



# Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor

August, 2020



Governor Linda Wheeler

## Message from Your Governor

What a year this has been! However, we have been able to meet the challenge of COVID-19 head on for the past five months with success; working on new or re-iMagine projects to serve our communities, discovering new ways to engage our youth, donating or volunteering to worthy causes, and keeping our optimism during one of the most difficult pandemics the world has ever seen.

Please continue to reach out to your club membership, especially those who are at high risk and are not willing to venture out to be with others. Consider appointing someone in your club, who enjoys visiting, and ask them to keep those who are not attending the club meetings up-to-date on club activities. If the weather is good, meet in a park or driveway to visit and engage with each other while practicing social distancing.

Even though it has been hard to get new members because of our "stay at home" instructions, we have added 69 new members. Sadly, we have lost 179 members

for various reasons. We can continue to invite friends, family, and associates from work or your communities. Invite them to your club activities and Zoom or club meetings. Any new members will help boost your club with their enthusiasm and energy. Listen to their ideas. By being open you may find new activities or re-iMagine projects or fundraisers.

I realize it is tough to stay positive and upbeat, given what is happening around us. To quote a baseball analogy "We are sitting on a fast ball and all life is throwing at us is curves." I believe we all need to figure out how to hit those curves! I am in awe of your commitment and dedication in very tough, and at times a depressing situation.

Personally, I would like to see every club stronger and ready to take an optimistic challenge into Sandra Allen's year. Be Safe, Be Strong, Be Optimistic for a Great Tomorrow!

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## Dates to Remember!

### August 15, 2020

Updated bylaws due to Optimist International

### August 17, 2020

Webinar "The Professional Growth and Involvement Program: How to Start Your Journey" 7 pm

### August 22, 2020

#### Cancelled

Summer Bash for Childhood Cancer Fundraiser  
Donations are appreciated!

### August 29, 2020

Nebraska District Convention  
Zoom Event  
Registration Form on [nebraskaoptimists.org](http://nebraskaoptimists.org)

### August 30, 2020

Childhood Health & Wellness Grant applications due to Optimist International

### September 1, 2020

Club Officer Election Reports due to OI (Requirement for Honor Club)

### September 21, 2020

Webinar "Making Sure that the Club Paperwork is Done!" 7 pm

### September 30, 2020

Optimist of the Year Due to Marge Melroy, District Chair

Last Day of 2019-20 Administrative Year

### October 1, 2020

First Day of the 2020-21 Optimist Year

### Notice

#### August 15, 2020

The deadline to submit updated bylaws to Optimist International.

#### August 30, 2020

The deadline to submit Childhood Health & Wellness Grant applications to Optimist International for \$1,000 matching grants.

## Nebraska Virtual Convention Updates

### Registration for Nebraska District Convention (Invite your friends to attend)

All Nebraska District members can now register for the 2020 Nebraska District Convention. The fee to register is \$10 and the funds raised from convention registration will be donated to the Optimist International Foundation. Should any one wish to give more to the Foundation, an additional donation may be added. There is also an option to mail a check to Dale Beckmann, District Secretary/Treasurer, for registration.

Also new this year, we are inviting non-optimists to join us. If you have a past Optimist member, friend, or family member, invite them to join us.

### Raffle of the Childhood Health and Wellness Quilt

Angela Tintori, Childhood Health & Wellness Chair, will be drawing the winning ticket for the beautiful quilt made and donated by her mother. Raffle tickets may be purchased when registering for the District Convention or by contacting Angela Tinori. (see article and picture on this page.)

### Eligibility to Vote at the 2020 District Virtual Convention

There will a Convention Session to discuss and vote on the Proposed District Policies. All clubs wishing to be included in the vote must have their club dues and fees paid for the 1<sup>st</sup> three quarters of the 2019-2020 year prior the 2020 Nebraska District Convention.

A copy of the Proposed District Policies is posted on the District website, [nebraskaoptimists.org](http://nebraskaoptimists.org).  
Linda Wheeler, Governor

### Overview of District Convention

Plans have been made to replicate the virtual convention as close to an in-person event as much as possible. The Zoom convention will start with a BYOF&B Fellowship Breakfast, but of course you will have to Bring Your Own Food & Beverage to your electronic device.

There will be opening ceremonies followed by the business session and Board of Directors Meeting. The business session will include the announcing of the 2020-21 Lt. Governors. The new business will include the Club and Zone attendance Banners and Committee Reports. The afternoon Convention Business Session highlight will be the election of a 2021-22 Governor. During the morning there will be breakout sessions and an address by Governor Linda. More breakout sessions are scheduled for the afternoon. In addition there will be a Memorial Service, and Closing Ceremonies.

For a \$10 registration fee you can spend a Saturday with your Optimist friends without ever leaving home or even having to get all dressed up. Just go to [www.nebraskaoptimists.org](http://www.nebraskaoptimists.org) and register, purchase raffle tickets for the beautiful quilt to help fund Childhood Health and Wellness program, and make a donation in your name to the OI Foundation. We hope to see you on August 29th, even if it is by way of Zoom!

### Buy Raffle Tickets and Help Childhood Health & Wellness!

As was mentioned in the February "iMagine More" newsletter, OI initiated a new program titled "Childhood Health & Wellness." Clubs and Districts will now have the opportunity to

create projects and services to improve the quality of life for children across a broader spectrum of needs: Healthy Lifestyles, Chronic Diseases, Mental Health, and Disabilities.

Since this is a new program, it needs to be funded and I am asking all of my fellow Optimists for your support. My talented Mom, Sharon Tintori, has pieced together a beautiful quilt using Optimist colors with batik fabrics that is up for raffle. It was quilted by a friend, Pat Doro and it is gorgeous!



Angela Tintori with the beautiful quilt.

The original plan was to sell the raffle tickets at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Conferences and have the drawing during the District Convention. Due to the pandemic we were unable to have a 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Conference so an opportunity was missed to purchase tickets, but it is NOT too late! You can purchase tickets by sending your money to me, Angela Tintori, 5141 Jade Court, Lincoln NE 68516 OR you can purchase tickets through Venmo using @Angela-Tintori. Tickets are \$5 each or five tickets for \$20, OR you can purchase tickets when you register for the District Convention. The drawing will be held during the District Zoom Convention on Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>.

Thank You for your help in serving the children across Nebraska.

Angela Tintori  
[angelatin2000@yahoo.com](mailto:angelatin2000@yahoo.com)

## OI Updates

### OI Deadlines

**August 15<sup>th</sup>**

Optimist International is requesting ALL Clubs update their Club Bylaws, using the new language OI has provided. This information was sent to all the Club Secretary-Treasurers and is posted on the Nebraska District website. Please work on this and file your updated Bylaws to OI **before August 15<sup>th</sup>**

**September 30<sup>th</sup>**

Optimist International has asked every Club to submit their end of the year paperwork **well before September 30, 2020**. Paperwork includes: Club's Pride Report, Club Officer-Elect Report (if not already completed), and recognition of a Club member or local community individual.

Club dues, and if donating to the Optimist International Foundation, must be paid prior to September 30<sup>th</sup>. If mailing, these cannot be postmarked September 30<sup>th</sup> but must arrive in St. Louis on September 30<sup>th</sup> or before.

Rational: Optimist International has been moving the deadlines back this year and this has created a large amount of paperwork to be entered into the system before OI is able to report to each District's 2020-2021 Executive team in a timely manner.

### Fly Your Optimist Flag

Optimist International is introducing a new way to celebrate the start of the Optimist Year. On October 1, Optimist Clubs around the world are encouraged to work with the local government organizations to fly the **Optimist Flag** at a municipal building or similar facility. If you do not have a flag, order from Shumsky, the OI official suppliers.

## Members Can Now Join At-Large!

Do you know someone who wants to join an Optimist Club, but cannot find one nearby? President Elcock announced at the 2020 Virtual Convention a new membership category, Member-at-Large. This category is ideal for those who live in locations where there is no club available and are not able to commit to starting one on their own. This does not replace the Friend of Optimist category, which is available to those who want to support Optimist International, but do not want to make the commitment to full membership.

Information on how to join as a member-at-large will be available soon.

### Get the Benefits of the Virtual Convention

All sessions from the iImagine 2020 Virtual Convention are still available through September 30, 2020. This means that if you were busy that weekend, or if there is something you want to review, you can still get the benefits of the training and speakers.

If you did not register for the 2020 Virtual Convention, you can go to [www.optimist.org/convention](http://www.optimist.org/convention) and register.

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## “Better Late than Never” Doesn't Work for the Scholarship Contests! Start NOW!

It is never too early to start thinking about and making contacts for the Optimist Essay and Oratorical Contests. Students benefit in multiple ways by entering in addition to the scholarships that are available for the District winners!

The essay contest allows students to express their opinions on the given topic. They will have to put their thoughts in an organized and logical manner and in turn, they are developing their communication skills. Many times during their lifetimes, their written communication skills are the first impression made with prospective employers or clients and co-workers.

The winners of the District Oratorical contests move on to the Regional contests, and those winners move to the World Championship. This summer a student from Illinois won the World Championship and received a \$15,000 scholarship in addition to the \$2,500 scholarship for winning the District contest. That amount represents significant funds toward a student's higher education! If a student from Illinois can win, why can't it be a Nebraska student next year??

If your club is having difficulty in getting students to enter the contest, start with the younger students in the “Kids Speak Out” programs. It is a pre-Oratorical program that will create interest and will lead to a pool of oratorical contestants in a few years. By conducting a ‘pre-Oratorical’ program, it will help students be more prepared for the Oratorical competition. The ‘Kids Speak Out’ program is basically aimed at elementary school age students. More information regarding this pre-Oratorical program, can be found on the Optimist International website; click on Member Services, and click on Community Activities. Let's do all we can to help a Nebraska student win a \$15,000 scholarship and maybe that student will be representing your Optimist Club!

Betty Totten,  
Co-Editor District Newsletter

## Omaha Miracle Hills Placed in the Top Three for the 2018-19 “Optimist Club of the Year”

The International Optimist Club of the Year is the highest achievement an Optimist Club can attain in the Optimist organization. The “Optimist Clubs of the Year” are judged and ranked by multiple judges. The winner is chosen regardless of number of members, or region and is known as the “International Optimist Club of the Year.” Community outreach and impact on children and members from projects throughout the year are considered as part of the judging

The Omaha Miracle Hills Optimist Club conducted many successful community service projects, such as the making of fleece blankets for the students at J.P. Lord Elementary school. Students at this school have many special needs and the fleece blankets keep them warm in transport to and from school.



l to r: Corinne Wastell, Ron Nelson, Ron Neiderhaus, Curt Huston with bags of fleece blankets

Club members also help at the annual toy distribution event held at the Open Door Mission each year; parents get to come with their children and pick out their Christmas treasures. As many Optimist clubs do, MHOC members ring bells to earn Christmas money for the Salvation Army to help families in need. MHOC honors a student of

the month and also a student of the semester rotating between four different high schools and middle schools. Each year 1-2 students from Burke High School receive scholarships. These are but a few of their many community-based activities.

Most of the fundraising to support these activities include the Avenue of Flags where 500+ flags are placed in local neighborhoods, and parking for the Nebraska State Track Meet. On the district level, MHOC participates in and supports the Oratorical, Essay, CCDHH and Tri-Star Sports programs.

Included among MHOC's 56 members are three past Nebraska District Governors.

Thank you to the following members who served on the committee that completed the Optimist Club of the Year application and produced a video to accompany it: Tamara Bailey, Curt Huston, and Marguerite Hansen.

Carla Gries  
Co-Editor District newsletter

### “1, 2, 3! The Power of 1, 2, 3!” July's New Members Elkhorn

**Ronald Nelson**  
sponsored by Andrea Abrahamson

**Lincoln West**  
**Jason McCartney**  
sponsored by Troy Cooney

**York**  
**Tyler Herman**  
sponsored by Jack Vincent

*Welcome to our world of  
providing hope and a  
positive vision to our youth!*

## “Support Your Local Sheriff,” Firefighters, EMTs, Police, and All First Responders!

No, we are not referring to the 1969 movie starring James Garner and Walter Brennan, but Nebraska Optimist Clubs **are** encouraged to show support for their community's first responders. At the last Executive Board Meeting, Zone 9 Lt. Governor David Thelen reported on the North Platte Club's plans to honor their first responders and he hoped all clubs in the District would do the same.

The board agreed that our First Responders deserve to be recognized. Every day they work in high stress situations due in part to the current social climate and the pandemic, in addition to responding to accidents and other emergencies, some of which are life-threatening.

Some clubs have already shown appreciation in various ways such as providing a meal, as was done by the Blair, South Sioux City and Lincoln Evening Clubs or sending thank you notes for their service as done by the Lincoln Friends Club. The North Platte Club is planning to have a picnic followed by a fireworks display. They are anticipating that they could have 400-500 people at the event and are working to enlist the support local businesses.

If your club has already shown support to the first responders, or when you do plan an event to Support your Local First Responders, please let us know so we can report it in the District newsletter.

Betty Totten, [bettytotten1@gmail.com](mailto:bettytotten1@gmail.com)

Carla Gries, [dcgries@cox.net](mailto:dcgries@cox.net)

Betty Totten,

Co-Editor District Newsletter

## Where There is a Will, There is a Way

Growing up on the farm, my brothers and I used to play on the dirt piles. One of our favorite pastimes was to place a hose at a precise location to create a stream which would cascade down our imaginary mountain. Using a popsicle stick, walnut, rock or other object to make a dam, it was fascinating how the water would inevitably change course in such a way that the water would go over, around or under whatever obstacle was placed in its path to reach the ultimate goal.

The past five months have been a challenge on "Optimist Mountain". Clubs have been forced to find unusual ways to meet and to serve their communities.



Many have been doing an on-line format, using emails and texts to communicate. Others have been holding meetings by Zoom or conference calls.

Projects are being completed while conforming with social distancing and community mask mandates, for example: boxes of chalk have been placed in parking lots and on sidewalks, some near nursing homes where isolated residents are able to read messages through their windows; cases of bottled water have been left for consumption by individuals waiting in lines at COVID-19 testing sites or at the Department of Motor Vehicles, near a sign displaying the Optimist logo and stating "Provided by" or "Courtesy of the (name) Optimist Club". Prepackaged, individually wrapped snack items have been left at police and fire stations or given to bus drivers, refuse haulers, and letter

carriers, each with a sticker thanking them for their service and identifying the Optimist Club responsible. This is also an opportunity to visit with the recipients about who we are, what we do and invite them to a live or virtual meeting or to assist with a project.

These are suggestions for ways Clubs can get over, around or under this coronavirus pandemic mountain. Don't let a "dam obstacle" stop the flow of creativity, community service or recruitment.

Judith Conway Kluge  
Growth Chair

## A&A (Achievements and Awards) Report

What a crazy year we are having! My sister Mary Sanders, Lincoln West President, and I lost our mother in April and we have been taking care of family affairs so I had to curtail Optimist duties for a bit. I dropped the ball and did not send out a reminder to send in third quarter reports. A few clubs did remember to send them. You are welcome to send them anytime or wait and combine with your 4<sup>th</sup> quarter/year-end report.

For those that have not submitted any A&A reports this year, you may submit one report at the end of the fiscal year. The form is available near the bottom of the District webpage. It says Second Quarter Form but it is the same form so please use that. In October, once all the forms for the year are in, I will compile the data and share it with you. It will be fun to see how various clubs are doing with social distancing and stay-at-home guidelines. Please stay safe and WEAR A MASK, it saves lives!

Judy Winkler  
A&A Chair

## Sponsors Who Reached Significant Milestones\*

Congratulations to all Nebraska Optimists who have sponsored new members during this past two quarters. Your pin and letter from Optimist International will be mailed to you with my note of sincere thanks for inviting a new member to your club. Please engage them and *involve them* in your club activities to serve the children of your communities. Wear your Sponsor Pin with pride and encourage others in your Club to join you in promoting growth, recruitment, retention for your club and community.

Linda Wheeler, Governor

### Member Who Has Sponsored 5 New Members!

Mycki Nissen - SouthWest  
Omaha

### Members Who Have Sponsored 10 New Members!

Troy Post - North Bend  
Linda Wheeler - Blair

### Member Who Have Sponsored 15 New Members!

Jack Vincent - York

\*This information is current through  
June 30, 2020.

## PGI – PDP? What's the Difference?

The Personal Growth and involvement (PGI) Program, developed over 25 years ago, offers every member the opportunity to learn more about Optimism while advancing through ten levels of personal growth, long-term Club involvement, leadership development and individual achievement. This program will help you to become a better, more knowledgeable volunteer while also helping your club grow. With the completion of each level you will receive a colored disc to be placed behind your membership pin to show your accomplishment. You can learn more about

this program by participating in the next OI webinar, “The Personal Growth and Involvement Program (PGI) – How to Start your Journey” on August 17, 2020.

As Optimist Members we also have other parts of our lives that can always use improvement. The newer Professional Development Program (PDP) was designed to help members enhance their resumes with skills that are marketable professionally by taking a project from creation through completion. The COVID pandemic provides an excellent opportunity for members to develop a new program or re-iMagine an existing program, ex. to include social distancing, facemasks and other safety precautions, which is ideal for advancing through the levels of PDP. While many of the PDP levels have the same color designation as the PGI levels, upon completion of each level you will receive a certificate that can be presented to an employer/supervisor to verify knowledge and skills necessary for successful project management.

While members are encouraged to work at their own pace and can complete the requirements for each level of both programs in any order, the recognition will be in sequential order, for example even though everything for level 4 has been completed the recognition will not be awarded until after level 3 is finished. Once everything for a level is done the work must be certified by an Officer at the corresponding level of activity/involvement, *i.e.* Club Officers for local projects and District Officers for the upper levels which include more District activities. Complete the appropriate program recognition form and submit it to the District Director of Personal Growth and Professional Development who

will in turn compile and submit all of the recognition for the entire District for presentation at the next District Conference.

So which should you do – PGI or PDP – it is entirely up to you. If you haven’t started either program, you may want to consider the Professional Development Program. If you have questions on either program, please feel free to contact me at [imnoptimist@yahoo.com](mailto:imnoptimist@yahoo.com) or 402-518-0720.

Cindy Von Fange,  
District Director of PGI and PDP

## Making a Difference

**South Sioux City Optimists** are helping to provide school supplies for at least two South Sioux City elementary schools. Last month the club hosted their annual Youth Appreciation Dinner following the COVID-19 guidelines. They also announced the Friend of Youth and Junior Friend of Youth Awards at the dinner.



Some of the South Sioux City youth who were being honored go through the serving line at the Youth Appreciation Banquet.

In the July issue of the iImagine More newsletter, it was noted the **Norfolk Noon Club** had started the Prime Time Family Reading Time sessions. Mark Classen has provided additional information regarding the program. The program is in collaboration with Humanities Nebraska and each week a featured book is read and followed by a discussion. One of the featured books was “Why Do Mosquitos Buzz in people’s

Ears?” and the discussion topic was “fairness” as it related to the book. A light meal is provided at each session along with child care for the younger children.

The **Ogallala Optimist Club** is proud to partner with Keith County Foundation Fund to assist Ogallala Public Schools to bridge the Homework Gap. The Club presented a check for \$2,000 to Pam Abbott and Angie Kolste towards the purchase of touch screen Chrome books for OPS students. (source - Facebook)

Congratulations to the three Nebraska District Clubs that “made it into the Club Project video for the OI Virtual Convention.” Congratulations **Nebraska City, Lincoln Sunrise, and Lincoln Friends!**

**Seward Optimists** sponsored a successful Virtual Freedom Run on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. They had 50 registered runners from North Carolina to California. Not bad for a re-iMaged run from their traditional 4<sup>th</sup> of July run. Should any club be interested in a virtual run fundraiser, contact the Seward Club for information on how to set one up.

The **Omaha Miracle Hills Optimist Club** made a donation to the Sunny Slope Neighborhood Association to create a Little Free Library. The project is now complete and stocked with books.

