



Twin City Area Optimist Club

P.O. Box 475

Festus, Missouri 63028

www.twincityoptimist.org

Follow us on Facebook

Affiliated with Optimist International

Serving Youth and Community since 1919

May 2025 News Making a Difference For Kids

President Cathy Elliott



Dear Ladies,

“The spiritual significance of May lies in honoring the cycles of life, embracing change, and appreciating the beauty and vitality of the natural world. Rituals and celebrations during May often focus on cultivating gratitude, manifesting desires, and welcoming new opportunities.”

As Optimists, we are always looking for new and meaningful ways to support the youth in our community. This year, we are excited to launch a new initiative: a “Club within a Club.”

This new group is designed for individuals who are enthusiastic about making a difference, but have limited time due to work or other commitments. It offers a more flexible way to get involved—without the need to attend weekly meetings or participate in frequent events.

It is a wonderful opportunity to serve, connect, and contribute—on your own schedule.

If you know someone who would love to get involved, but has a busy schedule, encourage them to take a look at what we are doing. This could be the perfect fit!

Cathy Elliott
President, Twin City Area Optimist Club

Welcome New Members!



Susan DeClue



Karin Spinks



Kelsey Volner



May 1, 2025 Oratorical & Essay Luncheon



The May 1 meeting was a favorite of club members with the presentation of the Essay and Oratorical contest winners. Also attending were the winners' parents. The top three winners of the Essay Contest read their essays, and two of the top three winners of the Oratorical Contest presented their speeches.

The essays and speeches were all amazing! Some of the winners have attended in previous years and it was heartwarming to see how much they have improved their essay and oratorical skills.

Essay Contest

Dylan Grayum, Jefferson R-VII

Dylan's essay described how optimism has helped him get through concerns about grades. He believes pessimists can change into optimists if they work at it, and that optimism is good medicine for mental health.

Jillian Woods, Hillsboro R-3

Jillian discussed how optimism helped her deal with her parents' divorce when she was young. She has adopted a glass half full mentality with the help and the support of her family. She also believes optimism has helped her to deal with other stresses such as growing up, including school and personal relationships.

Olivia Lee, Jefferson R-VII

Olivia is the District Winner for her essay. Her essay discussed her vulnerability when her father went to rehab for alcoholism while she was a teenager. With her mother's reassurance that everything would get better and her belief in her father, she changed into a confident and optimistic teen.

Oratorical Contest

Olivia Drinen, Herculanum High School

Olivia was not able to attend the luncheon, but was the winner of the Zone Contest for her Oratorical entry.

Katelyn Blair, Senn Thomas Middle School

Katelyn talked about how the death of her grandmother affected her and how optimism helped her get through that difficult time. She thinks of Cinderella as an example of an optimist. She sees optimism as being hopeful and confident in tomorrow, and optimists as seeing the sunny side of life.

Olivia Blair, Herculanum High School

Olivia won second place at the Zone Contest. She spoke of the pressures of being a teenager in 2025 and acknowledged that some of that is brought on by her own mindset. Through the stresses from school, friendships, relationships, and sports, optimism keeps her fighting. She has the persistent belief that tomorrow will be brighter if you choose to believe in it.

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney



Essay winners Dylan Grayum, Jillian Woods, and Olivia Lee.



Oratorical winners and sisters, Katelyn Blair and Olivia Blair.

**May 8, 2025
Board Updates**

The May 8 meeting opened with the great news that the Board has approved four new members. Welcome to:

- Tina Robinson, sponsored by Kim Elbl
- Kelsey Volner, sponsored by Jean Naeger
- Karin Spinks, sponsored by Jean Naeger
- Susan DeClue, sponsored by Barb Schmidt

In addition, two of the guests at the meeting plan to apply for membership!

The board approved donating \$200 to the hospitality room for the 4th Quarter EMO Conference in August.

The sponsorship program has collected \$21,343.12 to date.

We have been a little lax on collecting \$1.00 for birthdays and brags. Going forward, Tracy Johnson will be collecting this money at the meetings which is deposited into the General Funds bank account.

Patty Meyer attended the Twin City Chamber of Commerce meeting at which Tim Krysl spoke. Tim is a local teacher and historian who spoke about Civil Rights at an Optimist meeting last year. There was such positive feedback on his talk that he was invited back this year to speak at the June 19 meeting about Juneteenth, a Federal holiday, recognizing the 1865 ending of slavery in the United States.

BUNCO will be June 6 and sign-up sheets will start circulating. We play at HW Herrell Distributing in Imperial. It's a fun night and everyone is encouraged to attend whether you know how to play or not!

After the board updates, Marian Bozak had a game to play about having an Optimist meeting using Right/Left directions. Karen Huskey read the story while gift bags were circulated at each table. Everyone had a lot of fun!

Ruth Ann Adams distributed a sheet of trivia about Mother's Day for everyone to try to guess the correct answers. Pat Doenges was the big winner.

The winner of the Golf Raffle was drawn and it was Pat Parsons! TCA Optimists raised \$460 from the raffle. Congratulations Pat!

Submitted by: Cathy Elliott and Carolyn McKinney



Laura Elbl, Debbie Kettler, and Peggy Scott with their gift bags from the Right/Left game.



Dorothea Kehm won the special surprise at her table!

May 15, 2025 ST. Louis Winter Outreach



Audra Youmans

Cathy Elliott called the May 15 meeting to order with a few announcements.

- The Junior Golf Tournament on June 6 needs volunteers. An email with tournament details will be sent.
- Two more Dine to Donate events have been scheduled with both venues donating 25% of their profit to Optimists:
 - July 16: Qdoba in Festus
 - September 26: Panera in Festus
- A Red Cross Blood Drive sponsored by Twin City Area Optimist Club is scheduled for July 11, 2025 at the Jefferson County YMCA in Festus. At least 30 donations are needed in order for the club to receive any money from the drive. However, this is a worthwhile event as donations to Red Cross

tend to drop at this time of year.

- A \$1,000 matching grant for Foster Together has been awarded to the club, giving us \$2,000 to spend for their needs. We will surprise Foster Together at the June 12 meeting! if you have been making hats, blankets or have new items, please contact Karen Huskey at 314-420-2625.

Jean Naeger spoke about the plan to build a "Club within a Club" to invite young adults or anyone that may not have the time or interest in our traditional club. Members will be members of our club with all the same rights and privileges, but will serve in a more limited capacity. The advantages are increasing membership, new club building, and introducing new ideas and energy to the club.

The speaker for the week was Audra Youmans from St. Louis Winter Outreach. Audra graduated from Festus High School, received her undergraduate degree at St. Louis University, and is planning to attend Medical School at Mizzou.

During the Covid shutdowns, Home Camps started popping up in St. Louis as resources for the Homeless became unavailable. While at SLU, Audra started collecting supplies from the St. Louis Buy Nothing Facebook group as well as food for the homeless to bridge the gap between what the city provided and what was actually needed. This led her to St. Louis Winter Outreach.

St. Louis Winter Outreach is an all-volunteer organization that receives no government funding. They “activate” when the temperature is 25°F or below. The organization partners with several churches, some businesses, and AmeriCorps to provide shelter. In 2024-2025 they opened 11 shelters, but not all shelters are open every night. There are usually less than 350 beds available on any active night.

Some volunteers with the organization drive around the city looking for people who are living outside and offer to take them to a shelter. If no shelter space is available, they provide blankets, hats, gloves, and anything else the individual may need to get through the night. St. Louis Winter Outreach now has a school bus, which Audra helped to purchase, to use as a warming bus as the city of St. Louis has discontinued their program. The bus is used as a place for people to warm up before being transported to a shelter. Volunteers shuttle individuals from the warming bus to a shelter. Additional volunteers staff the various shelters.

Shelters are ‘reset’ every night, meaning linens are stripped and washed. Supplies are stored at some of the churches and AmeriCorps St. Louis. While AmeriCorps funding recently has been cut nationally, AmeriCorps St. Louis receives local funding.

After Audra completed her presentation and answered questions, Optimist Florence Borman talked about the homeless situation in Jefferson County. At this time, there are no overnight shelters in Jefferson County and a grant has been requested from the Salvation Army. Meanwhile, Florence and others are currently

looking for a space to use temporarily house the homeless in our community.

<https://www.stlwinteroutreach.org/>

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney

May 22, 2025 Respect for Law



Honorees, left to right: Crystal City: Officer Tyler Griffin, Festus: Patrolman Richard Placke, Herculaneum: Officer Charles Hubbard, De Soto: Patrolman Richard Draper, and Missouri Highway Patrol: Trooper Cole Richardson. Also honored, but unable to attend, were Pevely Patrolman Brandon Bumbales and Hillsboro Officer Mike Beutel.

In July 1965, a discussion between Past Optimist International President Carl Bowen and former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover resulted in the birth of the Respect for Law community program. This acknowledgement is the fourth most popular Optimist activity with more than 1,500 clubs participating each year.

The May 22 meeting was a special day for the Twin City Area Optimist Club as we celebrated Respect for Law with the dedicated men and women of our local law enforcement departments in Jefferson County. Each chief in the area was asked

to provide the name of an exceptional nominee to be honored for what they do for their community.

The Respect for Law program and luncheon has been celebrated for many years. The Twin City Area Optimist Club truly enjoys recognizing the brave men and women who put their lives on the line for us each day. It is because of them that we are able to live our lives with peace and security. We recognize each officer for their commitment to their duty and thank them for their selflessness.

Submitted by: Cheyenne Pratt and Cathy Elliott

May 29, 2025 Memorial Day Remembrances

Twin City Area Optimist members at the May 29 evening meeting were invited to wear red, white, and blue in honor of Memorial Day. Members were also invited to bring photos and stories of loved ones who served in the military. Photos and memorabilia were placed on a table for everyone to view.

During the program, Beth Winkler shared an inspiring story by John O'Leary about a man named Bill Skinner which focused on honoring veterans and recognizing their sacrifices. The microphone was then passed around the table and many members shared their memories of loved ones who have served our country from the Civil War through the recent conflicts in the Middle East.

A big thank you to Beth for organizing this touching program.

Submitted by: Karen Huskey and Cathy Elliott



CLUB PROJECTS

Hillsboro Homecoming and Festival

Saturday, May 17 was the Hillsboro Homecoming and Festival event, at which the Twin City Area Optimists had a booth. Hillsboro is one of the main communities we serve with our many club activities. Our service project for the day consisted of providing white rocks and markers so that children of all ages could decorate the rocks with colorful art work or encouraging sayings. We had toddlers who could barely see over the top of our table to teenagers participating in the rock painting.

Additionally, we distributed our club flyers to all of the parents and spoke with some women who were interested to learn more about our club.

The goal of the Community Networking Committee is to serve as a public relations outreach, positively impacting the public's perception of our organization and its purpose. By supporting this Hillsboro community event with our booth, we had direct communications with members of the public, clearly showcasing our mission statement.

We could not have had the booth without Mary Hatfield, the Community Networking Committee Chair who organized this event, and the Optimists who helped at the event: Ellen Bridgewater, Peggy Scott, Sue Joggerst, Karen Huskey, Jean Naeger, Becky Francis, Carroll Metzger, Marian Bozak, Carolyn McKinney, Amy Baum, and Karin Spinks. Thank you all so much!

Submitted by: Mary Hatfield





TCA Optimist Party Committee Brings on the Fun!

I'm writing to you today to share an update on the Twin City Optimist Club's Party Committee. Ruth Ann Adams chairs this energetic and creative group, which also includes Debbie Floyd, Tracy Johnson, Lynn Wendel and myself (Donna Long).

Our mission is to create memorable and engaging events for the club, balancing fun and creativity within our budget constraints. We strive to offer a diverse range of themes and experiences to ensure there's something of interest for everyone.

This year's party calendar has been quite ambitious! We've already successfully hosted Halloween, Christmas, Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day and Spring Fling celebrations. We're especially excited about our upcoming Luau in July – we're working hard to make it our best party.

Working with this incredible team has been a joy. Their dedication, enthusiasm, and willingness to contribute innovative ideas have been instrumental to our success. We're always open to suggestions, so please don't hesitate to reach out.

We look forward to seeing you at the Luau!

Submitted by: Donna Long



Committee Chair Ruth Ann Adams was a winner at a party game.



Committee members Tracy Johnson and Lynn Wendel toasted the holidays.



Committee members Debbie Floyd and Donna Long partied for St. Patrick's Day.

Coats for Kids Inventory Relocation

The inventory for the Coats for Kids project has graciously been housed in the basement of Cindy Cherry's office building for several years. This year Betty Hardin, Twin City Area Optimist Club member and Branch Manager of the Bloomsdale Bank in Crystal City, kindly offered the bank's basement to provide storage for the coats.

Judy Williams organized several Optimists as well as help from a local youth group to relocate the coat inventory to the bank on May 28. The youth helped dismantle racks, and moved everything from Cindy's office to the bank next door while the Optimists organized the new space.

Thank you to everyone who helped with the move. And special thanks to Cindy Cherry and Betty Hardin for providing the space to store the inventory for this important project!

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney



Donna Long, Judy Williams, Debbie Hogenmiller, Karen Huskey, and Laura English in the new space at the Bloomsdale Bank.



Members of the local youth group that helped with the move.

Amy Baum oversaw the move from Cindy Cherry's office basement.

CLUB FUNDRAISERS

Twin City Area Optimist Club **BUNCO**

DATE: Fri. June 6, 2025
Doors open at 6:00 p.m.
Bunco starts at 7:00 p.m.



Contact: Carol Schanz
314-222-4344

Registration Fee:
\$20

**(In advance/
non-refundable)**

Location:
H W Herrell Distributing Company
1002 White Street, Imperial, MO

**Bring your
own beverage**

**Bring a
snack/dessert
to share**

**Invite a
friend**

New Marketing Brochure

The revised tri-fold marketing brochure is now available. This document provides basic information about the projects and services we provide to the community. It will be used for new member packets, sponsorship campaigns, and available at club public events. This is a great way to spread the word about our club.

SERVICE



BICYCLE SAFETY

Optimists gave away and properly fitted hundreds of bicycle helmets as part of the club's new and growing bicycle safety project.

Optimists partner with community organizations to serve children

- Jefferson College: Scholarships
- Aunt Rose Project: Serving period poverty
- Second Hand Heroes: Providing items and support
- Atlas Youth Outreach: Therapy for local teens
- Foster Together: Supporting foster families
- Spotlight Community Theatre: Encouraging the arts
- Helping Hands and Horses: Equestrian therapy

SPONSORSHIPS | 2025

Help us help the kids

We rely on the generosity of our community to support the Twin City Area Optimist Club's work in the community. Help us help the kids by sponsoring our club. For more information, please contact Jean Naeger, marketing chair, at 314-495-2822.

Platinum Sponsor: \$1,000 or more

- Greater visibility at club events
- Includes photo/logo of you or your business
- Announced on our public Facebook page
- Included on our website
- Recognized at public events

Gold Sponsor: \$500-\$999

- Includes photo/logo of you or your business
- Announced on our public Facebook page
- Included on our website
- Recognized at public events

Silver Sponsor: \$250-\$499

- Includes business logo
- Announced on our public Facebook page
- Included on our website
- Recognized at public events

Bronze Sponsor: \$100-\$249

- Announced on our public Facebook page
- Included on our website
- Recognized at public events

New for 2025: Donations are tax deductible

Make tax-deductible checks payable to: The Foundation of the Twin City Optimist Club, separately incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please mail to P.O. Box 13, Festus, MO 63028.



Twin City Area Optimist Club

Bringing out the best in youth

Choose Optimism

By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities and ourselves. Join the Twin City Area Optimist Club, a service club supporting southern Jefferson County, and make a difference today.



COATS FOR KIDS

Coats for Kids is the club's largest project and has been operating for more than 30 years. Each year, up to 500 coats are given away. The project committee works with local school counselors to identify local children in need.

www.twincityoptimist.org
@twincityoptimistclub
P.O. Box 475
Festus, MO 63028



CELEBRATE



JUNIOR OPTIMIST CLUB

Children ages 11-18 are encouraged to join the Twin City Optimist's Junior Optimist Club. Above, members learn about careers while enjoying a craft project. The club elects officers, plans its own projects and gives members a chance to develop leadership skills, meet new people and have fun.



DICTIONARIES FOR THIRD GRADERS

Each year, every third grader in southern Jefferson County receives their very own dictionary. In an age of electronics, the children love getting the books and learning new skills.

JUNIOR GOLF

One of junior golf's most prestigious events, the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships, starts with a local qualifying tournament supported by the Twin City Area club.



COLLECTING FOR OTHERS

Club members organize food drives and other collections throughout the years to serve members of the community. Above, a truckload of food was gathered for Brenden's Friday Backpacks, a community organization providing food to children in need.

OPTIMIST CLUB MEMBERS RECEIVE AS MUCH AS THEY GIVE

- The fellowship of proactive people with optimistic mindsets
- New social and working relationships with individuals from a cross section of our communities
- The opportunity to develop and demonstrate leadership skills locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- The satisfaction of making a difference in our communities

Whether you are searching for an outlet to help your community, personal development, or rewarding camaraderie, you'll find what you're looking for in your local Optimist Club.



YOUTH APPRECIATION

Bringing out the best in youth includes honoring local students for their achievements at the annual Youth Appreciation luncheon.



RESPECT FOR LAW

As part of the Optimist International organization, the Twin City Optimists take part in a project held around the world to honor law enforcement officers each year.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU JOIN US

The Twin City Area Optimist Club includes people who want to help youth and the community. Members join to serve others and to promote Optimism as a way of life. Visit a meeting as a guest to see if Optimism is for you. Join and you will be invited to participate in projects you care about alongside people who want to make a difference.

facebook.com/twincityoptimistclub
www.twincityoptimist.org

EAST MISSOURI (EMO) OPTIMIST DISTRICT



Thanks to all the TCA members who attended the EMO Third Quarter Conference and District Oratorical Contest.

Pictured: Front row Beth Watts, EMO Conference and Convention Chair, Barb Schmidt

Second row: Peggy Scott, EMO Leadership Chair, Shirley Coile, and EMO Governor Jean Naeger

Third row: Phyllis Neff, EMO Past Governor, Pat Parsons, EMO Secretary/Treasurer, Mary Kay Scott, Mary Hatfield, Marian Bozak, Debbie Hogenmiller, and Ruth Ann Adams

Welcome First Timers Marian Bozak and Shirley Coile with Governor Jean.

Marian and Shirley were recognized for attending their first (but not last) EMO Conference.



Past Governor Phyllis Neff kept everyone moving from one speed training session to the next.



Leadership Development Chair Peggy Scott delivered an excellent session on utilizing social media to promote clubs.

The Year of Olivias.

Three Olivias from TCA Club are top winners in East Missouri Optimist District Scholarship Contests.





Olivia Lee not only won our club Essay Contest, but she went on to win the EMO District contest.

14 EMO Clubs participated in the Essay Contest, with a total of 98 essays submitted at the club level. Each club submitted the winning essay for the district contest. Olivia was the first-place winner, earning her a \$2500 scholarship.

Top photo Olivia pictured with Governor Jean Naeger

Bottom photo TCA Essay Co-Chairs Mary Kay Scott and Debbie Hogenmiller pictured with Olivia.



Olivia Blair won first place in the EMO District Oratorical Contest with Olivia Drinen placing second.

13 EMO Clubs participated in the contest. Ten finalists from Zone competitions were eligible to move to the district contest.

First place district winner Olivia Blair won a \$2500 scholarship and moves onto the next level of regional competition. We wish her luck as she moves forward.

Olivia Drinen earned a \$1500 scholarship.

Photos: Winners pictured with EMO Oratorical Chair Karl Tyminski and EMO Governor Jean Naeger

Submitted by Jean Naeger

**Get ready for the EMO Convention August 15-17,
2025 Reservation Information Coming Soon**

SAVE THE DATE



June 6, 2025 - EMO Jr. Golf Tournament

Ste. Genevieve Golf Course - Ste. Genevieve, MO

June 29-July 3, 2025 - OI Convention

St. Louis Union Station - St. Louis, MO



July 17-18, 2025- Oratorical Championships

St. Louis University, Center for Global Citizenship, St. Louis, MO

August 15-17, 2025 - EMO Fourth Quarter Convention

Courtyard by Marriott, Columbia, MO

JOI Club

There is no JOI Club update for May.

Debbie Schumaker
JOI Adult Advisor

Carol Schanz
JOI Chair



SAVE THE DATES



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

June 5 Meeting - Bloomsdale Fun Farm, Board Update

June 6 Jr. Optimist Golf

June 6 BUNCO

June 12 Meeting - Foster Together

June 19 Meeting - Tim Krysl on Juneteenth

June 26 Evening Meeting

June 29-July 3 107th Optimist International Convention in St. Louis

July 1 NO BOARD MEETING
 July 3 NO GENERAL MEETING
 July 10 Meeting - Hawaiian Luau, International Convention Updates
 July 11 Red Cross Blood Drive, Jefferson County YMCA
 July 16 Dine to Donate at Qdoba
 July 17 Meeting - All for Family
 July 24 Meeting - Old Bag Lunch
 July 31 Evening Meeting - NOW/WOW
 August 5 Board Meeting - hostess Sue Joggerst
 August 7 Meeting - Helmets First, Board Update
 August 9 Rock 'n Roll Bingo
 August 14 Back to Play
 August 15-17 EMO District Convention
 August 17 Bottleneck Bridge Bike Ride & Bike Rodeo
 August 21 General Meeting
 August 28 Evening Meeting - CARE



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
 2024-2025

President
 Cathy Elliott
 573 883 0924

President Elect
 Debbie
 Hogenmiller

Past President
 Peggy Scott

Secretary
 Kathy Todd

Secretary Elect
 Marian Bozak

Treasurer
 Becky Francis

Treasurer Elect
 Becky Capps

Board Members

2024-2026
 Amy Baum
 Beth Watts
 Kirstie Zych

2025-2027
 Mary McDowell
 Debbie Kettler
 Carolyn



Keep current with club activities,
like us on Facebook, and
visit our website.

Visit our website



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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!