



# Nebraska District Optimists



**Sandra Allen, Governor**  
January, 2021  
OI 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Theme  
“Happiness”

## Mark Your Calendars!

**January 18, 2021**

OI Webinar - 7 p.m.  
“Effective & Fun Meetings –  
Online, In Person or Hybrid”

**February 4, 2021**

Optimist Day

**February 15, 2021**

Deadline to File Form 990-N

OI Webinar – 7 p.m.  
“Club Facebook Basics”

**February 19 & 20, 2021**

Academic Decathlon State Finals

**February 26-27, 2021**

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Conference  
Zoom Event

**February 28, 2021**

Essays Due to  
District Chair Lana Urban  
“Reaching Your Dreams by  
Choosing Optimism”

**March 15, 2021**

OI Webinar - 7 p.m.  
“What is your Club Marketing  
Strategy”

**April 10, 2021**

A&A Reports Due to Judy Winkler

**April 19, 2021**

OI Webinar - 7 p.m.  
“Take Me to Your  
‘Next’ Leader”



Sandra Coaxum Allen, Governor

“In every life we have some  
trouble; but when you worry,  
you make it double.”

- Bobby McFerrin, *Don't Worry Be  
Happy*

## Happy New Year!

We have made it through the year 2020. We have celebrated a holiday season filled with challenges we never would have imagined. We have finished the first quarter of the 2020-2021 Optimist year. We have filled purses with special items and gave them to special people, displayed flags in our communities, honored first responders, provided food and clothing for those in need, cleaned up our neighborhoods to keep them beautiful, and re-imagined traditional projects to make sure the kids could still participate in Halloween and other holiday events. We have kept our young athletes busy with 5k runs or walks, fishing derbies,

basketball, football and golf. It has been a great 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

So here we are in 2021. OI President Mark Weinsoff has chosen “Happiness” as the theme for the second quarter. With that theme in mind, we will kick-off our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter conference exploring ways to achieve happiness and a sense of well-being through better mental health. Join us at the virtual conference on February 27<sup>th</sup> and get tips on how to “talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet,” especially to yourself.

We have a lot of work to do toward meeting the goals we have set for this Optimist year. In pursuing these goals, we are pleased to announce that Mary Lou Andersen of the Lincoln Club has accepted the chairmanship of the Leadership Development Committee. It is more important than ever that we each do our part to make sure we have a successful year.

Thanks to those who have already brought in new members. Even though OI no longer offers special membership incentives, it is still important that we have members who continue to inspire optimism in our communities. Thanks to those club members who have helped build new clubs in Nebraska, Lebanon and Ghana. We're off to a good start.

*(continued on next page)*

If your club needs assistance with recruiting new members, building a new club, setting up an essay or oratorical contest, or if you need ideas about how to plan community events in the midst of a pandemic, please reach out to our district leadership team. We can even help you set up a virtual meeting so your club can continue to meet together. [See reprint of "Zoom Policy" in this issue, last page.]

In 1988, singer/songwriter Bobby McFerrin created a very upbeat song called "Don't Worry Be Happy." The song has been described as "possibly one the sunniest songs ever written. He tosses out scenarios straight from the blues – no girlfriend, late rent, no cash—and smashes them **with optimism.**"

I know that the past few months have been very challenging for many of our Optimist clubs: no in-person meetings; for some clubs, no meetings at all; no fundraisers and limited community events. If you can't "social distance", then you can't have it. Very little interaction with other Optimists. I know you sometimes worry that our clubs will not survive the pandemic, but I encourage you to continue to soar with optimism! Face these challenges head on and smash them with optimism. After all, we've promised ourselves "to be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble."

So don't worry. Be happy!  
Governor Sandra

**Let the Youth Speak!**  
**Host an Oratorical Contest**  
The contest Planning Guide is available on the OI Website, under Member Resources, Programs, Scholarships. The District Oratorical Contest Chair is Gloria Epps at [gloriajepps@msn.com](mailto:gloriajepps@msn.com).

## 2021 OI Essay Contest - There Is Still Time!



It's not too late to find that special student who loves to write and bring out the best in our youth. This year may look a little different, so reaching out to a student interested in writing just may be the answer if it's not possible to hold a contest due to the pandemic.

Who do you know that may be interested in entering and could use some scholarship money for college? The winner receives a \$2,500 scholarship from Optimist International and the odds of winning are pretty good!! Please see the District website at: [nebraskaoptimists.org](http://nebraskaoptimists.org), and look for yellow tab, Youth Programs, click on District Programs, click the "details" tab under Essay Contest. There you will find all the information you need. The OI website also has the Essay Contest information plus more! The official topic for this year's OI Essay Contest is, "Reaching your Dreams by Choosing Optimism." The contest is open to students under the age of 19 as of October 1, 2020, and who have not yet completed secondary school. There is no minimum age.

So find that special student and/or contact Lana Urban with your questions, whether your club would be interested in sponsoring a student that has contacted Lana with their interest, OR would like to donate to help cover expenses with the contest. Her email is: [famofurbs@gmail.com](mailto:famofurbs@gmail.com) or call or text her at 402-641-3099. Deadline for entry is Feb. 28, 2021. Six more weeks to get your entry put together! This is something youth can do – write – and enter!! Thanks in advance for your interest.

Lana Urban  
District Essay Chair

## Childhood Health & Wellness

I am honored to be appointed by Governor Sandra to the position of Chair for the Childhood Health & Wellness Committee. In 2021, together we will continue to improve the quality of life for children in the communities we serve. Our focus areas remain Healthy Lifestyles, Chronic Diseases, Mental Health, and Disabilities.



The Optimist International Foundation will accept grant applications through January 29<sup>th</sup>. Projects are considered under the four focus areas in amounts ranging from \$250-\$1,000 which must be matched. Funds are to be spent within one year of when the matching grant is awarded.

For further information and to access the user-friendly grant application go to the OI Website at [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org), click on Member Resources, scroll down to Programs, and click on Childhood Health & Wellness. You may also contact me for assistance: [dcatalan@cox.net](mailto:dcatalan@cox.net)

David Catalan, District Chair  
Childhood Health & Wellness

## Is Georgia On Your Mind?

If so, you may be planning on attending the Optimist International Convention in Atlanta on June 30 – July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Why wait to make your hotel reservations? Do it now! If your plans have to change, you can always cancel your reservation, so WHY WAIT!?



**NOTICE** – A revised A&A form can be found on the Nebraska District website:  
[nebraskaoptimists.org](http://nebraskaoptimists.org).

## Coming Soon to Your Local Club – A Field Guide!!

Is your Optimist Club needing to find different ways to serve your community and your members? Optimist International Leadership Committee is developing a Field Guide to assist your Club with ideas. The Field Guide will soon be sent to all Nebraska District Clubs.

The Field Guide will include fundraising ideas such as partnering, collaborating, and seeking out grants from non-profits. Links will be provided in the field guide. The Optimist International Foundation will assist with your grant funding requests, as the OIF is a 501(c)3 which may be required by some non-profits. The Guide also will describe several successful fundraisers that can be accomplished with limited social contact, such as virtual fundraisers and directions for holding a Pop-Up Vendor Sale in a parking lot using social distancing. It will also have suggestions for community projects such as setting up a reading program for children via your Community Cable using local celebrity community members (Mayor, Police Chief, Coach) as readers.

More importantly the Guide will be full of ideas for keeping your Club members in touch, involved, and positive, using words to inspire hope. Respect your members who are restricted to their homes, but find ways to stay in contact. Even if it is only a card or phone call, you may never know how your words and effort may make the difference in someone's life. If your Club is using Zoom or Facebook Live, reach out to those members who are hesitant to use their devices. I heard of one 95-year-old man who with one-on-one personal instruction was not only able to learn to use

Zoom and be able to enjoy seeing and interacting with his fellow Club members, but he was also able to video conference with his physician.

The Field Guide will be full of ideas. Please take the time to look at it and consider, discuss, and adapt ideas for your Club and community. Let me know if I can be of any assistance

Linda Wheeler  
Club Fitness Chair 2020-2021  
[lawheelz@netzero.net](mailto:lawheelz@netzero.net)  
cell 402-452-4371

## PSSST! February 4<sup>th</sup> Is OPTIMIST DAY!!

Put on your Optimist shirt, vest, jacket, pins, and even your Optimist mask!



Wear your Optimist gear proudly on Thursday February 4<sup>th</sup> for the annual Optimist International Day! In our world of turmoil and pandemic, this day is needed more than ever. It is an opportunity to spread the mission of Optimism. OI is encouraging all Optimists around the world to promote our efforts in bringing out the best in youth, our communities, and ourselves.



OI is hoping all Optimists will take a selfie showing their Optimism, and will post the photo on social media with the hashtag #Optimist Day. They are also requesting that the photos be emailed to [marketing@optimist.org](mailto:marketing@optimist.org).

### Need a *Zoom* Tutor?

If you are interested in learning more about *Zoom* or just wanting to practice, we can help! Please email [neoptimists@gmail.com](mailto:neoptimists@gmail.com).

## A Perfect 10 + 1! December's New Members

### Gretna

Jeri Childers

Judy Bergman, sponsor

### Carissa Dickes

Violet Glasshoff, sponsor

### Paul Duin

Violet Glasshoff, sponsor

### Jami Ewers

Violet Glasshoff, sponsor

### Kirsten Troester

Violet Glasshoff, sponsor

### Norfolk Noon

Amanda Smith

Kayla Ramsay, sponsor

### Lincoln

Helen Andersen

Mary L. Andersen, sponsor

### Katie Andersen

Mary L. Andersen, sponsor

### Judy Klusman

Mary L. Anderson, sponsor

### Lincoln Friends

Duane Byerly

Angela Tintori, sponsor

### Friend of Optimists

North Omaha

North Omaha Center  
for Holistic Development, Inc

## South Omaha Club Is Almost Official!

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, a new South Omaha Optimist Club will be built. An organizing meeting will be facilitated by Mark Claussen of Norfolk to complete the official charter. The new club is co-sponsored by Al Penner of Miracle Hills and Dick Raasch of Breakfast. David Catalan of Miracle Hills is coordinating and recruiting charter members. An update will be in the next issue. David Catalan, Omaha Miracle Hills



## December Was a Busy Month for Optimists

**South Sioux City Optimists** were made aware of the Voices for Food project, a food pantry at a local church, was going unmanned because it had been manned by elderly church members who are at high risk for COVID. The Club will be the "muscle" for the food pantry at least until spring. Around 70 families are served each month.

**South Sioux City's JOI Club's** recent projects include a coat drive, Christmas cards to seniors and shut-ins, and a Positivity Wall at the local high school. (From Facebook)

The **Lincoln Evening Club** and members provided 160 pairs of pajamas to the Foster Care Closet. The donation was through the Scholastic Book project. With each pair of pajamas donated, Scholastic Books donates a book to go with the pajamas.



I to r: Melissa Masters, Crystal Masters, Dottie Williams. Not pictured Halle Pflughaupt

The **Lexington Optimist Club** had to re-imagine their 35th annual Operation Santa Claus project due to the pandemic. The need for assistance was higher than ever before. This year the project provided toys for 500 children from 175 families. Each child received two gifts. (From Facebook)

**Fairbury Optimist Club** was one of the Fairbury organizations that

sponsored free movies at the Bonham Theater last month. (From Facebook)

This was the 27<sup>th</sup> year for the "Operation Christmas Tree" project sponsored by the **Norfolk Noon Optimist Club**. With JOI helpers, the Noon Club delivered 30 evergreen trees and eight artificial trees to families who might otherwise not have a Christmas tree.



Norfolk Noon getting ready to deliver the Christmas trees.

Last month the **Norfolk JOI** clubs helped bag candy at Salvation Army. The bags of candy were for the 355 children who were registered to receive gifts. Another project, as part of JOI's "Adopt a Vet" program, was delivering cards that were made by **Norfolk MS** students, for local veterans to help celebrate the New Year.

Multiple churches in Holdrege helped the **Holdrege Optimist Club** serve the kids of Holdrege through their Toys for Tots program. In addition to toys, residents could drop off new socks and underwear for youth at their churches. (From Facebook)

**Omaha Southwest Optimist Club** was scheduled to help distribute food at the Millard Food Pantry on December 18<sup>th</sup>, however two thirds of the Southwest Club were quarantined with COVID or exposure to COVID. Carla Gries reports that "Our brothers and sisters in Optimism stepped up to help." From Miracle Hills Paul and Karen Keller and from Omaha

Breakfast Ron Nelson and Ivan Wineglass responded to the call.



I to r: far left, Karen Keller; Carla Gries; Corinne Wastell (blue jacket); Ron Nelson (standing at rear of car)

**Lincoln Friends Club** filled and donated six Christmas stockings for pediatric patients at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital.



Madonna staff members

The **Norfolk Club** provided Gifts and gift cards for their two "adopted families." Enough presents were purchased so that each child got almost everything on their wish list. In addition, several members purchased gift cards, and cash that the Club received went toward purchasing more gift cards. With matching funds from the Club, each family received a \$200 gift card from Target.

**Lincoln Evening, Omaha Miracle Hills, Southwest Omaha, Lincoln Friends, and Norfolk** all rang bells for charity. **Gretna** was unable to ring bells, but made a donation to a charity instead.



Having fun ringing bells! Lincoln Evening members Angela Tintori and Pat Driver

## Nebraska District Optimists Zoom Policy

- 1) All scheduled Zoom events must allow time for District and/or OI announcements.
- 2) The District Governor is the only one given preference when using the Zoom account for District business or committee meetings. **All other usage is scheduled on a first come, first served basis.**
- 3) Include the following information in your email request:
  - a. Name of Club/Zone/ Committee
  - b. Type/Purpose of use (e.g. Club Meeting, Club Board Meeting, Club Committee Meeting, District Committee Meeting, Zone Meeting, District Executive Meeting, NOW Meeting, Social/Coffee, etc.)
  - c. Contact name, phone number and email
  - d. Host contact information, if not same person
  - e. Day/date and time of Zoom event
  - f. Length of event (if longer than 1 hour)
  - g. Recurring Meeting Yes/No
- 4) Non-recurring meetings may be scheduled up to 3 months in advance.
- 5) Meetings **must** be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance. This allows the Marketing & Communications Committee to assign a host (in the case the Zoom Coordinator is not available).
- 6) It is recommended but not required for the host to complete the Zoom User Guide on the Optimist International Learning Management System (LMS) to become familiar with Zoom capabilities.

For additional questions or support contact the Zoom Coordinator, Jessica Von Fange at [neoptimists@gmail.com](mailto:neoptimists@gmail.com). Please add "Zoom Request" in the subject line.

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## Guest Editorial

### THE TRADITION OF CHANGE

By David Catalán, Miracle Hills

The dawn of a new year, a new decade, does not bring with it a new beginning. Rather, it is a new layer to overlay the one hundred already in place. This layer brings added strength, diversity, and creativity to the core values imbedded in our organization, Optimist International, and its thousands of roots spreading across the globe. This root system represents the strategic foundation upon which fresh growth thrives.

Our collective vision for Year 2021 should be SMART (Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable, and Timely). The Strategy has been proclaimed in Governor Sandra Allen's goals statement for the year. Now it is our turn to aggressively build a network of teamwork and resolve to assure completion of that vision. Positive and optimistic change cannot occur in individual isolation. The roots of change need to be nourished with care and maintenance. All must contribute and participate in the process.

Saying goodbye to 2020 is a cathartic relief! Welcoming 2021 is a bright challenge for Optimists everywhere. Our fundamental traditions so wisely voiced in the Optimist Creed still proudly stand. Our communities still value the good deeds Optimists share with neighborhoods, schools, churches, social service nonprofits, and our families. Let us make a New Year's Resolution to brighten the beacon of hope and service for the enrichment of us all. Happy New Year!

The views expressed in the Guest Editorials are the writer's views and do not necessarily reflect the views of Optimist International, the Nebraska District, or the Omaha Miracle Hills Optimist Club.