



WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN JOOI?

JOOI Clubs provide a cool way for you and your friends to help solve real problems facing your hometown. JOOI links Members of all Optimist JOOI Clubs throughout North America and around the world. An adult Optimist Club sponsors JOOI Clubs. Optimist Clubs, which live by the motto "Friend of Youth," consist of adult business and community leaders who want to help youth in their hometowns. JOOI Clubs perform community service projects just like adult Optimist Clubs. All JOOI Clubs share the same mission, "Kids Helping Kids," and students like you organize and run the Clubs.

“I belong to the Junior Optimist Club because it’s fun to help people. It lets others know that there are people who care.”

John Richardson, Junior Optimist Club Member.

Who runs the show?

You do! JOOI Club Members run their own meetings, plan events and elect all officers. As a Member, you’ll make almost all your Club’s important decisions! You will decide where and how often to meet. Most Clubs meet in a central location. Popular sites include schools, community centers and churches. Many Clubs meet as often as once a week; other Clubs meet only once a month. Some Clubs, such as computer Clubs, plan activities and projects via e-mail and get together to perform activities on weekends or school breaks. You’ll decide which service projects you want to do – from fundraising to tutoring – you, and the rest of the Members, run the show!

Can anyone belong to JOOI?

JOOI welcomes everyone from ages 6 through 18! For younger students, Alpha Clubs (ages 6 to 9) provide simple and fun activities parents and younger kids can do together. Middle school and junior high students join Junior Optimist Clubs (ages 10 to 13) for more involved and independent activities. High school students fulfill community service graduation requirements, improve their hometowns and develop skills for college or careers by joining Octagon Clubs (ages 14 to 18).

Benefits of JOOI Membership

JOOI lets you make a real difference right in your hometown! JOOI helps kids be a strong force in their communities. You can change the world – start with your corner of it!

MEMBERSHIP OFFERS:

Fun!

You’ll get to know other kids in your school and community! You’ll do great things for your hometown and have a fantastic time doing it. If your town has an Alpha Club and a Junior Optimist or Octagon Club, the transition from elementary school to junior high, or junior high to high school will be much easier. You’ll have a built-in network of friends and partners in service.

Skills and experience!

Through JOOI you’ll develop leadership skills at local, regional and national levels. The skills you learn now will help you grow and make your next step – whether it’s junior high, high school or college – much easier. You can fulfill community service requirements for graduation and build impressive credentials for college and a résumé. You’ll learn about citizenship, teamwork, communication and organization.

Experience other cultures!

JOOI Members come from all 50 states, several Canadian provinces and even the Caribbean. You’ll share unforgettable experiences that you’ll always treasure.

Networking!

Through JOOI you’ll meet adults in your community who care about kids and want to make the world a better place. These adults help you with service projects and fundraisers. You’ll meet people who will be great resources as you apply to college or seek a job. Optimist Members write outstanding letters of recommendation for potential employers, scholarships and colleges. JOOI activities provide great stuff for the elusive “experience” spot on job and college applications!

As Past Octagon Club Member Bryan Duncan says, “The people I was involved with made a major impact on my life. They were willing to do everything to see a person succeed. Mr. Spencer [my Octagon Club adviser] did everything he could to help me get into West Point.”

Impress your parents, teachers and the entire town! You can get your whole class on the service bandwagon! You’ll amaze adults with how organized and dedicated your JOOI Club can be. Adults will notice your efforts and will respect your opinions and abilities.



SO WHAT'S THE CATCH?

There isn't one! JOOI Clubs are run by kids, for kids. We want to help you help your communities and improve your own skills while you're at it!

Read it and Believe It! 17,000 JOOI Members can't be wrong!

"Why should you join JOOI? First, you're going to develop people skills, organizational talents and leadership skills. But it's also a chance to feel good about yourself. You can make yourself a better person. It changes your opinions about what kids can do to make a difference, and you'll make lots of new friends."

Matt Fields, Past International JOOI Board Director, Norman, Okla.

"Why join JOOI? That's simple. It's fun. It's an opportunity to help your community and your world. What could be better?"

Matthew Zimmerman, Past Junior Optimist and Octagon Club Member, Meeker, Okla.

"My Junior Optimist Club gave me a chance to be around my friends and interact within the community."

Bryan Duncan, Past Junior Optimist and Octagon Club Member, Meeker, Okla.

"Each year taught me more...I was on my way to learning about giving of myself. I joined the Octagon Club because I wanted to get to know other kids who had similar likes and who wanted to help our school and community."

Beth Pundman, JOOI Member of the Year, 1996-1997, St. Charles, Mo.

"The Alpha Club has changed my life and taught me to respect people."

Ricky Stark, Past Alpha Club Member, Tucson, Ariz.

"We are proud and enthusiastic about helping our school, families and each other. Making a difference...is what brings us happiness."

Teresa Blomenkamp, Alpha Club adviser, Tucson, Ariz.

"It's not just one day people are in need. [Volunteering] is something that should be constant. It will give people a boost."

Tere Cruz, Past Octagon Club Member, El Paso, Texas

"I truly believe there is always time for individuals to show kindness to each other."

Erika Villegas, Past Octagon Club Member and District officer, N.M.

THE FACES OF JOOI

We can talk about JOOI until we're blue in the face, but the best way to show you the benefits of JOOI is to show you where Members go once they graduate. When you finish high school, you also graduate from JOOI. But the friendships and skills you've gained from JOOI will stay with you wherever you go!

JOOI graduates go on to great accomplishments. Check out where these JOOI Members are now, and hear what they have to say:

Matt Fields, Past International JOOI Board Director. Matt attends Boston University as a pre-med/biology major with an outstanding 3.75 grade point average. Matt attributes part of his academic success to the organizational and time management skills he learned as a JOOI leader. Matt says, "I carry a pretty heavy workload. The self-discipline I learned in JOOI helped prepare me for college."

JOOI also helped Matt get accepted at his college. "I got a half-ride academic scholarship due in part to my involvement with JOOI. The scholarship was based on academics, an essay and outside community activity. Without my community service activities, I probably wouldn't have gotten the scholarship."

Cadet Bryan Duncan, Past Octagon and Junior Optimist Club Member. Bryan, a student at the prestigious United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. earned one of 1,200 spots from a field of 12,000 applicants! Bryan plays handball at West Point and is thinking about majoring in Psychology Engineering. Bryan hopes to be stationed in Hawaii.

Bryan tells us, "While involved in Junior Optimist, I developed many skills that have helped me get where I am today. I learned to socialize with other people... it helped me open up. The most important thing I took from Junior Optimist is respect - not only for myself, but also for others."

Believe it or not, fellow JOOI alum Matthew Zimmerman joins Bryan at West Point – what a great reflection of the quality of JOOI Members! Matthew says he joined an Octagon Club because “I enjoyed helping those around me and the feeling of accomplishment after making someone’s day.” Matthew adds, “JOOI is an opportunity to move outside of our cliques and work to improve our world. I have never really experienced an organization quite so universal...I not only got to help people, but learn a lot about them.” Matthew knows JOOI has the potential to change the world: “I believe JOOI Clubs shape our nation’s future by raising the standards of civic awareness of youth.”

LEARNIN', SERVIN' AND HAVING A BLAST – THE INTERNATIONAL JOOI CONVENTION

Every summer, JOOI Members from your hometown and all over the world come together to get to know each other, share ideas and talk about tough issues facing teens today. The agenda varies, but you can be sure you’ll make great friends and take home new ideas to improve your leadership, public speaking and team-building abilities.

JOOI Members describe the youth convention as tons of fun and claim it’s one of the best parts of joining JOOI! When you come to convention, you’ll check out area attractions with fellow JOOI Members, you’ll have a chance to strut your stuff in the JOOI talent show and you can boogie down at the President’s Dance. You’ll attend enlightening workshops, hear first-rate motivational speakers, elect international officers, and have a voice in planning the future of JOOI.

“JOOI Conventions are really life changing experiences. The fantastic speakers, the outstanding training sessions, making new life-long friends and the camaraderie of hundreds of JOOI members just like you wanting to make a difference and working toward that goal...That’s a really good thing.

Luke Hearn, 2001-2002 JOOI Board President, Locust Grove, GA

Money for Nothing – Scholarships

Well, almost nothing! JOOI offers scholarships for stuff you want to do anyway – such as building new Clubs and doing excellent community service projects. Here’s the skinny: if you’re a JOOI District Governor you can compete for thousands of dollars of awards to use for college expenses. Anyone can become a JOOI District Governor, so read up on the JOOI District structure and organize a District convention in your area. And if you’re not a Governor, you’re not left out! The Member of Excellence Scholarship allows Club Members who are dedicated to serving their Club and community an opportunity to be rewarded for their hardwork. Also, Members may compete in a speech or essay contest sponsored by a local Optimist Club and you can win up to a \$5,000 scholarship at the international level. For scholarship and contest information, contact the Programs Department at Optimist International (800) 500-8130, ext. 235.

Well, What Are You Waiting For?

Have we got you convinced that JOOI is cooler than a jam sandwich? Are you ready to start a Club? All right! You’ll need 20 to 25 interested kids, a location to hold your meetings, and lots of energy and enthusiasm.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE!

The More the Merrier: Recruiting New Members

To keep your Club active and strong, you’ll need to recruit new Members. You’ll need new Members to replace those who move away or graduate. If your Club is tired of doing the same old service project, but can’t seem to think of anything new, or if your Members want to tackle bigger projects, but don’t have the manpower, then you need to recruit new Members!

Start by telling your fellow classmates, teammates and friends about JOOI and your Club activities. Invite them to a Club meeting so they can see your Club in action. Follow up with an invitation for membership.