

Summer 2017

The OPTIMIST



**Kick Off Summer at the
International Convention**



THE CANADIAN CHILDREN'S OPTIMIST FOUNDATION
IS READY TO

Spread Relief

The Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation is proud to be a partner of the Canadian Optimist Clubs in their effort to promote and encourage Canadian youth. We developed programs to help these Clubs make their mark and succeed in helping their community.

The Outsourcing Program helps the Clubs optimize their fundraising efforts by providing charitable tax receipts to donors and by using Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation resources, like the online donations. Each quarter, \$500 **Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation Club Grants** are remitted to Canadian Clubs in order to help them develop community projects that benefit Canadian children at large. You may find more information on these programs on our website.

And now, there is the **Spread Relief** program.

Last July, the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation Board of Directors announced a moratorium on the Childhood Cancer Campaign. The objective was to enlarge that well-known and well-loved program in order to help more kids and their families across the country.

The always-growing number of Clubs and Members were asking for a way to help kids with a range of health issues. Physical disabilities generate high treatment costs for a family. Every community has special needs and asking the Optimists for some help is often the first thing that comes in mind when in need of support. Unfortunately, we were not able to help the Clubs in helping children with mental health problems, cystic fibrosis or heart diseases, for example, as much as we would have liked to. Our health program was very narrowly focused.

The Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation has broadened its program to assist more children and families dealing with

more diverse health issues. The mission will include projects focused on assisting children and families dealing with more mental and physical health issues, or promoting and raising awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle to inspire entire communities.

Starting on October 1st 2017, the **Spread Relief** program will:

- Develop a template for Clubs to use to identify and assess the needs in the community;
- Through a committee, select from all the project submissions those that exemplify this program;
- Give seed money to the chosen projects, based on funds available and the Club's needs;
- Share the projects on the Foundation's platforms to promote the program's success and inspire other Clubs.

The closer you are to a community, the more you know their needs. We therefore think Optimist Members and Clubs are well placed to know how they could serve youth in their own community. Optimist Members are well-known for their active work and we have committed to help them. The Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation is ready to **Spread Relief** from coast to coast. **Are you?**



THREE GENERATIONS of Optimists

A TRUE STORY OF FLOURISHING YOUTH

Imagine a large garden. To have magnificent flowers, you need to work the earth, sow and tend your seeds. You need to water to hydrate the plant and soil, and sunlight to caress their petals. Some people claim that they grow bigger and prettier if you talk to them.

An Optimist family functions exactly the same way. The children are the flowers; the water and the sun are the examples shown by the parents, and even the grandparents.

Nina Strickland, President of the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation, and her husband Fred, have sown Optimism in their family. The Optimist culture has taken root for three generations. Fred Strickland's involvement began in 1980, when he joined the Optimist Club of Moore in Southwest Ontario. Involved in Christmas activities and youth golf tournaments in his Club, his passion resulted in him serving on Club and District levels, and holding a Chair position on an International committee. His Optimism spread to his wife, who was involved informally during a time when only men were admitted as Optimist Members.

In 1990, Nina Strickland finally became an Optimist Member, and performed every important role in her Club, District, and various International committees. Her involvement reached its peak when she was appointed President of the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation, a first for a woman.

Denise Nacev, their daughter, often claims that she cannot remember a time without Optimism in her life. It is therefore not surprising that she has been active along with her parents since she was ten years old, in her parents' Club activities and with her Junior Optimist Club. She is now an Optimist Member and has served at the Club, District and International level.

Denise and her husband, Tony, have raised two boys, Mathew and Andrew. Both are Junior Optimist Members who have continued their grandparents' tradition within their local Junior Optimist Club and in their District.

If you ask them why they continue to cultivate their "Optimism garden," they would answer that they receive as much as they give. Fred and Nina have had the opportunity to influence the lives of many youth through the years. Denise has learned many leadership skills and overcome a fear of public speaking. Andrew, who is on the Autism Spectrum, has gained confidence, friendships, and leadership skills. Mathew is sharpening his natural leadership abilities and enjoys mentoring younger Optimist Members.

With three generations volunteering at the Optimist Club, District and International levels, we can expect to continue to see youth flourishing. Are you cultivating your garden?