



Optimistically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna - March 2025

News and Notes

Calendar

Ongoing

Call for Vendors

Vendors may now apply for spaces at the 2025 Vienna Farmers Market.

March

Board Meeting

7 PM (virtual)
Tuesday, 11 March 2025

Caboose Open House

1 PM-5 PM
Saturday, 15 Mar 2025

Coming Soon

Farmers Market

Begins in May 2025

Essay Contest Winners Celebrated

Club members and friends of contestants convened on February 19 at the Vienna Community Center to celebrate. The top three finishers in the 2025 Essay Contest presented their essays on "How Optimism Has Paved My Road to Success." The Essay Contest is sponsored by Optimist International to give young people the opportunity to write their own opinions regarding the world in which they live. The approach can encompass a young person's personal experience, the experience of their country, or a more historical perspective.

Checks for \$1000/\$600/\$400 were awarded to Daphne Jaillon, Yash Kini, and Tess Reynolds – all from Marshall High School. The first-place essay by Daphne Jaillon advances to the Optimist International District competition, with an opportunity to win a \$2,500 scholarship. Many thanks to Mike Fitzella and his team of judges, Shawn Dilles, Amy Jones, and Dan Woltman and special thanks to all of the Essay Contest contestants and our three winners.



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

Visit us:

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



Scholarship Announcement

The announcement and application for the Optimist Club of Vienna Career and Technical Education Scholarship (formerly called the vocational scholarship) will be available beginning on March 1 on the club website at [Youth Programs and Scholarships | OCoGV](#). Applications are due no later than May 9, 2025 via email to cte@optimistclubofgreatervienna.org or by mail to PO Box 411, Vienna, VA 22183.

To be eligible, the applicant must (1) reside within the boundaries of the FCPS Madison / Marshall / Oakton HS pyramids but need not attend those schools and (2) pursue post-HS training or education for occupational tracks identified in the program announcement which do not require a 4-year college degree. Questions regarding eligibility should be addressed to cte@optimistclubofgreatervienna.org.

Trailer Revitalization: Volunteers Needed

Many members may have noticed the poor condition of the trailer used by the club during the Christmas Tree sales. If you missed it, see below for some recent photos. Earlier this month, the club officers voted to start a project to improve the trailer's appearance. An updated trailer will better represent our presence and commitment to Vienna. The project will also be a great way to visibly celebrate our club's 70th anniversary this year.

The trailer project will be a whole club effort. We need many volunteers to prepare, divide, and conquer the various tasks leading up to, and including, the actual day of work. Please consider becoming a volunteer, not only for the revitalization day, but also any of the following: Prep team, Budget and Materials team, Art & Design team, and the Celebration planning team (Who doesn't love a good celebration after finishing a big project?). A project manager will be named soon but until then, please voice your interest to Monica Isaac. All are welcome!



Thought to Remember

Even amidst challenges, each day holds the potential for positive change
and new opportunities to grow;
keep your focus on the good things yet to come.

Thank You!

Club members recently received three heartfelt notes of thanks from those we have helped. Your efforts make a huge impact in our community.

From the Belong! Team:

Thank you for your generous donation of \$500.00 to Belong on January 9, 2025. Your support plays a vital role in empowering and equipping underserved children and youth in our community, helping them build brighter futures. Because of your support, we are expanding our reach and making a meaningful difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. Your contribution has helped fund initiatives such as:

- Providing mentorship and fostering long-term relationships** with children at Cunningham Park Elementary School, Jim Scott Community Center, and Marshall High School.
- Expanding opportunities for high school students** through our College Career Success Program.
- Strengthening partnerships** to better serve our community.

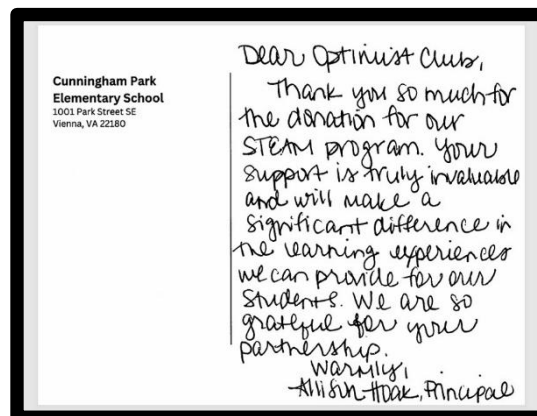
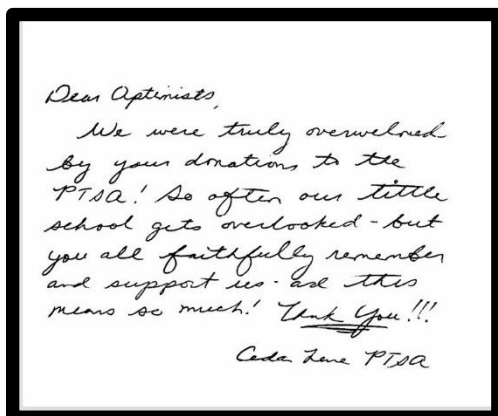
Here's just one story that highlights the impact of your generosity:

"I'm thrilled about Thursdays! In school, I start learning new things, but coming here, my mentor teaches me more, and I understand them better. That's why Thursdays are the best!" – 3rd grade student

Your kindness helps create pathways for children and youth to grow, learn, and succeed. We are truly grateful for your partnership in sharing God's love and providing meaningful opportunities for the youth we serve. Together, we are making a lasting difference. Thank you for being part of our mission—we look forward to all that we will accomplish in 2025 with supporters like you!



The images below are thank you notes from Cedar Lane High School (a small high school for youth with emotional needs. The school uses positive reinforcement techniques to help students learn self-control, gain confidence and teach them how to integrate into society) and Cunningham Elementary (a local school that struggles with finding money for STEAM education):



From President Monica Isaac

Dear Fellow Optimists,

We are living in unprecedented times, with many challenges facing our nation and world in ways we may have never imagined before. The degree of uncertainty, in our families and in our immediate community, is real. Several of you have shared with me worries and heightened levels of stress, as experienced by you, your family, neighbors, and friends. You have also shared your concern about how current circumstances will impact the future of our young people. While it may feel insurmountable, know this: You are not alone. Your fears are based on legitimate concerns. It is in times like this that we may recall the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, who once said “We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just a step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up, seeing it is not as dreadful as it appeared, discovering we have the strength to stare it down.”

We heard from our Essay Contest winners this past February and we learned how these young people are effectively stepping up and staring down the various forms of adversity they face in today’s society. Whether it be helping a parent battle chronic disease, devising solutions to combat climate change, or mentoring younger students to build personal resilience, these young people are not giving up hope. Rather, they are leaning on optimism to navigate through various challenges, big and small. They are also using their profound communications skills to inspire us and remain resolute. Following their lead, I encourage you to remember that our work together in serving our community is now more important than ever before. While assisting our community members in many ways, our work serves a central purpose in supporting and encouraging one another to withstand whatever is thrown our way.

As the former Roman slave turned playwright, Publilius Syrus, said, “Where there is unity there is always victory.”

Onward,

Monica

Board of Directors 2024-2025 Optimist Club of Greater Vienna

President	Monica Gomez Isaac
Secretary	Jacque Brewer
Treasurer	Michele Wright
Immediate Past President	VACANT
VP, Community	Susan Bauer
Director, Community	Bill Comerford
VP, Digital Communications	Brian Isaac
Director, Digital Communications	Jacque Brewer
VP, Membership	Dan Woltman
Director, Membership	VACANT
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