**News and Notes**

*Happy New Year to you all* -- may you be safe, happy, healthy, and well in 2023! Thanks to our successful ongoing Farmers Market and Tree Sale fundraisers, we are back in business this month of encouraging and supporting local youth. In fact, on Sunday, January 22, six students from Canterbury Woods Elementary School will compete in our annual Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) at 3 p.m. in the community room of the Vienna Community Center. Each student will give a short speech based on the theme "Discovering the Optimism within Me". The top three communicators win medals says Mike Fitzella, VP of Youth. Mike encourages you to please RSVP "yes" or "no" to this inspirational event when you receive the email invitation, to ensure an accurate count.

Meanwhile, while we're busy recognizing children with awards and scholarships for their abilities, they're helping us right back. JOI Club members and students from George C. Marshall and James Madison High Schools; Flint Hill Upper School; Louise Archer Elementary School; Thoreau and Kilmer Middle Schools; Boy Scout Troop 1539, and former Marshall now current NOVA student Aaron Feinberg volunteered at the tree lot, says Ed Wonder, director of youth.

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*Serving the youth of greater Vienna for more than 65 years!*

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From President Tom Bauer

Greetings Fellow Optimists!

That was sure a cold Christmas day this year. I can't remember many that were that cold. Thank God we're not in Buffalo! We started off the month with our annual Holiday party at Westwood Country Club with 40 people in attendance. It was so nice to be together and especially nice to see folks that we haven't seen in a while. It seems that the Madrigals just keep getting better. They are really the highlight of the party. We also had a successful Christmas tree sale this year even though we weren’t able to get the number of trees we planned for. Of course, we didn’t make as much as usual but we are still in good shape to fund all of our programs for this coming year. I’ll let you know exactly how much profit we made once we get a small discrepancy with our vendor cleared up. Thanks to all of you who participated in selling, tying, lifting and cashiering. Your efforts are much appreciated and make the whole process go smoothly. We will start off the new year with our CCDHH Oratorical contest which will be on Sunday, January 22nd at 3:00 pm at the Vienna Community center on the lower level. This is one program you don't want to miss! I think this is one of the most meaningful programs we conduct. Speaking of CCDHH, I saw Rob DiRocco in church on Christmas eve. He and Laurie are still in Japan for another two years and really enjoying the experience. He especially mentioned the safety and cleanliness of their community and the politeness of the Japanese people. Susan sent a sympathy card to Les Carl, former past president and longtime member for the passing of his wife, Jane. They had been happily married for 59 years. He wrote back immediately to thank us and let us know that Jane's services will be held April 20th at Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main St. in Fairfax. We could always count on Les to lend a hand with Christmas tree sales until he had to give that up to care of Jane.

Wishing each and every one a very happy and healthy new year.

Optimistically,

Tom

Music teacher Claire Rowan led the talented James Madison High School Madrigals in song once again for our annual holiday party. Thank you, Michele Wright, for this great photo. Thank you, Claire Rowan and the Madrigals, for the wonderful performance.
What's new for Optimism International with President Robert McFadyen?

In the fall issue of Optimism International, President Robert McFadyen writes about his vision for the organization. While membership has declined over the years (as with many other service groups) McFadyen says he is optimistic about OI maintaining its independence -- if we can garner more members to participate and join.

In the feature article introducing him as president, McFadyen cites the many benefits that optimism and volunteering bring, such as health, happiness, longevity, resilience, and success. Some new online benefits that OI is offering members include enhancing Club and Membership procedures; offering more relevant -- and now free -- content through the Optimist Institute (such as ways to grow through personal and leadership development tools, education, inspiration, and insight); marketing tools to help Clubs promote optimism; pursuit of alternate revenue sources that promote optimism beyond our current branded logo inventory; and enhancing youth programs to include modernizing JOI programs and developing Social Emotional Learning content. Lifelong learning is linked to health and happiness, too.