



OCTOBER, 2025

Jane Schmidt, Governor
Marguerite Fehseke, Secretary Treasurer

IOWA DISTRICT OPTIMISTS

CULTIVATE OPTIMISM



*The newly
chartered
Newton
Optimist Club!*

Welcome to the 2025-2026 Optimist Year

To cultivate means to nurture, improve, or develop something, whether it's land for growing crops, one's mind, or a skill or interest. Synonyms include: to nurture, to foster, to improve, to refine, to develop, to encourage. That is the theme for this year's Iowa District.

At each conference we will learn ways to cultivate optimism – fostering it in our community, in the youth we support, in our relationships, and in ourselves. This will be a year of growth because what we do in our Optimist Clubs is too important to keep to ourselves. It is impressive to see what our clubs are accomplishing as we live the creed whether it be through encouraging our youth, providing scholarships, taking part in community events for families, or supporting local food pantries. The impact of Optimist Clubs can be felt throughout Iowa. Every community needs an Optimist Club.

Governor Jane

Cultivating Optimism In Ourselves

One way to cultivate optimism in ourselves is to be part of our conferences and annual convention. Mark your calendars with the following important dates:

- **First Quarter Conference:** October 17-18
 - Location: Ankeny, IA at The Courtyard by Marriott from 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM. (Exec Board will meet Friday evening at 7 PM)
 - THEME: Bringing out the Best in Ourselves
- **Second Quarter Conference:** January 31, 2026
 - Zone Meetings or Zoom meetings - let's see about the weather!
 - THEME: Bringing out the Best in our Communities
- **Third Quarter Conference:** April 17-18, 2026
 - Location: Amana Colonies, IA from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM (Exec Board will meet Friday evening at 7 PM)
 - THEME: Bringing out the Best in Youth
- **Summer Zoom by Zones:** June 13 - 9:30-11:30 AM
- **IOWA DISTRICT CONVENTION:** August 28-20, 2026
 - Location: Dubuque, IA
 - THEME: Bringing out the Best



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN in this NEWSLETTER

This newsletter contains the following:

- Governor's Goals for 2025-26 - p. 2
- Presidential Incentives - p. 3
- Membership Growth Incentives - p. 4
- Clubs honored at First Quarter - p. 4
- Cookie Baking Contest - p. 4
- Description of A&A reports - p. 5
- Upcoming events - p. 6
- What you will learn at 1st Quarter Conference - p. 6
- Ideas for community betterment - p. 7
- Registration form for 1st Quarter Conference - p. 8



GOVERNOR GOALS FOR 2025-2026:

- Governor hopes to make at least one visit to each club – meeting or event.
- Each club is an Honor Club.
- Build 5 new clubs.
- At least 10 distinguished clubs in the district.
- At least 5 distinguished Lt. Governors in the district.

GOVERNOR GOALS FOR FIRST QUARTER CONFERENCE:

80 in attendance
10 first timers
10 participants in the cookie baking contest
Raise \$1500 for OIF



What could a club bring to the first quarter conference?

- A team of club members
- Club Banner
- A holiday-themed basket for the Optimist Foundation silent auction
- Entries for the cookie baking contest (3 dozen)
- Money for a Heads or Tails activity after lunch (Foundation Fundraiser)
- Club donations to the Foundation
- Your Optimist spirit!

**If we're going to bring out the best in
people, we need to sow seeds of
encouragement.**



Presidential Incentives

Our International President, Tom Kendo, has established the following membership incentives for the 2025-2026 year.

CLUB RECOGNITION

Merit Club

- Grow Club by Net +0 members (maintain beginning Oct. 1 membership count)
- Make a non-restricted contribution to the OIF of at least \$100
- Be current on District and International dues and fees

Honor Club

- Meet Merit Club Requirements plus grow club by Net +3

Distinguished Club

- Meet Honor Club Requirements plus one of the following:
Grow Club by Net +15 members or Charter 1 or more new clubs



DISTRICT RECOGNITION

Merit District

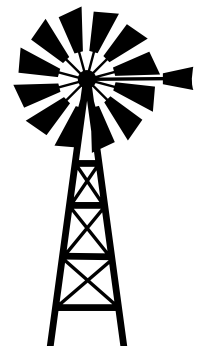
- Grow District by Net +10 members
- Raise \$7500 in non-restricted contributions to the OIF
- All District reports filed with OI as required

Honor District

- Grow District by Net +10 members and build 1 new club or Grow District by Net +25
- Raise \$7500 in non-restricted contributions to the OIF
- All District reports filed with OI as required

Distinguished District

- Grow District by Net +25 members and build 3 new clubs or Grow District by Net +70 members
- Raise \$10,000 in non-restricted contributions to the OIF
- All District reports filed with OI as required



The Governor's challenge to each club is to be an Honor Club this year!

Membership Growth Incentives

(to include Regular & Friend of Optimist Recruits)

These following membership growth incentives have been established by your membership growth chair, Dave Phillips.

Individual Incentive Awards:

Drawing Each Quarter - \$100 gift card

If you recruit 1 member then get 1 entry in hat. 2 members, 2 entries, etc.

Top Recruiter for the Year - \$150 Gift Card

Recruitment of a Minimum of 2 members - hand crafted, personalized pen (50 pens to be awarded)

Lt. Governor Incentive Award:

Zone with Highest Net Growth % for the Year - \$200 gift card

Club Incentive Awards:

Highest Net Growth % Each Quarter - \$200 check

Highest Net Growth % for Entire Year - \$200 check

Highest Retention % at Year-end - \$200 check

(Deceased/Members who have moved not counted; must have recruited a minimum of 3 members)

HONORING OPTIMIST CLUBS of 60+ YEARS

The following clubs will be honored at the First Quarter Conference on October 18 at The Courtyard by the Marriott in Ankeny, IA. Those clubs include:

Waterloo (1929)

Des Moines (1934)

Cedar Rapids (1937)

Davenport (1940), Iowa City (1949)

Dubuque (1953)

Marshalltown (1955)

Cedar Rapids Thurs. Noon (1955)

Coralville (1958)

Council Bluffs (1958)

Maquoketa (1961)

Red Oak (1964)

Solon (1965-66)



***Congratulations to these clubs
who have brought out the best in
their communities for 60+ years!***

Cookie Contest

Held at first quarter conference.

Purpose of contest is to raise money for a JOI Service Project



... and have FUN

Judging for Two Awards

- **Best cookie** judged by JOI
- **Fan Favorite** (use tickets to vote; selected by those in attendance)

Size of sample

Bring 3 dozen

Bring recipe card to display

Price is \$5 to sample all cookies.

5 tickets used to vote for Fan Favorite. All remaining cookies will be delivered to the local fire department.



Achievements and Awards (A&A)

To emphasize the importance of following OI and District policies and procedures and to help clubs be successful, the Awards and Achievements program may be conducted in the Iowa District in the following way (once approved by the Exec Board at first quarter)

The format of the A&A Report has changed from previous years. No longer are points assigned to each item. Instead, the report will function as a report card to keep the Governor informed of the club's activities. The report will be sent to the clubs in a fillable form after 1st quarter conference and is to be completed and submitted by **January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10**. Each club that returns the report on time will be entered into a drawing to be conducted at District Conferences/Convention. **The winning club will receive a \$75 check from the District.**

This form is to be mailed or e-mailed (preferred) to the A&A District Chair:
Sharon Phillips, 4075 Aspen Hills Drive, Bettendorf, IA 52722 or call 563-340-6595
e-mail: IowaOptimistAandA@gmail.com

Please send a copy of your report each quarter beginning in January. Keep the original and use it to add the information for each subsequent quarter so that the final submission will reflect all four quarters. Copies will NOT be returned. To show which items were accomplished during the quarter being reported, check the box under the appropriate quarter. For those items requiring a number entry, it will be indicated in the description of the item. If an item is repeated in more than one quarter, it should be recorded in each quarter it's accomplished. The following categories are included on the report:

OI Signature Programs:

For more information on the Oratorical Contest, Communication Contest for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (CCDHH), Essay Contest, Junior Optimist International Clubs (JOI), Junior Golf and Optimists Working for Learning Success (OWLS), refer to Signature Programs under Member Resources on the Optimist International website.

Club Projects:

List the projects your club did during the reporting quarter. If it was a joint project with another service club, please identify as such.

Club Fundraisers:

List any fundraisers that were done during the reporting quarter.

Administrative:

The Impact Report for completed projects is a new program being rolled out by Optimist International on October 1, 2025. More information to follow.

Membership:

Counts will be automatically totaled for the year. Information on C.A.R.E. programs can be found at <https://www.optimist.org/documents/C.A.R.E%20Program%20Overview.pdf>

Information on NOW programs can be found at

https://www.optimist.org/documents/now_brochure.pdf

Information on Friend of Optimist can be found at

https://www.optimist.org/documents/2025/foo_faq.pdf



Meetings/Conferences/Conventions:

Counts will be automatically totaled for the year. Optimist International Foundation:

Information on Optimist International Foundation can be found at:

<https://www.oifoundation.org/>

Training:

Counts will be automatically totaled for the year. Information on and Personal Development Program (PDP) and Personal Growth and Involvement (PGI) can be found at Optimist Institute

<https://optimist.tovuti.io/>

Public Relations:

Information on how to submit articles to Optimist Magazine can be found at

<https://www.optimist.org/member/documents3.cfm>

Achievements:

Governor Jane's goal for the 2025-2026 Program Year is for all clubs to achieve Honor status.

Upcoming Events

Grinnell Fly-In Breakfast!

The ONLY French Toast Fly-In Breakfast in Iowa!

Grinnell Regional Airport

At Billy C. Robinson Field

Saturday, October 4, 2025

6 am-11 am

on Hwy 146, ½ mile North of 1-80 Grinnell, Iowa



See what you can learn at First Quarter Conference!

October 18!

Using AI to Market an Optimist Club: (*Denise Schmidt Crawford, ISU Professor*) This presentation explores how artificial intelligence (AI) can help Optimist Clubs share their mission, attract new members, and engage their communities more effectively. We begin with simple examples of AI tools that clubs can use right away—such as creating eye-catching flyers and social media posts, drafting newsletters, or analyzing which types of events attract the most interest. We highlight the benefits AI brings to nonprofits, including saving volunteer time through automation, personalizing communication to different age groups or community interests, and providing insights on what messages inspire the most action. Real-world scenarios show how AI can help clubs tell their story more powerfully. The session also addresses important considerations, such as staying authentic, keeping member information safe, and using AI responsibly as a tool that supports—not replaces—the human connection at the heart of every Optimist Club.

How to Conduct a Contest: (*Judy Boyd, Theresa Dunkin, and Len Wright*) Optimist International sponsors three scholarship contests for students to earn money to pursue opportunities in higher education: the Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH), the Essay Contest and the Oratorical Contest. The contests are conducted at the Club level, then Zone and Regional (if necessary) and at the District level. District-level scholarships are funded by the Optimist International Foundations and awarded by Optimist International. Chairs from each of the Iowa District Scholarship Contests will be present in a Roundtable format to answer your questions on How to Conduct a Contest.

OIF Grants - Helping Optimist Help Kids: (*Sandi Schmidt and Rebecca Butler-Mona*) Want to learn more about how your club could "earn" money from the Optimist International Foundation (OIF) to support your club's projects? Join us as we talk about the Club Grants and Childhood Health & Wellness Grants offered each year by OIF. We'll cover application forms, deadlines and suggestions to help make your club's grant application stand out in the crowd of applications. With a stated mission of "Helping Optimists Help Kids", OIF wants your club to bring these grant dollars to Iowa to support the youth and your community. Let's make that happen!

Growing in Your Outreach Through Technology: (*Lynnae Hillyer*) Come to this session to learn more about Optimist Institute - how to enroll or renew, examine the free resources that might prove useful for your club meetings, and see what courses might help you with leadership in your club. Time is provided for you to explore the OI website and the resources available. Receive assistance with Leaders Online - how to check your roster and membership progress. Those who attend are encouraged to bring their laptop or personal device from which to work.

Bringing out the Best

Looking for ideas on how to be play a part in community betterment?

Here are a few ideas of how clubs are making a difference in their communities in the fall:

- Participating in local Trunk or Treat programs
- Playing a role in local food pantries
- Backpack programs for schools
- Honoring good citizens in schools
- Serving at a local community Thanksgiving Dinners
- Community star programs - purchasing gifts for those in need
- Mitten and Hat trees
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace bed builds
- Giving to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library
- Supporting a local Shop with a Cop program
- Helping with Breakfast with Santa
- Volunteering at local community events
- Working with after-school programs



Consider the needs in your community and consider how you can assist in meeting the need by cultivating Optimism!



Iowa District Optimist
1st Quarter Conference
October 17-18, 2025
Courtyard by Marriott

2405 SE Creekview Drive, Ankeny, Iowa 50021



Friday, October 17, 2025—Executive Committee (Casual District Attire)

Lt. Governor's Dinner..... 5:30 p.m.

Executive Business Session..... 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 18, 2025—District Board (District Business Attire)

Registration..... 7:00—8:30 a.m.

PGA (Past Governors Association) Meeting..... 7:15—8:15 a.m.

Morning Social.....7:30—8:30 a.m.

First Timer Orientation..... 8:15—8:45 a.m.

Opening Session (District update & Celebrate clubs for 60+ years).....8:45—9:45 a.m.

Training/Workshops Session.....10:00—11:45 a.m.

(Assistance with Optimist Institute & Leaders Online, How to conduct contests, Writing Grants)

Zone Meetings.....11:45—12:15 a.m.

Lunch & Guest Speaker.....12:15—1:25 p.m.

Special Service Project: Creating Pod Packets for those in Need.....1:25-1:35 p.m.

Special Activity: Best Cookie Contest..... 1:30—1:50 p.m.

Special Presentation: Understanding AI and how to use it for marketing... 1:55-2:30 p.m.

Closing Session.....2:30—3:30 p.m.

Lodging: Courtyard by Marriott: 2405 SE Creekview Drive, Ankeny, Iowa 50021

Phone 515-422-5555

For Guaranteed Iowa District Optimist Room Rate of \$119.00 - need to book by October 3

Group code: Iowa District Optimist

Registration – Detach, Mail or Email:

Early Registration Deadline October 7, 2025..... \$35.00

Late Registration October 8 and after..... \$50.00

Send To: District Sec/Treas.-Marguerite Fehseke 145 Crestview Drive Burlington, Iowa 52601

or Email: mmfehseke@yahoo.com

Make checks payable to: IA District Optimist

" This is my first-time attending a District Conference.

Optimist Name: _____

Club Name: _____ Club # 40-____ Zone _____

Email: _____ Club/District offices _____

Special Dietary Request (ex. Vegetarian) _____