

## Presidents Message:

### President's Update Aurora Optimist Club



It was another whirlwind Fall and Holiday Season for the Club to finish off 2025. We had fantastic support from membership to make it all happen. And it's encouraging to see that the Club continues to attract wonderful new members who share our vision of Community Service and Volunteerism.

I want to share a letter we received from a local school that reached out to the KIND Program for help.

"I apologize for not letting you know how well the jacket and snow pants fit. We got caught up in the excitement that this student now has warm clothing for the winter. The family is so very grateful to KIND for their generosity. As I watch this student and the others you have helped, it brings tears to my eyes. You should see their little faces when they get their new coats and winter attire. Wish you could be there to see it...the surprise, the excitement, the gratitude. It's a good feeling to know that these students and families have one less expensive thing to worry about this season. My deepest gratitude to the Optimist KIND program, for your care for the students and families. it means so much! "



This is why we volunteer. This is a great example of how we are making a difference in the lives of our local youth. Over the past few months, the KIND Program has handed out over 300 clothing items to Elementary Schools (winter coats, boots, hats, mitts, etc), and 54 items and 600 bus tickets to local Secondary Schools.

Our Optimist members and friends opened their wallets and donated over \$2000.00 in gift cards. Gift cards were given to Welcoming Arms where they were used to stuff stockings for 43 teens. And \$500.00 of this total was donated by Kleenway, thanks Carol!

And thanks go out to the Aurora Seniors Centre's Men's Shed, donated \$1,200 and one of its members donated \$2,500 himself! Another donation of \$ 376.00 was collected and received from the generous members of the Aurora Seniors Association's coin jar. Plus \$5,300.00 was donated to the KIND program by friends of the club that like what we are doing and want to help.

Hats off to the Wagon Committee for another great Mobile Kitchen season at the Schools, Senior Centre, Town Corn Roast, and the Haunted Forest. The "Winnie Wagon" has been the work horse of fundraising efforts for years and will now get some pressure taken off it once the new Bingo money starts to come in this spring. Thanks goes out to Glen for his tireless efforts and hours of paperwork, red tape and emails to get us certified and licenced to participate.

Glen also heads up the Healthy Snacks Committee and will be distributing \$2500 among six schools from the grant we received from the Mayor's golf tournament. And because of the new Bingo revenue we will be expanding the number schools we will be supporting in 2026.

The November Dinner Meeting was a fun Pizza Party at the Soccer Club. The team building exercise was a Dart Tournament won by the "Barbies and Ken".



Bonnie Robertson (President of the Aurora Legion and Club member) was very appreciative for the help from Club members who dropped off and picked up boxes during this years Poppy Campaign for the Legion. And thanks to Jean for taking part and laying the wreath on behalf of the Club at the Remembrance Day Service.

Vern ran another successful Fruit Cake campaign, raising over \$2,800. Thanks go out to our retail partners Oakridge's, Barons, Omars, Kitchen Accents, and all the members who bought cakes.



Diane Buchanan helped Dianne and Brian Harrison's 20th campaign to send Christmas and holiday cards to men and women serving in the armed forces surpass their goal. A new record was reached with 12,400 cards!

Thanks to the Optimist members that put pen to paper and sent best wishes to our soldiers.



Santa Under the Stars was a great event for the Club. This is one of our signature events each year. The parade ran smoothly, and we won the award for Best Non-commercial float. Congratulations everyone! From the planning meetings to the building of the float, marshalling the parade, walking with the float and the tear down, it was a total team effort!



The season ended with a fantastic Holiday Dinner Celebration at Stonehaven. The food and music were phenomenal, and everyone had a great time! Looking forward to the Artic Adventure, Chess Tournament and Road Rally in 2026!

Cheers,

Stu

## **Member News:**

**Installation of new Board-** L/T Rob Gaby installed the new Board of Directors for 2025/2026.



- ❖ President- Stu Bundy
- ❖ Treasurer- Greg Way
- ❖ Secretary- Glen Sharp
- ❖ Vice-President- Anna Kroepelin- Chess
- ❖ Vice-President- Jean Rodger- Membership
- ❖ Director- Paul Martin- Fundraising
- ❖ Director- Greg Grant- Fundraising
- ❖ Director- Maggie Thornton- Community Service/Wagon scheduling
- ❖ Director- Bill Booth- Fellowship/Dinner meetings
- ❖ Director- Connor Logan- Marketing and Publicity
- ❖ Director- Harold Reiter- Youth Activities/ Oratorical/Essay
- ❖ Sergeant-at-Arms- Sandy Bundy
- ❖ CCOF- Brenda North

Prior to the installation past-President Deb presented gifts to last year's Board members. Stu, in turn presented a thank you gift to Deb and congratulated her on a



good year.





**New Members:** Marie Wallace, Ruth Sharp and Ann Stark were officially welcomed into the Optimist Club. Vern Cunningham, Glenn Sharp and Kim Robertson presented the new members, while Alex Ansell recited the oath. President Stu Bundy presented the membership plaques.



## **Event News:**

### **Mobile Kitchen**

The Optimist volunteers operated the mobile kitchen, preparing and serving burgers, hot dogs, and peameal sandwiches at various events throughout Aurora and the surrounding area



Aurora Heights High school



Hartman School



Aurora Town Cleanup event





Halloween Hunted Forest



Garage Sale

## **Christmas Parade:**

Building the float:









**Christmas Dinner:**



