



FEBRUARY, 2026

Jane Schmidt, Governor
Marguerite Fehseke, Secretary Treasurer



IOWA DISTRICT OPTIMISTS

CULTIVATE OPTIMISM



**Des Moines–Western
Des Moines, North Liberty,
Maquoketa, and Coralville
serving at Ronald
McDonald Houses on
International Optimist
Day!**



Message from Governor Jane

Wow! It is hard to believe we are into the second quarter for this Optimist Year. It was fun to see so many online for our second quarter conference (118!). See Lamoni's picture above from our zone zoom meeting! The sharing by clubs was amazing with so many great ideas on how to bring out the best in our communities.

International Optimist Day was a great day of service! Various clubs served meals at the Ronald McDonald Houses in our state and donations were made to this very worthwhile organization. Thanks to the **Optimist International Foundation** for their starter donation of \$250 to every district governor across our nation and beyond. In many cases, clubs provided additional funds. For the RMH in Iowa City, the donation of \$250 grew to \$1000 due to the generosity of the Optimist Clubs of Coralville, Maquoketa, and North Liberty.

The **third quarter conference** will be held **April 17 – 18** at Hotel Millwright in the **Amanas**. (More information later in the newsletter.) For third quarter conference, the theme is **Bringing out the best in Youth**. I will be contacting clubs to share about their signature projects with youth.

We have been conducting a **Facebook Ad Campaign**, and we are hoping it will help our district grow. Looking forward to updates on our progress with this campaign in April.

Let's keep **being the change** as we **cultivate optimism across Iowa!**

Governor Jane



A message from our District Foundation Rep

Optimist International Foundation Election for 2026

Each year, the Optimist International Foundation (OIF) adds one new member to their Board of Directors. This year, there are three candidates for that Board seat:

Learn more about them at https://www.oifoundation.org/election_Candidates.html.

Then cast your vote for the one you feel will serve the Optimist International Foundation best for the next four years, with their term beginning October 1, 2026. Vote online on the OIF website (<https://www.oifoundation.org>) from February 1-28, 2026.

As Optimists, you are eligible to vote in this election if:

- You were a Dime-A-Day member during the 2024-25 Optimist year.
- You are the Club Foundation Rep (CFR) for a club who donated \$365 or more to the OIF during the 2024-25 Optimist year.

Any questions? Please reach out to me at schmidtsandi@gmail.com or **309-236-1342**.

Dime-A-Day – Support the Optimist International Foundation

Today is the day for you to become a **Dime-A-Day member for 2025-26**! You can make your donation of \$36.50 or more using one of these options:

□ Dime-A-Day form: <https://www.oifoundation.org/individuals/dime-a-day-form.pdf>

□ Donate online: <https://www.oifoundation.org/us-canada-donate.cfm>

Every Optimist who becomes a Dime-A-Day member by March 31 will be entered in a drawing for a fun prize basket to be awarded at the 3rd Quarter Conference. Already a 2025-26 Dime-A-Day member? Thank you, and your name has been included in the prize drawing.

The Optimist Club with the largest percentage of their members as Dime-A-Day members by June 30 will be recognized at our District Convention in August.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Optimist International Foundation!

Sandi Schmidt

District Foundation Rep, 2025-26



**OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION**

Membership Update

Membership Update

Membership growth has two facets; i.e., recruitment and retention. In order to reach our **District's net membership growth goal of a net +50**, it is imperative to focus on both facets. Through the first four months of this program year, we have done a commendable job in limiting the number of members deleted from our membership rolls compared to previous years. However, the recruitment of new members is lagging significantly at the end of January compared to previous years.

I am optimistic that the passion we share for the positive impact that our respective clubs are having on the youth in our communities will energize our recruiting efforts; thereby, giving others an opportunity to foster such passion. The following members have recruited at least two members this program year qualifying them to receive a hand-crafted Optimist pen turned by Carl McCarthy. **Deb Keast (Riverside); Dale Robertson (Underwood); Daniel Crouse (Red Oak); Jolynne Houck-Davis (Bloomfield); Shawn Conley (Iowa City); Jane Schmidt (Maquoketa); Jeff Waller (Davenport Noon); and Dave Phillips (Bettendorf)**



Congratulations for your recruiting efforts.

Yours in Optimism,

Dave Phillips

District Membership Engagement Chair



If you need membership pins, request them at this link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/6MErb8ZfL4>

Iowa District Growth Initiative: Facebook Marketing Campaign

The following clubs signed up to take part in a the Facebook Marketing Campaign:



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



Zoom meetings with Jim Boyd have taken place and Erin Houseton has been providing instruction for those who need help in designing their ad. It was the intent these would begin around Jan. 15 . We can run them until March 15 to complete this phase of the campaign so it is not too late to create and run one. Send your bills for the ad campaign to Marguerite Fehseke by the end of March. If you are a club who is not listed and want to try this campaign, please let Governor Jane know. Hopefully, we will be successful and grow this district!

**From Achievements and Awards Chairperson:
Sharon Phillips**



Thank you to all the 21 clubs who submitted First Quarter A and A reports. The winner of the random drawing was the **Optimist Club of Red Oak**. A check for \$75 is being forwarded to them.

Completing the A and A report provides an excellent way to determine the health of your club. And it gives your club a chance to win some money!

The submission deadline for Second Quarter Reports is April 10.

If you have any questions, Sharon's contact information is in the District Directory.

Optimist Essay Contest

The winning club essays are due to **Judy Boyd (boydjudy@gmail.com)** by February 28.



Optimist Oratorical Contest

Please email **Jeff Schmatt (jschmatt@gmail.com)** by February 20 if your club is planning to conduct an oratorical contest. He needs this information to organize zone contests.



Baskets for Third Quarter Conference



At conferences, we encourage clubs to donate a basket to raise money for the OI Foundation. The theme for third quarter will be: Spring into Optimism - focus on planting and growing things, as well as enjoying all the fun spring and summer have to offer.

Looking for ideas on how to grow your club?

Here are even more ideas:

- establish a public relations chair to publicize your club
- advertise your group at the library, banks, doctors' offices; contact local media - radio, TV
- put on social media who your guest speakers will be and invite the public to attend
- do a CARES program with your club to generate ideas on how you can keep your members engaged
- share photos of your club activities on social media
- meet with city leaders and inform them of your work to improve the community
- establish a membership chair and committee to build club engagement and membership

CONGRATULATIONS to the following clubs who have shown growth this year:

SIouxLAND +1

RIVERSIDE +4

KIMBALLTON-ELKHORN +1

UNDERWOOD +2

RED OAK +2

URBANDALE +1

OSKALOOSA +1

IOWA CITY +1

MAQUOKETA +2

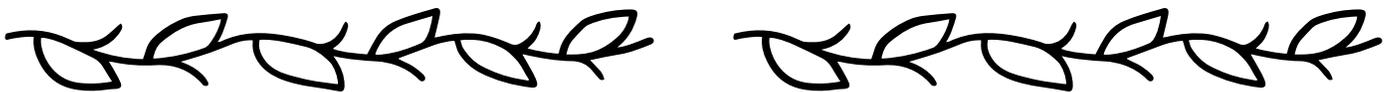
DUBUQUE MORNING +1

DAVENPORT NOON +2

BETTENDORF +5



KEEP GROWING!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Cultivating Optimism Across Iowa

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:

- **Third Quarter Conference:** April 17-18, 2026
 - Location: Amana Colonies, IA (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 28-30, 2026 **PLEASE COME!!!!!!**
 - Location: Dubuque, IA
 - THEME: Bringing out the Best

Third Quarter Events:



BRING YOUR QUARTERS to Third Quarter!

When touring the Ronald McDonald House in Iowa City, it was noted that the only thing the family has to pay for are the vending machines in the basement. Your quarters will be provided for families facing health challenges to purchase drinks from the vending machines. Let's see how much we can raise in quarters for these families!

GUEST SPEAKERS:

•Oratorical contestants

•2025 Iowa Teacher of the Year



•Ronald McDonald House of Iowa City Volunteer Manager

3rd Quarter Cookie Bar Contest

We have already determined the best cookie bakers in the IA District Optimist Clubs -

Janet Lloyd (DesMoines) with Fan Favorite - **Emily**

Johnson (Maquoketa). Now it is time to determine the best dessert bar in our Optimist Clubs. Bring your pans of bars to third quarter. The bars should not need refrigeration and may be your special brownie recipe..

Judges will sample and vote for the best dessert bar. Attendees are invited to bring money to sample the bars and vote for a fan favorite. Let's see how many entries we can receive. Remaining bars will be delivered to the local police departments.

