



The Noon Optimist Club of Centerville, Ohio

White Paper Summit

Optimist International Convention

July 3, 2013

1) Overview – The Noon Optimist Club of Centerville is a unique service club. The purpose of this white paper is to share what makes this club so successful in the South Dayton Communities. Many clubs will find this information to be relevant and beneficial as it shares specific ideas of teamwork and camaraderie within a club's structure.

2) Issue – Many service and civic clubs have struggled and suffered throughout the late 1900's and into the 2000's. It has not just been Optimist Clubs that have declined but also Lion's, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs. It seems that membership has declined; the average age of members has increased and an inability to connect with young people and new blood has hurt communities. Quite simply the former way of doing things is not working any longer.

3) So who are these Centerville Noon Optimists anyway? And why are they so passionate about kids in the community? Here's how it works:

a) Their press releases and banners are everywhere! A concentration of utilizing every means of social media attracts awareness and new members.

- Newspaper press releases, website, FaceBook, emails, LinkedIn Groups

b) But the Greater Dayton area seems to be the epicenter for more Optimist Clubs than anywhere else in Ohio. While there are more than 80 Ohio clubs, there are more than 20 in the Miami Valley...from Miamisburg and Springboro all the way to Troy and Lima the Optimists give back to their communities. This includes three clubs in Centerville alone. What makes this concentration so strong? Have you ever heard of sharing successes among clubs? It's more than visiting other clubs for their meetings but it includes actual sharing of ideas and programs. Perhaps success breeds success but many members are members of more than one club thus sharing the passion and possibilities.

- Helping new clubs fundraise and bring in new members. Avenue of Flags now helps more than 20 clubs raise money in Ohio
- Zone meetings and conference calls and actually helping each other succeed
- We have even gone together with Rotary Clubs to assist each other's efforts
- Always having a booth at local festivals continues to drive home the message that the Centerville Noon Optimist Club is the one club where you have to belong. We never stop reaching out and never stop recruiting!
- And at the Ohio District Conferences, many always help present and run training sessions helping other clubs to progress.

c) The largest and most active club in Ohio is the Noon Optimist Club of Centerville. Boasting more than 230 members, this lively group meets every Tuesday for lunch at Yankee Trace. With more than 80 at each lunch, members look forward to bringing guests and having a good time. Interesting weekly speakers are booked more than 2-3 months in advance. Members have a chance to learn and network, to grow and improve themselves. And that's just the start.

- Stressing the importance of attending club lunches; fining members for everything possible
- Recognizing and rewarding members who bring in new members and guests. We never go longer than a month or so without a major membership contest. Bringing new members becomes a way of life.
- Share information about the club with all members through weekly newsletters, board minutes and weekly President's letter
- Getting every member involved in one project or committee from the start
- Bringing along member after member to mainstream, educate and find excellent replacements for current officers

d) These Optimist members are a fellowship of people who like to accomplish things. They set examples and embrace an optimistic mindset for the community to see. Displaying leadership skills and working relationships with the schools, libraries, police and fire departments, hospitals and many other youth organizations, this club gives back to the community in many, many ways. They make a difference in the lives of our children as well as our community. That is why the club is a proud member of the Heart of Centerville Business Alliance, a vibrant organization promoting businesses and non-profits in and around Centerville and Washington Township.

- The relationship with Dayton Children's Medical Center is legendary. From working with the hematology/oncology nurses and doctors on the semi-annual Build A Bear events to annual donations from our golf outing, this alliance works.
- Annual donations to school libraries and support of student activities plays a major role. Once again from after prom support to DestinationImagination, we are actively helping our young people
- Respect for Law Awards are presented annually to police, fire personnel and EMT's. Both are named for fallen personnel killed in the line of duty.

e) The club is made up of people living and working in the community who want to reach out and help young people. Joined together, they serve others and promote optimism as a way of life. Numerous youth sports and scholarship programs offer great outreach for our kids. Programs like essay contests, oratorical contests and youth appreciation week help reinforce this commitment and allow them to take pride in their accomplishments.

- Tri Star Basketball and Soccer play a major role with our kids. An annual fishing derby attracts more than 150 children and brings out many club volunteers. Add Sof-T-Ball leagues and we help another 100 kids. Then turn to Top Soccer and we again assist children with disabilities. Our Haunted Trail combines the strengths of JOOI Clubs with the adult club to provide a fun evening for almost 2000 kids at Halloween.

f) This club emphasizes giving back to help your community and volunteering. The Noon Optimists make Centerville a better place to live, work, and play. If it were not for these volunteers, many things in our community would never get done. Optimist members meet frequently to perform charitable work. Most of their efforts are direct and hands-on but are also accomplished by raising money to help other organizations.

- Reaching out into the community to help needy kids is ever a problem. Members step up to donate food, time and toys to families in need through donations to food banks, school back pack programs or donations to shelters for runaway children. Annually at Christmas, our Adopt-A-Family is a huge success. Involvement with T.J's Place of Hope helps teens who might face addiction with drugs and alcohol.

g) Member committees plan and pulls off events like the Safety on Wheels bike rodeo on May 18,, the fishing derby on June 1, the Avenue of Flags on the five holidays, the Tee Off for Youth Golf Outing for Dayton Children's on July 25, Tri Star basketball, soccer and tee ball leagues, Easter Egg Hunts, Haunted Trail and Christmas Tree sales. They also who help build the shelter houses at the many Centerville-Washington Township Parks. That's right...the Optimists are well known in the Centerville community!

- Three annual fund raisers bring in almost \$100,000 to support the club's programs, donations and scholarships. More than 1,000 Christmas Trees are sold every December. Almost 1,000 flags are put up during the five flag holidays and subscribers gladly pay \$45 for this patriotic service project. And the annual Tom Frazier Tee Off for Youth Golf Fund Raiser invites children stricken with cancer to learn how to play golf followed by more than 125 golfers and sponsors.

h) This club consistently builds new Optimist clubs and also organizes JOOI clubs within our schools. Our children are members of these Junior Optimist clubs. It is excellent that children learn early and understand how they truly can make a difference in someone's life as a volunteer. These valuable lessons help build them into strong contributing citizens in the future. Combing a junior club with the adult club provides a little fun and love to cancer stricken kids at Dayton Children's Medical Center with a Build A Bear event and the opportunities are endless. Talk about giving back to bring out the best in kids....this is it.

- Members are consistently encouraged to build new clubs to help more people. This club sponsors and supports more than ten JOOI clubs and also have consistently built new clubs year after year.

4) The results.....

A strong club and profitable for more than 45 years

Continually adding new members and getting them involved

Giving back to the community with time, talent and treasures

Building new clubs annually

Playing a major leadership role in the district be it International VP, Governors, Lieutenant Governors or Convention Planners

Adding new projects and programs for the youth of our community

5) Summary - The members of this club continually Invest in the community and give back. The teamwork and committee efforts maintain the strong momentum with all the club's programs. The Centerville Noon Optimists do so much to help our communities but they cannot do it alone. As successful members of our community, we have the responsibility to help those that are less fortunate. By inviting others to join us, we find people who often are unable to give money but are able to give back time and volunteer with this organization that uses everyone's skills. And we always state that the investment is not a major one. Giving back to the community gives one a pleasant feeling of connectedness and the satisfaction of at least trying to make the world a better place. Giving back to the community raises your spirits in a nation that frequently seems out of control and leaves the community in better hands than when you moved here.