suites in East Peoria, IL.
- 3) That this service project will be completed between January 1 and December 31, 2025.
- 4) That my club will submit an article with pictures to the “Land of Lincoln Bulletin” after the completion of the project.

Club President Signature _____ Date _____

Grant application is due by March 28, 2025 and may be sent by email or mail to:

markcappel5321@gmail.com

Mark Cappel
IL District Optimist Governor
2323 Mound St.
Alton, IL 62002

Optimist International Foundation Grants are Waiting for You and Your Club!

Did you know your club could be awarded a grant from the Optimist International Foundation (OIF) to support the projects you do in your community? The process is easy, and it would be great to see some of the OIF funding supporting your community and the youth your club serves!

There are two types of OIF grants available. Check out the information below and on the OIF website to learn more. Then get busy and apply for one or both of these grants.

Annual Club Grants: These matching grants are available to any adult Optimist Club, to be used for a NEW project of the club. Grants are available for \$250-\$1000.

The project must start between April 2025 and March 2026.

Your club must be current on dues.

Grants are for one year only.

Your club must complete the application completely and have it signed by your President.

Applications available on the OIF website January 10, 2025.

Applications MUST be returned to the OIF office by March 21, 2025.

Winners will be notified May 16, 2025.

For additional information, check out this information:

<https://www.oifoundation.org/downloads/2025-Club-Grant-Info.pdf>

Fun Fact about these grants: In the first year OIF offered these grants, three of the twenty grants awarded were given to Illinois Optimist Clubs. It would be great to add your club to the list of grant-winning clubs!

Childhood Health & Wellness Grants: These matching grants are available to any adult Optimist Club, to be used for a NEW or ONGOING project of the club. Grants are available for \$250-\$1000.

The four focus areas for these grants are Healthy Lifestyles; Chronic Diseases; Mental Health; and Disabilities – Physical, Intellectual & Developmental.

The project must be completed within one year of the date the grant is awarded.

Your club must be current on dues.

Grants are for one year only.

Your club must complete the application completely and have it signed by your President.

Applications are available at https://www.oifoundation.org/downloads/Childhood_Health_Wellness_Grant_Application_Fillable.pdf

Applications are due to the OIF office by either January 31, 2025 or August 22, 2025.

For additional information, check out this information:

<https://www.oifoundation.org/downloads/CHW%20Grant%20Application%20Directions.pdf>

Contact the Optimist International Foundation at 800-500-8130 for more information.

Good luck!

Sandi Schmidt, District Foundation Rep

309-236-1342

schmidtsandi@gmail.com

From the IL District Membership Engagement Chair

To date, only 4 Illinois District Optimist Clubs have signed up for the SS. Optimism International Cruise Contest. There's still time to participate in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarter contests so get your club signed up **TODAY!**

The **SS. Optimism International Cruise Contest** sponsored by OI that can reward you in **CASH** for getting new members in this club year. Information was sent out in the October 15 "Newsday Tuesday" email to all clubs. Here are the terms and conditions for the contest:



- Clubs must "Opt-in" to participate. ([The opt -in link was in the Newsday Tuesday's email sent October 15 to all club officers](#)) Clubs remain enrolled in the incentive for the full Optimist year once they have opted in. The Club can opt in to join the incentive cruise at any time.
- There will be a drawing at the end of each quarter.
- Club's name is entered into drawing for every member past their NET Oct. 1, 2024, roster. Example: Club starts Oct. 1 with 50 members. On December 31, the Club has 57 members. Club will have seven entries into the drawing for this quarter.
- Clubs' names can be drawn more than once. If Clubs are working hard to retain members and bring in new members, they should have more chances to win.
- Each Quarter starts new. The Club baseline remains at their Oct. 1, 2024, roster. This should encourage Clubs to retain members.
- The following, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarter ports of call will be at the end of each quarter. Example: Club beginning roster on Oct. was 50, December 31 was 52 and March 31 roster was 53. One entry in the first quarter, two entries in the 2nd quarter and 3 entries into the 3rd quarter drawing.
- 1st Quarter: One drawing for \$250.00
- 2nd Quarter: Two drawings for \$250.00 each
- 3rd Quarter: Three drawings for \$250.00 each
- 4th Quarter: Four drawings for \$250.00 each

If you have any questions about the contest or need more new member supplies (new member welcome cards, new member pins and bookmarks) please contact me.

Carol Schlitt
IL District Membership Engagement Chair
624 Brook Stone Court
Freeburg, IL 62243
618-977-7787
cschlitt54@gmail.com

Optimist District Junior Golf

June 9 - 11, 2025

Red Tail Run Golf Club
Decatur, Illinois



36-hole tournament with 18-hole practice round on June 9 and competition rounds on June 10 and 11.

Ages: Boys and girls between 10 and 18. There are 4 boy divisions and 3 girl divisions.

Entry fees will be determined and announced in January once the Decatur Park District determines their fee structure for the 2025 golf season.

Any club or member desiring information concerning this tournament or the Optimist International tournament in July at Doral Golf Club should contact Bill Wagner who's contact information is listed below. Remember the Illinois District Tournament serves as the qualifier for the Doral Tournament.

Inquiries should be directed as follows:

Bill Wagner
Illinois District Golf Chairman
36 Willow Creek Drive
Highland, IL. 62249
Email: wwagner6@charter.net
Cell phone: 618-401-0681



June 29-July 3
2025

107th Optimist International Convention



St. Louis Union Station Hotel,
Curio Collection by Hilton,
1820 Market Street,
St. Louis, Missouri 63103

**START PLANNING
YOUR TRIP **NOW!**
CLICK HERE FOR
HOTEL RESERVATION**

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, JUNE 29

- Vice President-Elect and Governor-Elect Training
- Vice President and Governor Training
- Registration
- House of Optimism (Expo)
- First Timers Program
- Taste of St. Louis Reception
- Opening Ceremony

MONDAY, JUNE 30

Bringing Out the Best in Youth

- House of Optimism (EXPO)
- General Session
- Heritage of Optimism Brunch
- Organization and Life Skills Training
- Trivia Night

TUESDAY, JULY 1

Bringing Out the Best in Community

- House of Optimism (EXPO)
- General Session
- Organization and Life Skills Training

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2

Bringing Out the Best in Ourselves

- House of Optimism (EXPO)
- General Session
- Annual Business Meeting & Closing
- Presidents Gala & Dance

THURSDAY, JULY 3

- Club President-Elect & Lt. Governor-Elect Breakfast
- Local Attraction Tour

Plan now to attend the next Illinois District Optimist Conference

April 11-12, 2025

Holiday Inn & Suites
101 Holiday Street
East Peoria, IL

The April Conference is always a great meeting with the finals of the Oratorical Contest and announcement of the Essay and Poster Contest winners.

As Governor Cappel says,

"If you have not had the opportunity to attend a conference this year, this is the one!"

Conference Registration and meeting information will be sent out
in early March

See you there!

Moline Breakfast Optimist Club Helps Christmas Shine a Little Brighter!

The holidays shone a little brighter for lots of Quad Cities children, thanks to the efforts of the Moline Breakfast Optimist Club!

The 24th year of our annual Coats and Shoes project provided new coats, shoes, hats and gloves to 55 children at the Jefferson Early Learning Center in Moline. We provided those items, plus a shirt, pants and socks to 114 children in the Project Now Head Start pre-school program.

We kicked the party off with Optimist members shopping with the teachers from Head Start. We filled up several shopping carts, as we worked to coordinate the best ensemble for each of the children.



Delivery day at one of the Head Start locations was a lot of fun. And thanks to our partnership with Project Now, we were able to get some great publicity for this club-favorite project! [Project Now Coats and Shoes](#)



Marty Schmidt entertained the students by reading Pete the Cat's I Love My White Shoes as we waited for the event to begin.

Label on each gift bag given to the students



Ron LaShomb and Lynn Segura assisted the students in putting on their new shoes and coats.



Next stop Jefferson Early Learning Center, where we saw lots of smiles on the faces of the children and the Optimist members who were helping them put on their new shoes.



And it just wouldn't be Christmas without the Happy Joe's Christmas Party for special needs youth. Four parties held over two days; pizza, pop and ice cream served to about 1400 youth; dancing with Happy the Dog and more smiles than you can imagine. Breakfast Optimist Club members help get the students off their buses so they can come inside and enjoy the fun!



2024 Alton Area Optimists First Responder's Recognition Dinner



The Alton Area Optimists were proud to recognize and present awards to several honorees, including Officer Allen Averbeck from the Alton Police Department, Detective Sergeant Andy Johnson from the Madison County Sheriff's Office, and multiple members of the Alton and Godfrey fire departments. The recipients included Captain Donald Holliday, Engineer Matthew Halliday, Captain Todd Sissom, Engineer Matthew Piocos, and Firefighter Steven Lipski from the Alton Fire Department, along with Firefighter Monty Hawkins from the Godfrey Fire Protection District.



The Alton Area Optimists had a wonderful experience helping children in creating reindeer food and ornaments at the Godfrey Snowflake Festival. December 6th 2024.



TAKE NOTE: Important District Dates

Illinois District 3rd Quarter Conference	Registration information out in early March	April 11-12, 2025 Holiday Inn & Suites East Peoria, IL	illinoisoptimist.org	Mark Cappel, Governor mscappel5321@gmail.com
District Jr. Golf	Committee is always looking for new members	June 9-11, 2025 Red Tail Golf Course Decatur, IL	www.oijgc-il.dist.org	Bill Wagner, Jr. Golf Chair wwagner6@charter.net
District Land of Lincoln Bulletin	Send articles and pictures for the next bulletin	Articles due April 1, 2025. Issue to be distributed in May via email.	All bulletins can be found at illinoisoptimist.org under the "Member Section"	Carol Schlitt, Editor lolbulletin23@gmail.com
District Oratorical Contest	Northern contest: March 29, Rock Falls Southern contest: March 29, Belleville	District Contest—April 12, 2025 at 3rd Quarter IL District Conference Clubs must submit an entry fee of \$25 per student they send to the Regional Contest. The check needs to be made out to: Illinois District – Optimist International and send to District Treasurer, Charles Mayhew Charles.c.mayhew01@gmail.com	www.optimist.org	Sam Meier, Oratorical Chair Sam.meier@edwardjones.com
District Essay Contest	Essays due February 28, 2025 to Ron Elvin, Essay Chair	Winning District Essay will be read by the winner at the 3rd Quarter IL District Conference on April 12, 2025 \$25 entry fee for club winning essay due February 28 to District Treasurer, Charles Mayhew Charles.c.mayhew01@gmail.com	www.optimist.org	Ron Elvin, Essay Chair elvinmanor@sbcglobal.net
District Poster Contest	Winners announced at 3rd Quarter District Conference	Pictures of posters due April 4, 2025 \$10 entry fee for each poster sent to District due to Treasurer. Charles Mayhew Charles.c.mayhew01@gmail.com	illinoisoptimist.org	Charles Mayhew, Poster Chair Charles.c.mayhew01@gmail.com