

# A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-ELECT

I can find no better words than to say “Thank You” to all of you who provided support, advice and reassurances while I was considering being a nominee, and to all of you who elected me to be your Governor in 2010-2011. I pray that I can bring the same honor to the position as those who have gone before me.

Like many of you, I looked upon our recent blending of two districts into one with some trepidation. I should have paid more attention to our Optimist Creed and thought only of the best, worked only for the best, and expected only the best, because that’s where we’re headed. Thanks to very capable leadership at the Club and District levels, the South Texas District is on the way to becoming the best in Optimist International.

But we’re not quite there yet. While I was being interviewed by the Candidate Qualifications Committee after my nomination, I was asked my opinion of the major problem in our District and what I would do about it. Without thinking as long as I should have, I replied, “Apathy.” I had used that word often in the past when I saw the miniscule number of eligible voters that bothered to vote at a local election, the few that showed up at neighborhood association meetings, or the diminishing number of attendees at church. Later, I looked up the definition of “apathy,” and I found synonyms like “heartlessness,” “insensitivity,” and “indifference.” I certainly don’t know any Optimists that fit that mold, and so I realized I had, in my ignorance, chosen the wrong word.

So how should I have answered? I know the District has an aging membership, and possibly health issues have led to lower attendance at District meetings. I know that the District is large, and so perhaps travel expenses have become a problem. And I could have used the number one scapegoat we have today – the economy. Maybe “Cash for Clunkers” has become more important than “Concern for Children.” Should I have mentioned all three?

Had I the opportunity to answer the question again, I think I would say, “Forgetfulness.”

I think a lot of us have forgotten the reasons we became Optimists. At a recent rather large class at the International Convention in Florida, the instructor asked, “Who can tell me what our Mission Statement is?” She was met with silence! Finally, in a raised voice, she said, “By providing hope and a positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in kids.” Perhaps a lot of us have forgotten those words. We also may not remember that warm feeling we got when we conducted a successful youth project, or when a youth, parent, or teacher told us, “Thank you for what you do.”

So my solution to the problem is to remind fellow Optimists what we’re all about. I hope to accomplish that through our Lieutenant Governors and our Presidents. More than the social aspect of Optimism, which is still important, we should treasure the kids, for they are our future. I hope you will all remember that as we continue to revitalize the District.

—Hank Hollyday, Governor-Elect

## Youth Clubs, What’s In It For Me?

As I enter my 37<sup>th</sup> year of working with youth through Optimist International, I can look back and use the years of hindsight to evaluate what has and has not worked for me and my goals. I had a goal, years ago to build and sustain one of the largest most effective youth clubs in the entire organization. With the exception of a club or two that combined schools in an area, the club I worked with achieved that status on more than one occasion. So, as I look back of the 9 years of work with this particular club, I can see that I would count the “What’s In It For Me?” factor as the most important singular factor that counted towards the success we have achieved.

There is not one Optimist Club member out there reading this article that can not identify the exact factor that has made them and kept them working in Optimism. Year after year, day in and day out those motivating factors have kept you in Optimism, working to help the youth of today. Does it really matter what your motivation is, so long as the result is the success of our youth of tomorrow’s society? I have a challenge for you as you think about your answer: Build a youth club, get involved with a youth club or sponsor a youth club. You see, it is that cadre of youth that you bring together that will form the future of our wonderful organization.

There is a library of resources available from Optimist International for you to learn about building and sustaining a youth club, whether it is an Alpha Club, Junior Optimist Club, Octagon Club or Collegiate Club. At the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Conference our South Texas District youth members will be on hand to help with a Youth Club Building workshop. I can only assure that there will not be enough time to answer all your questions, but there will be ample time to help you understand the concept of “What’s In It For Me?” as it applies to our youth. Make your plans now to be there and learn about building our Optimist future.

—Sam N. Saenz, Past OI VP, District Youth Chairperson