

**REPORT TO THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF  
OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL  
BY THE**

**INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

**July 2, 2011**

**SECTION I - REQUESTS FOR BOARD ACTION**

**A. CONKERR CANCER FOR ENDORSED ORGANIZATION STATUS**

Rationale: ConKerr Cancer is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping children feel special and comforted while battling life-changing illnesses. Their main activity, “The Pillowcase Program,” invites volunteers to sew and distribute cheerful pillowcases to children in order to brighten up their hospital room and bring a smile to their face. This program is easy to participate in and has an immediate impact on a child in treatment for a life-threatening illness.

ConKerr has established 125 chapters serving children in 220 hospitals, pediatric hospices and Ronald McDonald Houses across the United States, Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom. Volunteers for ConKerr have delivered nearly 360,000 cheerful pillowcases to sick children in hospitals across the United States. A number of Optimist Clubs in California, Michigan and North Carolina have already become involved with ConKerr and distributed hundreds of pillowcases to hospitals in their area.

A partnership between the two organizations would allow Optimist Clubs to get involved in making pillowcases to brighten the “scary” hospital environments these children are often in, raise funds to support ConKerr’s mission of brightening the lives of children around the world and help build awareness about childhood cancer through shared events and fundraisers. A partnership would provide Optimist International with a platform to expand membership, create opportunities for Members to be directly involved in serving children with cancer, provide Clubs access to children’s hospitals across the country to broaden the reach of the organization and to create awareness building activities and shared fundraising programs.

The Activities Committee would like to establish this partnership immediately to tie into the organization’s renewed focus on childhood cancer. Since the 2010-2011 Optimist year is more than half over, it is recommended that the endorsement fee be waived for Conkerr Cancer until the 2011-2012 Optimist year.

**Motion Requested:**

**That the Optimist International Board of Directors approve ConKerr Cancer as an Endorsed Organization at the Bronze level effective immediately with the endorsement fee waived for the remainder of the 2010-2011 year.**

**Budget: \$0**

**B. UNITED SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS (USO) FOR ENDORSED ORGANIZATION STATUS**

Rationale: The USO is a non-profit organization committed to provide emotional support to United States military troops and their families. The USO offers programs and services at more than 160 locations worldwide, including the United States, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Germany, Italy, Japan and Korea. In 2010, USO centers were visited nearly 8 million times by military members and their families. The centers at airports and military bases provide entertainment and services. The organization also provides critical support to deployed troops, wounded soldiers and the families of fallen soldiers.

A relationship with the USO will provide increased service opportunities for Optimist Clubs. The USO will assist in generating publicity and awareness of individual Clubs that participate in its programs through press releases, the USO website and social media. The USO will provide Optimist Clubs with fundraising toolkits and train all Members interested in participating in its programs. Speakers will be provided for Optimist events benefitting the USO, when possible.

The USO will help Optimist International fulfill its mission to “bring out the best in kids,” focusing on a group of children that is currently underserved, military children. The organization will strengthen public awareness about Optimist International through promotion of the partnership on the USO website and through their social media site. The organization will identify a sole point of contact to manage the relationship with individual Optimist Clubs and assist in tracking Club donations to the USO.

The Activities Committee would like to establish this partnership immediately to promote this new service opportunity to Optimist Clubs and begin providing support to military families. Since the 2010-2011 Optimist year is more than half over, it is recommended that the endorsement fee be waived for the United Services Organizations (USO) until the 2011-2012 Optimist year.

**Motion Requested:**

**That the Optimist International Board of Directors approve the United Services Organizations (USO) as an Endorsed Organization at the Bronze level effective immediately with the endorsement fee waived for the remainder of the 2010-2011 year.**

**Budget: \$0**

## **SECTION II - FOR BOARD INFORMATION**

### **AA. ORATORICAL CONTEST SURVEY AND EVALUATION**

The Committee conducted a survey to determine the effects of the new age eligibility requirement for the Oratorical contest and to determine whether Members' feelings had changed after the 2010-2011 contests were conducted. The survey was sent via e-mail to District Governors and District Oratorical Chairs.

Based on the survey responses, it appears that the majority of reporting Districts have accepted the change and are now concerned with making the necessary adjustments to serve the youth of their communities.

The Committee has been contacted by various Optimist Members and leaders since the contests were conducted and the suggestion for age categories has been made on several occasions. Many evaluation forms submitted to Optimist International by Club and District Chairs have suggested that the contest be restructured to include a Junior and Senior age division.

The 2010-2011 Committee recommends that their proposal for instituting age categories (ages 10-14 and 15-18) be seriously reviewed by the incoming Committee. Establishing age categories would allow the high school age students to compete for an award that will be beneficial to them in the near future, while also allowing younger students a fair opportunity to compete for scholarship funds.

It was also recognized that the majority of Districts conduct separate gender contests, so the possibility of offering a male and female scholarship in each age category needs to be considered, with input from the Optimist International Foundation.

### **BB. CCC FUNDRAISER AT THE 2011 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**

The 2011 Childhood Cancer duck race was canceled due to low ticket sales. At the Baltimore convention, the Childhood Cancer Campaign will be running a silent auction on a variety of duck items. The silent auction will run through the close of the House of Optimism on July 4.

All of the funds raised from the silent auction will go to Johns Hopkins Medicine designated for childhood cancer research.

Members who have already purchased a ticket for the duck race and are attending convention will have the option of receiving a \$10 voucher for the silent auction or receiving a refund. Members who have purchased a ticket for the duck race and will not be attending convention, will have the option of receiving a refund or counting those funds as a contribution to the childhood cancer research fund.

### **CC. INTERNET SAFETY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

The Programs and Youth Clubs departments will introduce the teen component of the Optimist Internet Safety program at the 2011 International Convention. There will be two workshops conducted by the JOOI Committee Chair and the JOOI Board on Sunday, July 3 and Monday, July 4. The sessions will be conducted as actual presentations to a teen group to give attendees

suggestions on the best way to reach teens and encourage them to take the material seriously. A program packet will be given to each attendee, so they can begin running the teen component in their community. The materials will be posted on the Optimist website following convention.

The shooting of the teen DVD is scheduled for August 10-12. Locations in the headquarters office will be used for each of the scenes, including the International President's Office, Boardroom and lunchroom. The DVD will be duplicated and available for distribution to Optimist Clubs at the beginning of the 2011-2012 Optimist year.

#### **DD. REVIEW OF DISPOSE-A-MED PROGRAM**

The Activities Committee reviewed program materials submitted by a sponsoring Club to determine the feasibility of developing a "Dispose-A-Med" program at the International level. The need for this type of program is apparent in many areas as evidenced by statistics reporting an increased use of prescription pills by teens and the rising number of accidental fatalities.

The Committee acknowledged the great work being done by the Clubs working with this program and supports their efforts. However, a model for the program to be developed, funded and promoted at the International level has not been submitted.

#### **EE. REVIEW OF CURLING PROGRAM**

The Activities Committee reviewed program materials and substantiating documentation submitted by a sponsoring Club to determine the feasibility of making "Curling" an Optimist International program.

The project has a large operating budget and is a multi-Club project that is run in conjunction with various curling associations. The Committee felt while this is a great project that serves many children, meets the organization's mission of bringing out the best in kids, and has the potential to spread throughout some areas of Optimist International, the materials did not present a model that would take the project to the next step of implementation as an international program.

The Committee noted that the sport of curling is becoming more prominent since its inclusion in the Olympics but it is still not participated in globally. The Committee also discussed that many Clubs sponsor sports activities that are recognized and competed in on a global level, but none of these have been considered for adoption at the International level.

Respectfully submitted,

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