

2026 Optimist International Convention Workshops and Trainings

Tuesdays with Morrie: A Book Discussion

It's the 30th Anniversary of Mitch Albom's best seller, Tuesdays with Morrie, and its message of love is more needed today than ever before. Join us as we delve into Morrie's words of wisdom and work to embrace his lessons in how to live. This is an interactive session, so come ready to share your insights and wisdom as we learn from each other what it truly means to be fully alive.

Creating Smiles in the Community: Simple, Hands-On Activities for Kids

Looking for easy, engaging ways to bring joy to children at community events? This interactive workshop is designed to equip Optimist Club members with simple, low-cost, and high-impact activities that are perfect for festivals, school events, service days, and outreach programs, while giving clubs an opportunity to talk with parents to increase membership, community partnerships, and possible financial support while the kids complete activities. Participants will explore a variety of hands-on activity ideas that require minimal supplies, limited set-up, and can be adapted for different ages and group sizes. Through demonstrations and shared ideas, attendees will learn how to confidently run activity stations that encourage creativity, participation, and fun—while reflecting the Optimist mission of bringing out the best in youth and the community. By the end of the workshop, participants will leave with practical ideas they can use immediately, tips for managing activities in busy event settings, and inspiration to create positive, smile-filled experiences for children and families. Whether your club is new to community events or looking to refresh its approach, this session offers something for everyone.

The Modern Optimist: AI Creativity, Canva Design & Zeffy Fundraising

Step into the future of club leadership with a hands-on session designed to make technology feel simple, fun, and empowering. This workshop introduces Optimist members to three powerful tools—AI, Canva, and Zeffy—that can transform the way your club communicates, creates, and raises funds. Participants will learn how to use AI to spark ideas and streamline tasks, design eye-catching graphics in Canva without needing any design experience, and leverage Zeffy's free fundraising platform to support club projects and community impact. Whether you're a tech beginner or just looking to modernize your club's approach, you'll leave with practical skills, ready-to-use templates, and the confidence to bring fresh energy to your Optimist Club's outreach and fundraising efforts.

Optimist DREAM: District Resources for the Enrichment and Advancement of Members

Come learn about the new Optimist DREAM Program - a district leadership development program to help prepare your members for club and district leadership roles. You will be introduced to the finalized program and the resources that will be provided for districts to deliver this program! Highly encouraged for 2026-2027 district leadership development chairs, governors, and JOI advisors!

2026 Optimist International Convention Workshops and Trainings

"Let Them"--A Framework for Living Optimistically

Approach every day with more optimism! This down-to-earth workshop, inspired by Mel Robbins' 2024 book "Let Them Theory," focuses on what happens when we stop trying to control other people's actions, opinions, or reactions and instead protect our own peace and energy. This session encourages simple mindset shifts that help reduce stress, build resilience, and encourage healthier responses in all aspects of life. It's time to start living with more ease, confidence, and positivity!

Ten Simple Things That Great Leaders Know

Strong, effective leadership isn't about titles. It's about understanding people, purpose, and influence. This workshop takes a practical look at what great leaders know about self-awareness, communication, and the impact they have—whether or not they hold a formal title. Participants will leave with a better understanding of how trust and credibility are built and how leaders can work step-by-step to bring out the best in others.

What a Volunteer Wants: Meeting Expectations Across Generations

Volunteers today represent multiple generations, and each group has different ideas about how they want to help, communicate, and feel appreciated. This session focuses on what motivates volunteers, from Traditionalists to Gen Z, and how to create experiences that keep everyone engaged and feeling valued. Participants will gain practical tips for organizing roles, giving recognition, and connecting with volunteers in ways that work for them and support the Optimist mission.

Gatherings CAN be FUN and ENTERTAINING

Whether your club gathers weekly or monthly or someplace in between, no one wants to just attend another business session. People want to be engaged. They want to learn something. They want to be engrossed. So how does this happen? There are many ways to bring joy, fun and frivolity to gatherings. Let's make a list and make it happen!

Sowing the Seeds of Optimism In Youth our Community and Ourselves

This interactive workshop will provide practical projects and activities for your club to become a source of optimism in your community, and to energize and grow your club with optimism.

You've Got What It Takes

Put your instinctive strengths into action within your family, Optimism and your community.

2026 Optimist International Convention Workshops and Trainings

Finding Your Voice: Public Speaking for Optimists

How can one awkward moment from a date teach you everything you need to deliver a stellar speech? Join Mikey B, a member of Toastmasters and Optimist International, to learn the six key elements of effective public speaking: pitch, tone, volume, pace, non-verbals, and speech structure. Open to speakers of all experience levels, this session will give you practical tools to take your public speaking to the next level.

Social Media Advertising - Not Just for Growth Anymore

Reach a wider audience with social media advertising for club fundraisers, club growth or new club building. Social media platforms is where your potential audience is!

Strategic Communication for Optimist Impact

This interactive session equips Optimist leaders with practical communication tools to improve visibility, strengthen community engagement, and enhance club branding. Topics include content development, social media strategy, media relations, storytelling, and practical tools for consistent, impactful communication.

Choosing the Best of the Best: De-Mystifying How the Candidate Qualification Committee Works

Have you ever wondered how the decision-making process used to select the nominees for our International Officers works? During this session, the members of the Candidate Qualifications Committee will provide you with an overview of the step-by-step process the committee members go through to select the "Best of the Best" candidates for the International President-Elect, Regional Vice Presidents, and the Board of Directors. Committee members will also be prepared to answer your questions regarding the strategies and steps you should take should you aspire to seek one of these leadership positions.

Planning Successful District Conferences and Conventions

This practical, hands-on workshop walks participants through the essential steps of planning a successful District Conference or Convention. Attendees will explore best practices for site and hotel selection, vendor sourcing, budgeting, and contract negotiation—while also learning how to build a well-structured, engaging conference agenda. Designed for both new and experienced planners, this session provides actionable tools, real-world tips, and proven strategies to streamline planning and avoid costly mistakes.

2026 Optimist International Convention Workshops and Trainings

How to Become an OIF Board Candidate

This workshop is an opportunity for Optimist members interested in running for the Optimist International Foundation Board, to talk with the 2025-2026 Optimist International Foundation President. Let's chat about the qualifications, the election process, the role and responsibilities of OIF Board Members.

What's New With the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation

The Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation continues to work hard to support the Optimist Clubs in Canada. We are proud to introduce our new JOI Grants, our revised Recognition Strategy and some a fun new partnership with AI Distinct. This is also the place to find all the information on our Adult Club programs including Club Grants, Spread Relief Grants and our Outsourcing Program. We look forward to answering any questions you might have on the workings of the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation

Helping Optimists Help Kids: DFR and CFR Essentials

This Optimist International Foundation training will equip current and future Club and District Foundation Representatives (CFRs and DFRs) with strategies for a successful year. The session will cover essential responsibilities, resources, fundraising expectations, grant opportunities, reporting requirements, and practical ways to engage members while supporting the Foundation's mission of helping Optimists help kids. Whether new or experienced, participants will leave ready to plan effectively and make a meaningful impact.

New Recognition Program: Club Health Awards Program

We invite you to come and hear about the new Club Health Awards Program (C.H.A.P.) that will launch October 1st, 2026, as a two-year pilot program. This program is the culmination of two years of work that included engaging members across the organization and gathering their feedback. Your input was heard and you told us that we should Celebrate the impact your Club has on the youth in your communities as well as maintain flexibility so that all Club sizes could be recognized.

Choosing the Best of the Best: De-Mystifying How the Candidate Qualification Committee Works

Have you ever wondered how the decision-making process used to select the nominees for our International Officers works? During this session, the members of the Candidate Qualifications Committee will provide you with an overview of the step-by-step process the committee members go

2026 Optimist International Convention Workshops and Trainings

through to select the "Best of the Best" candidates for the International President-Elect, Regional Vice Presidents, and the Board of Directors. Committee members will also be prepared to answer your questions regarding the strategies and steps you should take should you aspire to seek one of these leadership positions.

The Value of Giving

This workshop will include an open interactive discussion on why we give to the Optimist International Foundation. There will also be a group discussion of roadblocks to giving and ways to overcome these roadblocks in order to develop a plan to continue "A Legacy of Giving for The Children."

2026-2027 District Secretary/Treasurer Training

Both first-time and more experienced District Secretaries and/or Treasurers are welcome to join us for this session. We'll focus on the partnership between you and your District Governor-Elect. We'll also discuss some of the specific duties and how to make this the best year ever for your District. Bring your questions and your ideas to share with the group.