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OPTIMIST CLUB OF MONACO SOUTH PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

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)

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

When: Monthly or Quarterly, as assigned Where: assigned school Who: One chairman and one or more assigned per school; Chair: Robert Wardlaw
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BRAIN BOWL

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.

When: January and February in Littleton, Westminster, Denver and Colo. Springs Who: Karl Geil
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In January and February, the Brain Bowl hosts over 160 competing teams in three tournaments located in Westminster, Littleton, and Colorado Springs. 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

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<http://www.optimistbrainbowl.org/> to learn more.

KNOW BRAINER COMPETITION

In the same format as the Brain Bowl (except there are no head-to-head elimination rounds in the afternoon), this competition is held by Monaco South and Tamarac clubs for 5th graders in the southeast Denver area. Volunteers will be done shortly after noon.

When: Late April/early May Where: Hamilton Middle School Who: Pat Bush
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COLORADO HISTORY DAY

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.

When: April-May Where: Auraria Campus Who: Karl Geil
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CHILDHOOD CANCER/WELLNESS CAMPAIGN

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 DINNER

At the Denver Area Council's Annual Eagle Scout Recognition Dinner 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 dinner 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. Monaco South sponsors a table at the dinner for a donation of \$ 1,000.

When: Annually in March Where: Local Hotel Who: Bob Avery

ESSAY CONTEST

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.

When: February Where: TJ High School Who: Jack Kleinheksel/Wyatt McCallie

HUGH O'BRIAN YOUTH FOUNDATION

The club provides student scholarship support and donations to HOBY. Each year, we sponsor a high school student to attend the annual state conference at DU. On the Saturday afternoon of the state conference, a group of members attend the HOBY picnic to mentor the kids and encourage youth leaders that are participating.

When: Each June Where: School of Mines Who: Paul Bernard
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OPERATION STUDENT SUPPLIES

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.

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

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

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

When: Annual donations from the Club and individuals Who: Andy Towt
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TRI-STAR BASKETBALL

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.

When: Feb/ March/April (finals) Where: Finals at Pepsi Center Who: Michael Chavez

BILL WALTERS MEMORIAL BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS THANKSGIVING DINNER

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.

When: The Tuesday before Thanksgiving Where: Boys and Girls Club and Girl's Inc. Who: Michael Chavez
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JUNIOR OPTIMIST CLUBS (JOC)

Junior Optimist clubs provide kids in our schools 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.

When: Ongoing Where: Various Schools Who: Jon Wachter

CHRISTMAS BASKETS & GIFTS

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.

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

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 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 gives 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 the food baskets and gifts is about 2 hours.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS

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

When: Saturday before Thanksgiving Where: Legion Hall Who: Jim Easton and Allen Pierce
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ORATORICAL CONTEST

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.

When: March Where: TBD Who: George Buzick and Michael Chavez
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The topic for the 2022-23 Optimist International Oratorical Contest is: **“Discovering the Optimism within Me”** Who: The contest is open to contestants under the age of 19 as of October 1st of the current Optimist

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International contest year (October 1 – September 30) and who have not yet completed secondary school or its equivalent, including CEGEP students in Québec, Canada. There is no minimum age

How To Enter: Interested students submit a speech on the pre-assigned topic to their local Optimist Club.

The deadline to enter is determined by the sponsoring Optimist Club. All Club-level contests are typically held by late March.

Clubs and Districts

The District deadline to submit winners to Optimist International is May 15. Optimist International does not set Club/Zone/Regional deadlines.

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

As a major program of Optimist International, Monaco South 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 raises about \$ 45,000 to help send 60+ kids to THE OPTIMIST each year. Members are welcome to sponsor holes for the District Qualifiers and to participate in the Adult Golf Fundraiser Scramble.

When: June/July Where: Various Courses Who: Joe Marci//Bob Meyer
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ROBERT SULLIVAN SCHOLARSHIPS

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.

When: April 15th Who: Joe Marci

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN

The club supports organizations with donations to help children with hearing impairments. We support the Optimist District oratorical 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.

When: April Who: Greg Young

JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH AND CAMPS

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.

When: June Who: Ron Gustas

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CUB SCOUT PACK 8023 and Scout Clubs

The pack serves 40 excited Cub Scouts in the 11 Stapleton neighborhoods. (Old Stapleton Airport area). The Pack has dens for girls and boys kindergarten through 5th grade. The pack does many fun things including overnight camp outs, pinewood derby and STEM programs. The monthly pack meetings are held at High Tech Elementary School, 8499 Stoll Place, Denver 80238. The club also supports a Scout Venture Group at South High School.

When: Ongoing Where: High Tech Elementary School Who: Frank Middleton
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CHILDREN'S SUPPORT PROGRAMS

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

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

BIKE MS-REST STOP

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.

When: Last Sunday in June Where: Johnstown Who: Michael Chavez
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RESPECT FOR LAW

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.

When: April/May Where: Legion Hall Who: Steve Kadye

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

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. The educators are chosen for dedication and results in our schools.

When: April or May Where: Legion Hall Who: Tom Mauro
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ORGANIZATIONAL/FUND RAISING

NEW CLUB BUILDING

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.

When: As needed
Where: Open
Who: Phil Perington

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
Who: Chair,
George Buzick,
Chief Editor, and
Editors

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 garland. **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
Evans
Who: Tom Kramis
and the Tree Lot
Committee (TCL)

PEACH SALES

Each year a member takes orders for Palisades, Colorado (Western Slope) peaches as a fund raiser. These peaches come in a two-layer box and are delivered tree ripe.

When: Summer
Where: Pickup
Who: Bob Finkelmeier

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Profits are shared with Tamarac Optimist Club.

KING SOOPERS INCENTIVE SALES

The Kroger Company will provide a donation to our club for anyone who signs up for the incentive program. If you shop King Soopers, you can get a loyalty 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, up to 5% of all signed up members' purchases. We also have a similar program with Safeway, whereby members can buy a reloadable Safeway debit card, and Safeway sends the club 3% of any members reloads, while the member gets full value for Safeway purchases of food or gas.

When: Weekly meeting
Where: Meeting Hall
Who: Frank Middleton

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

When: Summer
Where: Coors Field
Who: Michael Chavez

FUN TIMES

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
Who: Jon Wachter

HONEYMOON or ODYSSEY WEEKEND

Each year in the summer, many members and usually their wives/significant others gather in a fun Colorado vacation spot for a weekend of fun and sightseeing. Golf, shared fun at mealtimes and a wide range of activities, or just relaxing, make this a standout time and most enjoyable weekend to see *Colorful Colorado* or other fun places not too far afield.

When: June or July
Where: varies
Who: Craig Eley

YEAR END HOLIDAY PARTY

Monaco South puts on a holiday party to celebrate the end of the 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
Who: Frank Middleton

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

QUARTERLY DISTRICT CONFERENCES AND ANNUAL CONVENTIONS

The Colorado/Wyoming District holds 3 quarterly conferences and an annual convention in August. Optimist International also holds an annual convention in a different city each July. These meetings are a wonderful way to meet Optimists from all over and get training in various

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areas of club operations and leadership. Check the District website for dates and information:
<https://www.optimistcowy.org/events-conferences/conferences/>