



Ronda Vaughn

Ronda.Vaughn@optimist.org

Senior Director of Communications & Marketing
314-881-1305

Amy Keller

Amy.Keller@optimist.org

Senior Director of International Programs
314-881-1318

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oratorical World Championships Goes Virtual

ST. LOUIS—In 2021, students from around the globe will once again have the opportunity to compete for scholarships in the Optimist International Oratorical World Championships. In light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the Optimist International Board of Directors recently voted to conduct the 2021 Oratorical Regionals and World Championship virtually to protect the safety of the contestants, volunteers, and staff. The Regionals and World Championships will be live-streamed as previously scheduled on July 22 and 23, 2021.

On behalf of Optimist International, the Optimist International Foundation, and the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation, the Oratorical Committee is also pleased to announce that the scholarships for the Regionals and World Championship will be fully funded for 2021. Thousands of students will first compete in contests conducted by local Optimist Clubs, Zones, and Districts. A total of \$5,000 in scholarships is awarded to contestants at the District level and the winners will advance to the Regional contests.

In turn, the winner of each of the nine Regional contests will advance to the World Championship contest. Each Regional winner will receive a \$5,000 scholarship. At the World Championship, the third place contestant will be awarded an additional \$5,000 scholarship and the second place contestant will be awarded an additional \$10,000 scholarship. The Optimist International Oratorical World Champion will receive an additional \$15,000 scholarship for a grand total of \$22,500.

Participation in the Oratorical World Championships as a contestant or volunteer provides an excellent opportunity to "Choose Optimism" and to look forward to the future during the pandemic. "While we are not able to get together to watch the Oratorical Championship in person this year, we are happy to be able to continue this outstanding tradition of awarding scholarships to young people around the world," said Optimist International President Mark Weinsoff of Santa Barbara, California. "We would like to thank both of our Foundations for their continued,

unwavering financial support to the Oratorical Contest. Please consider supporting them, especially during these difficult financial times.”

Fittingly, the theme for this year's Oratorical contest is "Healing the World with Optimism." Contestants will write and deliver original speeches using this theme. Since 1928, many students around the world have been introduced to the world of public speaking through the Optimist International Oratorical Contest. This year's contest will once again show the world—that even in difficult times—Optimist Clubs and members are continuing to serve youth!

Optimist International, founded in 1919, is a service organization serving youth and communities around the globe. It has nearly 70,000 adult and youth members in more than 2,500 clubs in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico and many other nations throughout the world. Carrying the motto “Bringing Out the Best in Youth, in our Communities, and in Ourselves,” Optimists conduct positive service projects that reach more than six million young people each year. To learn more about Optimist International, please call (314) 371-6000 or visit the organization’s website at www.optimist.org.

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