



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

July 2025 News Making a Difference For Kids

President Cathy Elliott



Dear Ladies,

It's Hot...It's Humid...It's the End of July!

July kicked off with a celebration—our club honored our amazing Optimist members with a festive Luau! What a fun and relaxing way to spend time together before diving into the busy fundraising season ahead.

The Optimist International Convention has wrapped up, and we're bringing back

fresh ideas and a few new tricks to strengthen our club. Now, our focus turns to fundraising, and July has already been packed with momentum:

- We introduced a new *Dine to Donate* location at **Qdoba**, and we're excited about its potential!
- Our first-ever **Red Cross Blood Drive** was a tremendous success—thank you to all who donated and volunteered!
- And of course, the always-popular **Old Bag Lunch** brought lots of laughs and friendly competition as members tried to outbid each other and discover the surprise contents inside each mystery bag.

Looking ahead, don't forget—**Rock 'n Roll Bingo** is coming up on August 9! It's sure to be a night of music, fun, and community spirit.

We're officially in the home stretch of summer, and the energy is unstoppable. Thank you for showing up, stepping up, and making a difference. Your support fuels everything we do!

Let's keep the momentum going! ☺

Optimistically yours,

Cathy Elliott
President, Twin City Area Optimist Club
573-883-0924

Welcome New Members!



DaNelle Winters

July 10, 2025



The meeting on July 10 was a celebration indeed! President Cathy Elliott called the meeting to order by welcoming back two members who have not been able to attend: Cindy Cherry and Elsie Williams. Cindy and Elsie were greeted with a warm welcome, showing how dearly they have been missed.

Cathy Elliott shared some statistics from the Third Quarter that just ended:

- 16 projects and events – of which one new project was Foster Together!
- 16 new members were approved and joined the club!
- Third Quarter District Meeting in St. Louis along with the Oratorical Contest;
- 107th Optimist International Convention held at Union Station.

The theme for the meeting was a Hawaiian Luau. There was an assortment of aloha shirts, leis, and even a grass skirt modeled by JoAnn Thompson. The table decorations were colorful and cheery, and lunch was delicious as usual.

After lunch, the Party Committee gave directions for games. The first game was a lei toss. The first part of the game was a competition at each table to toss a lei around the table centerpieces. The table winners then progressed to the next part of the game which was tossing a lei onto Cathy Elliott! After several tries, Christine Bradshaw was declared the winner!

In the next game, members worked their way around the room to identify people who had been assigned specific Hawaiian-related activities. At the end of the game, Barb Schmidt and Ellen Bridgewater both had 15 people identified with Shirley Coile close behind with 14.

The final game was a quiz where members had to guess the synonym to luau-related words like “muu muu” and “smorgasboard”. The game helped to expand many members’ vocabulary. When correct answers were tallied, Susan DeClue was the final winner!

Everyone had a fantastic time playing the games with plenty of laughter. Congratulations to the winners and a big thank you to the party committee for an exciting afternoon!

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney



Party committee members Donna Long, Tracy Johnson, Lynne Wendel, Debra Floyd, and Ruth Ann Adams.



Lei toss finalists Dorothea Kehm, Vicky Campbell, Pat Doenges, Christine Bradshaw, Jan Buechting, JoAnn Thompson, and Tracy Johnson.

Lei toss competitions.



Hawaiian activities game winners Ellen Bridgewater, Barb Schmidt, and Shirley Coile.



Synonym game winner Susan DeClue.

July 17, 2025 All For Family



Updates & Reminders

- August 9 is the Fall Fundraiser for Rock 'n Roll Bingo. In addition to ticket sales, there is a list of items needed for the raffle baskets.
- You will be receiving a survey for our club via email from Liz Christman – it's very important to take part in the survey to see what we do very well and what we need to improve on within the club. The Care Meeting results will be discussed at the evening meeting on Thursday, August 28.
- Becky Francis can now "tap to pay" with credit cards in the GiveButter app. Please see her for any questions

All for Family

The speakers from All for Family were Optimist Amy Baum, President of the Board of Directors for All for Family, and Heather Frazier, the new Program Director.

All for Family (AFF) was started in 2018 by Angel Williams, who through being both a foster child and a foster parent, identified a need. Bio parents who are approved for supervised visits with their children in foster care must often

provide their own supervisor, but may lack the resources to do so. All for Family provides free or low-cost options by using qualified volunteers and safe meeting facilities to help families stay connected. Visits are for parents as well as siblings who may not be in the same home.

AFF also offers therapeutic visitation for families who need additional support. This is a no or low-cost option for families compared to the usual costs for professional services.

AFF volunteers have to be approved by the Missouri Department of Social Services-Children's Division, pass a background check and undergo training. While generally being observers during a visit, they may, if prompted, offer guidance or suggestions for future visits. Some volunteers "adopt" a family and supervise all the visits with that family. For each visit, volunteers complete a report which is sent to the family case manager after the visit.

Currently, AFF has locations in Hillsboro and Arnold, both with indoor and outdoor facilities equipped to support visits.

Funding is provided by donations, fundraisers, and grants. The primary grant is through the Jefferson Foundation. Crafting fundraisers are held multiple times a year with the next one scheduled for August 1-2, 2025.

AFF is looking for volunteers. If interested, call 636-345-5222. For more information, reference:

<https://www.allforfamily.net/>

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney

July 24, 2025 Old Bag Luncheon



The Old Bag auction at the July 24 meeting was lively and hilarious. Emcee Karen Huskey sparkled while cajoling attendees to increase their bids just another five dollars. Kathy Todd and Carol Schanz presented the bags to the audience while Sue Joggerst helped track active bidders.

Twenty-one bags, including designer names Vera Bradley, Dooney & Bourke, Ralph Lauren, Michael Kors, and Liz Claiborne, were auctioned. Kate Spade was the most popular brand with four bags in the auction. Bids ranged from under \$100 to a high of \$300, usually increasing by multiples of \$5, but occasionally dropping to increments of \$1.00 to \$3.00.

The auction raised \$3,318.00 in 45 minutes which surpassed last year's total by \$893! Thank you to Karen Huskey for taking on the role of emcee, Carol Schanz and her committee for organizing the event, all who contributed bags, and all who attended! Finally, congratulations and thanks to all the generous bidders.

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney and Cathy Elliott



Old Bag Luncheon committee chair Carol Schanz and emcee Karen Huskey



Cindy Cherry pulled a \$50 bill out of the bag she won!!



Paige Laiben found lots of good things in the large Michael Kors bag she won.



Bella Roesch, Judy Williams' granddaughter, won a Liz Claiborne bag.



Carol Schanz found some interesting beach items in the Mystery Travel Bag she won!



Kathy Todd displaying a bag being auctioned.



Lynne Wendel was the lucky winner of 2 bags!



A handful of cash in \$2 bills were in Mary Hatfield's new pink bag.

July 31, 2025 NOW/WOW Meeting

The NOW/WOW meeting was held on July 31 at the First United Methodist Church in Festus. NOW stands for “New Optimists Welcome” and WOW for “Welcome Optimists Worldwide”. Nine new and potential new members attended this special meeting.

After announcements and a delicious taco bar dinner provided by the United Methodist Women, NOW committee chairs Mary Hatfield and Amy Baum delivered a presentation describing many Twin City Area Optimist Club programs, projects, fundraising events, grants, and sponsorships. This introduction provided potential new members with a view of the breadth of our club activities.

In addition to the presentation, some members described their history with the club, the support they receive and the positive impact membership has made to their lives. In the last few minutes of the meeting, Mary Hatfield introduced an activity for attendees to draw what Optimists gave back to them.

The meeting ended with the induction of new member DaNelle Winters, sponsored by Carol Schanz. Welcome, DaNelle!

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney



Mary Hatfield and Amy Baum giving a presentation about club activities for new and potential new members.



Karen Huskey and Donna Long collaborated on drawings of what Optimists have given them.



CLUB PROJECTS

Coats for Kids Update

Earlier this summer, the Coats for Kids inventory and supplies were moved to the Bank of Bloomsdale's basement in Crystal City. While member donations furnished most of the items needed for the move, one outstanding issue was the need for a solid table cover for a table in the storage area. Judy Williams reached out to one of the Twin City Area Optimist Club's sponsors, Darren Street of The Flooring House, who graciously donated vinyl sheeting for the table. Thank you, Darren! Your donation is greatly appreciated.



KIDS BIKE RODEO AND HELMET CLINIC

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17 TH

A bike rodeo is a safe, controlled environment for kids ages 3-14 to practice bike handling skills and build confidence*



- Sunday, Aug. 17
- Registration is **FREE!**
- Ages 3-14
- 12:30 - 2 p.m.
- Corner of S. Mill and S. Second Street
- All registrants receive a free bike helmet courtesy of the Twin City Area Optimist Club & Helmets First

This event is part of the children's programming for the 2025 Bottleneck Bridge Ride in Festus, MO
The clinic will be followed by Kids Strider Bike Races brought to you by Living Life on Two Wheels - 2 p.m. on Festus Main Street
Visit: runsignup.com/bottleneckbridgeride



*Not a learn-to-ride event. Experience riding a bike is recommended and an adult must accompany child at all times to participate.

CLUB FUNDRAISERS

Red Cross Blood Drive July 11, 2025

A total of 35 people showed up to donate blood at the Red Cross Blood Drive sponsored by the Twin City Area Optimist Club on July 11 at the Festus

YMCA. While some people were unable to give or unable to complete a full unit, other donors completed the lengthier Power Red donation which produces 2 units of blood. In total we were credited with supplying 35 units of blood to the Red Cross which should yield \$350 to our club.

We also had great support from 17 of our team members who provided snacks or manned the snack or check-in table. Many of these members were also donors. In all, 30 different Optimist members supported in one or more ways to lead to SUCCESS!

This was a fantastic group effort and a win for our community and the American Red Cross!

I am so grateful for all of the support for this first-time project for our group and also for me. And a big thank you to you too, Cathy Elliott, for the nod to give this a try and also for the confidence in me.

Submitted by: Marian Bozak



Jean Naeger and Kathy Jensen at the check-in table with Red Cross volunteer Karen.



A Red Cross technician checked on Marian Bozak during her donation.



Alicia Cummiskey was smiles and thumbs up while donating.



Arlene Fidler, Kirstie Zych, and Karen Huskey staffed the snack table.

July 16 Dine to Donate at QDOBA

The July 16 Dine to Donate fundraiser at QDOBA in Festus was well attended by Optimists and friends. QDOBA donated 25% of the sales from customers who presented the Optimist flyer during a 4-hour window. The final result was a \$200.60 donation to the Twin City Area Optimist Club and a delicious meal for all who attended!



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. Members can request copies from Marketing Chair Jean Naeger.

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
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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 year 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



**Optimist International
President Jan Oord
Graves and First
Gentleman Ron Graves
cut the ribbon to open
the convention.**



TCA Members in attendance: EMO Governor Jean Naeger, OI Convention Chair Phyllis Neff, Cathy Elliott, Peggy Scott, Ruth Ann Adams, Kathy Todd, Gerty O'Leary, Carroll Metzger, Mary Hatfield, Carolyn McKinney, Sue Joggerst, Mary Kay Scott, Shirley Coile, Sue Boyer, Caryl Harness and Barb Schmidt. (Pictured with Zone 4 Lt. Governor Joe Hatfield.)

A Heartfelt Thank You to All!

A sincere thank you to everyone who attended the **107th Annual Optimist International Convention**! Your presence helped make the event a resounding success.

We'd also like to extend a special note of gratitude to all those who dedicated their time and talent to create the beautiful **centerpieces** for the occasion. Your efforts truly enhanced the atmosphere and were greatly appreciated by all attendees.



Taste of St. Louis



Heritage of Optimist
Brunch



President's Gala



EMO District Members Attend District Dinner



**Get ready for the EMO Convention August 15-17, 2025.
Registration now open**

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 was no JOI Club meeting in July 2025.

Debbie Schumaker
JOI Adult Advisor

Carol Schanz
JOI Chair



SAVE THE DATES



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

August 5 Board Meeting - hostess Sue Joggerst
August 7 Meeting - Helmets First, Board Update
August 9 Rock 'n Roll Bingo
August 14 Meeting - Back to Play
August 15-17 EMO District Convention in Columbia, MO
August 17 Bottleneck Bridge Bike Ride & Bike Rodeo
August 21 General Meeting
August 28 Evening Meeting - CARE Survey Results
September 2 Combined Board Meeting
September 4 Meeting - Board Update
September 11 Sponsorship Lunch
September 13 Brenden's Backpack Collection
September 18 General Meeting
September 25 Dine to Donate at Panera
September 25 General Meeting
October 2 Officer Installation
October 4 Bloomsdale Fun Farm
October 7 Board Meeting
October 9 Meeting - Board Update
October 16 General Meeting
October 23 General 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
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
McKinney



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