

Fellow Optimists,

I hope and pray that this email finds all of you successfully coping with the coronavirus pandemic. So many people are suffering; so many people are truly heroes by putting their lives on the line so that others can survive.

As your District Membership Chair, I want to provide an update on the state of membership growth through the end of the 2nd Quarter of this program year (March 31st). Notwithstanding the current crisis that we are experiencing, I am pleased to share some positive recruiting news. As of March 31st, 173 new members have been recruited (as of March 31st last year, 149 new members had been recruited). While the recruitment of new members is very encouraging, the other facet of membership growth; i.e., retention of members, is disappointing. A total of 226 members, on our District membership roll as of last September 30th, are no longer members (lack of interest, non-payment of dues, death, moved, etc.) At this time last year, 154 members were dropped from our membership rolls. We are currently a net minus 53 members.

With our current crisis, the recruitment of new members certainly is not the primary focus for us. As we are sheltered in our homes, I believe this is a good time to give some thought to whom we may approach, when we can socialize once again, to share the opportunity to enhance the lives of youth in our respective communities; neighbors, co-workers, relatives, etc. Consider recruiting Friends of Optimists; I believe this membership option provides businesses and professional people (who may not be able to get actively involved in our clubs' activities) an excellent opportunity to support our efforts to make a positive impact on youth. I personally have recruited my chiropractor, family doctor, eye doctor, insurance agent, church, etc. The possibilities are many.

**Membership Recruitment/Retention Incentives** (check out the incentives on our District website ([www.iowaoptimist.org](http://www.iowaoptimist.org)) Click on "Join Us"; "CLICK: for Incentive Details")

Congratulations to the following members for their recruitment efforts during the first half of this program year:

- Leading Recruiter for the 1st Quarter: Joy Smith, Winterset Optimist Club, 8 members recruited: will receive an OI pen hand-crafted by Carl McCarthy (shown on the website)
- Leading Recruiter for the 2nd Quarter: Mike Sullivan, Peosta Optimist Club, 8 members recruited: will receive an OI pen hand-crafted by Carl McCarthy
- Lt. Governor having the highest % of net growth during the first half of the year: Leonard Wright will receive an OI stepping stone (shown on the website)

- Zone 2 had a net plus 23 members (to include members of the new Manna Cares Optimist Club)

### **Drawing for a 50-inch TV (will take place at our District Convention)**

For each member recruited, the sponsor will have an entry in the drawing. During the 1st half of the year, 77 members sponsored at least one new member. Kudos to the following members for their exemplary recruiting efforts through March 31st:

- Mike Sullivan - Peosta - 8 members
- Joy Smith - Winterset - 5 members
- Paul Neuharth - Davenport Noon - 5 members
- Amy Vroegh - Knoxville - 4 members
- Craig Kelley - Knoxville - 3 members
- Jim Matthys - Davenport Noon - 3 members
- Ron Slechta - Kalona - 3 members
- Lucas Miazga - Drake - 3 members

Another drawing for a 50-inch TV will be held for sponsors of new members recruited for the period April 1 - September 30.

A closing comment on the District's Incentive Program: We would all acknowledge that winning an incentive prize is not our primary motive to recruit new members; such motivation comes from wanting to make a positive impact on the youth in our respective communities. However, I strongly believe that recognizing those individuals who put forth the effort to recruit new members is very important.

### **Importance of Membership Growth**

For those of you who did not attend either of our Regional Conferences, I want to share a few comments that I presented on the importance of membership growth. Optimist International attained its highest membership in 1991 -174,000 members. As of this evening, OI has 61,589 members (adult clubs). These statistics are concerning to me- are they to you? At some membership level, 50,000 members suggested to me by someone at OI Headquarters in St. Louis, our organization will cease to exist. We CAN NOT allow that to happen. Too many kids are counting on us to continue doing what we are doing. Why is membership growth so important? I offer the following reasons: to ensure the viability of our Great organization; to provide additional labor resources to be in a better position to carry out our current activities/projects and to be able to take on additional activities/projects; and to provide new ideas on how we can better serve the youth in our respective communities.

## **Challenge to everyone:**

We currently have 2,176 District members. Our OI President Adrian Elcock's theme for this Program Year is "iMagine". Just "iMagine" the Awesome impact we could have on the youth in our District if each one of us would recruit at least one new member this year. I acknowledge that recruiting new members is outside the "comfort zone" for a good number of us. But, as I have shared before, one way to get out of that zone is to take a different mental approach to recruiting; i.e., consider it as doing a favor to someone by introducing him/her to the opportunity of making a positive impact on kids' lives and to satisfy an innate need that we all possess; i.e., to add a meaningful purpose to our lives. BTW. If this challenge is met, an additional 76,160 kids' lives will be enhanced in our District. :-)

(2,176 x 35)

This email turned out to be QUITE LENGTHY. You wouldn't have expected anything else, right? :-)

Stay Safe.

Yours in Optimism,

Dave Phillips  
District Membership Chair  
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