

From: Twin City Area Optimist Club twincityoptimist-gmail.com@shared1.ccsend.com
Subject: Your 2024 December TCA Optimist Club Newsletter
Date: January 4, 2025 at 11:18 AM
To: donna.masters35@gmail.com



**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

December 2024 News Making a Difference For Kids

President Cathy Elliott



Season's Greetings to All!

As we wrap up our first quarter, I can hardly believe how quickly time has flown! By the end of December, we will have served the community and held fundraisers for 14 incredible projects. Fall is always a whirlwind, but it's also one of the most productive and rewarding times for both our club and the community.

This November, I took time to reflect on just how thankful I am to have the Twin City Area Optimist Club as a part of my life. December brings with it the joy of celebrating our accomplishments. None of what we achieve would be possible without each and every one of you. Your support—no matter how big or small—makes all the difference, and for that, I am truly grateful.

As we look ahead to the New Year, get ready! We have exciting new projects and fundraisers on the horizon, and it's going to be quite a ride.

Wishing you all the very best,

Cathy Elliott
President - Twin City Area Optimist Club

Welcome New Members



Kathy Burch



Winter Weather





Just a reminder to all club members that if the Festus School closes due to inclement weather, we will not have a meeting.

December 5, 2024 Board Update

The Twin City Optimist won a 1/8-page advertisement in the Jefferson County Leader from the Chamber of Commerce. The ad was in the December 19 edition of the Leader newspaper.

The new club Policies and Procedures have been approved and will be emailed to club members.

We have signed up for (two) Saturdays in October, 2025 for (six) members to work at the Bloomsdale Fun Farm. We will receive a \$500 donation each day. We can wear our Optimist shirts and not handle cash. Five people will work a station with (1) floater to give breaks. If this works for us, more days may be added the following year.

Sponsorship letters will be sent the first week of January, 2025. Members who are employed are encouraged to take a letter and brochure and ask their employers if they would like to donate to our organization. Katie Huck is looking for volunteers to stuff and stamp envelopes after the meeting on Thursday, January 2.

Optimist shirt sales will be in January.

Patty Meyer reported that our profit from the Koeze Nuts / Mascot Nuts will be more than last year. The totals will be calculated after all of the remaining nuts are sold. Our profit at the moment is approximately \$4500. These make great Christmas gifts and can be frozen!

Judy Williams reported on the Coats for Kids project. As of the end of November we have given out 371 coats. And we received great news: The Jefferson Foundation has approved a grant of \$6000 for this program!

A NOW Meeting is scheduled for Feb. 13. Members should invite people who would be a good fit for our club. If they cannot attend the NOW meeting they can attend at any time. At the Feb. 13 meeting, the meal is paid and the program is specific to informing what the Optimists do in the community.

Cathy Elliott and Carroll Metzger reported that the Childhood Health & Wellness Program is sponsoring Koralie Cooper who is 8 months old. She has recently had open heart surgery and had suffered many issues during and after including cardiac arrest and pneumonia. She will remain in the hospital for some time. Our club has

direct and pneumonia. She will remain in the hospital for some time. Our club has provided gift cards to help the family, and continued prayers are requested.

Members that have a fundraiser suggestion for our club, or a new project should complete the form for New Projects (emailed out) and return it to Gerty O'Leary for the project committee's review. The committee review is completed prior to going to the Board.

Cathy Elliott mentioned a possible new fundraiser of selling cheesecakes through My Daddy's Cheesecake in Cape Girardeau. Based on the positive responses from the members, this will be investigated further.

Submitted by: Cathy Elliott and Carolyn McKinney

December 12, 2024 Rusted Spur Stables Equine Therapy



Our speaker at the December 12, 2024 meeting was Melissa James of Rusted Spur Stables. Melissa shared with us her joy of horse ownership and helping people with their physical and emotional needs.

Melissa's background in helping others is rooted in her 25-plus year career of being an OR-RN at Mercy South Hospital. She has a passion to help people and animals. Her desire to get a horse for herself led her to a horse sanctuary where she received the deal of a lifetime, a buy-one-get-one free bargain. She ended up with two horses, no trailer to transport them to her property and no fence to contain them. Her husband agreed also to being a new horse owner and erected a fence in time for the horses to be delivered.

Melissa is not trained as an equine therapy specialist and does not allow any riding on the horses. Instead, she follows the Equine Assisted Learning philosophy she learned from a website in Canada (<https://www.ealcanada.com/>). People who are experiencing mental and emotional issues such as grief, depression, or PTSD, and those who are experiencing physical difficulties such as cancer, blindness, or heart disease walk beside a haltered horse. This activity helps to form a human-horse bond to foster personal growth, emotional healing, and self-discovery.

Melissa offers group “therapy” sessions like date nights, gatherings of cancer survivors, or just getting people together to communicate-no cell phones allowed, human-to-human interaction only. These group sessions can meet monthly or quarterly.

Rusted Spur Stables provides serenity to people ages teen through adulthood. For more information refer to <https://www.rustedspurstables.com/>.

Submitted by: Karen Huskey

December 19, 2024 Winterfest Holiday Party

The Twin City Area Optimist Club celebrated the holidays with a Winterfest 2024 party on December 19. The party committee outdid themselves with decorations, a hot cocoa bar, a delicious meal, cookies, entertainment and games.

During the party, Paige Laiben sang some holiday songs for us and later led a sing-along of Jingle Bells.

Carroll Metzger shared some interesting information about Hanukkah, including that the word Hanukkah means "dedication". She explained the history of the celebration and some of the changes that have occurred over time such as gifts being added by the US. She then distributed dreidels (a dreidel is a four-sided spinning top) to each table and taught us how to play the dreidel game which was great fun!

For the next game, dice were passed out and we rolled for snake eyes to win the table centerpieces. After the games, Cathy presented Leroy with a Christmas card and donations from the club to thank him for all that he does for us throughout the year.

The raffle for the beautiful quilt donated by Karen Huskey was won by Laura Elbl.



The quilt raffle brought in \$900 for the club! Karen also donated her famous peanut brittle which she auctioned off to the highest bidder, Linda Portell for \$100. Finally, the 50/50 raffle was held and \$60 was won by Pat Parsons.

Thank you to the party committee for their hard work planning a great holiday party! And congratulations to all of the winners! It was a very fun and profitable meeting.

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney



Karen Huskey and Laura Elbl with the quilt
Karen donated and Laura won



Cathy Elliott presented Leroy Brown with a
card from the club



Carroll Metzger explained the background of
Hanukkah





Paige Laiben led everyone in singing Christmas Carols



Debbie Hogenmiller was happy with her table centerpiece win.



Barb Schmidt was decked out for the party.



Gerty O'Leary was all smiles after winning the dice game at her table.



Becky Capps and Becky Francis shared their holiday spirit while on duty.





Tracy Johnson and Lynn Wendel were ready to party in their festive wear!



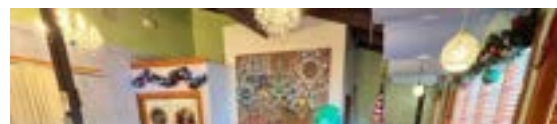
Vicky Campbell and Carolyn McKinney had a discussion about their table centerpiece.



Linda Portell won the peanut brittle donated by Karen Huskey with her \$100 bid.



Lisa Ermer showed off her "snow" decoration win.





CLUB PROJECTS

2024 Head Start Christmas Parties

This annual Optimist project is planned to provide much-needed gifts to Head Start children at Christmas. A welcome visitor is Mrs. Claus who reads a book to the children and sings a song or two while waiting for Santa Claus to appear. The children are asked to listen for jingling bells which signal that Santa is on his way. Santa calls each child up to receive their bag of gifts. Children, who are willing to participate, have their photo taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

In preparation for the parties, members helped wrap 90 gifts in under 20 minutes at the November 14 weekly meeting. We love how this brings the members together with joy and to be part of this much-loved project.

Members met at Laura Elbl's house on November 19 to bag each child's gifts. Members participating were Mickie Huskey, Sue Boyer, Patty Meyer, Alicia Cummiskey, Donna Long, Kirstie Zych, and Laura Elbl. All bags were loaded and sorted into classes in 2.25 hours.

The first Head Start Party was on Tuesday, December 3 at De Soto. Santa and Mrs. Claus provided gifts and entertainment for the children. Optimist members assisting with the party were: Patty Meyer, Laura Elbl, Janice Boyd, Mickie Huskey, Cathy Elliott, Alicia Cummiskey, Tracy Johnson, Vicky Campbell and Kirstie Zych.

Santa and Mrs. Claus provided more gifts and entertainment to the children at the Hematite Head Start Party on Wednesday, December 4. The Optimist members assisting at this party were: Laura Elbl, Debbie Hogenmiller, Kirstie Zych, Barb Schmidt, Katie Huck, Janice Boyd, Alicia Cummiskey, Jean Naeger and Mickie Huskey.

Joe and Mary Hatfield attended both parties as Santa and Mrs. Claus.

The 2024 event was chaired by Laura Elbl and Alicia Cummiskey.

Gifts for each child included:

Photo card with Santa

An outfit with pants and a top including socks, gloves, and hat

Toothbrush and toothpaste

Coloring book and crayons

Stuffed animal with a book

Children under 3 received a V-Tech Learn-n-Drive

Children over 3 received a Fisher Price school bus or a zoo train

Submitted by: Laura Elbl and Alicia Cummiskey



De Soto Headstart party participants

Patty Meyer, Laura Elbl, Janice Boyd, Mickie Huskey, Cathy Elliott, Santa Claus (Joe Hatfield), Mrs. Claus (Mary Hatfield), Alicia Cummiskey, Tracy Johnson, Vicky Campbell, Kirstie Zych



Hematite Headstart party participants

Front: Laura Elbl, Debbie Hogenmiller, Kirstie Zych, Barb Schmidt
 Back: Katie Huck, Mrs. Claus (Mary Hatfield), Santa Claus (Joe Hatfield), Janice Boyd, Alicia Cummiskey, Jean Naeger, Mickie Huskey







Winterfest 2024 December 7

Twin City Area Optimists had a booth at the City of Festus Winterfest, sponsored by Festus Tourism. We helped children make “ornaments” for wildlife by spreading peanut butter on pinecones and then rolling them in bird seed. The event perfectly aligned with the goals of Optimists by actually engaging with children and by providing the hands-on experience of creating the “ornaments.”

This was a fun-filled event for sooo many children (estimated 300)! We braved the cold and the wind to give the children a chance to be innovative and make something for the birds in their backyards. From teenagers to toddlers in their mom's arms, youth of all ages stopped by for the chance to smear peanut butter on pinecones and then roll them in bird seed!

An additional goal of the event was to serve as a public relations tool promoting our club's services to youth, increasing awareness of our club's programs, and to positively affect the public's perceptions of our club in general. We did this through our conversations with parents and handing out the club's informational brochures.

Thanks to all of the Optimists who helped.

Committee: Mary Hatfield

Participants: Cindy Cherry, Carolyn McKinney, Marian Bozak, Katie Huck, Laura Lohman, Carroll Metzger, Pat Parsons, Betty Aders, Florence Borman, Judy Williams, RuthAnn Adams, Alicia Cummiskey, Peggy Scott, Cathy Elliott, and Paul Stelling (Marie's husband). Plus everyone who scoured their yards for pinecones!

Submitted by: Mary Hatfield





Judy Williams assisted kids with their creations



Pat Parson helped to with the bird seed creations



Adolescent Boys Health Project

The Jefferson County Foster Children's Fund holiday event was held on December 13, 2024. Twin City Area Optimist members of the Adolescent Boys Health Project committee attended the event, at which program books were distributed to young boys in the foster program. These books help to educate adolescent boys on health, hygiene and life skills. Appropriate hygiene items also were given to the boys.

The Adolescent Boys Health Project impacts the most vulnerable young boys as they feel unsettled by being in the foster care system. The positive effect of resource

material and adequate hygiene supplies, as well as giving caregivers a tool for communication and direction, is clearly valuable.

The supplies for the event were funded by the Twin City Area Optimist Club as well as an Optimist International Foundation Childhood matching grant.

Committee members: Pat Parsons, Carroll Metzger, Katie Huck, Becky Francis, Debbie Schumaker, Phyllis Neff, Kathy Todd and Amy Baum.

Submitted by: Pat Parsons



Phyllis Neff with some of the packages that were distributed



Pat Parsons, Carroll Metzger, Debbie Schumaker, and Becky Francis helped distribute packages at the event

CLUB FUNDRAISERS

Koeze Nuts December 4, 2024

Thanks to 13 wonderful volunteers who helped sort Koeze nuts at Fantasy Pool, Wednesday, December 4. We were there from 9:30 am to noon.

We received a credit of \$106.31 for paying our Koeze bill early for a total profit of \$4111.69! This is a great fundraiser for our club. Thank you to all who participated!



Volunteers : Amy Baum, Cathy Elliott, Debbie Bradley (friend), Pat Parson, Carolyn McKinney, Debbie Hogenmiller, Kirstie Zych, Katie Huck, Laura Elbl, Patty Meyer, Sue Boyer, Jean Naeger, and Barb Schmidt



The Koeze Nut sorting volunteers

Front: Debbie Bradley, Patty Meyer, Kirstie Zych, Katie Huck
Back: Sue Boyer, Jean Naeger, Carolyn McKinney, Cathy Elliott, Debbie Hogenmiller, Amy Baum, Pat Parsons, Barb Schmidt



Mascot Nut Sales

While a few bags of Mascot Nuts remain, the total profit once they are sold will be \$1,207.20.

Great job everyone!

Quilt Raffle

The drawing for the beautiful quilt donated by Karen Huskey was held during the December 19 Winterfest Party. The club received \$900 from ticket sales. The lucky winner was Laura Elbl!

Congratulations to Laura and a big thank you to Karen!





SMOKEHOUSE

1267 N. Truman Blvd, Crystal City
636-543-3296

Dining Out for a Cause
Benefits Twin City Area Optimist Club



Supporting youth of
Southern Jefferson County

.....
TUES. JANUARY 21, 2025

5-8 PM NO FLYER NEEDED
10% OF TOTAL RECEIPTS DONATED
Dine in only

Donation Box will be available
.....



Come and join us for a



**WINE TASTING,
DINNER, AND AUCTION
FUNDRAISER**

\$60/person

*Take advantage of this chance to indulge
in fine wines and great company!
Taste Missouri and international wines.*

*May reserve
a table of 10*

DATE: Saturday, February 8, 2025
TIME: 6 PM
VENUE: Oak Valley Golf Course & Resort
 1230 Abbey Lane Pevely, MO

Scan QR code to
 reserve spot
 (service charge
 applied)
 or mail check to
 Twin City Area
 Optimist Club,
 P.O. Box 475,
 Festus, MO
 63028

**Proceeds support the
 projects of the Twin
 City Area Optimist Club**

Minimum Age 21 years



EMO OPTIMIST DISTRICT



Grouper will be changing their benefits in the new year. Members will be receiving additional cash! New members will receive \$50 for joining Grouper. After you set up your account and report each month that you have remained active, you will receive a \$20 check at the end of each quarter. Anyone already signed up will be converted to the new benefit plan in early 2025. More information will be communicated as we learn more. Please feel free to contact EMO Governor Jean Naeger if you have questions. 314 495 2822

**Grouper
 Refined Benefit
 Announcement!**



Grouper helps you access benefits to cover participation costs of group activities that provide social connection and keep you healthy. **What's New? We've increased the overall value** you receive to cover your ongoing group activities.



New Members

STEP ONE

Check Your Eligibility Online

GrouperGroups.com/oi-emo

STEP TWO

Get your \$50 annual payment

To cover your group activity



STEP THREE

Receive \$20 every 3 months

When you're socially active



Current Members

Thank you for being a Groupie!

Take action to ensure you are getting the full benefit.

Please log in to your account and verify your information: app.hellogrouper.com/login We're offering a new, enhanced experience where you can update your address, activity information, and other details. Your new dashboard allows you to report monthly activity, so you can receive your ongoing \$20 activity payments.

PROUD TO BE INCLUDED IN:

Renew Active
UnitedHealthcare

OnePass

Grouper

Call (833) 445-2400

Email info@hellogrouper.com



SAVE THE DATE



Nov. 8-9, 2024 EMO First Quarter Conference
K.C. Hall, Jackson, MO

Feb 22, 2025 EMO 2nd Quarter Conference
VIRTUAL/ZOOM

May 2-3, 2025 EMO 3rd Quarter Conference
Hilton St. Louis Airport - St. Louis, MO

June 30-July 3, 2025
St. Louis Union Station - St. Louis, MO

August 15-17, 2025 EMO Fourth Quarter Convention
Courtyard by Marriott, Columbia, MO

JOI Club December 5

The December 5, 2024 meeting of the JOI Club was called to order by Addisen Eldridge. Attending members in addition to Addisen were Arrianna Eldridge, Sparrow and Avalon, Oscar and Katelyn Blair, Blake Neff and Jasmine Stout.

Dates to remember:

December 18, 2024: JOI Club members plan to sing Christmas carols at Autumn Ridge at 6:30 p.m. followed by a Christmas party, also at Autumn Ridge. Members can bring a \$10.00 gift to exchange only if they want to participate.

January 2, 2025: Wendy Wulf from the Mercy Crisis Nursery will be our guest speaker. We will also be making bird feeders out of peanut butter, bird seed and toilet paper rolls.

Business updates:

The club voted to donate to Mercy Crisis Nursery of Jefferson County. We spent \$350 at Walmart on children's toothbrushes, toothpaste, wipes, coloring books, crayons, markers, ponytail bands, sanitizer and more. These items were delivered to Mercy Crisis Nursery by Debbie Schumaker.

The members also are going to help the Department of Health by collecting items for homeless youth. They need sanitizer, bug spray, shampoo, body soap, toothbrushes, tooth paste, sunscreen, and draw string bags to store and carry these items easily. We will be participating in this event quarterly.

Submitted by: Debbie Schumaker

Debbie Schumaker
JOI Adult Advisor

Carol Schanz
JOI Chair



SAVE THE DATES



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

January 2 Sponsorship letter preparation
January 7 Board meeting - hostess Pat Parsons
January 9 2nd Session for New Optimists
January 18 Seckman Dance Competition
January 21 Dine to Donate - Kettlehut
February 4 Board meeting - hostess Amy Baum
February 6 Optimist Day
February 8 Wine Tasting Dinner Event
February 13 NOW Meeting
February 21 BUNCO
February 22 EMO 2nd Quarter Conference via Zoom
March 4 Board meeting - hostess Mary Hatfield
March 5 Nominating Committee
March 22 Oratorical Contest
March 28 Leader's 2nd Annual Celebrating Women



Board of
Directors
2024-2025

President
Cathy Elliott
573 883 0924

President Elect
Debbie
Hogenmiller

Past President
Peggy Scott

Secretary
Kathy Todd

Secretary Elect
...

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 Poppy's Parlor. Meeting starts at 6:00 p.m. If you would like to order food, please contact Phyllis Neff on Monday prior to meeting.

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

Alicia
Cummiskey

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

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