



**OPTIMIST CLUB
OF AURORA INC**

Opti Prime

Quarterly
January 2021
Volume 1



Presidents Message



This was not the way we had planned to celebrate our 35th Anniversary. Yes, 35 years of Optimism in Aurora! It has been our pleasure serving and supporting Aurora's Youth by our hundreds of members over the years, this is something to be very proud of, and we are!

Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said in the 1940's while working with the United Nations after WWII "Never let a good crisis go to waste". Closer to home in 1980 Canadian Hero Terry Fox was quoted as saying "Anything is possible if you try" as he embarked on a cross-Canada run to raise money and awareness for cancer research. That journey was called the Marathon Hope.

2020 has been a year of hardship for many and has felt like a world-wide Marathon of Hope. Hope that a vaccine would be found for the virus COVID-19 and we can all feel safe and go back to life as we remember it.

The last 11 months have brought hardship and even death to many. It has been a year of loss and uncertainty. And even for the most Optimistic the situation can be overwhelming at times.

Members have said to me "It sure is not a good year to be President!" or "Would you want to do another year so you could get the whole experience?"

My thoughts...it's a great year to be President! We just have to think like Terry "Anything is possible if you try" and try we have. With the support of the Board and our members we have been able to provide for our Town and its Youth.

During the summer we sat down, masks on and 6' apart and changed all the roles of our Board Members. We gave them duties, challenges and goals that could be managed during a pandemic. We knew that not supporting our Youth of Aurora as we have done for the last 35 years was not an option! I thank those members that have come before me had the wisdom to put money away "For a rainy day" who knew it would be a worldwide pandemic that this money would provide a cushion of support in a time of need.

This year is allowing us to work on all those things that just don't get done during a busier Optimist year. Our goals this year are to increase and improve our social media, update our newsletter, catalogue all our inventory, put together a sponsorship presentation package, find new ways to fundraise, update and make repairs to our mobile kitchen and complete a "tell all" manual for this money-making machine!

Kind donations from companies have allowed us to install plexiglass barriers and a hand sanitation station in our Mobile Kitchen that will get us "safely" back on the road in the very near future.

Although many of our fundraising activities and town participation has been challenged, we have been able to keep up with many past and new fundraising activities and take part in activities of giving back.

Thank you to all the hard working Board Members and Members. We could not go into our 36th year without you. I am excited for the New Year and all the promise it will bring. Stay safe my friends.

Yours in Optimism,
Sandy Bundy

Optimism In Our Community

Southlake Run

The Southlake Run took on a different look this year. Rather than a large group run each person did their run/walk individually over a 5-day period. **Anna Kroeplin, Tom and Sheila Beck, Rob Gaby and Glen Sharp** represented our Club. Thank you to all of those that donated over \$800.00 to our local hospital.



Anna



Glen

The Aurora Optimist Club laid a wreath at the Cenotaph on November 10th. We had about a dozen members turn out.

It was a lovely, warm fall day while we held our own small Remembrance Day ceremony. Sandy and Stu Bundy both spoke eloquently about the sacrifices made by so many during the war years. It is always a wonderful reminder to be grateful and never forget.

Joy to The World

Aurora Food Pantry Needed Our Help!



We have unanimously agreed to continue to donate food during these difficult times.

Sandy Bundy has been communicating with the pantry on a regular basis to determine what they need the most. Sandy and an assortment of Opti members have been coordinating the very large grocery shopping trips to Ross' No Frills, Aurora. Ross and other private donations helped us in our mission to ensure nobody goes without.

We are very proud to be able to have contributed over \$5,000.00!!

Tidings of Comfort & Joy.... ***Santa Under the Stars Parade***

The team from Town of Aurora really rose to the occasion this year with the Santa Under the Stars parade.

Lest We Forget





Sandy Bundy did an excellent job creating our theme. Mrs. Claus (Kim Robertson) was busy baking gingerbread men in the kitchen while an elf (Sandy Bundy) and gingerbread man (Anthony Garramone) frolicked around waving to the passing cars.

It was a joy to see the enthusiastic families drive by. If you missed it go to <https://www.aurora.ca/en/recreation-arts-and-culture/santa-under-the-stars-parade.aspx>

York Region Police Holiday Gift Drive



Each year at Christmas we participate in donating to local kids. This year there is a big need for gifts for teens. In particular they were

looking for, hoodies, hats, mitts, scarves, basically anything cozy.

They also requested diapers and formula for babies.

We are very pleased to note that our members have generously donated over \$1,000 in gift cards along with many other items.

This year we are not able to have our annual Christmas dinner party where we load up the police car with donations. However, the Bundy's offered to collect everything and have the police car pick it up from their home.



Over 650 cars drove by the parked floats at the Aurora Leisure Complex. The lights, music, cheers and general good spirit was so uplifting! It was a big success and we were thrilled to be among the participants.

A huge shout out to **Rob Gaby** and **Ken Morreau** for taking the lead and organizing this event. We'd also like to thank Terry Sherin, Stewart McLaren, Rose Fulop, Bill Hack, Stu Bundy and Carolyne Trussler for their time, effort and donation of decorations and space to get the float ready.



2020 has been the biggest challenge we have ever faced collectively in many decades. Let's keep in mind the families who have been hit the hardest and hope we have made their Christmas a little brighter for them.

On Earth Peace, Goodwill Toward Our Military

Diane Buchanan took charge of **Christmas cards for Canadian military personnel.**

Diane's goal was to have 1,500 ready to send by December 1st. We were thrilled when she told us 2,100 cards were written and ready to send.

Thank you to everybody and their family who participated! Being away from home during the holidays can't be easy and it must be a nice reminder that the military are appreciated for keeping a watchful eye out for us.

Fruit Cake Fundraiser!

This year we decided to go back to something we haven't done in almost 20 years. We sold Christmas fruit cakes. Past President **Brian Walsh** took this on and it has turned out to be a big success. We are projected to make several thousand dollars from the cakes, we have helped Grant's Bakery in Huntingdon, Quebec as they are the largest employer in their small town. Grant's Bakery were able to include our Optimist logo on their packaging as well. Two local stores, Barron Warehouse and Kitchen Accents gave us wonderful support by selling our Christmas cakes in their stores.



Community Youth Service Award Scholarship Program



One of the Optimist Club of Aurora's endeavours has been the

Community Youth Service Award Scholarship Program. This \$300 award together with a plaque is given to high school students that meet the criteria.

The purpose of this award is to foster volunteerism in the community amongst graduating high school students. The award is based on the impact the student has had through volunteering, raising funds, helping other students or individuals within the Aurora community. One student from each of the following

schools is selected each year: Aurora High School, Cardinal Carter High School, Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, Ecole Secondaire Catholique Renaissance and St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School.

Our dedicated member **Rosalyn Gonsalves** has been doing an excellent job managing this program.

School Healthy Snack Program

It is a proven fact that children learn better if their tummies are full. Unfortunately, many children in Aurora arrive at school having had no breakfast or with little or nothing for



lunch. The Optimist Club reached out to local schools to see if we could assist in providing healthy snacks for the students. The programs vary but, in most cases, food is available before school, at lunch and a snack cart may go out during the day. Children enjoy such items as apples, cheese strings, granola bars, juice, bagels and yogurt. We are proud that we are able to be of assistance with this program since 2016. Thank you to **Glen Sharp** for taking the lead on this project.

Cancelled

2020 has been a year like no other. Due to the COVID Pandemic the Following events to name a few had to be cancelled.

Chess Tournament
Easter Egg Hunt and Pancake Breakfast
Judging and Sponsoring of the Aurora Youth Art Festival
Annual Beer Fest
Big Brothers/Big Sisters Bowling for Kids
Street Festival
School end of year Barbecues
June 30th Party in the Town Park
July 1st Celebration
The Hoedown
Meet-the-Teacher Barbecues
Legion BBQ
The Haunted Forest

Here's hoping that 2021 will allow us to continue with these fundraising events and the opportunity to serve our community!

Optimist Member News

Celebrations and Congratulations!

In June many of our members were recognized by the **Town of Aurora** for their volunteerism.

We are so proud of our Optimist Members for reaching the following milestones for volunteering in our community.

Volunteer Service Awards

35 years of service:

Alex Ansell, Ken McIssac, Grant Perry and Rob Whiting

30 years of service:

John O'Heir and John Thompson

20 years of service:

Terry Sherin

Lifetime Member Awards

In October our club recognized **Anna Kroeplin** and **Janice Walsh** with Optimist Lifetime Member Awards. Congratulations to both of these hard working ladies! The club and community appreciate your efforts.

The Board of the Aurora (Adult) Soccer Club awarded **Anna Kroeplin** "Person of the Year". This award recognized all Anna's volunteer work with the Soccer Club.

Other BIG news...

This summer it was announced that **Brian North** would be among 123 Canadians to receive the **Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers**. This is obviously an enormous honour and it is very well deserved! We can certainly attest to the amount of hard work that Brian contributes not only to the Optimist Club but to several other fortunate organizations.

Brian was to travel with his family to Ottawa to receive this award. Brian also received the **2019-2020 Presidents Citation Award** from the Optimist Club!

Congratulations to these long-standing and valuable club members!



Brian and Anna



Brian and Janice

(Please note all safety precautions were taken by Brian in the presenting of these awards. A mask was not needed while he was in the presence of Janice...they know each other.)



Brian and Brian

Optimist News

And the Community Leadership Award goes to...The Optimist Club of Aurora

This award is presented to an individual or not-for-profit organization that has significantly enhanced the Town through their contributions, commitment and leadership in the areas of charitable giving, civic engagement, community events or community spirit.

We shared this award with Steve Falk who is the founding member and current leader of Soul Benefit and has been for the past 20 years. To date, it is estimated that Soul Benefit has raised over \$2,000,000 for charity. Steve, if you would ever like to become an Optimist, we would welcome you with open arms. **Congratulations!**

Opti Christmas Party

A pandemic could not stop us from getting together to celebrate the season!

Members gathered on zoom for surprise group parties of 4-6 members and then we all gathered together via zoom for one large after party. Members came dressed in everything from tux with tails to PJs and sweats. With drinks and goodies close by we all enjoyed socializing with our fellow members.



Thank You!

We would like to extend a huge thank-you to:



Kleenway Business, Maintenance Service Inc. and Keystone Home Products Ltd. for support for enhancements to our Optimist Food Trailer so we can safely get back out in the community and ensure everyone is safe by following the new guidelines.

Aurora Kitchen Accents, Barrons Warehouse and Almac Industrial Systems for their support of the Fruit Cake Sales Fundraiser.

Hurst Bakery for their support of the Santa Under the Stars Parade. Best Gingerbread in town!

And...when it is safe to meet in person, we thank the following organizations.

The Aurora Legion for allowing us to use their facilities for our monthly Business Meeting.

The Aurora (adult) Soccer Club for allowing us to use their facilities for our monthly Dinner Meeting.

The Town of Aurora for allowing us to use their facilities for our monthly Board Meeting.

Fun Fact Celebrating our 35th Anniversary 1985-2020



We are celebrating our 35th Anniversary this year!

We will have to wait to enjoy any actual celebrations in person, but we can certainly be proud of all of the amazing contributions this club has contributed to the Youth of Aurora.



One of our very large donations was done back in 2000. We were happy to donate \$20,000 to the Highview Spirit Playground. This fully accessible playground is really worth seeing. It is located at Highview Public School on McClellan Way.



All children deserve to experience playfulness and fun and this playground certainly allows them to do that. It was the first barrier free playground in York Region at that time.



Many thanks to Georgia Pottage for designing our 35 Years of Service logo.

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Interested in the **Fundraising Committee** or have a great idea? Contact Board members Susan Pratt or Susan Gaudet

Have a news story or pictures for the **Opti Prime Newsletter** Contact Board member and Opti Prime editor Kim Robertson

Events planned for the Winter Season are on hold until it is safe to do so.

Business Meetings: First Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm on Zoom

Business and Social Dinner Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of the month are on hold

Board Meetings: Last Wednesday of the month 7:00pm on Zoom



**OPTIMIST CLUB
OF AURORA INC**

Optimist Club of Aurora Inc.,
PO Box 28509,
14800 Yonge St.,
Aurora, ON L4G 6S6

Follow Us On:

Facebook:

@OptimistClubAurora,

Instagram:

@auroraoptimist

... In with The New

A new Board of Directors was sworn in on October 7th by Governor Jennifer Krizel and Lieutenant Governor Peter Krizel. Our membership zoomed in. With that many people it almost puts the "zoo" in Zoom. It was great to see so many smiles in those small squares!

The Board members are:

Sandy Bundy.....*President*
Greg Way*Treasurer*
Glen Sharp*Secretary*
Brian Walsh*Past President*
Sandra Watson*President Elect*
Brenda North.....*Vice President*
Kim Robertson.....*Vice President*
Stu Bundy.....*Sergeant-at-Arms*

Diane Buchanan*Director (2 years)*
Susan Gaudet*Director (2 years)*
Susan Pratt*Director (2 years)*
Alex Ansell.....*Director (1 year)*
Vern Cunningham.....*Director (1 year)*
Bill Hack.....*Director (1 year)*

Our Optimist Creed

Promise Yourself

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.