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*“My Alpha Club proves that kids don’t just do bad things.”*

**Kori Leinenbach**, Schumaker  
Alpha Club  
Tucson, Ariz.

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*JOOI Clubs – provide fun, fellowship and community service learning opportunities for youth of all ages. Younger students take part in Alpha Clubs. Middle school or junior high students can join Junior Optimist Clubs, and high school students build Octagon Clubs.*

*JOOI Members want to make the world a better place. JOOI Clubs actively involve themselves in their communities. From fundraising to neighborhood clean-ups to tutoring younger kids, JOOI Members make things happen.*

## HOW CAN YOU SPONSOR A JOOI CLUB?

### Getting Started

Congratulations! You’ve already started – you took the first step by reading this guide!

If your Optimist Club should decide to sponsor a JOOI Club, your Club should appoint a JOOI Clubs Committee and select a chair for that committee. The chair will be the liaison between the JOOI Club and your Optimist Club, so it is important to select a dedicated Optimist who is comfortable working with kids. The Committee should determine what age group your Club will sponsor and then make a formal sponsorship recommendation to your Board. Your Optimist Club should grant official approval to form a JOOI Club before the Committee proceeds. Remember to inform your general membership about the plans; many Members may have suggestions. Now you’re ready to choose a site and recruit Members!

Remember, JOOI Clubs can be built without a Sponsoring Adult Optimist Club. Opportunities for such Club are those that are sponsored by schools, partnering with other youth associations or other outside youth activities such as sports, performing arts groups or churches.



*"Being involved with a JOOI Club can be very rewarding!"*

**Charles Allen III**, 1995-1996  
International JOOI President

New London, N.C.

## CHOOSING A SITE:

### Working with school authorities

The majority of JOOI Clubs hold meetings in schools; the convenience and membership possibilities make schools attractive to most Clubs. Arrange a meeting with school officials to inform them of the benefits of JOOI Clubs. Emphasize that JOOI Clubs will not interfere with school operations and that the administration of the Club will rest with the Optimist Club and JOOI adviser. Assure them that school authorities will maintain control over all school policy matters and regulations concerning school Club functions. Encourage the school to appoint a faculty adviser who will be a part of the "Advisory Committee" designated in the proposed bylaws. The adviser will meet regularly with the JOOI Club. Please mail, fax or e-mail the advisers name, address and contact information to the International Office. (See page 83.)

Emphasize the value of the potential JOOI Club to the school. Some benefits to mention include the increased responsibility the students will feel toward their community and facility. The students will become better citizens. Through relations with local businesses and professionals, students will gain valuable insight into hometown problems and career opportunities. Students learn to work together to solve problems both in and out of school. Make sure to obtain permission to use the school facilities. If you're granted permission to meet in a specific classroom, it's a good idea to talk to the teachers who use that classroom.

### Alternative Clubs

Optimist Clubs may sponsor JOOI Clubs in conjunction with other community activities or organizations. If meeting in school facilities is not feasible, meetings can be held almost anywhere - churches, community centers, and bowling alleys.

Some of the most rewarding JOOI Clubs are not formed through schools. Some Optimists work with Juvenile Centers or Homes for Children. Such Clubs may require a bit more effort to get started, but the rewards outweigh any difficulty in starting up a Club.

"Certainly there are obstacles to overcome, but the original sponsors saw the need and the great potential for helping these boys," says Ed Pike, adviser to a JOOI Club based in a youth home environment. Youth are sent to the home for family problems and law violations.

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*"One of the highlights of my involvement in Optimism has been the opportunity to work with the JOOI organization."*

**J. Wayne Smith**, 1997-1998  
Optimist International President

Independence, Mo.

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## RECRUITING MEMBERS

More than 13 million teens volunteer a combined 2 billion hours of service each year. The fact is, teens want to volunteer and they have the necessary energy and time to make real and positive contributions to their communities. Recruiting Members for JOOI Clubs will prove both exciting and rewarding to your Club.

### Step One: Gather names of prospective JOOI Members; invite those students to an initial meeting.

Student names can come from principals, athletic advisers, and faculty Members or from your Optimist Club Members. Leaders of youth groups (such as Girl Scout leaders or church group leaders) may also supply names of active youths. Send an invitation to each of the prospects you gather. Personally invite as many interested students as possible.

Remember that the 13 million teens who volunteer each year do so because they were asked. Be the one who asks! Try not to limit your recruitment efforts to students who are already designated by the community as achievers. Expand your reach to allow each student the opportunity to learn about Optimism. Hang the enclosed poster in a prominent spot in the school or community and ask a willing faculty Member to collect the applications (obtain permission before posting signs). Publicize your informational meeting through school newspapers, radio spots, posters and signs, and informational newsletters. Host a sign-up table at the local library or supermarket, and distribute Optimist and JOOI materials! Be sure to advertise meeting time and location. Let the potential JOOI Members know that the first meeting is informational and no long-term commitment is necessary.

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*“Sponsoring a JOOI Club is one of the best youth-serving projects a Club can do!”*

**Chris Albert**, 1996-1997 District JOOI Clubs Chairperson

Anniston, Ala.

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## Step Two: The First Meeting

Choose a convenient location and time for the first informational meeting. Remember most students do not have their own transportation. Also keep in mind competing events such as sports practices, and avoid those times.

The purpose of the first meeting is to let students know about Optimism and to gauge their interest level. The meeting should be short (no longer than 30 minutes) and informal with the students providing input as well as receiving information about JOOI.

Distribute JOOI applications to each student who attends the first meeting. Explain the purpose of JOOI Clubs and explain why your Optimist Club decided to sponsor a JOOI Club. Emphasize that once students form a JOOI group, they are in charge of their own Club. Adult Optimists will provide advice and guidance, but activities will be chosen and organized by JOOI Members.

Remember to address your comments to the students. Keep in mind the level of maturity of your audience. You probably need not make any adjustments for high school students, but younger kids need more time to digest new information. At the same time, younger kids won't be shy about asking questions, while junior high students might need some prodding. Describe the types of activities JOOI Clubs have accomplished in the past and ask students for feedback. Once the students seem to grasp the concept of Optimism, give them ample opportunity to ask questions. Encourage students to discuss the idea of a JOOI Club between this first meeting and the next, more formal, organizational meeting.

Before adjourning the meeting, take a quick vote to determine interest levels. If enough students express interest (10 or more students), plan an organizational meeting for approximately two weeks after the informational meeting. Remember to collect all membership applications before the organizational meeting. Keep up recruitment efforts in the interim weeks.

## Step Three: Organizing a JOOI Club

At the next meeting, students should start to take control of the Club. They will need your guidance initially, but once they have begun, most students enjoy being in-charge of the meetings and are capable of running effective meetings with little supervision.

At the organizational meeting, be sure students vote to adopt the bylaws with or without changes, nominate and elect officers, and establish dues and fees. Help them determine the regular Club meeting place and time, and discuss potential projects and basic goals for the Club. Encourage the students to begin their first project immediately. Successful Clubs invariably begin work on a project within a month of organizing.

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*“Being an Optimist JOOI Club sponsor allows you to experience the same kind of warm and fuzzy feeling a teacher gets when he sees the children he taught years ago become important community leaders, devoted parents and outstanding citizens.”*

**Ron Huxley**, 1997-1998 International JOOI Clubs Committee Chairperson

London, Ontario

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## Step Four: Making It Official

Send the necessary paperwork and the charter fee to the JOOI Clubs Department at Optimist International, 4494 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108 in the United States or to the Canadian Service Center, 4559, boul. Métropolitain est, St-Leonard, Qc H1R 1Z4 in Canada.

The paperwork and fee structure sheet can be found at the end of this manual. Please photocopy as necessary and fill out all information completely and legibly. Call the International JOOI Clubs Department if you have any questions at (800) 500-8130, ext. 261. In Canada call the Canadian Service Center at (800) 363-7151.

The JOOI Clubs Department needs the following information in order to charter your Club:

- Charter application
- Membership roster
- Officer information/Election report
- Enrollment fee
- Prorated Membership fees
- Prorated Registration fee
- Signed Club Bylaws

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*“I believe one person can really make a difference to a child. Can you imagine what a whole Club of Optimists can do if they really get involved with their JOOI Club?”*

**Don Brose**, 1997-1998 District JOOI Club Chairperson

Clarkston, Mich.

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## SET THE NEW CLUB IN MOTION

Optimist International will mail the new charter to your Club Member designated as JOOI Club Chair. Optimist Clubs should organize a Charter Ceremony to present the new charter to the JOOI Club. The Charter Ceremony is an excellent opportunity for publicity and can be as elaborate as the sponsor Club desires. Remember to invite school officials and anyone who helped recruit Members, as well as parents of the Members and community leaders.