The Midday Messenger

July 10, 2026

Newsletter of the Davenport Noon Optimist Club

Club Luncheon Meetings

We gather at noon on Fridays to connect with members and guests, enjoy a delicious lunch, and hear from engaging speakers who share programs and initiatives shaping our local community. See our upcoming events.

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Location

River Center, North Building, Iowa/Illinois Rooms, 136 E 3rd St, Davenport, IA

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Board of Directors

Roland Lamantia
President

Brian Baxter
President-Elect

Mauricio Diaz
First Vice President

Karen Roebuck
Second Vice President

Tom Redington
Third Vice President

Joseph Obelton
Past President

Paul Neuharth
Secretary

Stan Mohr
Treasurer

Pictured, Joseph Obleton and the Smart Middle School award recipients

Recognizing Positive Outcomes

– By Joseph Obleton, Youth Appreciation Chair

The Youth Appreciation program has been a cornerstone of Optimist International since 1956, offering clubs the opportunity to honor local youth for their contributions and accomplishments. It is designed not only to recognize outstanding students but also to foster interaction between youth and adults, encouraging mentorship, idea exchange, and community engagement.

Our club's Youth Appreciation program recognizes Davenport middle school students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades from Sudlow, Smart, Williams, Wood, and Walcott who have made the greatest progress in math and language arts during the school year. Teachers and counselors select two students per grade for math improvement and two per grade for language arts improvement. A total of **61 students** were recognized!

Selection is based on demonstrated improvement, effort, and perseverance, with schools also able to apply their own criteria to identify up to four honorees per grade.

Students are recognized at year-end achievement ceremonies and receive a Certificate of Improvement Recognition, a $30 gift card, and an invitation for them and their parents to attend a club luncheon meeting as our guests.

Special thanks to **Jenny Schnauber, Tom Redington, Brian Monroe, and Karen Roebuck** for attending the ceremonies, presenting certificates and gift cards, and joining the students for photos. We greatly appreciate their time, effort, and support of our Youth Appreciation program.

Youth Appreciation is one of the most popular programs of Optimist International, with over 2,000 clubs participating annually. It provides a meaningful way for clubs to make a positive impact in their communities while celebrating the accomplishments of young people.

(See additional photos on page 3)

Pictured left: Krishna Smit

Pictured right: Kelly Airey

Business Meeting Highlights

– Friday, July 10th

Today's business meeting gave us plenty to celebrate, starting with the induction of new member **Krishna Smit**, sponsored by **Mauricio Diaz**. Krishna serves as Development Director for Quad City Arts. Watch for more about Krishna in a future new member spotlight.

Paul Neuharth, 2026 Birdies Campaign Champ, shared an update on this season's Birdies Foundation Scholarship Fund Drive. Our membership goal was $3,000, and we surpassed it by raising $4,185. Including our club donation, we raised $11,685 before the Birdies Bonus Fund—67% more than last year which was also a banner year!

We also drew the remaining special Birdies raffle prizes. Congratulations to **Kelly Airey**, winner of a $100 Duck City gift certificate donated by **Kathleen Vondran**; **Jim King**, winner of QC Symphony tickets donated by **Brian Baxter**; and **Bernie and Cathy Mack**, winners of Brooks & Dunn concert tickets donated by **Vibrant Arena**.

Thank you to everyone who donated and helped make this year's Birdies campaign such a success for our scholarship fund!

Finally, members enjoyed a special presentation from **Brian Baxter** about his recent trip to the Optimist International Convention in Jacksonville, Florida. Brian highlighted the warm welcome he and his family received, the excellent entertainment, key business sessions, the strong Iowa delegation presence, and plenty of lighthearted moments—including a few classic "Dad" jokes.

Look for Brian's upcoming newsletter article about his convention adventures.

(See page 5 for more biz meeting photos)

New Member SPOTLIGHT

Kelly Airey, Cardiologist/Electrophysiologist

What do you do for fun when you aren't being an Optimist? Work one week a month, golf, sail, and ballroom dance.

When you think "Optimism," what's the first word or image that pops into your mind? Providing a bright outlook for those in need whether it be at risk, vulnerable due to circumstances such as poverty, being unhoused, or just lack of opportunity.

Which line of the Optimist Creed resonates with you the most? To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

What is one thing that never fails to put a smile on your face? Visiting with my friend's kid Dax, teaching him a new skill, and watching him say "I did it." Being in nature, sailing my boat, and dancing.

What is your "superpower" in everyday life? I can always provide some empathy in a tough situation. I can give career and financial advice.

What community causes or youth projects are you most passionate about? I support animal shelters and TNR programs. I am working with the sailing club to get a youth program started. I am interested in at-risk youth and providing opportunity.

Do you have a favorite local charity or organization you already support? Gilda's Closet, American College of Cardiology (local chapter), King's Harvest, and It Takes a Village (now closed).

Think back to a coach, teacher, or mentor who impacted your youth. What did they do that you want to pay forward? I have more recent mentors in my Cardiology training that taught me excellent patient care. Always have thought of patients as people, which isn't always the case.

What unique skills, hobbies, or professional talents do you love*?* Teaching people to sail. Mentoring Cardiology fellows in training.

Are you a "big picture brainstormer" or a "detail-oriented executor"? Big picture.

Is there a specific club committee or role you are curious about learning more or becoming involved with? Fundraising, and youth activities.

What is a fun or surprising fact about you that most people don't know? I am Canadian. I spent 17 years after high school in school. I like to travel and will travel alone without issue.

If you could write a headline for the local newspaper about a major positive change in our community, what would it say? All youth and adults came together from various clubs to provide for underserved communities. As a result, the communities have joined to help others.

Photos from the Youth Appreciation Awards

Pictured left, Tom Redington and the Wood Middle School award recipients

Pictured above, Karen Roebuck and the Williams Middle School award recipients

Optimist INTERNATIONAL
Davenport Noon Optimist Club

Pictured right, Tom Redington and the Smart Middle School award recipients

Mark Your Calendar Dates to Remember

July 17th
Club Luncheon | **HOBY Youth Leadership** | River Center

July 24th
Club Luncheon | **Kids for Vets** | River Center

July 31st
Club Luncheon | **Davenport Junior Theatre** | River Center

Aug 6th
Board Meeting | 4 PM | Rudy's Tacos | 2214 E 11th St | Davenport

Aug 7th
Club Luncheon | **Business Meeting** | River Center

Aug 12th
Foundation Board Meeting | The Filling Station, 305 E 35th St, Davenport

To see the **full calendar** of events, visit [Davenport Noon Optimist Club - HOME]

SUNSHINE NEWS.

Welcome back Doug Koester & Rex Hutchinson! Glad to see you at our Business Meeting.

July 12th
Wishing **Jim King** a Very Happy Birthday!

July 15th
Happy Birthday Wishes to **Ed Winborn!**

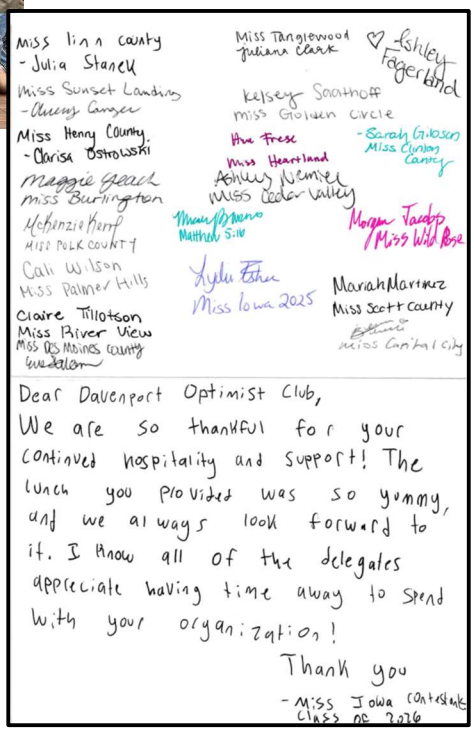
We'd love to celebrate with you! Please send your **Sunshine** notifications, birthdays, and special announcements to

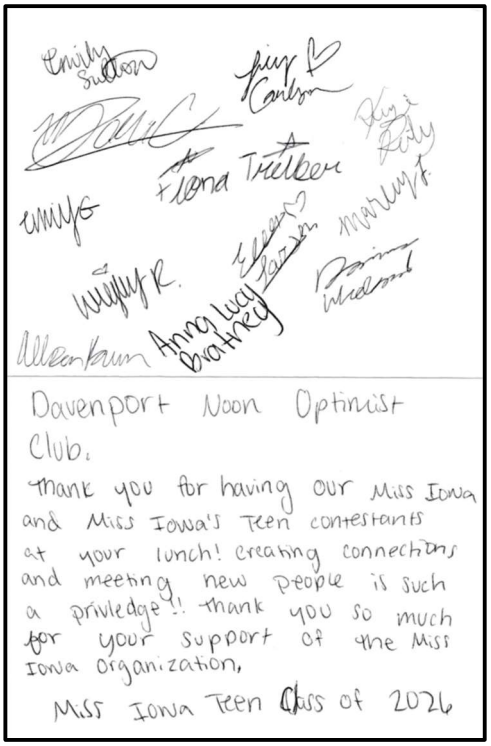
Davenport.Noon.Optimists.Club@gmail.com.

Notes from Miss Iowa Luncheon

Below are the thoughtful thank you notes we received from Miss Iowa and Miss Iowa Teen 2026 contestants.

Miss Iowa Scholarship Program





More from our Business Meeting

New Optimists Welcome

Know someone who shares your commitment to Optimism and making a positive impact on the youth in our community?

Most of us became Optimists because someone invited us to a meeting. A simple invitation can help others discover our club, our mission, and the positive impact we make together.

Make sure to invite your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family to join us as our guests next Friday for a delicious lunch and enlightening program.

Have you got something to say?

Say it in The Midday Messenger

Send your notes, articles, announcements, activities, and other items of interest to Davenport.Noon.Optimist.Club@gmail.com.

Submissions are due by Friday evening for each weekly issue.