



The Southern Exposure

Indiana South District – Optimist International

Volume 31, Issue 3

April 2026

2025-2026

“Ripples of Change”

Monica Wallace, Governor

Walt Willms, Immediate Past Governor

Greg Kuhn, Past Governor

Jim Tribble, Governor Elect

Kent Reyling, Secretary-Treasurer

Lt. Governors

Zone 1- Glen Shay, Indy Bft

Zone 2- Greg Kuhn, Indy Bft

Zone 3- Darrel Paul, Avon

Zone 4- Mike Butts, Terre Haute Bft

Zone 5- Patti Scott, Jeff-Falls City

Zone 6- Ron Fuhrman, Santa Claus

Zone 7- Bill Cherolis, Santa Claus

Attention:

Committee Chairs & Lt Governors

The deadline for submitting articles for the next District Bulletin is **August 3,**

2026. Send your articles to

p_grant@fastmail.fm via e-mail. If you prefer, send it snail-mail: 770 N County Road 625 E, Avon, IN 46123.

DON'T FORGET!

Greetings all Indiana South District Optimists

Ripples of Change

Dear Members of the Indiana South District,

As we enter the last quarter of our year together, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your unwavering commitment to service and to making a lasting impact in your communities. Your dedication has carried us far, and together, we have accomplished remarkable things. Now is the time to finish the year strong!

Our work is far from over. The needs within our communities remain, and there are always new opportunities to serve, to uplift, and to inspire. Let's build upon the momentum we've created and continue to reach out, share the spirit of optimism, and invite others to join our mission. Each new member strengthens our clubs and multiplies our capacity to do good.

Our youth hold the future in their hands. As Optimists, it is our privilege and responsibility to help them see a world filled with possibility and hope. If you sponsor a Junior Optimist International (JOI) club, encourage graduating seniors to stay engaged and start their own clubs or join your ranks, so they can continue to make a

difference with their peers and nurture their spirit of optimism into adulthood. Let's use these final months to grow even stronger, to continue making ripples of change—one member, one act of kindness, one hopeful young person at a time. Every club and every member matter. Your efforts inspire hope and optimism for generations to come. Thank you for your passion, your service, and your dedication. Together, let's ensure the Indiana South District finishes this year with strength, unity, and a renewed commitment to our mission.

**With Optimism and Gratitude,
Monica Wallace, Governor, Indiana South District**

Indiana South Optimists Officers and Members Incentive Program

Dear Indiana South Optimist Club Officers and Members:

You're Invited! Join us at our upcoming district events and qualify for exciting incentives: mileage reimbursement, door prizes, and big drawings like a night's stay at the annual convention in August 2026 or free registration at our next Jasper Conference! The more you engage, the more chances you have. Thank you for your service—let us reward your leadership!

Eligibility

Open to all currently serving Club Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers, and Members who are in good standing within Indiana South District.

Incentives & Rewards

Mileage Reimbursement

Description: Officers attending in-person at conference and the convention are eligible for mileage reimbursement.

- **Rate:** \$0.25 per mile round trip, up to \$50 per meeting/conference.
- **How to Claim:** Submit mileage log at the end of the conference to Kent Reyling, District Treasurer.

Door Prizes

Description: All officers and members are entered into special drawings for door prizes at each conference.

- **Examples:** Optimist merchandise, gift cards, books, logo apparel, etc.
- **Draw:** Multiple prizes drawn at each event and must be present to win.

Grand Prize Drawings

All attending officers and members will receive one entry per event attended (more attendance = more chances!) for these grand prizes, drawn at each conference:

- **A. Night's Stay Giveaway:** Win a complimentary one-night hotel stay at the convention venue in August 2026.
- **B. Dinner & Show Ticket:** Win 2 free tickets to the Friday night dinner and show at the convention in August 2026.
- **C. Jasper Conference Registration:** Win a complimentary registration for the Jasper Conference (April).

How to Earn Entries

- Attend a conference event in January and April and be in good standing with your club.
- Bonus: Bring a new officer or member (first-timers) – get **1 extra entry** for yourself to win one of the grand prize drawings.
- Must be present at the end of each conference to win.

Indiana South District
3rd Quarter Conference
Friday and Saturday April 17 - 18
Kimball International Headquarters
1600 Royal Street Jasper, Indiana



Register online through <https://mp.gg/m4vouj6fqh> or complete form below and email (Please print neatly)

Member name #1 _____ Name for badge: _____
Club name: _____ Zone _____
Club office held? _____ District office? _____
Member name #2 _____ Name for badge: _____
Club name: _____ Zone _____
Club office held? _____ District office? _____
Non-Member Name _____ Name for badge: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION (person submitting registration)

email address: _____ Phone: _____
Street _____ City: _____ State: _____

Friday Dinner (on your own) Schnitzelbank 393 Third Ave, Jasper, IN 47546 6:30 pm EST

Will you be attending? Yes _____ No _____ If so, How Many? _____

Lunch (per person)

Price \$17.00 Number _____ Amount \$ _____

(Pecan Chicken, Smoked Pork Butt, Garlic Red Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Roasted Carrots, Fresh vegetable tray, Assorted desserts and drinks, Roll w/Butter)

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE (Must Accompany This Form)

\$ _____

***Deadline for lunch choice is Monday April 13, 2026. After that date lunch may be "on your own".**

**REGISTRATION FORM &
REMITTANCE**
Must be received by: April 13, 2026
Indiana South District Registrar
Attention: Dave Osborne 1189
Pinewood Drive Plainfield, IN
46168
C (317) 538-4548 indsoptimist@gmail.com

Hotel Accommodation
Hampton Inn \$135 [Click Here](#)
355 3rd Ave
Jasper, IN 47546
812-481-1888
Breakfast Included
BLOCK CODE: IN South Dist. Optimist
Reservation due by April 11, 2026

[Indiana South District Optimist Website link](#)

A message from our Governor

Dear Indiana South Optimist Club Members,

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes our annual Spring Conference in April in the great town of Jasper! This is a time to celebrate, re-energize, and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone together. As members and friends of the Optimist Club, each of us shares a common goal: to make our communities brighter and offer hope to children and families across Indiana.

This year let's renew our commitment to growth but not only in our programs, but in our membership. There are so many people out there with big hearts like our neighbors, friends, and colleagues who would love the chance to join our mission of spreading optimism and opportunity. By inviting others to join us, we multiply the impact we can have and ensure that every program, every project, and every act of kindness reaches even more families and children in need of support.

Let's also take every opportunity to share the incredible work we're doing. Every story of a child helped, a family encouraged, or a community uplifted, is a story worth telling. Through our newsletters, social media, and word of mouth, let's shine a spotlight on the difference Optimists make. Our outreach will inspire others to get involved and remind everyone that optimism is contagious!

Together, we can turn hope into action and dreams into reality. Let's use this Spring Conference as a launching pad for renewed enthusiasm and bigger impact as we grow our membership, expand our programs, and reach as many people as we can.

Thank you for all that you do for your club, your community, and our shared mission. I am excited to see what we accomplish together and look forward to connecting with you all this April.

With optimism and gratitude,
Monica Wallace
Governor, Indiana South District Optimists

Message from our Vice President

Dear Optimist Friends,

It is my honor and privilege to serve as your Regional Vice President for the Middle America Region. From the very first time I volunteered with an Optimist service project, I felt something click: a deep alignment between who I am and what our Optimist organization stands for. Hope. Action. Community. Growth. That's the heart of Optimist International, and it's what fuels my commitment every single day. Professionally, I've spent 25+ years in education and nonprofit management. That journey gave me the skills and perspective to lead, but more importantly, it grounded me in service. Today, I work as a project manager by day-and pour my energy into being an Optimist by night (and let's be honest, most weekends too).

While I've served in many roles throughout my Optimist career, the ones closest to my heart have been Governor of the East Missouri District (2020 - 2021) and International Leadership Development Chair (2023 - 2024). In those roles, I've had the joy of nurturing leaders, building connections and helping others discover just how powerful they can be when they lead with hope.

But beyond the titles, what truly fills my cup is being out in the community-volunteering side by side, learning from others, and doing the hands-on work that reminds us why we do what we do. My guiding light is a line from our Creed: "To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best." It's a bold standard and a daily practice. This year, I promise to walk beside you with optimism, courage, and a deep respect for the work you're doing in your clubs, your communities and your hearts.

Here's to a year of purpose, connection, and unstoppable hope. I can't wait to see all that we'll accomplish -- together.

With deep optimism,
Liz Christman
Regional Vice President - Middle America Region
From the heart of Middle America-with hope and purpose

**Indiana South District
40th Annual Convention
Friday and Saturday August 28th and 29th
Radisson Hotel Louisville
505 Marriott Dr
Clarksville, IN 47129**



PLEASE FILL OUT PAGES 1 AND 2

Register online through <https://mp.g/runzctbvbs> or complete form below and mail (Please print neatly or type)

Member name #1 _____ Name for badge: _____
Club name: _____ Zone _____
Club office held? _____ District office? _____
Member name #2 _____ Name for badge: _____
Club name: _____ Zone _____
Club office held? _____ District office? _____
Non-Member Name _____ Name for badge: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION (*person submitting registration*)

email address: _____ Phone: _____
Street _____ City: _____ State: _____



Governor Monica Wallace



Governor Elect Jim Tribble

Registration Payment Form

Friday Funday Derby Dinner Playhouse (505 Marriott Dr, Clarksville, IN 47129)

Group seating \$46/person includes Buffet Dinner and show. Please ensure if mailing in your reservation that you allow enough time for mail delivery. If mailing reservation is close to deadline, please email form as well to David Osborne at indsoptimist@gmail.com to ensure tickets are reserved. Tickets are available as long as they have seats available. Must Call David Osborne for tickets after Aug. 6th 317-538-4548. **Do Not order through Derby Dinner Playhouse. They will charge you full price.**

| Conference Functions Require a Reservation | Price | Number | Amount |
|--|---------|--------|--------|
| Registration Fee (only if you are not eating on Friday) | \$5.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Derby Dinner Playhouse (if you received free tickets Mark Free) | \$46.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Full Hot Breakfast Buffet: Chef's Choice | \$23.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Italian Theme Lunch Buffet Baked Chicken Alfredo, Eggplant Parmesan (for the Vegetarians) Vegetable Medley + Steamed Broccoli + Zucchini & Squash, desserts and drinks | \$25.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Dinner Buffet Grilled Chicken, Brisket, Baked Potato, Green Beans, Glazed Carrots, Roll, Dessert and Drinks | \$35.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Package Deal (\$23 savings Includes Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner) | \$60.00 | _____ | _____ |

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE (Must Accompany This Form) \$ _____

***Deadline for meal choice is Thursday August 6, 2026. After that date lunch may be "on your own".**

REGISTRATION FORM & REMITTANCE
Must be received by: August 14, 2026
 Indiana South District Registrar
 Attention: Dave Osborne
 1189 Pinewood Drive
 Plainfield, IN 46168
 C (317) 538-4548
indsoptimist@gmail.com

Hotel Accommodation
 Radisson Hotel Louisville
 505 Marriott Dr
 Clarksville, IN 47129
 Hotel Phone 812-283-4411
 BLOCK CODE: Indiana South Dist. Optimist
Reservation due by August 14, 2026 link on
 website <https://www.indianaoptimist.org/>

Message from Governor

Dear Members of the Indiana South District,

As we enter the last quarter of our year together, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your unwavering commitment to service and to making a lasting impact in your communities. Your dedication has carried us far, and together, we have accomplished remarkable things. Now is the time to finish the year strong!

Our work is far from over. The needs within our communities remain, and there are always new opportunities to serve, to uplift, and to inspire. Let's build upon the momentum we've created and continue to reach out, share the spirit of optimism, and invite others to join our mission. Each new member strengthens our clubs and multiplies our capacity to do good. Our youth hold the future in their hands. As Optimists, it is our privilege and responsibility to help them see a world filled with possibility and hope. If you sponsor a Junior Optimist International (JOI) club, encourage graduating seniors to stay engaged and start their own clubs or join your ranks, so they can continue to make a difference with their peers and nurture their spirit of optimism into adulthood.

Let's use these final months to grow even stronger, to continue making ripples of change—one member, one act of kindness, one hopeful young person at a time. Every club and every member matters. Your efforts inspire hope and optimism for generations to come.

Thank you for your passion, your service, and your dedication. Together, let's ensure the Indiana South District finishes this year with strength, unity, and a renewed commitment to our mission.

**With Optimism and Gratitude,
Monica Wallace
Governor, Indiana South District**

Message from Governor Elect Jim Tribble

My fellow Indiana South District Optimists, I want to take a few moments to share a bit more about me, my family, my time as an Optimist and my vision for 2026-2027 as the Indiana South Governor.

I have been married to Judy Tribble since 8/6/77 (see I remember!!). We have four grown, successful children and 10 grandchildren ranging in age from 1-18. I went to Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology majoring in Chemical Engineering. I retired in 2018.

I joined the Brazil Breakfast Optimist Club in 2001, but moved to Richmond, VA in 2005 causing me to join the Richmond West Central Optimist Club. I returned to Indiana in 2013 to a disbanded Brazil Club, so I stayed a member in Richmond. In 2018, I transferred to TH Noon Optimist and am still a member there. In 2022, with the help of Ron Fuhrman, Mike Novak, Kent Reyling and many others from Noon and the district, we started the Clay County Optimist Club of which I am

currently President. In Clay County, I work on Clothe A Child, our Pancake Breakfast, Junior Golf, and I give out questionable prizes at our meetings.

“Achieving the Mission” has been the theme in my head for several months since becoming Governor Elect. My ‘vision’ of the Mission has several aspects. First, is that we focus on a firm 25+ person membership base in each club. I will help now and next year to achieve this goal. This enables the second aspect of the mission: service to the children of our communities. Each club defines and executes the tactics needed to implement the “service” Mission. The ability to vary our projects to meet local needs is a great strength but each should strive to fulfill the Mission.

Finally, the Mission is to grow more connected to each other and to our communities as Optimists by building trust. We unfortunately live in an often cynical, disbelieving world. Trust in local Optimist Clubs comes by publicly declaring our mission both in terms of what we intend to accomplish and why. It grows when we signal our behavior to others by what we do for others in our community. Finally, that Trust is rooted when our communities see us “Achieving the Mission” of a better life for our children across Indiana South.

I pray each of you is ready to join with me in “Achieving the Mission” of Optimism for Indiana South and your local community. I am here to help you in any way that I can.

**Jim Tribble
Governor Elect 2025-26**

Agenda See on website <https://www.indianaoptimist.org/>

Jim Tribble has purchased twenty Indiana South District Optimist license plates and has them available for purchase at \$15 each.

They will be available at the Jasper Quarterly meeting later this month. Buy them in person or have a club member pick one up for you.

This is a great and easy way to advertise Optimist membership everywhere you travel.

Indiana South District Optimist Junior Golf Tournament

June 20, 2026 8:00 am

Oak Tree Golf Course

4712 US-40,

Plainfield, IN 46158

Ages: 10 to 18



OPTIMIST
G • O • L • F

THE OPTIMIST



International Junior Golf Championships

2026 Indiana South District Optimist Junior Golf Tournament SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Indiana South District Qualifying Tournament for the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships (OIJGC) will be held at TBD, Indiana on Friday, June 19, 2026. Winners (and other participants who qualify) in each age group will be eligible to advance to the International tournament at Trump National Doral Resort & Spa, Miami, Florida on July 15-30, 2026.

Sponsorship opportunities for businesses, individuals, and organizations are listed on the attached form. If you, your business, or your club would like to participate as a sponsor in this year's District Qualifying Tournament, please complete the form and return it as soon as possible, but no later than June 9, 2026. Prior year sponsors will have the first opportunity to renew the same sponsorship if received by April 30, 2025. The Indiana South District of Optimist International and the many junior golf participants thank you in advance for your support!

David Osborne, District Tournament Chair
dwomedic@gmail.com (317) 538-4548

Brent Edwards, Sponsorship Contact
wbrent.edwards@icloud.com 812-550-2784





**2026 Indiana South District Optimist Junior Golf Tournament
SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Title Sponsor – \$1,000 (Priority renewal if received by April 30, 2025)

Promoted as "Title" Sponsor on all signage on the course, in the Tournament Program, event mailings to potential participants and sponsors, Optimist Clubs in District, and Regional and District promotional material.

Friend of Youth – \$500 or above

Signage at the Clubhouse, Registration Table, and website.

Double Eagle Sponsor – \$235 (Priority renewal if received by April 30, 2025)

Sponsor the Scoreboard, Driving Range, Putting Green, 1st Hole, 10th Hole, 17th Hole or 18th Hole. (All of these are near the Clubhouse.) Includes Sponsors Sign and Listing in Tournament Program.

Eagle Sponsor – \$185 (Priority renewal if received by April 30, 2025)

Sponsor the Check-in Table, Beverage locations, 2nd Hole, 9th Hole, or 16th Hole. (Not far from the Clubhouse.) Includes Sponsors Sign on course and Listing in Tournament Program.

Birdie Sponsor – \$135

Sponsor a Hole. (Holes 3-8 and 11-15.) Includes Sponsors Sign on course and Listing in Tournament Program.

SPONSORSHIP FORM

Sponsor(s): _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-Mail: _____

Sponsorship Type:

Friend of Youth (\$500+) _____

Double Eagle (\$235) _____

Eagle Sponsor (\$185) _____

Birdie Sponsor (\$135) _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED ~~-\$~~ _____

RETURN INFORMATION: Please complete this form, enclose a check for the proper amount (Make check payable to Indiana South District OJG), and return to:

Indiana South District Jr. Golf
C/O David Osborne
1189 Pinewood Dr.
Plainfield, IN 46168

THE OPTIMIST

International Junior Golf Championships



One of the top premier Junior Golf Tournaments in the world. A unique opportunity for junior golfers from around the globe. The Optimist is unique from all tournaments. Junior golfers and family enjoy golf, parent-child tournaments, off-course activities, meals and housing all on one property.

More than 50 qualifying tournaments, Optimists reach out into their own communities to involve children in the game of golf. Each year 5,000 junior golfers, ages 10-18, participate in Optimist sponsored events. The top 700 junior golfers advance to the Optimist International Junior Golf Championship each summer.



Three Lakes and Spa (2000, 2002) - 14,000 sq. ft. resort and world class amenities is conveniently 3 miles from Miami International Airport. The prestigious resort boasts four dining and golf courses - the legendary Boca Museum, Gold Club, Red Tiger and Silver Fox.

Regularly ranked by the Junior Golf Standard and Golfweek, World Amateur Golf and included in the U.S.A. Performance Great City Process and attracts over 30 college coaches each year.

Local Qualifier Information

2026 Indiana South District Junior Golf Tournament
 Oak Trees Golf Course
 4712 US-40, Plainfield, IN 46168
<https://sites.google.com/site/optimistgolf/>

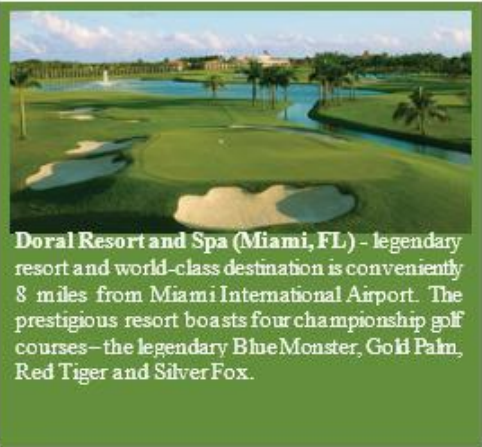
Registration opens March 1, 2026





One of the top premier Junior Golf Tournaments in the world. A unique opportunity for junior golfers from around the globe. The Optimist is unique from all tournaments. Junior golfers and family enjoy golf, parent-child tournament, off-course activities, meals and housing all on one property.

More than 50 qualifying tournaments, Optimists reach out into their own communities to involve children in the game of golf. Each year 5,000 junior golfers, ages 10-18, participate in Optimist sponsored events. The top 700 junior golfers advance to the Optimist International Junior Golf Championship each summer.



Doral Resort and Spa (Miami, FL) - legendary resort and world-class destination is conveniently 8 miles from Miami International Airport. The prestigious resort boasts four championship golf courses—the legendary Blue Monster, Gold Palm, Red Tiger and Silver Fox.

Nationally ranked by the Junior Golf Scoreboard and Golfweek, World Amateur Golf and included in the AJGA Performance Based Entry Process and attracts over 30 College coaches each year.



Local Qualifier Information

2026 Indiana South District Junior Golf Tournament
 Oak Tree Golf Course
 4712 US-40, Plainfield, IN 46168
<https://sites.google.com/site/insoptimistgolf/>

Registration opens March 1, 2026

Contact the Optimist Junior Golf Office for information on qualifying tournaments in your area.
 (800) 500-8130 ext. 207 • golf@optimist.org • www.optimist.org/golf • www.facebook.com/optimist.golf

The Club Pride Report is Changing!

We're excited to announce a new and improved way to capture your club's success!

The **Club Pride Report** has been replaced with two new digital reports:

- The **Club Project Impact Report** — completed each time your club finishes a service project.
- The **End-of-Year Club Impact Report** — completed at the end of the Optimist year to share your club's overall story, including membership growth, fundraising, and other accomplishments. The End-of-Year Club Impact Report will be available in August 2026.

The **Club Project Impact Report** is ready for you to start inputting your club's projects today!

How to Submit a Project:

1. Log into Optimist Leaders — submissions must be entered by a Club Officer (President, Secretary, or Treasurer).
2. Click on "**Club Impact Report.**"
3. Select one of **Optimist International's Signature Programs** (such as Oratorical, Essay, CCDHH, JOI, Junior Golf) or choose a **Community Project** your club has completed.
4. Enter the project details and submit!

By entering your projects regularly, your club will:

- See all your projects in one place throughout the year — a great way to visualize your service impact as it grows.
- Showcase your impact on youth, schools, and communities.
- Simplify end-of-year reporting — no more scrambling for details!
- Be recognized for your service achievements and dedication to optimism in action.

At the end of the year, your club will be able to reflect on the incredible difference you've made — a true celebration of optimism in service!

Helpful Tip: Use the Web App

If you follow the instructions to download the **Progressive Web App (PWA)** to your phone, it will remember your login credentials for easier access. You can even use the app offline — your data will automatically upload the next time you connect to the internet.

Note: If you belong to more than one club, the PWA will only remember the most recent login.

A training video is coming soon.

OWLS Program

OWLS Program Recap: Supporting Schools, Inspiring Optimism

Optimist International's OWLS (Optimists Working for Learning Success) program, introduced in 2023, is making strides in supporting elementary school-aged students through partnerships with local schools. The initiative provides vital resources such as nutrition, clothing, school supplies, hygiene products, and tutoring assistance, fostering academic success and personal growth.

Key Benefits and Success Stories

OWLS is already delivering significant benefits. Students gain access to critical resources, increased self-esteem, and better academic performance, while clubs deepen community connections and attract new members. The Dor-Wood Optimist Club in Kettering, Ohio, exemplifies success by engaging schools through ongoing collaboration, volunteer recruitment, and student recognition programs.

Steps for Club Participation

Optimist Clubs can get involved by identifying local school needs, initiating projects, building relationships with educators, and sharing their success stories. By maintaining these connections, clubs ensure continued support for their communities.

OWLS is transforming lives by empowering students and strengthening communities. With your participation, the program will continue to grow and inspire optimism across the globe.



It is my honor to invite you to the 2026 Optimist International Convention, June 28 through July 2, at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront in Jacksonville, Florida.

This year's theme, "**Be the Change**" will be reflected in our convention, inspiring each of us to lead with purpose and make a lasting difference in the lives of youth. Together, we will share ideas, strengthen leadership, and celebrate the impact Optimists make around the world.

You can look forward to meaningful networking, inspiring keynote speakers, informative workshops, and outstanding entertainment from talented youth groups who remind us why our mission matters.

If you have attended an International Convention in the past, you will notice a few changes this year. We have heard from members that sit-down meals have become too time-consuming and too expensive, leading to declining attendance. So, there will NOT be a Taste of Jacksonville event, and the Heritage Brunch has been discontinued. But, we are introducing a new option this year: you may purchase a convenient and economical grab-and-go lunch on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, giving you the flexibility to enjoy the full 1½-hour lunch period however you choose.

Please also note a change to our payment processing this year: because our new registration system only accepts one currency, all convention fees will be listed and paid in U.S. dollars. Your credit card company will simply apply the applicable exchange rate at the time of your transaction.

Registration opens this week, and I encourage you to register early and take advantage of the Early Bird rate before May 1. After May 1, the registration fee will increase by \$50 USD. Visit optimist.org/convention for complete details and updates.

Come ready to connect. Come ready to learn. And, most importantly, come ready to **Be the Change**.

I look forward to welcoming you to Jacksonville.

Yours in Optimism,

Tom Kendo
2025–2026 President
Optimist International

[Register Now](#)



Register Now for the 2026 International Convention

Registration is officially open for this year's convention! Join us in Jacksonville to connect with fellow Optimists, gather fresh ideas for your club and make a positive impact.

Registration Fee: \$299 (Includes access to all general sessions, trainings, workshops, the Town Hall, and the Business Meeting).

Early Bird Deadline: Register before **May 1** to avoid a \$50 price increase!

[Click here to register, preview the schedule, and see who's already registered!](#)

Questions? Reach out to convention@optimist.org.

Convention Service Projects

This year, we invite attendees to support local families by participating in two on-site donation drives benefiting Jacksonville-area food pantries:

Celebration Cake Packages: Help families in need celebrate life's milestones with joy and dignity! We are collecting simple cake-making kits. Suggested items include: a boxed cake mix, one can of soda (which cleverly replaces eggs and oil), frosting, candles, sprinkles, and a disposable cake pan.

Pinch of Hope Spice Drive: Food pantries often receive staple items, but rarely the ingredients that bring meals to life. Help add flavor and comfort to everyday dinners by donating new, sealed spices. Suggested spices include: garlic powder, onion powder, cinnamon, Italian seasoning, chili powder, paprika, and black pepper.

Every small act of generosity makes a difference. We can't wait to see you there!

A graphic with a dark, swirling, ethereal background. The text is white and reads: "Words can inspire, thoughts can provoke, but only action truly brings you closer to your dreams." A small double quote mark is visible at the bottom left of the graphic.

Words can inspire, thoughts
can provoke, but only action
truly brings you closer to
your dreams.

Sad News

It is with great sadness that we inform you that long time Optimist Ken Kolmerten died February 13th.

A Memorial Service for Ken Kolmerten was held Thursday, February 19, 2026 at Zionsville Presbyterian Church.

Additional Information from Betsy Burke.

Ken joined our club in 1990 and served a term as president for the 1991-92 year as well as secretary for several years. He was honored as Optimist of the Year in both 1993 and 2007. He also served many years in offices at the District level. Recently, although no longer a club member, he has served as a member of the Foundation Disbursements Committee. Many of you may remember the many years he did the grilling at the Blind School fishing derby. Ken celebrated his 96th birthday last year on September 2nd. He has lived a fulfilling and wonderful life; we will miss him!



Clay County Optimist Club

On February 28th, the Clay County Optimist Club held its first ever TriStar Basketball Competition at the Clay County YMCA. Many thanks to the YMCA for the use of its facility.

While our registration numbers fell short of what we desired, it was a great learning experience for the club. At our recent Board meeting we discussed how to improve it for next year.

Thanks to an efficient group of volunteers from members and local HS students, we were able to conduct the event in short order and crown our winners.

Two of our winners, Sincere Jackson in the 10 Boys and Eli Phillips in the 13 Boys expressed an interest to compete at Greensburg.



**Clay County Optimist Club
Distributes Placemats & Coloring Supplies**

At the Brazil Main Street Festival

On Saturday September 20th, thousands of area residents flooded National Avenue in Brazil, Indiana for the annual Main Street Festival.

The Clay County Optimist Club has a tent at this festival and has successfully engaged hundreds of young children each year.

The Club purchases laminated dinner placemats with a variety of educational themes, and the children are empowered to select the one that interests them. For 2025, the placemats included Presidents of the United States, Flags of the 50 states, math training in fractions, a map of the United States, a map of the world, how to write in cursive and a few other interesting topics. At the end of the day all but 17 of the placemats had been distributed.

The children were also invited to take home some Optimist artwork sheets for coloring animals, connect the dots & coloring, plus the embedded word puzzle and the crossword puzzle. These were quite popular with children of all ages. Each child also received a small packet of crayons.

Each child who received a placemat, coloring item or puzzle was invited to ring the Optimist bell and to toot the Happy Dollars horn. These exciting noises were amazingly effective tools to draw more families and children to our tent.

**Clay County Optimists Participate
In
The Terre Haute Breakfast Optimists' Chili Cookoff**

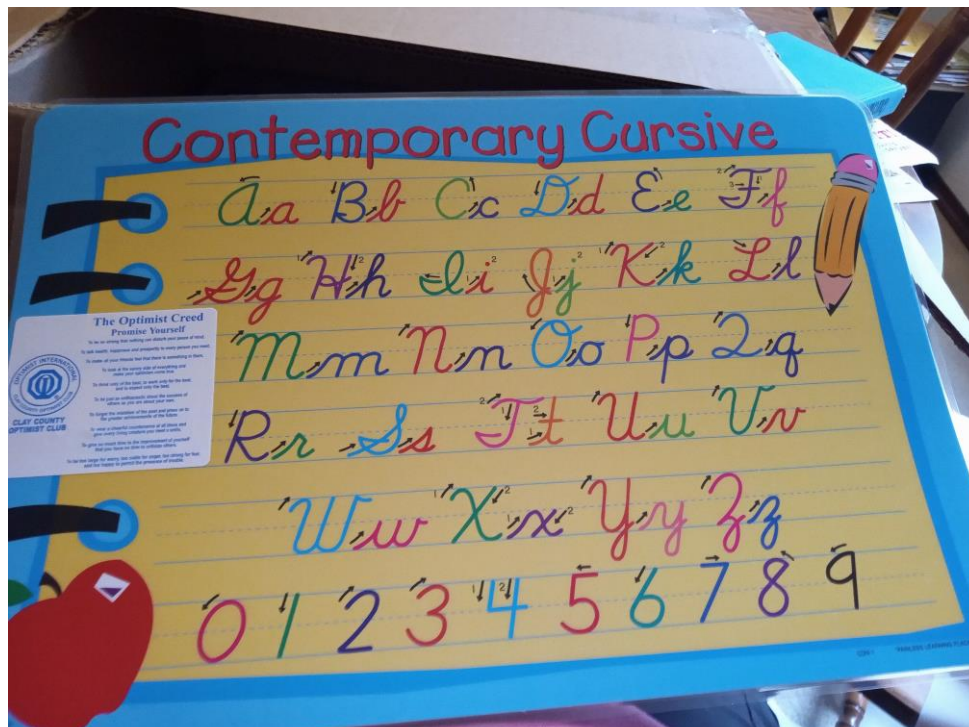
On Saturday October 4th, the Clay County Optimist Club sponsored an entry into the TH Breakfast Optimist Chili Cookoff. Member Brian Boyce provided the beef and chef Matthew Tribble developed a complex, moderately spicy recipe featuring his home-grown peppers and dark chocolate.

Members Matthew Tribble, Brian Boyce, Dick Boyce, and Jim Tribble staffed the Clay County table during the five-hour event which serves as a major fundraiser for our cousins in Vigo County.

In addition to the delicious chili offering, the Club also had Optimist coloring sheets, connect the dots sheets, embedded word puzzles and crossword puzzles to hand out to kids of all ages. Each child who received a prize was asked to ring the Optimist Bell and Toot the Happy Dollars horn. They all really enjoyed the noise and attention.

The club also sponsored a free drawing every half hour. The winner got to pick a CD from the selection that was available.

More Clay County Events Pictures



Optimist History

Optimist International began with the Buffalo Optimist Club in 1911, grew with clubs like Indianapolis in 1916, and formally organized as an international body in 1919 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Its mission, to be the premier service organization for youth, solidified around its core principles of optimism and service, adopting the Optimist Creed in 1922 and expanding programs for kids like Octagon Clubs and Oratorical contests, evolving to include women members in 1987 and becoming a global force for "Bringing Out the Best in Kids".

Early Days & Formalization (1911-1920s)

1911: The first "Optimist Club" formed in Buffalo, New York, focusing on positive community outlooks.

1916: The Indianapolis Optimist Club spurred interest in a national body, leading to early growth in major cities.

1917: A conference in Indianapolis discussed formal organization, but World War I delayed it.

1919: Representatives from 11 clubs met in Louisville, Kentucky to form the International Optimist Club, electing William Henry Harrison as the first President.

1922: The Optimist Creed was adopted, defining the group's philosophy.

Growth & Programs (1960s-1980s)

1960s: Major campaigns against pornography and apathy toward crime began, alongside the launch of Octagon Clubs (high school) and the "Stay in School" program.

1968: Golden Anniversary celebrated in Louisville with participation in the Rose Parade.

1987: Women were admitted as members, a significant step for inclusivity.

1988: Junior Optimist Octagon International (JOOI) formed to support youth clubs.

Modern Era (1990s-Present)

1990s: The Optimist Junior Golf Championships grew into a premier event, launching careers for golfers like Tiger Woods.

2000s: First female President (Ronnie Dunn, 2006) and first non-US/Canada President (Theo W. Golding, 2007) elected.

2008: An Internet Safety program was launched to protect children online.

2016: First Optimist Oratorical World Championships held, showcasing youth speaking talent globally.

Today, Optimist International remains dedicated to its mission of "Bringing Out the Best in Kids," fostering optimism, and serving communities worldwide.

Contact an OI Department:

Optimist International is committed to providing professional and prompt service to Optimist volunteers and other interested parties. If you know which department you wish to contact, please check the e-mail list below.

You may also speak to a staff member in that department by calling (314) 371-6000 or (800) 500-8130 and requesting the extension listed next to each department. To speak to someone in the Optimist International Canada office, please call (514) 593-4401 or (800) 363-7151.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Awards | 261 | awards@optimist.org |
| LMS/Optimist Institute | 210 | |
| Communications/Social Media | 236 | communications@optimist.org |
| Executive Director | 200 | executiveoffice@optimist.org |
| Finance & Administration | 202 | finance@optimist.org |
| International Convention | 205 | convention@optimist.org |
| International Office | 300 | headquarters@optimist.org |
| International Programs | 218 | programs@optimist.org |
| Junior Optimist | 218 | youthclubs@optimist.org |
| Leadership / Personal Development | 261 | leadership@optimist.org |
| Marketing & Graphics | 236 | marketing@optimist.org |
| Member Services | 247 | clubservices@optimist.org |
| Membership | 227 | membership@optimist.org |
| New Club Building | 227 | newclub@optimist.org |
| Optimist Junior Golf | 218 | golf@optimist.org |
| Webmaster | 209 | webmaster@optimist.org |
| Canadian Service Centre | (800) 353.7151 | CanadianService@optimist.org |
| Canadian Supplies | (800) 565.7062; www.optimistsupply.ca | info@optipromo.ca |
| Optimist Supply (US) | (800) 223.2203; www.shumsky.com | |

Contacting Optimist Leaders:

To contact an International leader by e-mail, use their firstname.lastname followed by @optimistmail.org. For example - Cheryl Brenn: cheryl.brenn@optimist.org

OI Foundation

Dime-A-Day Level is reached by a contribution of \$36.50 to the Foundation within one Optimist Year and is recognized by the presentation of a pin.

The Diamond Level requires a minimum donation to the Foundation of \$100 annually and the donor receives a specially designed postcard and thank you message from the Foundation President.



Women’s Philanthropy Council (WPC) was formed in 2005 to support the work of the Optimist International Foundation. Members reach out to women as donors and assist in shaping their philanthropy. All donations raised through the giving circle of the WPC will be used to underwrite World Oratorical Championship scholarships for young women that win the Regional Contest from the US and in the Caribbean. It is important to note that your contribution to OIF designated to support the efforts of the WPC will be counted as a restricted donation and will not be credited to your annual giving or that of your District/Club. It will count towards lifetime giving.

Join the Presidents Club by making an initial unrestricted gift of \$250, and renew your membership each year by making an annual \$250 contribution. When you join, you will receive a prestigious Presidents Club lapel pin. Each year at the International Convention, you will be recognized with a ribbon for your badge and will be invited to attend a function exclusively for members.



Friends of Today make a minimum unrestricted donation of \$500 annually to the Foundation. Donors will receive a special plaque designed by a local St. Louis artist.

The Christian D. Larson Partners was adopted to recognize donors who contribute a one-time \$1,000 unrestricted gift. *Donors may combine multiple unrestricted gifts in one Optimist fiscal year to achieve the \$1,000 level. Partners will receive a plaque presented by the DFR.

To become a member of the William H. Harrison Society, donors must have a life-to-date of \$10,000 and contribute \$1,000 annually to the Foundation. Members will be invited to attend a recognition dinner with the Foundations' Boards of Directors at the International Convention. Members also receive a ribbon noting their Membership in Society to be worn with Convention badge.

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Optimist International Foundation was established on February 28, 1971.

The creators envisioned a Foundation that could provide significant funding for OI's youth and service programs and which would be proudly supported by individual Optimists, their Clubs, and the community at large.

WHAT OIF DOES FOR CLUBS AND DISTRICTS

- \$5,000 TO EACH DISTRICT FOR THE DISTRICT ORATORICAL CONTEST
- \$2,500 TO EACH DISTRICT FOR THE CCDHH CONTEST
- \$2,500 TO EACH DISTRICT FOR THE DISTRICT ESSAY CONTEST
- \$5,000 FOR THE REGIONAL WORLD ORATORICAL CONTEST WINNERS FOR NON-CANADIAN WINNERS

WHAT OIF DOES FOR CLUBS

- \$15,000 FOR THE WORLD ORATORICAL CHAMPION, \$10,000 FOR 2ND PLACE AND \$5,000 FOR 3RD PLACE FOR NON-CANADIAN WINNERS
- \$2,500 TO EACH DISTRICT FOR THE DISTRICT ESSAY CONTEST
- Club Pass Through:
 - If your Optimist Club is seeking grant funds or contributions for funding of your charitable community service projects or other charitable, literary or educational programs, you may request the assistance of Optimist International Foundation (OIF) as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. This program is only available in the United States. Please find the Club Pass Through Grant Program guidelines document on the Foundation website at: oifoundation.org.

WHAT OIF DOES FOR OTHER OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAMS

- CONTRIBUTES \$85,000 TO SUPPORT THE JOI PROGRAM
- CONTRIBUTES TO THE JUNIOR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS



OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
F O U N D A T I O N

Presidents Club

The Presidents Club is a giving level that recognizes Optimists who are truly committed to the mission of the Foundation and its work to support Optimist International. By becoming a member of the Presidents Club, you are doing much more than giving a gift to change a child's life; you are making a statement that you are dedicated to the future of Optimism.

Become a member of the Presidents Club today and show your support as a steadfast Optimist and devoted friend to the Foundation. Optimist International Foundation works to raise funds to support the endeavors of Optimist International, its Clubs and its Members. The Foundation needs donors like you to continue 'Helping Optimists Help Kids'.

Join the Presidents Club by making an initial unrestricted gift of \$250, and renew your membership each year by making an annual \$250 contribution. When you join, you will receive a prestigious Presidents Club lapel pin. Each year at the International Convention, you will be recognized with a ribbon for your badge and will be invited to attend a function exclusively for members.

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Become part of an exclusive group that is
committed to making a difference.

I want to join the Presidents Club!

Name (one person only) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

_____ Enclosed is my check made out to the Optimist International Foundation.

_____ Please deduct \$_____ from my account monthly for _____ years. (Enclosed is my voided check)

Bank Name _____

Account # _____ Routing # _____


_____ Please charge my credit card \$_____ per month for _____ years.

MC Visa Discover American Express

Account # _____ Exp. ____/____ Security Code _____

Signature _____

Please return to: Optimist International Foundation • Presidents Club • PO Box 952126 • St. Louis, MO 63195-2126



Update Member Information

To ensure each Optimist Member is receiving valuable information from Optimist International, encourage each Member to update their contact information with a leader in your Club. This includes addresses, email addresses and phone numbers. Each leader (Club President, Secretary, and/or Treasurer) has a log-in for Optimist Leaders to update the Members' information.

The Optimist Club of the Year

The Optimist Club of the Year is the highest achievement an Optimist Club can attain in the Optimist organization. The recipient of this prestigious award will be chosen regardless of number of members, or region and will be known as the “Best Overall Club” in Optimist International.



The Optimist Club of the year award is presented annually to the most outstanding Club in the organization based on the following criteria:

| | Maximum Points |
|---|-----------------------|
| Service projects sponsored by the Club | 30 points |
| Member Development Programs a year (<i>i.e. PGI Program, Optimist International Conventions and Summit, etc.</i>) | 25 points |
| Club Growth and Increased Community Awareness Campaigns (<i>i.e. NOW Program, Marketing Campaign, etc.</i>) | 25 points |
| Increased Volunteer Member Base | 10 points |
| New Community Efforts | 10 points |

Points in each category will be awarded by independent judges based upon community outreach, impact on children and Members, new and innovative ideas; and benefits to the individual Club Members.

Interested Clubs are invited to submit information as outlined on the [judging form](#). Clubs can submit any materials they chose as the items relate to the specified criteria.

The Club named Overall Optimist Club of the Year will receive one round-trip airline ticket to the Optimist Convention, a banner patch, an award, and a special article in The Optimist magazine and on the Optimist website.

Submissions: Submit the judging form and back up documentation to Leadership@optimist.org .

In the email subject line include: Club of the Year Judging Form, Club's full name, and Club Number.



We understand the importance of protecting your Optimist Club and the children you serve. IntelliCorp has partnered with Optimist International to ensure Optimist Clubs receive comprehensive and validated screening services at the lowest possible cost.

Optimist Background Check Package

The following cost-effective screening package has been created to simplify your background check process. The package uses a combination of multiple sources of criminal record information. In addition, we validate database records by returning to the source to ensure that we have the latest updates regarding your applicant's history.

Package Pricing: \$13.86

Includes:

- Validated Criminal Database
 - Validated Nationwide Sex Offender
 - Validated Department of Corrections
- Unlimited Single County Searches (7 year address history)*
- SSN Verification w/Address History
- Government Sanctions (Terrorist Search)

Notes:

*Some courts charge a mandatory fee. These are treated as pass-through fees to our clients and are clearly highlighted before processing the search.

Package Add-Ons

- Motor Vehicle Reports
- Employment Verifications
- Education Verifications
- Drug Testing
- Federal Criminal Searches
- Civil Searches
- I9/E-Verify
- Credit Reports



Program Benefits:

- Preferred pricing
- Criminal product validation
- Compliance information/online sample forms
- Personalized customer support
- System & product training sessions
- Secure online report ordering & retrieval

Please Note: Information and preferential pricing provided for U.S. Clubs only. Canadian Clubs should contact IntelliCorp for more information.

Sign-Up Today:

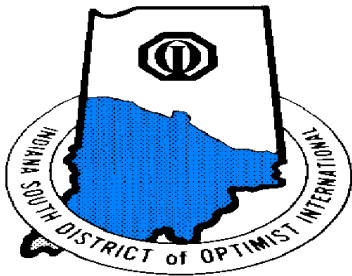
Click [here](#) and complete the first page of the registration process.



Contact:

Mike Terrell
800-539-3717 x157
mterrell@intelicorp.net
www.intelicorp.net

Club Presidents: Please make copies of this Bulletin and distribute to the members of your club.



100% and then some...

Attention ALL Club Presidents

Presidents of all Clubs in the District serve as members of the District Board of Directors. Make sure to attend your Board meeting at every District Conference and at the Convention.

The Southern Exposure is published for all Optimists located in the Indiana South District, Optimist International. The editor is Paul R. Grant, 770 N County Road 625 E, Avon, IN 46123. Submissions may be sent to p_grant@fastmail.fm and are subject to extreme editing.