



PAOLA OPTIMIST CLUB

404 College St.
Paola, KS 66071
September 28, 2011

To: Interested Essay Writers

The Paola Optimist Club is sponsoring an essay contest in conjunction with Optimist International and is open to students under age 18 as of December 31, 2011. Students meeting the age limitation in public, parochial, home, or private schools are eligible to participate. This contest is to give young people the opportunity to express their own opinions regarding the world in which they live. The approach can encompass a young person's personal experience, the experience of his/her country or a more historical perspective. The official topic, "**How My Positive Outlook Benefits My Community**" is intended to give young people the room to develop their own views around a central idea. In addition to the opportunity for written expression, participants have the opportunity to win a college scholarship of up to \$2,500 at the Kansas District level.

Interested students should submit essays to the Paola Optimist Club, **no later than February 8, 2012**. No individual having previously won a district level essay scholarship will be eligible to compete at any level of the competition again. The essays are judged at the club level, district level, and at the international level. The length of the essay is to be 700-800 words. (Title, footnotes, and bibliography are not included in the final word count.) The club level winner will be determined by February 11, 2012 and will receive a medallion, for first, second, and third places, along with \$50 for first place, \$25 for second place, and \$10 for third place as prizes, awarded at the club meeting on April 17, 2012, 6:30 PM, at the Paola Country Club. District level winners will be determined by April 14, 2012 and will receive a plaque and a \$2500 college scholarship for first place. International level winners will be announced in May 2012, and will receive scholarships as follows: first-place: plaque, recognition in *The Optimist* magazine. Refer to the application blank for specific details regarding scholarships.

Applications for the essay contest have been provided to local schools and are also available from Jim Gray, essay contest chair at 913-294-3173, 913-306-0433 or email at jamesgray8213@att.net. **The essay contest rules are listed on the application blank.** Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim Gray
Essay Contest Chair

Application for 2011-2012 Optimist International Essay Contest

Name _____ M F _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Zip/Postal Code _____
 State/Province _____
 Telephone (_____) _____
 E-mail _____
 Date of Birth ____/____/____ Age ____
 Have you participated in any other Optimist Club's Essay Contest this school year?
 Yes No

Please send application to address below:

Contestant Agreement: _____
 Contestant's Signature _____ Date ____/____/____
 Parent or Guardian Permission: _____
 I give my permission for my child/ward to participate in this contest.
 Signature _____ Date ____/____/____
 Relationship _____
 Sponsoring Optimist Club Name PAOLA DINNER CLUB
 Sponsoring Optimist Club Number 37-046

Official Topic: "How my Positive Outlook Benefits my Community"

Essay Contest Rules

Each contestant must be given a copy of the rules and complete the entry form. The rules contain information about the contest, judging and awards.

Section I - General Rules

1. The Optimist International Essay contest is divided into three levels of competition: Club, District and International.
2. Contestants must enter through a local Optimist Club, or an at-large contest if a local club is not available.
3. Contestants must compose an original essay with limited guidance from others. Webster's dictionary defines an essay as an analytic or interpretative literary composition. Works of fiction or poetry will not be accepted.
4. All District-level competitions must have a minimum of 3 contestants participating.
5. Optimist International will have the right to edit, publish or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment to the author.

Section II - Qualifications for Contestants

1. The contest is open to students under age 18 as of December 31st of the 2011-2012 school year (December 31st, 2011) who have not yet graduated from high school or the equivalent. Students must enter in the District in which they reside. U.S. students attending school on military installations outside the United States are eligible to enter in their last home of record.
2. Contestants are eligible for only one Club's contest during any given year.
3. No student who has previously won an Optimist

Essay contest scholarship will be eligible to compete at any level of the competition again. All contestants at each level of the contest must furnish a copy of their birth certificate or passport before participating.

Section III - Contest Rules

1. Participants must write on the official topic.
2. Each entry must begin with a title page containing: the official topic, number of words, writer's name, address, phone number, name of school and date of birth.
3. At the top of page 1 should be the official topic and the number of words (penalty of 2 points for lack of topic and 5 points for failure to identify the total number of words correctly).
4. Essays must be typewritten and double-spaced. (Deduction of 5 points)
5. Essays must contain at least 700 words but no more than 800 words. Every word of the essay is counted. This does not include the title, bibliography or footnotes. Hyphenated words count as 1 word (Deduction of 5 points for each 25 words over/under limit).
6. Each page of the essay must be numbered starting with page 1 of the essay, not the title page. The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
7. Any quotations or copyrighted material used must be identified properly. For example, use of a specific writer's format (such as MLA) may be specified by the instructor overseeing the contest. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
8. No reference can be made in the essay that identifies the student, parents, school, community, sponsoring Optimist Club or District. (Deduction of 5 points or fraction based on degree of identification)
9. An essay may be written in either English,

French or Spanish if the language used is an official language of the country in which the sponsoring Club is located. The entry must be stapled together in the upper left-hand corner. Covers of any type are not accepted.

Section IV - Judging and Timing

1. Judging will be completed by a panel of three qualified judges. At the Club level, judges may be Optimist Members, who are not acquainted with the contestants. At all other levels of the competition, judges must be non-Optimists.
2. In an effort to conceal the identity of each contestant, each entry will be assigned a number by the Essay Contest Chair. The assigned number will be placed on the title page and page 1 of the essay. The title page will then be detached and retained by the Essay Contest Chair. The judges will be given the essay bearing only the assigned number.
3. Judges will not discuss or compare essays being judged.
4. Only judges can assign a penalty or award points.

Section V - Scoring


- Scoring procedures at all levels of the contest will be identical.
1. Material Organization - logical interpretation of the subject, adherence to topic: 40 points
 2. Vocabulary and Style - phrasing and continuity: 30 points
 3. Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling: 20 points
 4. Neatness: 5 points
 5. Adherence to Contest Rules - prepared in the proper format: 5 points
- Section VI - Penalties
1. Failure to list official topic: 2 points

2. Failure to accurately identify total number of words: 5 points
3. Failure to type essay and double-space: 5 points
4. Failure to stay within the 700-800 word limit: 5 points for each 25 words over/under limit
5. Self-identification: 5 points or fraction of based on degree of identification

Section VII - Awards

1. Club level - medallion
 2. District level - plaque and a \$2,500 college scholarship for the first-place winner
 3. International level - First Place: plaque, recognition in *The Optimist* magazine
- A. Scholarships are funded by the Optimist International Foundations of the United States and Canada. Scholarships awarded are for use at a college, university or trade school only.
- B. All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
- C. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International.
- D. Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.

For more information contact:


 JAMES W. GRAY, 404 COLLEGE ST.
 PAOLA, KS 66071-1519
 Phone-913-294-3173, 913-306-0433
 email- jamesgray8213@att.net