

# Membership Growth Program



**NOW**

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designed to capture  
the interest of  
qualified, prospective  
Optimist club  
members



# **CENTRAL OPTIMIST CLUB OF ST. LOUIS**

**Affiliated with OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

11 May 2000

Mr. Samuel Anderson  
4620 Maher Street  
St. Louis, MO 63109

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The Evening Optimist Club of St. Louis takes pride in the quality of its membership and fills vacancies with men and women recommended by its members.

One of our members has recommended you as a person of integrity and with an interest in the community. Based upon this recommendation, our board of directors has granted their approval for us to invite you to become a club member.

The Central Optimist Club of St. Louis, now ten years old, attempts to be of service to youth and community, principally in the Central West End of St. Louis. The club is a member of Optimist International, one of the best established and largest federations of service clubs.

We would like to share information on the club's activities and goals with you and other community leaders. For this reason, we hope you will be our guest for dinner on Thursday, 24 May, at the Salad Bowl on Lindell Boulevard. We will meet at 6:00 PM and conclude no later than 8:00 PM.

Prior to the meeting, to serve as a reminder and to be sure you can attend, you will be contacted by our member, Tom Wright.

We anticipate meeting you and sharing the fellowship, programs and activities of our club.

Sincerely yours,

*Sandra McClary*

Sandra McClary, Chair  
Membership Committee



## Membership Growth Program

“NOW” is a program designed to capture the interest of qualified, prospective Optimist club members. It is a program exclusively for clubs committed to achieving a net gain of 10 during the administrative year. The central feature is a dinner (or a series of dinners) at which the goals and activities of the club are explained and prospects, previously qualified for membership, are invited to join.

A “NOW” program is designed to last approximately four weeks not including the planning and follow-up. The program can be repeated as often as needed. The “NOW” meeting must be at a time when prospects will not be rushed. At least two hours must be available for the meeting.

The integrity of the membership process must not be jeopardized in the interest of short-term membership goals. It is necessary that every new member receive the full program of enrollment, education, induction and orientation.

As the “NOW” program is prepared and conducted, it is essential that the personal touch be maintained. No matter how well planned and conducted, no program can be effective unless it includes personal contact with potential members.

### Key Elements in the “NOW” Program

1. Selection of prospects by club members.
2. Qualification of prospects by membership committee and board.
3. Letter sent to each qualified prospect inviting him/her to the “NOW” dinner.
4. Personal invitations to prospects by table hosts.
5. “NOW” dinner
  - a. Speech on Optimist International and club
  - b. Invitation to membership
  - c. Completion of membership invitation and collection of fees and dues
6. Follow-up prospects who did not join at dinner meeting.
7. Preparation for next dinner if required to reach goal.

*Any club following this step-by-step plan will grow.*

### Special Notice

**Clubs completing the program as explained in this section, with at least a 10-member net annual increase on September 30, are entitled to a “NOW” banner patch. Successful clubs must request the recognition by writing to the Membership Department, Optimist International, 4494 Lindell Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63108, before October 20, following the conclusion of the year in which the “NOW” program was implemented.**



# Week-To-Week Guide

## “NOW” recruitment program

Step by step preparation Guide (check as completed)

### Planning

- Review the “NOW” program guide
- Appoint a “NOW” Membership Chairperson
- Appoint a “NOW” Membership Committee
- Meet to make plans, review program, set dates and assign duties

### Week Number One

- Announce the program to the club and sell its benefits. (Larger clubs mean greater service, more members bring more talents and resources, increased fellowship and reduced workload and increased members give increased morale and stimulate confidence.)
- Get names of prospects from members. Distribute “member invitations” at club meeting and ask members to fill out as much information as they know. Pass around several phone books to get accurate information. Consider vocational classifications, age groupings, business associates, neighbors, friends, and local businesses. Ask for people with integrity, good reputation, interest in community and a balance to club strengths.
- Membership committee meets, adds names and screens prospects.
- Collect and order materials needed:
  - Scrapbook
  - Club organization chart
  - Club trophies/recognitions
  - The Optimist* magazine
  - The Optimist Difference* brochures
  - Member invitations
  - Name tags

### Week Number Two

- Announce prospects to club and ask for further names.
- Plan the “NOW” dinner
  - Reserve the room and plan seating arrangement
  - Plan menu
  - Arrange for coffee to be served following the meeting
  - Prepare the “NOW” invitation letters (See sample on page 2)
  - Select the “presider” of the meeting
  - Recruit the faculty/presenters
  - Recruit the “table hosts” and explain their duties

### Week Number Three

- Prospects approved by Board
- Mail the “NOW” invitation letters (See sample on page 2)
- Review the agenda, dinner and faculty

### Week Number Four

- Final check with all concerned
- Ask “table hosts” to call their prospects
- Appoint “greeters”
- Confirm faculty appearances
- Check with presiding officer
- Hosts telephone prospects, explain format and offer to “pick them up”
- Room set-up
- Bring materials gathered during week #1 and your:
  - Club banner
  - Bell and gavel
  - Lectern
- Table host duties:
  - Bring the prospects
  - Sit with prospects
  - Introduce one to another
  - Promote good conversation and warm fellowship
  - Introduce prospects to the audience
  - Distribute and collect applications and fees

# “NOW” Dinner

Conduct the dinner as planned. After the presentations and the recruitment speech, provide an opportunity to complete Member Invitations. Do not be apologetic about collecting the membership fee and dues. (Most clubs collect the full membership fee and a prorated portion of the dues, based upon the balance of the dues period.) If, for some reason, a check will not be written at the time, the committee should arrange for personal follow-up.

The “NOW” committee members follow-up any prospects who did not join and begin planning the next dinner.

Involve members added through the “NOW” program; each should participate in all elements of the membership process. This includes biographical sketches in the bulletin, a welcome letter from the president, completion of a Member Interest Finder, an induction ceremony and the other elements of orientation. The membership committee is responsible for these procedures. The “NOW” committee need only check to be sure each new member is quickly involved in these activities.

The club secretary-treasurer should make sure to complete the Club Roster Adjustment form for submittal to the Optimist International office along with the new member processing fee. The program cannot be completed successfully unless the new members are officially enrolled.



## Agenda “NOW” Dinner

### Time

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| _____ | 1. Call to order  |
| _____ | 2. Invocation/Creed   |
| _____ | 3. Meal service   |
| _____ | 4. Welcome and purpose of meeting   |
| _____ | 5. Introduction of head table   |
| _____ | 6. Introduction of prospective members. The presiding officer should introduce each table host, who then introduces the prospects at his/her table. |
| _____ | 7. Speeches on club and Optimist International  |
| _____ | 8. Questions and answers  |
| _____ | 9. Collect applications and membership fees   |
| _____ | 10. Coffee and informal fellowship  |
| _____ | 11. Adjournment   |

# Recruitment Speeches

The entire speech may be given by one person. However, if possible, each topic should be addressed by a different faculty member. Speakers should make their talks from notes or outlines.

## I. Optimist International

The early twentieth century saw the birth of today's family of service organizations, of which Optimist International is an important member. The first Optimist Club was in Buffalo, New York, organized in 1911. Then came Rochester and Syracuse. In 1916, the Optimist Club of Indianapolis, Indiana was organized. Within a few months, Optimist clubs were established in Louisville, St. Louis, Denver, Milwaukee, Springfield (Illinois), Peoria (Illinois), Kansas City (Missouri), and Los Angeles. The following year, clubs were organized in Kansas City (Kansas) and St. Joseph (Missouri). Optimist International was formally established in Louisville in June of 1919. At this first convention, 13 of the existing Optimist clubs were represented.

In 1920, the prototype of the Junior Optimist Club was formed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1924, the Junior Optimist club program was adopted as an international activity and the organization's slogan became "Friend of the Boy". In that same year, the first Canadian club was organized in Toronto, Ontario. In 1928, the first boy's oratorical contest was held; contestants were members of Junior Optimist clubs.

The year 1936 saw the beginning of the Life Membership plan, a plan designed to help finance the new club building program.

Bike Safety Week was introduced in 1953. Youth Appreciation Week was adopted as an organization-wide activity in 1957. Other programs are Respect for Law and Tri-Star Sports. In 1978, "Help Them Hear" and Junior World Golf were two new activities added to the Optimist Club agenda. In 1983, the Essay Contest was introduced for the first time.

Representative of the organization's expansion of interest and service, the additional slogan, "Friend of Youth", was adopted in 1972.

Currently, there are over 3800 Optimist clubs in the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean with more than 131,000 members. Optimist International's Constitution states that "Optimist International is an association of member clubs". Clubs comprise Optimist International's membership and guide its destiny through delegates to the annual International Convention. Individuals are members of Optimist clubs.

At each International Convention, club delegates elect vice presidents and a president-elect. These officers, the president, the two immediate past presidents and the Executive Director comprise the International Board of Directors. The International President appoints the International Committees necessary to make plans and develop materials.

Optimist International serves its member clubs by determining the need for new service activities and helping clubs broaden the scope of their community service. Each year Optimist clubs conduct thousands of community serving projects. Thus, the annual, aggregate accomplishment is attained. Throughout its history, Optimist International has refrained from conducting activities or encroaching upon the purpose of member clubs.

The International Office, located in St. Louis, Missouri, along with the Service Center in Montreal, Quebec, serves as a clearing house of ideas for club activities. Here, a professional staff devotes full time to the organization's administration and provides aid and counsel on all phases of club administration and community serving activities.

## II. The District, Your Zone

To improve efficiency and communications, Optimist International is divided into districts. Our club is in the \_\_\_\_\_ District. (If the district is not a state/province, it might be good to add the sentence: The \_\_\_\_\_ district is composed of \_\_\_\_\_ clubs. The governor is Optimist International's officer responsible for administering the International Program in the district. Our governor is \_\_\_\_\_. He/she is a member of the Optimist Club of \_\_\_\_\_ .

The governor is elected by representatives from the clubs he/she will work with. The governor appoints the district persons required to implement Optimist International's programs and objectives within the district.

Lieutenant governors are elected each year at the third quarter district meeting in May. The lieutenant governor is Optimist International's officer responsible for direct contact with member clubs. Our lieutenant governor is \_\_\_\_\_. He/she is a member of Optimist Club of \_\_\_\_\_ .

The lieutenant governor's chief responsibility is to provide counsel and aid to the clubs in the zone. Like all district and international officers, the lieutenant governor serves voluntarily. District meetings include conferences to aid and encourage effective club administration and service.

The annual district convention, scheduled between 15 August and 30 September, features the election of a governor-elect as well as a variety of training and informational events dealing with club administration and activities.

Zone meetings, conducted by lieutenant governors, are meetings devoted entirely to the exchange of ideas and experiences in club activities and programs.

### III. Our Club

Our club was organized in \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ Optimist Club was our sponsor. Our charter membership consisted of \_\_\_\_\_ members. Of those charter members, \_\_\_\_\_ are still active in the club. We now have \_\_\_\_\_ members.

### IV. Club Meetings

To make our club meetings enjoyable and appealing, business is conducted at committee and board meetings open to all members. Club meetings feature good fellowship and interesting programs. Our meetings are every \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. Meetings last \_\_\_\_\_. Regular club meetings are held at \_\_\_\_\_.

### V. Club Bylaws

Our club is governed by our own bylaws which comply with the Constitution and Bylaws of Optimist International. Briefly, membership represents a cross-section of men and women who reside or have interests in our city.

The responsibility of the board is delineated in Article VII. The board is responsible for all matters that do not require a vote of the membership. The bylaws require a vote of the membership on: 1) elections; 2) amendments to the bylaws; and 3) fund raising methods.

The membership fee is \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Annual dues are \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year per member.

### VI. Service Activities

Because of the wide variation of club projects, it is not possible to provide a script for this topic. Major projects should be identified and their purposes given without going into detail.

### VII. Members' Privileges and Responsibilities

The club is dependent upon the participation of members to accomplish its goals in self development, fellowship and service.

1. A member's first responsibility is to attend club meetings as often as possible.
2. An Optimist club functions through committees. Each member is encouraged to serve on one standing committee and to participate in one fund raising and one service project each year.
3. The club needs a constant flow of officers. All members should seriously consider serving as a club officer and accept nomination when time permits.
4. Like a business or any other organization, the club must have reliable finances. It is most important that all members pay their dues promptly.
5. Growth in membership is essential to the well being of our club. A member makes a significant contribution to his/her club by sponsoring a new member.

Most active club members feel they gain more from the club than they give. A few advantages are:

1. Members develop leadership qualities and talents from service on club committees and in club offices.
2. For many members, club meeting programs provide a continuing education.
3. Optimists gain friends in one of the best ways, working together for a worthwhile goal.
4. The ideas and talents of individual members create an effective voice for the good of the community.
5. Recognition comes to club members through their own accomplishments and activities.

### VIII. Recruitment Speech

In order to serve youth and community effectively, a club must have able, dedicated members. We seek women and men of good character with a keen interest in serving the community. This is why you are here. We believe you are that kind of person. We need you to share our mission. We need the new ideas and talents you bring to the club. It is not often that one has the opportunity of meaningfully affecting the lives of others. Through club membership, you will have this opportunity. With you, we can become a better club. With you, we can provide greater service.

Your table host will be glad to answer any questions you may still have about our club. They will also distribute applications for your use. We hope that you will complete the applications tonight so that we can add you to our membership. You will not be sorry that you made this commitment to the betterment of our community and the welfare of its children.



**OPTIMIST**  
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