



100 Years of Optimism in Canada

# Optimist International

The Beginning

The 1910's

# One of the First Pictures of an Optimist Club Meeting - March 1913



Article: *“At the banquet of the Optimist club, a society of business men who teach and practice optimism in business”*

Source: The Buffalo Sunday Morning News – March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1913

# OPTIMISTS PLAN TO INCORPORATE

## *Will Become International Body.*

The Optimists' Club is going to become an international organization. The Board of Governors of the Louisville club was instructed at yesterday's meeting to consider the tentative charter providing for incorporation under the laws of Indiana. The following committees were appointed:

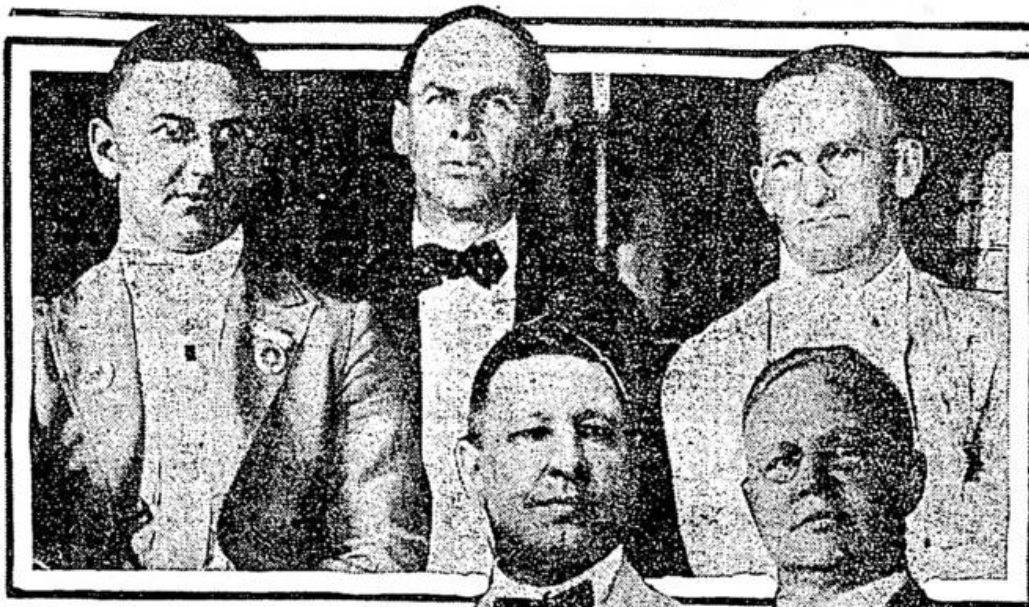
Hotels and Banquet—C. M. Phillips.  
Entertainment—Harry B. Carter.  
Executive—Mr. Phillips, Mr. Carter, F. W. Schoppenhorst, Bert Garstin, M. W. J. Young, President Walter Young and Secretary Sibby Lottman.  
Reception, Automobile, Badge, Prize and Finance Committees will be formed later. Mr. Phillips, Mr. Carter, Dr. Ben L. Bruner and Wil-

## Optimists Plan to Incorporate Will Become an International Body

At a Louisville Optimist Club Board of Directors meeting in Louisville in April 1919, a decision was made to become an international organization and charter clubs outside of the United States



## First Officers of International Optimist Club



Upper, Left to Right—E. H. Bowman, first vice president; W. H. Harrison, president, and E. L. Monser, second vice president.  
Lower, Left to Right—William Snyder, treasurer, and Harry S. Hill, secretary.

It is the International Optimists' Club now.

Optimism, the thing that makes the world go round, and makes the people in the world go round with it, and work and help and be cheerful while doing it, is too good a thing to keep at home.

At the first convention, held in The Tyler this week, plans were laid to organize clubs of optimism all over the world. Already one has been formed in Sweden, and the clubs in New York are planning to go over the line into Canada at once and gain new membership.

Optimists from clubs all over the country visited Louisville's convention and, in addition to the formal work of organizing, adopting a constitution and laying permanent plans, there was time for sightseeing, handshaking and banquet speech-making. St. Louis will entertain the convention next year.



LABOR SOLIDLY  
BEHIND LEAGUE

U. S. RAIL BUREAU  
IS GIVEN PRAISE

## First Officers of International Optimist Club

- In June 1919, Optimist members from across US attended 1st Optimist Convention at The Tyler Hotel in Louisville KY
- International Club Officers were elected, plans were developed to expand internationally
- Article: *"...Optimism, the thing that makes the world go round, and makes the people in the world go round with it, and work and help and be cheerful while doing it. It is too good a thing to keep at home."*



Picture of The Tyler Hotel

# Optimism Expanding into Canada

## The 1920's





## William (Bill) M. Skilling

### “The Father of Canadian Optimism”

- Born in Ontario on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1889
- 1915 – obtained a degree from University of Toronto
- Joined Canadian Army as a Forward Observation Officer in France in WW1
- 1917 - returned to Canada after being injured
- 1923 – responded to an ad in Toronto Globe “*to help organize Optimist Clubs in Canada.*” Following the war, he felt that “*...veterans and others needed Optimism as they attempted to rebuild their lives...*”
- November 1923 - became 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Field Director of Optimist International
- January 1924 - organized and chartered the first Optimist club outside of the US – The Optimist Club of Toronto
- June 1924 - helped to charter the 2<sup>nd</sup> club in Canada – the Optimist Club of Hamilton



# Charter Presentation Program



WM. M. SKILLING  
"Optimist International" Field Director for  
Canada and his first club

## First Canadian Club Receives Charter

Toronto Club Honored by International  
President Chilton on Charter Night

The first Canadian Optimist Club was enthusiastically started on its way Tuesday night, February 26th, with an elaborate banquet at the Prince George Hotel, Toronto.

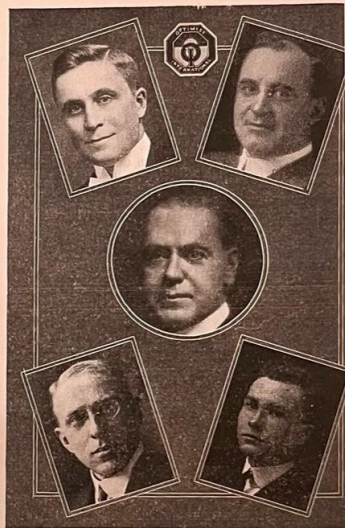
Members and guests sat down to supper at seven p.m. in the Empire room, gaily decorated for the occasion by a committee headed by optimist Ivore Brock.

At the head table sat International President Jim Chilton, Dr. Louis Gottlieb, secretary of the Buffalo Optimist Club; President Ben C. Stephenson of the Toronto Club, together with Mr. R. A. Stapells, president of the Board of Trade; Comptroller Cameron, representing the city of Toronto in the absence of the Mayor, through illness; Optimist Bill Skilling, Canadian Field Director; W. J. Bolus, president of the Kiwanis Club; Governor Ivore Brock, acting as toastmaster. Other representatives of the Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs were in the audience.

After supper community singing of optimist songs composed by members of the Toronto Club, was put over in snappy style by Optimist Fred Reid.

Following this Comptroller Cameron, in a speech bristling with wit and optimism, welcomed the club on behalf of the city. Then came a solo by Miss Ethel Peake. Mr. R. A. Stapells, on being called upon, delivered, on behalf of the Board of Trade, a very carefully thought out speech on the aims of the service clubs in general and the opportunity that was before the Optimist Club of Toronto.

Miss Rachelle Copeland, outstanding violinist at this



HUSSELL A. WILLIAMS, D.D.S. Vice-President  
CYRIL E. DYSON, B. Vice-President  
BENJAMIN G. STEPHENSON, M.D. President  
WILLIAM A. HINES Vice-President  
ALLAN GRIFFIN Vice-President

point delighted the company with several selections. Enthusiasm reached its height when Toastmaster Ivore Brock, who had been keeping the gathering in a good humor all evening, rose to introduce International President Jim Chilton. President Chilton, on rising, replied, received a great reception. Right from the start he carried his hearers with him, as he unfolded in masterly fashion the object for which the Optimist Club stands and its accomplishments. His remarks made optimism a very real thing to his hearers, who applauded frequently. He spoke of the boys' work of our sister clubs, and finished his great address by installing their ladies. The oath of office was administered with solemn dignity, and repeated by the officers in unison with International President Chilton. The charter was then presented formally to President Ben C. Stephenson, who accepted it, in behalf of the club, in an earnest short speech.

President Bolus of the Kiwanis Club then conveyed to the club greetings from the other service clubs.



J. ALFRED YORSTON Secretary  
REV. GORDON GAULD, M. S. Chaplain  
FREDERICK H. REID Musical Director  
WILLIAM GRAY Treasurer  
CHARLES H. KERR Sergeant-at-Arms

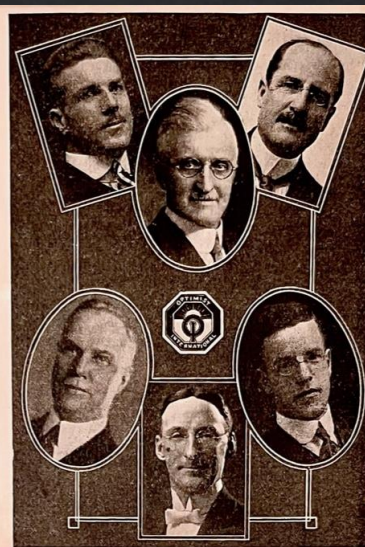
Another musical number was rendered by Riley Hallman, then followed a fighting optimist address by Canadian Field Director William Skilling. "Bill" was in fine form, making every word count, and drove home the meaning of optimism, proving beyond a doubt that the new Canadian Field Director is the right man to further the International Club's interest in Canada. He worked exceptionally hard in the formation of the first Canadian Club, and the reception he received must have inspired him in the great work he is starting out to do.

Telegrams of congratulation were read from the Optimist Clubs at Cincinnati, Toledo, Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Columbus, Jay Goodrich, Field Secretary, Tom Elliott, Executive Secretary, and Washington, D. C. The sentiments expressed by the Washington Club created the greatest of enthusiasm, being to the effect that "one more tie now binds the English speaking peoples of the world."

The enjoyable evening was closed by an hour of dancing.

Join the Double-Up Club.  
Double the Number of Clubs and Multiply the Membership by Two.

MEET ME AT MILWAUKEE JUNE 12-13-14



W. LESLIE DOBBIN, A.A.S. Ambrose W. Holtby  
HARRY W. WILLIAMS  
IVORE E. BROCK  
EDGAR S. VANDEVENTER

Charter Presentation Program Optimist Club  
of Toronto February 26

Toastmaster \_\_\_\_\_ Ivore E. Brock  
Invocation \_\_\_\_\_ Rev. Gordon Gauld  
Our King and Country.  
Community Singing.  
Address of Welcome \_\_\_\_\_ W. H. Hiltz  
Mayor of Toronto.  
Soprano Solo \_\_\_\_\_ Miss Ethel Peake  
Greetings from the Board of Trade \_\_\_\_\_ R. A. Stapells  
President.  
Violin Solo \_\_\_\_\_ Miss Rachelle Copeland  
Presentation of Charter \_\_\_\_\_ James W. Chilton  
President, Optimist International.  
Acceptance of Charter \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Benjamin G. Stephenson  
President, Toronto Club.  
Tenor Solo \_\_\_\_\_ Riley Hallman  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ William M. Skilling  
Field Director for Canada, Optimist International.  
Miss Eva Goodman, Accompanist.  
Glen Island Orchestra.

# First Canadian Club Receives Charter Optimist Club of Toronto

- Article: "The first Canadian Optimist club was enthusiastically started on its way Tuesday night, February 26<sup>th</sup> ... at an elaborate banquet at the Prince George Hotel, Toronto."
- After dinner, members in attendance enjoyed listening to and "...singing ... optimist songs composed by members of the Toronto club."
- Optimist International President Jim Chilton "...received a great reception..." when speaking about the accomplishments of the club.
- The charter was formally presented by Jim Chilton to Ben Stephenson, the club's 1<sup>st</sup> President during the formal portion of the evening.

Article in "The Optimist" Magazine  
regarding the Charter Presentation  
Celebration banquet on February 26,  
1924

Source: "The Optimist" Magazine, March 1924



# Chartering of the Second Optimist Club in Canada

## Optimist Club of Hamilton

- Article: *"The Optimist Club of Hamilton officially came into being on Monday, June 9<sup>th</sup> when about one hundred diners sat down to the banquet held in the ballroom of the Royal Connaught Hotel to celebrate the presentation of the club's charter by Jay Goodrich."*
- In his speech, Optimist Field Director Skilling, *"...emphasized co-operation (between service clubs) as one of the chief planks of OPTIMISTIM. Co-operation must and will replace competition in business and elsewhere ...co-operation results from a proper understanding of each other..."*
- Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Lion's Club, and Kinsmen's Club attended the ceremonies and *"... spoke feelingly with regard to the club's place and prospects in Hamilton."*

Source: "The Optimist" Magazine, September 1924

### Officers of the Optimist Club of Hamilton, Canada



Top Row—Left to Right: William P. Zick, Sergeant at Arms; Chas. Kidner, Secretary; Russell W. Treleven, President; Luther M. Budd, Vice-President; Raymond W. Doering, Governor. Second Row—Left to Right: Roy McInosh, Governor; Dr. John H. Scott, Governor; Sidney T. Livingston, Treasurer; Dr. Richard E. Guyatt, Governor; Norman J. White, Governor. Bottom—Left to Right: Dr. John D. Brown, Vice-President; Norman C. Marshall, 1st Secretary, (now transferred to Little Rock, Arkansas Club.)

### Chartering of the Second Optimist Club in Canada, Hamilton, Ontario

The OPTIMIST CLUB OF HAMILTON officially came into being on Monday, June ninth, when about one hundred diners sat down to the banquet held in the ballroom of the Royal Connaught Hotel, to celebrate the presentation of the club's charter by Jay Goodrich.

One of the outstanding features of the occasion was the fine spirit of good-will and co-operation exemplified by the city administration, the other civic bodies of Hamilton, and the OPTIMIST CLUB OF TORONTO. With the assistance of the guests a thoroughly enjoyable program, leavened with just the right amount of seriousness, was provided.

Mayor Jutten officially welcomed the new organization, "the baby among Hamilton's service clubs," as he called it, and said that he, as well as the other citizens of Hamilton, were expecting great things from the OPTIMISTS. In his words to come, His Worship believed, the citizens would look to the founders of the OPTIMIST CLUB as men with age and vision to help make Hamilton a better place to live in.

N. J. Westaway, president of the Chamber of Commerce,

and past-president of the Rotary Club; Peter Gordon, president of the Club; Thos. Holmes, president Kiwanis Club; Harry Walker, president of the Lion's Club, and Roy Smye, speaking for the president of the Kinsmen's Club, all spoke feelingly with regard to the club's place and prospects in Hamilton. Dr. Ben Stephenson, president of the Optimist Club of Toronto, a large representation from which was present, sounded the keynote of Optimism. He said: "The whole idea of Optimism is summed up in that declaration, 'The Magna Charta of Optimism is the Sermon on the Mount. Every person joining this club should know its creed off by heart, should dream it, live it, sleep it, should have it with him every 24 hours of every day consciously and subconsciously.'"

District Field Director W. M. Skilling in calling upon Mr. Goodrich to present the charter, spoke of the co-operation he had received in forming the club. He emphasized co-operation as one of the chief planks of OPTIMISM. Co-operation must and will replace competition in business and elsewhere. Competition is born of fear, co-operation results from a proper understanding of each other and of each other's work in life. He stressed the desirability of and the excellent prospects for the greatest degree of co-operation among the service clubs of Hamilton. THE OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL existed to promote co-operation among the many individual clubs within its bounds.



# Optimist Club Chartered in Brantford, Ontario

*“Organized optimism will make its initial appearance in Brantford ... when 40 Optimists, members of the Optimist clubs of Toronto and Hamilton, together with a group of Brantford business men interested in the establishment of a branch of Optimist International in this city, will join a banquet at Victoria Hall... In addition to community service and patriotic endeavor, one of the main objectives of the organization ... is to foster, practice, and organize optimism.”*

Source: *The Brantford Expositor*, Brantford, Ontario, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1924

## OPTIMIST CLUB.

“Organized optimism” will make its initial appearance in Brantford on Monday evening next when about 40 Optimists, members of the Optimist clubs of Toronto and Hamilton, together with a group of Brantford business men interested in the establishment of a branch of Optimist International in this city, will join in a banquet at Victoria hall. In addition to community service and patriotic endeavor, one of the main objectives of the organization, according to the program mapped out by the International body, is to foster, practise and organize optimism. The speakers will include Dr. Benjamin G. Stephenson and William A. Hines of Toronto; Russell W. Treleaven, Rev. Richard E. Zimmerman and William M. Brandon of Hamilton, and Capt. W. G. Martin of Brantford.

## Philadelphia, Pa., and Newark, N. J., Soon to Have Clubs

### CLAYTON, MO., CHARTERED

#### NEWARK, N. J.

A most enthusiastic gathering of Optimists and prospective Optimists met at the Newark Athletic Club, Wednesday, February 11th. The city slogan, "NEWARK KNOWS HOW," was made the war cry of the new organization. Their message to International is, "Watch Us Grow!" New Jersey will give our great Brotherhood many strong clubs. Newark is to set the pace. Good luck to the first club in New Jersey!

#### CLUBS FORMING.

Write your friends in these cities to join. Report their names to the Field Secretary.

Duluth, Minn.  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.  
Ottawa, Canada.  
Sarnia, Canada.  
Brampton, Canada.  
Brantford, Canada.  
Boerne, Texas.  
Austin, Texas.  
Danville, Ill.  
Moline, Ill.  
Henderson, Ky.  
Georgetown, Ky.  
Bowling Green, Ky.  
Newark, N. J.  
Philadelphia, Pa.  
Maplewood, Mo.  
Waco, Texas.  
Hannibal, Mo.  
Superior, Minn.  
Virginia, Minn.  
St. Cloud, Minn.  
Lancaster, Texas.  
Jackson, Miss.  
Macon, Ga.  
Americus, Ga.

by halves. Austin should lead the state. Here's hoping for the best club in the biggest state in the Union.

#### MAPLEWOOD, MO.

Field Director Slater is completing a fine club in this thriving suburb of St. Louis.

#### OPTIMIST PRESIDENTS.

If your Club is to sponsor a new club before Convention, it should be undertaken without delay. Appoint an Extension Committee at your next meeting. Select your town, and send to the Extension Department for a Dispensation and charter roll with instructions. You can if you will.

Optimistically,

JAY C. GOODRICH,  
Field Secretary.

#### PHILADELPHIA, PA.

The first organization luncheon in the City of Brotherly Love was held at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel, Friday, February 13th. Friday, the 13th, is OPTIMISM'S lucky day. It certainly seemed so on this occasion. Philadelphia starts off in great good spirits. District Field Director Earl Godwin is in charge and is planning a great and effective Service Club for this city.

#### CLAYTON, MO.

District Governor Harlington Wood chartered the fourth new club for his district at Clayton, Mo., January 30th. Guy L. Pollard, President, is a worthy leader of this youngest member of the Optimist Family. Clayton is especially interested in Boys' Work, and already has laid plans for practical endeavor in this direction.

#### CANADA.

Brampton and Brantford are to be the next clubs in Canada. Canadian Field Director Skilling is building carefully and planning for charter deliveries in the near future.

#### FROM THE FAR NORTHWEST.

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, reports through Field Director Wood, that organization is going forward, and he is planning to give us other clubs in this territory before Convention time.

#### AUSTIN, TEXAS.

District Field Director Ready reports helpful co-operation from San Antonio in building the Optimist Club of Austin. Texas Optimists never do things

#### NEW CLUBS.

Omaha, Neb.  
Galveston, Texas.  
Wichita Falls, Texas.  
Hollywood, Calif.  
Wilmington, Calif.  
Oak Park, Ill.  
Hamilton, Canada.  
Texas City, Tex.  
San Pedro, Calif.  
Aurora, Ill.  
LaSalle-Peru, Ill.  
Girard, Pa.  
San Jose, Calif.  
Topeka, Kan.  
Minneapolis, Minn.  
St. Paul, Minn.  
Galesburg, Ill.  
Bay Cities, Calif.  
Alameda, Calif.  
Clayton, Mo.

# Future Expansion of Optimist Clubs in US and Canada

- Article in the February 1925 edition of "The Optimist" Magazine outlining current and future plans to organize clubs across the US and Canada, including in Brampton (ON), Brantford (ON), and Edmonton (AB).

Source: "The Optimist" Magazine, February 1925



# Article: “Canadian Soil Invaded by International President Sherman Rogers”

- Article: “*His first visit to Canada ... 400 Business Men Greet (President Sherman Rogers) ... and remain for three hours to hear his stirring message*”
- “*Ninety-five percent of mankind wants to be square... Faith in fellowman is the gyroscope of civilization...*”

Source: “The Optimist” Magazine, March 1925

## Canadian Soil Invaded by International President Sherman Rogers

His First Visit to Canada Made Under the “Optimist” Banner—400 Business Men Greet Him and Remain for Three Hours to Hear His Stirring Message—Toronto Club the Hosts

“There are three sides to every question—yours, the other fellow’s, and the right side.”

“Ninety-five per cent of mankind wants to be square.” “Faith in fellowman is the gyroscope of civilization.”

To those OPTIMISTS who have had the privilege of hearing International President Sherman Rogers the above quotations will sound very familiar. No one but President Sherman could enunciate such sentiments and clothe them in such direct and pithy language.

Our International President told Toronto OPTIMISTS on February 17 that he had made 852 speeches, but this was his first in Canada. It won’t be his last. We are going to make him earn his title of International President.

His address created widespread interest and enthusiasm and already we understand that President Rogers has been invited to speak at the Canadian Club, one of the most representative organizations of the city, with a membership of 2,000.

Toronto OPTIMISTS, 65 strong, mustered a meeting of nearly four hundred to hear President Sherman on February 17. Representatives of

all the service clubs in the city—Rotary, Kiwanis, Gyro and Board of Trade—were present, as well as several members from the Hamilton and Brampton OPTIMIST Clubs.

The meeting was at noon and the speaker held his audience of busy men until nearly 3:00 o’clock, but not a man left before the end of the address.

As a result of the visit of our International President, organized “OPTIMISM” and the local clubs have received a marvelous impetus. No one who heard the thrilling personal story can soon forget it, and Toronto OPTIMISTS have received many expressions of appreciation from visitors who wished to thank us for the privilege of hearing the address.

In addition to the large noon meeting the Annual At Home was held in the evening. Unfortunately President Rogers was unable to stay for this event. We missed him, but recognize the fact that he is a busy man and train connections were such that it was necessary for him to leave in the early evening. Chairman Alex Merrill and his At Home Committee deserve unlimited praise for the success of the first Annual

At Home. Two hundred guests had a most delightful evening’s entertainment.

February 24 was election day and the new President of the Toronto Club is William A. (Bill) Hines. He was elected unanimously. The other officers elected are as follows:

Vice-President, Civic Welfare—Les Dobbin.

Vice-President, Boys’ Work—Wallis Fisher.

Vice-President, Membership—Alex. Merrill.

Vice-President, Publicity and Extension—Joe Short.

Secretary—Foster Chappell.

Treasurer—William Gray.

Chaplain—Gordon Gauld.

Sergeant-at-Arms—Art Grant.

Musical Director—Fred Reid.

Chairman of Speakers’ Committee—Gordon Jackson.

Board of Governors—Amber Holtby, Ed. Vandewater, Frank Oliver, Roy Oliphant, Jas. McIver, Geo. Dane.

Under the guidance of this excellent set of officers Toronto Club expects to double its membership during the next year.

C. LEAR WHITE.  
Local Editor.

### The Waiter

I met him in a college town, a youngster with a grin,  
And he was sweeping up the floor when I was ushered in.

When I had registered my name, he put aside his broom

To grab my suitcase from the floor and show me to my room.

That night at dinner I beheld that youngster at my side,  
“We’ve pork and lamb,” said he to me, “potatoes, baked or fried.”

When I had made my choice of food, he gayly went away  
And when he next appeared he had my dinner on a tray.

“So you’re a waiter, too?” said I. He chuckled soft and low:

“Three times a day it is my job the dishes round to throw.

I’m bellhop in the afternoons, between times I’m the clerk,

But I can get my lessons when I’ve finished up my work.

I’m on my way through college, and I’m paying for it here,

Some day I’ll chuck this job and be a civil engineer;  
I want an education, and the only way I had

Was to come and be a waiter, for I haven’t any dad.”

I don’t know how to say it, but some day I know I’ll hear,

If I still am with the living, of a civil engineer  
Who has earned his way to glory, and I’ll smile at his renown

And say: “There stands the waiter of that little college town.”

(Copyright, 1922, by Edgar A. Guest.)



## Covington, Ky. and Brampton, Ont. Welcomed By the Field Department

### EDMONTON, ALBERTA, NEARING CHARTER

The story of the formation of the Edmonton, Alberta, club makes interesting reading. Beginning with the aid of two real Optimists to Toronto and their first glimpse of organized OPTIMISM, Edmonton, under the leadership of Mr. Lloyd E. Wood, has gone steadily forward until they now have twenty members enrolled headquarters. Edmonton will be the "Daddy" of many clubs in the Canadian Northwest.

#### COVINGTON, KY.

Covington, Ky., received its charter at the hands of District Governor Stith, April 21st. They had a charter membership of fifty-nine.

Senator Richard Ernst has been enrolled as an honorary member. The Senator is an Optimist of long standing, being a member of a club bearing that name which was organized in Cincinnati years ago, before the formation of the club which now holds membership in International. We are mighty proud to have Senator Ernst connected with OPTIMISM.

#### NEWPORT, KY.

District Field Director Trimble, who is responsible for the Covington Club, deserves the highest recognition of International. He completed the active club at Henderson, and now presents us with Covington, and reports twenty members signed at Newport. This means another charter within the next two weeks. CONGRATULATIONS, TRIMBLE!

#### CANADIAN OPTIMIST WEEK

Plans for an inspirational week for the Dominion had been under way for months. Canadian District Field Director Skilling had each day filled to the limit. Hamilton, Monday noon; Kitchener, Booster meeting for a new club, Monday night; Toronto, Club Rally, Tuesday noon; Brampton, new club, Tuesday night; Charter Night Banquet,

ampton, Wednesday evening; Kitchener, new member campaign, Thursday noon.

The Brampton Charter Night was a most enthusiastic success. Toronto and Hamilton were represented by large delegations. Rousing singing, thrilling stunts and unusual music, together with a banquet of excellence, made a great birthday for the baby Canadian Club. The Canadian Optimist Week was a success, and the results will show the use of such inspirational work.

#### PHILADELPHIA

Word from the City of Brotherly Love still announces their determination to break all records. They have one hundred and twenty-three enrolled. Three cheers and a tiger for Philadelphia and District Director Earl Godwin.

#### DULUTH, MINN.

Sixty-two members are drilling now to put over a club of one hundred in Duluth by May 15th. All credit to Roy and the loyal Duluthians.

A long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether will bring us to a glorious end of a strenuous year.

We have twelve hundred charter members for the year. We'll make it fifteen hundred if hard work can do it.

Optimistically,

JAY C. GOODRICH,

Filed Secretary.

#### NEW CLUBS

Omaha, Nebr.  
Galveston, Texas.  
Wichita Falls, Texas.  
Wilmington, Calif.  
Hollywood, Calif.  
Oak Park, Ill.  
Hamilton, Canada.  
Texas City, Texas.  
San Pedro, Calif.  
Aurora, Ill.  
Girard, Pa.  
San Jose, Calif.  
Topeka, Kans.  
Minneapolis, Minn.  
St. Paul, Minn.  
Galesburg, Ill.  
Bay Cities, Calif.  
Alameda, Calif.  
Clayton, Mo.  
Wellston, Mo.  
Henderson, Ky.  
Brampton, Canada.  
Burbank, Calif.  
Covington, Ky.

# "Edmonton, Alberta Nearing Charter"

- Article: *"The story of the formation of the Edmonton, Alberta club makes interesting reading ... under the leadership of Mr. Lloyd E. Wood (the club) ... has gone steadily forward until they now have twenty members enrolled ... Edmonton will be the 'Daddy' of many clubs in the Canadian Northwest."*

Source: "The Optimist" Magazine, May 1925



# OPTIMIST CLUB FORMED HERE

**Latest Service Organization  
is Known as "The Friend  
of the Boy."**

The Optimist Club is Edmonton's latest service club, "the friend of the boy." It will aim to remove all causes for delinquency and undertake a constructive work in behalf of future citizens. A branch of Optimist International, the second club in Canada, although since 1911 they have been organized in most cities of the continent, this one had its inception at a general meeting yesterday organization was undertaken and committees placed in charge to report at the first regular meeting a fortnight hence. Following the establishment here of Rotary, Kiwanis and Gyro, this makes the fourth luncheon club in the city.

His honor Judge Taylor of the District Court was the speaker at the first luncheon held yesterday in the Hudsonia. Taking as his subject the delinquent boy, his honor said he knew of other organizations that were doing something for the other boys and helping along the boy problem very much, doing excellent work, but this was the only one specially helping the boy who has made a slip.

## **A Surprise**

"It is surprising that not more has been done for the first offender, for a boy reclaimed is an asset, not a liability. As it costs the country \$2,800 for every conviction, there is an economical reason also for such work."

# Optimist Club formed in Edmonton

Chartered on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1925

- Club will be known as "The Friend of the Boy"
- The club, "...will aim to remove all causes for delinquency and undertake a constructive work in behalf of future citizens."
- At the first luncheon of the club Judge Taylor of the District Court was the guest speaker and he stated, "...It is surprising that not more has been done for the first offender, for a boy reclaimed is an asset, not a liability. As it costs the country \$2,800 for every conviction, there is an economical reason also for such work."

Source: *Edmonton Journal Newspaper*, page 5, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1925

**100 Years of Optimism**  
**Expanding into Canada**  
The 1930's



# 1<sup>st</sup> International Convention Toronto, Canada

- In 1934, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Optimist International Convention was held in Canada at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto
- 600+ members and their families attended  
*“...one of the finest conventions in the first 20 years of Optimist International.”*
- Henry Schaffert from Washington DC elected as International President. In his acceptance speech he stated he is,  
*“...committed to helping spread Optimism throughout Canada.”*



Picture of Royal York Hotel in Toronto

Source: “Bringing Out the Best – First Century of Optimist International”, published by Optimist International in 2019

Pictures: <https://www.vintageinn.ca/tag/history-of-the-royal-york-hotel-toronto/>



# William J “Bill” Tamblyn

1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Optimist International President  
Elected in 1937

- Was a principal of Jarvis Street Auxiliary School when the Optimist Club of Ontario sponsored the schools harmonica band
- 1925 - joined the Toronto Optimist Club after he spoke out about vocational training for boys at a club meeting
- Early 1930's – organized a program where club members would spend 1 hour each week mentoring a boy
- 1931 – invited to speak at an Optimist International Convention about the need to support boys – “...*there is no such thing as a ‘bad’ boy...*” Rather, “...*the problem of delinquency...*” caused by a lack of training and leadership development opportunities
- 1937 – elected as 1937/38 President of Optimist International at an convention in Fort Worth, Texas



# BUSINESSMEN FORM CALGARY OPTIMIST CLUB

Will Prevent Youths  
From Developing  
Criminal Habits

## 25 MEMBERS

About 25 Calgary business and professional men met at luncheon at the Palliser Hotel yesterday to perfect plans for forming the Optimist Club of Calgary, which will become a part of the Optimist International organization when establishment of the local club is complete.

Helping under-privileged boys to become useful citizens is the prime objective of the Optimist International organization declared Ronald D. White, barrister of Edmonton, who is a member of the Edmonton Optimist Club, and who is assisting in organizing the club in Calgary.

### Boys Need Fair Chance

"When we consider that crime costs Canada and the United States billions of dollars a year," he said,

# BUSINESSMEN FORM CALGARY OPTIMIST CLUB

*"About 25 Calgary businesses and professional men met at a luncheon at the Palliser Hotel yesterday to perfect plans for forming the Optimist Club of Calgary...helping underprivileged boys to become useful citizens is the primary objective..."*

The club was chartered in May 1938 with the help of the Edmonton Optimist Club

Source: The Calgary Herald – February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1938



# Optimist Club Formed in Montreal

- 1938 - *“Forty-five Montreal business and professional men met at the Berkely Hotel last night to perfect plans for the forming of the Optimist Club of Montreal.”*
- During the meeting, Paul Wickham, first club president stated, *“...Optimist International has become famous throughout North America because of its devotion to high ideals...Not only do Optimist Clubs take part in every worthwhile civic activity, but they also have earned distinction for their wholehearted and successful efforts to aid needy boys.”*

Source: *The Montreal Gazette*, page 19, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1938

## 45 MEN ORGANIZED IN OPTIMIST CLUB

Local Unit of International  
to Be Established—Paul  
Wickham President

Forty-five Montreal business and professional men met at the Berkeley Hotel last night to perfect plans for the forming of the Optimist Club of Montreal, which will become a part of the Optimist International organization when establishment of the local club is complete. The International has headquarters at St. Louis, Mo.; W. J. Tamblyn, Toronto, is International president.

Paul Wickham, Notary Public, was elected president of the club, and Henry Cavill was chosen as secretary.

“Optimist International has become famous throughout North America because of its devotion to high ideals,” Wickham told the members. “Not only do Optimist Clubs take part in every worthwhile civic activity, but they also have earned distinction for their wholehearted and successful efforts to aid needy boys.”

**100 Years of Optimism**  
**Expanding into Canada**  
The 1950's



# Optimist Convention in City To Attract 1,500 Delegates

More than 1,500 delegates, some from as far away as Hawaii, are awaited here during the next few days to participate in the 37th annual convention of Optimist International in the Mount Royal Hotel. The Optimist Club of Montreal and the Club Optimiste Laurentien are host clubs for the convention, being held in Canada for the second time.

Heading the visitors will be the president of Optimist International, Maurice Perkins, of Louisville, Ky. Mr. Perkins will arrive in Montreal Thursday afternoon and will be a guest of the St. Jean Baptiste Society on the reviewing stand for the parade Friday in tribute to French Canada's patron saint.

The convention proper gets under way next Tuesday evening with a reception in the convention hotel. A civic welcome will be tendered the delegates at the business session Wednesday morning, while the preliminaries of the oratorical contest will be staged Wednesday afternoon. A feature of the Wednesday evening session will be an address by Arthur H. (Red) Motley, president of Parade Publication, Inc., New York.

Claude S. Richardson, M.P., representing Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, will address the general session Thursday morning prior to the memorial service to be conducted by the immediate past

the Club Laurentien, as associate chairman.



Picture of Mount Royal Hotel in Montreal

## Optimist Convention in Montreal Attracts 1,500 Members 2<sup>nd</sup> Convention Held in Canada

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Optimist International Convention held June 29, 1955 in Montreal at Sheraton Mount Royal Hotel
- Countries represented at convention included US, Canada, Cuba, and Mexico
- Members of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets presented the colors of the Optimist nations
- Dr. Donald J. Twiss from Brantford (ON) elected as International President. During acceptance speech he stated, “...*the future of (Optimism) is as bright as the brightest star in the universe...*”

Source: Article from The Gazette – June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1955

Picture: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les\\_Cours\\_Mont-Royal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Cours_Mont-Royal)



Optimist members attending the International Convention in Montreal Convention on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1955 demand  
*“...the death penalty for anyone convicted of selling narcotics to minors ... at the present rate of increase in juvenile crime, by 1960 there will be nearly 1.5 Million boys and girls getting into trouble with the law each year.”*

Source: The Gazette – July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1955

Equal to Murder

## Death Penalty Asked For Sale Of Narcotics

An international service organization has demanded the death penalty for anyone convicted of selling narcotics to minors.

Optimists international — with 1,100 member clubs in the United States, Canada, Hawaii, Alaska, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba—wound up its 37th annual convention here Saturday with a resolution that blamed the use of narcotics as a “contributing factor in the increase of crime among youth.”

The 1,500 delegates found the juvenile delinquency increase hitting hardest in the 10-17 year age group, the very group the service organization tries to help.

In one of two resolutions concerning juvenile delinquency, the Optimists noted that “at the present rate of increase in juvenile crime, by 1960 there will be nearly 1,500,000 boys and girls getting into trouble with the law each year.”

The first resolution urged clubs to “redouble their efforts during the next five years to prevent delinquency from reaching the estimated figures, and to offer their services to juvenile courts and other youth agencies in this juvenile delinquency prevention

convention had demanded stronger penalties for narcotics' sale, the Optimists re-affirmed their view that the “crime of selling narcotics to youth equals in magnitude the crimes of murder and kidnapping.”

In a two-pronged resolution, the group told its member clubs to urge that all state, federal and provincial governments pass laws:

1. Making the first conviction of illegal sale of narcotics to an adult punishable by a minimum fine of \$5,000 and five years in prison, “with no time off for good behavior or parole,” and

2. Making the “first conviction of illegal sale of narcotics to a person legally known as a minor, or the second conviction of an illegal sale to an adult, punishable by death.”

## Record 900 Enrol at U of M Summer School

More than 900 students, a record high, have enrolled in summer



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The 1960's

# Top Youths Honored

About nine years ago, in the hills of Kentucky, dozens of people flocked through a chilling winter storm to attend a variety show put on by young people.

A man, known only as Yarborough, was very impressed with the turn-out, if not the show, and decided the U.S. should have a youth appreciation week.

In 1957, a pilot project was conducted involving seven Optimist clubs from the U.S. and Canada. One of those clubs was the Optimist Club of Calgary.

Today, a special week, Nov. 14-20, has been set aside for acknowledgement of outstanding endeavors by youths. About 2,500 Optimist clubs in North America will participate.

The two Calgary clubs will sponsor a dinner for 34 deserving youths, none of them older than 20, who have displayed outstanding leadership and superlative achievements in the fields of education, athletics and culture.

In February, 1962, the first step was made to give Youth Appreciation Week government approval in Canada.

A private member to the House of Commons took a bill to the floor, asking for a national youth appreciation week. While being identified as a private member's bill, the project was actually the idea of the Calgary Optimists.

The club had asked Art Smith (PC - Calgary South), now a city alderman, to present the bill. Mr. Smith remarked at the time of presentation to the House, that "a number of service organizations in the country have requested that such a bill be introduced to give us an opportunity to set aside a week in which the positive and good qualities of the vast majority of our citizens can be recognized."

Government approval was given. In the U.S., where the plan originated, government sanction still has not placed the project under the country's statutes.

A total of 11 Optimist clubs in Alberta will recognize boys and girls who have made outstanding contributions to the community although the Optimist slogan is, "Friend of the Boy."

Tom Steele, spokesman for the Optimist Club of Calgary, said, "There are more youths that are good people and they are doing things that are good. We don't have the opportunity to bring their achievements to light but it is very easy to find the name of a delinquent on a police file or listed under some discrediting statistic."

Selection of youths for awards during Youth Ap-

preciation Week starts with the organization or school to which a youth belongs. They in turn are recommended as outstanding youths to Optimist clubs. The 34 youths to receive awards this year will attend a special banquet Tuesday during which time individual accomplishments will be announced. Several of the youths are Herald carrier boys in addition to being members of youth clubs.

## Men Of Science



JOSEPH JACQUARD

Another inventor who did much to launch the Western world of Europe and North America into the

February 1962 – private members bill introduced in House of Commons

*"...asking for a national Youth Appreciation Week...while being identified as a private members bill, the project was actually the idea of the Calgary Optimists."*

November 11<sup>th</sup> - two Optimist Clubs in Calgary host a youth appreciation dinner for 34 deserving youths under 20 for *"achievements in the field of education, athletics, and culture."*

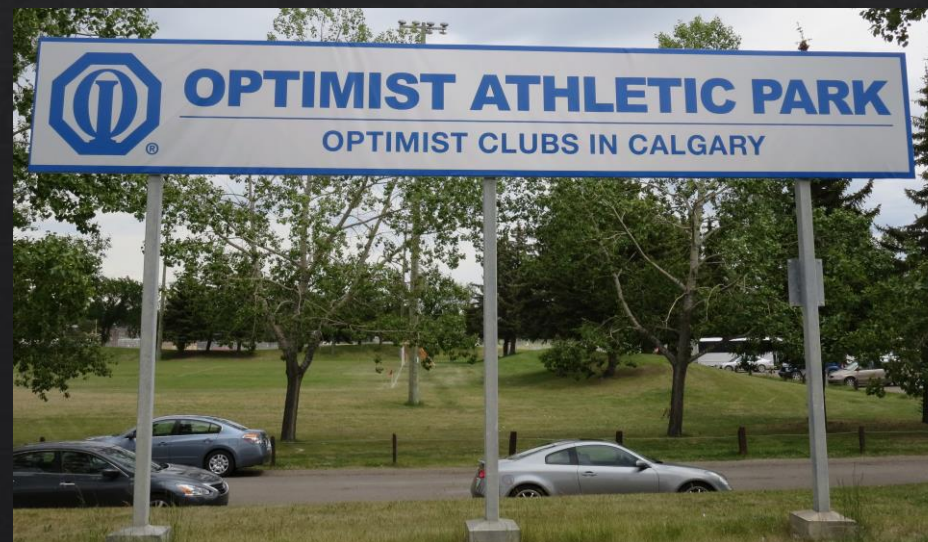
Source: The Calgary Herald – November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1966



**100 Years of Optimism**  
**Expanding into Canada**  
The 1970's

# CONSTRUCTION OF OPTIMIST ATHLETIC PARK IN CALCARY

On June 23, 1976, after years of fundraising, the Optimist Clubs in Calgary along with Parks and Recreation constructed and finally opened the Optimist Athletic Park in the southwest corner of the city. There are four baseball diamonds, two soccer fields, and two ice hockey rinks in the complex.





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**Expanding into Canada**  
The 1980's

# Women Allowed to Join Optimist Clubs

- June 1987 – Weeks before the 1987 Optimist International Convention in Montreal, the organization finally abandoned the ruling that only men could join an Optimist Club after a US Supreme Court ruling forced the Rotary Club organization to allow women to join.
- Article: *“...The decision to strike down the men-only provision in the club’s constitution followed the United States Supreme Courts decision May 4<sup>th</sup> ordering Rotary International, another service organization, to accept applications from women.”*
- Optimist International President Lester Craft stated, *“... the decision will attract new members and expand the organization’s community services.”*

Source: *The Gazette*, Montreal, page 3, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1987

## Wet weather doesn't deter Optimists



Expos mascot Youppi takes Optimistic view of proceedings yesterday as service-club delegates parade near convention centre.

## Annual convention attracts 6,000 of them to Montreal

By MELANIE CLULOW  
of The Gazette

High winds and rainy weather didn't deter thousands of Optimists from gathering outside the Palais des congrès yesterday to watch the parade that kicked off their 69th annual international convention.

About 6,000 of them are expected to attend the convention, which continues through Wednesday.

Optimist International is the world's fourth-largest service organization and has 160,000 members throughout North America and the Caribbean.

But until recently, it had no women.

The Optimists abandoned that tradition two weeks ago when its board of directors decided to allow women to apply for admis-

sion. The club had been an all-male bastion since 1919.

The decision to strike down the men-only provision in the club's constitution followed the United States Supreme Court's decision May 4 ordering Rotary International, another service organization, to accept applications from women.

"Our legal counsel advised us that the provision of our constitution restricting membership to men is no longer enforceable," said Optimist International president Lester Craft of Lake Wacamac, N.C.

He said the decision will attract new members and expand the organization's community services.

Asked whether the Optimists would have made the move without the Supreme Court decision, Craft responded: "Probably, but

who knows. The Supreme Court made the decision for us."

Ottawa delegate Alfred Percival expressed reservations. "I guess in general it will be a good thing," he said. "It's been coming for a long time. But I know some women I would not want to have as members."

Robert Hauss of Lenoir, N.C., had mixed feelings. "Women are welcome ... but it's going to take some getting used to."

All applicants must be sponsored by a current club member, which means new female members will have to be brought in by established male members, said public relations director James Braibish.

Since the decision was made, a women-only Optimist club has been established in California, and about 20 women have been registered as members of other

clubs. Braibish said the women-only club was established because the women were unwilling to press for membership in an established club that didn't want them.

"I don't have the facts and figures yet, but I'm sure we'll see at least one female sitting as a delegate at this week's convention," he said.

The motto of the organization is "Friends of Youth."

Members organize programs designed to benefit young people. These include bicycle safety, block parents, essay contests, youth volunteers and sports.

Optimist International has 30,000 members in Quebec.

Among the delegates who wheeled into Montreal yesterday were four cross-country cyclists ending a trip that began 45 days

and 4,800 kilometres ago in a Los Angeles suburb.

The Optimist cyclists rode across the continent to raise funds from member groups for the "Just Say No" anti-drug campaign.

Departing from Covina, Calif., on May 13, George Graves, 72, Ernie Wells, 69, Jack Lester, 63, and Art Popovich, 22, completed their trip two days ahead of schedule.

Graves, a former officer with the Montreal police department who moved to California 30 years ago, said he hopes the funds raised during the bike trip don't turn out to be a one-shot deal.

"The program is aimed at young kids in Grades 4 to 7," he said. "We've got to start at the bottom and keep them off drugs for life."



**100 Years of Optimism**  
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The 1990's

# 1<sup>st</sup> Female Optimist Governor “plans to break ground”

## Optimist governor plans to break ground

By Alden Brown

Features Editor

Optimist's first female governor plans to break new ground, not as a woman, but as an Optimist.

Jewel Thompson of Wichita Falls became involved in Optimist International with her late husband, Eldon, in June 1974. Seventeen years later, she will guide 90 clubs in the North Texas District of Optimist International.

She's come a long way and so has Optimist. The organization first allowed women members in July 1986.

When Thompson was elected, she said, several Optimists said,

“All the eyes are on this district.”

“It's not just Optimists watching, though,” Thompson said. Other civic organizations are keeping a careful eye on Optimists and their growth since women were allowed to join.

Growth is Thompson's most visible objective for her tenure.

“My quota for the year is 10 percent increase,” Thompson said. “We have a commitment of five more clubs before the end of September.”

Growth in Optimist means more help for children.

“That's our mission,” she said, “to help the youth in the community. That's what we do.”

Which is why Thompson said she feels “Optimist is the best service organization to be a part of.” The group does a great deal more than share lunch.

Events include an annual essay contest, youth appreciation week and oratorical contest. Keeping a tab on all the events and the people involved could be a rough job, Thompson said, if she were alone.

“Being governor doesn't mean I'm up there by myself. There are a lot of past governors giving me ideas and help.”

There's also her 22-year-old daughter, Jana, to lean on. “She went with me to the international

convention in June and really seemed to enjoy it.”

Optimist has filled the voids in Thompson's life, she said, by allowing her to help those in the community and by providing a fellowship. “The fellowship you have with other members — not just in our club, but all over the district — makes this a wonderful opportunity.”

But there is a significant amount of pressure, pressure to excel.

Thompson is taking that pressure in stride. Her objective is simply, “I hope that I bring a little pride in the fact they can say ‘she's from here, my zone, my club.’”

**Jewel Thompson from Wichita Falls, “...Optimist's first female governor plans to break new ground, not as a woman, but as an Optimist ... She's come a long way and so has Optimist. The organization first allowed women members in July 1986.”**



**100 Years of Optimism**  
**Expanding into Canada**  
The 2000's



October 17, 2001 the Optimist Clubs of Midwestern and Southwestern Ontario Districts announced their commitment to raise \$1 Million to help fund an Opticare Zone at the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario in London, Ontario. By 2005, they reached their target and the project was completed.

## OPTIMIST MILLION DOLLAR MARCH

MAY 29, 2005



### PROGRAM

On October 17, 2001, the Optimist Clubs of Midwestern and Southwestern Ontario Districts announced their commitment to raise \$1 million for Children's Health Foundation to help fund the new Children's Hospital of Western Ontario. The goal was to have raised this money by the end of 2006. With incredible energy, dedication and commitment you have reached this target a year ahead of time! Thank you!

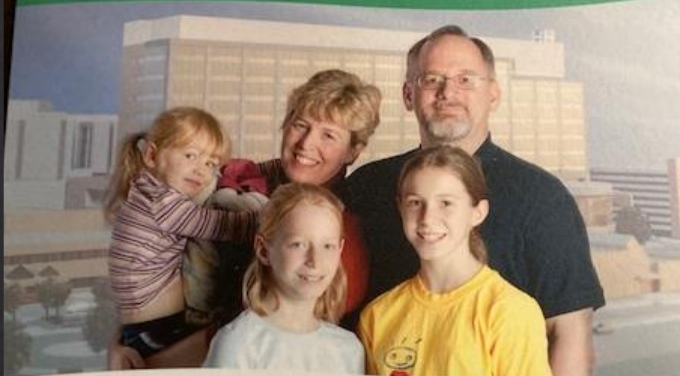
- Surprises, Surprises and More Surprises!
- Special Guest – Chantal Vandesompele
- Safe Journey Home

*"The Optimist Clubs of Midwestern and Southwestern Ontario Districts have shown inspiring leadership, initiative and energy in raising these important funds and incredibly, ahead of schedule! Sick and injured children and their families will be forever grateful for their kind hearts."*

Gabe Valente, Chair, Board of Directors, Children's Health Foundation  
Debbie Comuzzi, President and CEO, Children's Health Foundation.






## Thanks a Million!



Your leadership is instrumental in raising \$1 million to help build the new Children's Hospital of Western Ontario. Sick children and their families will be forever grateful for your vision and kind heart.

From everyone at Children's, our sincerest thanks.



### Optimist Inpatient Care

2011







In 2001, Alberta Curling Federation asked the Optimist Club of Calgary to sponsor the creation of an U-18 Alberta Provincial Curling Championship. All other clubs in Alberta decided to join in and become the Title Sponsor for what is now the annual *Curling Alberta Optimist U18 Championship*. This led to the creation of the Canadian U18 Curling Championships by Curling Canada. At an Awards Ceremony in July, 2022, Curling Alberta thanked Optimist Clubs of Alberta and awarded them with a “Partner of the Year” Award.





# Saskatoon Optimist Clubs Build a Ski Hill in their City

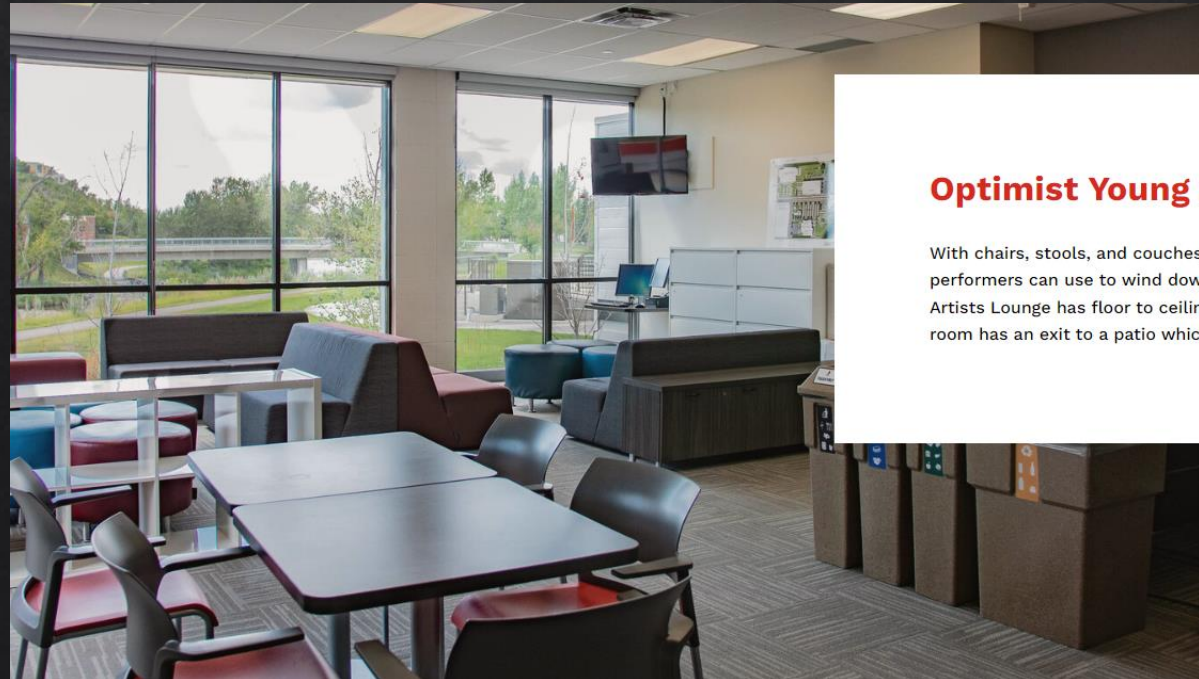
Building a ski hill in a city like Saskatoon seemed like an impossible idea. Despite this, the Optimist Clubs of Saskatoon had a dream and the passion to make it a reality. Construction started around 2013, and with the help of the City of Saskatoon, local businesses, and community groups, they raised over \$3 Million to build it. They had to move 147,000 cubic meters of dirt from the base of the park's hill to the top in order to have 300 meter long ski and snowboard runs. It officially opened in 2019 with plenty of space for downhill skiing, snowboarding and tubing. It even has a chalet, snow making equipment, ski lifts, and equipment rentals





# OPTIMIST “YOUNG ARTIST LOUNGE” BUILT ON CALGARY STAMPEDE GROUNDS

In 2016, the Optimist Clubs in Calgary provided a \$500,000 donation for the construction and maintenance of an Optimist Young Artist Lounge within the TransAlta Performing Arts Studio on the Calgary Stampede Grounds. The grand opening was held on March 31st, 2017. This 13,000-square-foot facility is home to The Young Canadians School of the Performing Arts and the Calgary Stampede Showband.



## Optimist Young Artist Lounge

With chairs, stools, and couches, the Optimist Young Artists Lounge is a space that performers can use to wind down and relax before performances. The Optimist Young Artists Lounge has floor to ceiling windows which allows for natural light. Additionally, this room has an exit to a patio which overlooks the Elbow River.

In February 2020, Optimist International asked Jean-Claude St-Onge and Claire Labreche to consider taking on a 3 year pilot project to run a separate Optimist organization in Canada that could better serve the language and cultural needs of French speaking Canadians. A rollout plan was developed and organizational structure created. On April 17, 2021 a vote was held at a Constituent Assembly and the Optimistes Francophones Canadiens was born. They now have 255 clubs with 4831 members across Canada.



## Le Credo de l'Optimiste

### JE PROMETS...

D'être fort au point que rien ne puisse troubler ma sérénité d'esprit; De parler de santé, de bonheur et de prospérité à toute personne que je rencontrerai;

D'inculquer à mes amis la confiance en eux-mêmes; De ne considérer que le bon côté des choses en véritable Optimiste;

De ne songer qu'au mieux, de ne travailler que pour le mieux et de n'espérer que le mieux;

De manifester autant d'enthousiasme pour les succès des autres que pour les miens;

D'oublier les erreurs passées et de voir à faire mieux à l'avenir;

D'avoir toujours l'air gai et de sourire à toute personne que je rencontrerai;

De consacrer tant de temps à m'améliorer moi-même que je n'aurai pas le temps de critiquer les autres;

D'être trop magnanime pour me tracasser, trop noble pour m'irriter, trop fort pour craindre et trop heureux pour me laisser troubler.





# 100 Years of Optimist International in Canada and Beyond Current



# Optimism Across the Globe

From 1924 when the 1<sup>st</sup> Optimist Club was formed outside of the US in Toronto to current, we now have over 2,800 clubs in 28 countries across the globe!

United Arab Emirates (1)	Antigua And Barbuda (2)	Anguilla, Bwi (1)	Barbados, Bwi (10)	Bangladesh (1)
Bahamas (1)	Belize (2)	Canada (484)	Congo, Democratic Republic Of The (2)	Algeria (1)
Ghana (4)	Haiti (1)	India (1)	Iraq (1)	Jamaica (65)
Jordan (2)	Japan (1)	Korea, Republic Of (South) (1)	Cayman Islands, Bwi (2)	Lebanon (1)
Malta (1)	Nepal (44)	Philippines (1)	Thailand (1)	Trinidad And Tobago (1)
	Uganda (8)	United States (1379)	Saint Vincent And The Grenadines (1)	





**Help us celebrate 100 Years of Optimism in  
Canada at Niagara Falls, Ontario in 2024!**

