



Optimistically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna - September 2024

News and Notes

Calendar

Ongoing

Farmer's Market

Saturdays

8 AM – 12 PM

We need volunteers for each shift and for pooch parking

Shifts are:

7 - 9 AM

9 - 11 AM

11 AM - 12:30 PM

11 September

First Responders Awards

7:00-8:30 PM

14 September

Caboose Opening

1-5 pm

Coming in October

Board Meeting

2 October

7 PM (virtual)

Vienna Oktoberfest

5 October

11am - 7pm

Halloween Parade

23 October

7pm

Optimist Dues Moves to Digital Payment

2024-2025 membership payments are now being accomplished digitally! You should have received an email notice with an invoice and link to pay your dues in the first part of September. The due date for payment is 1 October 2024.

If you did not receive your invoice, or if it was lost in your spam folder, please contact Brian Isaac at brian.isaac.ocogv@gmail.com for a link to pay your dues.

First Responders Dinner and Awards

Our annual 1st Responders Dinner and Award Ceremony will be held at the Vienna Community Center (Southside Rm) on September 11th at 7PM. There will be a dinner costing \$21.50 each person from Nozzo Pazzo (Cheese Lasagna, Salad, and a Dessert). You must sign up - registration will go through September 9th so we have time to confirm with the caterer.

Please come out and support the 1st Responders! The link for registration and payment is here -

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0848A4A923A1F94-51073482-ocogv>

September is Hunger Action Month

According to Feeding America, more than 47 million people in the US face hunger, including 1 in 5 children. In Fairfax County, nearly 75,000 residents are food insecure and it is estimated that since the pandemic, food insecurity has doubled. But there is good news to report. Since May 2024, OCGV has partnered with Cornerstones of Reston and their Assistance Services and Pantry Program (ASAPP) to serve local community members. As the largest food pantry operating in northwest Fairfax County, ASAPP services 1,3347 households, benefiting 4,810 people. (continued on page 2)



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

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www.OptimistClubofGreaterVienna.org, [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#)



September is Hunger Action Month (continued from page 1)

In collaboration with Cornerstones, OCGV coordinated the weekly pickup of over 4,500 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables over the course of 18 weeks from the OCGV Farmers' Market. Generous donations provided by local vendors at the OCGV market have made a big impact, according to Minnie Orozco, Cornerstones Program Manager of Urgent Needs and Life Skills. The donations support 25-30 families each week, many with young children, and totaling 80 people. The quality of the food is filling a major gap by supplying nutritious items rich in minerals and vitamins vital for child development. Simultaneously, vendors receive a tax donation receipt each time they make a contribution to Cornerstones Food Bank.

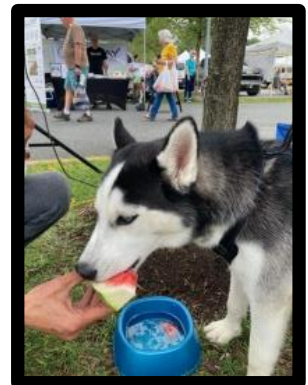
The good news doesn't end there. Virginia-based vendors Westmoreland Produce and J&W Valley View Farms were approved by the Virginia Farmers Market Association to accept Senior and WIC vouchers redeemable at OCGV Farmers' Market. In conjunction with Virginia Fresh Match and SNAP/EBT, these vendors are widening the range of opportunities to include community members who rely on these programs for their nutritional needs.

Moving forward, the OCGV Farmers' Market Committee will continue to work with these committed partners and prepare for future gleaning coordination efforts in 2025!

Pooch Parking – A Cornerstone of the Market

There are only eight weeks left in the 2024 Optimists' Farmers Market season and, this year we saw a record number of visitors come to purchase fresh produce, enjoy delicious meals, and hear great live music. Despite the market's popularity, certain visitors are not permitted within the market: dogs and other pets. Due to local and state health codes, dogs are prohibited from entering the market. But the Optimists of Greater Vienna saw an opportunity to comply with regulations AND still carve out a special place for faithful canine companions every Saturday.

In 2023, the club instituted Pooch Parking, a designated corner location at the manager's tent where club members volunteer to babysit the dogs of patrons while they shop. Provided with shade, water, treats, and love from Optimist volunteers, Pooch Parking has become a popular attraction. Dave, a first-time visitor to the market recently shared, "It's really nice that I can enter the market, get some great produce, and not have to worry that another dog might interact negatively with my dog while my hands are full with groceries. I will definitely be returning to this market knowing both my dog and I can enjoy a setting that accommodates everyone appropriately."



The response is remarkable: Cheryl Welsh, Optimist volunteer and Pooch Parking manager, reported an increase in use and appreciation for dog-sitting services from the community, with a record of 21 dogs on a single Saturday! Patrons have generously provided tips which all go towards Optimist youth programs and scholarships in the community. What once was a 'no-no' has now become a big hit with a happy outcome for dog lovers and their furry companions.

New Member Spotlight – Jorge Morazanni

How lucky we are that veteran member Rob Ruth brought us a new member, Jorge Morazanni! Below is Jorge's bio – it looks like Jorge will fit right in with our group and we are looking forward to seeing him at Optimist events.

From Jorge – “I was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. I graduated from the University of PR in 1979 and immediately joined PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). In 1996, I was transferred to VA, so my family and I moved and settled in Vienna. I am a widower and the proud father of four daughters and grandfather of four grandkids. Three of my daughters went to Madison High School and then to VA Tech (three Hokies!)

“In 2015, I retired and instead of looking for another job, I became a “professional” dad and grandfather, so I try to spend as much time with them as possible. I also have two dogs that keep me busy and active. My main hobby is audio/video, which I enjoy very much, particularly when sharing it with other people. In addition, I like other activities such as travel, charity work, tennis, walking, reading, and exploring nature. Also, I look forward to experiencing new things, particularly when they may offer learning opportunities. I was lucky that my career brought us to Vienna, and I am glad that I have resided here for the last 28 years. Vienna is quite a town with a great community.”

Welcome Jorge!

Logophile Volunteer Needed

Love words? Love reading? Inspired by youth and their writing? Want to help with Optimist programs? Look no further - OGCV is actively recruiting for an OGCV Essay Contest Coordinator to replace Dan Irvine, who has graciously overseen this effort for several years and is seeking to pass on the torch.

Duties in this position involve working with a dedicated team of other club volunteer judges while serving as the lead liaison between the club, local high school guidance counselors, and students. Specifically, this individual will electronically share the contest rules with schools in December and answer any questions to support contestants until mid-January. From there, the coordinator will electronically share submissions with other judges and determine the finalists. By early February, they will contact finalists and invite them to attend the Essay Contest Dinner in mid-February, where students will have the opportunity to read their essays before their families and club members before the top three winners are announced. The first-place winner will then have their essay material electronically submitted by the Essay Contest Coordinator to compete at the Optimist District level and a chance to win additional monetary scholarships.

If this virtual volunteer opportunity sounds appealing to you, please send an email message to info@optimistclubofgreatervienna.org.

From President Monica Isaac

Dear Optimists,

In our effort to “bring out the best in kids”, there is no greater priority than their safety. I state this because on August 1, 2024, a Langley High School football coach and teacher was suspended after police arrested him for allegedly attempting to solicit sexual acts from a minor online. This individual’s attempts to prey on a child were thwarted by an undercover detective posing as a teenage girl. Sadly, this is not an isolated incident and there are many cases in which the outcome is nothing short of inexcusable, horrific, and depraved.

I raise this issue, because if we are truly committed to the well-being of children, it requires us as a club to address the realities that exist in our world today and proactively take steps to safeguard the children we serve. With this in mind, I recently brought a motion before the board to check current and future members against national and state sexual predator registries. This motion passed and is now adopted as standard protocol. This is the first step in establishing and adopting a child protection policy and code of conduct for our club. The objective of these measures is to safeguard all children who interact with our club and keep them from harm.

All children have a right to protection. By instituting a policy that ensures the safety and protection of all children, we are affirming our commitment to this principle not only by our words but by our actions. We hold the trust of children and the community sacred. Therefore, we have established a working committee, led by Michele Wright, to effectively execute our duty in creating and adopting a Child Protection Policy. Upon completion, full transparency detailing the parameters of this policy will be shared with all existing and future members. To reiterate, the club’s good name and standing within the community require proactive measures to safeguard the children and families we serve. These safeguards are also components of the modernization and protection for the club. Finally, it necessitates that we not only confront the ugly realities that threaten child safety but also the accountability required to serve as true stewards of child well-being.

All members are invited to join this committee and help in the creation of this policy. If interested, please reach out directly to Michele at michelewrightoptimist@gmail.com

In solidarity,

Monica

**Board of Directors 2024-2025
Optimist Club of Greater Vienna**

President	Monica Gomez Isaac
Secretary (acting)	Susan Bauer (acting)
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VP, Community	Susan Bauer
Director, Community	Bill Comerford
VP, Digital Communications	Brian Isaac
Director, Digital Communications	Jacque Brewer
VP, Membership	Roger Doughty
Director, Membership	Dan Woltman
VP, Youth	Mike Fitzella
Director, Youth	Ed Wonder

The Optimist Creed

Promise Yourself

- To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
- To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
- To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
- To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
- To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and expect only the best.
- To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
- To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
- To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
- To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
- To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Christian D. Larsen