

OPTIMISTICALLY SPEAKING

The Newsletter of the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna

January 2017

Calendar

December 31 — Caboose Open
Vienna's "First Night" Celebration

January 1 — New Year's Day



January 4 — No Meeting

January 11 — Board Meeting
7:30 Emmanuel Lutheran Church

January 16 — Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 18 — CCDHH Contest

Fairfax American Legion

6:15 — Social Time

7:00 — Dinner

Early start time for our young guests!

January 20 — Inauguration Day

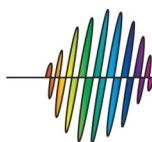
January 25 — Fourth Wednesday Dinner

Culmore Teen Center — Team D

Spotlight on Upcoming Events

The entire staff at *Optimistically Speaking* wishes you a healthy, happy new year! May 2017 be a year filled with Optimism.

We will take a pass on our first meeting date in January and go straight to our annual **Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) on January 18.**



COMMUNICATION CONTEST
for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

As is our custom, we will start the evening early in consideration of our young contestants. **Social time starts at 6:15, and dinner will be served at 7:00.** Please come to support the kids who are taking the bold step of public speaking—daunting for any person, young or old, but a particular challenge for young people with hearing impairments. A warm, welcoming atmosphere from the minute the kids, their families, and their teachers walk into the room will help put the contestants at ease.



Also at the January 18 meeting we will present **Growing Hope** with a check for the proceeds of our Family Fun Day fundraiser. This is the culmination of the months of hard work and generous giving that go into our Club's participation in OI's Pediatric Cancer Campaign.

This month's **Fourth Wednesday dinner/birthday party for the Culmore Teen Center** (a program of Alternative House) will be provided by **Anna Ryjik and her team** : Ed Wonder, Nicole Pham, Jim & Diana Stivison, Dick Gongaware and Rich Ordeman. Feeding their bodies and spirit is one more way to "Bring Out the Best in Kids." **If you want to participate in this ongoing project, contact [Laurie Cole](#)** for more information. There is a role for everyone!

We are in that magical time of year when **Christmas Tree sales** are done (see the wrap-up on page 3), the **Caboose** is shuttered for the winter and the **Farmers**



Market has not yet opened. It's a perfect time to **invite a prospective member** to a Club meeting and to **get involved** in a Club activity that is new to you! That could even be a **New Year's Resolution**....



Serving the Youth of Greater Vienna
for over 60 Years!

Visit us at www.OptimistClubofGreaterVienna.org
We're on Facebook! [Facebook.com/ViennaOptimistClub](https://www.facebook.com/ViennaOptimistClub)



From the President—

Dear Fellow Optimists,

Congratulations to all who helped make this year's **Christmas** tree sales a resounding success. The athletic teams and the Octagon Clubs were a great help. I especially wish to thank Jim Houston, Dick Lippert and all our team captains—Jim H., Dick Gongaware, Rich Ordeman, Jeff Johnson, and Tom Spengler. Despite some weather set-backs, they pulled through. Thank you.

Thank you to Laurie Cole, Bruce Lauther, and Joe Miller, for continuing to get the **Culmore Center** ready for the holidays with a tree, dinner and desserts. It is great to know that we are appreciated – just check out the thank you from the Alternative House on our Facebook.

Please remember that we continue to take donations for the Culmore Center on our website. If your budget allows, please consider making one on-line. When you do make a donation, please note that it is to go to Culmore Center.

Join us on **First Night Vienna** – the family celebration of the coming of the New Year on Church Street from 6- Midnight. Several of us will be warmly ensconced at Cocoa Vienna watching a Magic Show, smelling chocolate and exhibiting our Optimist Spirit.

We will have our **Board** meeting on January 11, 2017 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church at 7:30pm.

Our first Club meeting in 2017 will be on January 18th for the **CCDHH** program at Fairfax American Legion. Start time is at 6:15 pm and we will be presenting the check to **Growing Hope**.

Wishing you all **Peace** in the coming year!

Optimistically yours,

Michele H. Wright

Carol Waite Brennan Awards Presented

On November 16, 2016, we honored six area high school seniors for their outstanding achievements with the annual Carol Waite Brennan Youth Appreciation Awards. Each student received a \$1500 college scholarship. The 2016 recipients are: **Joy Hernandez Luna** and **Jack Ruskowski** (Madison HS); **Katherine DeLong** and **Piero Tosi** (Marshall HS); and **Elizabeth Malone** and **Calvin Krist** (Oakton HS).



Kelly Brennan, left assisted **Club President Michele** in presenting the awards named in honor of her late mother. A girl and a boy from each of our area high schools received \$1500 scholarships.



January Birthday Wishes to:

- Rich Ordeman – January 4
- Anna Ryjik – January 4
- Susan Bauer – January 10
- George Mills – January 10
- Joan Marsh – January 12
- Dick Lippert – January 13
- Pat Hackerson – January 20
- Jim Wilson – January 20
- Laurie Cole – January 25
- Kathryn McHale – January 29

Optimist Anniversaries in January

- Jeff Johnson – 39 years
- Mike Nadolski - 29 years
- Jim Stivison – 29 years
- Joan Marsh – 6 years
- Kathy Cutri – 3 years
- Lauren Wagner – 2 years



Christmas Tree Sales

It's a Wrap!

From Jim Houston

The tree lot ceased operations on December 18 after 1,000 trees were sold.

Thanks to all who participated in this effort that raised over \$32,000 for our Youth Fund and the kids in the greater Vienna area. While we had help from the Madison baseball team, the Oakton football team, the Marshall and Madison Octagon Clubs and the JOOI Club at Louise Archer Elementary, it was the club members who provided the guidance and sweat equity that made for another successful sales season.



When the lot opened on Dec. 17, only a few stalwart small trees remained for sale.

At 9:15 AM on December 24, the last tree stand was placed in storage and the 2016 Christmas tree sales were officially closed/completed/over with/terminated.

Thanks to the following for braving the rain on Saturday to accomplish this last task:

- Bruce Lauther
- Rich Ordeman
- Jeff Johnson
- Rob DiRocco
- Randy Sawyer
- John Andrews
- Tom Fraim
- George Mills
- Dick Lippert
- Jim Houston

Thanks to everyone who worked on the project. Please rest up because we will start again in 11 1/2 months.

Editors Note: And many thanks to Jim H. and Gary Moonan for providing reports and photos to cover our annual tree sales!

Delivering a Hot Meal and Warm Wishes to Local Kids

In December our **Fourth Wednesday** volunteers did double-duty—bringing birthday wishes and holiday cheer to the **Culmore Teen Center**. The Teen Center, which is operated by Alternative House (but is a different program and separate from the Emergency Shelter), serves teens in the Culmore area by giving them a place to do homework, practice language skills, get a nutritious meal, and socialize with peers in a positive, safe environment.

Since the summer of 2014 our Fourth Wednesday program has provided dinner and birthday treats once a month to the Teen Center. When appropriate, our volunteers also stay to serve the meal, help kids with homework, play games—generally just “go with the flow” of what is happening at the Center.



Above: A tree from our lot is beautifully decked out by the kids at the Culmore Teen Center.

December was a good case in point. An *ad hoc* team (giving our regular volunteers the month off) delivered a hot meal of shredded pork, fresh fruit, and cookies, and birthday gift bags. Once onsite, Joe, Bruce, and Laurie hung around a bit to see how we might engage with the kids. Joe pulled out a *Trivial Pursuit* game from the shelves and just started reading the questions. Bruce and Laurie played along, drawing one of the teens into the game. With the ice broken, Laurie was able to get a quiet girl to do a language worksheet with her. We were invited to stay for a group discussion, sharing things we were thankful for. We wrapped up the afternoon with a group photo and lots of warm wishes.

In addition to a Christmas tree from our lot, our Club donated \$300 for winter clothes for the teens. Jeff Bechtle also donated two frozen turkeys for the Center. Do they appreciate it? Here’s a message from Soraya Borja, Program Manager: *“That is a great bless[ing], thank you so much for your support, thank you for all your help during all this time. God bless you and bless the great Optimist Club.”*

Our support for the teens is year-round. If you would like to participate in Fourth Wednesday, contact [Laurie Cole](#).

Below: Teen Center Coordinator Dashonae Hawkins, Optimists Bruce Lauther, Joe Miller and Laurie Cole, and some of the kids gather near the Christmas tree during the Fourth Wednesday team’s December visit.



Celebrating the Holidays, Optimist Style!



Members of our Club gathered on December 7 to celebrate the holidays and another year of fellowship in serving kids in our community. We even closed down the tree lot so all could attend!

Highlights of the evening at the Army-Navy Country Club in Fairfax included: presentation of a Life Membership to Past President Joe Miller (top left); a raffle for door prizes including restaurant certificates and White House ornaments; and carol singing led by Bruce Lauther and Susan Bauer (below left). Thanks to all who organized the festive evening!

December 2016 Board of Directors Highlights

The Board of Directors met on December 14, 2016, with 9 members present. Highlights of the meeting are as follows:

- VP of Youth Mike Fitzella reported that plans for the Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) program on January 18 are set and planning for the Essay Contest, Oratorical Contest and T.R. Cook Youth Awards of Excellence is underway.
- Discussed the status of tree sales; which were a little behind previous years.
- Discussed plans for the Holiday Party on December 21.
- Discussed scheduling a New Optimist Welcome (NOW) event in April.
- Discussed planning for 2017 Farmers Market.
- Approved donations to Alternative House and the James Madison High School orchestra.



OPTIMIST CLUB OF GREATER VIENNA Board of Directors 2016-17

President	Michele Wright
Secretary	Jim Houston
Treasurer	Tom Fraim
Immediate Past President	Joe Miller
President Elect	<i>vacant</i>
Vice President of Community	Anna Ryjik
Vice President of Finance	Dick Lippert
Vice President of Media Relations	Gary Moonan
Vice President of Membership	Kathy Cutri
Vice President of Youth	Mike Fitzella
Director of Community	Susan Bauer
Director of Social Media	Nicole Pham
Director of Membership	Lauren Wagner
Director of Youth	Jeff Bechtle
Webmaster	Gary Moonan

The 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 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.

Christian D. Larsen