

**OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STATUS REPORT  
July 2, 2011**

As Executive Director, please accept this report as a summary of the activities of the St. Louis and Montreal headquarters since our meeting in May for your review.

**New Club Building**

- Direct contact with all Governors: phone calls, notes.
  - Discussing New Club efforts, how can we help them, what is their plan
- Worked with Gloria Kloster in Omaha, Nebraska, at the 3-day Spring Fling
  - Worked with Club Builders, held meetings for new Clubs
  - Drove hundreds of miles between Iowa and Nebraska to attend Club meetings and NOW meetings
  - Attended a total of 7 Club/New Club meetings and spent the rest of the time on strategy, working with several different teams
- We enjoyed the success of seeing the Club in Seattle organize after our January NCB Seminar.
  - We had about a dozen Optimists learning the NCB process and putting it into practice; those who attended the seminar are now continuing to build back in their home communities with their Clubs
- Re-scheduling a Growth Seminar with VP Ron Graves
- Coordinating the Creed Video Project
  - Preparation to film at Convention
  - Preparation for post-production to edit together the footage
- Coffee recruitment program components and a newly designed coffee mug are being made ready for Convention and future wide release
- The New Club Database usage has increased and enhancing its usability is an ongoing project. We continue to gather critiques and make necessary changes to make the tool ideal for our new Club builders.

**Communications**

We are currently in the middle of creating the *Of Dreams and Deeds* website so that all Members can read about the organization's history at any time. The website will also feature more archived photos than previous editions of the hard-copy book.

We recently hired a new graphic designer, Sandra Grunzinger, whose expertise will ensure that Optimist International's identity is consistent and of the highest quality.

The Communications Department is gearing up publicity efforts for this summer's Optimist International Junior Golf Championships, always a favorite event with media throughout North America and around the world.

Online magazine subscription numbers for *The Optimist* are up to 200, with more subscribers signing up each week.

In coordination with the IT Department, QR codes are being introduced to Optimists and those who attend big events, enabling them to use smart phones to get additional information instantly. We expect the QR codes to be especially well received at this summer's Optimist International Junior Golf Championships.

### **Promotions Corall**

Communications are ongoing with Corall over various issues, and complaints have actually declined over the past few weeks. USA/Caribbean sales are under expectations while sales in Canada remain stable. Corall will have 17 tables of products on display for the delegates in Baltimore.

### **Baltimore Convention**

As of June 14, 2011, we can now report that we are less than 50 room nights from meeting our room block agreement with the hotel, which eases any concerns of attrition in this area. Meetings Director Ronda Vaughn and Associate Executive Director Dennis Osterwisch are well in charge of the Convention planning and activities in coordination with our strong Convention Host Area Committee. Delegate attendance is running equal to last year's attendance and, with a good on-site registration, can surpass the attendance in Denver.

### **Pension Committee**

The Executive Director has met with our Pension Account Manager on several occasions and continues to monitor the investments and program. Total pension fund (Defined Benefits Plan) assets have now exceeded \$2.6 million. It is the belief that the bylaw change for the Pension Committee will be positively received by the Convention delegates allowing individual members with strong financial and investment backgrounds to be appointed to serve.

We are on track to fully fund the Defined Benefits Plan requirements prior to the seven-year Federal Law requirements, and it is quite possible to be able to offer options to close out this fund in the very near future.

## Budget

- **Finances** – For the seven months ended 4/30/2011, we have a surplus of \$316,246. This is a positive variance from Budget of \$27,167. Our Members are doing a **great job** recruiting new Friends of Optimists. After seven months, we have already **exceeded** our annual revenue budget for **Friend of Optimists** by \$16,244! Other items contributing to the surplus include savings in the following expense categories: Board & Officers, Committees, Growth Services, Leadership Development, Club Insurance Premiums and Communications.
- **Insurance** – We renewed our Club General Liability & Umbrella Insurance policies in May 2011. The new premiums are comparable to last year, as we incurred only a modest rate increase of less than one percent. There have not been any major losses during the current fiscal year. Please note we received a \$70,000 decrease in premium rate last fiscal year.
- **Legal** – At present, we do not have any legal issues pending.
- **GST tax refund update** – We recently filed an appeal with the Canadian Revenue Agency for their denial of our GST tax refund application. It may take up to 90 days before we receive their ruling on this matter.
- **Pension** – The total fair value of the Defined Benefit Pension Plan Assets as of 5/31/2011 is \$2,625,259 as compared to \$2,418,001 as of 9/30/2010.
- **New Employee** – Jennifer Nunn started on June 7 in the position of Staff Accountant. She is responsible for managing the accounting records and reports of the Optimist International Foundation.

## E-Optimist

- eOptimist is coming up on its one-year anniversary and we want to thank the OI Board and OIF Board for supporting this new Membership class
- The eOptimist Facebook page has 447 “likes” and the Twitter page @OptimistOrg has 533 followers
- There are over 2,000 subscribers on the website, e-mail or as a free member
- The Optimist Creed video on YouTube has almost 5,000 hits since its release in October 2010
- A monthly newsletter goes out to all subscribers and new blog posts are added

- We continue to have monthly guest writers and feature positive news articles every week for the eOptimist community and are continuing to come up with new ways to advertise and promote eOptimist.

## **Building Maintenance**

The remodeling of the first floor of the old building has been completed, as well as all office renovations in the membership area and 3 offices on the second floor of the new building.

Bids have been sought to replace the new boiler from 3 companies, with a targeted date of installation in late summer or latest by early fall. A new air compressor was installed for the fire sprinkler system and a new air conditioner compressor was replaced under the full service agreement on the chiller unit at no cost.

We are working with ABS Consulting on issues with the parking garage/deck with side wall movement and fractures. We have installed crack monitors and scoped the drain tile systems in this effort.

## **Junior Golf**

### **Qualifying Process**

District Qualifiers: 53 District qualifying tournaments are being held in Optimist Districts throughout North America this spring/summer. These qualifying events are used to determine which golfers will advance to the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships.

Exempt Golfers: 34 “exempt” junior golfers have confirmed their participation in the international championships. These golfers are exempt into the championships by way of being a past Optimist champion or by finishing near the top of the field in last summer’s OIJGC.

International Designees: junior golfers from 10 different countries are being designated by their national golf federation/association and are in the process of registering for the international championships. Countries include: Argentina, Bermuda, Chile, China, Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Thailand and Venezuela.

At Large and International Golfers: Junior golfers from several other nations have applied and have been accepted into the international championships. Countries include: Australia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Netherland Antilles (Curacao), Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Vietnam.

Special Invitees: A limited number of junior golfers will be accepted into the championships in each division based on their national ranking (*Junior Golf Scoreboard* or *Golfweek*) or by winning an important national/international junior golf event in the past year.

### **Hugh Cranford All-Scholastic Team**

A sub-committee of the Junior Golf Committee selected five junior golfers to the 2011 Hugh Cranford All-Scholastic Team. A total of 28 junior golfers applied for this honor. The following junior golfers were selected: Will Davenport (Palm City, FL); Forrest Gamble (Birmingham, AL); David Sargent (Davidson, NC); Haley King (Elkhart, IN); and Caroline Rouse (St. Louis, MO). The selected golfers receive an exemption into the OIJGC and will receive a commemorative plaque and will be introduced on stage during the Opening Ceremony at the OIJGC.

### **Optimist Golf World Cup: Team USA and Team Canada**

A sub-committee of the Junior Golf Committee selected the golfers who will represent Team USA and Team Canada for the Optimist Golf World Cup. Harrison Winger (Orlando, FL) and Evan DeRoche (Key West, FL) will play for Team USA. Tim Gillespie (Hepworth, ON) and Brooke Henderson (Smiths Falls, ON) will play for Team Canada. A total of 20 two-player teams are expected for this second annual event that is held on the transition day between phase 1 and phase 2 of the OIJGC.

### **Parent-Child Classic**

Registrations are currently being received for the inaugural Optimist Golf Parent-Child Classic that will be held on July 21 (arrival day for phase 1 of the OIJGC). The event is an 18-hole best-ball event for a junior golfer and his/her parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle. The event will be limited to a maximum of 60 teams.

### **Volunteers**

A large number of Optimist volunteers are expected to travel to the OIJGC again this summer to assist in registration, tournament operations, scoring and chaperone duties.

## **JOOI**

JOOI has had 39 new charters so far this year!

JOOI updates, reminders, award deadlines and monthly activities are sent out weekly in the JOOI Club e-mail boxes, which can be accessed using the JOOI Club number.

Teenage Internet Safety Program: The JOOI Board wrote scripts that will be acted out using the following subjects: Identity Theft, Posting Harmful Materials on a Social Networking Website, Internet Predators and Cyber-bullying. Shooting for the video will take place August 10-12 in St. Louis, Missouri. The Teenage Internet Safety video and instructional packet will be available to Clubs at the beginning of the 2011-2012 OI fiscal year.

The JOOI Board will be presenting four workshops at the OI Convention:

### **Sunday, July 3**

9-10 a.m. (Essex A) Where We've Been & Where We're Going

10:15-11:15 a.m. (Essex A) Keeping Up with Tech-Savvy Teens (Introduction to the Teenage Internet Safety Program)

**Monday, July 4**

3:15-4:15 p.m. (Kent A) Ask the Experts

4:30-5:30 p.m. (Essex C) Keeping Up with Tech-Savvy Teens (Introduction to the Teenage Internet Safety Program)

The JOOI Board and Committee will be selling the 2011 JOOI Legacy Fund pins at this year's Convention for \$25. The JOOI Legacy Fund is a designated fund within the Optimist International Foundations. It is a discretionary fund to be used by the JOOI Board of Directors with \$1,000 spent annually for service outreach. The JOOI Board has decided to donate \$250 from the Legacy Fund to Living Classrooms Foundation which will be presented to them during the service project. Their service project is located about one mile away from the Renaissance Hotel where they will be painting and fixing up the Living Classrooms building. Living Classrooms is a non-profit organization, operated for the benefit of the community at large, providing hands-on education and job skills training for students from diverse backgrounds, with a special emphasis on serving at-risk youth. The remaining \$750 will be distributed to a disaster relief of their choice.

### **Activities and Programs**

**CCC** – The matching grants program continues to be a success in both the United States and Canada. During the 2010-2011 year, more than \$10,000 has already been awarded in the US and \$12,000 has been granted in Canada. Both Advisory Panels will be meeting after Convention to review more applications.

**CCC Walk** – A number of Clubs (both US and Canadian) have registered their plans to conduct a CCC Walk during the month of June. They have been asked to complete the Walk Wrap-Up form to let Optimist International know how many walkers participate and how much was raised. The 2011-2012 Walk will be promoted in the District Activities Chair training and CCC workshops conducted during Convention.

**Johns Hopkins** – Program Director Danielle Baugher is working with the staff at Hopkins to provide our members with stories of children dealing with cancer in order to put a face on our campaign. These stories will be Optimistic in tone and detail what the children and their families went through after their diagnosis and how their lives have changed today.

**Internet Safety** - The Programs and Youth Clubs departments will introduce the teen component of the Internet Safety program at the 2011 International Convention. There will be two workshops conducted by the JOOI Committee Chair and the JOOI Board at the adult Convention. Packets of the program materials 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 and production of the teen DVD is scheduled for August 10-12 at the headquarters office. The DVD will be duplicated and available for distribution to Optimist Clubs at the beginning of the 2011-2012 Optimist year.

The next thing the Internet Safety Committee will be working on is developing training materials for Clubs and Districts to make sure Members feel comfortable with the program components and to encourage them to schedule presentations in their communities.

### **Leadership Development**

The Leadership Development Department will be busy during the upcoming Convention coordinating more than 80 training and workshop sessions with more than 100 people serving as faculty. The online training modules for Club Presidents are being finalized and should be ready for presentation at the Board of Directors meeting.

### **Canadian Service Centre**

#### **Communications:**

[www.optimistcanada.ca](http://www.optimistcanada.ca)

#### Club websites

Customizable Club websites were launched in late January for all of the 678 Clubs. A detailed tutorial was created alongside to help members customize their website proficiently. In February and March, some adjustments were made to stabilize the websites. These will continue to be made throughout the year. More improvements are under way to enhance the utilization of social networking applications as well as provide the ability for Clubs to add PDF files within their articles and calendar of activities. As soon as the websites are upgraded with these new features, a 2nd version of the tutorial will be posted. Search engine optimization is also under way. By February, there had been 52,291 visitors. In May, it went up to 94,522 visitors. The Director of Communications, Web Media & Programs, Geneviève Meilleur, wants to double, even triple these numbers by September 2012. She also wants to increase Club usage of the site. So far, she has visited six districts (5 French, 1 English) to give workshops and intends to offer workshops through Skype in the coming months.

#### JOOI websites

The 59 French customizable JOOI websites are almost finished, with English translation of 11 Club sites under way. Promotional material and information will soon be sent to Club Advisors, and an article will be posted on all Club websites. All JOOI websites will be linked to their respective sponsor club.

#### District websites

So far, three French districts have requested websites. These will be made in August, September.

[www.optimistcanada.org](http://www.optimistcanada.org)

A few new sections were added to the main Canadian website with an average of 19,537 visitors/month since January. The Optimist social network will be upgraded this summer with additional interactive features and connectivity to Facebook. When possible, blogs will be linked to Club websites.

**Marketing:**

In September, a Canadian bulletin will be sent to all Presidents along with a business card that includes their website's domain. We will be pushing this bulletin to all Club websites. More emphasis and energy will be put upon social networks such as Facebook and Twitter to increase our presence on the Web. Promotion will also be made to NCB to publicize the fact that Club websites are an asset for new Clubs.

Staff will continue to visit Districts, give workshops, and promote the organization.

**Programs:**

Two years ago, Claire Labrèche and Geneviève Meilleur put together a 7-hour Internet Safety Program training, thus enabling Optimist Members to implement and present the program in their communities. So far, over 300 Optimists attended these trainings, either in their Districts or at the Montreal office. The training is now fine-tuned and is always updated before each training session. Attendants receive a 60-page folder of additional information. On the Canadian website, within the Optimist network (350 members), a group in both French and English has been formed for this program, and there is now a new section on the homepage that showcases it. Blog posts related to the topic also appear in the section.

**Golf:**

After 4 years, all French Districts now contribute financially to the Optimist Junior Golf Qualifiers for the St-Lawrence Region, and one Representative per District contributes to the Organizing Committee. The Optimist Qualifiers is now the 2nd biggest junior golf tournament in Québec with 115 participants coming from all over the St-Lawrence Region.

**Leadership development:**Certified training

A Certified Trainer program was offered under the leadership of CIT Gérard Bourcier and Pauline Langelier. Twelve new trainers are now active in the St-Lawrence Region.

District Secretary/Treasurer Training

April 16, CIT Pauline Langelier, assisted by Associate Director Member Services Béatrice Rossignol, has given training to St-Lawrence Region District Secretary/Treasurers Elect at the Canadian Service Center.

Training at the Baltimore Convention

Together with CIT Gérard Bourcier, VP Raymonde Michaud and VP-Elect Claire Labrèche, we have assembled the schedule for French Convention attendees; 12 hours of training will be offered at the Convention. A special brochure will also be distributed to them.

**Governor-Elect Conference:**

Senior Director Jacques Pelland and Geneviève Meilleur attended the Governor-Elect Conference in St. Louis on March 23-27 to facilitate interpretation to French Governors-Elect and their spouses.

**Translation & Interpretation:**

Throughout the year, most of the translation has been assumed by our outsourcing translator, Gaston Cousineau, with the collaboration of the Communications Department.

**JOOI:**

Béatrice Rossignol and Geneviève Meilleur have given an interactive workshop to JOOI members at District meetings.

**Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation:**

With the help of Optimist International Canada, the Foundation is now well structured and all administrative functions are now being autonomously conducted in Canada.

**Non-Mailing to Club Officers:**

The Non-Mailing to Club officers will be added in the private section of all Club websites.

**Insurance:**

With major changes to customer service in Canada, the Montreal office staff has ensured the smooth transition and follow-ups with French Members and Clubs in a timely fashion.

Respectfully submitted,  
Benny Ellerbe, Executive Director