

To: SWIS District Club Presidents and Officers
From: Jim Kondrasuk, Leadership Dev Chair
RE: Round Table Notes from 2nd District Conference
Date: Feb 12, 2009

Optimists:

A special thank you to the participants at our Second Quarter Conference last weekend. The numbers of attendees was super – and the number of “First Timers” impressed us all.

So, special congratulations to all the first timers, and special thanks to all of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to come and share your Optimism with your fellow Optimists.

Below is the full compilation of all of the discussion sheets from last Saturday’s Round Table Discussions. These are here word for word from each table on each question – there is no editing (unless I could not read the handwriting).

There is a great wealth of data and information here. Through these table discussions, and all of our discussions at the Conference we share, we learn from each other, and we grow personally and as Optimists.

Please share these ideas with your Club Members & your Board Members – and we will have more round tables at the 3rd Quarter Conference at the Kalahari in Wisconsin Dells in May!!

Look forward to seeing you there

Yours In Optimism,

Jim

**Southern Wisconsin Optimist District - Second District Conference
2009 -2010 Give Me "Five" For The Kids – Sharing Forward
The Radisson Hotel, Madison, WI Feb. 7, 2009
Round Table Session – Question # 1**

***If you were going to share your OPTIMISM with a new community, where would you look & what would you do & why would you do it??
(This will be used by the SWIS NCB Committee to look for new opportunities to serve more kids)***

South Wayne/Cottage Grove/Had a chapter going in News Glarus
Talk to the school district (opt oratorical/essay) because of our mission to working with youth
Village President, Police Chief, Grocery Stores, Car Dealerships, etc
Community Connections
Find people who are willing to go out & recruit – pairs
The church – people already give back
Nearby geographically – friends, family, business connections
Recreation departments, libraries, schools, parent groups
Schools, YMCAs, activity strategies right away
Chamber of Commerce "Welcome Bags" – calendar, retirement groups
Business Parks in Larger Communities
Teachers – bring your parents (to an event)
Parents of SOM
Why – it's to be involved in activity
Why – Direct Impact on kids
Clubs that offer activities for kids
Activity Directors – because they know
Ask whoever you meet – who is really involved with kids
Chamber of Commerce
Ask other clubs
Keep asking
Ask business owners, managers, if they or any of their employees are interested
WHY – Share your Optimism, help the community
Look into neighboring communities
Assess the need(s)
Speak to the Principal/Superintendent
Emphasize the independence of the Optimist group
HOW – Go to the Chamber, PTAs at the schools, advertise at them, Advertise in Public Access, Announce at Churches
Show them numbers, introductory meetings, invite too meetings/events
Where to look: Butan through a contact/Ghana; corporations – Generac, TREK, etc; Chamber of Commerce (whether it would fly); somewhere there is an established club serving adults (Lions, Rotary, etc – that service adults – cooperation to "co-promote"
Form a search committee
Check with Chamber of Commerce to see how many (service-type)

clubs in a selected area

Place to meet – community centers, hotels, restaurants, schools

Contact other Clubs

Contact Village President, Planners for club availability

Determine the need

Library/Teachers/Bank/Police Department/Optimist Sign/Churches/Other
Service Organizations/Welcome Wagon/Popcorn Wagon/Agenda
For City Council Meeting/Local Newspaper/Chamber of Commerce/
Cable Network/Local websites

WHERE: Find a friend or family person
Business associates, suppliers
Schools, community leaders, police & fire departments

WHAT TO DO: Invite to an Optimist event
Join with an existing community event – if possible
Sponsor (co-sponsor) the event
Small business owners can suggest employees to join

Where there is NOT a club/Chamber of Commerce/Look for Community
Leaders/ Banks, Schools, & Churches too start/ Explain the Optimist
Mission to get members ***(By Providing Hope and Positive
Vision Optimists Bring Out The Best In Kids)***

Where to look: Elkhorn

Start more JOOI Clubs in our communities.

Rebuilding clubs by adding new members; sell the Mission Statement of
OI – build it and they will come! What activities are being
done in your club to further the MISSION of Optimist Int;
get new members to grow your club.

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***How can we better encourage, promote, and GROW what we do as Optimists ... service, projects, or something new etc?
(By providing hope & positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in kids – OI Mission statement).***

New Members

Interactive events w/other organizations to promote the club & events to other organization members

Talk to parents of Oratorical Contestants (Essay & CCDHH as well)

Coordinate/partner activity with other organizations (e.g., Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast & Optimist Ice Fishery)

Library & Optimists co-promote events

Chamber of Commerce Meeting

Newspaper or radio – which ever is in your community (library board, senior center etc)

Post Promotion (follow-up)

School District Communications

"New Staff Orientation" – have an Optimist table there

Social for members – have a special/extra meeting at a different time – have a meal, invite a Friend (Sound like a NOW meeting)

Oratorical/Essay – promote the scholarship potential - approach librarians, English teachers, counselors

Tri-Star – press release for newspaper & school papers; posters throughout the community; coaches, activities directors; use more than one channel; individual chair promotes with the help of a facilitator

Pancake Breakfast – wear Optimist apparel; people patronize non-profits if they know it; make sure the public knows that the Optimist Club is sponsoring the event

Bottom up marketing – go straight to the Kids

Newspaper to join

More projects – Tri-Star events

Tell them what you are going to do – do it – tell them what you did

Promote future vent at current event

Different types of events year-to-year

Mirror other clubs and events currently being done & try new ones

Make & Build relationships with other clubs to expand events (participation)

Find New Way to advertise

SPONSORS – for riders

T-Shirt Sponsors (Optimist Logo & their logo)

Spread the word of Optimists – GROW – JUST ASK

Get inactive members active!
Student of the Month
Start a new project, some older ones may be "stale" –
think outside the box!
Recruit new members – young adults under 35
Break up the cliques in the club
Maybe concentrate efforts in your club to grow if not to build a new club
What is the mission of the SWIS District: why did we form – to
share ideas/info through the clubs/share the activities we are doing
Go To The District Quarterly meetings
Give out info at events to those attending
Marketing Kit – on website (OI)
Newspapers with pictures of the event in action or after the fact –
send in your own written articles
Send personal letters – emails get jammed/junk status
Flyers - have everyone helping out to promote events
Community Board/Website/Chamber of Commerce
Banks with electronic message boards may post events
Working with other community service clubs/organizations
Outreach to business
Communication with school contacts
Monthly calendar of events shared at all Optimist activities/meetings
Banners/signage at all activities
Cyber options
Creed available at all events
Incorporate Optimist information into school music/play/drama programs
Alliances with other organizations – JR Achievement, Boys & Girls Clubs,
Youth Center, YMCA, etc
Local newsletters/newspapers
Sponsor athletic teams-events/ Optimist Logo on T-shirt
Scholarship at high school
JOIN the local Chamber of Commerce
Banners & Name Tags
Publicize the PURPOSE for our fundraisers – posters showing how much
money the club has distributed to local youth
Public Relations Committee
Optimist Signage at activities – note that price is a suggestion, and money
raised is going toward youth activities
Get information to the local newspaper
Joint projects with kid/youth groups – JOOI
Publicize "signature" events to membership: encourage every member to
work on big fundraisers; encourage every member to work at least
one hour on one other club project
Booth at local business fairs
Celebrity basketball game – get sponsorships from local businesses
Get pictures in newspapers
Chamber of Commerce – help to promote
Mobile sign or use local banks signs
Businesses' signs – e.g., hotel marquees etc
Sell cheese curds, etc; video running at an event to promote what we do
for youth (Power Point, handouts, pamphlets w/pictures, etc
Get info in school newsletters, and school, programs

Website for local club info

Tri-Star: inserts in food pantry, grocery stores, etc – try to reach out to youth not in school, or club sports teams

Home Shows – have a booth or table

Promote: Network/Contact companies to generate advertising/banners; MS 150; Optimist Bike Group; generate Bike Tour (Middleton); Take A Kid Fishing; Club business cards to meetings for distribution; how to distribute CPA (Community Project Award) info/data to club members

Encourage: Send a listing of every event every group(club) does with results for input/suggestions; break-out sessions at various events (round tables at the District Conferences)

Grow: JOOI groups established at local schools; establish a high school association for promotion of the essay/oratorical; HOW to network; 4-h's, Boys Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, Kid's Ranch; promotion of club events well before they occur; PA Announcements of Optimist events in local schools

For SWIS District Consideration- At events such as the "Art Fair On The Square" or some of the "Farmer's Market on the Square" provide a booth with pictures from various clubs throughout the District, doing various projects/activities, a listing of all the clubs in the District, and a number of contact numbers (preferably at least one from each area code within the District.) Also an Optimist contact number(s) for individuals to contact, if they live in a community with no Optimist Club, or just want more Optimist information. The District could purchase a "folding display tent" and have some SWIS Banner info available. Could be used at any major event in the District, when many people will be in attendance..

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Round Table Session – Question # 3**

What is the best way to invite friends, new and old, to join & share in our Optimism so that we can serve even more kids!

Just Ask

Bring them to an event (need one more person)

Friendly-Fest – stop down and see what we do

Tri-fold handout to give to people

Ask to a meeting, sit next to them & coach `em

Optimist Creed – Very Impressive – Bookmark give away

Get over the "secret handshake" syndrome – not a "business owner"

Talk to your neighbor

"Burma-Shave" type signs

When you fail to give information, people make-up their own

Banners, shirts, handouts

Don't look for the "perfect" member

"Improve longevity & sex like by being an Optimist"

Stress the importance of working with kids

Kids in the hospital – send a card

Support Children & Families when childhood cancer is involved

Invite to social events

Boys/Girls Club

Referrals

Mother told daughter to join because she was a pessimist\

Share the Optimist Creed

Give the creed to every speaker

Refrigerator magnets

Be able to describe your club well & know what service
projects/events your club does

Personally invite someone to join

Give a great impression at your club with new members

Make the club so that it is meaningful

Make sure it is not necessary that they have to participate
in every event/project

Make use of individual talents

Make fun – but also take care of business

Make sure members do not feel bad if they can do only one event/project

Meet new people by getting out in public at social events

Go to a different club & visit – learn what they do & how they run their
club – make a "game" out of visiting new clubs

Make sure to welcome everyone at all meetings

Mentor new members

Shop around at different clubs and see how they run their programs

Build the schedule every year to get more people involved; critique the

event to make sure it is operating as best it can
Make change
Have chair people on events/co-chairs
"JUST ASK" people to do projects or bring stuff
Delegate helpers by just asking to get support – be
there to help the helpers
Always have a "Plan B"
Advertisement in newspaper about new members
When you advertise an event, "Item of Interest" column in newspaper;
well before the actual event
Applications/information at every event
Advertising Optimists
Honor "most improved" student instead of high honors student
Have students lead us in the Creed every week
Don't hesitate to ask folks you are "put out with" to become a member
Get names from the Chamber of Commerce
Promote "Friend of Optimists" to Industrial Areas
Attend "after school programs" to advertise the Oratorical contest
Call them up – Just Ask
Invite to meetings, projects, etc – people who may have a special interest
in a particular project
Emails/newsletters to members publicizing upcoming speaker and events;
encourage the to bring a guest to the next meeting/event
Business cards with the creed and contact info; other flyers to friends
Ask them to come & speak to the club
Student of the Month – give info to parents as well
Ask people with an interest in children
New potential member dinner
Have members speak to the group about their own experiences;
they can invite family members, friends, etc
Picnic for new teachers, or other groups
Identify new businesses in town, and contact them about membership
Lt Governor should summarize and circulate to all clubs a list/summary
of upcoming club events
Pictures with visiting club presidents
Threaten them!!
Get them to come & speak
Just Ask
Give our pamphlets
Corporate membership/corporate sponsorship
501c3 status
Pay dues for teachers, superintendents – get more kids involved
School Board involvement
Tell your story, talk about it
Reach out to retirees – esp educators who are retired
Get involved in the projects
Social events to bring prospective members – get them sponsored
Personal calls to members – re-engage them
2 month "Dog & Pony Show" for new members to bring in new members
Everybody bring a new member to a meeting
ASK
Pick the right people; align objectives

If you are in a management position at your company, let subordinates know joining a civic organization is an expectation; let them know about Optimists as an option

Have clever "gimmicks" at meetings to get the members to attend (joker draw, pot'o'gold, etc)

Have events open to the public (or members bring a guest) – free for a wine and cheese social, car shows, etc (car show at drive-in theater in Jefferson)

Social event at Wollrsheim winery for the whole SWIS District (off subject, but still a good idea – like Jefferson auto show)

Invite to breakfast

Personal Contact (Not email)

Written Note

Hand the creed to a person

Invite "new" person

Invite to an event (like a progressive dinner)

Social thing- more open – fun

Months with five weeks – 5th week have a social event/invite friends

Be a member of the Chamber of Commerce – use them as entry to new folks

Find the folks "aging" out of the JCs

It's not always necessary to attend every meeting/event

"Mentor" new members

Recruit the speaker

Ask to help with a special project rather than asking to simply join

Invite prospective & new members to a dinner to tell them what you do; one-to-one invite; ask 6-7 a time – snacks, drinks, appetizers, etc; have a chili dinner – members make chili, have some entertainment, explain the Optimist organization; pie bakeoff between members – invite fun people, shows camaraderie

Make packets of information to give to members to share with others

Start a website – tell people to check it out, then do a follow-up call

Community fair – service clubs have a booth, churches, all organizations are invited & assigned to food booths

"Riverway" Concerts in the park – Sauk Prairie – will sell food & distribute information

Sell pies at band concerts and give out information

Monitor your attitude & output

Share what projects you do/activities

Optimist Ratio – 1 = 30 – I help 30 Kids

Ask – invite as an opportunity

Welcome new prospects with warmth & someone responsible for guiding

Invite to participate in an event, without meeting attendance

Invite to project rather than to a meeting per se

Ask to help at a project, and later offer membership

Send an event flier to a neighbor/friends

Contact guidance office to find people who want to volunteer someplace

Moving? Here is a club to join or can I give you a phone number of the club president in your new town

Welcome Wagon contact – contact local real estate people – hand out fliers/pamphlet to new home buyers

Insurance agents – same idea – hand out fliers to new customers

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Round Table Session – Question # 4**

Does your club offer the opportunity for kids in your area to participate in the Essay, Oratorical, and/or CCDHH – how do you promote these youth serving projects, what can be done to better promote them, and how can the SWIS District Team help you?

Teachers on board
Advertise to those who would recognize the scholarship opportunity
Start-up Jooi Club
Advertise in the paper
Public speaking classes in middle & high school
Forensics groups
Winnings Increased
Bribe them ☺
Mentors promote it – Big Brothers/Sisters/tutors, etc
Way to set it up so EVERYONE wins
SWIS help – more scholarship \$\$; 2nd/3rd places; Alter the program – change it; help with promotion to teachers/schools
Teacher takes up the program – a class project
Teacher of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Kids contacted area program – Monroe
Sponsor pool party & overnight at hotel with contest the next day; this includes CCDHH – contact them and parents give local club contacts for sponsorship
Partner with specific teachers to include essay/oratorical contests in local school curriculums
Give t-shirts to participants in the contests to help promote it for next year (generic with no date on t-shirt)
Promote with pizza party as in intro, or after the contest
Oratorical: Menomonie Falls, Platteville, Monroe Breakfast, Sauk Prairie, Baraboo, Middleton, Cross Plains; most of the same clubs for the Essay, much smaller number for CCDHH
Monroe-do them all; Madison West – CCDHH; Whitewater – none; Racine – Essay & Oratorical; Lodi- none
School systems – esp public school systems are overwhelmed with mandatory "stuff" over the above; Parochial/Private school associations are fertile grounds for participation
Idea: many parochial, private and home level school organizations partner with public schools for certain subjects/events (e.g., music & sports) – this partnering association can be helpful to promote Optimist programs
Make fun
Guidance counselors as contacts at schools/English teachers – possible assignment
Make kids aware that participation look good on a resume

Have local paper publish the winning essay
Invite all participants to a dinner/breakfast & give their speeches
Have kids/advisor from other schools/clubs talk to local teachers
Have past winners speak about participation in the event
Media advertising from the SWIS District or OI
More public notice of Optimist Clubs
Difficult to get into school districts, use home school associations
Use libraries to get in touch with home "schoolers"
SWIS District wide scholarship fund – each club participates – ask club to
consider annual donation to a SWIS District Scholarship Fund
Forward club scholarships to the SWIS District
Matching contributions for funding
SWIS District could contribute towards more scholarships
(standard club forms – like Tri-Star)
Oratorical: committee that understands the concept; go to schools and
identify somebody on school staff to work with Optimist
volunteer(s) to identify students who would be good
at this & be interested; Optimist volunteer then returns to
school and meets with interested kids & explains the
program; bring past winners to this meeting
If there is a forensics or debate club, this is a good place to start
Target middle and grade school students
Promote with 4-H clubs, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts
Make sure kids know there is a \$\$ scholarship involved
SWIS District – establish a list of people (like JJ) who would be willing
to come out and give advice to their clubs
If club can afford it, hire professional judges
Make it fun for the kids (e.g., pizza & soda)
CCDHH – send money & volunteers to help with contest at State School
for the Hearing Impaired
Provide avenues for getting schools partnering with clubs
Promote contests to after-school programs; get after school program
coordinators involved in the Optimist programs
Send materials to administrators at public and private schools –
email flyer with "pdf" of contest flier
Find teachers to assign to classes
Get superintendent/administrator to publicize contest to teachers
Get teachers involved in the club generally
Topics focused on "Optimism" are better
Approach private schools, YMCAs & Libraries as well
Contact schools- home schooled as well
Why A boy and A girl – why not the top two
Boys – forensics club participants
Boy Scouts or 4-h Members
Speaker from the District
Contact teachers – elementary
Institute scholarship draws more people at the local level
Locally, why 1 boy & 1 girl – top two – at District level 1 boy/1 girl
Have a JOOI Club
Know someone at school – retired teachers for essay
Called student over winter break who had been recommended by teachers
Youth not participating, have them attend

Use student of the month through schools, good way to get the word out
Events in local newspapers
Talk to teachers EARLY – like September (or even August)
Involve the principals/involve forensics advisors
Sponsor stuff at school – they will reciprocate –
try to get them as members
Early Contact