



OCTOBER, 2026

Joleen Jorgensen, Governor
Gerri Barnett, Secretary Treasurer



IOWA DISTRICT OPTIMISTS

TUNE INTO OPTIMISM

Message from Governor Joleen

Welcome to the 2026 - 2027 Optimist year. This past year, Governor Jane Schmidt did an outstanding job in Cultivating Optimism. Now is the time to Feel the Beat move your feet, as we keep the momentum moving forward as we "Tune Into Optimism." Wouldn't it be nice for our District to have Back to Back positive hits?

As a child my grandparents had an older Philco radio. When I visited, I enjoyed listening to that radio. It always seemed to have notes of nostalgia. Occasionally, the frequency did not come in well and adjustments were made in order for the station to come in correctly. We as Optimists need to keep dialing in, in order to keep the static and noise out of our airwaves. We as Optimists need to change the tempo and promote positivity. Once we inundate the airwaves we can nurture and improve what occurs within our communities. I believe Optimists in the District can develop powerful beats that speak to communities throughout our District. However, we must work at this together. Optimist members and Optimist Clubs are the DJ's of their own lives, and I believe we can keep making the right harmonies versus minor chords.

During each conference we will be learning how to better promote ourselves within the communities we reside. We will talk about using a "Branding Day." We will also celebrate long term Optimist members. Those individuals are a key to the success of Optimism and truly are making a difference in the communities in which they serve. I want to set a tone and investigate the use of Club within a Club. I intend to turn up the volume on all forms of media platforms. This is in addition to encouraging a more visual presence at Festivals, Fairs and parades, to make more of a visual presence to those around us. Think for a moment what it would be like if every community had an Optimist Club within our District. Wouldn't that make life sound better? We would be changing the world one song at a time from our radio. I believe this could happen if we worked together.

I am looking forward to meeting all the clubs during this next year and seeing the impressive Clubs in action. I will take delight in seeing our members living out The 10 promises in our beautiful Optimist Creed.

I want all of you to prepare to share this Optimist year as we turn up the volume button on the radio as we tune in. We all can create a new rhythm and keep this tempo moving forward.

Governor,
Joleen Jorgensen

What you will find in this newsletter:

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Page 2: Important dates for this Optimist year

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Page 4: Outline of our Essay and Oratorical Contests

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early registration extended to Oct. 5

Page 7: Registration form for State Convention in August

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Mark your calendar for the following **important dates** in this Optimist Year:

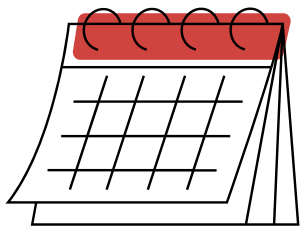
Dates to Remember

First Quarter Conference – October 23rd –24th, 2026

The Courtyard by Marriott

405 SE Creekview Drive Ankeny, IA 50021

2nd Quarter Conference– February 27th, 2027 via Zoom
9:00 – 11:30 AM



3rd Quarter Conference – April 23rd–24th, 2027

The Courtyard by Marriott

405 SE Creekview Drive Ankeny, IA 50021

Optimist International Convention – July 6th – 9th, 2027

Hyatt Regency

601 Loyola Ave New Orleans, Louisiana 70113

4th Quarter Iowa District Convention – August 27th–29th, 2027

Hotel Millwright

800 48th Ave Amana, IA 52203



**OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION**

Dime-A-Day

Optimist International and Optimist International Foundation coexist as two separate organizations that support each other. Optimist International Foundation is the fundraising arm of Optimist International, and works to develop funds to support the endeavors of Optimist International and its mission.

When Members and Clubs make a contribution to support Optimist International Foundation, they are, with that gift, supporting Optimist International itself and themselves as a Club as well.

With just one dime a day, you can become part of the movement of "Helping Optimists Help Kids" and become part of a large group of Foundation supporters who realize what a difference they make every day in the lives of children. Would you consider making a gift of just a dime a day to assist the charitable work of Optimist International?

The 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.

Building a future where every kid counts
Can you spare a **dime a day**?

☐ Sign me up! Please accept my \$ _____ donation. (Enclose check, payable to Optimist International Foundation, referencing "Dime-A-Day" in the memo section.)

☐ Sign me up! Please accept my \$ _____ donation. Charge my ☐ MC ☐ Visa ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Account # _____ Exp. ____/____ Signature: _____ Security Code _____

☐ Sign me up! Please deduct \$3.05 per month from my checking account.

Checking account number: _____ (Please include a copy of a voided check)

Name _____ Email _____

Club Number _____ Member Number _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Please return to: Optimist International Foundation • Dime-A-Day Campaign • P.O. Box 952126 • St. Louis, MO 63195



OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONTESTS 2026-2027



Topic

**“How My Actions Strengthen
Those Around Me”**

ORATORICAL CONTEST

Beginning in 1928, the Oratorical Contest has become the longest-running program of Optimist International. The contest is designed for young people to gain experience in public speaking and provide them with an opportunity to compete for multiple college scholarships with a pre-assigned topic.

District Scholarships:

First Place: \$2,500 • Second Place: \$1,500 • Third Place: \$1,000

**with a chance to win up to \$22,500 at the
World Championships level**

ESSAY CONTEST

The Essay Contest is sponsored by Optimist International to give young people the opportunity to write about their own opinions regarding the world in which they live. The approach can encompass a young person's personal experience, the experience of their country or a more historical perspective. In addition to developing skills for written expression, participants also have the opportunity to win a college scholarship!

One District Scholarship of \$2,500



Topic

**“Finding My Voice in a
World Full of Noise”**



Topic

**“How My Actions Strengthen
Those Around Me”**

COMMUNICATION CONTEST FOR THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

This contest offers an opportunity for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing to present their thoughts in the community, gaining skills, which can only come from signing or speaking to a large audience. Patterned after the Optimist Oratorical Contest, the contest offers youth the chance to compete in speech or sign language with the chance to win a college scholarship.

One District Scholarship of \$2,500

Note from our Membership Chair, Dave Phillips



Friend of Optimists–An Accommodating Membership Option

Often in our membership recruitment efforts, we hear the following–" I don't have the time to attend club meetings or get actively involved in the activities/projects of the club." In response to that comment, we can inform the potential recruit of a membership option which provides the opportunity to support the positive impact our club is having on the youth in our respective communities without making a time commitment. The recruitment of "Friends" provides an opportunity for us to make the existence of our club known (our Club provides our Friends with an attractively framed certificate–see below) and to raise funds; i.e., a Friend membership costs \$140 of which Optimist International rebates \$56 to the sponsoring club.

Potential Friends include: business owners; Professionals (your family doctor, lawyer, accountant, pastor, insurance agent, etc.); your neighbors; friends; adult children; spouse; school administrators; city officials; and others. Our District's membership recruitment incentives this Program Year will include two incentives; i.e., for the individual member and the club recruiting the most Friends.

To learn more, check out the [Friend of Optimists Brochure](#) (\$140 annually to OI with \$56 sent back to the club) and read the [Frequently Asked Questions](#). To apply for membership online, [click here](#).

CONFERENCE BASKET IDEAS FOR THE OI FOUNDATION SILENT AUCTION

FIRST QUARTER THEME: Fall, Thanksgiving, and even Christmas. Could be artwork, mums, tailgate baskets, Iowa or Iowa State items, wreaths – items and baskets worth \$25 or above.

THIRD QUARTER THEME: spring and summer related items. Beach or pool baskets, garden baskets, a weekend get a way for mom for Mother's day. Or any item you feel is worth \$25.00 or above.





Iowa District Optimist 1st Quarter Conference **October 23-24, 2026**

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



Tentative Agendas

Friday, October 23, 2026—Executive Committee

Lt. Governor's Dinner 5:00 p.m. Executive Committee Session 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 24, 2026—District Board

Registration 7:30—8:30 a.m. PGA (Past Governors Association) Meeting 7:15—8:15 a.m. First Timer Orientation.....8:00—8:30 a.m.
Opening Session.....8:30—9:55 a.m.
Training/Workshops10:00—11:45 a.m.
Lunch.....11:45-1:00 p.m.
Zone MeetingStarting at 1:00 p.m.
Workshops.....1:30—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 Group code: Iowa District Optimist

For Guaranteed Iowa District Optimist Room Rate of \$119.00 - **need to book by October 1**

Registration – Detach, Mail or Email:

Early Registration Deadline **October 1 2026** \$40.00 1st Timer Discount

Price.....\$30.00

Late Registration **October 2 after** \$50.00

Send To: District Sec/Treas.-Gerri Barnett 23 Oak Drive Fort Madison, Iowa 52627
or Email: jooiful@gmail.com

Make checks payable to: *IA District Optimists*

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

Optimist Name: _____ Club # _____ Club

Name: _____

Email _____ Club/District offices _____

Dietary Requests ☐ Specify _____

2026–2027 Iowa District Optimist Convention

August 27–29, 2027



Location

Hotel Millwright
800 48th Ave.
Amana, IA 52203

Hotel Contact

319-838-5015



Rooms \$154 (plus taxes/fees), Room Block expires July 26, 2027

	Price	Total
Full Registration (if registered by July 27, 2027) Includes:	\$150	

**General Sessions, Training, Model Club Luncheon,
Friday Fun Night, Governor's Banquet, Memorial Service, and All-Optimist Breakfast**
AFTER JULY 27 - PRICE IS \$175

Prices below are single event registration amounts

Friday, August 27, 2027,

Friday Fun Night (included in full registration)
AFTER JULY 27 - PRICE IS \$50

\$30

Saturday, August 28, 2027,

Model Club Luncheon (included in full registration)
Inspirational speaker and service project
AFTER JULY 27 - PRICE IS \$65

\$45

Governor's Banquet & Entertainment
(included in full registration)
AFTER JULY 27 - PRICE IS \$75

\$55

Sunday, August 29, 2027,

All Optimist Breakfast (included in full registration)

\$35

Memorial Service for those optimists who were deceased in the past year
AFTER JULY 27 - PRICE IS \$45

Amount Enclosed

Make check payable to:

Iowa District Optimist Convention 2027
Attn: Darlene Smith
347 Fox Run Dr., North Liberty, IA 52317

NOTE: One form per person please

Name: _____

Club Name, Number, Club Position: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Special Food Needs: _____

E-Mail: _____

Promos you can use to advertise your club: Graphics from Optimist International Facebook Page



Follow **Optimist International** on **Facebook**
and share their motivating posts along with
your club information to build your
membership!