

Kansas District Newsletter November 2025

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Treasurer:

Joe Shank, shank9538@gmail.com

Secretary:

Mary Griffin, kumoogie@aol.com

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Zone 3: Bill Wisdom, billwisdom17@gmail.com

Zone 4: Jim Morris.

jimmorris2007@yahoo.com

District Team

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Member: Cecil Cunday, cbcundayii@aol.com

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Oratorical: Diana Carlin-Pierron,

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rnelson1021@sbcglobal.net

KANSAS DISTRICT OPTIMISTS
2nd Quarter District Meeting
January 23-24, 2026
Arkansas City

Meeting Place:

Buford Theatre 118 S. Summit St. Arkansas City



Saturday Lunch: Optimist of Ark City Pork

Burgers



Meeting reservation and hotel information will be sent to clubs soon.

Attention: First person to solve this "Name the Club" puzzle AND attend the Ark City meeting will win a prize. Call Jim Morris (316-516-1186) or email him at jimmorris2007@yahoo.com with your answers:

Name this Kansas Optimist Club by its projects: Imagination Library Reading Program, Jefferson Leaders, Fire Pup Program, City Fireworks Celebration (important clue!)



MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR RANDY BAILES

Spreading Optimism and Cheer Across Kansas Season's Greetings, Kansas Optimists

As the holiday season approaches, I am reminded of the incredible warmth, kindness, and optimism that define our district. At a time when communities gather in celebration and reflection, it's especially important to remember the power we each possess to make a difference—one smile, one helping hand, and one act of optimism at a time.

This year, our clubs across Kansas have demonstrated remarkable dedication to the Optimist mission, uplifting youth and supporting local families. From holiday service projects to joyful gatherings, you have shown that optimism truly changes lives. I am deeply grateful for your unwavering spirit and generosity. Your commitment not only brightens our communities but inspires hope for a brighter tomorrow.

As you celebrate with family and friends, I encourage you to take pride in all we have accomplished together. Let us continue to embody the Optimist Creed, striving to "wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature we meet a smile" and sharing encouragement and joy wherever we go. The holiday season is an ideal opportunity to reach out, connect, and extend kindness to those who may need it most.

Looking ahead to the new year, I am excited for the opportunities that await our district. Together, we will continue to grow, serve, and build a legacy of optimism throughout Kansas. Thank you for your leadership, your compassion, and your unstoppable positivity.

May this holiday season fill your hearts with peace, love, and optimism. Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and blessed holiday!

From my family to yours with gratitude and cheer,

Randy Bailes 2025-2026 Kansas District Governor randyb16@cox.net

FIRST QUARTER DISTRICT MEETING

The Kansas District Optimist 1st Quarter Meeting was held October 17-18 in Salina. On Saturday members gathered at Christ the King Lutheran Church where they were welcomed to Salina by Hank Boyer, a member of the Salina Optimist Club. During the morning members listened to a video of the inspiring address made at the Optimist International Convention by Dan Meers who recently retired as K.C. Wolf. They also heard a recorded message from Optimist International President Tom Kendo outlining his plans for the upcoming year.

During lunch an auction for two gift baskets was held with proceeds benefiting the Optimist International Foundation. Following the break the business portion of the meeting was conducted with approval of the 2025-2026 District Budget. Then reports were made by various committee chairs and the Lt. Governors. Rod Obermeier spoke of how clubs can engage new and existing members, and Kris Kirkes gave a presentation on how to recognize and utilize members' leadership skills.

Please plan to join us for the 2nd Quarter District Meeting which will be held in Arkansas City January 23-24, 2026.









CLUB IMPACT REPORT

The following is copied from the "October 7, 2025 Optimist International Newsday Tuesday" email.

The Club Pride Report is changing!

We're excited to announce a new and improved way to capture your club's success!

The Club Pride Report has been replaced with two new digital reports:

The **Club Project Impact Report** — completed each time your club finishes a service project.

The **End-of-Year Club Impact Report** — completed at the end of the Optimist year to share your club's overall story, including membership growth, fundraising, and other accomplishments. The End-of-Year Club Impact Report will be available in August 2026.

The **Club Project Impact Report** is ready for you to start imputing your club's projects today!

How to Submit a Project

- 1. Log into Optimist Leaders submissions must be entered by a Club Officer (President, Secretary, or Treasurer).
- 2. Click on "Club Impact Report."
- 3. Select one of **Optimist International's Signature Programs** (such a Oratorical, Essay, CCDHH, JOI, Junior Golf) or choose a **Community Project** your club has completed.
- 4. Enter the project details and submit!

By Entering Your Projects Regularly, Your Club Will

See all your projects in one place throughout the year — a great way to visualize your service impact as it grows.

Showcase your impact on youth, schools, and communities.

Simplify end-of-year reporting — no more scrambling for details!

Be recognized for your service achievements and dedication to optimism in action.

CLUB IMPACT REPORT (CONT)

At the end of the year, your club will be able to reflect on the incredible difference you've made — a true celebration of optimism in service!

Helpful Tip: Use the Web App

If you follow the instructions to download the **Progressive Web App (PWA)** to your phone, it will remember your login credentials for easier access. You can even use the app offline — your data will automatically upload the next time you connect to the internet.

In the Optimist Institute there is a Quick Reference Guide for completing the Club Impact Report Online.

Currently, only Club Presidents and Club Secretaries have access to making entries to this report. As much as I would like to assist you, I have no way of looking at what you are seeing on the OI Website. Randy

Randy Bailes 2925-2026 Kansas District Governor randyb16@cox.net

A summary sheet of the Presidential Incentive program and a Club Tracking Form are included at the end of this newsletter.

KANSAS DISTRICT FOUNDATION



2025/2026 THE YEAR OF **DIME A DAY**



Dime A Day is the backbone of our International Foundation. The Kansas District supported this fund with 165 members in 2025. Just a reminder, the Optimist Foundation budgets \$10,000 for each District (40) to fund the Essay, Oratorical, and CCDHH scholarships. Currently we have 784 members. Therefore, we have 21% of our members that were Dime A Day members in 2024/25. I would like to suggest that each of our clubs give some serious thought to supporting our Foundation, and especially the Dime A Day program.

As I reported to you last month, the cost per member is \$36.50/year. I watched a commercial on tv that said, "If you will just send only \$19 per month, you may make a difference.". My thought was that if I would send \$3.05 per month to Optimist International Foundation, my money is guaranteed to make a difference in a young person's life.

I would like to ask every club, whether 5 members or 125 members to set a goal, of at least 50% of the members of your club be Dime A Day members in Optimist International Foundation.

To that end, every club that achieves that goal will be recognized as A Club of Distinction at our Fall Quarterly meeting in 2026.

Oh, and by the way, just in case you haven't heard the latest:

IF YOU JOIN DIME A DAY BY JANUARY 1, 2026, YOU WILL RECEIVE A TREASURED DIME A DAY PIN, AND YOUR NAME WILL BE PLACED IN A DRAWING THAT WILL OCCUR IN ARKANSAS CITY ON JANUARY 24TH, 2026, AT OUR 2ND QUARTER MEETING. THE WINNING TICKET WILL RECEIVE, NOT 1, BUT 2 GREAT SEATS FOR THE I-70 SERIES BASEBALL GAME BETWEEN THE KANSAS CITY ROYALS AND THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS ON JUNE 19, 2026. The prize also includes PARKING.

If I can be of any help to your club, please give me a call at 785-248-6309, or email me at ddfox1701@yahboo.com. You can also use the QR code at the right to Venmo your Dime-a-Day payment to me on the Franklin Co. Optimist account.

Yours In Optimism,
Dale Fox
District Foundation Rep
ddfox1701@yahoo.com



CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Health & Wellness Committee would like District Clubs to know that the Optimist International Foundation has Health & Wellness Grants available for clubs to apply in the following project areas:

Healthy Lifestyles – e.g. - Physical Fitness, Child Obesity, Healthy Eating

Chronic Diseases – e.g. – Childhood Cancer, Juvenile Diabetes, Multiple Sclerosis, Ronald McDonald House, Sickle Cell Anemia

Mental Health – e.g. – Depression, Abuse, Bullying

Disabilities – Physical, Intellectual& Developmental – e. g. – Autism, Special Olympics

Grant information and application forms can be found on the Optimist International Foundation website. These grants must be completed within a one-year time frame.

At the 2025 Optimist International Convention in St. Louis a session was presented addressing Club Grant Applications and common mistakes club make when applying for these grants. The common mistakes are as follows:

- · Vague or missing project description
- · No timeline or unclear project dates
- · Budget section left blank or unrealistic amounts listed
- · Matching funds not identified or explained
- · Unclear who benefits or how many youths are served
- · No mention of Optimist member involvement
- · Application not signed by Club President
- · Club dues not current or CFR (Club Foundation Representative) not listed
- · Project does not match grant type (e.g. ongoing project submitted for grant)
- · No explanation of how the project will be executed or measured.

These grants are a wonderful way for District clubs to extend their services, meeting youth needs within their communities.

Marlene Natoli, Health and Wellness Chair, marnatoli@att.net

KANSAS DISTRICT QUALIFIER-OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR GOLF TOURNAMENT

KANSAS DISTRICT QUALIFIER OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP (OIJGC)

ELIGIBILITY: Open to Girls and Boys 10 - 18 years of age who have not turned 19 on or before

July 30, 2026, and may not have attended college. Entry Deadline - 5/30/26

WHEN: June 5th 2026

WHERE: Emporia Golf Course, Emporia Kansas 1133 S HWY 99, 620-343-5610

*Driving Range - balls provided

TO ENTER: Go To - OPTIMIST JUNIOR GOLF: KANSAS DISTRICT QUALIFIER or

Optimist International Junior Golf Championship

POSTING: Tournament results posted approx. 1HR after all play is completed at -

www.emporiagolfcourse.com and ASAP Optimist International websites

TEE TIMES: Posted May 31st by 5 PM

Girls All 8:30 - 9:30 AM (Oldest Group First)
Boys 10 - 15 10 AM - 12PM (Oldest Group First)

Boys 16 - 18 12:00 PM All times are approximate and

Requested tee times can be accommodated

OIJGC DATES: July 15 - 20 Boys 10-11, 12-13 and Girls 10-12

2026 July 20 - 25 Boys 14-15 and Girls 13-14

July 25 -30 Boys 16-18 and Girls 15-18

SPONSORSHIP: Girls 13-14 & 15-18 Winner, and Boys 14-15 & 16-18 Winner

Will have entry fee sponsored by Kansas District Optimists

QUALIFYING Equal to or better than and (Available Spots)

SCORES: Girls 10-12 = 96 (2) Boys 10-11 = 95 (2)

Girls 13-14 = 92 (2) Boys 12-13 = 89 (2)

Girls 15-18 = 84 (2) Boys 14-15 = 82 (2) Boys 16-18 = 77 (5)

YARDAGE: Girls 10-12 = 5000 Boys 10-11 = 5500

Girls 13-14 = 5500 Boys 12-13 = 6000

Girls 15-18 = 6000 Boys 14-15 = 6500 Boys 16-18 = 6800

TROPHIES: 1st - 3rd All Divisions, Plus 4th and 5th for Boys 16-18

NOTE: All participants play 18 holes, pull carts are allowed. Parents may spot and help look for balls but no coaching. Parents may rent a cart but must stay on the cart path.

Kit Kelley

Jr. Golf Chair

kkelley1099@sbcglobal.net

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL ESSAY AND ORATORICAL CONTESTS

ESSAY CONTEST

The Essay Contest topic for the 2025-2026 year is "How My Acts of Service Help Me Understand What My Community Means to Me". There are excellent resources on the Kansas District website (ksoptimist.org) or the Optimist International website (optimist.org) to help Optimist clubs plan and publicize local essay contests. Or you can contact the District chairperson if you have questions. The winning essay from each club should be submitted to the District chair by February 28, 2026. The District Essay Contest winner receives a \$2,500 college scholarship.

Lisa Brummett Essay Contest Chairperson thebrummett5@gmail.com

ORATORICAL CONTEST

As your club decides on activities for the upcoming year make plans to hold a club Oratorical Contest. The topic for the 2025-2026 year is "The Moment I Realized I Belonged--My Definition of Community". The winner of your club's contest will enter your Zone Oratorical Contest and Zone winners move on to compete for \$5,000 in college scholarships in the Kansas District Oratorical Contest to be held April 25th in Olathe. The 1st place winner of the District contest receives a \$2,500 scholarship, and will then go to the Regional/World competition in St. Louis next summer. 2nd and 3rd place District winners receive \$1,500 and \$1,000 scholarships. Regional winners are given a \$5,000 college scholarship and compete in the World Contest. The 1st place winner in the World Competition receives a \$15,000 scholarship, the 2nd place winner a \$10,000 scholarship, and the 3rd place winner a \$5,000 scholarship. All the information you need to hold a contest is available on the Kansas District website (ksoptimist.org) or the Optimist International website (optimist.org) under Member Resources. Or you can contact the District chair to answer your questions.

Diana Carlin-Pierron
Oratorical Contest Chair
dianabcarlin@gmail.com

MANHATTAN CLUB ACTIVITIES

The **Manhattan Optimist Club** has been successfully selling live Christmas trees for the past 67 years. Our biggest fundraiser began in 1958 by selling trees from a flatbed trailer driven through Manhattan neighborhoods. By 1960 we were located in a city park and in 2008 moved to our permanent location at Optimist Park in Manhattan, Kansas.

This year our inventory includes 763 trees. Our biggest sellers are Fraser Firs (40% of our inventory), followed by Douglas firs (26% of our inventory). We specialize in tall trees, with over half of our tree inventory between 7 and 11 feet. We also sell tree stands, tree decorations and a variety of greenery (wreaths, swags and garland).

We are open from Thanksgiving Day through December 14th. Sales are especially brisk Thanksgiving weekend, as we sell over 65% of our inventory, Thursday through Sunday.

Santa's Workshop continues to be enjoyed by our younger visitors. Kiddos may choose from a variety of stuffed animals, toys and candy at no charge. They then may join mom and dad for some popcorn and cider.

This is our club's biggest fundraiser. Our Christmas Tree lot sales, combined with our annual Spaghetti Dinner and Chili Crawl, have allowed us to invest in over twenty programs benefiting Manhattan area youth. These programs include T-Ball, Hoop, Holler N Shoot, Early Expressions Art, Pops Choir, Youth (grade school) of the Month, Student (high school) of the Month, and a host of others.

Jean Klassen Manhattan Optimist Club jean@connerandcompany.com



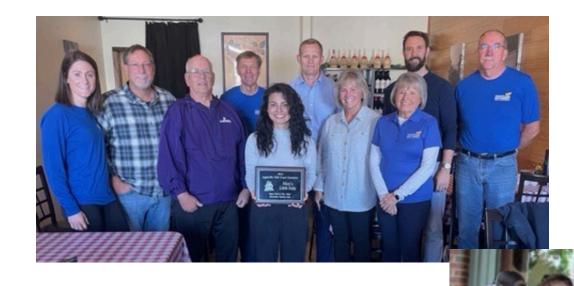


MANHATTAN CLUB ACTIVITIES

The **Manhattan Optimist Club** presented the Manhattan Arts Center with a check for \$1,040.00 to support their ongoing programs for youth in Manhattan. The Arts Center provides numerous opportunities in the arts for youth including classes and theater productions, and their programs continue to grow in popularity. The club presented the check to Kendra Kuhlman, Executive Director; Gracie Stutterheim, Markey and Development Director; and Addie Schneider, Director of Theater Education.



The yearly tradition of the Aggieville Chili Competition continued as the **Manhattan Optimist Club** held the event for the 23rd year on October 18th. Over 400 participants visited several restaurants, sampled chili at each one, and then voted for their favorite. The competition was close, but this year's winner of the "Best Chili in Aggieville" was Nico's Italian Restaurant for their delicious Pepperoni Chili recipe. Governor-Elect Jacob Swisher (far right in second photo) joined in the fun too!



Bill Wisdom
Jean Klassen
Manhattan Optimist Club
jean@connerandcompany.com

OPTIMISTS OF ARK CITY ACTIVITIES

The **Optimists of Arkansas City** participated in their community's Arkalalah event in October. They had a concession stand at the festival selling their famous pork burgers and other items. They even had a new member to help with the grilling! All the money raised at the event funds the club's projects for young people.







The Optimists of Ark City also assisted with the Cowley College Aces Pulled Pork Dinner Fundraiser. The club prepared all the pork for the dinner and helped throughout the day. The events was a tremendous success with over 250 dinners served. The proceeds from the dinner fund Cowley's annual food packaging event where student volunteers assemble over 20,000 meal servings for local food pantries, churches, and local blessing boxes in Cowley County.



WEST WICHITA TRIVIA NIGHT

The **West Wichita Optimists** held their first Trivia Night/Silent Auction on Thursday, November 6th at Emerson-Biggins in Wichita. Fourteen teams competed in the new club event which was organized under the leadership of club member Ryan Littlejohn. Pam States and Marilyn Landreth assisted with the auction and Jerry Jackson and Ron Helten with sponsorships. In addition to the teams' trivia game entry fees, the club raised money at the event through table sponsorships, a silent auction of items donated by local businesses, a gift card grab bag, and a 50-50 raffle.

Dan Holder West Wichita Optimist Club danlpkansas@yahoo.com









TOPEKA OPTIMISTS ACTIVITIES

The **Topeka Optimist Club** held a Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, October 11th at Christ the King Church in Topeka, serving pancakes, sausage, and biscuits and gravy. In addition to the breakfast, the club held a bake sale to raise funds for their youth programs. We understand Governor Randy does a great job making the pancake batter!



The **Topeka Optimists** are also holding their annual sale of Holiday Wreaths and Swags this month.

Rod Obermeier Suzi Obermeier Topeka Optimist Club obermeierrd@cox.net





GREAT BEND CLUB ACTIVITIES

After winning in the Great Bend Major League Pitch Hit and Run competition two athletes advanced to the regional competition hosted by the Kansas City Royals. Both came home with championship medals! Baze Hogan, a freshman at Great Bend High School, won the 13-14 year old softball division in Kansas City with a score of 1,140 points, bettering her local competition score of 1,000 points. Briggs Keiswetter, a 4th grader at Cornerstone Classical Private School in Salina, competed in the 9-10 year old baseball division and turned in the best performance in his division with a score of 875 points. The Great Bend Pitch Hit and Run Competition is sponsored by the **Great Bend Optimist Club** and the Great Bend Recreation Commission.





This fall the **Great Bend Optimist Club** continued its annual project of presenting a dictionary to every 6th grader in Great Bend



Randy Goering
Great Bend Optimist Club
randy.goering1@gmail.com

SUNRISE OPTIMIST CLUB CRAFT FAIR

The **Sunrise Optimist Club of North Topeka** held their annual "Made From the Heart" Holiday Craft Fair at their event center on Saturday, November 1, 2025. A total of 24 vendors displayed their products at the event showcasing woodworking, jewelry, Christmas ornaments, and other items. Prior to the event Charlie Galligher of the Sunrise Club appeared with one of the crafters, Denice Large, on Topeka station WIBW-TV to promote the craft fair.

Charlie Galligher Sunrise Optimist Club cgalligher@cox.net













KANSAS OPTIMIST HALLOWEEN ACTIVITIES

Youngsters enjoyed rides on the **Franklin County Optimist Train** at a Trunk or Treat event this fall. Bruce Groninger was the engineer with the help of Harry Peckham. The train consists of an engine (powered by a lawn tractor) and 4 cars with 2 seats each. The club enjoys taking the train to gatherings where there are a lot of young children who will line up for a ride!





Carolyn Holland and Connie Snider from the **Olathe Noon Optimist Club** handed out treats to youngsters at Trick or Treat Off the Street at Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm Historic Site in Olathe.

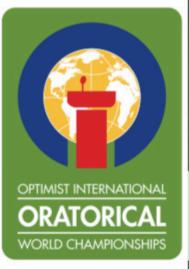


The **Topeka Optimist Club** participated in a Trunk or Treat event, giving out candy to the youngsters in the community.





OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONTESTS 2025-2026





Topic

"The Moment I Realized I Belonged

—My Definition of Community"

ORATORICAL CONTEST

Beginning in 1928, the Oratorical Contest has become the longest-running program of Optimist International.

The contest is designed for young people to gain experience in public speaking and provide them with an opportunity to compete for multiple college scholarships with a pre-assigned topic.

District Scholarships:
First Place: \$2,500 • Second Place: \$1,500 • Third Place: \$1,000
with a chance to win up to \$22,500 at the
World Championships level

ESSAY CONTEST

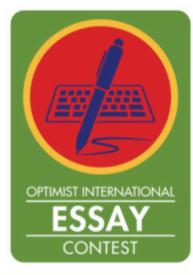
The Essay Contest is sponsored by Optimist International to give young people the opportunity to write about their own opinions regarding the world in which they live.

The approach can encompass a young person's personal experience, the experience of their country or a more historical perspective. In addition to developing skills for written expression, participants also have the opportunity to win a college scholarship!

One District Scholarship of \$2,500



Topic
"How My Acts of Service Help Me
Understand What My Community
Means to Me"







"The Moment I Realized I Belonged

-My Definition of Community"

COMMUNICATION CONTEST FOR THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

This contest offers an opportunity for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing to present their thoughts in the community, gaining skills, which can only come from signing or speaking to a large audience. Patterned after the Optimist Oratorical Contest, the contest offers youth the chance to compete in speech or sign language with the chance to win a college scholarship.

One District Scholarship of \$2,500

KIDS SPEAK OUT! SPEECH CONTEST

All young people can compete in the Optimist Oratorical Contest. The "Kids Speak Out" contest is a "pre-Oratorical" program that provides a more equitable competition for younger speakers.





2025-2026 PRESIDENTIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

CLUB RECOGNITION

Merit Club

- Grow Club by Net +O members (Maintain beginning October 1 membership count)
- Make a non-restricted contribution to the OIF or CCOF of at least \$100
- Be current on District and International dues and fees

Honor Club

• Meet Merit Club Requirements plus Grow Club by Net +3 members

Distinguished Club

- Meet Honor Club Requirements plus one of the following:
 - Grow Club by Net +15 (inclusive of 3 Honor Club members)
 - · Charter a one or more new Clubs

DISTRICT RECOGNITON

Merit District

- Grow District by Net +10 members
- Raise \$7,500 in non-restricted contributions to the OIF or CCOF
- · All District reports filed with Optimist International as required

Honor District

- · Grow District by:
 - Net+10 members and Build 1 new Club or
 - o Grow District by Net +25 (inclusive of 10 members from Merit District)
- Raise \$7,500 in non-restricted contributions to the OIF or CCOF
- · All District reports filed with Optimist International as required

Distinguished District

- · Grow District by:
 - o Net +25 members and Build 3 new Clubs or
 - Grow District by Net +70 (inclusive of 25 members from Honor District)
- Raise \$10,000 in non-restricted contributions to the OIF or CCOF
- All District reports filed with Optimist International as required

Club & District Incentives will be fulfilled through the Optimist Merch Store.

ADDITIONAL AWARDS

Governor Pacesetter Award

• Grow District by Net+15 in membership by June 30. And Charter two or more new adult clubs by June 30.

Builder of Excellence

Up to 4 Builders of Excellence can be named for each new adult Club, regardless of the number of Sponsor Clubs.
 Up to two Builders of Excellence can be named for a Club within a Club. (Medallion for first BOE with a Ribbon Star thereafter)

Club Tracking Form

Club Name & Club Number				
Oct. 1 Me	embership:			Sept. 30 Membership:
MERIT CLUB				
STEPS TO ACCOMPLISHMENT 1. Grow Club by Net + 0 members (Maintain beginning October 1 membership count) 2. Make a non-restricted contribution to the OIF or CCOF of at least \$100 3. Be current on District and International dues and Fees				
HONOR CLUB				
STEPS TO ACCOMPLISHMENT 1. Meet Merit Club Requirements PLUS Grow Club by Net + 3 Members				
DISTINGUISHED CLUB				
STEPS TO ACCOMPLISHMENT 1. Meet Honor Club Requirements PLUS one of the following: • Grow Club by New + 15 members (including 3 members from Honor Club)				
Charter one or more new Clubs				
DUES FOUNDATION				
International Dues				
t Quarter ue Date Dec. 31	Date Paid	Second Quarter Due Date Mar. 31	Date Paid	Club Foundation Representative: Amount Donated: (Min. of \$100)
d Quarter ue Date une 30	Date Paid	Fourth Quarter Due Date Sept. 30	Date Paid	NST INTERNAL.
District Dues				
	Date Paid		Date Paid	FRIEND OF YOUTH

Signature _

Lt. Governor

Club President