



AUGUST, 2026

Jane Schmidt, Governor  
Marguerite Fehseke, Secretary Treasurer



IOWA DISTRICT OPTIMISTS

# CULTIVATE OPTIMISM

OI World Oratorical Contest in St. Louis was absolutely the BEST! IA District Oratorical winner Jordyn Velitchkov from Cedar Rapids was named the World Oratorical Champion! She will be addressing our convention on Saturday, Aug. 29!



Some excited new members seeking to charter an Optimist Club in Clinton.



Chartering night for the DeWitt Optimist Club.

## Message from Governor Jane

***Running through the tape not to the tape***...club visits, World Oratorical Contest, chartering and working towards chartering clubs - It has been a very active month. Now plans are being finalized for a memorable District Convention. We have several special guests who plan to attend. Looking forward to visiting with many of you in Dubuque and also learning about and raising funds for local organizations like **Project Rooted** (<https://projectrooted.com/>) and the **Two by Two Character Development Program** (<https://twobytwoeducation.org/>).

This month it has been a joy to watch our District move from -26 to a +4. Red Oak is at a +8 and several others are not far behind. As we increase our membership, we increase our ability to make a difference in our communities and also increase our ability to bring out the best in youth. Membership ebbs and flows but what we do leaves a beautiful legacy. Congratulations on the amazing things you are accomplishing across Iowa!

When you view the fields across Iowa, it is evident the planting of seeds and their careful cultivation are providing a productive harvest for the fall. Our clubs are also planting seeds and cultivating great opportunities for the youth of our communities. Michael Jordan once said, "Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen." Optimist Clubs across Iowa are definitely making it happen!

Keep **being the change** as we **cultivate optimism across Iowa!**

Governor Jane

# YOU DID IT!

Our district is still jumping for joy about our Meals from the Heartland project to meet food scarcity issues faced by Iowa families. Our goal was to raise \$6300 but with your generosity we raised \$10,545. THANK YOU!

For those clubs who pledged a donation, please send checks made out to  
MEALS FROM THE HEARTLAND to:

**Marguerite Fehseke, IA District Secretary/Treasurer**  
**145 Crestview Dr. Burlington, IA 52601**

It is important we have many members there on Saturday afternoon to accomplish this huge undertaking of packaging over 31,000 meals. Please consider taking part in this district service project during the state convention.

Thank you to the following Optimist Clubs for their generous donations towards the Meals from the Heartland project on Saturday, Aug. 29 beginning at 2:30:

|                        |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Council Bluffs         | \$1300.00 |
| Davenport Noon         | \$1000.00 |
| DesMoines-Western Noon | \$1000.00 |
| Dubuque Noon           | \$1000.00 |
| Ankeny                 | \$1000.00 |
| Fort Madison           | \$1000.00 |
| Dubuque AM             | \$ 500.00 |
| Riverside              | \$ 500.00 |
| Urbandale              | \$ 400.00 |
| Maquoketa              | \$ 350.00 |
| Bettendorf             | \$ 300.00 |
| DesMoines              | \$ 300.00 |
| Peosta                 | \$ 250.00 |
| Ames                   | \$ 200.00 |
| Griswold               | \$ 200.00 |
| Mediapolis             | \$ 200.00 |
| Underwood              | \$ 200.00 |
| Winterset              | \$ 200.00 |
| Shenandoah             | \$ 145.00 |
| Newton                 | \$ 100.00 |
| Oskaloosa              | \$ 100.00 |
| Wayne-Corydon          | \$ 100.00 |
| Washington             | \$ 100.00 |
| North Liberty          | \$ 100.00 |



# **Our Iowa District is GROWING!**

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the following clubs who are showing growth:  
**SIouxLAND +1**

**RIVERSIDE +6 (HONOR CLUB) AMAZING GROWTH!!!**

**COUNCIL BLUFFS (HONOR CLUB) +3**

**KIMBALLTON-ELKHORN +1**

**UNDERWOOD +5 (HONOR CLUB) AMAZING GROWTH!!!**

**MANNA CARES +3 (HONOR CLUB)**

**RED OAK +8 (HONOR CLUB) AMAZING GROWTH!!!**

**DES MOINES - WESTERN DES MOINES +6 (HONOR CLUB) AMAZING GROWTH!!!**

**URBANDALE +5 (HONOR CLUB) AMAZING GROWTH!!!**

**AMES +1**

**WATERLOO +2**

**GRINNELL +1**

**IOWA CITY +1**

**OLON +1**

**MAQUOKETA +7 (HONOR CLUB) AMAZING GROWTH!!!**

**DUBUQUE MORNING +4 (HONOR CLUB) AMAZING GROWTH!!!**

**NORTH SCOTT +1**

**BETTENDORF +5 (HONOR CLUB) AMAZING GROWTH!!!**



We need our Iowa District to be at +25 and grow one more club in order to be designated a Distinguished District. This is our goal and we are close to accomplishing this. Consider adding a new member if you need to drop one.

There are grants available to help get clubs **BACK IN BALANCE** (back to where your club was Oct. 1, 2025) We currently have 24 clubs that need to get Back in Balance. 18 of those clubs only need to add 1 or 2 members. Attached to the email are grant opportunities to create a **NOW event (New Optimists Welcome)** or to create a **social media presence**. I have also attached a flyer you could use by filling in your club information and putting around your community or handing to potential new members. Let's continue to grow! It will take all of our clubs working together for our district to be distinguished. We can do this, Team!

*"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things."*

*— Mother Teresa*

# AN IDEA FOR STARTING A NEW CLUB:

## Building a Club Within a Club

A “Club within a Club” is a group of at least 15 new Optimist Members who are added to your Club in order to expand service to your community. They are still members of your Optimist Club, but they function somewhere outside the scope of your Club’s traditional membership base and activities.

Look for any opportunities within your community. Think of a special project that needs to be accomplished. Are there other volunteer groups working in your area whom might benefit from a partnership with your Optimist Club?

Consider your Club’s current membership. Are there any groups in your community that you are failing to attract? Younger people? Community College students? Teachers? Men? Women? The most successful Optimist Clubs have diverse memberships reflecting a cross-section of all ages, genders, professions, and backgrounds existing in their communities.

There is no Charter fee for a Club within a Club. Clubs will be billed for the Members of the “Club within a Club” in the same manner in which they are billed for other members. A regular, adult member still pays the \$15.00 processing fee and full International and District dues. If they are Friends of Optimist, college Members, \$30 under 30, etc., they will be billed accordingly. Any class of Optimist Member may be included in a “Club within a Club”. They will be included in your dues billing along with your other members.

All 15 members must be added on the same day. You may add the members yourself online at [www.optimistleaders.org](http://www.optimistleaders.org). After that, notify Optimist International that you have done so. Please email [jim.boyd@optimist.org](mailto:jim.boyd@optimist.org) or call 800-500-8130 ext. 226 or 227 with any other questions.



# IOWA STATE FAIR

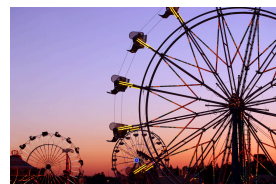
The Iowa District Optimists have a presence every year at the Iowa State Fair. We have an entry in the parade on Wednesday, Aug. 12. Put on your Optimist gear and come be a part of the fair parade! (Entry #40)

**For the Optimist table in the air-conditioned Varied Industry's Building, we have a few shifts still available:**

State Fair link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080E48AEAA2DA4F58-63165469-2026>

**Come visit our optimists at the State Fair. Both Governor Jane and OI World Oratorical Champion Jordyn Velitchkov will be riding in the Fair Parade on Wednesday, Aug. 12 at 6 PM.**



## Childhood Health and Wellness Grants

Final opportunity this Optimist year: August 21, 2026 Grant Deadline  
The Optimist International Foundation provides matching grants for up to \$1,000 to help Optimist Clubs expand their impact for meaningful projects that fit into one or more of these categories -

### **Four Core Categories of Childhood Health and Wellness:**

- ❑ **Healthy Lifestyles** (Child Obesity, Healthy Eating, Physical Fitness, Happy Heart Advice, March of Dimes)
- ❑ **Chronic Diseases** (Childhood Cancer, Juvenile Diabetes, HIV, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Sickle Cell Anemia)
  - ❑ **Mental Health** (Depression, Bullying, Abuse)
- ❑ **Disabilities** – Physical, Intellectual & Developmental (Autism, Special Olympics)

Application guidelines with a fillable form can be found at this link:  
[https://www.oifoundation.org/downloads/Childhood\\_Health\\_Wellness\\_Grant\\_Application\\_Fillable.pdf](https://www.oifoundation.org/downloads/Childhood_Health_Wellness_Grant_Application_Fillable.pdf)

# A Message from our District OIF Chair:

## Sandi Schmidt

Our District Convention at the Grand Harbor Convention Center and Resort is coming up soon! The Convention will be packed with lots of fun, learning and socializing, including great opportunities for you to support the Optimist International Foundation (OIF).

Plan now to bring your **basket or item for the OIF silent auction**. The theme this quarter is “**Fun and Games**”. Here’s some ideas to get you started thinking about your donation - the last barbeque of summer, tailgating, board games and puzzles, movie nights, wine and cheese, or anything that lets us enjoy the time we spend with those we love.

OIF Board member Jennifer Kendo (yes, Tom is her husband) will be at our Convention, so let’s show her firsthand just how generous Iowa Optimists are in our support of the Foundation!

Thank you for all you do to support the Optimist International Foundation! You’ll have a **chance to win a print** highlighting OIF Board President Fatima Plater’s theme, A Legacy of Giving for the Children.

If you or your club have not yet supported the OIF with your donation this year or if you want to give more, you’ll have an opportunity to present your gift during the Convention.



# District Convention News

## Friday, August 28, 2026

- 2-5:00 PM     **Registration and credentialing**  
3:00 – 4:15     **Executive Committee Meeting** – Room 3  
4:30             **Mid-Afternoon Choices**

- Walking tour of Dubuque or enjoy a lovely river walk
- Take a tour of St. Luke's Methodist Church Tiffany Windows
- Journey up the side of the hill via the Fenelon Place Elevator
- Visit the Mississippi River Museum or the Diamond Jo Casino



5:30     **TRAVEL TO LOCATION** (suggest carpooling with others): Dubuque Arboretum

6:00     **Meal** catered by Kalmes – MENU: Grilled Brats and Chicken Sandwiches

Enjoy **Music bingo** (DJ Express)– cash donations towards BINGO cards will go toward Project Rooted in Dubuque. **Speaker:** Connecting kids to real food, from the Ground Up (speaker from Project Rooted)

8:30-11:00     **Hospitality room** at the Grand Harbor Resort

## Saturday, August 29, 2026

- Welcome International **President Tom Kendo & First Lady Jennifer** and **Great Plains VP Thomas Lloyd**
- Recognize those who have **served in the military**
- Celebrate those nominated for **Optimist of the Year 2025-2026**.
- WORKSHOPS: **President/Lt. Governor Training, Secretary/Treasurer Training, How to write a News Release, Identifying your Leadership Styles, Ideas for Having Fun with your Club**
- Model Luncheon: Guest Speaker– **Jordyn Velitchkov, OI World Oratorical Champion**
- Learn about the **Two by Two Program** that encourages good character and participate in a **Chuck a Duck Contest** with donations going to the Two by Two Program
- Meals from the Heartland packaging

## GOVERNOR'S BANQUET in Evening

- **Honor** this year's district team, introduce next year's team, install Joleen Jorgensen as the new Governor for 2026-2027
- **Guest Speaker:** Samuel Schmidt – topic: **Foolish Optimism**

## Sunday, August 30, 2026

**All Optimist Breakfast, Memorial Service** for those Optimists who have passed during this past year (clubs are welcome to share memories), **General Business Session** with the voting on and induction of our new Governor Elect.

**Hope you can join us for this fun-filled time with Optimists from across Iowa!**

