

Illinois District Optimist Land of Lincoln Bulletin



May 2017

illinoisoptimist.org

Oratorical Contest a Highlight of District Conference

By Ron Elvin, District Oratorical Chair

The 2017 District Oratorical Competition was held at the third quarter District Conference in Bloomington. There were seven finalists, each representing a different club. Once again this year's District Oratorical Contest was a testament to the future as each of the finalists gave outstanding presentations.



The Winner for the boys was **Nolan Flaherty** from **Oswego** and for the girls was **Laura Kelly** representing the **Oak Park Optimist Club** (shown at left with District Oratorical Chair **Ron Elvin**).

Although the scores were close, Laura was the overall winner and will be traveling to St. Louis for the 2017 Optimist International Oratorical World Championships June 16th and 17th. Laura will be an outstanding representative for our District. Wish her luck and watch here for the results!



Essay Contest Scholarship Awarded

By Connie Minnes, District Essay Chair

The Illinois District is pleased to announce the winners in the recent Essay Contest. First place winner is **Carlie Hansen** from Chicago, an at-large entrant. Second place is **Quintin Powers**, sponsored by the **Champaign-Urbana Optimist Club**. Third place winner is **Grace Markwell**, sponsored by the **Taylorville Optimist Club**. There were 21 entries.

Carlie will attend college at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. She plans to major in political science with a double emphasis in policy and environmental studies. Carlie won a scholarship of \$2500.



Hello Illinois Optimist Members,

I cannot believe we are over halfway through this Optimist Year. I have heard so many wonderful things from your clubs and all the new members joining our Optimist Family. Our third Quarter District meeting has just finished up and if you were unable to attend, I am very sorry for that as we had the best of the best in Oratorical, Essay and Poster Contest participants. The Illinois District will be praying for and wishing the best to our Oratorical winner from the Oak Park Club as she works to win the International contest in St. Louis next month. Thank you Ron Elvin from the Oswegoland Optimist Club for chairing the Illinois District Oratorical Contest once again and once again you did a fantastic job. All went without a hitch. Charles Mayhew from the Optimist Club of Belleville who also did another outstanding job chairing our District Poster Contest, it is always so wonderful to see the amazing artistic talents of the kids in our District. Thank you to Connie Minnes from the Optimist Club of Champaign-Urbana for chairing the District Essay Contest again this year and bringing our winner and her family to the Conference. She had such an inspirational Essay not to mention what a great job she did reading it as well. So proud of what our kids or should I say young adults can do in this state.

As the summer is approaching, I want to remind all of you if you have not had your elections for officers yet for the 2017/2018 year, please do so now – your COER (Club Officer Election Report) forms are due into OI by the 20th of this month. If you need help with this form or have any questions, please contact myself 847-824-7050 or Barb Reich 847-945-1955 and we will be more than happy to help. These forms are so important for many reasons, but we as your District also need your officers list so that we can be sure your information will be entered correctly into the directory, not to mention we can make sure your incoming officers receive the information and invitations to their training at the 4th quarter convention. Our Illinois District 4th Quarter Convention is in Bloomington, August 4-6th. Please keep this weekend open so you can attend; we will have many great training sessions planned, a very important voting session for your new Governor, our OI representative will be in attendance, the Governor's Banquet and so much more. Please watch for the registration form, everyone is welcome to attend and we would love to have you join us.

How are your plans going to become an Honor Club this year?

- ✓ Have you completed 3 or more service projects?
- ✓ Have you turned in your COER?
- ✓ Are you working on your President's Pride Report?
- ✓ Have you recognized a club or community member?
- ✓ Do you have a Club Foundation Rep and given to the best of your abilities to the Foundation?
- ✓ Have you conducted a formal membership program?
- ✓ Have you paid your dues on time?
- ✓ Will someone from your club be attending the District Convention in August?
- ✓ Have you grown your club by net 3 or more?

How close is your club – do you need help to accomplish your goal of honor club – please reach out your District is willing to help.

As you continue on with all of your club events and activities I urge you to remember our Creed – to be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own and to wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile. We sometimes we are so caught up in other aspects of our lives and forget about being an Optimist and living by the Creed that we all gave our oath to. So forget the mistakes of the past and press onto the greater achievements of the future – after all, our goal is all the same – to bring out the best in our kids.

If you remember the Optimist theme for this year is Together We Can – as that is how all of our greatest achievements happen, this is not a one-person show; this is the 1478 Optimist in Illinois working together to bring out the best in our youth. Keep of the GREAT work and let's see if we can have 1500 Optimists working on our goal before the end of the year.

Yours in Optimism
Ruth Del Re
Illinois Optimist Governor

Poster Contest Winners

By Charles Mayhew, District Poster Contest Chair

This year's poster contest theme, "**Be a H.E.R.O. – Helping Everyone Respect Others**", inspired some outstanding artwork by students from seven Optimist Clubs (Belleville, Champaign-Urbana, Freeburg, Granite City, Highland, Marshall Clark County, and Sterling). The winning posters were created by:

First Place - \$100

Boys: **Ethan Smith (Highland)**

Girls: **Macee Shemwell (Granite City)**

Second Place - \$75

Boys: **Aiden Murphy (Freeburg)**

Girls: **Jocelyn Curlis (Highland)**

Third Place - \$50

Boys: **Evan Koontz (Granite City)**

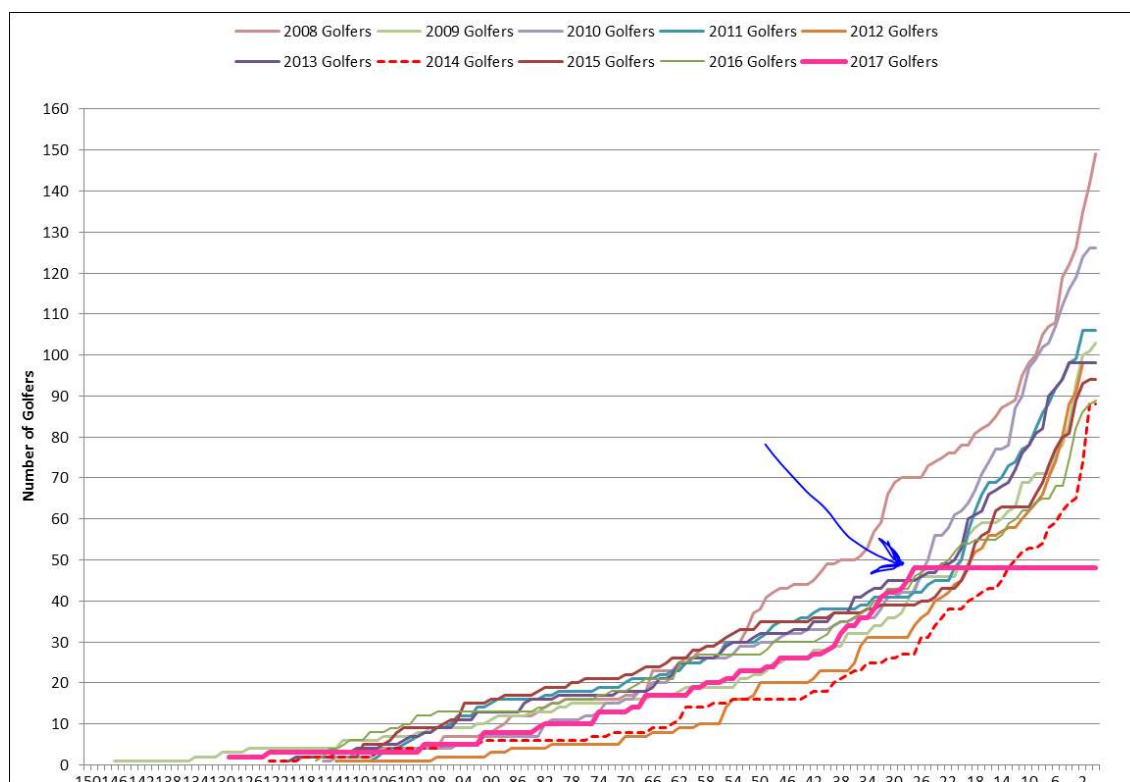
Girls: **Ella Gagen (Freeburg)**

Thanks to all the clubs and students who participated in the contest!

OIJGC Sign-ups Are Strong

By Terry Wright, District OIJGC Chair

The graph below shows that we have the largest number of junior golfers we've ever had registered for our tournament 27 days before the event begins. As the committee continues to prepare for another successful tournament, there is still plenty of time for your club's young golfers to sign up, so encourage them to do so today.



To find out more about what you or your club can do to support this premier event for young golfers, please contact OIJGC chair Terry Wright at terry@oijgc.org or 217-827-5978.

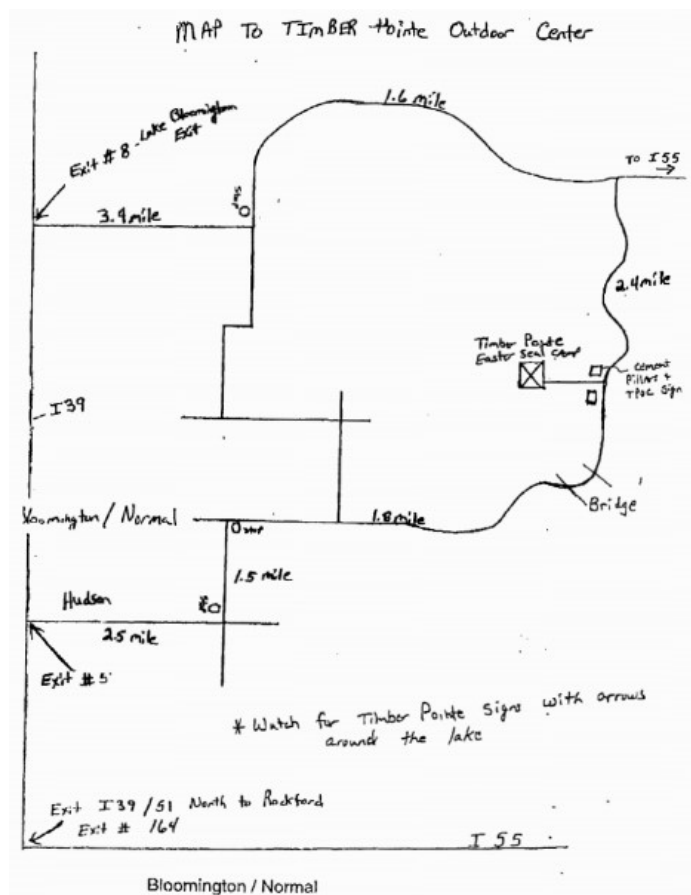
Camp COCO Set for June 27

By Chris Smith, Childhood Cancer Chair

It'll soon be time for District Optimists to gather for this year's Camp Coco activities on Tuesday June 27th from 9-12 at Lake Bloomington's Timber Pointe Outdoor Center. The theme this year is Lights, Camera, Action!, and we will be working with the campers to come up with their own skits and then have them perform. I'm working on having a videographer there, Doug Faulkner with One Moment Video, so we can capture the magic. So get your creative juices flowing in preparation for a fun filled morning with the Camp Coco kids!

Feel free to contact me with questions, suggestions, and ideas! Chris Smith, csmith@hdsmith.com, [217-341-4350](tel:217-341-4350)!

To learn more about Camp COCO: <http://www.siumed.edu/foundation/campcoco.htm>



Directions to Timber Pointe Outdoor Center

Look for the large stone pillars & Timber Pointe Outdoor Center sign at the entrance.

From I-55 Southbound: Exit at Lexington. Take Lexington Road (Co. Rd. 8) west (right) 6 miles to the Lake Road (look for Timber Pointe sign). Turn left. Timber Pointe Outdoor Center is 3 miles south on the right.

From I-55 Northbound: Note that you cannot get off onto 1700E. You must exit on I-39 or Hwy 51 North. Go 4.5 miles to Hudson Road. Turn east (right) through town and 3 miles into the country to the stop sign or 1700E. Go north (left) 1.5 miles to Co. Rd. 2350N. Turn east (right) for 2 miles. Timber Pointe Outdoor Center is just after the bridge on the left.

From I-74 Eastbound: Exit on I-55 North to Chicago, then exit on I-39 or Hwy 51 North. Go 4.5 miles to Hudson Road. Turn east (right) through town and 3 miles into the country to the stop sign or 1700E. Go north (left) 1.5 miles to Co. Rd. 2350N. Turn east (right) for 2 miles. Timber Pointe Outdoor Center is just after the bridge on the left.

From I-74 Westbound: Exit on Hwy 51 North. Take Veterans Parkway (bus. I-55) north/east. Follow signs to I-55 South to Springfield (exits to the left) but instead of getting onto the interstate ramp, continue straight north on 1700E. toward Lake Bloomington. Go approximately 6 miles north to the T intersection. Turn east (right) for 2 miles onto Co. Rd. 2350N. Timber Pointe is just after the bridge on the left.

From I-39 (Hwy 51) Southbound: Take Lake Bloomington Road Exit (Co. Rd. 2500N) 3.5 miles to the T stop sign. Turn north (left) and follow the lake road over the spillway and watch for the camp sign, which turns to the right at the Lexington "Y". Follow the lake road 3 miles. Timber Pointe is on the right.



Governor-Elect Candidates

The candidates below are running for the position of Governor-Elect at the special convention that will be held at our August District Convention. The winner will become the Governor of the Illinois District on October 1, 2017. John and Marty provided the information below to assist Illinois District Optimist Clubs in deciding which candidate to vote for.

John Del Re	Martin C Schmidt
Current Optimist Clubs:	
I belong to the Optimist Club of Des Plaines.	Silvis Optimist Club, Moline Breakfast Optimist Club, Bettendorf (IA) Optimist Club
Date you first joined an Optimist Club:	
March 8, 2008	September 1, 1989
Why do you want to be the Governor of the Illinois District in 2017-18?	
I believe we need to stop the bleeding in the district and we need an experienced business leader to change the direction of the Illinois district to catch up and keep up with the times.	<p>Optimists exist to benefit the children in our communities – that is why I am an Optimist. Working with Illinois Optimists to enhance the services we provide for our youth is why I would like to serve as Governor. Specifically, my goals are to increase membership, increase youth participation in our contests, and see more Optimists at quarterly meetings, with the District focusing on providing the training and resources required for clubs to recognize what the District can do for them. Illinois Optimists are moving forward, and this plan will insure more children's lives are enhanced by our efforts.</p> <p>It is great to see Optimists working together. Whether that is the new member bringing a new idea to meet their club's goals or an experienced club providing mentoring to a new club, we all benefit from sharing and working together. The District must take an active part in this sharing, focusing on continued support to every club every day.</p>
What is your number one priority for the District during the next Optimist year?	
To increase the communication between the clubs and the district. Some clubs have not been to a district event in years because they keep asking, (what does the district do for me)? The district should be the go to when any club has questions, issues or just needs some advice. Collectively as a district we have more than 250 years of experience and knowledge, all of the clubs and club members should feel confident in the Illinois District that they can count on us for anything – but most clubs have	<p>We need to increase Illinois Optimist membership. The most effective way to do this is to build new clubs. New clubs will energize the Illinois Optimist membership and bring new ideas to the forefront. My goal is have 3 new clubs built in 2017-18. This goal will need teams from our strong clubs and a well thought out strategy to be successful.</p> <p>Adding new clubs does not mean we begin ignoring the clubs we already have. We must</p>

no idea who to contact or what we are even here for.	also focus on providing the incentives, training, and visits from District officers that will help inspire ALL of our clubs for growth in their own communities.
What do you feel is the greatest strength you can bring to the Governor's role?	
I am an excellent leader with good people skills, and people are the most important asset that the district has and the clubs need to know that. Any member that has an idea should be given the media to share that or ask for assistance with that idea from any other member in the District. You may not know how good your idea is if no gets behind you, helps you or help to figure out how to make use of it. This idea may not work in northern Illinois, but yet be great in the southern part or vice versa. Our goals are all the same, we just need to work together to be even better than we are now.	<p>Experience. I was fortunate to serve as Illinois Optimist Governor during 2010-2011. The team had many successes during our time together. During my time as Governor-Elect and Governor I reached out and visited all 57 clubs to offer a familiar face to help them serve more children in their communities.</p> <p>I also served in many positions along my trail to Governor. I served four Governors as the Leadership Development Chair and two years as Conference Chair. A role I enjoyed many times was being Lt. Governor for the clubs near my home. I feel I have kept in contact with the grassroots level of our organization.</p>
What do you feel is the biggest challenge we face in the upcoming Optimist year and how do you plan to address that challenge?	
Communication; if you get people involved from the clubs, not just the club president or secretary, but other members, they probably have great ideas and the District needs to hear them or help them with those. Every idea has merit and we will share every idea openly on our website for a free exchange or ideas.	More children are served with every new member. Our biggest challenge is to put more Optimist members on the street. In addition to new clubs, another way to reach this goal is to increase existing club membership by 150. Other Optimist Districts achieve this goal by creating incentive programs and using inter-zone competition. Sounds good; it worked there, it can work here.
Years you were a Club President?	
I was Club President in 2010 and a distinguished Club President 2011.	Silvis Optimist Club: 1992-93; 2004-05; 2011-12; 2012-13
Years you were a Lt. Governor?	
I was a Lt. Governor in 2011 and 2012.	1998-99 zone 5; 1999-2000 zones 4 & 5; 2000-01 zone 5; 2011-12 zone 4; 2012-13 zone 4; 2013-14 zone 4; 2014-15 zone 3; 2016-17 zone 3
Other leadership positions you have held in your club(s)?	
I have been a board member at least 4 years and Vice President for 1 year. I have also sponsored 13 new members to my club in the last 9 years. I am also the current President and Charter Member of our new 501c3 Foundation in Des Plaines.	<p>Silvis Optimist Club: Secretary-Treasurer 1995-96; 1996-97; 1997-98; 1998-99; 1999-2000. Club Foundation Rep 2000-01; 2002-03.</p> <p>I have also served on the Board of Directors and as chair of our Scholarship Committee for several years, as well as actively participating on a number of committees.</p>

Other leadership positions you have held in the Illinois District?

I was the District Leadership Development Chair in 2015 and 2016 as well as the Director of Information Chair in 2010.

Leadership Development Chair: 2001-02; 2002-03; 2003-04; 2004-05. Convention Chair: 2005-06; 2006-07. Candidate Qualifications Chair: 2010-11.

Occupation?

I am a Professional Entrepreneur; I have owned three successful businesses and currently am co-owner of Liberty Business Systems (Information Technology) in Des Plaines. I head up all sales and technology projects as well as customer support.

Social Worker dedicated to older populations, retired.

Family?

I am married to Ruth Del Re since January 4, 1986 and we have 4 children (Johnny 28 years) (Jessica 23 years) (Nicole 19 years) & (Jimmy 16 years). I was a Cub Scout Den Leader for both of my sons from Tiger Scout all the way up entering Boy Scouts and am still currently the Committee Chair for the Boy Scout Troop.

Married to Sandi Schmidt, my rock and confidant, also a fantastic Optimist. Older son James Patrick Schmidt, smart cookie and Optimist active at the club, district and International levels. Younger son Michael Schmidt, former Silvis Optimist Club member, now resides in Florida.

Anything else you want to say to the clubs in the Illinois District?

I am a natural leader with the skills to take ideas and make them into something workable through experience and hard work. I don't give up, I will work through any problem and that is what we need. Not just the same of well that is how we have always done it before attitude, we need to restructure what the district has been doing and really make all our friends feel there is something in them and that will make the Illinois District much more productive for all. The District should be working for the clubs and not the other way around. The clubs should be able to count on the District when in need, not just continue to struggle on their own and pay their dues to the State with nothing in return.

Following the Optimist International mid-year conference in January, I began speaking with leaders in our District and at Optimist International about the fact that we did not have a Governor-elect in place in the District. This is a very important role in the Illinois Optimist organization, and the person moving into that role needs the 15 months to prepare and organize their team.

As a past Governor I was very concerned about the fact that on April 1, halfway through our Optimist year, nobody had stepped forward to run for Governor for next year. At that time I began contemplating running for the job. After two weeks of asking myself "do you want to do this again?", my answer was yes. I am ready to go, even though the work will be challenging due to a compressed timeline. My heart is in this new adventure.

The information below was recently published in the **Optimist International Leadership Hotline** – May 2017 issue. It is being included in our **Land of Lincoln Bulletin** as a reminder that each Optimist club in the District should be sure to vote for our Optimist International leaders when voting opens on June 1.

Make your club's voice heard. Traditionally, only a relatively small percentage of Optimist Clubs internationally vote for these leadership positions in our organization. Let's show them all that Illinois cares and cast our votes.

Each club is encouraged to review the provided resumes and vote for the candidates they feel are most qualified.

On the list of Board of Directors candidates, please note that Robert Floyd is from our Middle America Region. Bob has visited our region and has been very involved at the international level of Optimist International. Please consider Bob as one of your votes for Board of Directors.

The Optimist International Election is Near

Optimist International has partnered with Survey & Ballot Systems (SBS) to administer the 2017 International officer election. To assure your Club's election specific broadcast email arrives safely in your inbox on June 1, simply add the following email address as an approved sender:
noreply@directvote.net

Your Club's dues must be paid in full prior to being allowed to vote. Elections open online at 8AM (CDT) on Thursday, June 1 and closes at 5PM (CDT) Friday, June 30.
If you have questions, contact Tom Carver at [\(800\) 500-8310 ext. 243](tel:(800)500-8310) or [\(314\) 881-1343](tel:(314)881-1343), or email tom.carver@optimist.org.

Visit www.optimist.org/elections to read about the below candidates for the 2017-18 International officer election:

2017-18 President-Elect Candidates:

Rebecca Butler Mona, IA
Fatima Plater, MI

2017-18 Board Director at Large Candidates (2 to be elected):

Don Brose, MI
Lola Cumbo, AC
Sandy Cyphers, NCE
Robert Floyd, WMO
Patsy Garner, NTX

2017-18 Vice Presidents-Elect Candidates:

Region 1 Northeast & Great Lakes – Cheryl Thames, MI
Region 2 Southeast – Brenda Ortelli, NFL
Region 3 Mid-Atlantic – Stewart Mallard, NCW
Region 4 Middle America – Gerri Barnett, IA
Region 5 Great Plains – Edie Harris, AMS&NW
Region 6 Southwest – Paul Lucas, NTX
Region 7 West Coast – T G Thomas, PSW
Region 8 St. Lawrence – Nathalie Boulet, QW and Roch Daigle, QC

Illinois Optimist Clubs will vote only for the Region 4 Vice President candidate.

Viewing Our 34th Ward Through the Lens of Optimism

By Asabi Carroll, Cousins Empowered Optimist



Project Coordinator **David Jenkins** with Students

In this project, youth from the City of Chicago One Summer Program Youth Corps will be paired with Senior volunteers from the Kroc Center Photography Program who have been instructed by our Project Coordinator David Jenkins. Images reflecting the empowerment strategies, businesses and service projects that are inspiring optimism in the residents of the 34th Ward will be captured by the youth and their Senior mentors. These framed images will be presented in a reception, then the images will become a permanent collection housed on the walls of the Kroc Center highlighting the strength and vibrancy of the 34th Ward.



Educator **David Jenkins** presents the photographs of his students in the Kroc Center Program

David has resided in the Morgan Park neighborhood for the last 15 years living in the home his grandfather built 86 years ago (1929). Building on a strong history of support for our residents and self-empowerment, David has demonstrated a desire to use the skills he has developed in his 30 years as a professional photographer to teach youth and adults how to expand their voices through photography.

Mr. Jenkins currently teaches classes to Seniors at the Kroc Center, and is pictured above standing in front of one of the exhibitions of the work of his students." It gives me great excitement to see elders, some at the age of 84 and above, experience the joy of releasing their creativity and sharing it with the world," is how David describes sharing his talent for teaching photography.

David captured the images of the Cousins Empowered Optimist Club of Chicago founding meeting which appear on the Morgan Park based organization's Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/449474502050137/>. As a Board Member of the club, he represents a team that has created an opportunity for seniors to be paired with youth on field trips where they will capture images from both of their perspectives. As they interact, we will have created the opportunity for the communication they share to stimulate expanded thinking, mutual respect, greater appreciation and enhanced sensitivity.

We are clear that learning styles differ in youth and elders. The fundamentals of photography which include learning the use of the camera, lighting, composition and editing, will be taught separately to maximize effectiveness.

This is one of the first projects the Cousins Empowered Optimist Club of Chicago will share as we emerge with tangible strategies to impact our community this summer, in a 7-week format beginning on Monday June 26th and ending on August 1st. David's Senior students of photography from the Kroc Center will serve as volunteer mentors to the youth employed in the City of Chicago sponsored project. Through field trips, fellowship, food and photography, we hope to unleash the power of self-expression in our participants and all who view their exhibition as a part of the City of Chicago Year of Public Art!



This photo represents those at the heart of the implementation of our Optimist International Cousins Empowered Club of Chicago strategy. Our website will share a glimpse of our goals for empowering the Morgan Park Chicago Community where our properties exist. In this document, we have shared more details about the specific programs they are implementing and who they are.

Pictured **seated** from left to right are Raimonda Pierce, Founder & CEO of the Design Principle Team and now serving as our President; her Dad Raymond Pierce, former Dean of Meharry Dental School; Ingrid Sanders, Systems Management Consultant, Cancer Survivor Activist, now serving as our Secretary/Treasurer. **Standing** from left to right are Derric Price, our property protection strategist; Board Member and Master Photographer David Jenkins of David Jenkins Foundation; Former Deputy Mayor Serving alongside our beloved Mayor Harold Washington, Lucille Dobbins; Board Member Bishop Sabree Myhand, Ph.D. and founder of WISH Ministries; Alexis Wallace, former Principal of Proviso East High School and currently serving as our Co-Vice President; and Pharaoh Keith Whitsey, Founder & CEO of Student Assets. Holding their backs are Donta Rice, Engineer, Master Barber, Martial Arts Educator, Founder & CEO of Legendary Cuts Salon, now serving as our Co-Vice President, and Charles Childress, Board Member, Financial Advisor for Waddell & Reed.

<https://www.cousinsempowered.com/>

Belleville Oratorical Contest a Success

By Jane Bonaldi, Belleville Optimist

The seven young people pictured below inspired a roomful of adults as they presented their speeches on "What the World Gains from Optimism". Check out their smiles – they were so Optimistic!



The participants in the **Optimist Club of Belleville's** Oratorical Contest were **Khaleo Price** (1st place boy), **Garrett Shanks** (2nd place boy), **Jack Shaaf** (3rd place boy), **Dajah Gilmore** (1st place girl), **Morgan Murphy** (2nd place girl), **Cydney Wilkerson** (3rd place girl), and **Catherine Libby**. These students are from Central Jr. High and West Jr. High Schools in Belleville School District #118 and Signal Hill School.

The club's Oratorical Contest Chairs, **Lacey Schmersahl** and **Jason Karstens** thank everyone who helped make this event a big success, especially these seven outstanding young people!

Granite City Supports Car Seat Safety Event

By Dan Connors, Granite City Optimist

The Granite City Optimist Club recently supported an effort to provide families with appropriate infant and toddler car seats. Pictured below are club members participating in this important safety event.



Quincy Sponsors First Global Messenger Program

By Matt Schmidt, Quincy Optimist

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own is one of the tenets of the Optimist Creed. Six athletes with the Illinois Special Olympics put those words into action as they competed in the first ever Global Messenger Oratorical Contest sponsored by the **Quincy Optimist Club**.

During the club's noon meeting at the Quincy Kroc Center, the contestants delivered short speeches on "How Special Olympics Creates Optimism". They shared personal stories of how they've overcome challenges to succeed as Special Olympic athletes.



(L-R): **Emilee Walker** of Rock Island, **Sandi Froman** of Normal, **Sam Ruble** of Quincy, **James Foster** of Kinderhook, **Kaylee McGlaughlin** of Kirkwood, and **Daniel Olson** of Springfield.

The **Breakfast Optimist Club** holds an annual Oratorical contest for local students. When the club recently added a noon meeting, **Heather Davis**, area director of the West Central Special Olympics, proposed using that speech contest as a basis to highlight the Global Messenger program. Global Messengers are Special Olympics athletes who help spread the message and vision of the movement as well as the benefits they have gained by participating in Special Olympics. Public speaking and presentation are a major part of the program which is a perfect fit with the Optimist Oratorical contest.

Kaylee McGlaughlin of Kirkwood took first place, earning \$250 for her local Special Olympics program from the Optimist Club. **Sam Ruble** of Quincy won \$150 for her district for finishing second, and **Daniel Olson** of Springfield took third place and received \$100. Other winners included **James Foster** of Kinderhook, **Emilee Walker** of Rock Island, and **Sandi Froman** of Normal.

The **Quincy Optimist Club** is a strong supporter of Special Olympics, including sponsoring and serving the food at the annual Spring Games in Quincy. The Optimist Club also organizes the Super Kids races for children with disabilities. This year's race will be held on Friday, June 9, a day before the Soap Box Derby. Children with special needs get to race down the hill in a specially-designed buddy car with an experienced Soap Box Derby driver.

Lewistown Easter Egg Hunt Continues 60 Year Tradition

By Terrie Kay Davison, Lewistown Optimist

The **Lewistown Optimist Club's** Easter Egg Hunt has been a tradition in town for more than 60 years! While some of the details have changed through the years, the fun and frolic for all the children has remained the same.

The club started the Easter Egg Hunt in the 50's with real hard boiled eggs. In the 60's we started giving the hard cream filled eggs that were individually wrapped (and didn't taste very good). In the 80's we switched to the plastic eggs, which we stuff ourselves. The 2017 Easter Egg Hunt provided fun for about 200 children, hunting for the 3000 eggs stuffed by 16 club members and volunteers. Four club members helped with the Easter Egg Hunt.



Taylorville Honors Seniors at Youth Appreciation Banquet

By Terry Wright, Taylorville Optimist

The **Taylorville Optimist Club** held its annual "Youth Appreciation Banquet" on Thursday, May 4th, 2017, in the Taylorville Memorial Hospital Auditorium. The Club honors graduating Taylorville High School seniors each year. The selected seniors were honored with a banquet and the awarding of scholarships. Guest speaker for the event was Dr. **Patrick White**, President, Millikin University. Dr. White gave a very appropriate presentation based on one of the key tenets of the Optimist Creed. He concentrated on the line of the Creed that states "think only of the best, work for only the best, and expect only the best". He charged those seniors with this as a challenge for the future.



Pictured L to R: **Dr. Patrick White**, President, Millikin University; **Michael Nelson**; **Nic Lavin**; **Allison Wright**; **Sydney Wolf**; **Matt Hutchison**, THS Principal

Those receiving the awards this year are: **Jack Curtin, Madison Taylor, Allison Wright, Sydney Wolf, Michael Nelson, and Nic Lavin.**

Corporate partners with the Optimist Club in this endeavor were People's Bank & Trust, TCCU, CNB, FNB of Taylorville, FNB on Spresser, Midland Comm. Bank, First Mid-Illinois, Kennedy Real Estate, Ridings Ford, Landmark Automotive, and Trinity Dodge. The **Taylorville Optimist Club** thanks these sponsors for their generous support of the youth of Taylorville.

Des Plaines Pasta Dinner Visited by Optimist from Uganda

By Ruth Del Re, Des Plaines Optimist

The **Des Plaines Optimist Club** Annual Pasta Dinner was held on April 30, 2017, and our guest of honor this year was **Brother John** (seated in the front middle) from the **Uganda Optimist Club** in Uganda. **Brother John** is currently in the Chicago area working at the Seminary and had contacted some clubs in the area to visit while he is so far from home.

Brother John was able to attend this event and we could not have been more excited to spend time with him and learn about what the Optimists are doing in Uganda. Their adult club of about six members is helping to keep the JOI clubs of about 175 going and growing.

They even have online clubs and are working at keeping up with the times.



As for the Pasta Dinner, it was a great success, food was great and the raffle prizes were a huge hit. Thank you to **Dianna Edwards** for chairing this event again this year and to all of the club members for donating, working or just spreading the word. Together we can make things happen.

Greenville Has a Busy Spring

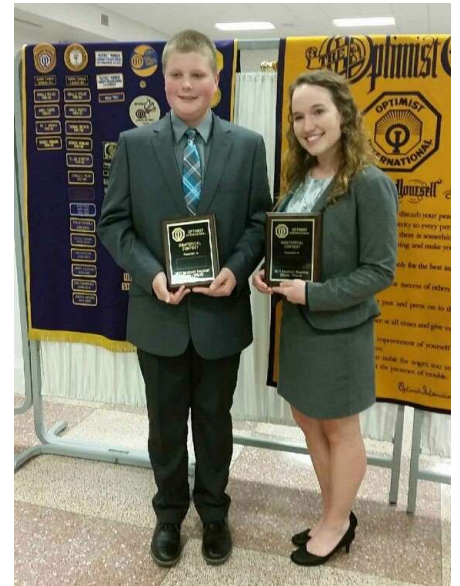
By Larry Martin, Greenville Optimist



The **Greenville Optimist** Oratorical Contest was held February 22.

1st Row: **Quinn Mesnard, Emma Nord, Garrett Oglesby, Maggie Goodsen**; 2nd Row: **Kyra Wells, Eowyn Dorethy, Hannah Gaffner, Dakota Driemeyer**.

Hannah Gaffner and **Dakota Driemeyer** were selected to advance to the Regional Contest in Taylorville.



Dakota Driemeyer and **Hannah Gaffner** participated in the Taylorville Regional Oratorical Contest and were selected to advance to the District Oratorical Contest in Bloomington.



The **Greenville Optimist Club** and the Greenville Commercial Club were co-sponsors for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Optimist **Mark Robertson** (white shirt) is supervising one of the age groups.

42 of the 145 flats of Florida strawberries awaiting delivery and pickup at our annual **Greenville Optimist Club** strawberry fund raiser. The strawberries were sold during February and delivered to Greenville in mid-March.



On the evening of April 27th, the **Greenville Optimist Club** held their annual Youth Appreciation Reception at the St. Lawrence Posch Hall to honor the presidents and representatives of Bond County Unit #2 High School Clubs and Activities. The students gave a short speech on their club activities within the high school and how they support the community with their time and fund raising. The **Greenville Optimist Club** recognizes the club leaders for their willingness to serve and help the community. The students, parents and siblings were treated to desserts consisting of cupcakes, cookies, fruit, and punch.



Back Row: **Jonathan Hall**, FCA; **Brooke Krankel**, FFA; **Kayla Dannaman**, Yearbook; **Tyler Bryant**, LightForce; **Katelyn Thomason**, Sophomore Class; **Will Sunderland**, Chorus

Front Row: **Hannah Gaffner**, Student Council; **Caitlynn Elliott**, Drum Majors; **Amber Blackman**, Drum Majors; **Bailey Sidwell**, Senior Class

Unable to attend: **Carson Mathewson**, Freshman Class; **T.J. Zobrist**, Junior Class; **Samantha Siefken**, LightForce; Kenan Oestreich, National Honor Society & Scholar Bowl; **Noelle Beans**, Yearbook; **Ryker Grove**, FCA

Wilmette Spring Activities

By Noel Jackson, Wilmette Optimist



L to R: **Paul Hahn**, Immediate Past President, and **Mike Donnelly**, Past President

Community Outreach - Wilmette Police Department Open House

Paul Hahn, Immediate Past President, was the grill master for serving 600 hot dogs to friends and family members from the community for this annual event. The **Wilmette Optimist Club** has been hosting the Hot Dog Stand for many years.

Arbor Day

The **Wilmette Optimist Club** distributed 200 seedlings to students at The McKenzie School in Wilmette. The school is dedicated to developing in its students the habits of mind, body and heart essential for academic success and productive lives.

Optimist International Junior Golf

The **Wilmette Optimist Club** will be a Hole Sponsor and members including. **Bill Ballantyne** and **Paul Hahn** will be volunteers.

Taylorville Respect for Law Honors Officer of the Year

By Terry Wright, Taylorville Optimist

The **Taylorville Optimist Club** held its special "Salute to Law Enforcement" breakfast on Thursday, May 11, 2017, in the TMH Auditorium. This event is a part of the Optimist International's "Respect for Law Month" nation-wide during the month of May.

The morning started with breakfast served by the staff of TMH. Following breakfast, the Honor Guard of the Springfield Police Department presented and posted the colors. President **Larry Vaughan** led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance, and Pastor **Ted Marrinan** gave the morning invocation. A formal recognition of the officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty in 2017 was observed. Club members **Steve Switzer** and **Jerri Mazzotti** read off the list of 45 officers nation-wide, who have died in 2017. A bell was rung following each name, and "taps" were played by **Mallory Jones** and her father **Dennis**.

Lt. **Chris Owen**, Commandeer, District 9, Illinois State Police, was the guest speaker. Lt. Owen spoke passionately about being an officer and what he learned that helped him improve his relationship while working with the public. He also talked about the dangers associated with being in law enforcement and how ideas and policies have changed over the years.

Next, the nominees for "Officer of the Year" were recognized. Six outstanding individuals were nominated by the public this year. The decision was a very difficult one for the judges, as each nominee had their own strengths. Nominees for 2017 included **Bill Hogan**, CC Sheriff's Correctional Officer, **Charis Hobbs**, CC Probation Officer, and **Aaron Reimann**, TPD. The three finalists were **Gary Jones**, TPD, **Bryan Thomas**, TPD, and the 2017 Officer of the Year went to Det. **Evert Nation**, TPD. Det. Nation was presented with a certificate recognizing his achievement, an assortment of gift certificates from various local and area businesses, and a "Thin Blue Line" flag courtesy of the **Taylorville Optimist Club**.



Pictured L to R: Taylorville Police Officer **Bryan Thomas**, Officer of the Year Finalist; Taylorville Police Officer **Gary Jones**, Officer of the Year Finalist; Lt. **Chris Owen**, Commander Dist. 9, Illinois State Police



Wilmette Optimist Club Awards Grants

By Noel Jackson, Wilmette Optimist

The **Wilmette Optimist Club** Foundation is pleased to announce that it has awarded a \$5,000 grant to the Alliance for Early Childhood. Continuing the efforts of Optimist Clubs worldwide in bringing out the best in kids, the Alliance is a dynamic local non-profit with depth and breadth of leadership serving the North Shore in a community collaborative manner promoting the healthy growth and development of children from birth through age eight. Approximately, 1,000 Wilmette youth were served in 2016.



Pictured from left to right:
Paul Hahn, Steve Santacruz, Ron Witt, Libby Joyce, Tim Clemens, Liza Sullivan, Pete Marvin, Noel Jackson, Don Butzen, and David Kritzer

The **Wilmette Optimist Club** through its foundation awarded a \$2,000 grant on April 11, 2017 to The Kindness Connection for its ongoing work in fostering meaningful volunteer experiences for elementary school age children so that these children may develop strong personal values in community service and awareness of the contribution that they can make at any age.

Don Butzen, Chairman of the **Wilmette Optimist Club** Foundation, is pictured presenting the check to **Lisa Rosenberg**, Executive Director of The Kindness Connection. The Optimist organization on a local level and globally strives to bring out the best in kids.



Congratulations to the **Sterling Optimist Club**, celebrating 35 years since they were chartered on September 9, 1982.



To My Fellow Optimists,

Having just completed the 3rd quarter conference in Bloomington I would like to personally apologize for the outburst from the other Governor-elect candidate, when he chose to campaign inappropriately during the Board of Directors meeting. It had been agreed upon earlier in the weekend that we would not be campaigning or causing a disturbance so as to it would not take away from the Oratorical, Essay and Poster Contests that were going to take place at this time. I was also under the impression that the Bulletin Editor was preparing appropriate questions for both candidates so you would have a great idea who we are and what we would like to do for you as the Illinois Optimist Governor for the 2017-2018 year. Without receiving those questions, I have decided to do my best to give you an idea of who I am and what I feel can be done to help all of you and your clubs. I am 53 years old and have 4 children Johnny 28, Jessica 23, Nicole 19, and Jimmy 16. Ruth and I married January 4, 1986. I have one dog and about 6700 hot wheels cars. I have owned and operated 3 successful business's, the first being a printing company of which I actually had a printing press in my living room for about 3- hours until we could move it into the basement. We sold that about seven years later and then started a low voltage cabling company which we merged with Liberty Computers, the company that we still own today. In my years of being an entrepreneur I have learned how to talk and listen to people. I feel that finding out what their needs are so a plan can be created to help them to be successful as well. I believe as a district we need to help some of the smaller clubs with their needs, whether it is with one on one training of the club President, Secretary and Treasurer or meeting as a zone to receive training. Many of our clubs don't know that the district will help them if they need it and the district needs to be more fluid in our ways, because if your club is not growing your club is dying. In my approx. 10 year optimist career I have sponsored 13 members, was a distinguished Club President (I have the watch and everything) and served as Lt Governor in zone 1 for a few years. Since joining the Des Plaines Optimist Club I have suggested and help to start many new programs, which are still in effect. One of which is our summer Movies in the Park for which I applied for the Club Grant Award from OI and we were awarded the \$500 from them for that program. What a great help that was to get our program off the ground. As a Lt. Governor, I had advised many club members in my zone on how to make meetings more fun and exciting. One of those ideas was to have a pig roast for our NOW event which I am chairing with many helpers from my club, because a club is more than just one person, we all need to work together. Every event needs to have a good leader and good advisors, but the support is just as important. I wanted to buy a piece of real estate for the club I belong to, so I put together a team and we prepared a business plan, started a foundation in preparation for the purchase. All of the members except 3 agreed to the plan as our members truly want to grow our club. Those members are also no longer a part of our club, but growth still continues and the real-estate purchase is still in the works. I can say with the members we have I have been told that our club is a lot of fun and our membership consists of adults in their 20's, 30's as well as some older members as well, but everybody contributes to the meetings and I think that is what we need to bring to the district meetings as well. I believe we need to perhaps stream some of the meetings to the clubs that can't make it to the scheduled quarterly meetings. We need two way communication between our clubs and our district, if you have a question or a comment we need to do something about it right away. We cannot continue to do the same old stuff, we need to modernize and bring some younger people to your clubs and our district. It has just seemed that all of the new ideas are being stopped by the old guard because that is how they have always done things. You will never hear those words spoken at one of my meetings. Let's try some new things because the old way was a new idea at some time and thought up by someone. I promise to listen to any idea new, old or whatever you have, this is OUR District - so let's turn it around - not let it die on the vine from old age. Vote for me in August and let's make Illinois a district we can all be excited about.

Yours in Optimism
John Del Re
Des Plaines Optimist Club
847-942-2897
johndelre@sbcglobal.net

Coming Attractions:

Optimist International Junior Golf Championship Qualifying Tournament – June 11-15

Host course – Red Tail Run Golf Course in Decatur

June 11 – Sponsor Golf Outing

June 12 – Registration and practice rounds

June 13-15 – Tournament play



Camp Coco – Lights, Camera, Action – June 27

Timber Pointe Outdoor Center at Lake Bloomington

Optimists should plan to arrive at 9:00; activities with the campers from 10:00-noon



Optimist International Convention – Albuquerque, NM - July 6-8

Find all the information at

<http://www.optimist.org/e/Member/convention1.cfm>.

District Convention – Murder Mystery Event, The Chateau, Bloomington – August 4-6

Along with training and education, the murder mystery event will round out our year of fun events. Registration and training information will be provided soon – watch your inbox for it.

Want to see your Optimist Club in the **Land of Lincoln Bulletin**? It's simple – just email your pictures, with a story or captions, to Bulletin editor SchmidtSandi@gmail.com. It only takes a few minutes to share the great things your club is doing

Action pictures of your club's activities are more fun to share with your fellow Optimists around the Illinois District, so keep that in mind when sending your information.

We will also publish information about your upcoming events – the next issue will include events from September through January.

The deadline for the next issue of the **Land of Lincoln Bulletin** is **Friday, August 11**.