



“I am a new Optimist, though I've always been one at heart. My Optimism stems from seeing kindness and joy in others blossom when shared. Optimism is contagious and I'm glad to be infected and share it with others! I want to share the concept that together we are better and so much good can be achieved with Optimism and goodwill.”

- Teresa McLellan, Freeman Youth Services Optimist Club, London, ON

Audrey Newell, Member of the Milton Optimist Club in the Central Ontario District, gave this heartfelt comment at a meeting:

“A few years ago I was in a deep state of depression. I had been threatened with physical abuse, lied to and stolen from, which led to bankruptcy. That is when my son dragged me to my first Optimist Club meeting. I didn't want to go. When I saw the Fines Session for the first time, I was horrified that grown people would play such silly games, and vowed never to go back to another meeting. However, I was dragged back again and again, at which time I started to sort of enjoy the Fines Sessions. I got to know a few of the Club Members which made it a lot easier for me to attend meetings, especially when my son moved away and left the Optimist Club. I continued to go to the meetings on my own.

I am now happier than I have been in many years. I feel alive again and enjoy life thanks to the Optimist Club of Milton. I believe that becoming an Optimist Member helped me realize the world is still full of kind, compassionate people, and for that, I am very thankful.”

This is a tribute from a true Optimist to a great Club and to the spirit of Optimism. In striving to serve the youth of our communities, we make a strong impact on ourselves and folks of all ages.

- Submitted with Audrey's permission by Ted Simmonds, Central Ontario District Governor



“I joined the Breakfast Optimist Club of Kalamazoo (BOCK) in January of 2000. At that time I was an Assistant Vice President at National City Bank and they encouraged us to serve the community through a service club. I chose BOCK because they worked with children and that was where my interests were and still are today. One event I enjoy more than any of the others is the Back-to-School Shopping, which takes place each year in August. We take children to Target just before school starts and let them spend \$100-\$135 for clothes. We want them to be able to start school with new clothes, which they were not able to do in the past. We have taken 50 less fortunate children on these special shopping trips during the past several years. We also provide them with backpacks and bags full of school supplies. We partner with Family and Children Services of Kalamazoo on this project.

The smiles on the children's faces and the tears and thankfulness in the eyes of the mothers as they checked out made me feel I had made the right decision when I joined BOCK over 14 years ago. So my Optimism is the children that need our love and caring by taking them to shop for new clothes, which many have never had, especially on their first day of school and many other projects we do for the children throughout the year.

- Wilma VanLoo, Lieutenant Governor – Zone 6 Michigan District

