

NEW CLUB BUILDING

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PREFACE:

Congratulations and welcome to New Club Building. The New Club Building (N.C.B.) manual is actually a series of short concise manuals dedicated to the different phases of N.C.B. They are:

1. *Philosophy and Foreword*
2. *Getting Ready*
3. *Working with your team and Core Group*
4. *Informational Meetings*
5. *Organizational Meeting*
6. *Follow up and Charter Banquet*
7. *Resources*

Each is specifically written to aid you in learning what is required to complete a particular phase in the formation of a new club. With the information provided here, assistance from Certified Club Builders and the New Club Building Committee, others who have built before you, the N.C.B. Department at Optimist International (O.I.), and **your own "trial and error" you will have what you need to start and complete this most rewarding of projects.**

No club exists today, which was not built by dedicated members interested seeing our organization grow and bring Positive Opportunities to youth in an area not currently served. Your foray into N.C.B. will offer these same opportunities to other future members and more Positive Opportunities to more youth – youth not currently being served.

Read, review and plan your N.C.B. project then call the N.C.B. Department at O.I. and get started. Most importantly, get started!

PHILOSOPHY and FOREWORD – number 1 in the series:

The Board of Directors of Optimist International has adopted an official: "New Club Philosophy" and directed every effort be made to share it with Optimists everywhere, especially those interested in N.C.B. Optimist leaders are encouraged to share this philosophy at N.C.B. workshops and wherever deemed appropriate. This philosophy is as follows:

The primary goal of Optimist International in the area of growth is to build and develop Clubs who contribute to the betterment of their communities and play a major role in the development of our youth.

Clubs should be built to attain maximum strength for the Club as well as Optimist International. Strong, viable Clubs are of paramount importance to Optimists everywhere.

A well-built and properly structured Club, with complementing leadership, will give

strength to new Members and seasoned Optimists alike. The ultimate goal is a Club composed of Members proud to share their time, talents and experiences.

Sponsors across the organization are encouraged to approach their goal expeditiously and with great enthusiasm. As a builder seeks his or her objective, it should be done with a positive attitude, always keeping in mind new Clubs are built today to last.

Prospective Charter Members must be given an opportunity to really understand the full benefits of affiliation. New Clubs should be officially organized only after Charter Members have a thorough familiarization with the objectives of the organization as well as the real purpose of their Club.

Every Club built must become an active, contributing force in this organization, and in its community. Each should be comprised of dedicated Members who yearn for an opportunity to grow in and with Optimism, and in meaningful service to youth and community.

There are three statements which best describe this undertaking: It takes the greatest commitment; it offers the greatest challenge; and it returns the greatest reward. You will also enjoy a great feeling of accomplishment by helping another community reap the rewards of an Optimist Club. In addition, you will make great life long friendships and, as a caveat, you will experience tremendous personal and professional growth. Whatever your primary reason might be, you can rest assured your post N.C.B. life will never be the same.

Suppose you build a Club lasting years or even centuries. You will affect the lives of many generations, many of whom are not born yet. There is great truth to the saying **that, "By helping others achieve what they want out of life, you can get anything out of life that you want."**

You may have asked yourself: What does it really take to build an Optimist Club? The answer is simple: it takes a firm commitment, a positive mental attitude, and know how. The commitment is up to you. If you really want to build the Club you will make the commitment, and the positive mental attitude will come with knowledge and the building process, **the "know how" you can learn** from this series and the other sources referenced. This series contains successful guidelines. A N.C.B. project is not officially finished until the follow-up has been successfully completed.

Study and apply this material your N.C.B. project will be completed within a reasonable period of time and with a minimum of complication. Leave nothing to chance! In the reference material section there are plenty of graphics, forms, sample letters and invitations for your use. All materials can be downloaded from www.optimist.org/newclub.

Make sure you plan well, pay close attention to the details and most of all keep the momentum high!

REMEMBER – THE ONLY REASON TO BUILD A NEW OPTIMIST CLUB IS TO SERVE THE YOUTH OF THE COMMUNITY!

GETTING READY – number 2 in the series:

The first step in your N.C.B. project is to decide what type of Optimist Club you want to form. You can build a Traditional Club, a College Club, or Specialty Club. A Traditional Club is what most of us are familiar with and is the structure of most clubs. It consists of men and women from all walks of life who have come together to be Optimists. A College Club is an Optimist Club whose membership consists primarily of students from a four-year, two-year, technical, or trade school campus. And a Specialty Club is one whose members have formed their Optimist Club to support, or around, a specific cause or program. Prime examples of Specialty Clubs are athletic clubs to support a youth sports program.

The requirements to charter a new club within any of these categories are the same. There must be a minimum of 15 signed and paid Charter Members. There are some differences in dues structures and billing times between Traditional Clubs and College Clubs, which will be discussed in the ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING part of this series along with other requirements to Charter.

Next, develop your team. This should consist of current members who are interested, dedicated, and motivated to seeing a new club built. They also must have the time to devote to the completion of the N.C.B. project. On average a N.C.B. project takes six to eight weeks to complete, but some can go much longer. Having goal oriented individuals is a plus.

Your team can come from one club or several clubs. They will most likely be members of the sponsor club or clubs. The more members on this team the easier it will be for all, and the less time and stress placed on each individual. However, there must be a leader who will both organize efforts and keep track of what has been done and what needs to be done. Finding seasoned members who have a thorough understanding of Optimist International and Optimism is a plus. Past District leaders like former Governors, Lt. Governors, Leadership Development Committee members and Club leaders – past and present – are all great people to consider.

Site location goes hand in hand with developing your team since you will want to be geographically close enough to minimize travel concerns. The location of the new club should be in a community large enough to support a new club, have a need, and not deter from existing clubs or be in a location where an Optimist Club recently failed. You will also want to consider the demographics of the community. A small bedroom community where most everyone commutes into a larger city on a daily basis may prove to be a tough place to build, while a mid-sized town with a strong community identity may provide an excellent opportunity.

While there is not a magic population size for a community to support an Optimist Club it does have to be large enough handle the clubs exiting already and your new Optimist Club. Successful Optimist Clubs have been built in communities with a population of a few thousand to the largest of communities. Trying to add another club to a small town with several other clubs or organizations existing already may over tax the residence, thus making it difficult to build your club and jeopardize the survival of your club. Likewise, trying to build in a location where a club just folded you may find there is a feeling of hopelessness towards Optimist Clubs.

Most communities have websites with a wealth of information about the community. There is generally information on populations, and sometimes details as to how many are commuters, and how many live and work in town. What industry and commerce is **located there, who the major employers are, the mix of 'blue collar' vs. 'white collar'**, and possibility median income. Of major importance is other civic and volunteer organizations or groups which already exist within the community. Another value will be the listing of community leaders; civic, educational, and commercial. From this list you can determine who you want to visit and how or where to reach them.

WORKING WITH YOUR TEAM & CORE GROUP – number 3 in the series:

The development of the Key Builders (your team) and the Core Group will in all likelihood determine the success of your new club project and how easy and efficient it will be. Having Key Builders who can work together, are dedicated, and can take direction or be leaders if needed is vital. The process of building a new club is not the time or place for personality conflicts or personal agendas. Sometimes it is best not to **have every Key Builder involved be “an expert” if they all** come for different styles and must be the lead builder. Perhaps it would be better to break up a group like this and start two or three new club projects, with each taking the lead in a different project.

The Core Group too can be an issue if they can not agree on the reasons for having an Optimist Club in their community. Here again, personal agenda can be counter productive, and could destroy the best intentions of others. Finding Core Builders from similar circumstances can be very beneficial. This does not mean they all have to have the same economic background or strength, nor do they have to have the same educational background or level. They should, however, come from within a relatively common socio-economic and community setting. By working for this commonality you will get common needs, wants and abilities to handle these needs and wants. Having some individuals who feel the solution is to write a check while the others can not afford to simply write a check to solve every problem could very likely set up an area of conflict. The same can be said for having some hands on individuals and others who are only interested in fund raising and donating.

The Core Group will determine the make up of the new club, so having a common thread here will avoid potential conflicts. This is not to say having a varied diversity is a bad thing. On either group the diversity can bring a variety of ideas, resources, and approaches. Care, however, must be taken so personality differences do not become an issue.

Take time to carefully choose your Key Builders and when developing your Core Group. Your projects success may rest with your selections. Sometimes the Core Group selection is not your option, they simply appear to you in your initial visits. If you deem conflicts are a potential or surface then be ready to redirect the efforts of individuals to **best utilize everyone's talents.**

INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS – number 4 in the series:

The Informational Meeting is designed to “sell” prospective Charter Members on who we are, what we do, and how we operate. In order to have an Informational Meeting you must first develop a Core Group of interested individuals. They should be: well known in the community, community or business leaders, persons with good reputations and respected, and interested and willing to help build an Optimist Club. Once you have three to five people who fit this profile schedule a meeting with your Core Group.

At your initial Core Group meeting you should lay out the process for building an Optimist Club and the follow up support they will receive from their sponsor club(s).

Take time to address the following:

- A. A short discussion on reasons for an Optimist Club in their community.
- B. Develop a list of benefits they see for a Club.
- C. Establish the need for a Club.
- D. Explain the conducting Informational Meetings.
- E. Schedule the day, time and place for the first Informational Meeting. The next meeting should be within ten days.
- F. Select a good meeting place, a private room accommodating 35-40.

Once these items have been covered and everyone is comfortable with moving forward you will need to see publicity is handled. The Core Group needs to be sure they understand their job is to sell the Informational Meeting – your job is to sell Optimist International and their new club. Each should be challenged with bringing 3 prospective Charter Members. Subsequently each Charter Member must understand this same process. Growth through the pyramid method – 3 bring 3 each ads 9 for a total of 12, 9 bring 3 each ads 27, added to the first 12 totals 39.

Between the time of your first Core Group meeting and the first Informational Meeting you will want to make visits to government, education, and industry leaders. These individuals can be a huge assistance in building your new Optimist Club or they can be a huge obstacle. Having the support of this group can be essential in getting past your initial Core Group meeting. They have the ability to post road blocks if they feel threatened, are not familiar with Optimist International, or see you as a conflict. The police department (governmental) is a great source for ideas on need and support.

Your publicity can be as simple as flier posted through out the community (be sure to gain permission before posting) or as involved as radio and television advertising. It all will depend on your budget, time, and resources. Most radio, television, and newspapers have community service ads, which can be utilized for free and some will **do ‘news stories’ if they need to fill space and see the value.** **The best way to publicize** the Informational Meetings is by word of mouth. Announcements can be made at church services, business employee meetings, social engagements, or wherever there

is an opportunity to address a group of people. Another approach is a direct mail campaign. From referrals you can send letters or e-mails to specific individuals. The communication should, at the very least, be co-signed by either the person giving the referral or a member of the Core Group. Again, the objective is to sell the Informational Meeting.

Your Informational Meetings should:

- A. Meetings should last about one hour
- B. Alcoholic beverages should not be served during meetings
- C. Conclude with the time and location of the next Informational Meeting
- D. Informational Meetings should be conducted weekly
- F. Scheduled to correspond with the anticipated meeting time of the new club
- G. Creed banner should be displayed.
- H. Members of the building team should sit amongst potential Charter Members
- I. Make sure needed supplies are available.

You have about an hour with the potential Charter Members. The first couple minutes (5 – 7 at most) will be devoted to introductions, opening comments, a brief history of where the new club project is so far, and laying the ground work for the Informational presentation. The next block of time (about 45 minutes) will be the Informational presentation. And the last few minutes (7 – 10) can be used for closing remarks by both builders and signed Charter Members to help persuade potential Charter Members to sign. This is also a time to give the timeline for completing the project. Remember the habits you build through the Informational Meeting process will set the tone for how the club structures its self.

Just like in school we needed assignment due dates to get our school and homework done your new club project needs a completing date as well. Setting the completion date (Organizational Meeting date) should be done with the Core Group so they have buy in as well. You may want to get started and work for a couple weeks before setting your completion date. This will give you some time to see how fast members will join and prevent you from having to change dates.

A sample Informational Meeting agenda with presentation notes follows:

1.) Who is OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL?

An International service organization – much like Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.

In 30+ countries & 80,000+/- members strong.

Largest concentration in North America (U.S. & Canada), growing fast in Caribbean and Mexico.

Started in early 1900's.

Originally “Friend of Wayward Boy”, now “Friend of Youth”, “Bringing Out the Best in Children”.

2.) What do OPTIMIST CLUBS do?

Hold service projects – providing positive opportunities – to youth.

Many bad influences on youth today – malls, street corners, etc. – not the kind of opportunities most parents want for their kids, surely not what I wanted for mine!

Raise money and donate to youth groups.

Hold fund raisers to build YOUTH ACCOUNT to donate and underwrite club activities.

Anything from Bake Sales, Art or Jewelry Sales, Fair Food Stands, to Pizza Sales, to you name it.

3.) What are some of our PROJECTS?

Canned programs from O.I.

Oratorical & Essay Contest, CCDHH (alphabet soup) Contest, Sports Skills (Tri-Star Basketball, Soccer, Hockey, Baseball, and Football), Youth Safety, which has grown from Bicycle Safety to include everything from Skate Boards to Computer/Internet Safety.

Currently there are about 10.

Simply download or order Program Guide, follow and use the instructions and forms.

Others designed by local clubs based on local needs.

Some clubs do Breakfast/Lunch with Santa/Easter Bunny, Easter Egg Hunts, A Day of Fishing, Scholarships, Youth of the Month/Quarter, Dictionary Projects, Reading/Study Buddies, do whatever is needed in the club's service area.

4.) Why join an OPTIMIST CLUB? (College Club specific)

Resume building – more weight than a campus club i.e. math, science, fraternity/sorority, etc. Clubs based on areas of study are good and do a lot, but future employers put more emphasis on recognized service organizations – not viewed as social or limited in scope. Network and connect with those outside the university.

5.) How is OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL structured?

Bottom up – vs. – top down.

Clubs, via members, recommend bylaw and policy changes and vote on them at our INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION. Nothing comes from St. Louis and is pushed down on clubs.

Organizationally much like the U.S.

Cities = Clubs, Counties = Zones, States = Districts, U.S. = OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL. However, remember, we do have clubs all over the world.

Dues support O.I.

Each member is billed by their respective club.

Suggested between \$80.00 & \$100.00 per year (\$30.00 & \$40.00 per semester for College Clubs).

Optimist International bills clubs per member.

College Students get a break.

Optimist International bills Quarterly, Districts bill Semi-Annually.

Total cost is about \$60.00 for non-college students and \$35.00 for College Students.

6.) What does it take to CHARTER a new club?

15 new members.

Existing Optimist members do not count, however, can be part of new club, just not one of the 15, #16 and beyond.

Must not have been a member of an Optimist Club in the last 6 months.

You do not find 15 Charter Members. You find 2 or 3 and each of them finds 2 or 3, and so on. Start with 3, each finds 3 more this is 9 more and we have 12.

Each of the new 9 finds 3 and we add 27, plus our 12 and we have 39. We need 15, so we are there.

\$30.00 Charter Fee.

Payable to your club – returned if the club does not Charter.

\$400.00 + \$1.00 per Charter Member to O.I. – set up fee.

Balance to help start new club's treasury – Administrative, \$315.00 based on 15 Charter Members.

Sponsor club – act as mentor.

Will work with you for a minimum of 2 years - resource.

Give advise, teach the club the “ins & outs” of O.I.

Encourage involvement in Zone, District, and O.I.

Informational Meetings.

We are holding those now – you are attending one at this minute.

We sell the organization, talk about being OPTIMISTS.

You, sell the meetings, bring friends, classmates, others who are interested in Community Service.

We know the organization, you know the students.

Organizational Meeting.

When the Club is Officially formed - birthing process, now club can start doing the fun stuff – being and OPTIMIST CLUB!

Charter Banquet.

A celebration, chance for area clubs to come and congratulate and welcome you.

Many will bring gifts.

7.) Start holding regular MEETINGS.

Each club decides what time, location, and format is best for the club.

Some do Morning Meetings, many do Noon Meetings and a few do Evening Meetings, (late evening seems to work well for College Clubs).

Most meetings include a meal, some include cost in Club Dues and some clubs are pay as you go.

It is recommended, and the more successful clubs, meet weekly.

8.) QUESTIONS.

9.) ASK FOR APPLICATIONS.

10.) See at the NEXT meeting.

Bring with you another prospective member, or 3.

If you have someone you wish us to contact please give us their detail before you leave.

Meeting time is _____, at _____.

Contact me at _____, or one of the other Key Builders at _____.

Thank you for being here and your interest in OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL and your OPTIMIST CLUB.

At the close of each Informational Meeting you will need to “close the sale” with those prospective Charter Members who attended. This can be done either as a part of the close or one-on-one after the Informational presentation is completed. You will have to decide which is best based on the number attending and the response shown during the presentation. If you know you have a for sure joiner (or a plant) then asking for applications as a part of the closing can trigger others to sign up as well – the domino effect. However you decide, no close means no Charter Members, which means no new club.

Be sure to reinforce the need for each Prospective Charter Member and signed Charter Member to bring 3 new prospective Charter Members to the next Informational Meeting. Wish everyone safe travel home and a GREAT week. Be pleasant – ever if there were problems during the meeting – and show your willingness to help. Some prospective Charter Members may wish to stay after to ask questions or just visit. Make sure there are builders who can stay to accommodate their needs. Avoid becoming involved in personal conflict conversations between Charter Members or making recommendations on club leadership. After all, this will be THERE club.

A nice option to offer are rides to the Informational Meetings. By making the offer you are saying you are willing to go out of your way to make their club come together. It shows an added level of dedication on behalf of the builders.

After all the Charter Members have left your team will need to sit down and compile notes from the Informational Meeting. Add to your list of signed Charter Members, review referrals, note how effective your publicity was, determine if anything needs to be changed (added or deleted) from the Informational presentation, and decide if everyone is able to make the next meeting. You may also want to trade duties so those attending get to listen to a new speaker. This is also the time to determine what other changes are needed, such as a different time, location, or method of approaching prospective Charter Members. Sometimes you will find a dynamite person in an Informational Meeting and you may wish to add them to your Core Group, a person who has contacts, energy, a willingness to get out and work.

All applications need to include the \$30.00 Charter Fee. If an individual gave you an application but did not pay the fee do not include them on the list of signed Charter Members. You can have a list of committed, but not signed and paid. Use the list of signed and paid Charter Members as an incentive – **“You can only be a CHARTER MEMBER at the beginning of the new club, afterwards you will just be a new member”**. **“CHARTER MEMBER are CHARTER MEMBERS for life”**. Use this list of signed and

paid to show progress in the forming of the new club. Some individuals will not join until they see the club is close, so be willing to share how many are signed and paid.

Between Informational Meetings plan canvas days. Set up two-Member teams and canvas the community once or twice a week. Make calls on businesses to see about sponsorship of an employee into the new club. Often asking to owner/manager to sponsor someone else works best as they typically feel they are too busy. Remember most business leaders want positive publicity and exposure for their business. While we are not there to promote their business or for them to profit from us the attitude of **“you wash my hands I will wash yours” can go a long way.**

Meeting with or at least providing a report to the community leaders identified previously should also be done. Their involvement and support is essential to the long term health of your new club and they can be a strong influence. Remember these people include governmental and school leaders.

Follow up calls to those who showed an interest at an Informational Meeting is always a good idea. They may be looking for additional information or may just want the personalized attention. Some will be very positive about getting the new club built, but may not want to join, so they become a great center for referrals and influence.

Staying diligent in your efforts and stay in touch with your Core Group. Meeting with them either as a group or individually at least once during the time between Informational Meetings is a must. Review progress and look for opportunities which may present themselves. Move the new club forward by being sure everyone is informed and aware of all activities.

Written communication to both signed Charter Members and those showing interest helps by keeping the new club project in the front of their minds. Listing the signed Charter Members in the margin or as part of the header or footer provides a lot of useful, yet intangible, information. Seeing who has committed can be an incentive for others to sign on. The communication can also include details about possible programs and projects as well as fund raising ideas. This is also an opportunity to share a small tidbit of information about Optimist International or other Optimist Clubs, which you do not have time to share during Informational Meetings.

Between meetings you will also want to review your supplies and other presentation materials to see what needs to be replenished or revised. Brochures specific to the new club can be designed (or revised from a previous new club building project) and used as a reminder and publicity piece. This is also your time to see if personal changes need to be made. Updating Optimist International and your District leadership should take place after each Informational Meeting. If there are problems or the project hits a stumbling point this is your opportunity to seek advice, get help, or bring in outside assistance (Certified Club Builder).

By the fourth or fifth Informational Meeting the signed members can be split off into their

own group with one of the builders to start discussions about the leadership and operational structure of the club. No final decisions should be made until all Charter Members can have input. A framework and list of potential club leaders can be developed based on required information from the Organizational Meeting requirements. Any time spent on this now can both save time at the Organizational Meeting and also be utilized to motivate the completion of the club. Remember, and be sure the Charter Members understand, any decisions made now or at the Organizational Meeting can be changed in the future.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS – number 5 in the series:

This meeting is most exciting moment of a new Club as it is the official **“birth” of a new Club**. Everything which has been done up to now was in preparation of this one meeting. You will need to devote a minimum of one hour and possibility as much as two hours for this meeting. The more preparation done in advance the shorter and smoother the Organizational Meeting will be. At the end of this meeting your team and the Charter Members will experience one of the greatest feelings of their lives. You all will have also accomplished something most people never accomplish – the changing of lives you will never know, in ways you can never imagine.

A Field Representative assigned by Optimist International will run the Organizational Meeting. This individual will come prepared with all the forms required and knows the rules for Chartering a new club. Even though the Field Representative runs the meeting and is in charge it is very helpful to have one of the key builders handy to assist. If things are not ready or it is felt something inappropriate is being done the Field Representative can stop the Chartering until everything is correct or until the situation has been resolved. About two weeks prior to the targeted Organizational Meeting date a request for a Field Representative should be made.

After the Organizational Meeting the Field Representative will forward all completed forms, and if possible the Chartering check, to Optimist International. They will also leave with the Sponsor Club(s) materials for the new club. These will include informational packets for club officers, new member packets, and certificates for presentation at the Charter Banquet. Plan to have one or two of the key builders available to spend about 15 minutes with the Field Representative to go through the above material and review the follow up mentoring process.

One item, which should not be discussed in the presents of the new club is who will be the Builders of Excellence. There are a maximum of two Builders of Excellence per Sponsor Club. Since there can be two Sponsor Clubs there can be a total of four Builders of Excellence. The Builders of Excellence do not have to be members of the Sponsor Club(s). The Field Representative will need to know who these individuals are, what club they are members of and their club and member numbers.

The requirements to hold the Organizational Meeting are very simple. There must be a minimum of 15 signed and paid Charter Members (remember individuals who are, or have been an Optimist member in the previous six months, do not count) and 9 of those Charter Members must attend the Organizational Meeting. The Field representative will review the applications and verify the payment of the Charter fee by each Charter Member. It is advisable to have a strong showing from the Sponsor Club(s) to show support and start the bonding process with the new club. A special invitation to all

Charter Members and anyone who has expressed interest, but not yet signed should be sent at least ten days in advance.

Additionally the Lt. Governor should be invited, and expected, to attend the Organizational Meeting. The District Governor and New Club Build Chair should also be invited and if feasible be in attendance. If they can not be there, or the distance is too great to make sense, they will have an opportunity to speak to the Charter members at the Charter Banquet. A message on behalf of each should be shared with the Charter Members at the Organizational Meeting, however.

Getting ready for this meeting should be done at the later Informational Meetings. The Standard Club Bylaws (along with any specific requirements for college/technical schools), Club Officers, Board of Directors, and Committee Chairs need to be determined or nominations readied for an election. The Field Representative can supply a detailed list of what will be needed and their preference in handling specific aspects of the Organizational Meeting. Time spent in preparation will save time and possible confusion at the Organizational Meeting. All decisions regarding leadership and the organization of the new club must be decided by the Charter Members. As Key Builders your only job is to guide and be sure Optimist International Bylaws and Policies are not violated. The Field Representative may also want to meet with the Core Group and Key Builders prior to the Organizational Meeting to review everything to be sure everyone is ready.

Either as a part of the Organizational Meeting or immediately following the first meeting of the Board of Directors will be held. This meeting is designed to familiarize them with their respective duties and set policy for the club. The Field Representative will run this meeting as well, with the assistance of the Charter President. The intent here is to set a standard for formal Board of Directors Meetings and to impart the importance of Board of Directors Meetings.

After the formalities are completed will be your opportunity to congratulate and start the **next phase of the new club's life** – being an Optimist Club. Take a few minutes to visit with the Charter President, Club Officers, and Board of Directors about the Sponsor Club(s) attendance at the upcoming club meetings of the new club. Explain your presents there will be to mentor and is part of the Follow Up Program. If the mentors are going to be different than the Key Builders were they should be introduced at this time to the new club leaders.

FOLLOW UP and CHARTER BANQUET – number 6 is the series:

Once a new club has been Chartered there are two additional and very important steps to be completed. These will as much as anything determine the success and strength of a new club. There is the Charter Banquet and Follow-Up Program to be completed yet. The Charter Banquet is both a celebration and chance to introduce the new club to their fellow Optimists, while the Follow-Up Program your opportunity to have hands-on mentoring of the new club. The Follow-Up Program should be expected to last about two years. In the later stages the time commitment and contact will become less and less.

In planning the Charter Banquet keep three things in mind; a celebration of the new club, introduction of the club, and setting the tone for proper installation of Club Officers. The Charter Banquet should be within the first two months after Chartering. It is the responsibility of the Sponsor Club(s) to organize and host the Charter Banquet. A time and location convenient to the new club so as to encourage maximum turnout from their members.

The general format of the Charter Banquet is very similar to an Installation Banquet, with the added benefit of comments from local, regional, and District dignitaries. Therefore, be sure you send invitations to City/Town/Village, County/Provincial, and the District Governor, Lt. Governor, New Club Building Chair, and any other District leaders it is felt appropriate. The International President and Vice President should also receive an invitation. Their attendance is very unlikely, but it is respectful to invite them. Members of the Sponsor Club(s) should also be invited along with members of clubs in the Zone, and from around the District. It should also be made clear spouses/significant others are invited as well. Making the new club feel welcome is the key goal.

One of the Key Builders, if they are comfortable with public speaking, should act as emcee. It is important to have someone who knows the members attending and has a handle on Optimism and our traditions.

When inviting dignitaries make sure you give them a time allotment to speak and background information on Optimist International, Optimism, and the new club. Generally speaking, depending on how many dignitaries agree to attend, three to five minute each is plenty of time. Since the formal part of the program should be kept to about an hour more time than this would cause the Charter Banquet to run to long. Also, this is not a forum for campaigning, again a reason to limit their time. Most elected officials will likely attend while appointed or hired are less likely to, so do not be surprised when they decline.

The same time limits should be given to your District leaders. Again, they should be

reminded their job is to welcome the new club and offer support. The District Governor is the exception, who should be given about ten minutes to speak. Their job is to welcome, offer support, and to share a little about the District theme, goals, and how many youth the new club will be serving.

A sample agenda for a Charter Banquet follows. However, do not be afraid to change speakers or the order based on attendance, time constraints, or physical set up.

PROGRAM

Welcome & Introductions		EMCEE
Prayer		SPONSOR MEMBER
Pledge of Allegiance		SPONSOR MEMBER
Toast to Countries of Optimism		SPONSOR MEMBER
	MEAL	
Sponsor Club(s) Remarks		CLUB PRESIDENT or REPRESENTATIVE
Lt. Governor's Remarks		LT. GOVERNOR
Governor's Remarks		GOVERNOR
Induction of Club Members		LT. GOVERNOR &/or GOVERNOR
Installation of Officers		LT GOVERNOR &/or GOVERNOR
Presentation of Gifts		NEW CLUB BUILDING CHAIR or REPRESENTATIVE
Key Note/Special Guest		DIGNITARIES
Charter Club President Remarks		NEW CLUB PRESIDENT
Creed		GOVERNOR ELECT or REPRESENTATIVE

This should be the left inside side of the program. On the right side should be a list of **the new club's officer and Board of Directors. You will note the speakers go from the "smallest office" to the "largest office" to signify respect. The dignitaries are the last** invited speakers, again in respect of their position within the community. The Charter Club President is the last to speak as this is their chance to both thank the Sponsor

Club(s), District, and dignitaries and to challenge their club to move forward and be a strong Optimist Club felt within their service area. Last, but not least, is to challenge each Charter Member to share the opportunity to be an Optimist with someone they know – get the idea of recruiting entrenched early.

On the right inside of the program you should list the Charter Officers and Board of Directors. Sometimes a complete list of Charter Members is included on an insert.

OFFICERS

President

Internal Vice President

External Vice President

Secretary/Treasurer

Board Members

One-year

One-year

One-year

Two-year

Two-year

Two-year

When preparing your invitations to go to clubs in the Zone and District it should be clear some sort of gift is appropriate. It is often helpful if someone from the Host Committee coordinates these gifts. Monetary gifts could either be collected and used to purchase club banners, name badges, badge box, etc. or just be made to the new club. This would allow them to decide what paraphernalia they will use in their club.

The Charter Banquet needs to be kept affordable yet portray the formality it deserves. Everyone should be expected to pay their own way at the Charter Banquet with the offer to cover the meals for the District Governor, International Guest, and dignitaries and spouses. Most elected officials will not accept the offer and will pay for their meals, but the offer should be made.

Again, this is everyone's opportunity to celebrate a great accomplishment. Avoid ruining the mood with business talk, talk of awards, or anything negative. Nothing can take the wind out of the sails of a new club if they feel the only reason they were

formed is so someone can receive an award. The growth of a great organization, the service to youth, and the welcoming of new friends to Optimism.

As soon as the new club is Chartered the Follow-UP Program must begin. It is the responsibility of the Lt. Governor along with the Sponsor Club(s) to see this is taken care of. It is also a good idea to bring in the Club services Chair to be part of the process as well. Every District Chair should be contacted about giving a presentation at **a club meeting regarding their specific area. It is also vital to get the club's officers and** as many members as possible to attend District Conferences and Convention. There are reporting forms, which the Sponsor Club(s) will be required to complete and return to Optimist International as well.

The toughest part of the Follow-UP Program is to not clone your club, but rather to mentor the new club. Sharing your clubs fund raisers, programs, and projects is a great way to help by giving the new club ideas and possibly opportunities. The new club must be encouraged come up with ideas of their own as well. The ideas developed from the first Organizational visits relayed by community leaders is a great place to start. Any number of the Charter Members may have joined based on an activity form the list, so it should not be discounted.

One of the first things you will need to do is to help the new club officers understand their roles and responsibilities. The Charter President may need some assistance in preparing for their first meetings as they have been an observer until now. Sharing your clubs meeting agenda and those of other clubs can be useful. The Treasurer may also start out needing a lot of assistance. Dues from Optimist International and the District are always confusing and tend to create trouble for new clubs. The Secretary will need to be schooled in the forms required and their due dates.

A formula which has been successful in the past is for the Sponsor Club(s) to run a meeting and have the Charter President run a meeting, alternating from meeting to meeting. This gives the new president a chance to slide into their roll as president. It also gives the Sponsor Club(s) a chance to showcase the programs, fundraiser, activities, and structure of Optimist International, the Zone and District. After about two to three months the Sponsor Club(s) can back off to organizing one meeting out of every three. As time goes on this can be reduced until the Sponsor Club(s) is just there as a resource.

Once some decisions have been made as to a fundraiser and an activity or project it is the responsibility of the Sponsor Club(s) to assist in the planning and implementation. Your job as mentor is not to run their event, but to assist and provide any background required. Knowledge of what is permissible by your District and Optimist International Bylaws and policies as well as what has or is being done already is a big benefit brought to a new club. Helping them avoid road blocks, activities/events which have failed, or violating a Bylaw or policy will help ensure success of the event. It will also minimize frustrations of a new club.

Inviting members of the new club to attend or participate in events held by other clubs is another great way for the new club gain experience and insight. Be careful if members of the new club participate in a fundraiser any sharing of proceeds is made clear up-front. A new club is not slave labor for other clubs under the guise of training. Sometimes just allowing the new club members to observe an event is best.

As a Sponsor Club there is a lot which must be taught to a new club. Optimist International Foundation is a key topic. Other topics include the Liability Insurance, Optimist International Convention, Logos and their use, Growth and Retention, Optimist International websites – www.optimist.org, www.optimistleaders.org, and www.oifoundation.org – as well as club management via websites. Again, using your District Committee Chairs is a great way to educate the new club.

In the first weeks and months of a new club there will likely be a lot involvement by the **Sponsor Club(s), but as time goes by you're the time commitment will decline as well.** Having several people responsible for the Follow-Up Program is best so as to not burn anyone out. Communication between the Follow-Up committee is essential so conflicting information is not relayed to the new club. After having worked to build the new club and spending time with them over the next two years will endear you and the new club to each other for a lifetime.

Resources – number 7 in a series:

When you decide you want to build a new optimist club or if you have already decided this is a project you wish to undertake you will be relieved to know there are any number of individuals and resources available to you. The biggest resource at your finger tips is the internet. Through the websites of Optimist International there are guides, templates, sample materials, and a data base all for your use. Additionally through the websites you will be able to find contact information for others who have experience in New Club Building.

Staff at Optimist International, New Club Building Department, is available to aid you in most any way you need. They can provide or direct you to materials, refer you to those with experience, arrange for Certified Club Builders, or just serve to council. While their job is not to come work directly on a project they can still be a vital tool.

Certified Club Builders are Optimist members who have demonstrated an ability to complete New Club Building projects successfully and have received additional training through Optimist International. Their expertise and experience can make the difference in completing a project. Their involvement may also make for a much easier project. Before requesting a C.C.B. be sent to assist you will need to have signed seven or eight members. They are also available for consultation whenever needed.

New Club Data base is a great resource available to anyone who is building a cub. It allows you to keep track of progress, communicate with others, and set up a central location to post progress. The biggest advantage is everyone involved in the building process can see what is happening, how many Charter Members have been signed, and what difficulties many have been encountered. At the Organizational Meeting a Roster can be printed relieving the need to complete the form by hand for submission.

At your District you also have a number of resources. Each Lt. Governor should have some background in club building, as well as your Governor. However, the best person to contact is your District New Club Building Chairperson. Along with the New Club Building Committee in your District these individuals should be able to provide both the **background and experience, and the ‘rubber on the pavement’ help required. Many** times there is also a Club President who is interested in building a new club (a requirement for Distinguished Club President) who would also be a resource.

Following are some sample e-mails, letters, and news releases you may wish to use. These can be used as is or edited to better reflect specific details of a new club building project.

SAMPLE 1:

E-mail – Prospective Charter Member

Hello (enter name)~

Your name was forwarded onto me by (enter referring individual) with the (enter club/organization).

My name is (enter name) and I am a member of the (enter your club name), a member **club of Optimist International, one of the world's** most active and involved civic service organizations. We are an organization whose sole mission is to better the lives of children in every community through one of our 3,000 Optimist Clubs! Each year Optimists conduct 65,000 service projects that reach more than six million young people throughout the world.

An Optimist Club is in the process of forming in your community and I would like to meet with you to discuss your opportunities in this club and the ways you can help improve the lives of local children. (may substitute – invite you to attend our Informational Meeting be held at)

I understand that your organization currently does great things for your community and I feel your insight and guidance would be of tremendous value!>> OR <<We are looking for help in indentifying the needs of your community and I feel your insight and guidance would be of tremendous value!.

I will be in (community name) this week on (time, date) and would like to visit with you, if your schedule permits.>> OR <<We will be having an informational meeting on (date/time/location of meeting) and we would love to have you attend.

Please let me know if you are available or if you have any questions! Thank you for your time.

(Name)

(Contact information)

SAMPLE 2

E-mail – Follow up to visit/Informational Meeting

Hello (enter name)

Thank you for your time which you afforded me on (enter day). >> OR << Thank you for attending the Informational Meeting on (enter day). I hope you were able to gain a better understanding of who we are and what we do. I trust you can see, as I do, how Optimist Clubs are a benefit to their respective communities.

As we continue to form your Optimist Club I want you to know we will be here to help in any way needed. What we ask of you through this process is two simple things; first your commitment to your club by becoming a Charter Member, and second to share this opportunity with others you know. The (working name of club if you have one) Optimist

Club will be your club and the club of your fellow members, run by you and your fellow members.

I know you probably do not feel you have enough background or knowledge on Optimist International or Optimism to be able to get others to join you, but we do. So, if you could either bring 2 or 3 people with you to the next Informational Meeting I would greatly appreciate it.>> OR << refer 2 or 3 people I can arrange to visit with I would greatly appreciate it.

The exciting news is with your Charter Membership our numbers will be up to (insert number of signed & paid). As you know we only need 15 to Charter your club, so we are getting closer and you can be of vital assistance in reaching the magic 15.

Again, thank you for your time and I look forward to seeing you involved in hyour Optimist Club – Bringing out the Best in Youth.

(your name)
(contact information)

SAMPLE 3

E-mail – follow up to signed Charter Members

Hello Charter Members of (insert working name of new club),

Your club is coming along very well. You currently have (insert number) Charter Members signed up for your club. Again, you need a minimum of 15 to Charter, but it would be fun to see 25 or more.

I want to encourage you to bring with you 2 or 3 friends, family, or co-workers to the **next Informational Meeting. Remember, right now it is our job to ‘self’ Optimist International and Optimism, it is your job to ‘self’ the meeting**

The Informational Meeting is being held at (inset meeting day, time, and location).

I will see you there. If you have any concerns or someone needs transportation please do not hesitate to contact me.

(your name)
(contact information)

SAMPLE 4

News Release for New Clubs – Initial Informational Meeting announcement
(Fill in appropriate information about your Club. Retype on your optimist Club letterhead)

For immediate release - (date)

For more information - (name, address, and number of contact person)

The Optimist Club of (inset Sponsor Club(s)) is assisting in forming an Optimist Club in (inset community/location) with the cooperation of local individuals. An Informational Meeting is being held at (inset day/time/location) to provide interested individuals with background and information on who Optimist International is and what Optimists do.

All interested individuals are invited to attend this one hour presentation.

If anyone is unable to attend, but would like information they can contact (insert name and contact information of 2 or 3 Key Builders).

SAMPLE 5

News Release – Subsequent Informational Meetings

(Fill in appropriate information about your Club. Retype on your optimist Club letterhead)

For immediate release - (date)

For more information - (name, address, and number of contact person)

The Optimist Club of (inset Sponsor Club(s)) continues to assist in forming an Optimist Club in (inset community/location) with the cooperation of local individuals. The next Informational Meeting is being held at (inset day/time/location) to provide interested individuals with background and information on who Optimist International is and what Optimists do.

There are currently (inset number) individuals on the Charter list, which needs to be 15 to Charter the new club.

All interested individuals are invited to attend this one hour presentation. Anyone who is unable to attend, but would like information they can contact (insert name and contact information of 2 or 3 Key Builders).>> OR << Anyone who is unable to attend, but would like information they can contact (inset name of Charter Member(s) who have given permission to do so).

SAMPLE 6

News Release – Organizational Meeting

(Fill in appropriate information about your Club. Retype on your optimist Club letterhead)

For immediate release - (date)

For more information - (name, address, and number of contact person)

On (insert date and time) the (inset new club name) will be Chartered. The Chartering of (insert name of new club) is the bringing to life new opportunities for the youth of (insert community) through the programs and projects which will be offered by (insert name of new club).

The (insert name of new club) will become one of the 300 plus member clubs of

Optimist International, providing over 65,000 service projects a year, and donating of \$3,000,000.00 annually. Locally, each member of an Optimist Club provides positive opportunities to 30 youth each year. The (insert name of new club), and the (insert number of Charter Members) will effect (insert 30 X number of Charter Members) each year in (insert name of community).

Join every Optimist member worldwide in welcoming the (insert name of new club) to service to youth in (insert name of community). Anyone interested in additional information or becoming a Charter Member can contact (insert name and contact information).

SAMPLE 7

News Release – post Organizational Meeting

(Fill in appropriate information about your Club. Retype on your optimist Club letterhead)

For immediate release - (date)

For more information - (name, address, and number of contact person)

New Optimist Club formed to serve area youth and community. A group of (name of city or area) community members have announced they have formed the (insert name of new club) conduct positive service projects to benefit area youth.

The insert name of new club) **is affiliated with Optimist International, one of the world's** largest and most active service Club organizations. With nearly 100,000 members in more than 3,000 Optimist Clubs across the United States, Canada, and other nations, Optimist Clubs conduct a wide range of positive service projects reaching more than six million young people each year.

Major Optimist programs include substance abuse prevention, the Optimist Oratorical Contest, the Optimist Essay Contest, the Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, Youth Appreciation Week, the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships, and many others. Additionally the (insert name of new club) will design and host project to meet specific community needs.

Officers elected to lead (insert name new club) during its first year are (insert name of Club President) and (insert name of Secretary-Treasurer or Secretary and Treasurer) as Secretary-Treasurer. Club Vice Presidents include (names of Vice Presidents). Elected to Board of Directors are (insert names **board members'**).

The (insert name of new club) will meet (meeting days) at (time) at (meeting location). A charter presentation banquet for the new Optimist Club will be held on (date) at (place).

For more information on becoming involved, contact (insert name, address, and number of contact person)

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