



Nebraska District Optimists



Sandra Allen, Governor
July, 2021
OI 3rd Quarter Theme
“Success”

Mark Your Calendars!

July 14 – 29, 2021

2021 Optimist International Junior
Golf Championship dates

July 22, 2021

Oratorical Regional Contest**
Northeast & Great Lakes
and Great Plains Regional
Contest – live stream
8:30 – 11:45 a.m.

July 30, 2021

3 on 3 Basketball Tournament
Sponsored by Hickman Optimist
Club - Start time 4 p.m.
Hickman Community Center
Deadline to [register](#) – July 23rd

North Omaha Optimist Club
Annual Fish Fry – 11 a.m.
Zion Baptist Church
2215 Grant Street

August 1, 2021

MAYF Kickoff for Childhood
Cancer Wine Tasting Party**
Charlie’s On the Lake
4150 W 144th St., Omaha

August 20-21, 2021

Nebraska District Convention**
Omaha

August 30, 2021

[Health and Wellness Grant
Applications](#)
due to OI Foundation

**see details in this issue



Sandra Coaxum Allen, Governor

“And will you succeed? Yes! You will indeed! (98 and ¾ percent guaranteed.)” - Dr. Seuss, Oh the Places You’ll Go!

We are soaring into the last quarter of what has been a very challenging Optimist year. During the first quarter we developed our **resiliency** - demonstrating that we have what it takes to continue to serve in the midst of a health pandemic and social crisis. During the second quarter we were able to lift one another’s spirits as we experienced **happiness** on the International Day of Happiness by sharing fun and fellowship virtually. Most of our clubs continued to meet and continued to serve, overcoming challenge after challenge, as we took a deep breath and **rallied** together during the third quarter and put things in gear for the big finish. And here we are, at the last quarter of the 2020-2021 Optimist year.

This is the time of Optimist conventions, designation of next year’s leaders, and the final push to become Honor and Distinguished clubs. We celebrate the work of our district committees and we celebrate the achievement of some of the goals we set at the beginning of the year. We congratulate the winners and participants of our essay, oratorical, and golf competitions. We just returned from Atlanta, GA (both in person and virtually) where we participated in the 103rd Annual Optimist International Convention, embraced old Optimist friends and made new ones.

We are soaring with optimism as we prepare for the Nebraska District Annual Convention that will be held August 20-21 in Omaha. We will be joined by our Great Plains Vice President, Terry Gorman (Wisconsin) who will install our 2021-22 district officers. Our featured guest will be Greg “Coach Roz” Roeszler (Southern California). Coach Roz, along with Buffalo Bills defensive tackle Harrison Phillips (Omaha-native), is the co-founder of Playmakers, a nonprofit organization designed to build leadership and character through sports and academics. Playmakers has been described as an organization with a “faith-based style whose goal is not to win, but to mentor kids so
(continued on following page)

they gain a sense of self-worth, giving them reasons to take pride in themselves, to learn respect – above all – for others, and to feel a sense of inclusion when they may have been passed by or not even given a chance to participate or belong!” Coach Roz and the Playmakers organization has provided sports camps throughout the country for many years and is currently working closely with Nebraska Optimist clubs to develop active programs within our district.

The theme for this final quarter is **success**. Success can be simply defined as the accomplishment of an aim or a purpose. For our district to be successful, it is important for each of our clubs to set specific goals to achieve by the end of this Optimist year. How many projects can your club complete before the regular school term begins? How many new volunteers will you recruit by September 30th? What percentage of your club membership will attend the District Convention in Omaha?

I believe that a significant number of our clubs can achieve Honor status this year, and I challenge you to do so. Did you know that each Honor Club represents 100 more youth being served in that club’s community?

To help you achieve that goal, the Nebraska District is introducing “**The Great Soaring with Optimism Campaign**” which is an exciting incentive campaign to encourage clubs to recruit more Optimist volunteers. There is more information about the Campaign in this newsletter, but here are some of the highlights. Any club that adds 5 new members between July 1 and September 30 will receive \$100 to use as the club sees fit, plus a “chance” to win a 4-day, 3-night vacation stay

at one of 32 Holiday Inn resort locations. Any individual member that brings in 8 or more new volunteers will receive a free, non-transferable, early-bird registration for the 2021-2022 Optimist International Convention in Reno, Nevada.

We have less than three months remaining for this year, so brace yourselves for a fast-moving, eagle-eye focus as we soar toward a successful year in Optimism!

Sandra Allen, Governor

Finish the Year STRONG!

Many Nebraska Optimist Clubs are meeting in person or combination of in person and virtual. For those clubs who are not comfortable in meeting yet -- please reach out to your club members who you have not seen or heard from recently. Consider holding a SOCIAL event inviting your members and family. Food is always a good draw. For those hesitant to meet together, allow for social distancing or make arrangements to meet for coffee.

Fellowship together is a key to having an active and energetic Club. Call and talk with your members to determine what type of meeting or activity they are willing to participate in. Your Club may have to re-imagine your activities.

Please let me know if you need any assistance or support. I am willing to travel and meet with any club.

Linda Wheeler
District Club Fitness Advisor
cell 402-452-4371

13 + 1 FOO = 14 New Members in June!

Omaha Miracle Hills
Elaine Adams

Robert Labeledz, sponsor

North Omaha
James Holt

Sandra Allen, sponsor

Terry Mclemore
William Graves, sponsor

South Omaha
Glenda McKenna
David Catalan, sponsor

Norfolk Noon
Andrew Hahn
Hailey Hahn, sponsor

Hailey Hahn
Mark Claussen, sponsor

Brandon Scheffler
Mark Claussen, sponsor

Auburn
Amanda Palmerton
Heather Pemberton, sponsor

Lincoln Evening
Vicki Lawton
Lisa Riekenberg, sponsor

Lincoln Friends
Adam Kettelhut
Taylor Woods, sponsor

Elijah Prall
Taylor Woods, sponsor

Shelly Prall
Taylor Woods, sponsor

David City
Marla Schnell
Judith Kluge, sponsor

Friend of Optimists
North Omaha
NailsByNette
Sandra Allen, sponsor

Omaha!
August 20-21
Register NOW!

The Great Soaring with Optimism Campaign

We have all been through a difficult year when many of us could not meet in person and we struggled to maintain our sense of Optimism. Some of you found ways to reinvent yourselves and continued to provide service to your youth, your communities, and yourselves. Now that many of you have your shots, most of you are meeting again and have a more Optimistic attitude, it is time for all of us to open our doors and invite both existing members and potential volunteers to join with us! Thus, we are introducing “**The Great Soaring With Optimism Campaign!**”

The campaign will run from July 1st through September 30th. Both clubs and individuals have opportunities to reap benefits. First, any club that brings in five or more new members in that period will be awarded \$100 to use as they see fit. It is assumed that they will use it to cover investments made in a WOW or NOW event. In addition to the \$100 benefit, your club will increase your volunteer base and you can feel good about your success going into the future! Furthermore, since OI is waiving the usual \$15 registration fee, it's like earning another \$75 (\$15 X 5) for your club!

Second, Marvin and Corinne Wastell are offering a Vacation Package of four days and three nights lodging in a two bedroom suite through Holiday Inn Vacation Club. It could be a great trip for a family or even two couples! The winner will select a resort from an array of 32 Holiday Inn Club Resorts around the country. For example, the Holiday Inn Club Orlando Resort is near Disney World, has four golf courses, seven swimming pools

and all kinds of other amenities. Your Optimist Club and any other Nebraska District Optimist Club who recruits five new members will earn one drawing ticket. You will receive another opportunity ticket when you reach eight, a third at ten, and an additional ticket for each two members above ten. The winning club can use the package as their leaders see fit. For example, they might award it to the top recruiter, conduct their own drawing, or even use it as a fundraiser.

Finally, any individual that brings in 8 or more new members between July 1 and September 30 will receive a free, non-transferable early bird registration to the 2021-2022 Optimist International Convention in Reno, NV.

There you have it—three ways you and your Optimist Club can Choose Optimism and Soar like Eagles! We look forward to your remarkable accomplishments!

For additional information, contact Marvin Wastell, Growth Team Chair, at 402-203-3591, mcwboy@gmail.com or Governor Sandra Allen, at 531-329-1559, sancoax@yahoo.com.
Richard (Dick) Raasch
Growth Committee Member

Time to Start Thinking about Football – Tri-Star Football!

2021 is a great year for your club to host a Tri-Star Football Punt, Pass, & Kick Contest for the youth of your community. The contest has 10 categories ages 6 – 15 in both Boy and Girl Divisions. For just \$80, you may send the first place winner from each of the 20 age/gender categories to the District Finals at Nebraska



Wesleyan University in Lincoln, tentatively scheduled for Sunday October 3, where each will compete for one of five trophies.

Why is this such a great club event?

- 1. It's easy.** All you need are score sheets, a couple of foot-balls and a kicking tee, a minimum 200' measuring tape, a string to calculate deviation from the straight line, and at least 5 volunteers.
- 2. It's economical.** It costs only \$80 to advance your 1st place winners, up to 20 contestants, to the District Contest. Local costs may include ribbons or certificates for your local winners.
- 3. It's not exclusive.** Prior to the NFL PPK demise, a participant could compete in only one local contest. Now, they can compete in a Jaycee or local school event AND your local Optimist Club contest. PLUS, the Optimist Contest may be the only one offering advancement to a state level of competition.

Clubs are encouraged to schedule your local contests prior to September 19 to allow ample time to send in your results by September 22.

Bob Grundman
District Tri-Star FB PPK Coordinator
402-489-9171

Watch Our District Oratorical Champion Compete at Regionals via Live Stream!

District Oratorical Chair Dr. Gloria Epps has received the streaming times for the Regional Optimist International Oratorical competition. The Oratorical stream for the Northeast & Great Lakes Region and the Great Plains Region, (the Nebraska District is part of the Great Plains Region) will be held on July 22, 2021 from 8:30 a.m. – (continued on following page)

11:45 a.m.
Stream 1: [Click here](#) to watch
8:30 a.m. CDT
Announcements/Welcome
9:00 a.m. CDT
Northeast & Great Lakes Region
10:30 a.m. CDT
Great Plains Region

Nivriti Varanasi will represent the Nebraska District in the virtual competition. She will be a sophomore at Gretna High School. Nivriti was sponsored by the Omaha Breakfast Optimist Club. Dr. Epps is encouraging Optimists to set aside time and support Nivriti.

“O-MA-HA!!”

As Payton Manning has said many times, O-MA-HA!! Now it is time for all Nebraska Optimists to start making plans to go to go to O-MA-HA for the District Convention on August 20 and 21. The convention site is the Comfort Inn and Suites at 7007 Grover Street, just off I-80. It is easy to get to and once you are there, be prepared for fun, fellowship, and new ideas.

On Friday afternoon there will be club officer training as well as a Leadership Lab (Soaring Toward Excellence). If you are wondering what a Leadership Lab is, it is a place to complete your Leadership Management System (LMS) training, update Personal Growth & Involvement (PGI) or Personal Development Program (PDP) certifications, and to get information about district committees and programs. The afternoon training will be followed by a Barbeque sponsored by the Gretna and Omaha Optimist Clubs in the hotel parking lot. All are welcome to attend!

On Saturday there will be opportunities to attend break-out sessions, including the “Eagle’s Eye Approach to Effective

Meetings” and more opportunities for the “Soaring Toward Excellence” Leadership Lab. As the old saying goes, there will be something for everyone! A business session and a convention business session are also scheduled.

The luncheon will feature awards for the 2019-2020 year and the Red Jacket Ceremony presentation to Immediate Past Governor Linda Wheeler, plus a guest speaker. The evening banquet will have entertainment, the Memorial Service, and installation of the 2021-2022 Governor and team.

The registration fee of \$50 will cover the convention, the luncheon, and banquet. There is a \$5 fee for the Friday night Barbeque. Now before you forget, mark your calendars for August 20 and 21. In fact, you may want to think about coming early or staying an extra day or two and enjoying what OMAHA has to offer. Doesn’t a long weekend get-away sound good?

Important: Room reservations and convention registrations MUST be made by August 10th!!

For complete details, visit the District website by [clicking here](#).

Betty Totten
District Newsletter Editor

MAYF Hosting a Wine Splash*

Imagine having a sick child that is not getting better with a tablespoon of medicine or Tylenol and missing days of work taking him or her to doctor appointments. Now imagine feeling devastated when your child is diagnosed with cancer. You might have taken some time off work and forgotten to pay a couple bills. So, today when you received an envelope in the mail that said “Past Due”

you are not sure how you are going to manage getting that bill paid. But you remember the social worker at the hospital telling you that if you need help, let her know. You do and within 48 hours your bill has been paid by a foundation started by a group of Optimists in the Omaha Metro Area.

In 2020, 171 requests came to the Metro Area Youth Foundation for help and every one of them was approved and paid. This could not have been possible without donations from Optimist Clubs and their members, individuals who supported the 2019 Summer Bash, and corporate sponsorships. The 2020 Summer Bash went virtual during the COVID pandemic and MAYF called on Optimists, friends, and family to support these families in need. The call was answered with people doing the best they could.

So far in 2021, those donations eased the stresses for 50 families and 110 of the “Past Due” bills were paid. MAYF is asking for your help again. Join us for **Wine Splash on August 1, 2021**, at **Charlie’s on the Lake**, 4150 South 144th Street, Omaha, Nebraska for an evening of wine pairings, music, and activities. To get your tickets today, [click here](#) and be there for the first wine pour at 4 pm. Tickets are \$60, and proceeds go to families of children with cancer in the Omaha Metro Area.

Submitted by Nani Reed at the request of Richard “Dick” Raasch. The Sherwood Foundation gave MAYF a reoccurring grant to hire outside help to provide marketing, fundraising, and consulting support. Nani is the liaison for MAYF and Paul. J. Strawhecker Inc.

*MAYF is a corporation with 501(c)3 status formed by Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa Optimist Clubs.

Nebraska Clubs Aren't Letting the Heat Slow Them Down!

If you are looking for a **Fairbury Optimist Club** member on a Thursday in July, you will need to look on the ball field. They have over 60 kids registered for the T-Ball season.

The **Norfolk Noon Optimists** collected \$324.29 from Childhood Cancer Campaign (CCC) coin banks placed around Norfolk. The funds are used to help local families affected by childhood cancer! (From Facebook) If you want to join a football pool, the Club will be doing four Husker Football pools this fall. They will be happy to let you join one.

Papillion/LaVista Optimists enticed members to help set-up the fireworks stand with pizza, appetizers, and non-alcoholic drinks once the work was done. Their major fundraiser was open from June 25th to July 4th. No word on what the enticement was to help tear down and clean up the stand after the 4th!

The **Kearney Optimist Club** sponsored a Little League Baseball team of optimistic 8-year olds during the month of June.

Aurora Optimists held their annual Pancake Breakfast at the Aurora Airport on June 26th. It was advertised as the "Best pancakes in town!!!!" (From Facebook)

Things are getting back to normal for the **Seward Optimists**. They were able to host their traditional 4th of July Run/Walk. There was a 10 K Freedom Run, a 2-mile Fun Run and walkers were welcome to join in the fun. (From Facebook)

The **McCook Optimist Club** hosted the 44th Annual Larry

Samway Memorial Fishing Derby and Casting Contest over Father's Day weekend. There were divisions for adults and for children.(From Facebook and the McCook Gazette)

Beryle Lantz and Carla Gries represented the **Southwest Omaha Optimist Club** in a rowing event at Orange Theory Fitness in Omaha to raise awareness for Foster Love. Foster Love is a charity that is committed to providing basic needs for children in foster care so they feel confident and valued through a unique boutique-like experience. The Founder, Amber Richardson believes children in care deserve to be clothed in confidence, like everyone else. Every child in care can get new or like-new clothing once a month at the "boutique."



Carla Gries rowing the machine, but going nowhere



Past Governor Beryle Lantz rowing for two miles

The **Omaha Metro Area Optimist Clubs** worked together

for the Metro Summer of Growth and Opportunity for the Hope Center Kids. The Hope Center is an inner-city youth facility and the clubs provided field trips to area activities and attractions. Some of the activities are for specific age youth while others are for youth of any school age. Examples of the activities are: a trip to the SAC Museum, swim & splash at Zorinski Water Park, and the Schramm Park & Aquarium.

North Bend Optimists are looking ahead and planning for the fall volleyball and flag football seasons for students entering 3rd-6th grades. (From Facebook)

The **Ralston Optimist Club** sponsored a Ralston Independence Day Fun Run/Walk. The Fun Run was a 3-mile run while the Walk was a 1-mile walk. (From Facebook)

Ogallala Optimist Club made a \$500 donation to the Crandall Creek Golf Club "for the great work they are doing with the youth...through their Junior Golf Program. 84 youth are enrolled this year." (From Facebook)

Lincoln Evening Optimists are spending their July weekend evenings at Pioneer Park, to be exact, they will be in the concession stand at Pinewood Bowl! The Club will be working the eight evenings during the run of "The Addams Family."

Holdrege Optimists were busy during the annual Swedish Days festivities. They started the day by helping "the community get into the Swedish spirit by hanging flags at participating businesses around town." The Club also sold root beer floats during and after the morning parade from a prime spot along the parade route.. (From Facebook)

OI Convention Photos



103rd Annual Convention
Atlanta, Georgia



104th Annual
OI Convention
Reno, Nevada
June 29 – July 2
2022

