



Fellow Optimists:

The Optimist International Foundation (OIF) is proud to announce that during the 2020 - 2021 Optimist Year we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of “Helping Optimists Help Kids”. Our Foundation remains strong, managing resources to support the programs of Optimist International (OI). The good work and goals of your Foundation that support our Clubs and their communities over the past 50 years has continued during the COVID - 19 pandemic and will continue into the next 50 years.

A few highlights of The Optimist International Foundation accomplishments during the past Optimist year:

- Supported the Optimist International Oratorical World Championship Contest by funding the US and International Regional winners and the top three finishers in the finals totaling \$70,000.
- Sent 113 students off to college with Optimist International Oratorical, Essay and Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing scholarships totaling \$270,000.
- Contributed \$51,451 toward the OI Research Fellowship at Johns Hopkins. Plus, an additional \$69,754 towards a new research effort around pediatric bone marrow transplants.
- Assisted 367 Optimists to help 4,889 children and their families by awarding 20 Club Grants, including one grant to a Club in Africa.
- Raised \$28,000 to launch the OI Childhood Health and Wellness program.
- Paid out \$553,112 to Clubs utilizing the Club Campaign program and added \$61,361 in interest to the Club Campaign funds.

As you can see by the examples mentioned above, your Foundation is working hard to support our Optimist International Club programs and add funds to the Club coffers. The generosity of many dedicated Optimists and Clubs is what makes all of this possible. This grass roots support from Clubs and Optimists is essential to the continued funding of Optimist grants, scholarships, Club Projects and the numerous other Optimist programs that your Foundation funds. As we plan for the upcoming Optimist year, celebrating our 50th anniversary, we encourage all of our Optimists and Clubs to contribute to our Foundation. As Optimists, each one of us should support our Foundation to the level that we are able.

We will have numerous special celebratory events and incentives for Optimists and Clubs to commemorate our 50th anniversary. I am thrilled to announce that we are partnering with Jeff Hanson, artist and philanthropist, using his art to enhance many of our incentives and special promotions during the 2020 – 2021 Optimist year. If you have not had the pleasure of meeting Jeff, here is a brief description about this amazing young man, artist and philanthropist.

Jeffrey Owen Hanson is an award-winning, philanthropic artist on a mission to change the world through art. Visually impaired since childhood from neurofibromatosis, Jeff's acrylic-on-canvas works employ bold color and heavily sculptured texture to create an unmistakable signature style. Self-taught as an artist, Jeff first began painting while undergoing chemotherapy at age 12. Despite his limited vision, he continues to create brilliant artwork—a sight for sore eyes, he calls it.

Jeff believes, "Every act of kindness helps create kinder communities, more compassionate nations and a better world for all ... even one painting at a time." We are very appreciative of Jeff's optimistic spirit, his beautiful artwork and his dedication to supporting philanthropic causes in our communities. The OIF Board and Staff send a huge thank you to Jeff Hanson for supporting our Foundation and partnering with us to celebrate our 50th Anniversary.

A few special incentives that you can look forward to:

- We will hold an on-line bidding auction featuring many incredible items. This auction will be open to all Optimists and the public. A few examples of items are: A Jeff Hanson original painting, Myrtle Beach trip, Jewelry, and much more. We welcome donations from Districts, Clubs and individuals.
- Scarves and Ties featuring Jeff Hanson print.
- OIF 50th Anniversary edition Jeff Hanson note card set.
- OIF 50th Anniversary edition of the Dime A Day Pin.
- OIF 50th Anniversary ink pen for Presidents Club members.
- A Plaque with the 50th Anniversary theme print etched on metal for Friends of Tomorrow members.

I look forward to serving as President of the Optimist International Foundation Board during the 2020 – 2021 Optimist year. It will be a fantastic year celebrating the 50th Anniversary of our Foundation. Help continue the support the OIF provides to our Optimist International programs and Clubs by contributing as an individual at whatever level you can, by encouraging your Club to contribute and by spreading the word about the work of our Foundation to your fellow Optimists.

Here's to 50 more years of "Helping Optimists Help Kids!"

Yours in Optimism,

Jan Oord Graves, President-Elect 2019-2020

Optimist International Foundation Board