

GATEway News



SERVING OPTIMIST CLUBS IN GEORGIA AND TENNESSEE

Volume 4

Issue 1

Summer 2023





Conference and Convention Sites
GATEway District Optimist International 2022-2023



GATEway First Quarter Conference – November 4-6, 2022

Hilton Peachtree City Atlanta Hotel & Conference Center
 2443 Highway 54 West
 Peachtree City, GA 30269
 770-487-2000
 RATE: \$139.00 + tax



2022-2023 GATEway District Kick-Off

GATEway Second Quarter Conference – January 20-22, 2023

Hotel Indigo Athens
 500 College Avenue
 Athens, GA 30601
 1-866-808-1483
 RATE: \$129.00 + tax + \$5.00 parking fee per night



*GATEway District Hall of Fame Recognition
 2021-2022 Awards and Recognition Banquet*

GATEway Third Quarter One-Day Conference – April 22, 2023

Tellus Science Museum (Location of Event)
 100 Tellus Drive
 Cartersville, GA 30120



Hampton Inn Cartersville (for Accommodations)
 5600 Highway 20 SE
 Cartersville, GA 30121
 770-382-8999
 RATE: \$105.00 + tax



GATEway District Scholarship Contests

GATEway District Convention – August 3-6, 2023

Hilton Atlanta Northeast
 5993 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard
 Peachtree Corners, GA 30092
 1-800-678-4120
 RATE: \$129.00 (King) or \$139.00 (Queen) + tax



*Lieutenant Governor-Elect Training
 Officer-Elect Training
 District Governor Election
 GATEway District Optimist of the Year Recognition*



Governor

Bruce Peace

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Secretary

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Immediate

Past Governor

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Governor Elect

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News Stories Needed !

Do you have local club news? Do you have committee news? Do you have other Optimist news? Send stories and photos to Dianna Johnson at ddjohnson@juno.com or Gerald Johnson at geraldjohnson@juno.com Next issue deadline is December 30, 2022..

Time to Share your Light?

Greetings Fellow GATEway Optimist,

It is hard to believe that we have entered this last quarter of the optimist year. I hope that you are planning to join us at the 2022-2023 Convention in Peachtree Corners on August 5th – 6th .

Saturday is jammed packed with workshops for our incoming club officers as well as session for those who are not serving as club officers next year. In addition, you will have a chance to hear from Optimist International President Bob Mcfadyen. We will top off our Saturday with a message from our keynote speaker, Steve Dennis.

Join us on Sunday for committee and Lt. Governor reports and other informative information. You will also want to be present on Sunday as we will have our drawing for the winner of the District Raffle and if you or your club has not purchased a ticket, you still have time to do so. I hope you have seen the emails from Optimist International announcing the Race to the Finish incentive program. You can still enter for an opportunity to win up to \$1000 for the club in the organization that has the largest percentage of growth in the 4th quarter.

We want to give the GATEway clubs an additional chance to win up to \$1000 for 4th quarter growth. By clicking the " Shine Brighter Together" button below you will find the details of the district contest. We will also discuss the program on our Training on Tuesday call next Tuesday. Zoom invitation is at the end of this email.

Membership growth is critical now more than ever in our organization. It's not all about getting a recognition in an incentive program or honor / distinguished club or district. That should not be the reason we strive to introduce Optimism to new members. Let's not lose sight of the real benefits of being and Optimist which is improving the lives of our youth, our communities and ourselves.

Take care and I hope to see you in Peachtree Corners in August

Sincerely,

Bruce Peace



Candidate Qualifications Committee Recommendation For Governor Elect

The Gateway District Candidate Qualification Committee is pleased to announce that its recommendation for Governor Elect for the 2023-2024 Optimist year is Dr. Dianna Johnson from the Optimist Club of Carrollton.

Dianna has been a member of Optimist Clubs since 1987 when she joined the Optimist Club of Carrollton, where she was the second female member of her club and a few years later she became the first female president of the Carrollton Club. In the mid 1990s, after a move to Cobb County, she became a member of the Milford Optimist Club, where she also became the first female president of that club. On the local level Dianna has held the office of club president, secretary, treasurer, and board member, each multiple times and has achieved Honor and Distinguished status several times. She is currently also a member of the Born to Shine Optimist Club and the Reach for The Stars Optimist Club.

On the District level, Dianna is currently serving as District Treasurer. She has achieved Distinguished Lt. Governor status and has been a Builder of Excellence for five new Optimist Clubs. Dianna has completed Level ten of the PGI program and level two of the PDP program. She has served on numerous district committees including District Bulletin, Spouse/Guest Events, Oratorical, Leadership Development, Governor's Advisory, Hospitality, and New Club Building.

Dianna is a retired educator and spent her working years in the Cobb and Douglas County school systems as well as Chattahoochee Technical College, Kennesaw State University, and at the University of West Georgia. She received the Optimist Excellence in Education Award twice, has been honored twice by the Georgia House of Representatives in both 2006 and 2019 for her service to education in Georgia, and she received the Herb Strobino Optimist Service Award for her work in the Carrollton community during the 2018 – 2019 year. Dianna is a graduate of the Leadership Carroll program through the Carroll County Chamber of commerce, and she completed the Aspiring Leaders program through the Douglas County School System. She was honored as the 2019 Future Business Leaders of America Region Seven Advisor of the Year.

The election for Governor Elect for the 2023 – 2024 year will take place this year at the Gateway District Convention to be held in August.

The 2022 – 2023 Candidate Qualification Committee

Michael Brown	Wrens – North Jefferson
Rudy Corn	Gainesville – Hall County
Kathy Forster	Ya Ya Xpress
Gwen Gable	Emory Decatur
Essie Johnson	Knoxville
Gerald Johnson	Carrollton
Deanna Morrow	Carrollton
Bruce Peace	Rome
Albert Still	Tucker
Mary Still	Tucker



Shad McMillan Wins Third Place In Optimist International World Oratorical Contest

The 2023 Optimist International Oratorical World championships were held at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri July 20th and 21st. The Optimist Oratorical contest gives students the chance to speak to the world and earn scholarships by doing so. Each year more than \$150,000.00 is awarded through the Optimist International Foundation to winning students.

The 2023 contest rules required the students that entered to speak on the topic “Discovering the Optimism within Me.”

Shad McMillan from Carrollton High School represented the Optimist Club of Carrollton in the Oratorical contest and finished in third place in the World Finales after winning first place in the Southeast Regional Contest that was held on July 20th. McMillan received a \$5,000.00 scholarship for winning the regional contest to add to the \$2,500.00 scholarship he had already won for winning the GATEway (Georgia/Tennessee) District contest in April. He also received an additional \$5,000.00 scholarship for his Third-place finish in the WORLD CONTEST. Before reaching the district level McMillan had to win the Carrollton Club contest and then the Zone 4 contest, as well as an area contest that included students from Metro Atlanta and West Georgia.

Master of Ceremonies for the World Oratorical Contest, Kansas Appeals Court Judge and Optimist member Dave Bruns said after this year’s contest that the level of competition was the toughest he has seen since he has been working with the contest. Optimist International President Bob McFadyen, from Canada, agreed and added that this year’s students were extremely impressive speakers.





GATEway District Governor Bruce Peace, from Rome, Georgia expressed excitement after hearing the results and of Shad's success. This was the third year in a row that a Georgia Student has won the regional contest. Year before last a student from Rome, Georgia won the region contest, and last year a student from Forsyth County won the region contest and the also won the World Contest.

Gerald Johnson, President of the Optimist Club of Carrollton, said that the local club has been sponsoring students in the Oratorical Contest for over fifty years and that members knew when they heard McMillan speak at the local contest that he had the ability to make it to the World competition. Johnson added, "Shad is a natural speaker, talking before a group comes easy for him and he enjoys using his talents.

Optimist Club of Carrollton Oratorical Chair, Dr. Dianna Johnson said, "Shad has a very bright future. As an educator I would have to say that his speaking talents are above and beyond most students. He is an impressive young man with an extremely bright future."

In response to an interviewer's question after the contest McMillan said that he is thankful for all that the Optimist International organization and the local club has done for him. In response to another question he said, "I didn't talk about it in my speech, but these scholarships mean a lot to me and my family in helping to plan my future and what I would like to do." Shad added that, "it is not just about the competition, but also having an opportunity for people to listen to you and maybe having something to say that might change the world."

The next Optimist Oratorical contest will begin in early 2024 and the topic will be "How to Change the World With Optimism." The contest is open to all students under the age of nineteen. For more information students should contact a local Optimist Club.



The Benefits of an Optimist Membership

I learned a long time ago Optimists are special people. They care and are driven to become the light for service in their community, to make a difference, and to be a face of positive change.

Optimists know there is great power in helping or doing for others. An Optimist membership gives a person the opportunity to become engaged in many worthwhile endeavors, make connections with other like-minded individuals, and work together in the Optimist mission of serving for the good of our children, our community, ourselves, and our fellow human beings.

Optimism is a calling! A calling we have to share our philosophy of life and the tenets of our Optimist Creed with others. It is our willingness to serve others, to strive to be the best we can be, to have a positive outlook, to make a difference, and to be a face of positive change in the world around us.

Optimists are winners and they strive to produce winners! They work daily to make the most of the gifts and opportunities they are given. Optimists live by the words of Harry Firestone, who said, “You get the best out of others when you give the best of yourself.”

An Optimist membership adds value to a person’s life. People want to feel worthwhile in life. Optimism makes people feel special, helping them to become winners in life.

Studies show the higher one’s level of service and helpfulness to others, the greater well-being a person will experience! Optimists are healthier, happier, and live more productive lives.

Together Optimists are a powerful and positive force in their communities. In the book of Galatians, Paul tells us we were never meant to journey through this life alone. We are encouraged to embrace others in our daily lives and endeavors and help them with their burdens. Optimists inspire, help and give comfort to those around them and in doing so, they themselves become better people.

Optimists by being together and working together make each other better. Proverbs 27:17 tells us as iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend. There’s an old saying, “Help a person and you make their day; teach a person to help others and you change their life”. Optimists change people’s lives every day.

When you take the light of Optimism out into your community looking for people to become involved in your club, share with them the great things Optimism can do for them. Invite them to participate in the things you love and are passionate about. Plant a seed by showing them what Optimism does for others and what it can do for them. Then ask them to join the movement to help make the world a better place. And once they join, nurture them and help them become the person they were meant to be.

Be the Light for Retention

Every year Optimist Clubs lose members. Some of these losses are due to natural attrition – caused, for example by death, business transfers, or other unavoidable relocation or health problems. Such losses are to be expected, however, studies show that most Optimists leave our organization without giving a reason, which most likely means they did not receive from us what they were looking for and were not experiencing the benefits Optimism offered them. If your Club is steadily losing members now is the time to take a stand and reverse this trend, to find out what is wrong and fix it.

Member retention starts the very moment a new member walks in the door, not when they have one foot out the door. It is imperative your Club embrace and welcome new members, helping them feel they are an integral part of your Club and the Optimist movement. Be ever vigilant in knowing what your members want and what they need. Every member comes to Optimism looking for something and asking the question, “What’s in it for me?” Your Club must answer that question and keep on answering it as long as that member is part of your Club. Research indicates most volunteers leave their organizations because they feel they are not valued and the work they do is not valued.

Studies also show many younger members leave their Clubs because they feel an incompatibility and lack of belonging due to age and philosophy differences. To counteract this problem, we must change our Club model, looking for new ways to draw members to our organization and keep them engaged. A member, young or old, must feel comfortable with his or her peers and be engaged and involved in Club activities that encourage solid relationships, comradery, and loyalty to the Optimist cause.

Continued on next page.







OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
F O U N D A T I O N

Dime-A-Day

Optimist International and Optimist International Foundation coexist as two separate organizations that support each other. Optimist International Foundation is the fundraising arm of Optimist International, and works to develop funds to support the endeavors of Optimist International and its mission.

When Members and Clubs make a contribution to support Optimist International Foundation, they are, with that gift, supporting Optimist International itself and themselves as a Club as well.

With just one dime a day, you can become part of the movement of "Helping Optimists Help Kids" and become part of a large group of Foundation supporters who realize what a difference they make every day in the lives of children.

Would you consider making a gift of just a dime a day to assist the charitable work of Optimist International?

The Dime-A-Day level is reached by a contribution of \$36.50 to the Foundation within one Optimist Year, and is recognized by the presentation of a pin.

Building a future where every kid counts
Can you spare a **dime a day?**

Sign me up! Please accept my \$ _____ donation. (Enclose check, payable to Optimist International Foundation, referencing "Dime-A-Day" in the memo section.)

Sign me up! Please accept my \$ _____ donation. Charge my MC Visa Discover American Express

Account # _____ Exp. ____/____ Signature: _____ Security Code _____

Sign me up! Please deduct \$3.05 per month from my checking account.

Checking account number: _____ (Please include a copy of a voided check)

Name _____ Email _____

Club Number _____ Member Number _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Please return to: Optimist International Foundation • Dime-A-Day Campaign • P.O. Box 952126 • St. Louis, MO 63195



Have Questions about Optimist International Foundation? Call Kathy Forster at 256-371-0062.

Playground Dedication

On May 12, members of the Forsyth-Cumming Optimist Club attended the dedication of the children's playground at Cumming's new City Center in Forsyth County. The playground was sponsored by the Cumming Kiwanis Club, and a number of community organizations and individuals contributed to purchases of equipment for the playground. The playground is a sensory playground, which makes it inclusive for children with autism and other sensory conditions.

Music intervention has been shown to improve social interactions in children with autism, and neuroimaging studies in healthy controls have shown that circuits important for emotion and memory processing are engaged during music listening. Research has shown that soft musical sounds are particularly appealing and soothing to children who display sensory characteristics and music often affects their behavior in a positive way.

Specialty play equipment such as musical "flowers", musical "butterflies", tuned drums, and a marimba, serenade chimes, melody chimes, and aria chimes are installed on this playground.

In addition, a special merry-go-round that can hold up to four wheelchairs at one time takes center place in the playground.

One of our members, Linda Kelly, was a member of the Cumming Kiwanis Club at the time and had this great idea for the playground. Linda is a member of the Forsyth-Cumming Optimist Club and the Cumming Kiwanis Club asked her to participate in the ribbon cutting.

The Forsyth-Cumming Optimist Club is proud to be a contributor for the tuning drums at the playground.



A Note From The President Of Optimist International

As we enter the ninth month of our Optimist year, First Lady Penny and I want to thank all the Clubs and Districts that have made us feel welcome during our visits. It is so gratifying to meet the wonderful people working to make our communities a better place, for ourselves and our children.

Knowing how hard our Members work makes it all the more tragic that there are fewer of us every year. As our numbers dwindle, so does our impact. Because, while our Clubs are shrinking, the needs of our communities certainly aren't.

We must grow as well.

We hope our fourth quarter membership incentive will get us back on the right track. From July 1 to Sept. 30, we are offering cash prizes to the Clubs that recruit the most new Members, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of current membership.

Here's a breakdown of the rewards:

- \$1,000 to one Club that adds the most new members (category 1).
- \$1,000 to one Club that adds the highest percentage of new members (category 2).
- \$750 to each of the second-place Clubs in both categories.
- \$500 to each of the third-place Clubs in both categories.
- \$300 to two Clubs drawn randomly from participating Clubs not in the top three in either category.

If you want to join the incentive program and compete for the cash prizes, just follow these two simple steps:

Register your Club to participate by July 15. You can do so by filling out this [registration form](#). Please note that this program is only open to regular Optimist clubs. Junior Optimist Clubs, college Clubs, and any Clubs built under a pilot project are **not** eligible.

Recruit as many new members as you can between July 1 and September 30. New members' dues must be paid by October 31, and they must still be on the Club roster in January 2024. The winning Clubs will be announced as soon as possible after Nov. 6.

Consult our [Member recruitment and retention webpage](#) for ideas to grow your membership, and please contact newclub@optimist.org if you have any questions.

Fellow Optimists, we must build an organization to serve children and our communities long into the future. If we work together, we can build that future. So, good luck and have fun!

"The only way you can predict the future is to build it." ~ Alan Kay

Bob McFadyen
2022-2023 President



The Optimist Creed

Promise Yourself

GATEway Optimist
P. O. Box 1160
Carrollton, Georgia 30112

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism
come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect
only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are
about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater
achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living
creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have
no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear,
and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

