



# Twin City Area Optimist Club

P.O. Box 475

Festus, Missouri 63028

[www.twincityoptimist.org](http://www.twincityoptimist.org)

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Affiliated with Optimist International

Serving Youth and Community since 1919

## November 2023 News Making a Difference For Kids

### Message From President Peggy Scott



Because of the wonderful members of the Twin City Area Optimist Club, it's been my honor to represent our club at two memorable events. I tagged along to deliver dictionaries to third graders and rode along to say goodbye to club member Nell Austin. I couldn't be prouder of the work we do.

At local schools, children were delighted to receive a dictionary of their own. They wrote their names inside the covers, looked up the longest word - more than 1,900 letters - and discovered that they could teach themselves sign language. It was "dictionary day." Teachers, administrators and students celebrated.

A group of us traveled to Alton, IL, to be part of funeral services for

our dear Nell. Her family thanked us, not for being there Sunday to say the creed and our tearful goodbyes. They thanked us for a club that gave Nell so much. During Nell's final days, her walls were decorated with cards from her Optimist friends along with a silly photo of us in Halloween costumes holding a message for Nell. She knew our love and friendship.

Both projects brought home for me a simple but important fact. Optimists create a better place for our kids, our communities and our members. We make a difference.

President Peggy Scott



### **Farewell Nell**

It is with a heavy heart we say a final goodbye to Optimist Nell Austin. She joined our club in March 2018.

Nell's sponsor Judy Williams remembers: "Nell was such an asset to our club. I met her at a resale shop and talked Optimist. She came to a meeting and fell in love with what we do. We helped ease the grief of losing her husband."

Click link to access Nell's obituary:

[Nellie "Nell" Austin, 83, Festus | Obituaries | myleaderpaper.com](https://www.myleaderpaper.com/obituaries/nellie-nell-austin-83-festus)

**November 2, 2023**

**Pony Bird**

**Jeff Doty, Grant and Donor Relations Manager**

Our speaker for the today was Jeff Doty, the Grant and Donor Relations Manager of Pony Bird. Jeff provided us with information on Pony Bird's mission which is "to enrich the lives of individuals with disabilities." In 2022, Pony Bird merged with Next Step for Life to provide services for disabled individuals in four primary areas: community living/residential services, employment services, community support service and family support and leisure services. Pony Bird now serves about 1,100 individuals per year, with 110 people living in their residential facilities.

Pony Bird offers day programs and activities, respite services for family members as well as working with 100 employers in the community to provide employment opportunities. Pony Bird receives most of its funding from the state of Missouri which only provides for basic living needs. Services and events such as dances, sports, Special Olympics and entertainment nights that make life memorable for the residents are solely supported by donations from the community. Pony Bird sponsors several fundraisers each year including The Great Taste held in February, A Night at the Races in June and a golf tournament. More information can be found at



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## November 9, 2023 Board Update 2022-2023 Perfect Attendance

Highlights from November 7, 2023, TCA Board Meeting:

- Elise Reineck was approved as a new TCA member; she is sponsored by Phyllis Neff.
- Snow Policy reminder regarding our weekly mtgs – If Festus R-6 calls off school for a full day or a partial day, we will not meet.
- JOI CLUB UPDATE: by Katie Huck. Next year the JOI club will be celebrating 20 years of sponsorship with our club. Chartered in November 2004 so our celebration would be around November 2024. We should plan a joint celebration of some sort. A decision was made that funding would be a joint endeavor and we would try to invite some of the original or past members.
- New project for the boys in foster care was presented by Carroll Metzger. A book written for adolescent boys along with a bag of deodorant, shaving cream, body wash etc. will be included. Bags will be distributed at the Foster Childrens' Christmas party by Renee Gerlach from the Aunt Rose Project. An \$800 project budget was approved by the board. A survey to determine if this project should be continued will be included in the bag.



Congratulations to members with perfect attendance for 2022-2023 Optimist year. Please note the total number of years each member has achieved this distinction.



Carroll Metzger  
 Kirstie Zych  
 Ruth Ann Adams

one year  
 one year  
 one year

Laura Elbl  
 Debbie Hogenmiller  
 Kathy Todd

two years  
 two years  
 two years

Cathy Elliott

three years

Patty Meyer

four years

Debbie Schumaker

five years

Jean Naeger

six years

Katie Huck  
 Barb Schmidt

seven years  
 seven years

Judy Kuhlman

ten years

Pat Parsons

twenty-seven years

Barb Bates

twenty-eight years

Sue Boyer

thirty-two years

Caryl Harness

thirty-three years

Pat Doenges

thirty-five years

**November 16, 2023**

**IT'S A WRAP!**



80 Head Start gifts wrapped by the TCA elves in just 15 minutes!  
Thanks to Cathy Elliott and Laura Elbl for chairing the Head Start Christmas parties.







**November 23**  
**Happy Thanksgiving**  
**NO meeting**

## **CLUB PROJECTS**

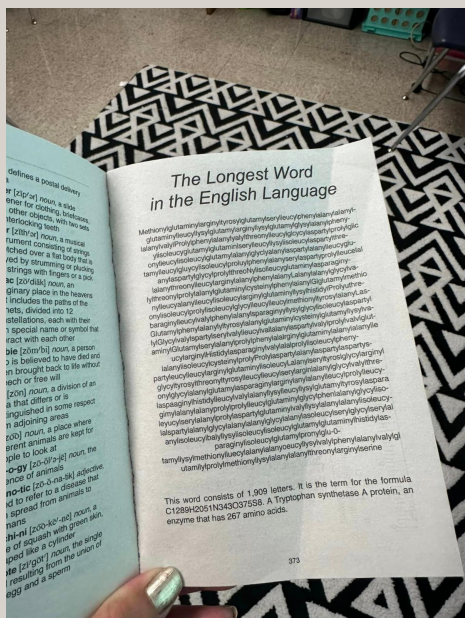
### **Dictionary Project (Continued from last month)**



Dr Siefert delivers dictionaries along



with Optimists Alicia Cummins, Laura Lohman, and President Peggy Scott to Festus Elementary third graders.



Laura Lohman with her Festus Elementary third grade daughter Collette.

World's largest word -- there will be a test on Monday.

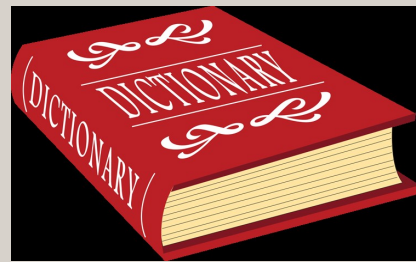
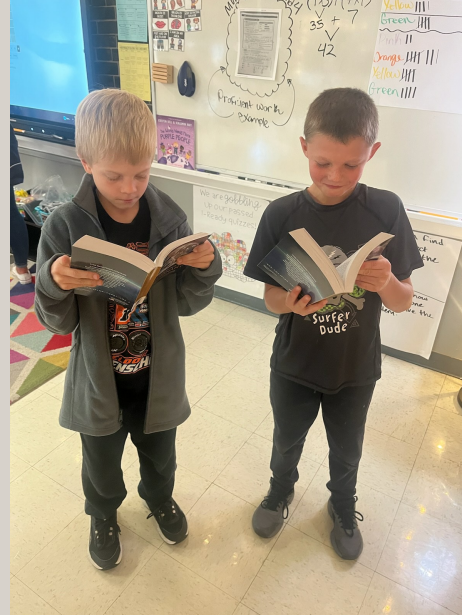
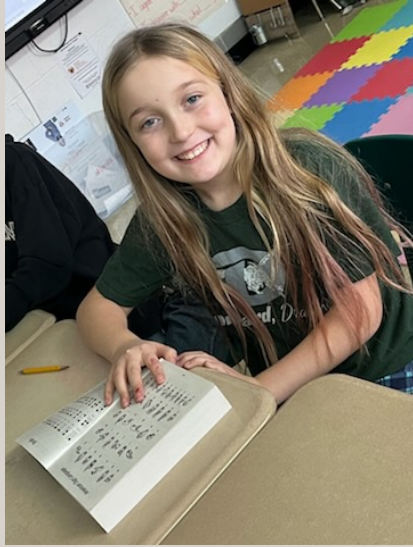


Students from Athena School checking out the sign language section of the dictionary.



Students from Washington-Franklin Elementary School in Farmington receive dictionaries. Extra dictionaries were available through the Optimist Club of St. Louis grant. TCA member Donna Long's daughter teaches third grade and is grateful for the donation.





Barb Schmidt delivers dictionaries to Sunrise School.

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## Annual Art Contest

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Best of Show



**Sailor Tucker**  
**Age 15**  
**Herculaneum High School**

### Twin City Area Optimist Art Contest



Annual Art Contest  
November 5, 2023  
2:00pm-4:00pm  
Elks Lodge 1721  
4 Elks Acres  
Festus, MO



The Twin City Area Optimist Club Art Contest took place on Sunday, November 5, 2023, at Elks Lodge 1721 in Festus. The annual event had 322 entries with 215 student artists exhibiting artwork. The students and their art were represented by the following schools in southern Jefferson County: Festus High School, De Soto High School, De Soto Junior High School, Herculaneum High School, Senn-Thomas Middle School, Hillsboro High School, Hillsboro Junior High School, Crystal City High

School, Danby-Rush Tower (R-7) Middle School, St. Pius X High School and Jefferson R-VII. Three entries were submitted by homeschooled students. Entries were showcased in art categories, photography, three-dimensional and graphic/digital art.

Best of Show winner was Sailor Tucker, Herculaneum High School with his entry "Untitled." First place winners in three art categories were: Art – Ages 12-13 Julianna Dalaviras, Hillsboro Junior High School, with her entry "Serenity", Art – Ages 14-15 Katie Strawhun, De Soto High School, with her entry "Penguin" and Art-Ages 16-19 Kyla Cook, De Soto High School, with her entry "Three Crosses." Taking first place in photography was Anna Frantzen of Hillsboro Junior High School, with her photo "Frosty Morning." Three-dimensional art first place winner was Brianna Wagner, Festus High School, with her entry "Buck Book." Graphic design/Digital art first place winner was Alexis Jackson, De Soto Junior High School with her entry "Parrot Pop."

The Twin City Area Optimist Club strives to “bring out the best in kids” with events such as the art contest that encourages Jefferson County youth to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Submitted by Art Contest Chair Patty Meyer

## Head Start Thanksgiving Baskets



Thanks to members who donated items or cash donations for our annual Thanksgiving baskets for Head Start families.

### OUR FIVE FAMILIES

Family 1: 2 adults – 1 female and 1 male

1 child – 1 yr old boy

Family 2: 1 adult - 1 female

2 children - 6 yr old girl, 4 yr old boy

Family 3: 1 adult – 1 female

3 children – 3 yr old boy, 2 yr old boy, 7-month-old girl

Family 4: 1 adult - 1 female

2 children – 5 yr old girl, 2 yr old boy

Family 5: 2 adults – 1 pregnant female & 1 male

2 children – 11 yr old boy, 5 yr old girl, newborn baby soon



TCA shoppers and Head Start staff







Thanks to Pat Parsons for chairing Head Start Thanksgiving Baskets Project and Katie Huck for helping with weekly drop off of donations.

In addition, thanks to the following shoppers:

Carol Schanz  
Katie Huck

Judy Kuhlman  
Debbie Hogenmiller  
Sue Boyer  
Kathy Todd  
Karen Huskey  
Judy Williams  
Pat Parsons

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## Grants

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### Jefferson Foundation Awards \$6000 Grant

Thanks to Mary McDowell for renewing the grant request with the Jefferson Foundation. The foundation awarded an increase of \$500 from last year, authorizing a \$6000 donation to fund our Coats for Kids Program.

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### VFW Post 3777 - Festus, MO Donates \$500 to Coats for Kids Program

You never know when a simple conversation can reap financial rewards. During the fall Mouse Race fundraiser, President Peggy Scott spoke with a member of the local VFW. He said he thought the post may want to help us out with a project.

Judy Williams volunteered to call the gentleman and talk to him about our coats program. Well, we know our Judy can be very persuasive. He offered to present a donation request to the VFW Post 3777 Board of Directors for consideration. We appreciate another local organization supporting our club with a \$500 donation.

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### Optimist International Foundation Awards \$1000 Matching Grant

Jean Naeger received word recently that the \$1000 matching grant she submitted to Optimist International Foundation in late August was approved. The funds will be used to purchase hygiene products, clothing, and other basic needs for the Homeless Youth Initiative. Pat Parsons will coordinate the purchase of items.

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### Ameren Missouri Authorizes \$2000 Grant

Jean Naeger has been notified that the \$2000 request to help fund Head Start Christmas Parties has been approved. The Ameren Missouri grant will help offset the cost of the parties. The annual events serve both the Hematite and DeSoto Head Start facilities. More than 100 children will receive



sweatshirts and pants, hats, gloves, books, coloring books with crayons, toothpaste with toothbrush, along with other items. They also receive a gift from Santa, and Mrs. Claus will read a story to students. Each student takes home a photo with Santa. Thanks again to Cathy Elliott and Laura Elbl for co-chairing this project and all the helping hands who make this a memorable experience for the kids.

## Fundraisers

Please support this fundraiser by purchasing chances and sharing flyer with family and friends. You can share post from our public Facebook page. [\(20+\) Facebook](#)



# QUILT RAFFLE



Purchase raffle chances for American Heartland Quilt measuring 76"x78"



**One entry for every \$10 donation:  
Venmo @Karen-Huskey or  
check to TCA Optimist Club,  
P.O. Box 475, Festus, MO 63028  
(include your name and phone number)**





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## JOI Club

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### JOI Club News

The November 2 meeting of the JOI Club was called to order by the club's president at the Joachim Ambulance facility.

#### Old Business:

The BB 5K, suicide awareness event, held on October 21, was a success with more than 50 people walking at Larry Crites Park in Festus. Scholarships for essays in the amount of \$4,500 were awarded to participating students. Due to a rainy Saturday, the Halloween Party in Larry Crites Park was cancelled. Events from the Halloween Party included pumpkin carving and a costume contest. Olivia Blair won the costume contest as Bell and KK won the pumpkin carving contest with his pumpkin the devil.

#### New Business:

Members voted not to continue to visit the Ronald McDonald house, but to help with foster kids in our community. A vote to contribute \$100 to a dog shelter was approved.

Getting in the Christmas spirit, members scheduled their Christmas party/caroling activity for December 16 at Autumn Ridge from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. After caroling, members will go to Quonset for bowling from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. A \$10.00 Secret Santa gift for either a boy or girl will be exchanged. (Participation not required)

After enjoying refreshment treats, the meeting was adjourned.





*Debbie Schumaker  
JOI Adult Advisor*

*Carol Schanz  
JOI Chair*





## SAVE THE DATES



**Note upcoming events. To assist with projects, please contact Committee Chair.**

November 30 - Evening meeting. Assemble PAT boxes and foster boys' hygiene bags.

December 5- Board of Directors Meeting - Hostess Mary Hatfield

December 6 & 8: Hematite and DeSoto Head Start Christmas Parties contact Co-Chairs Cathy Elliott and Laura Elbl if you would like to assist with this project.

December 21 Club Holiday Party

December 28 Evening meeting TBD



**Members meet every Thursday from Noon - 1 p.m. at Taytro's. Please RSVP by 8:00 a.m. on Monday by contacting Cathy Elliott.**

**The last Thursday of the month is an evening meeting held at Poppy's Parlor. Meeting starts at 6:00 p.m. If you would like to order food, please contact Phyllis Neff on Monday prior to meeting.**

**Our Club will continue looking at the sunny side of everything and being committed to bringing out the best in our area youth.**

Board of  
Directors  
2023-2024

President  
Peggy Scott  
314 420 0897

President Elect  
Debbie  
Hogenmiller

Past President  
Carroll  
Metzger

Secretary  
Ruth Ann  
Adams

Secretary Elect  
Kathy Todd

Treasurer  
Janet Mace

Treasurer Elect  
Becky Francis

Board  
Members

2022-2024  
Cathy Elliott  
Katie Huck



Patty Meyer

2023-2025  
Amy Baum  
Beth Watts  
Kirstie Zych



Visit our website

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Twin City Area Optimist Club | P.O. Box 475, Festus, MO 63028

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