



Twin City Area Optimist Club

P.O. Box 475

Festus, Missouri 63028

www.twincityoptimist.org

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Affiliated with Optimist International
Serving Youth and Community since 1919

June 2026 News Making a Difference For Kids

President Cathy Elliott

Dear Optimists,

Summer has a way of reminding us to slow down and notice the simple things—a sunrise, the laughter of children, a backyard barbecue, or a conversation with a friend. Joy doesn't always arrive in grand moments. More often, it grows from appreciating the blessings already around us.

The Optimist Creed encourages us to “look at the sunny side of everything and make our optimism come true.” Summer gives us countless opportunities to do just that. Whether we're serving our communities, spending time with family, volunteering at youth activities, or simply enjoying the beauty of the season, each day offers a chance to spread kindness and encouragement.



As we move through these warmer months, let's make it a goal to create joy as much as we find it. A smile, a helping hand, or a word of encouragement can brighten someone's day more than we may ever know.

May your summer be filled with sunshine, meaningful moments, and the happiness that comes from making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Thanks ladies!

Cathy Elliott
President - Twin City Area Optimist Club

In Memoriam Kitty Ebersoldt



The Twin City Area Optimists lost a dear friend, Catherine Marie "Kitty" Ebersoldt, on June 11, 2026. Kitty was a member of the Optimist club from September 2009 through 2024, when health issues forced her resignation.

Kitty joined the Optimist Club in 2009 and later sponsored her daughter, Tracy Anderson, as a member. Some of Kitty's favorite projects with the Optimists were the Head Start holiday parties and Easter food baskets. She co-chaired Head Start events with Martha DeMent for several years, including a year in which they coordinated six separate parties throughout the county. A particularly memorable incident occurred when, after loading Kitty's van with toys and clothing, they realized the loud noise they heard while driving through town was caused by the back of the van being left open.



Kitty was all in on the Optimists' mission to support children. In addition to Head Start events, she regularly took part in projects that made a real difference, including Coats for Kids and the Dictionary Project. She kept everyone focused on the purpose, too—reminding members who hesitated during shopping trips that it was about the children, not their personal preferences. If anyone needed a nudge, she made it clear they should "get over it" and keep the mission front and center.

Giving back to the community was another priority for Kitty. She knew that local businesses were generous partners—sponsoring events, donating gift cards, and contributing baskets for our fundraisers—and she believed we owed them our support in return. So, on any Optimist outing, whether shopping for a project or visiting businesses for donations, she encouraged the team to take time to enjoy a meal at a local restaurant. It was her way of keeping gratitude at the center of the work.

Kitty was a good loyal friend and a great Optimist. While she could appear quiet and unassuming, she came alive whenever she was helping children—her joy unmistakable, her purpose unwavering. She truly embodied the Optimist spirit. In every project, every act of kindness, Kitty carried a deep love for her community and a belief in giving back. Her legacy is one of compassion, dedication, and a heart that always leaned toward helping others.

**Kitty with Gary, her
husband of 60 years.**



**Head Start Holiday parties
were a favorite activity.**





A great friend!



June 4, 2026

The June 4 Twin City Area Optimist Club meeting focused on updates from the June board meeting.

- A new pop-up canopy tent has been purchased as our old one has holes. We can still use the old one, if needed, for events like the Pickleball Tournament coming up.
- The board approved Donna Long to purchase two new tables for our tent – that will give us a total of three.
- Bike helmets are being purchased for Twin City Days in September and our Bike Rodeo in October.
- The board approved \$600 for the Foster Boys – Back to School program. Becky Capps is the chair for this activity and will be making more hygiene bags to give out.

Upcoming events

- **GEO CASH' Adventure** – we need a group of 8 - 10 people to stay after a meeting for Harold Hagen to explain this event. While this event is unfamiliar to many of our members, our hope is that interest might grow once Harold explains how it actually works. For the event to be held at all, we **MUST** have a chair person.
- **The Old Bag Lunch** will be held on Thursday, July 23. Carol Schanz will start the planning when she returns from her tri. A note will be sent to the group who will be explaining this fundraiser to new members.
- **NOW Meeting** (New Optimist Welcome) will be on Thursday Evening July 31 at the First United Methodist Church. We'd love to meet your friends who might

be interested in joining us!

- Don't forget to grab some friends or family to come out August 8 to play **Rock 'n Roll BINGO! SO.MUCH.FUN!**

After the board updates, Ruth Ann Adams introduced the Optimist Creed line for the month, "To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and to give every living creature you meet a smile." She invited us to reflect on a positive change that each of us made that improved our lives. Conversations began at each table, then the tables presented their highlights to the full group. Thank you, Ruth Ann, for another thought-provoking exercise!

Submitted by Cathy Elliott and Carolyn McKinney



June 11, 2026 Flag Day Celebration

To kick off Flag Day, Marian Bozak hosted a lively true-or-false trivia game about the United State flag. Everyone began standing, sitting only when they missed a question. The questions ranged from the easy "Flag Day is celebrated on July 4th" (False), to the more challenging "The first Flag Day celebration was in Washington DC" (False). After several questions, Elsie Williams claimed the lead with some impressive flag knowledge! Alicia Cummiskey closed the meeting beautifully by leading us in "America the Beautiful".

Thank you, Marian, for the patriotic goodies and décor, and to Alicia for the uplifting music.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney



Flag Day Trivia!

June 18, 2026

The Homeless Youth Initiative

Robin Scott, President of Homeless Youth Initiative, spoke to the Twin City Area Optimists about the mission and projects the volunteer organization provides for homeless teenagers aged 15-20. The most recent count of homeless students in Jefferson County high schools is 116.

She said that teenagers find themselves in a homeless situation when there is parental abuse or neglect of the teen due to parent drug abuse, financial difficulties or rejection of the teen by a stepparent in the home. This differs from children in foster care as the teen takes themselves out the dysfunctional environment in the home rather than a legal engagement that requires the government to step in to provide a safe living arrangement for the teen. Teens find themselves “couch surfing” from one friend’s home to another, seeking out a safe place to call home for a short time. This differs from teens living on the streets.



Robin Scott

The primary goal of Homeless Youth Initiative is to “assist the youth in becoming self-sufficient by providing them with the tools and resources they need to be successful in an independent living situation.” Some examples of help the organization offers include college scholarships, encouraging the work ethic of the teens by helping them find and keep jobs, educational expenses, emergency food and other needs, medical/mental health, and vehicles expenses.

The Homeless Youth Initiative relies on referrals from “high school counselors and social workers, several area churches, and many concerned citizens.” The workers accept no salaries, and the organization is funded strictly by donations and grants. In support of this important work, the Twin City Area Optimist Club has donated \$1000 to the Homeless Youth Initiative for 2026.

For more information on the Homeless Youth Initiative, refer to their website, <https://hyi4teens.org/>

Submitted by Karen Huskey

June 25, 2026

Juneteenth was the focus for our June 25 evening meeting, with Beth Winkeler guiding the discussion. She explained some common misunderstandings of the Federal Holiday, and walked us through a series of trivia questions that deepened our understanding.

Juneteenth has been a Federal Holiday since 2021 but many communities have honored it since the 1860's. It marks June 19, 1865 - the day enslaved people in Texas were finally informed of their freedom, more than two years after the

Emancipation Proclamation declared freedom for enslaved people in the Confederate states.

Beth's trivia sparked conversations about equality, acceptance, and the shared responsibility of community. Our Twin City Area Optimist Club provides \$250 annually to help support the local Juneteenth celebration.

Thank you, Beth, for your insightful presentation.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

Image from Vecteezy.com



CLUB FUNDRAISERS



Karen Huskey (right) presented the quilt to raffle winner Danellel Winters (left)

Quilt Raffle

Congratulations to DaNelle Winters, winner of our June quilt raffle! The beautiful Missouri-pattern quilt—generously donated by Karen Huskey—found a happy new home during the June 18 Twin City Area Optimist Club meeting. Phyllis Neff livestreamed the drawing on the TCA Optimists Facebook page. The raffle raised \$930 to support our club's work.

Thanks to everyone who participated.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

CLUB PROJECTS

Summer Fun for the Women's Shelter

On June 18, members of the Women's Shelter committee set out on a mission: to help the kids at the Women's Shelter have fun and stay cool all summer long. Their trip to Walmart turned into a cart full of sunshine, with bubbles, a bubble machine, reusable water balloons, and other supplies guaranteed to spark laughter from the children on even the hottest days.



Barb Bates, Judy Williams, and Jessica Korte shopping for water fun!

To add even more splash-worthy fun, the committee ordered water tables online—perfect for kids to play in and beat the heat.

The committee successfully completed their mission, ensuring the children at the shelter have plenty of ways to enjoy a bright and refreshing summer.

Submitted by Jessica Korte



For the second year, the Twin City Area Optimist Club supported a Red Cross-sponsored blood drive. The drive this year was held on June 19 at the Jefferson County YMCA in Festus from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Red Cross goal for the day of 25 units of blood drawn was exceeded by one with 26 actual units drawn!

TCA Optimist members turned out to support the drive, donating collectively at least 30 hours of their time. They donated blood, snacks and manned the check-in and snack tables. Some Optimists took shifts at both tables or donated blood before or after their turn at a table.

While there was the potential for a donation to the club from the Red Cross if 30 units of blood were drawn during the drive, that goal fell short. Even though we didn't make any money at this drive, it was a great community service project. For

Jefferson County, many of the donations throughout the school year come from a strong donation program at Mizzou. During summer breaks there is always a greater need for donations in our area. Each year the need grows and our club has been able to assist and exceed the Red Cross' expectation for each of the drives we support. What a great way to support the community!

Submitted by Marian Bozak

The TCA Optimist Team

Chairperson: Marian Bozak

Snacks donated: Barb Schmidt, Katie Huck and Christine Bradshaw

Flyers and signage: Jean Naeger

Blood Drive Volunteers: Kirstie Zych, Karen Huskey, Kathy Jensen, Debbie Hogenmiller, Diane Brown, Peggy Grieshaber, Jan Buechting, Donna Arnold, Laura English, Michele Horrell, Jennifer Woolridge, Jean Naeger, Phyllis Neff, Mickie Huskey and Patty Meyer.



Michele Horrell with a Red Cross attendant while donating blood.

Dime -A- Day Optimist International Foundation

The Dime-A-Day Program

What is Dime a Day? An annual contribution level to the Optimist International Foundation, (OIF) which is the charitable fundraising arm of Optimist International. The amount represents a donation of **one dime (\$0.10) per day** for one Optimist year (365 days) = **\$36.50**. Individual members who contribute at this level are recognized with a special **"Dime-A-Day" lapel pin**.

What the Funds Support

The unrestricted funds raised through the Dime-A-Day campaign are critical because they enable the OIF to support the core programs that reach millions of children each year.

- **Scholarship Contests**
- **Youth Programs**
- **Club Grants**
- **Administrative Support**

Peggy Scott is the club's OIF Representative and can provide you with a copy of the Dime-A-Day donation form or you can download a copy: dime-a-day-form.pdf

Submitted by Jean Naeger

EAST MISSOURI (EMO) OPTIMIST DISTRICT



EMO Third Quarter Conference

CONFERENCE / CONVENTION DATES

EMO District Convention

August 21, 22, 23, 2026

Installation of Officers
Governors' Choice Awards

Comfort Suites
Rolla, Missouri

108th Optimist International Convention

June 28 - July 1, 2026

Hyatt Regency
Jacksonville, Florida

JOI CLUB

Several members of the Junior Optimist Club gathered on June 18 at Larry Crites Memorial Park for a hands-on project: painting inspirational rocks. Each rock carried a positive message, ready to brighten someone's day. The finished pieces will be shared throughout the community and given to friends and family, spreading optimism one small stone at a time.

Debbie Schumaker
JOI Adult Advisor

Carol Schanz
JOI Chair





Some of the JOI Club members that participated in rock painting: Olivia Blair, Oscar Blair, Katelyn Blair, and Matthew Devoure



SAVE THE DATES



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

July 2 NO MEETING
 July 7 NO BOARD MEETING
 July 9 Meeting - Gaitway, Inc.
 July 16 Meeting - Dr. Cangas (Bike Helmets)
 July 23 Old Bag Lunch
 July 30 WOW Meeting
 August 4 Board Meeting
 August 6 Board Updates
 August 8 Rock 'n Roll Bingo
 August 13 Meeting
 August 20 Meeting
 August 21-23 EMO 4th Quarter Convention
 August 27 CARE Meeting
 September 3 Meeting - Bike Park Presentation
 September 8 Joint Board Meeting
 September 10 Meeting - Board Updates
 September 12 Twin City Days
 September 17 Foster Together
 September 19 DeSoto Fall Festival
 September 24 Meeting



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

The last Thursday of the month is an evening meeting held at the United Methodist Church in Festus. Members are invited to bring their own dinner at 5:30 to socialize. The meeting starts at 6:00 p.m.

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
2025-2026**

**President
Cathy Elliott
573 883 0924**

**President Elect
Donna Masters**

**Past President
Peggy Scott**

**Secretary
Marian Bozak**

**Secretary Elect
Jessica Korte**

**Treasurer
Becky Capps**

**Treasurer Elect
Ellen
Bridgewater**

Board Members

**2024-2026
Mary McDowell
Debbie Kettler
Carolyn
McKinney**

**2025-2027
Becky Francis
Megan Siracusa
Donna Long**

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