Last Updated 10/1/2026

OPTIMIST CLUB OF MONACO SOUTH
PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Check the Calendar on the website for times and detailed information

WWW.MONACOSOUTH.ORG

PLEASE JOIN US IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The following describes the various youth, community service, and organizational projects that your Monaco South Optimist Club (a non-profit 501(c)4) sponsors and/or actively participates in running. This list is not all-inclusive, since we actively encourage our members to create or find new projects in which to get involved.

YOUTH PROJECTS--OUR PRIMARY MISSION

SUPER CITIZEN (Our Premier Service Project)

When: Monthly or Quarterly, as assigned
Where: assigned school
Who: One chairman and one or more assigned per school;

Our Club presents **Super Citizen Awards** for outstanding citizenship at McMeen, Samuels, Bradley, Holm, Most Precious Blood, Hamilton MS, Lowry, and Slavens and Ellis schools. At the elementary schools, at one or two assemblies during the school day, a Monaco South member presents each ***SUPER CITIZEN*** with a framed certificate signed by our Club President, Denver's Chief of Police and Mayor, and a T-shirt proclaiming them to be Super Citizens at that school. Photos are taken of each child with his/her parent and/or teacher. At Hamilton Middle School, Monaco South presents the awards during the evening at gathering of the award winners, their families, their teachers, and Hamilton's school administration

BRAIN BOWL

When: January and February in Littleton, Westminster, Denver and Colo. Springs

The Brain Bowl is similar to the old GE College Bowl TV show (for those too young to remember, think Jeopardy with teams), but for middle school kids. Three competitions go on at the same time: one for 6th grade, one for 7th grade, and one for 8th grade. Teams take a written test and engage in verbal rounds against other teams which test their general knowledge. The teams surviving the preliminary rounds of competition then face head-to-head single elimination in verbal competition rounds until the champions are determined at each grade level.
In January and February, the Brain Bowl hosts over 160 competing teams in three tournaments located in Westminster, Littleton, and Denver. Teams come from all around the state, and the assistance of 30 other Optimist Clubs throughout the Colorado-Wyoming

District is necessary to put on the event. This event culminates with a "Super Brain Bowl Championship" tournament in Denver in February. Go to http://www.optimistbrainbowl.org/ to learn more.

COLORADO HISTORY DAY

When: April-May
Where: Auraria Campus

Middle school and high school students write papers, assemble displays, produce documentaries, or write and perform original live performances related to the year's official theme. Monaco South members serve as judges (except for the papers) at the Denver Region History Day event and at Colorado History Day held at the University of Colorado at Denver, on the Auraria Campus. Training is provided. See: https://clas.ucdenver.edu/nhdc/ and https://www.nhd.org/ for more information

EAST HIGH CONSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARS

When: April-May
Where: Club Meeting

Students taking The Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics class at Denver East High compete in state and national competitions regarding details of the U.S. Constitution. Our club has supported this project since 1989 with a cash contribution and by having them appear at a weekly meeting every year to be quizzed on constitutional issues by members of the club.
The students at East High have finished in the top 10 schools in the country for 28 years and have finished first 5 times. They finished second in 2025 and should have finished first because of an error that was not discovered till after the competition.

CHILDHOOD CANCER/WELLNESS CAMPAIGN

When: Annually in March
Where: Donations to Optimist International foundation

Monaco South supports research into the causes and prevention of Childhood Cancer and assists children and their families who are undergoing treatment. Each year, one dollar from each Christmas tree sold is donated to a cause that aids the prevention of cancer or treatment of children with cancer. This can amount to $1200 or more! In addition, we occasionally conduct "Happy Bucks" where members can brag on or report happy events in their life and put cash in the pot for the CCC. Often the District holds a casino night to also raise funds for CCC, and this is a lot of fun.

EAGLE SCOUT RECOGNITION

When: Annually in March

At the Denver Area Council's Annual Eagle Scout Recognition event in March, the President of Monaco South makes the award presentations for the outstanding Eagle Service Projects for the current class of Eagle Scouts in the Council. The awards are for each Scout District and the Council at large. The award for the Council winner is a $ 1,000 gift from Monaco South. The event is arranged by the Council and hundreds are in attendance, with a special keynote speaker and numerous other special awards made by the Council or the Eagle Scout Association.

DESTINATION IMAGINATION

Our club has supported this creative problem-solving competition on an international level since the 1980's. The teams must solve a long-term problem in five different scientific, service learning, fine arts, improv, technical, engineering and answer a spontaneous problem in less than one minute. Many Monaco South members have coached teams over the years from elementary, middle, and high schools in southeast Denver. Many of

the members' children have been competitors and have won international titles many times. We still provide financial support to southeast Denver schools and volunteers for judging at city, state, and international competitions.

ESSAY CONTEST

When: February
Where: TJ High School

This event is sponsored by Optimist International, and it awards scholarships to high school students. Monaco South's involvement is to solicit student entries and to find qualified people willing to read and grade the essays. The winning essay is then forwarded to the district contest where it is graded against essays from around Colorado/Wyoming with the top one winning a $2500 scholarship.

OPERATION STUDENT SUPPLIES

When: Each Fall
Where: 8 Elementary Schools
Who: school SC reps

At the beginning of the school year, for our Super Citizen partner schools, Monaco South either purchases school supplies which the schools then distribute to students who need supplies, or some schools receive stipends to buy those items that they deem most needed for their school that year.

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

When: Annual donations from the Club and individuals

Established in 1971, the Optimist International Foundation (OIF) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. OIF works with Optimist Clubs located in over 3,800 communities in the United States, Canada, Europe and the Caribbean. A majority of support received by the Optimist International Foundation is unrestricted. These donations are applied to the annual campaign, and are used to support the Oratorical Contest, Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) and Essay Contest scholarships, as well as the Junior Optimist Octagon International program (JOOI). OIF is a major contributor to research at Johns Hopkins to help find cures for childhood cancer. In addition to the annual club donation of about $5 per member, individual members are encouraged to give tax-deductible donations, either to OIF, especially through the Dime-A-Day program, or to the club through the OIF Passthrough program

TRI-STAR BASKETBALL

When: February
Where: Boys and Girls Club of Denver

This activity is a key program from Optimist International. Volunteers from our club are needed to schedule this one-hour basketball skills competition, to recruit participants and to officiate at the events. We hold a club level event at the Boys and Girls Club and help with the Regional and District events. Top winners go to the District event at the Pepsi Center. Monaco South also provides assistance at all levels of this magnificent event for kids from 6-11 years of age. Other sports are also eligible for Tri-Star.

BILL WALTERS MEMORIAL BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS THANKSGIVING DINNER

When: The Tuesday before Thanksgiving
Where: Boys and Girls Club and Girl's Inc.

Run for many years by deceased member, Bill Walters, as it has for the past 35 years, Thanksgiving comes early for about 1000 boys and girls (and their families) at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver and at Girls, Inc of Metro Denver. Members of the Optimist Club of South Monaco serve turkey - about 800 pounds of it - and all the trimmings at two locations on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Kids are bused in from most of the metro area Boys and Girls Clubs to get to the location of the dinner, which for many would be the only Thanksgiving dinner they would have. Some bring their siblings and parents, and many take

advantage of the "to go" boxes to take turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes and pumpkin pie to the folks back home who can't come. Monaco South purchases the food, which is prepared by a local catering operation for free. As they have for over two decades, Monaco South club members have a wonderful time serving the food to the noisy crowd.

JUNIOR OPTIMIST CLUBS (JOI)

When: Ongoing
Where: Various Schools

Junior Optimist clubs provide kids in our schools with the opportunity to learn about being an Optimist while having fun and doing a community or school project for the betterment of their community. Currently we have a club at Bradley Elementary School, with plans for others in Southeast Denver.

CHRISTMAS BASKETS & GIFTS

When: Saturday before Christmas, 8-10 am
Where: Legion Hall

The Christmas Baskets & Gifts Project is an offshoot of the Thanksgiving Basket Project which was started in the 1980's. This project was expanded in the 1990's to include furnishing fixings for a full Christmas Dinner and usually some toys to needy families with children in the elementary schools where we sponsor Super Citizen Programs.

The Committee Chairman for Monaco South starts a sign-up sheet about a month before the event (which is always the Saturday before Christmas). The Chairman makes arrangements with various food sources for the essential ingredients of a Christmas Dinner. The Club pays for these items, but we try to get grocery stores to give us a discount price on the food & foil pans that we buy.

Early in the morning on the Saturday that we deliver the food baskets, several members of the club will meet to pick up the food and take it to the designated spot for assembling the food boxes for each family. At a designated time, the rest of the members who have signed up to work on this project will meet at the assembly area and box up the food for delivery.

The Christmas Gifts, for the children of six families in each school are purchased by Monaco South with budgeted funds and by other benefactors. The Social Services representative at the schools give us a list of the names, gender and ages of each child. Club members will then deliver the food baskets and gifts to the designated families.

The total time of assembling and delivering 50+ food baskets and gifts is about 2 hours.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS

When: Saturday before Thanksgiving
Where: Legion Hall

This project is identical to the Christmas basket project, but without the toys. We usually deliver 40+ full meal baskets.

ORATORICAL CONTEST

When: March
Where: Prairie Middle School

The Optimist Oratorical Contest gives youngsters the chance to speak to the world. More than $150,000 in college scholarships funded by the Optimist International Foundations is awarded annually from this program.
First conducted in 1928, this is the second most popular Optimist International Program. Nearly 2,000 clubs participate in this program each year. The winners at the Club level receive medallions and Zone winners receive a plaque. Districts have the opportunity to provide a first-place scholarship of $2,500, a second-place scholarship of $1,500, and a third-place scholarship of $1,000. Scholarships: The district winner gets $2500 and the international

winner gets $15,000. Lesser amounts are awarded to second and third place students.

JUNIOR GOLF

When: June/July
Where: Various Courses

As a major program of Optimist International, Monaco South and other club's members help with the three CO/WY District Junior Golf Qualifiers. We provide 15 or more people to help run the District Qualifiers in conjunction with the Junior Golf Alliance of Colorado. Our club helps raise over $60,000 to help send 60+ kids to THE OPTIMIST golf tournament in Florida each year. Members are encouraged to sponsor holes for the District Qualifiers and to participate in the Adult Golf Fundraiser Scramble.

ROBERT SULLIVAN COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

When: April 15th

The Robert Sullivan Scholarship fund was established by Monaco South to honor Bob Sullivan who was an outstanding member of the club and president of the Thomas Jefferson High School booster club. This fund annually provides scholarships to deserving college-bound seniors from Thomas Jefferson High School. The fund accepts contributions and raises funds from selling Rockies baseball tickets and Entertainment Books to club members and others.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING ORATORICAL CONTEST

When: April
Where: District Conference

The club supports organizations with donations to help children with hearing impairments. We support the Optimist District Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH). Like the regular Oratorical Contest above, District winners get a $2500 scholarship from the OI Foundation.

JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH AND CAMPS

When: June

Monaco South supports fund raising for research via JDRF (http://jdrf.org). Members also help JDRF with manpower for their annual GALA setup and Walk for a Cure.

SCOUT TROOPS AND CUB PACK CHARTERING

When: Ongoing
Where: Various

The club is fortunate to be able to sponsor three Cub Scout packs and one Scout Troop. The Packs are located in Park Hill, Centennial, and Central Park areas, and the Troop is located in Castle Rock. They are all very active girl and boy family units. The scouting progam teaches Scout patriotism, courage, self-reliance, character development, citizenship, leadership, and mental and physical fitness. The club serves in excess of 100 youth through this program.

CHILDREN'S SUPPORT PROGRAMS

The club supports the YMCA, East High School Constitutional Scholars, T.J. High School Music programs, and others with annual donations from funds raised by our Christmas Tree Lot fundraiser project.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

BIKE MS-REST STOP

When: Last Sunday in June
Where: Johnstown

This is the **Pat Sorensen Memorial Rest Stop** in memory of the wife of long-time member Oscar Sorensen. Our members participate in this 150-mile bicycle ride two ways as a fund raiser for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. This race attracts thousands of riders each year in July. Monaco South members have raised over $10,000 over the years as riders. Monaco South, along with the assistance of the Tamarac Optimist Club, also sets up and staffs the largest and best rest stop for this long, hot ride. Members direct traffic and we man the hydration station for dispensing ice, water and Gatorade to very thirsty and tired cyclists. Hundreds of riders take advantage of our rest stop each year. We also provide free photos of riders that are posted to our website for free download.

RESPECT FOR LAW

When: April/May
Where: Legion Hall

Each year, around May 1, Optimist International encourages its member clubs to honor one or more individuals in a show of respect for the operation of law. Our club usually honors a Denver area law professional or helps promote respect for law among our youth.

RESPECT FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

When: April/May
Where: Legion Hall

Each year, our club usually honors a Denver area first responder or helps promote respect for the men and women who protect our community.

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

When: April or May
Where: Legion Hall

Each year in February or March, before the schools let out for the summer, Monaco South honors outstanding educators from our southeast Denver public schools. Educators are chosen for dedication and results in our schools.

COLORADO SCOTTISH FESTIVAL

When: September
Where: Denver Polo Club

This is a weekend activity of Scottish Heritage celebrations with food and music. At the heart is the Highlands games, a display of skills and traditional events celebrating Scotland's storied athletic heritage. Our club provides volunteers to sell tickets and help with parking. This is an opportunity for our club to interact with our community and enjoy the Scottish cultural heritage.

ORGANIZATIONAL/FUND RAISING

NEW CLUB BUILDING

When: As needed
Where: Open

We are always looking to find a community or program that is not currently being served by an Optimist Club to initiate and build a new Optimist Adult Club or JOI (Junior Optimist International) Student Club (Grades 6 – 12). We begin by contacting "New Club Builders" in the community, businesses, and schools. We then solicit and engage potential new members for the goal of

building a NEW Optimist Club that directly serves their purpose and programs. Once a new Club has been built and chartered, Monaco South helps guide and follow up to ensure the new Club's success and survival.

NEWSLETTER

Monaco South publishes a weekly newsletter after each meeting. It is titled "Grandiose Utterings of Monaco South," **"GUMS"** for short. Typically, it is distributed via email on Sunday afternoon. The Chief Editor assembles and distributes the four-page newsletter. Five other editors rotate each month to take notes and draft the content for the newsletter. One member is designated as the newsletter photographer; however, other members contribute photos as well. We always welcome additional members who want to serve as "editor of the month." Additionally, project chairs are encouraged to write up their events to assure accuracy and specific details. For members that do not have email access one member mails copies by USPS. **Consider volunteering to be an Editor.**

When: Weekly
How: By Email

NEW PROJECTS

Monaco South is always looking for new youth and community service projects and has a standing committee for the development of new projects.

When: open
Where: open
Who: Anyone with desire

SPEAKERS' BUREAU

Finding and scheduling interesting speakers is essential to making our weekly breakfast meetings vibrant and interesting. Volunteers are needed to help our speaker chairs find and arrange speakers.

When: Weekly
Where: Meeting Site
Who: Mark Metevia

CHRISTMAS TREE LOT

Each year, Monaco South establishes and runs a Christmas tree lot. This is the club's **major fund raiser** for the year and provides the funding foundation for most of our many youth and community projects. One dollar from each tree sale is donated to Childhood Cancer, an Optimist International supported project. We have maintained this lot for over 40 years. We sell up to 1300 trees, wreaths, and garlands. **ALL** members are encouraged to put in a minimum of six 2.5-hour shifts over the month (we run 10am to 8pm, seven days a week) over 3 weeks and help with the set up and teardown of the lot. This is the most wonderful time of the year and a fun time to get to know your fellow Optimists. The annual club chili cook-off is held at the tree lot trailer. We also get help from local high school youth groups (JROTC, Sports teams, etc.) and donate to those groups that participate.

When: Day after Thanksgiving until Dec 24th
Where: Monaco and Iliff
Who: Tree Lot Committee (TLC)

KING SOOPERS COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

King Soopers will provide a donation to our club for anyone who signs up for the community rewards program. If you shop King Soopers, you can get a loyalty (aka Fuel Rewards) card and then go to the website to sign up to participate in the program. King Soopers then will donate to the club, on a quarterly basis. This amount is based upon the total amount of food purchases made by all enrolled members.

When: Ongoing
Where: King Soopers

ROCKIES HANDOUTS

Each year, for one or two games members and their families have the opportunity to support the Rockies baseball organization by handing out promotional items at a game. Usually, t-shirts and free game tickets are provided to all who participate, and

When: Summer
Where: Coors Field

the club receives a contribution of $250 to $750 depending on the size of the promotion.

ANNUAL RAFFLE
The club conducts a raffle each summer to raise about $5000 with a payout of $5000. Members and other clubs sell tickets to the public.

FUN TIMES

KIDS TO BREAKFAST
Each year the meeting after Christmas, kids and grandkids gather at our meeting place for a special breakfast and entertainment.

SWEETHEARTS TO BREAKFAST
Each year we try to have a special program for our wives or significant other at breakfast closest to Valentine's Day. Volunteers are needed to plan the entertainment for this meeting.

When: Around Valentine's Day
Where: varies

ANNUAL "WHITE ELEPHANT" GIFT EXCHANGE
At the meeting before Christmas, Santa (or maybe the Grinch) hands out presents to each member. Members bring a poorly wrapped gift of something they have wanted to get rid of for a long time, and the gift exchanNe commences.

When: the Friday before Christmas
Where: Club Meeting

NEW YEAR HOLIDAY PARTY
Monaco South puts on a holiday party to celebrate the end of the year and the start of the New Year. This is a fun way to meet members and spouses, and have a wonderful time with music, dancing, and good food and libations. Sometimes we have a multi-club event.

When: Mid December
Where: Varies

ANNUAL *CELEBRATE YOUR OPTIMISM* BANQUET
The end of our fiscal year is September 30th. In the week or two prior to that, the club holds a year end celebration banquet to honor the outstanding club members of the year, the outgoing officers of that year, and to install the incoming officers for the following year. (Elections are held in April) A fun evening of celebration and camaraderie is not to be missed!

When: September
Where: Local Restaurant
Who: Chair: Immediate Past President

DISTRICT QUARTERLY CONFERENCES AND ANNUAL CONVENTION
The Colorado/Wyoming District holds 3 quarterly conferences and an annual convention in August. These meetings are a wonderful way to meet Optimists from all over to share ideas and get training in various areas of club operations and leadership. Check the District website for dates and information: https://www.optimistcowy.org/events-conferences/conferences/

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
Held each year in late June, in a different city each year, this national convention is for everyone and especially incoming officers for the new fiscal year to get training and conduct national business.
Go to www.optimist.org for the latest information and dates.