



DECEMBER, 2025



Jane Schmidt, Governor
Marguerite Fehseke, Secretary Treasurer



IOWA DISTRICT OPTIMISTS

CULTIVATE OPTIMISM



Davenport Noon Optimist Club Honors Girls Basketball



The Maquoketa Optimist Club donated to T. J. Stockings to help children have a better Christmas season. Pictured is Maquoketa Optimist Club membership, Krabberhoff, Carol Hamenill and Todd Weise from T.J. Stockings.



Pride and Purpose

When attending the 85th Anniversary celebration of the Davenport Noon club, VP Ben stated, "Let's look back with pride and look forward with purpose." What a great challenge for all of our clubs! We can look with pride at the significant difference we have made in our communities but also look ahead with purpose to continue our drive to bring out the best in youth and our communities. In doing that, we are bringing out the best in ourselves.

It has been a joy visiting clubs across Iowa. For those whom I have visited, thank you for your welcoming ways and continue the good work you are doing. For those I have not yet visited, know I plan to see you sometime this Optimist year. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have a special event coming up or if you simply want a visit.

Wishing you all happy holidays and a beautiful beginning to a new year. Continue your great work with cultivating Optimism Across Iowa!

Governor Jane

Cultivating Optimism In Our Communities

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:

- **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

Begin planning for Jan. 31. Set your club meeting for Jan. 31. Prize for the club that has the highest number in attendance!

**Prize for the most creative costumes/hats!
(More info on the next page.)**



Second Quarter Conference January 31, 2026 9:30-11:30am



THEME: Bringing out the Best in our Communities!

This is an opportunity for each Club to come together in their respective part of Iowa and participate in a District Zoom Meeting with their clubs or by zones.

Presenting a Potpourri of Community Service Ideas!

Maquoketa: Fireman's Banquet, Law Enforcement Banquet

Des Moines Area: Student Achievement Banquet

Bettendorf: Honoring Good Citizens

Davenport Noon: Honoring Coaches and Athletes

Oskaloosa: Kite Flying Festival

Council Bluffs – Manna Cares: Special Activities

Burlington-West Burlington: Storybook Characters

Dubuque AM: Monthly Crafts with Special Needs

Underwood: Dictionaries for Third Graders

Grinnell: Fly In Breakfast

Guest Speaker: Diane Nelson from The Iowa Girl Scouts of the USA



Awards:

Most in Attendance by %
Most Creative Hats/Costumes



Membership Update

What a Great start in "Cultivating Optimism" across our District in October; i.e., membership growth of a net +8 (but recently dropped to -1). If we continue our commitment to growth and retention, it will ensure attaining our membership growth goal for this program year. (+3 per club!!!)



Incentive Leaders (so far) for the 1st Quarter

Individual: Debbie Keast, Riverside Optimist Club

Club: Riverside Optimist Club

Lt. Governor: George Volz, Zone 2



Friend of Optimist

I encourage clubs to engage in this recruiting option. It is an excellent opportunity to promote your club's existence in your respective communities. Also, it serves as a potential fund raiser as Optimist International rebates \$56 of a Friend's membership dues of \$140 to your club. The Friend application can be downloaded from the OI website. If you want hard copies, please email me (phillips363@mcshi.com) your mailing address.

Yours in Optimism,
Dave Phillips
District Membership Engagement Chair



Iowa District Growth Initiative: Facebook Marketing Campaign

**The following clubs will take part in a training by Erin Houseton
on Monday, Dec. 15 at 7 PM via zoom:**

Washington Township, Burlington West Burlington, Kalona,
Fort Madison, Mediapolis, Bettendorf,
Wayne of Corydon, Maquoketa, Peosta,
Dubuque AM, Cedar Rapids Thursday Noon,
Urbandale, Grinnell,
Southwest Iowa collective effort



New Club Projects

Keokuk
DeWitt
Clinton
Glenwood
Waukee



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL!

Growth Recognition Criteria

Who will be recognized?

- Within the Net+ Districts, the top 10 Districts will be listed by name and Governor's name
- Top 10 Net+ Clubs will be listed by name and President's name
- Clubs that grow from <7 to 7 or more members

Retention Recognition Criteria

Who is eligible?

All Districts and all Clubs – no need to opt in

What is measured?

- Retention is based on member deletes adjusted for valid reasons
- Deletes for deceased, moved, or transfer are removed before calculating retention

When is recognition given?

- Quarterly, based on end-of-quarter membership
- Featured in the second issue of Newsday Tuesday following each quarter



Retention means:

- Members feel valued and connected
- Clubs are communicating consistently
- Members see meaningful opportunities to serve the youth and their community
- An Optimistic return for their investment of time and money

How will they be recognized?

Video Interview

- A Top 10 Governor and President will be interviewed
- Link to video interviews in Newsday Tuesday
- Snippets will be included in social media

Newsday Tuesday

- Second Tuesday of month following each quarter
- Top 10 Clubs and Districts in Growth listed
- List of Clubs moving to 7 or more

Digital Badge and Certificate to top 10 leaders



Achievements and Awards (A&A)

Chance to win \$75 for your club!

Sound good? All you have to do is submit the Achievements and Awards report by January 10th to be entered into a drawing for your club to win \$75.

The format of the A and A Report has changed. 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. Instructions for filling out the form can be found on iowaoptimist.org by selecting Achievements and Awards Program under the Programs heading. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to download the form.

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
e-mail: IowaOptimistAandA@gmail.com

NOTICE FROM OI: 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:

- Log into Optimist Leaders — submissions must be entered by a Club Officer (President, Secretary, or Treasurer).
- Click on "Club Impact Report."
- 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.
- 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!

Upcoming Events

NEWTON INSTALLATION BANQUET

We are pleased to announce that Urbandale and Grinnell Optimist Clubs have chartered a new Optimist Club in Iowa. You are invited to attend the Charter Banquet for the **Newton Optimist Club** on Saturday, December 13, at 1 PM. The banquet will be held at the Gezellig Brewing Company at 403 W. 4th St. N. Suite 103, Newton, IA. The menu includes: Pizza and beverages for \$ 20.

Make your reservation before Dec. 11 by emailing, texting, or calling Jane Schmidt - janeschmidt5@gmail.com.

Cell phone is 563-249-2536.

If you are unable to attend, please extend your congratulations with a card to Jane Schmidt at janeschmidt5@gmail.com (or mail to: 1499 235th Ave. Delmar, IA 52037). These will be shared at the banquet. You will help show them the pride of the Iowa District by attending their banquet or sending a note.

The club chartered on September 25 with 16 members. It would be great to see representation by a Club Officer or Club members by either attending or sending a congratulatory email or note. Clubs might consider bringing a Club check or gift as a donation toward their Youth Activities Fund or a silent auction item representing your club or community. The Newton Club will utilize the Flag Project loan program.

Thank you everyone. We hope you plan to visit Newton on Saturday, December 13 to welcome the **Newton Optimist Club!**



New Club Builders:
Mark Feilmann, Ames Optimist Club
Rich May, Grinnell Optimist Club
Sue Wunsch, Urbandale Optimist Club
Jane Schmidt, Maquoketa Optimist Club



Bringing out the Best

Looking for ideas on how to grow your club?

Here are a few ideas:

- Give a membership as a present - it can be a life changing experience.
- Offer special incentives for those in your club who bring in a new member.
- Make it easy to join: Simplify the registration and payment process.
- Offer incentives: Offer trial memberships or discounts. Present new members with t-shirts. Offer discounts for one spouse when married couples join.
- Make meetings fun and engaging: Experiment with different activities to keep meetings interesting and dynamic.
- This is a unique idea - Create different membership tiers: Offer different levels of membership with varying benefits to cater to a wider range of interests and budgets.
- Involve current members: Encourage current members to be active recruiters by asking for referrals and making them feel valued
- Use social media strategically: Post regular updates, behind-the-scenes content, and member testimonials to attract new people. Run targeted ad campaigns to reach a wider audience.
- Build a user-friendly social media page: Ensure your social media is easy to navigate and makes it simple for prospects to find information and register.
- Create compelling marketing materials: Develop a compelling message that emphasizes personal growth, community impact, and belonging. Use brochures and social media to spread the word.
- Collect and share testimonials: Share positive feedback and success stories from current members on your website or social media to build credibility.
- Bringing in speakers that have faced adversity with optimism. Have people who your projects have impacted talk about it to your club. Advertise on social media who your speakers will be and invite the public to attend.
- Hold a NOW event (New Members Welcome): Organize events specifically for prospects, such as a "bring-a-friend" or "open house" night, to give them a feel for the club. EX. One club holds a teacher appreciation event and then encourages teachers to become members.
- Hold a CARE event with your club to get member feedback. Talk to your Lt. Governor about facilitating this event.

