



# Twin City Area Optimist Club

P.O. Box 475

Festus, Missouri 63028

[www.twincityoptimist.org](http://www.twincityoptimist.org)

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Affiliated with Optimist International – Serving Youth and  
Community since 1919

## April 2021 News: Making a Difference

### Life on the Autism Spectrum Club ZOOM Meeting March 11, 2021 Speaker Ann Phillips



#### April is Autism Awareness Month.

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication.

To learn more visit:

<https://www.autismspeaks.org>

Thank you taking time to learn about a population of people and their unique needs and gifts. The CDC estimates that one in 54 children are diagnosed with autism by age 8 in the United States. Therefore, about 68 students in the Crystal City and Festus School Districts might have an autism diagnosis.

Autism happens to a family. Jack is a 9 year-old-boy in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. He was officially diagnosed with autism at age 6. His official diagnosis is moderate autism with language impairment and ADHD. His diagnosis affects where we live (we moved from St. Louis City to the county for better resources), how we educate (Jack attends a public school with services from Special School District), what we do for entertainment (Missouri Botanical Gardens is more attractive than the Magic House), and even how we shop (small grocery stores are easier to manage than Target).

Autism is classified as a condition that occurs on a spectrum, meaning there is a wide range of ability and characteristics among people with autism. Jack is moderate and verbal, so his experience and ours is very different from a family whose child does not speak, and from a family that lives in an area with very little awareness or support. What makes autism, autism and more than enduring normal struggles of child development is that the challenges significantly impair daily functioning: eating, socializing, toileting, information processing, and safety are compromised.

Autism is a neurological developmental disorder. The frontal lobe, the big thinking warehouse of the brain, is impaired. This impairment causes significant problems in two main areas: in social communication and reciprocity and in repetitive and restricted interests and behaviors.

For children like Jack, facing these challenges requires on-going training, therapy, and systematic teaching every day. Imagine if you had to do calculus all day every day—calculus to go to the grocery and think about how much something costs; calculus to understand what the cashier is saying; calculus to understand her facial expressions. You would be exhausted. You would want that experience of grocery shopping to apply to every grocery shopping encounter, but it doesn't. People are the most dynamic systems. They are complicated and ever-changing. Often, the autistic mind likes a predictable system. It is a fight for sameness.

Understanding about the causes of autism has changed over the years. Today it is understood that the most common connection is genetics. Children with autism often have a family history of learning challenges, autism, and other neurological disorders. Vaccines are not the cause.

Two great ways to promote autism awareness and support those who are managing the struggles of autism involve being an optimist and helping your local special educators. We so often endure public meltdowns, and I always rely on the one in the crowd, the compassionate one who may offer help or simply a smile. Secondly, support your special educators—they are on the front line every day. They are often the only intervention a family relies on. Find out what they need: Do they need supports in the classroom? Would they love a surprise breakfast? These educators are catching a very vulnerable population of children.

Jack is one of thousands of children with this condition. This is only one picture. Hopefully you have an awareness of the condition. Perhaps some myths have been clarified, as is natural with any information that becomes more clear through better research.

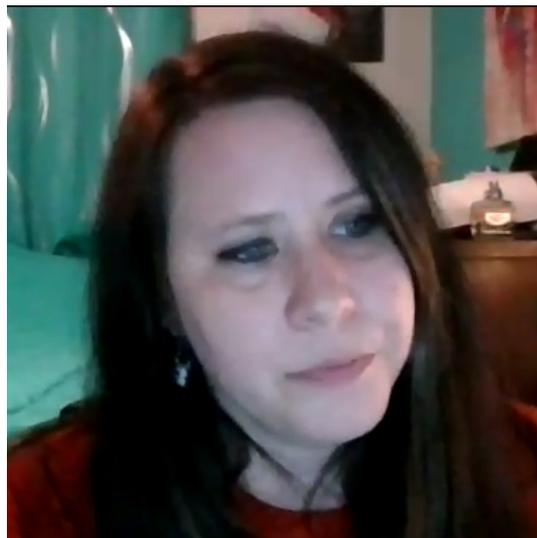
Ann Phillips

NOTE: Ann is Cheri Phillips daughter-in-law.

## **Finding Grace Ministries Club ZOOM Meeting March 25, 2021 Speaker Doreen with Finding Grace Ministries**

**Finding Grace Ministries strives to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of youth and adults that are at risk or suffer from homelessness. While providing these services we are able to share the gospel and the tangible love of God with them.**

**Find us on Facebook:  
Finding Grace Ministries.**



# CLUB PROJECTS

## The Aunt Rose Project



**The Aunt Rose Project**

Product drive on April 1, 2021 was a success. 6,082 sanitary pads and 4,641 tampons were collected.



### Addressing "Period Poverty"

Thank you to our members who contributed their time, products, or cash donations for this very worth while cause. Special thanks to the Second District Court and Xi Theta Pi Sorority for their product donations.

During the April Board of Directors Meeting, the board approved The Aunt Rose Project as an ongoing club project.



Club member Jane Kost receives her "I'm an Auntie" pin.



Club President Mary Kay Scott with Phyllis Neff brings the weekly meeting to order during a short Facebook Live.



Members line up to drop off donations.



"I'm an Auntie" pins were distributed to donors



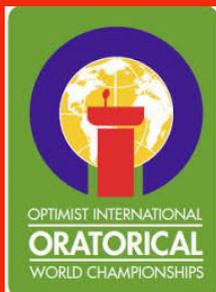
Boxes filled with donations...and more already loaded for delivery.



### **Volunteers**

**Kneeling: Megan Siracusa, Barb Schmidt, Elizabeth Check,  
The Rosie Project Founder Renee Gerlach, and Patty Meyer**

**Standing: Phyllis Neff, Project Chair Caryl Harness, President Mary Kay Scott, Gerty O'Leary,  
Janice Boyd, Cheri Phillips, and Jean Naeger**



## **Congratulations to our Oratorical Contest Winners**

### **First Place Winner - Lindsey Darian**



Lindsey is a Freshman at Hillsboro High School. She plays the clarinet and just recently started public speaking class in school. She enjoys gardening and loves animals. Lindsey plans on a career as a medic.

Lindsey won a \$500 cash prize along with a certificate and medal.

### **Second Place Winner - Olivia Drinen**



Olivia is a 7th grade student at Senn Thomas Middle School. She is involved in many extracurricular activities including Cross Country, Track, Band, president of Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, American Heritage Girls Troop MO3110, and Calvary Chapel Youth Group. Olivia also enjoys reading, writing, climbing, and learning sign language.

Olivia won a \$350 cash prize along with a certificate and medal.

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### Third Place Winner - Teagan Capstick



Teagan is a Junior at Jefferson High School. She is involved in NHS, journalism editor, jazz band and concert band. Currently she is President of the JOI Club. Teagan's future plans are to attend Lindenwood University; her major is undecided at this time.

Teagan won a \$200 cash prize along with a certificate and medal.



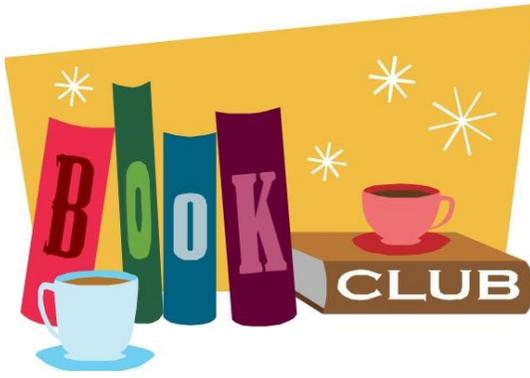
First Place winner Lindsey Darian receiving award from Phyllis Neff, President Mary Kay Scott, and Gerty O'Leary



Second place winner Olivia Drinen receiving award from President Mary Kay Scott

**Please note: First and second place winners will move onto regional contest on April 18th.  
Thank you Mary Kay Scott for chairing this project.**

## Book Club



### April Book Review

Remember TCA Optimist Book Club will be reviewing *Before We were Yours* by Lisa Wingate. Book Club will meet immediately after the evening ZOOM meeting on **April 29th**. Those interested just stay on the call.

All are welcome!

Please email Mary Kay Scott with future book selections.

## JOI CLUB

### JOI Update

Some more pics from Saturday March 20th at the “Don’t Give Up” give away. It was a great day to hand out free “Don’t Give Up” inspirational yard signs. The Junior Optimist and Twin City Optimist members worked all afternoon along with our local Festus Police Department and Cyndi Buchheit-Courtway, State Rep and Optimist member. Arlene DeGonia came by to visit us. It was good to see her. The JOI club had a good time working and being together. We heard many stories on how the signs have helped people through some difficult times. We gave away all 100 signs by 3:30 pm.

Thank you, JOI members: Hannah, Josie, and Sophie for making signs and working. Also, thanks to Maddy, Olivia, KK, Liz, Audrey, Marcus for donating your time and talents. Thanks to TCA Optimist members: Debbie Schumacker, Carol Schanz, Maria Hoepfner, Karen Huskey, Sherry Armstrong, Phyllis Neff with Blake, and Mary Hatfield, along with guest moms Vanessa B. (son Oscar), and Debbie F. Thanks, Phyllis, for doing the Live FB segment for advertising the event. Thanks to Peggy and Kevin for the article in the Leader. Many people mentioned they saw it and that is why they were there.



Katelyn Blair, JOI member and new TCA Optimist Member  
Cyndi Buchheit-Courtway



Sergeant Fitzsimmons and  
Festus Mayor Sam Richards  
with JOI Club members



JOI Advisor Katie Huck with  
JOI Member Hannah  
Christopher



Carol Schanz  
with Arlene DeGonia



JOI members with Festus  
Police Officers



JOI members showing signs

Katie Huck  
JOI Adult Advisor

Debbie Schumaker  
JOI Chair

## Zone 10/EMO District



South Side Members Support Arnold-Imperial Pancake Breakfast



Mary Hatfield, Jean Naeger, and Mary Kay Scott (with spouses Joe, Chuck and Ric) represented TCA Club. Joe Hatfield is an Arnold-Imperial Optimist.



**Mark your calendar for the next  
Zone 10 meeting.**

**Date: Saturday, April 24, 2021**

**Time: 11 a.m.**

**Place: Wesley Roger's Steak and Buffet  
(Old Ponderosa) in Arnold**

**Still time to sign up for EMO 3rd Quarter  
Conference in person or virtual  
April 30-May 1, 2021**

click link to register [oi-emo.org](http://oi-emo.org)



## **FUNDRAISERS**

### **2021 Sponsorship Campaign**

Update: I am pleased to report we currently have 41 sponsors with donations of \$11,250 for 2021. This is our fourth year having a sponsorship campaign and each year the donations have increased. I think we have received all donations for this year but of course we won't refuse any additional checks if they come in!

Jean Naeger  
Marketing Chair

## Raffle Basket Fundraisers



### Congratulations to Lotto Tree Winner Tyler Waddell

Tyler won \$338 (purchase price) in tickets. We received this text from Tyler regarding his winnings:

I won 239 dollars on 13-15 tickets I can't remember the exact amount of winning tickets but it was in between there. It took us a little while to do them all and it was really fun scratching some every few nights. Thank you! There was a total of 43 tickets in the prize thank you all so much it was a blast and I never thought I'd win!

**DRAWING THUR.  
APRIL 1, 2021**



Project Chair Barb Schmidt displays Lotto Tree. The spinning wheel on screen in the background chose the random winner.

**May Raffle**

**DRAWING THUR.  
MAY 6, 2021**

Raffle for  
Beer-Wine-Spirits Chest  
**One** entry for every \$10 donation

NAME:



PHONE NUMBER:

Donations can be made thru  
Venmo @TC-Optimist  
or mail check and this card to:  
TWIN CITY AREA OPTIMIST CLUB  
PO BOX 475, FESTUS, MO 63028



**PLEASE NOTE:**

- In May, we will raffle off Beer-Wine-Spirits Chest
- In June, we will raffle a Restaurant Gift Card Basket.

As in the past, we need your help in filling the baskets. Please contact Barb Schmidt if you can donate. You can either give your donation to Barb or drop them off with Phyllis Neff at Quonset Lanes!

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Barb Schmidt  
314-603-1099  
b.schmidt70@yahoo.com



Members meet every Thursday at  
Noon - 1 p.m. via **ZOOM**.  
Our Club will continue looking at the  
sunny side of everything and being  
committed to bringing out the best  
in our area youth.

Keep current with club activities,  
like us on Facebook, and  
visit our website.



Visit our website