



OPTIMIST CLUB
OF AURORA INC.

Opti Prime

Quarterly
September 2026
Volume 18



Hello Fellow Optimists,

Welcome to Fall!

It has been an incredibly busy and rewarding summer for our Club. We kicked things off by operating the Mobile Kitchen at *Dance in the Park*, followed by *Canada Day*, where our volunteers prepared and served more than **1,000 pancakes** to the community. In August, we took on BBQ duties at the Legion, preparing and serving meals for one of their Friday Night Dinner events.



It has been an incredibly busy and rewarding summer for our Club. We kicked things off by operating the Mobile Kitchen at *Dance in the Park*, followed by *Canada Day*, where our volunteers prepared and served more than **1,000 pancakes** to the community. In August, we took on BBQ duties at the Legion, preparing and serving meals for one of their Friday Night Dinner events.



One of our most meaningful contributions this summer was providing **\$2,300 toward a prosthesis for a young girl**, helping her gain greater independence and mobility.

Thanks to our Bingo fundraising efforts, we were also able to donate **\$14,250 to the Aurora Food Pantry**. In July and August, members volunteered their time to help pack **300 food kits each month** for families experiencing food insecurity. These food packs helped bridge the gap while schools were closed for the summer, ensuring families continued to receive much-needed support.



Together, we are making a real difference in our community.

Looking ahead, the fall calendar is equally busy. The Mobile Kitchen will support several local school events, Fall Clean-Up Day, the Senior Active Living Fair, the Haunted Forest, and another Corn Roast at Town Square. The Town's continued reliance on our Club reflects our strong reputation and year-round commitment to making community events successful.

Meanwhile, the **Santa Under the Stars** committee is already hard at work developing creative ideas for this year's parade float. Before long, we will wrap up another successful season by coming together to celebrate at our traditional Holiday Party.

President's Night is also just around the corner. This special evening gives us the opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of the outgoing Board and welcome our new leadership team.

A sincere thank you to our outgoing Board members:

Glen Sharp, Greg Way, Deb Finniear, Anna Kroeplin, Jean Rodger, Bill Booth, Greg Grant, Maggie Thornton, Harold Reiter, Connor Logan, and Sandy Bundy.

Most importantly, thank you to all our dedicated members who generously give their time, energy, and talents to support our fundraising efforts and community initiatives. One of the greatest rewards of being part of this Club is seeing firsthand how our contributions positively impact the lives of others. Together, we continue to embody the spirit of optimism and service.

Yours in Optimism,

President Stu

Optimist Member News

Member News

New Members: The Optimist Club proudly welcomed **Lynne Logan** as its newest member on June 3, 2026. During the induction ceremony, **Alex Ansell** invited Lynne and her sponsor, **Diane Buchanan**, forward and administered the oath of membership. **President Stu Bundy** concluded the ceremony by presenting the membership plaques.



Birthdays!

A special surprise celebration was held at the Soccer Club to honor **Alex Ansell**, who reached the remarkable milestone of his 90th birthday in early May.



April brought another celebration as our fearless leader, **Stu Bundy**, marked his birthday. The highlight was a Marilyn Monroe-themed cake, and for a brief moment, Stu enjoyed the full *"Happy Birthday, Mr. President"* treatment. Rumor has it he was blushing almost as much as the frosting!

Optimist Member News

Felicitations:

It was a proud moment for the Aurora Optimist Club as it was named an **Honour Club**, with **Deb, Sandra, and Carol** receiving certificates in recognition of their efforts. The club also achieved an impressive **4th-place ranking out of 47 clubs across the District**, a testament to the dedication of our members.

Adding to the celebrations, **Alex** was honoured with the **Knowledge Keeper Award** for his contributions to CCOF, while **Rob Gaby** received a certificate recognizing his outstanding work as **Lieutenant Governor**. Well done to all who helped make this success possible! 🎉



Llew Crone was recognized for an impressive **15 years of volunteer service** to the Aurora Optimist Club. President **Stu Bundy** presented Llew with a service award in appreciation of his longstanding dedication, commitment, and contributions to the club and the community.



Optimist Dinners

Dinners!

January : A Fiesta to Remember! 🎉 🌮

January's dinner was held at the Aurora Legion, on 21st January, where members were treated to a festive Mexican-themed evening. The menu featured a delicious spread of tacos, guacamole, salsa, Mexican rice, and a special signature drink that proved quite popular!



The fun continued with a lively trivia challenge that tested everyone's knowledge of Mexico and its rich culture, followed by the always-entertaining piñata game, which brought out the competitive spirit in guests of all ages. To wrap up the evening, Anna, our Dinner Committee Lead, extended a heartfelt thank-you to Bonnie for helping secure the Legion venue on short notice and ensuring the fiesta could go on without a hitch.



¡Olé! A great time was had by all, with plenty of laughter, good food, and just enough trivia knowledge to impress our friends. MX 🌮



Optimist Dinners

March: A St. Patrick's Day Celebration with a Greek Twist! 🍀 GR

After Mother Nature forced us to cancel February's dinner due to challenging weather conditions, members were more than ready to gather on March 18th at the Aurora Soccer Club for a long-awaited evening of fellowship and fun.

Although the theme was St. Patrick's Day, the menu took a slight detour from Ireland to Greece! In keeping with our commitment to Delicious Greek Restaurant, whose February order had been cancelled, members enjoyed a wonderful Greek feast instead. As it turns out, great food is worth the wait, whether it comes with shamrocks or tzatziki!



We were also pleased to welcome Shelley Ware from 'Town of Aurora', who, like many of us, missed last month's meeting. Shelley shared updates on activities around town, highlighted several upcoming community events, and discussed opportunities for the Club to get involved.



The evening wrapped up with a delicious dessert and an Irish-themed trivia contest. While not everyone could claim Irish roots, many discovered they had a surprising talent for Irish facts, especially after dessert. All in all, it was a wonderful evening filled with good food, great company, and plenty of laughs. 🍀 😊

Optimist Dinners

April Dinner Meeting: Spring Has Sprung! 🌷😊

Spring was finally in the air as members gathered for the April Dinner Meeting on April 15th at the Aurora Soccer Club. Embracing the season's theme of renewal and warmer days, the evening featured festive spring décor, great fellowship, and a delicious meal.

Members enjoyed a wonderful selection of Chinese cuisine, chosen to add a little variety to the menu and tantalize everyone's taste buds. We were also pleased to welcome Jaime Cruz from the Alzheimer Society of York Region as our guest speaker. Jaime shared valuable insights about the Society's work and the support available to individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.



The evening began with social time and refreshments before dinner was served, giving members plenty of opportunity to catch up with friends and fellow Optimists. To round out the night, members enjoyed a few lively rounds of Bingo, adding a little friendly competition and laughter to an already enjoyable gathering.

A big thank-you to the April Dinner Team for organizing another successful event filled with good food, great company, and plenty of springtime cheer.

🌸 // 🍷😊

Optimist Dinners

May: The Annual Progressive Dinner - The Mystery Manila Envelope Adventure!



One of the most anticipated events of the year once again delivered an evening full of surprises, laughter, and great company. The **Progressive Dinner** on May2nd, began with members eagerly opening their first envelope to discover where they would enjoy appetizers. After that stop, a second envelope revealed the location of the main course, and finally, a third envelope unveiled the destination for dessert and the evening's festivities at Deb's place.

Part treasure hunt, part dinner party, and all fun, the event gave participants the opportunity to visit fellow Optimists' homes, enjoy wonderful food, and share plenty of stories along the way. Each stop brought new hosts, new conversations, and perhaps a few GPS challenges, making the journey just as enjoyable as the destinations!

As always, the Progressive Dinner was a memorable evening that highlighted the warmth, hospitality, and friendship that make our Optimist family so special. By the end of the night, everyone had enjoyed not only a delicious meal but also a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow members in a unique and entertaining way. 😊🏠🍰



Optimist Dinners



Optimist Dinners

June: Annual BBQ Kicks Off Summer in Style! 🍷🍴🍷

The Club's unofficial year-end celebration took place on June 17, as members gathered for the much-anticipated Annual BBQ, hosted by the February Team. This year's event had a change of scenery, moving to the Aurora Legion because the Aurora Soccer Club had a slightly higher-priority booking... apparently something called the FIFA World Cup was in town! 🏆 😊

Undeterred by the venue change, members enjoyed a fantastic evening featuring perfectly grilled steak and chicken, along with a delicious assortment of sides. The food was plentiful, the conversation lively, and the summer spirit was definitely in the air.

While we may have had to share the spotlight with soccer fans around the world, the BBQ was once again a winning event for our Club, bringing members together to celebrate another successful year of friendship, service, and community. Cheers to great food, great company, and a well-earned start to summer! 🍷 🍴 🍷



Optimist Dinners



Optimist Chess Tournament

Chess Tournament

28th Annual Optimist Chess Tournament Draws a Winning Crowd! ♟️ 🏆

The **28th Annual Optimist Chess Tournament** took place on **February 26 at the Aurora Legion**, bringing together some of the brightest young minds from across the community. With registration beginning at 8:00 a.m. and matches underway by 9:00 a.m., the day was filled with concentration, strategy, and friendly competition.

Interest in the tournament was outstanding, with **224 students registered** in advance and an impressive **230 students ultimately participating**. Representatives from **ten schools** took part, making it one of the largest and most successful tournaments in recent years.

Leading up to the event, volunteers helped with setup and organization, ensuring everything ran smoothly. For **President Stu Bundy**, attending the tournament for the first time was an eye-opening experience. He was amazed by the energy, enthusiasm, and excitement throughout the room as students proudly showcased their chess skills and sportsmanship.

Adding to the excitement, **Rob Gaby** shared a photo from **Aurora Montessori**, where the school's victory banner was already proudly displayed in the office window, a testament to how much the students value this annual event.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to **Anna, Don Stubbs, all of the judges, volunteers, and organizers** whose hard work made the tournament such a tremendous success. Checkmate to another fantastic year! ♟️ 😊 🙌



Optimist Chess Tournament



Optimist Club Mobile Kitchen

Optimist Club Mobile Kitchen

Arctic Adventure- Family Day- A Beautiful Day of Service and Community 🧠 🚚

Monday, February 16 treated our volunteers to perfect weather, making for a very pleasant day at the food wagon. Thanks to excellent teamwork and organization, setup, service, and cleanup all ran smoothly, with very little food left over at the end of the day, always a sign of a job well done!

While the overall pace felt a bit quieter than usual, many felt the wagon's location may have played a role. Even so, the day was a success, with volunteers serving the community efficiently and enjoying plenty of camaraderie along the way.

As always, a huge thank-you goes to everyone who pitched in. Good weather, great teamwork, and happy customers made for another rewarding day of service! 😊 🙌 🚚 📷



Optimist Club Mobile Kitchen

Chamber of Commerce Home Show April 11/12 - 🍔🥗🍹

The **Home Show** was a well-organized success, though the chilly weather certainly kept our cooks on their toes. This year, the popular Pub & Grill format made a welcome return! All the volunteers serving the drinks during operating hours required **Smart Serve certification** and the Board had generously approved funding for six members to take the course.



The **Town Clean-Up Day** on April 26, brought another opportunity to serve the community on a cold and damp morning. The pace started slowly, and some volunteers may have wondered if the crowds had taken the day off. However, shortly after a few reinforcements headed home, business picked up significantly. Timing is everything! 😊



Optimist Club Mobile Kitchen

Corn Roast Supports Food Pantry and Community Spirit 🍷 😊

The annual **Corn Roast** at the Farmers' Market on Aug 16 was another great success, bringing together delicious food, community spirit, and a worthy cause. Volunteers spent the day grilling fresh, hot corn while collecting donations in support of the **Food Pantry**.

The event was filled with plenty of smiles, great conversations, and, of course, lots of corn! Members enjoyed connecting with market visitors and helping raise awareness and support for the Food Pantry's important work in the community.

One lesson learned from the day was that our trusty old BBQ may be showing its age. While it got the job done, it reminded us that the newer grill might be the better choice for future events. As they say, even BBQs deserve retirement plans! 😊

A big thank-you to everyone who volunteered, donated, and stopped by to enjoy some freshly grilled corn. Your support helped make the event both enjoyable and impactful. 🍷 🙌 🍷



Optimist Zone Breakfast

Zone Breakfast and Inspiring Young Voices!

Our Club had the pleasure of hosting the **3rd Zone Breakfast of the 2026 Optimist Year**, welcoming fellow Optimists from across the Zone, including members from **Newmarket** and **Keswick**. The event took place at the **Aurora Soccer Club** on **April 19**, with coffee flowing at 9:00 a.m. and breakfast served shortly thereafter.

In addition to the usual club updates and fellowship, the morning featured a special highlight: **five talented contestants** competing for the opportunity to advance to the District Oratorical Competition in Oakville. These remarkable young speakers captivated the audience with their confidence, passion, and thoughtful presentations.

Each year, the Oratorical Contest reminds us why Optimism matters. The creativity, poise, and enthusiasm displayed by the participants were truly inspiring and left a lasting impression on everyone in attendance.

Between a hearty breakfast, great company, and outstanding speeches, the morning was a wonderful celebration of both friendship and the bright future represented by these young leaders. Congratulations to all the contestants, and thank you to everyone who helped make the event such a success! 🙌🍰🥗💎



Optimist Zone Breakfast



Optimist Southlake Run

Southlake Run

Record-Breaking Run for Southlake! 🏃🏃🌟

The annual Run for Southlake took place on Sunday, April 26, 2026, and it was a spectacular success. Participants enjoyed a beautiful spring morning as they took part in the popular 5 km run/walk, which followed a unique route along Davis Drive in front of Southlake Health. The event also welcomed back the much-loved Mini Mile, giving younger runners a chance to join in the fun.

This year's event attracted more than 1,800 participants, setting a new attendance record and creating an energetic atmosphere from start to finish. Our club was proud to support the event, raising an impressive \$4,559.18 and serving approximately 1,100 Harvey's hot dogs to hungry runners, walkers, volunteers, and spectators.

Adding to the excitement, **Connor** set a new club record in completing the run, giving members yet another reason to celebrate.

From the enthusiastic participants to the dedicated volunteers, the day was a wonderful example of community spirit in action. Congratulations to everyone involved in making this record-breaking event such a memorable success! 🙌🏆👏👏



Optimist Southlake Run



Optimist Road Rally

Road Rally- May 23

Road Rally and Fundraising Efforts Drive Another Successful Year! 🚗 🌱

The annual Road Rally once again proved to be a highlight of the year. With 34 volunteers supporting the event and 23 vehicles taking part, the rally was filled with fun, teamwork, and community spirit. Thanks in large part to generous sponsorship support, the event generated an impressive profit of approximately \$7,700.

May also saw another successful **Drive for a Cause** campaign. Thanks to the participation of more than twenty members and the tremendous support of **Greg Grant** and **Highlands**, the fundraising goal of **\$5,000** was achieved. A heartfelt thank-you goes to everyone who contributed to making the campaign such a success.

Special appreciation was extended to **Highlands** and **Greg Grant** for their continued support and dedication. During the wrap-up discussions, members also recognized the valuable contributions of community partners such as the **Aurora Legion, Almac**, and the **Aurora Soccer Club**. In recognition of Highlands' longstanding support, a proposal was raised to explore a commemorative plaque as a token of appreciation.

Congratulations to everyone involved in these successful initiatives. Whether volunteering, fundraising, sponsoring, or participating, your efforts continue to make a meaningful difference and help keep the Club moving forward. 🙌 🚗 ⏳ 🌱



Optimist Road Rally



Optimist Road Rally



Optimist Road Rally



A Finger-Lickin' Good Finish to Summer! 🍴 🍷

Summer came to a delicious close at **Aurora Ribfest**, where good friends, great food, and mouthwatering ribs made for a memorable day. It was the perfect way to wrap up a fantastic season, and yes, it was definitely **finger-lickin' good!** 🍴 🍷 😊



Rest of 2026 Calendar

Sept:

Sat, Sept 12 – Bingo Shift

Sat, Sept 19 – Corn Roast (Town Square)

Sat, Sept 19 – Fall Clean Up

Thurs, Sept 24 – Aurora Heights

Wed, Sept 30 – Board Zoom

Oct:

Wed, Oct 7 – Presidents Night

Thurs, Oct 8 - Hartman PS

Sun, Oct 11 – Bingo Shift

Wed, Oct 14 – Business Meeting

Sat, Oct 24 – Haunted Forest

Wed, Oct 28 – Board Zoom

Nov:

Wed, Nov 4 – Business Meeting (Legion)

Tues, Nov 10 – Bingo Shift

Wed, Nov 11 – Remembrance Day Wreath Laying

Wed, Nov 18 – Dinner Meeting (Soccer Club)

Sat, Nov 21 – Santa Under the Stars

Wed, Nov 25 – Board Zoom

Dec:

Wed, Dec 2 – Business Meeting (Legion)

Wed, Dec 16 – Christmas Dinner (Location TBA)

Sun, Dec 20 – Bingo Shift

Wed, Dec 30 – Board Zoom

Current Board of Directors

President- Stu Bundy
Treasurer- Greg Way
Secretary- Glen Sharp
Vice-President- Anna Kroeplin- 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

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.



**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