Twin City Area Optimist Club

P.O. Box 475
Festus, Missouri 63028
www.twincityoptimist.org
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Serving Youth and Community since 1919

October 2026 News
Making a Difference For Kids

President Donna Masters

President's Message: A Busy Month of Service, Growth, and Optimism

As we begin a new Optimist year, I feel very fortunate to serve this club as your new President and look forward to working alongside such dedicated members who generously share their time, talents, and passion for helping young people in our community.

October was a very busy and successful month. Our Pickleball Tournament brought together community members, introduced many new people to the Optimist Bicycle Playground project, and generated important fundraising revenue through raffle baskets.

We also partnered in hosting a Bike Rodeo and Helmet Clinic at the Festus Library, where club volunteers and members of our Junior Optimist Club helped children learn bicycle safety skills and build confidence on their bikes.

Mid-month, members assembled 60 Parent as Teachers activity boxes filled with art and learning supplies that will benefit families throughout Festus, Crystal City, Hillsboro, and De Soto. We were equally excited to see our Junior Optimist Club continue to grow, welcoming prospective members during its Open House and strengthening youth leadership opportunities in our area.

The momentum behind our Optimist Bicycle Playground Capital Campaign continues as well, with a fundraising, grant applications, and community outreach helping us move closer to making this vision a reality.

Our club was also proud to sponsor the 8th Annual BB5K, at Windsor School. This is a community event focused on youth mental health awareness and the message, "Learn the signs; change the story." Nearly 200 participants joined the walk and

activities, while sponsorship funds helped support six student essay awards. The event highlighted the importance of supporting the mental health and well-being of young people in our community.

I want to thank all the committee chairs and club members who gave so much of their time, energy, and support to the great success of our club this October. It is an honor to be a part of this club.

As we move into November, I invite everyone to get involved with our upcoming Art Contest, Coats for Kids collection efforts, Koeze Nut Sales fundraiser, and our holiday support projects for local Head Start families. Together, we continue to live our mission of bringing out the best in youth, our community, and ourselves.

Donna Masters
President
Twin City Area Optimist Club

NEW MEMBERS

Renee Reuter

Naomi Little

ANNOUNCEMENTS & BOARD UPDATES

Project heads are reminded to keep Jean Naeger in the loop for marketing support and flyers.

New member Naomi Little, sponsored by Jessica Korte, was approved by the board. Welcome Naomi.

Bike Playground: Grant applications have been submitted to the Jefferson Foundation and Festus Tourism. A Capital Campaign is underway to raise funds for this project.

An Evening of Optimism, our third dinner fundraiser, will be held February 27, 2027 at the Oak Valley Golf Course. Tickets will be $60. The event this year will focus more on our club and its purpose.

Koeze Nut catalogs are available. Final orders should be turned in to Pat Parsons by November 19 with delivery expected in early December.

Mascot Nut orders are currently being taken. Look for a clipboard circulating at the general meetings.

The Annual Art Contest will be held Sunday, November 15 at the Elks Lodge in Festus. It takes a lot of volunteers to make this event a success. If you can help at the contest or with sorting the art on Friday, November 13 at the Festus Library, please contact Amy Baum for details.

Coats for Kids: As of October 15, 85 coats and 25 hoodies have been distributed to the local schools!

Member Spotlight
Pam Cernik

Pam Cernik first heard about the Twin City Area Optimist Club from her friend and former schoolmate Judy Williams. At the time, Pam was still teaching 7th grade math and science in the Fox C-6 School District so she didn't explore the club further. After retiring from a 25-year teaching career, she met Pat Parsons who invited her to attend a meeting. Pam was drawn to the camaraderie among members, the strong community support and the commitment to helping kids. She officially joined the club in August 2015.

During her time in the Optimists, Pam has worked on many projects including the dictionary project, Head Start parties and baskets, Brenden's Backpacks food drives, and Coats for Kids deliveries. While no single project stands out above the rest, Pam especially enjoys the hands-on interactions with kids.

Since retiring, Pam has filled her days with travel, reading and games. She plays Mahjong regularly and is helping others learn the game. She also loves Bunco and game nights filled with laughter and friendly competition. She enjoys traveling and diving into good books. She currently is rereading a favorite series as she waits for the next installment to be released.

Pam's weekends are usually spent at race tracks where her son and 12-year-old grandson both compete in dirt track racing. In addition to her son, Pam also has a daughter who lives nearby and has two children, another grandson and a granddaughter. Her oldest grandson, 24, was married in October 2026. Pam has had a busy couple of months!

The line of the Optimist Creed that speaks the most to Pam is, "To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others." She believes that focusing on personal growth is one of the most powerful ways to create positive change around you.

Pam lives the Optimist Creed each day with her cheerful, friendly attitude. Her willingness to share her love of games—especially Mahjong—shows how she spreads positivity in simple, joyful ways. Whether she's teaching someone new or gathering friends around a table, Pam creates moments of connection that brighten the day for everyone around her.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

Fun at the Race Track

Family Time

Optimist Activities!

October 1, 2026
Officer Installation

The Twin City Area Optimist Club installation was held October 1 to thank outgoing officers and board members and install the incoming board. Ruth Ann Adams hosted the meeting. There was a definite bee theme with yellow and black decorations, bee pins, bee and sunflower centerpieces, and even honeycomb patterned and bee-topped cupcakes.

Leaving the Board this year are Secretary Marian Bozak, Treasurer Becky Capps, Past President Peggy Scott, and board members Mary McDowell, Debbie Kettler, and Carolyn McKinney. Stepping into new leadership roles are Donna Masters as President, Jessica Korte as Secretary, and Ellen Bridgewater as Treasurer, with Jan Buechting, Nancy McAnany, and Michele Horrell serving as President-elect, Secretary-elect, and Treasurer-elect. Board members Megan Siracusa, Becky Francis, and Donna Long will continue their service, joined by newcomers Patty Meyer, Pat Parsons, and Shelly Storment. Cathy Elliott transitions into the past president role. Bouquets of sunflowers were presented to all outgoing and incoming officers and board members.

After lunch, members enjoyed a slideshow tribute to Cathy Elliott, though spotty wi-fi caused a few interruptions. The full slideshow remains available at https://canva.link/voi3a9rtbtjl57d. Members were invited to write personal messages to Cathy on notecards placed at each table, and the collected notes were presented to her in a keepsake box along with a Visa gift card as a token of appreciation for her service. As a special surprise, Cathy's daughter Kim attended the meeting, bringing a bouquet of roses to her mom!

In her outgoing remarks, Cathy reviewed a long list of highlights from her time in office. She also presented a number of awards to members. To Pat Doenges, Cathy presented a "Thank You for Taking Care of the Fellowship Program" award, and to Jan Norrick, a "Thank You for Taking Care of our Email" award. She presented the "President's Cheerleader" award to Laura Elbl, Pat Parsons, Ruth Ann Adams, Carroll Metzger, and Becky Francis for their support and encouragement. The "Just Can't Say No to Cathy" award went to Marian Bozak, Ruth Ann Adams, Nancy McAnany, Katie Huck, Donna Long, and Jean Naeger for their willingness to jump in when Cathy asked. Peggy Scott received the "I Have Your Back and You Have Mine" award, and Carolyn McKinney was presented with the "President's Citation Award."

Mary Hatfield, past and current Governor of the East Missouri District installed the new officers and board members, then new club President Donna Masters spoke about her plans and ideas for the coming year. The meeting ended with the 50/50 drawing, raffling off the table centerpieces, and the announcement of Phyllis Neff as the winner of the "guess how many honeycombs" game. There were 173 pieces of honeycomb cereal in the jar and Phyllis guessed 172 - congratulations!

Our sincere thanks go to the outgoing board for their commitment and hard work this past year. We look forward to supporting the new board as they begin their term. We also extend appreciation to Ruth Ann Adams and her team—Jean Naeger, Donna Long, and Carolyn McKinney—for organizing a memorable installation meeting.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

Outgoing Board members
Left to right: Ellen Bridgewater, Becky Capps, Carolyn McKinney, Peggy Scott, Jessica Korte, Mary McDowell, Marian Bozak, Donna Masters, and Cathy Elliott

Cathy Elliott and daughter Kim.

Cathy Elliott with a gift box of member messages.

Incoming Board members
Front row, left to right: Jessica Korte, Donna Long, Ellen Bridgewater, Megan Siracusa, Pat Parsons
Back row, left to right: Shelly Storment, Michele Horrell, Becky Francis, Nancy McAnany, Donna Masters, Jan Buechting, Cathy Elliott

October 8, 2026
All for Family

Renee Reuter, sponsored by Jean Naeger, was inducted into the TCA Optimists. Welcome Renee!

AFF Program Director Heather Frazier and AFF Board President Amy Baum

All for Family (AFF)

Heather Frazier, Program Director of All for Family (AFF), and Optimist Amy Baum, AFF Board President, shared an overview of the organization's work. All for Family provides a low-cost, supervised-visit option for foster children and their biological families, using trained volunteers to ensure visits are safe and supportive. Families are evaluated before visits begin, and volunteers document each session for case managers. AFF also employs two therapists to assist families who need additional guidance.

AFF hosts visits at two Jefferson County churches, each offering playgrounds, indoor play areas, and kitchen facilities.

With case managers often carrying caseloads of 40–60 families, AFF's involvement eases their workload. The need continues to grow—AFF has already provided more than 500 hours of supervised visits in 2026, a significant increase from under 200 hours in 2025.

AFF continues to rely on dedicated volunteers, all of whom complete background checks and training before supervising visits. Volunteers may commit to one family or fill in as their schedule allows, and longer visits can be split to keep shifts manageable. As the need grows, this volunteer support remains essential to ensuring safe, consistent family connections.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

October 15, 2026
Perfect Attendance, BB5K

Jessica Korte had the honor of presenting perfect attendance awards to members at the October 15 meeting. The awards recognize members with anywhere from 1 to 38 years of perfect attendance.

The award recognizing 38 years of perfect attendance went to Pat Doenges and required a little creativity. Since Jessica did not have a "38" available, she turned it into a DIY project by gluing two numbers together to create the award.

Reipients:
One year: Marian Bozak, Susan Declue, Jessica Korte, Carolyn McKinney
Five years: Kathy Todd, Debbie Hogenmiller
Six years: Cathy Elliott
Nine years: Jean Naeger
Ten years: Katie Huck, Barb Schmidt
Thirteen years: Judy Kuhlman
Thirty years: Pat Parsons
Thirty-one years: Barb Bates
Thirty-five years: Sue Boyer

Thirty-eight years: Pat Doenges

Thank you to Jessica for tracking attendance records and for finding a creative solution when needed. Congratulations to all of this year's recipients on their outstanding achievement!

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

Perfect Attendance recipients
Left to right: Judy Kuhlman, Barb Bates, Jessica Korte, Pat Parsons, Marian Bozak, Carolyn McKinney, Sue Boyer, Pat Doenges, Susan Declue, Kathy Todd, Jean Naeger, and Katie Huck

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BB5K

Debbie Schumaker, president of BB5K, and Carol Schanz, chair of the organization, shared information about the upcoming BB5K Teen Mental Health Awareness Walk. Debbie explained that the fundraiser began eight years ago following a devastating loss experienced by her family.

The mission of BB5K is to raise awareness and educate families about teen mental health. Their new message, **"Learn the Signs...Change the Story,"** reflects their commitment to prevention, education, and support.

This year's event is scheduled for October 31 at the Windsor High School track. In recognition of Halloween, the event will also feature a trunk-or-treat activity for participants and families.

The walk's location has changed from previous years as the organization continues to expand its outreach efforts. Debbie has been invited to St. Pius High School to share the meaning of the BB5K walk with the students. She and Carol are exploring the possibility of organizing an additional walk in the spring of 2027.

We thank Debbie and Carol for sharing the important work of BB5K and for their ongoing efforts to promote teen mental health awareness in our community.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

October 22, 2026
P.A.T. Boxes

Due to illness, President Donna Masters was unable to attend the October 22 meeting. Past President Cathy Elliott stepped in and conducted the meeting– without the bell! The meeting itself was short, with project updates, event reminders, and brags. Afterwards, members stayed to pack Parents as Teachers (PAT) boxes.

Debbie Hogenmiller had all the purchased supplies and labeled containers organized and ready in the back room at Taytro's. Our members, as always, quickly and efficiently filled 60 containers with markers and crayons, stickers, scissors, glue, paper, paint and bubbles. Debbie delivered 20 boxes each to Festus, Hillsboro, and De Soto schools for distribution to underserved children.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

Left to right: Laura Elbl, Julie Reiter, Marie Strong, Michele Horrell, Debbie Hogenmiller, Marian Bozak, and Jean Naeger finishing boxes!

The Optimist assmbly line at work!
In front: Marie Strong, Diane Brown, Donna Long, and Barb Bates.

Twenty completed boxes!

Phyllis Neff displaying a final box.

October 29, 2026
A Bewitching Evening of Fun & Friendship

The Twin City Area Optimist Club's Halloween Party was held on October 29, with members invited to don their favorite witch costumes for an evening filled with fun, laughter and a little Halloween magic. Witches of every style gathered for a night of fellowship and friendly competition as party planners Judy Williams and Julie Reiter kept everyone entertained with a variety of fun-filled activities throughout the evening.

Amid the evening's witches, games and laughter, Naomi Little was officially inducted as a new club member. Welcome, Naomi! We're so glad you were able to join in the fun and become part of our Optimist family.

The festivities began with three exciting rounds of Halloween Bingo, giving everyone a chance to win prizes. Next came a creative challenge that tested participants' artistic talents. Each attendee was given a paper plate, instructed to place it on their head, and then, draw a witch without peeking. Judy Williams judged the final masterpieces, awarding prizes to Pat Parsons and new member Naomi Little.

The evening concluded with a costume contest to determine the scariest and the funniest/happiest witches in attendance. Barb Schmidt earned the title of Scariest Witch, while Phyllis Neff flew away with honors as the Funniest Witch.

With plenty of laughter, creativity and Halloween spirit, the party proved to be a spellbinding success. Special thanks go to Judy Williams and Julie Reiter for planning a wonderfully bewitching evening enjoyed by all!

Halloween Party Planners Judy Williams and Julie Reiter

All of the witches lined up for judging!

Mary Kay Scott, Carroll Metzger, Kathy Jensen, Tabitha Brauch, and Carol Schanz filled their Halloween Bingo boards.

What a creative idea and what a sight to see a room full of women drawing on paper plates held on their heads!

Costume contest winners
Scariest: Barb Schmidt
Funniest: Phyllis Neff

Winners of the witch drawing contest, Pat Parsons and Naomi Little with their masterpieces!

FOUNDATION UPDATE

Third Quarter Report
July-September 2026

The Foundation of the Twin City Optimist Club

The Board of Directors of The Foundation of the Twin City Optimist Club now meets every other month. During the third quarter of 2026, the Board's discussions focused primarily on the progress of the Optimist Bicycle Playground project. The remaining balance of the design contract with American Ramp Company has been paid. Grant opportunities and a capital campaign for this project are being pursued. The Board also approved a T-shirt fundraiser featuring the project logo and the capital campaign slogan, **"Imagine the Impact."**

Ellen Bridgewater has established a website, email addresses, and a phone number for the Foundation. The Foundation's email and phone number can be forwarded to any member as needed. During the bicycle project, emails will be forwarded to Carroll Metzger, and phone calls will be forwarded to Katie Huck. Ellen also requested that technical assistance be provided when needed going forward. Club members interested in purchasing T-shirts for $20 may contact Carroll Metzger.

Submitted by Carroll Metzger

CLUB FUNDRAISERS

The Twin City Area Optimist Club Pickleball Tournament, held October 3–4, was a fun-filled weekend of friendly competition, beautiful weather, and enthusiastic players and volunteers! With approximately four hours of play each day, everyone enjoyed a great time on the courts.

We received lots of positive feedback from players about how much they enjoyed the tournament. Just as importantly, the event gave us a wonderful opportunity to spread the word about our Optimist Bike Playground project. We had players who traveled from as far away as St. Peters. Several players expressed excitement about bringing their children and grandchildren to enjoy the playground once it's completed!

Sunday's activities included delicious food from Kanoa Hawaiian Grill and plenty of interest both days in our 10 pickleball-themed auction baskets.

Although participation was lower than we had hoped, partly due to a competing long-established tournament, we gained valuable experience that will help us make next year's event even better. After expenses, the tournament raised $1,400 for our Bike Playground project!

A Big Thank You to Our Volunteers! Events like this simply wouldn't happen without Optimist members willing to give their time and energy. A special thank-you to everyone who helped with setup, takedown, and all the little things throughout the weekend that kept everything running smoothly.

Thank you to: Laura English, Nancy McAnany, Donna Masters, Cathy Elliott, Carroll Metzger, Katie Huck, Donna Arnold, Jan Buechting, Judy Williams, Jan Norrick, and Ellen Bridgewater. Your willingness to pitch in helped make this event a success, and we truly appreciate each of you!

We're already looking forward to next year's tournament.

Submitted by Becky Francis

TCA Optimists

Donna Masters, Katie Huck, and Becky Francis after welcoming remarks.

Becky Francis and Donna Masters with the Traveling Trophy.

Carroll Metzger, Donna Masters, Nancy McAnany, Becky Francis, Laura English, and Katie Huck at the Optimists booth.

Donna Arnold, Cathy Elliott, Jim Berger (Tournament organizer) and Becky Francis

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Pickleball Players and Organizers

Holiday Koeze Nuts Sale – Get 10% Off + Free Shipping!

It's that time of year! Koeze Nuts sales are officially underway.
If you have not received your paper catalog yet, please reach out to **Pat Parsons**.
Exclusive Club Savings:

- **10% OFF catalog pricing with club bulk order**
- **FREE Shipping on all orders included in our club bulk order**

Key Dates to Remember:

- **Orders Due: November 19th (to Pat Parsons) cell: 314 223 4309 or pat.herkygirl@yahoo.com**
- **Estimated Delivery / Pickup: First week of December**

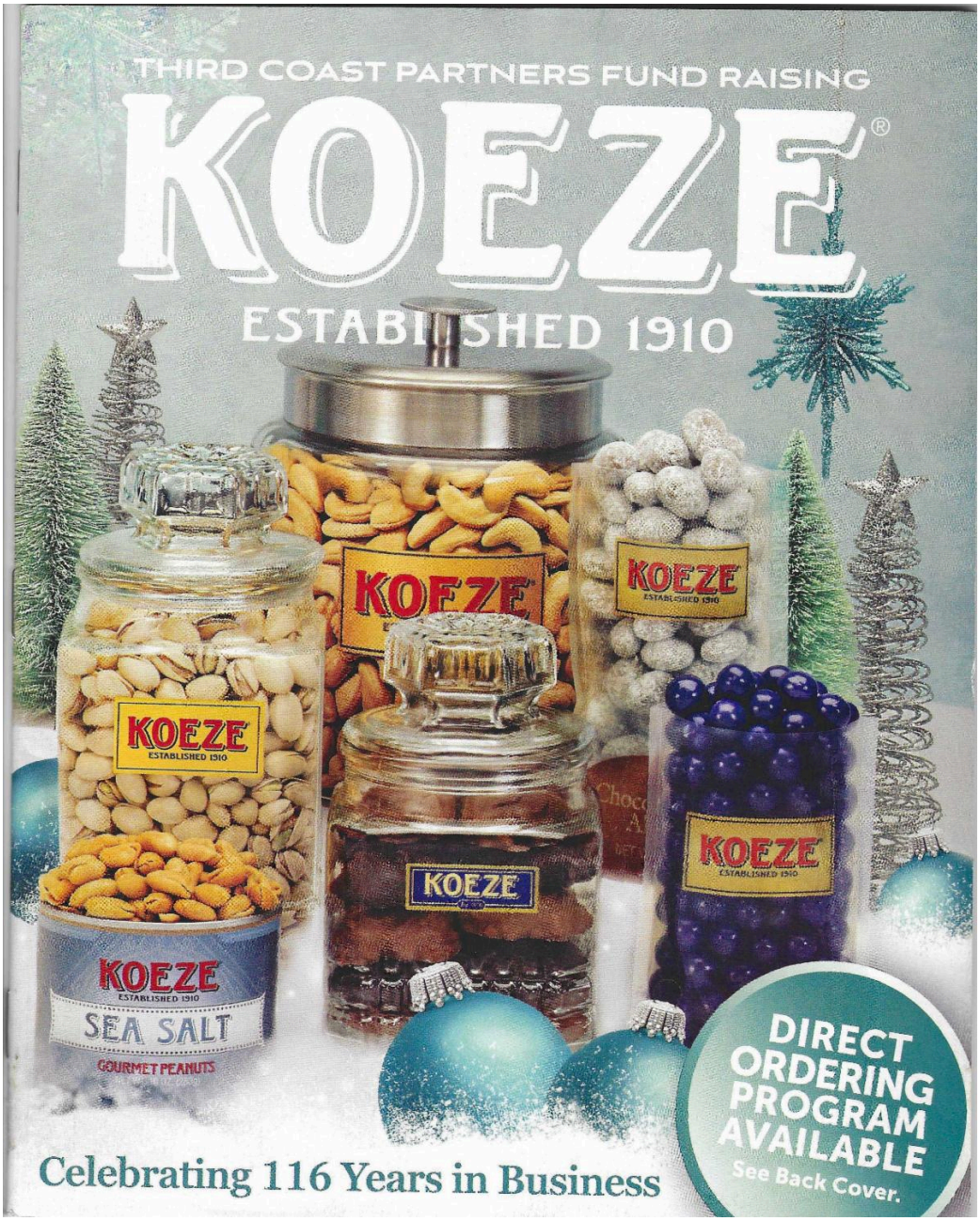
Think Corporate Gifts! Koeze Nuts make exceptional holiday gifts for clients, employees, service providers, and hostesses. Who do you know that might need corporate gift solutions this season? Share the catalog with them today to help support our community projects!

Direct Ordering Online or by Phone (Ships directly to you/recipients) Can't make the bulk order deadline or need items shipped directly to out-of-town family, friends, or clients? You can order directly online or by phone, and Koeze will give a portion of your purchase total back to our club!

- **Online:** Visit Koeze.com and enter our group promo code at checkout.
- **By Phone:** Call **800.253.6887** and mention our group code.
- **Group Name:** OPTIMIST TWIN CITY AREA
- **Promo Code: T0006716**

Note: Direct orders shipped straight to your recipient will include standard shipping costs and sales tax.

Submitted by Jean Naeger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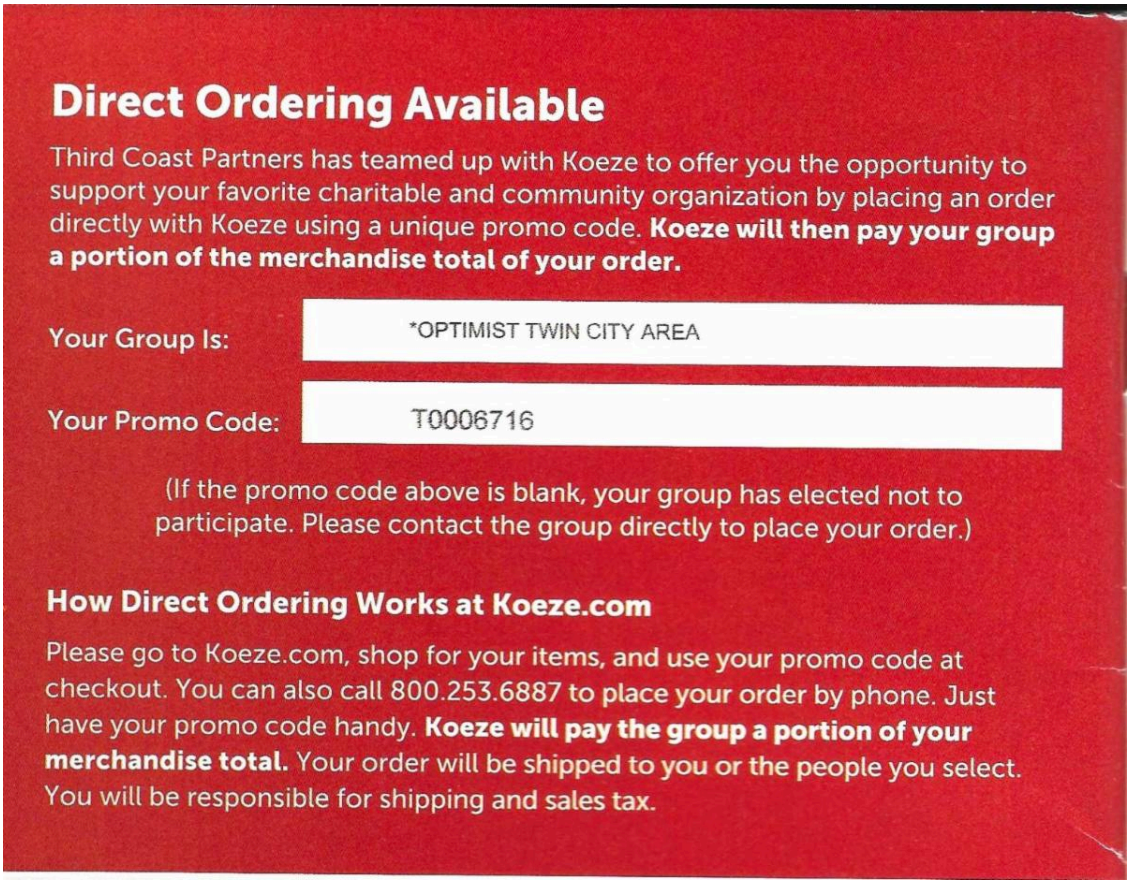

Our Next BIG Event: An Evening of Optimism Needs YOU!

Mark your calendars for February! Our annual **An Evening of Optimism** is right around the corner, and our goal is ambitious but completely achievable with your help: **a sold-out event for 150 guests!**

Gather your friends, family, and co-workers for a wonderful evening out while directly supporting our club's work and local youth projects.

- **Reserve Your Seats: Scan the QR code on the event flyer or purchase tickets directly from Pat Parsons at our weekly meetings.**

How You Can Help Make It a Success:

- **Auction Items Needed: We need volunteers to solicit donations for our live and silent auctions. *Who do you know with a business or service that might donate an item, gift card, or experience?***
- **Event-Day Support: We're looking for hands-on volunteers to assist with setup, cleanup, and hosting tasks during the event.**

If you can lend a hand in any way, please reach out to Event Chair **Phyllis Neff -- cell:**
636 795 3665. Let's work together to make this our most successful fundraiser yet!

Submitted by Jean Naeger

CLUB PROJECTS

Kiwanis Donation

Katie Huck and Becky Francis presented the Bike Playground project to the Kiwanis Club at their October 5 lunch meeting held at Pasta House in Festus. Thirteen of the club's fifteen regular members attended. The conversation was informal and interactive, with members offering thoughtful questions and helpful suggestions throughout.

After lunch, the Kiwanis surprised Katie and Becky with a donation of $250 for the playground project. Katie and Becky expressed their gratitude for the donation and

plan to follow up on the connections made and the suggestions!

Submitted by Becky Francis and Katie Huck

The Bike Rodeo and Helmet Clinic took place on October 10 from 12:30–2:00 PM at the Festus Public Library, held in partnership with the Bottleneck Bridge Ride.

Fourteen Twin City Optimists and five Junior Optimists volunteered to teach bike safety and fit helmets for young riders. Ten children participated in the event, fewer than hoped, but the group still enjoyed a fun afternoon. JOI Club volunteers staffed the ABC station (air, brake and chain checks), and added a splash of red, white, and blue glitter to the kids and themselves!

Our partnership with the Bottleneck Bridge Ride remains an important connection for the club, and showing up for the children in our community continues to be a meaningful asset.

Committee: Katie Huck-Chair, Mary Hatfield-co-chair, Jan Buechting-co-chair

Volunteers: Debbie Schumaker, Julie Reiter, Pat Parsons, Peggy Scott, Peggy Grieshaber, Carroll Metzger, Marian Bozak, Becky Francis, Kathy Todd, Pat Doenges, Debbie Hogenmiller, Ellen Bridgewater , Christine Bradshaw, and Phyllis Neff

JOI Club Volunteers: Lainey Casey, Katelyn Blair, Oscar Blair, Olivia Blair and Blake Neff

Submitted by Katie Huck

Mary Hatfield adjusted the helmet for Ellen Bridgewater's granddaughter.

Julie Reiter with a couple of riders.

Peggy Grieshaber helping a young rider on the track.

What a great turnout! TCA Optimists and JOI Club members filled the Optimist booth!

Twin City Optimists Take to the Radio

On October 28, Twin City Area Optimist Club member Katie Huck and club President Donna Masters joined Hal Neisler on AM 1400 KJFF Radio to talk about the club's projects in October and future events, and to provide an update of the Optimist Bicycle Playground. Tune in to hear optimism in action!

October 28 interview

https://www.mymoinfo.com/kjff-newsmakers-twin-city-optimist-club-katie-huck-and-donna-masters-10-28-2026/

Head Start Thanksgiving Baskets

For this year's Head Start Thanksgiving Basket project, the committee will be accepting donations of personal care and household cleaning items only. Participation is entirely optional, but members wishing to help may donate supplies or make a cash contribution in lieu of shopping.

Drop off locations:

- Pat Parsons will be at the November 5 and November 12 meetings parked on the back row of the Taytro's parking lot between 11:15-11:45 to collect items. If you are unable to drop-off before a meeting, you can call or text Pat at 314-223-4309 to make arrangements.
- Quonset Lanes - contact Phyllis Neff first at 636-795-3665

- First State Community Bank - ask that the donations be placed in Debbie Kettler's office.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney

Suggestions

(you do not need to buy 5)

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

Hand soap
Deodorant – 5 female and 5 male
Body wash
Bar soap
Razors – 3 male and 5 female
Toothbrushes – 10 adult and 8 child
Toothpaste – 10 adult and 8 child
Shampoo & conditioner – 5 female and 3-4 male
No tears shampoo – 5 (one for each household)
Body lotion
Band-aids

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Dish soap
Laundry soap
Fabric softener
Bleach
Cleaning products (example – Mr. Clean)
Disinfecting wipes
Toilet bowl cleaner
Toilet paper
Facial tissues
Paper towels
Ziploc bags – sandwich, quart, gallon
Sponges
Dish cloths
Can Opener
Aluminum foil
Plastic wrap

TWIN CITY AREA OPTIMIST CLUB

ANNUAL ART CONTEST

November 15, 2026

2:00PM - 4:00PM

Elks Lodge 1721

4 Elks Acres, Festus, MO

Important Notice for Independent & Homeschool Contestants

Students who are homeschooled or enrolled in a school not actively participating in this year's contest are fully eligible to participate.

To receive contest details, or get your questions answered, please contact Amy Baum:

- By Email: amybaum515@hotmail.com
- By Phone: 636-633-0711

Details regarding artwork drop-off dates and times at the Festus Public Library are specified on the contest application form.

Application Form:

Application form and instructions are available on our website: https://twincityoptimist.org/art-contest-1

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**

Cathy Elliott 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

2026 EMO Convention

JOINT EMO/WEMO DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Members and leaders from across the East Missouri (EMO) and West Missouri (WEMO) districts attended a joint conference October 23-25, 2026 in Jefferson City. The collaborative event brought together dedicated Optimists for a weekend focused on growth, youth programs, and community outreach.

Workshop Highlights and Interactive Sessions

Participants had access to a variety of educational sessions including:

- **First-Timer Recognition: A special shoutout to new TCA Optimist Renee Reuter for attending her first district conference. Her experience highlighted the value of seeing the "bigger picture"—remembering that members belong not just to a local club, but to the global network of Optimist International.**

- **Join the Optimist Movement Optimist International President Michael Goldman delivered a powerful and simple call to action: *increase membership by one member each month per club* to drive substantial organizational growth.**

- **C.H.A.P Program (Club Health Awards Program) Presented by an EMO member and current Optimist International Board of Directors member, this session introduced a two-year pilot awards program. Full details are available in the district directory.**

- **2026-2027 Online District Directory:**
  - Visit the East Missouri Optimists website.
  - Click the **"About"** tab at the top of the page, then scroll down to request the directory
    password.
  - The password will be emailed within a few days, granting access to the EMO leadership team, committee chairs, district policies, and more.
- **JOI Clubs Big thanks to JOI District Chair Katie Huck, who stepped in to lead a session when the scheduled speaker was unavailable. Drawing on her 17 years as a JOI Advisor, she shared her profound passion for working with youth.**

- **Small Projects. Big Impact: (“Easy to Serve”) Presented by WEMO Governor Robyn Leimkuehler, this interactive session inspired participants with creative, low-effort ideas for community outreach that yield impressive results.**

Fellowship & Networking

Joint District Meetings offer a fantastic chance to connect and exchange ideas with like-minded Optimists across the state. Attendees enjoyed plenty of fun and laughs through activities such as the Hospitality Room, Bingo, Karaoke, and a paper plane drop, alongside successful fundraising efforts for both EMO/WEMO and the Optimist International Foundation.

Submitted by Jean Naeger

CONFERENCE / CONVENTION DATES 2026-2027

Second Quarter Conference
Feb. 5-6 , 2027
Virtual Conference

Third Quarter Conference
May 14-15, 2027
St. Louis

Fourth Quarter Convention
Aug 20-22, 2027
Columbia

JOI CLUB

October was a busy and exciting month as the JOI Club kicked off the new Optimist year!

The club held an Open House at the Festus Library on October 19. Fifteen students, including existing members and potential members came together to learn about the JOI club and its mission. As part of the event, participants decorated oversized jigsaw puzzle pieces centered on the theme of optimism. While the project is still a work in progress, the completed artwork will be proudly displayed at a future event.

The JOI Club also hosted a booth at the BB5K event at Windsor High School on October 31. In preparation, members and prospective members gathered October 28 to create bracelets and small containers of slime to sell at the event. Eleven students participated in the project, including six newcomers who were introduced to the club through the Open House. On the day of the BB5K, nine JOI members staffed the booth, selling bracelets and slime while distributing bubbles, stickers, and candy to visitors. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for members to get acquainted, build friendships, and work together as a team.

Submitted by Marian Bozak

JOI Club Advisor
Marian Bozak

Co-Chairs
Shelly Storment
Jessica Korte

Masterpiece in the Making:
The JOI Club Jigsaw Puzzle

JOI Club Members at the BB5K Booth.

NEW JOI CLUB BROCHURE

A tri-fold marketing brochure about the JOI Club is now available. This document provides basic information about the JOI Club and the services they provide to the community. The brochure will be available at public events and is a great way to spread the word about the JOI Club!

Our Service

Junior Optimist International (JOI) clubs are youth-led service clubs where members live by the motto "Kids Serving Kids".

Because JOI clubs are autonomous, the youth members themselves get to choose, plan, and run their own projects based on what their specific community needs.

Our Mission

Junior Optimist International is an all-inclusive youth organization sponsored by Optimist International. Our organization embodies the Optimist Creed, which motivated us to embrace positive values like optimist and respect for ourselves and others while engaging in community service. Our mission is to use a passion for making a difference to reach out to other people wishing to make a difference too.

Our Vision

To become a prominent youth service organization in the world.

SAVE THE DATES

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

November 3 Board Meeting
November 5 Meeting - Board Review
November 12 Meeting
November 13 Art Contest sorting
November 15 Art Show
November 19 Meeting
November 26 NO MEETING
December 1 Head Start Party - De Soto
December 1 Board Meeting
December 3 Head Start Party - Hematite
December 3 Meeting - Board Review
December 4 BUNCO
December 5 Winterfest
December 10 Meeting
December 17 Meeting - Holiday Party
December 24 NO MEETING
December 31 NO MEETING

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 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
Donna Masters
314-651-0435

President Elect
Jan Buecching

Past President
Cathy Elliott

Secretary
Jessia Korte

Secretary Elect
Nancy McAnany

Treasurer
Ellen Bridgewater

Treasurer Elect
Michele Horrell

Board Members

2025-2027
Becky Francis
Megan Siracusa
Donna Long

2026-2028
Pat Parsons
Patty Meyer
Shelly Storment

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