

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

October 2025 News Making a Difference For Kids

President Cathy Elliott

Hello Optimists,

Welcome to another exciting year of serving the Jefferson County area! We're off to a great start with 141 members strong – a true testament to the spirit of optimism in our community. If you know someone who shares our passion for service and positive change, please invite them to join us!

The months ahead will be filled with opportunities to make a difference through volunteering and fundraising. I encourage each of you to jump in wherever you can—these moments are how we strengthen our club, our friendships, and our impact.



We also recognize that this year brings unique challenges for our club. With the ongoing government shutdowns, many families will be facing hardship, and our community's needs may grow. We may also feel the ripple effects with some of our sponsors. But together, we have the creativity, compassion, and determination to rise to the moment. Every effort—large or small—helps us continue to bring hope and support to those who need it most.

Thank you for all you do to live out the Optimist Creed. Let's make this a year of purpose, connection, and service from the heart.

Yours in Optimism,

Cathy Elliott

President, Twin City Area Optimist Club

Welcome New Members!



Marie Strong



Dana Koenig



Danita Miller



Maria Hopefner

Member Spotlight!

Marsha Greenstreet

Marsha Greenstreet is a charter member of the Twin City Area Optimist club and the club's first president. In 1987, she was working at Commerce Bank, acting as a bank representative to local service organizations, when three gentlemen from Cape Girardeau met with state Senator Jack Gannon to propose a new Optimist International club in Festus/Crystal City. The Senator declined the proposal saying there were enough service organizations in the area. Delegates at the Optimist



International Convention had revised the organization's constitution to admit women members. The gentlemen approached Ruth Tucker at the Chamber of Commerce for help. Ruth provided three women's names including Senator Gannon's own daughter and Rosetta Hagan, a local businesswoman. Marsha was approached by Rosetta to see if she would be interested in helping form an Optimist club in the area.

At the time, many service organizations were men only with women involved in auxiliary clubs. But businesswomen and women in general wanted more than an auxiliary role. Word spread and when the club was chartered in May 1988, there were 63 members! Shirley Overberg was first approached to be president and she declined due to work responsibilities but suggested Marsha, who was then voted in as the first club president. Marsha served in that capacity for one and one-half years. She says the role changed her life, forcing her to speak in front of the entire club when she previously had no public speaking experience.

One Optimist project Marsha is especially proud of is the Head Start holiday parties. These were started the first year the club was chartered. One member, Mavis Witte, who accompanied her photographer husband to the public schools, noticed that some of the children lacked basic items. Mavis and Irma Graham came up with the party idea and held the first one in December 1988. This also led to the Coats for Kids project in later years when a member at one of the Head Start parties noticed a child who needed a coat.

Marsha has been an insurance agent for 36 years, leaving the bank when she was approached about taking over a small Farmers Insurance agency in Hillsboro in 1989. She stayed with Farmers for 15 years before becoming an independent agent. She and her husband Jerry, Director of Building and Grounds at Jefferson College before retiring, have two children. Son Jeff lives with his family in South Carolina and daughter Dana lives with her family in Dittmer, Missouri. Between

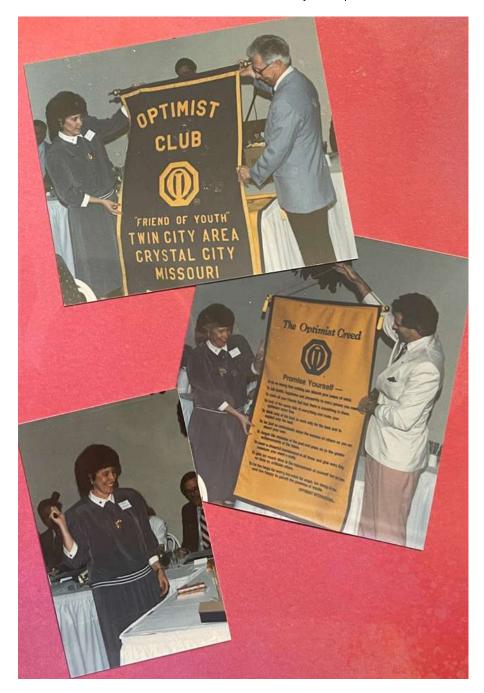
them, Marsha has five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren that she's very proud of.

Cooking has always been a favorite pastime of Marsha's. She ran community dinners at her church for 15 years, regularly serving ~100 people. She reads cookbooks for fun and at one time she had over 350 cookbooks of her own!

When asked about her favorite line in the Optimist Creed, Marsha had a hard time identifying just one. She believes that a person who lives by the creed or tries to live by it is exceptional. After she quoted "To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble", she said there's just so much meaning in that last line.

Marsha was very involved with Optimists for many years before having to step back for work. She has always viewed the Twin City Area Optimist Club as the best service club in Jefferson County. She is member #1 and proud to have had a part in starting the club. She and the other charter members set a course for the club that we are still following today.

Submitted by Carolyn McKinney



The beginning of the Twin City Area Optimist club with President Marsha Greenstreet.



The first Head Start Holiday party, still a favorite project!

October 2, 2025 New Officer Installation!

Welcome to a new Optimist Year!

The October 2 meeting was spent thanking the ladies who served as officers and board members for the past year, and welcoming the new officers and board members. In a change from previous years, and since Cathy Elliott has graciously agreed to serve as President for another year, members showered her with gratitude rather than roasting her.



Outgoing board members: President-Elect Debbie Hogenmiller, Secretary Kathy Todd, and members Kirstie Zych and Amy Baum.



Incoming board members: Donna Long, Past President Peggy Scott, President Cathy Elliott, Secretary Marian Bozak, and member Megan Siracusa with Jean Naeger.

Some members expressed their gratitude to President Cathy Elliott!



















October 2, 2025
Board Updates

Board Meeting Updates

- Officers who were unable to attend the October 2 meeting were installed.
- Membership update: Five previous members were removed at the end of September leaving the current membership at 141.

- The budget has been approved for the coming year. Thank you to the budget committee of Pat Parsons, Ellen Bridgewater, Becky Capps, Becky Francis and Donna Masters for their time and hard work!
- The Bike Park for the Learn to Ride Your Bike Program was discussed. The
 next step is payment for the design and approval. Additional information will
 be provided at a future meeting.
- A \$1000 grant was approved for the art contest.

Additional Announcements

- Koeze nuts are on sale. We sell at 10% less than the price in the catalog and provide free shipping. Order forms are due by November 20.
- Mascot Nuts are available for order through Patty Meyer. They should arrive by Thanksgiving.

EMO/WMO 1st Quarter Conference

Jean Naeger and Phyllis Neff reviewed the East Missouri/West Missouri 1st Quarter conference held in Jefferson City over the weekend. At the conference, 2024-2025 EMO Governor Jean Naeger presented the Twin City Area Optimist Club with the A&A (Awards & Achievements) Club of the Year Award. Congratulations! Our club also received a \$365 Club patch for having donated over that amount to the OI Foundation to help support the Oratorical, Essay and Junior Golf programs.

Creed Activity

Ruth Ann Adams presented an activity to discuss the meaning of the first line of the Optimist creed: "Promise yourself to be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind". Members were asked to identify the "disturbers" and then discussed various actions that can be taken to overcome them. Disturbers identified included the news, highway construction, rudeness, and anything health related. Some of the actions suggested were taking deep breaths, exercising, resting, and volunteering to help others. The conversations were very interesting! Thank you, Ruth Ann!

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney

October 16, 2025 Perfect Attendance Awards

At the October 16 meeting we welcomed two new members:

- Danita Miller, sponsored by Cathy Elliott
- Marie Strong, sponsored by Laura English

Welcome ladies!

Announcements

- Volunteers are still needed for some events in the next year including
 Winterfest in December and Hillsboro Homecoming in May. Both of these
 are community events, but we are working towards having high school
 students who need service hours be available to help with event setup and
 tear down.
- Volunteers are needed to plan the spring and summer parties.
- We're looking for help to find grants other than Optimists International.
- The Coats for Kids project is beginning to receive requests even with the warm weather. Due to the timing of grants, reimbursements won't be available until January. Coats can be purchased (check with Judy Williams about sizes needed) but receipts will need to be held until January. Gently used coats are also welcome!

Carroll Metzger provided an update on the foundation, first identifying the board members: President-Carroll Metzger, Vice-President-Pat Parsons, Secretary-Gerty O'Leary, Treasurer-Ellen Bridgewater, Mary Kay Scott, and Judy Williams. The board will be having a strategic planning meeting to plan the next 3 years. She also reminded us that the two-year anniversary of the foundation is in January 2026. Carroll also shared that over \$1,000 in donations have been made in memory of Caryl Harness, and around \$13,000 was raised in the past two years from the membership campaign. The funds from the membership drive will be contributed to the bike park project being designed by American Ramp Co. Finally, Carroll mentioned that the bike park may be moved from Sunset Park to Larry Crites Memorial Park, but that is still in being discussed with the Parks department.

Perfect attendance awards were presented to the following ladies:

- 1 year: Tracy Johnson, Lynne Wendel, and Shirley Coile
- 3 years: Kirstie Zych
- 4 years: Debbie Hogenmiller and Kathy Todd
- 5 years: Cathy Elliott
- 6 years: Patty Meyer
- 7 years: Debbie Schumaker
- 8 years: Jean Naeger
- 9 years: Katie Huck and Barb Schmidt
- 12 years: Judy Kuhlman
- 29 years: Pat Parsons
- 30 years: Barb Bates
- 34 years: Sue Boyer
- 37 years: Pat Doenges

Congratulations to all!

The meeting ended with members sharing special memory brags about Caryl Harness that were enjoyed by all.

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney





























October 23, 2025 Missouri Kids Unplugged

Announcements

- Amy Baum will be looking for volunteers very soon for the Art Contest it takes a lot of people to set it up – please volunteer if possible.
- If you do not have a Koeze Nut order form, please take one. This is one of our larger fundraisers – please offer these to any businesses you know who may be looking for holiday gifts as well as giving these as gifts to those you know. Also, there will be cases of Mascot nuts coming in – these are really good too!
- Donations to help support Chef Leroy will be collected today and also next Thursday. The Treasurer has a QR code if you would like to use GiveButter to donate.
- Donations for collection of Head Start Thanksgiving Basket items will continue at the next several meetings.
- Coat Donations we are accepting new and used coats in good condition for the Coats for Kids programs. Check with those you know who are ready to retire kids' coats that are in good condition.
- A chairperson is needed to work the Winterfest on Saturday, December
 Gather a team of volunteers, set up a tent and make bird feeders with the kids! We must sign up by December 3. It's fun!

 Our club was awarded \$250 from Optimist International for being one of the top clubs for recruitment this past year! We are "still" ending the past year strong!

Perfect attendance recipients who were not present at the previous meeting were awarded their pins. Congratulations ladies!

Missouri Kids Unplugged

Rodney Bickel returned to talk about Missouri Kids Unplugged, an organization based in Dittmer, Missouri that provides for children to participate in device and screen-free activities. The season for Missouri Kids Unplugged is usually April – October and they are now closed for the year. The winter months are spent preparing for the next season!

The land used for Missouri Kids Unplugged events is private property and is only accessible on event days. The activities offered include fishing, hiking, and biking. They also speak in schools and at community events. Notices are posted



on social media and in The Leader, and do require RSVPs so they can gauge the volunteer and supply requirements for each event. The property is handicap accessible.

Many of the Missouri Kids Unplugged education events focus on responsible recycling, which provides jobs and protects the environment. Rodney displayed some of the "old" technology that younger people may not be able to identify, but many of our members easily recognized such as a rotary phone, a CD player, and a VCR camera. Most electronics are recyclable, but getting them to a responsible recycling company is important. Rodney mentioned events where they have provided old Chromebooks and let kids tear into them to show that they're 100% recyclable!



PAT Boxes

After the general meeting, Debbie Hogenmiller led volunteers in assembling Parents as Teachers boxes. Thank you to all who were able to stay and assist!



Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney and Cathy Elliott

October 31 HALLOWEEN!



Before starting Halloween activities during the evening meeting at the First United Methodist Church, Cathy announced that over the past two weeks, our club collected **over \$1,000** in cards and donations for our friend Chef Leroy. He

recently suffered a stroke and has been unable to work. Some members also gave privately. This is what Optimism looks like in motion: helping those who truly need it.

Upcoming Events and Activities

- Art Show November 23. To help, contact Amy Baum @ 636-633-0711
- **BUNCO Night** November 21 (Club fundraiser bring family & friends!). Only 54 spots available at \$20/person! Reserve yours next Thursday with Pat Parsons @ 314-223-4309.
- Thanksgiving Food Baskets. Donations will be collected for the next 3 weeks. Shopping on November 24. Contact Jan Buechting @ 314-604-3541
- Koeze Nut Sorting & Delivery Patty Meyer (Date TBD) 314-313-7744
- Winterfest December 6 Making pinecones with the kids in Festus. Chairperson is still needed, plus lots of volunteers!
- Head Start Winter Parties December 9 and 10 Laura Elbl @ 314-650-6001
- Quilt Raffle sales start November 6– Susan DeClue @ 314-630-0283 & Jessica Korte @ 636-633-3416
- Adolescent Boys Project Becky Capps @ 314-456-3919

Welcome to two new members!

- Dana Koenig, sponsored by Kim Elbl
- Maria Hopefner, sponsored by Katie Huck

We're happy to have you join us!

Instead of the 50/50 drawing, party planner Amy Baum introduced a game of Dead or Alive. In this game members had to decide whether a named celebrity is dead or alive. There was a good number of players until the name Peter Boyle, the monster from Young Frankenstein who has since passed away, took out quite a few. Then came the name John Astin, Gomez from The Addams Family TV show of the 1960's and still living, which took the number to just 2! Debbie Hogenmiller and Judy Kuhlmann were the last two standing until Debbie took the final prize.

The Grim Reaper quietly stalked the party for a good part of the evening, even managing to snack with the mask on before finally unmasking as Barb Schmidt. Witches mingled and Cathy Elliott, as a Price is Right contestant, introduced all speakers with a "Come on down".

The party team had also distributed a list of "Find the guest who..." that got everyone up and asking who likes or hates scary movies or decorates or dresses up for Halloween every year. A photo booth with lots of available hats and props was heavily utilized for photo ops and everyone enjoyed ghoulish, yet delicious, snacks provided by several ambitious bakers.

It was a fun evening and a big thanks goes to Amy Baum and her party helpers!

Submitted by: Carolyn McKinney and Cathy Elliott



Debbie Hogenmiller and Judy Kuhlmann faced off for the final rounds of Dead or Alive while Amy Baum tried to stump them.

A coven of witches posed for a photo op: Christine Bradshaw, Dana Hanna, Debbie Floyd, Karen Huskey, Shelley Storment, and Katie Huck.





Jessica Korte looked angelic while Carroll Metzger showed off her ninja moves.





Frazzled mom Amy Baum considered some 8-legged child care.

Christine Bradshaw treated herself to a ghostly strawberry.





Jan Buechting was ready to play!



The Price is Right contestants Pat Parsons and Cathy Elliott stopped by the photo booth.



Ladies in orange: Lynne Wendel, Kim Elbl, and Karen Huskey.



Tracy Johnson and Anedra Owens enjoyed the festivities.

(Left) Christine Bradshaw tried out several photo props.





Some of the goodies members brought to snack on!





CLUB PROJECTS



We're gearing up for our **annual student art contest**, a major event recognizing the talents of young artists in southern Jefferson County.

We encourage all members to invite your **children and grandchildren** living in the area to participate.

We need your help to make this event a success! Plan to volunteer a little time—it's a wonderful way to connect with the club and the community.

We need volunteers for:

- **Preparation:** Sorting and organizing the submitted artwork (done before the event).
- **Event Day:** Helping with set-up, greeting attendees, and closing the event.

Don't miss out on this fantastic event!

To **volunteer** or learn more, please contact **Project Chair Amy Baum**. Here is link to the necessary registration documents available on our website: <u>Art Contest</u>

Submitted by Jean Naeger

CLUB FUNDRAISERS

Bloomsdale Fun Farm

Seven intrepid Optimists braved cooler temperatures to work at the Bloomsdale Fun Farm on October 25, earning \$500 for our club! Reports were that families and volunteers all enjoyed a fun day. Thank you, ladies!



Standing: Janice Boyd
Front row: Jennifer Wooldridge, Marian Bozak, Peggy Scott
Back row: Mary McDowell, Debbie Kettler, Cathy Elliott



Peggy Scott oversaw the Gem Mine.



Mary McDowell worked at one of the kiddie rides.



Marian Bozak helped at the wagon ride.



Jennifer Wooldridge bagged popcorn.



Sign up during meetings or contact Carol.

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 hun-dreds 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 Heros: 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

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

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





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 900 coats are given away. The project committee works with local school coun-selors 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 as own projects and gives members a chance to develop leadership skills, meet new people and



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.



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 Back-packs, a community organization providing food

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 honol 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 memoers join to serve conters and to promite.

Optimism as a way of life. Visit a meeting as a
guest to see if Optimist 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



Eight TCA Members Attend First Quarter Conference



2024-2025 EMO District Governor Jean Naeger presents TCA Club President Cathy Elliott and members with the 2024-2025 Awards and Achievements Club of the Year Award.



Optimist International President Tom Kendo



Middle America Regional VP Liz Christman.



2025-2026 EMO District Governor Jennifer Bagwell with Immediate Past Governor Jean Naeger



EMO Governor Elect Mary Hatfield with Zone 4 Lt. Governor Joe Hatfield.

The West Missouri and East Missouri Districts held a joint conference on October 3-4, 2025, in Jefferson City. This was an excellent opportunity to visit with our West Missouri Optimist friends and attend training sessions. Training sessions were conducted in a panel format, providing an opportunity to learn from four to five subject experts. There was ample time for members to ask questions and share their experiences.

CONFERENCE / CONVENTION DATES

October 3-4, 2025

EMO/WMO 1st Quarter Conference Capital Plaza, Jefferson City, MO

Feb 6-7, 2026

EMO 2nd Quarter Conference

Virtual

May 1-2, 2026:

EMO 3rd Quarter Conference

Hilton St. Louis Airport, St. Louis, MO

EMO District Convention

August 21, 22, 23, 2026
Installation of Officers
Governors' Choice Awards
Comfort Suites
Rolla, Missouri

108th

Optimist International Convention

June 28 - July 1, 2026

Hyatt Regency

Jacksonville, Florida

JOI CLUB

The new board for the JOI Club was installed on Thursday, October 2, 2025. Cathy Elliott, Twin City Area Optimist Club president, installed board members Olivia Blair, Katelyn Blair and Matt Devore. The same evening, members were invited to tour the new Ambulance Simulator at the Joachim-Plattin Ambulance District (JPAD) headquarters.

On Saturday, November 1, the Junior Optimist Club held their Halloween party at Larry Crites Memorial Park beginning at 11 a.m. with 10 members in attendance. Four members dressed up in costumes and entered the costume contest, which was won by a new member. Oscar Blair won the pumpkin carving contest which was followed by a fun Halloween scavenger hunt. Everyone ate a great lunch and had a lot of fun. even though it was very cold. The party ended at 12:40 p.m. with all members saying good-bye and thanking the party planners.



The 2025-2026 JOI Club Board: Katelyn Blair, Olivia Blair, and Matt Devore with Twin City Area Optimist Club President Cathy Elliott.



JOI Club members touring the JPAD Ambulance Simulator JOI Club Halloween Party at Larry Crites Memorial Park!



Debbie Schumaker JOI Adult Advisor

Carol Schanz JOI Chair



SAVE THE DATES



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

November 4 Board Meeting

November 6 Meeting - Board Update

November 13 Meeting - Parents as Teachers

November 20 Meeting - Head Start Gift Wrapping

November 21 BUNCO

November 23 Art Contest

November 27 Thanksgiving - NO MEETING

December 2 Board Meeting

December 4 Meeting - Board Update

December 6 Winterfest

December 9 Head Start Party - De Soto

December 10 Head Start Party - Hematite

December 11 Meeting

December 18 Holiday Party & Baked Goods Auction

December 25 Christmas - NO MEETING

January 1 New Year's Day - NO MEETING

January 6 Board Meeting

January 8 Meeting - Board Update

January 15 Meeting - Monarch Jewelry

January 22 Meeting

January 29 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 2025-2026

President Cathy Elliott 573 883 0924

President Elect Donna Masters

Past President Peggy Scott

Secretary Marian Bozak

Secretary Elect Jessica Korte

Treasurer Becky Capps

Treasurer Elect Ellen Bridgewater

Board Members

2024-2026 Mary McDowell Debbie Kettler Carolyn McKinney

2025-2027 Becky Francis Megan Siracusa Donna Long



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Visit our website



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