

APRIL 1991

Sponsored by Optimist Club of Downie

Charter President: Wayne Krug

The Optimist Club of Mitchell

Charter Membership 1991

Board of Directors

<i>Wayne Krug</i>	President		
<i>Chris Elliott</i>	Vice President	<i>Bob Uniac</i>	Vice President
<i>Cheryl Matheson</i>	Secretary	<i>Rick Matheson</i>	Treasurer
<i>Robert Brodhagen</i>	Director (1 year)	<i>Edna Hotson</i>	Director (1 year)
<i>Bill Hulley</i>	Director (1 year)	<i>Roger Beuermann</i>	Director (2 year)
<i>Henry deVries</i>	Director (2 year)	<i>Dianne Josling</i>	Director (2 year)

Charter Members

Calvin Annis Colleen Appleby Ken Appleby Dorothy Beuermann
Roger Beuermann Robert Brodhagen Bob Cheoros Jody Cheoros
Sharron Cheoros Ray Clark Barry Colquhoun Henry DeVries
Ed Dolmage Patti Down John McAllister Chris Elliott Bill Elliott
Norma Elliott Murray Feltz Arno Fiebig Dennis Fischer
Tracy Fischer Clarence Holmes Guilda Holmes Donald Hotson
Edna Hotson Bill Hulley Dianne Josling Dave Kells Angela Kelly
Cliff Kemp Nancy Krug Wayne Krug Cheryl Matheson
Rick Matheson Julie McCarthy Mike McCarthy Jim McCreight
Dave McMaster Richard McNamara Larry Muegge
Maureen Murray Tom Nahrgang Julia Parkinson Bob Parkinson
Barry Nevin Sandi Norris Jeff Pauli Marlene Pauli Roger Pauli
Julie Pehlke Doug Rader Clair Raymond Dawn Raymond
Gladys Rock Carrie Rolph Randy Rolph Barb Rose Ruth Sawyer
Scott Tolton Larry Torrance Bob Uniac Mike Uniac Kathy Vivian
Lawrence Walkom Bill Walkom Bob Ward Bill Walt Jan Walt

First new member: Dwayne Bryant

APRIL 16, 1991

1991-1992

Club President: Wayne Krug

Galbraith Park “The Galbraith Optimist Camp For Kids” near Milverton began a summer day camp, with local clubs giving financial support. Youngsters attend a week of outdoor activities.

Spelling Bee The first Grade 5 spelling bee was held at Mitchell Public School. It remains an annual event. Winners at club level enter a Zone competition, competing against other local schools. Winners in each Zone compete at the Midwestern Ontario District competition. The 1991-92 year's district winner was Sandi Van Loon.

Youth Appreciation Optimist International encourages clubs to hold Youth Appreciation in November. Our club has provided suppers at the Youth Centre, Youth night with the Mitchell Hawks, Library Programs, Public Skating, sponsorship of St. John's Baby-sitting Courses, and Home Alone courses. Youth Appreciation Week is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to “Bringing Out The Best In Our Youth in Our Community!”

1992-1993

Club President: Roger Beuermann

Playground The first major community service project for our young club was the installation of a playground behind the Lion's Pool. The main wooden structure had a number of play areas including climbers, slides, zip line, and ladders, all placed in a bed of sand.

Canada's 125 Birthday July 1, 1992

Our members took a lead role in the community celebration, providing organization and security for the parade. Looking forward to the 150th!

Fall Fair Booth Our club began our annual involvement with the "Biggest Little Fair In Ontario." Operating our food booth has become one of our most fun social events of the year. Have you tried our "Opti Breakfast Burger?"

Arena Expansion Our commitment to athletic opportunities for our local youngsters called us to help out with the arena expansion project. Over the years we have sought out ways to help fund community centre/arena ballpark complex projects...everything from a safety net, to change tables to fridges.

1993-1994

Club President: Roger Beuermann

Fashion Show Our spring Fashion Show has become another annual fundraiser. Our focus for this event was to give children and adults a few minutes in the spotlight wearing trendy fashions and at the same time, raise some funds to help support our many community youth projects. Through the 20 plus years of hosting this, we have presented many fun theme nights, added a delicious dessert buffet, and showcased many talented members of our community. In 2018 we will be hosting our 25th event!

Spreading Optimism The Optimist Club of Mitchell became the Sponsor Club of the new Optimist Club of Monkton. With help from the District Optimist New Club Building Team, we were instrumental in bringing Optimism to Monkton. We worked with Monkton on many projects over the years, as both clubs share the same school areas.

Bingo/Nevada Fundraisers We earn money at Bingo Country, Stratford, and for many years held a license to sell Nevada Tickets at a local business.

1994-1995

Club President: Kathy Vivian

District Oratorical Scholarship Optimist International provides post-secondary scholarship programs. Our club was the proud sponsor of District winner, Larry Kelly. Larry's winning topic - 'Labelling'.

Santa Call Out A fun event we started at Christmas was our "Santa Call Out" with young families. We had parents give us a child's wish list, then a phone call was made to each of the children from "Santa." Some of their reactions were priceless!

Ambassador of the Fair We have had the opportunity to sponsor a contestant into the Ambassador Of The Fair competition for many years. We have been proud of our contestants in the self-confidence and composure they have displayed.

'Lest We Forget' Remembrance Day November 11 Our service club stands shoulder-to-shoulder with other service organizations, churches, schools and all levels of government in remembering the service and sacrifice of many local men and women. We take part in the annual Remembrance Day ceremonies.

1995-1996

Club President: Henry De Vries

TOUR OF HOMES A new Fundraiser with the Mitchell & Area Community Outreach came into being, the very successful "AUTUMN ADVENTURE". This has successfully run every second year since, with 2016 being our 12th time. Funds are raised for both "senior and youth" projects in our community by purchasing a passport and visiting six homes that are decorated for viewing by generous local businesses.

HOBY Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership program is a world-wide initiative of Hugh O'Brien (Wyatt Earp fame). Hugh O'Brien was invited to meet Albert Schweitzer in Africa in 1958. Hugh was challenged to work toward world peace and global understanding by engaging young people. Leaving his acting world, Hugh set up the HOBY program. Since 1958 Grade 10 students, selected by their high schools, attend a weekend of leadership inspiration in Ridgetown. For many Grade 10 students, this is a life-altering experience. Each year our club financially supports HOBY. A local Grade 10 student is selected by M.D.H.S. staff.

1996-1997

Club President: Nancy Krug

Oratorical One of the Optimist

International scholarship programs is the annual Oratorical Contest. Youth 18 and under are encouraged to write a speech on a topic chosen by Optimist International, then present it at a public speaking event hosted by our club. Speeches are judged with winners moving into Zone and District levels of the competition and have the opportunity to win scholarship money for post-secondary school education.

Sharing Optimism with our Community

In February 1997 an Open House was held in the Howie Morenz Room at the Community Centre. Many say we are one of the best kept secrets so this was our way of getting out the word about the impact Optimism has in a community. We live by this motto: *'By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities and ourselves.'* As a service club, two of our goals is to *'Inspire Respect for Law'* and *'Promote an active interest in good government and civic affairs'*.

1997-1998

Club President: Ray Rochon

Graduation Ceremonies at local schools are supported by donations to awards by many in our community. We too have supported these awards each year for students at Mitchell District High School, Mitchell Public School until closure, Upper Thames Elementary School, and St. Patricks/St. Columban Separate School.

River Safety Wildwood Conservation Authority developed an educational program for Grade 2 students and with our financial support, they travel to our schools to present this safety day to the students. It teaches safe practices along the riverbanks and precautions during the high water spring runoff time. Over the years this project has become co-funded by the Mitchell Kinettes.

Junior Golf is an Optimist International program that promotes a healthy lifestyle. Our partnership with the Mitchell Golf and Country Club and local mentors has kept local juniors on the greens, here in Mitchell, throughout Midwestern Ontario and in some cases talented local juniors have competed for us in Florida.

1998-1999

Club President: Dorothy Beuermann

Fire House A project amongst area Optimist Clubs and Fire Departments arose when a proposal to fund the "FIRE SAFETY HOUSE" came from area fire chiefs. Our club fulfilled a substantial share of this travelling safety house. Fire stations locate the house at schools and events with children, then work with the children to promote fire safety at home. It is equipped to simulate a smoking fire they could easily encounter at home.

New Club Building Our organization gains its strength and existence through its members, both new and seasoned. There are two ways to do this: Optimists are invited to join existing clubs or help to start their own new club by becoming Charter members. During the 1998-99 year, the Optimist Club of Teeswater was sponsored by our club.

Mobility Bus A joint project with many of the service clubs and organizations in our area was to help fund the first

Mobility Bus Many youngsters, hurt or ill, have needed the transportation service provided by the Mobility Bus.

1999-2000

Club President: Cheryl Davidson

Moonlight Madness Remember when our town held its annual Moonlight Madness? Mitchell Optimists were there on main street entertaining the children. A variety of fun events, especially our "Fish Pond", being one of the most popular. Remember the Optimist Clowns?

Sledge Hockey It is our strong belief that all children deserve to play in organized sport, regardless of ability. We began a sponsorship of the Perth FYI Sledge Hockey Team, helping these athletes in their desire to participate. The team challenged us to a game! We came away with great admiration for the strength and ability needed to play this sport.

Dragon Boat New to Mitchell this year was a full community supported "Dragon Boat Festival." Local service groups planned and presented a full weekend of activities, entertaining over 6000 people. Our Optimist Club provided a fun day of activities for the children including an entertainer, face painting and "bubbles." We also sponsored the ceremonial "Dotting The Eye of the Dragon" during the opening ceremonies by the current Citizen of The Year.

2000-2001

Club President: Mary Jane Runhart

10TH Anniversary Celebration

10 Years of Community Service was celebrated in fine style, with youngsters sharing their talents in music and speaking. Noted in the May newsletter: *"We would like to thank our visitors for attending and hope that when 25 years gets here we can do it again."* **WE ARE!**

"M.O.S.T." Fun Day Camp began a very successful program for children aged 4-12. M.O.S.T. offered many activities such as theme days, crafts, swimming, sports and trips to name a few, as well as giving summer employment to 2 full time students and 4 part-time students.

Country Quilt Show In September 2001, we hosted jointly with Mitchell & Area Community Outreach, a special one-time fundraiser, our Country Quilt Show at Main Street United Church.

Relay for Life Cancer Walk We raised close to \$2000 for cancer research when the **"OPTIMISTIC OWLS"** - "Optimists Walking for Life" - spent a fun time together at the Relay for Life Cancer Walk in Stratford...an overnight event complete with tents and slumber time.

2001-2002

Club President: Ivan Coulthard

West Perth Nature Trail Our club was a partner in securing a Trillium Grant for developing the "West Perth Nature Trail." Look for our name at the Bridge.

Christmas Carolling One of our most heart warming service projects is singing Christmas Carols to the residents in Mitchell Nursing Home. We're not a professional choir by any means, but it's fun to see residents appreciate our "talents" and even join our group to sing along. 15 years later, and we still look forward to the evening!

New Pool Bathhouse Project We fulfilled our pledge to donate \$12 500 to the Mitchell Lions' New Pool Bathhouse Project.

Fitness Centre at M.D.H.S. A donation and moral support was given.

Barn Dance Show and Dance in July A joint project with the Mitchell Lions, this evening of music, fun and food was a hit all around. Over the years we have partnered with other local service clubs. This mutual support has enabled many large community projects to take place.

2002-2003

Club President: Dianne Josling

Mitchell Optimist Music Festival *'Music - the universal language of humanity.'*

With support from the disbanding Mitchell Jaycees, our club became the new sponsors of the Mitchell Music Festival, a tradition that started in 1947.

The Mitchell Optimist Music Festival is another of our community service projects where Optimists *'Bring Out the Best in Youth'*. Thanks to all our donors!

Upgrading our Playground The club determined it was time to replace the playground at the swimming pool, and set in motion a financial plan to make this happen. It would soon be a reality.

'Providing the Care, Finding the Cure' is a world-wide effort by Optimist International to eradicate childhood cancer. Our first efforts supported a local family with gas and food vouchers.

Club Website Our club joined the online world with the creation of our website.

Rebuilding the Optimist Club of Monkton kept Optimism alive and well in our neighbouring town.

MDHS Band Instruments Through a joint evening with a local restaurant and the music department, used instruments were acquired...and fun was had by all!

2003-2004

Club President: Cathy Hallman

Christmas Baking This fundraiser caught on quickly: the desire for busy homes to have someone else do their Christmas Baking was incredible! Pre-paid orders were taken for a variety of homemade squares and cookies, and a delivery date was set. Members did the baking, then boxed and delivered orders. Within a few years, we had way more orders than we could keep up with, so regrettably for our customers, we had to let this fundraiser end.

Mitchell Public School The staff and students of local schools appreciate our donations, such as the fridge donated to Mitchell Public School for the free use for 10 years of the school gym for our popular M.O.S.T. Fun day camp.

Youth Centre - Ongoing Support As a club we strive to connect with the interests and needs of all our young people. When the Youth Centre needed financial support to 'bring out the best' in its young visitors, our club stepped up to the plate, providing letters of recommendation, suppers and funding.

2004-2005

Club President: Brian Van Moorsel

'Tour of Lights Christmas Competition'

What a better way to enjoy the Christmas lights and help a charity than to bring a little friendly competition to Mitchell. Residents were encouraged to light up their property for everyone's enjoyment. Displays were judged and 4 winners were chosen. A \$50 donation to a charity of their choice was made in their name.

Children's Hospital of Western Ontario

Our club completed its 5 year pledge to the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario, along with other Optimist Clubs in Midwestern and Southwestern Ontario Districts, making Optimists the first service organization to complete their One Million Dollar Pledge. In May, 2005, Mitchell Optimists, along with 600 other Optimists, took part in the Million Dollar parade on Wellington Street, London. It was a proud moment for club members, holding our large club banner while walking down the middle of one of the busiest streets in London, shut down for this very special occasion - recognition of the completion of the \$1 Million pledge by a service organization---us!!!!

2005-2006

Club President: Rose Kraal

15TH Anniversary Celebration

Breakfast Program at Mitchell District High School Our club has responded to many requests for assistance to help local school students including benevolence, breakfast programs, nutrition programs and so on.

Long term Care Homes Over the years we have taken part in fund raising efforts carried on by other not-for-profit organizations including Ritz Lutheran Villa, United Way, the 'Y', etc.

Christmas Tree Fundraiser There are many ways to raise funds and many ways to partner with businesses. Selling Christmas trees for a local business was one such fundraiser that connected us with local families during the Christmas holiday season. The rosy cheeks weren't just on the faces of the little ones...

Faithful Optimists Remembered Over the years, the Optimist fellowship, like our own families, suffers the loss of loved ones. Their memory is revered in a way that matches their Optimistic ways.

2006-2007

Club President: Bert Vos

New Optimist Playground

With a focus on planning and fund-raising over the last few years, our hopes for a new Optimist Playground started to materialize. New safety standards warranted replacing our original 15 year old set with the present playground equipment on the same site behind the Lion's Pool. It's an area we're very proud of when we see the constant activity of children playing, whether it be at the playground, the splash pad or in the pool, it's great to be a part of it!

JDRF-Telus Walk to Cure Diabetes In 2007, Mitchell became the host centre for "JDRF-Telus Walk to Cure Diabetes". Our Optimist Club became a helping hand, sponsoring games and activities for the children during the event. Large funds have been raised every year since the event has been held here.

Mitchell Legion Elimination Draw For several years we took part in the Mitchell Legion Elimination Draw fundraiser, partnering at times with the Legion and the Mitchell Hawks Junior Hockey team.

2007-2008

Club President: Mary Jane Runhart
Academy of Reading Computer Program
- UTES Financial support was given to Upper Thames Elementary School with \$700 donated towards the Academy Of Reading Computer Program. School computers are being linked to the reading program, allowing students to access the program to improve their reading skills on their own.

Optimist Community Garage Sale The Mitchell Arena was the location, and Community Yard Sale was the reason for multiple groups to join under one roof. We raised funds by selling space to vendors and when everyone was ready, the community came out in large numbers for one-stop-shopping!

Galbraith Optimist Camp for Kids is a project of local Optimist Clubs. Several of our local teenagers had employment through the camp. At one time Mitchell Optimists ran its own bussing schedule complete with Optimist volunteer drivers. In recent years, we tied into the bussing handled through the Galbraith Camp for Kids. Mitchell Optimists are proud of their 25 years of participation in this amazing summer day camp! It's a wonderful place to make memories.

2008-2009

Club President: Wayne Krug

Chick'N'Rib'N'Fun Night The very first Chick'N'Rib'N'Fun Night was held in February of 2009 and has quickly become our most successful annual fundraiser. We have combined a “can't be beat BBQ Supper” with a silent auction and numerous games of chance. Community support continues to amaze us, right from our first time through to this year as we host our 7th event!

Spooktacular A “Spooktacular” family walk is a great way to celebrate Hallowe'en. The walk travels through a beautiful wooded area just outside of Mitchell. Complete with spooks and their friends, the walk is held on a weekend close to Hallowe'en. It has provided community volunteer hours for high school students. Proceeds raised from our walk in the haunted bush are passed on to a community project.

Stratford Perth Museum The Stratford Perth Museum has welcomed the support of the Mitchell Optimist Club for projects promoting youth education. Our club fulfilled its 5 year pledge.

2009-2010

Club President: Cheryl Davidson

“HEART & SOUL CAMPAIGN” The Optimist Club of Mitchell was successful in fulfilling our pledge of \$10,000 to Stratford General Hospital Foundation’s **“HEART & SOUL CAMPAIGN.”** This sponsorship helped to fund the Paediatric Day Surgery Room in the new east wing of the Stratford General Hospital.

The “M.O.S.T. FUN DAY CAMP” sponsored by the Optimist Club of Mitchell was held for the last time during the summer of 2010. The camp ran for 10 summers for children ages 4-10, at which time we passed the project on to the very capable YMCA, and it is still operating in our community every summer.

New Members Welcome It’s always an exciting moment welcoming new members to our organization. It’s especially rewarding when those new members grew up in an Optimist home. Over the years, children of several of our club members became adult members, making us a second generation Optimist club.

2010-2011

Club President: Mary Anne Lealess

20th Anniversary Celebration

Our club celebrated 20 years of service in our community with a short celebration at the Chick'N'Rib'N'Fun Night held in February. Representatives from our sponsors, the Optimist Club of Downie, participated. The 69 original charter members were invited to be present for recognition of their efforts in bringing the Optimist International service organization to our community.

Bike Rodeo/Respect For Law One of the most important service projects we can offer to our young children is promoting safety practices while bike riding, skate boarding, or walking. This goes hand in hand with Respect for Law Enforcement. We have partnered with our local OPP officers for a number of years in presenting a bike rodeo. In 2015 the youngsters at the Bike Rodeo took part in a recognition event for the OPP officers conducting the bike rodeo.

We have helped fund a bicycle for our community services officer and a "Catch Them Doing Something Safe" coupon reward program.

2011-2012

Club President: Leanne Davidson

Accessible "SUN SHELTER" We are very proud to see a well needed component to our Optimist Playground area be installed for the summer of 2012. With help from an Ontario Trillium Grant and sponsors within our community, the Accessible "SUN SHELTER" was completed. An accessible walkway leads to a covered area with benches and picnic tables, the perfect spot for a fun family outing. The "Lion's Pool," the "Splash Pad," and the "Optimist Playground" will be alive with activity for many years to come.

Crime Stoppers of Perth County A donation was made to Crime Stoppers of Perth County to support their program in our community, with signage at our town limits. Supporting Crime Stoppers fits into our mandate of promoting 'Respect for Law'.

We're on Face Book! Lots has happened over the past 25 years, including the rapid growth of technology and online communication. Face Book brings us right into the homes of the community and beyond, giving us a way to promote our events and the success of our young people. Look for us on line - we're there!

2012-2013

Club President: Megan Runhart

International Plowing Match As residents of the community, many of us took part in organizing the volunteer side of the International Plowing Match held September 17-21 in West Perth. Throughout the match we offered a hospitality area for volunteers to congregate or grab some refreshments on their way to their work area.

ZONE CAR RALLY A fun event was planned inviting all clubs in our area as well as general public to take part in a challenging car rally. Checkpoints were observed in each town of a hosting Optimist Club, with each checkpoint offering a challenge activity for participants. A sunny day was perfect for a leisurely drive through Perth and Oxford Counties. Proceeds went to Stratford General Hospital Foundation.

Optimist International Scholarships Our local youth are encouraged to take part in club contests. It was a proud moment all around when Matthew Klassen's 2010 essay entry was awarded 1st place at the International level. Matthew won a post-secondary scholarship payable to a qualifying educational institution

2013-2014

Club President: Kathy Vivian

Minor Sports Recognition We are very proud to be honoured by a fellow Youth Organization in West Perth! We were presented a Plaque of Recognition from Mitchell Minor Sports for *'years of dedication in supporting the athletic development of the youth of our community'*. Over the years we have funded teams and team equipment.

Senior Swing Set at our Playground

Another piece of our playground was installed in the spring of 2014, a much anticipated "senior swing set" for the older children. We had much feedback from parents to have these added to the playground installed in 2007.

Clinton Raceway Always eager to try new things, our club ventured to the Clinton Raceway to partner with them for a Sunday afternoon fundraiser. We hosted a BBQ, silent auction, bake sale and 50/50 draw, all while taking in the excitement of the horse races too!

'Just Ask! Extending an invitation to join our club resulted in 17 new Optimists bringing hope and positive vision to our youngsters. Want to join us - just ask!

2014-2015

Club President: Kathy Vivian

West Perth Opti-Challenge Baseball We are very proud of the “West Perth Opti-Challenge Baseball League” for its first summer of organized play. The program has run successfully in London for many years and was well received here by our athletes, their buddies, parents and spectators. Our thanks to Canada Post for giving this project a \$3500 grant!

Midwestern Ontario District Essay Scholarship The Optimist Midwestern Ontario District Essay Scholarship winner this year was Ali Van Bakel from MDHS. Her winning essay is worthy of a post secondary education scholarship worth \$2500.00. Congratulations Ali!

Playground Completed! The final piece of our playground area was installed this spring...a wooden border to contain the sand. It quickly became a balance beam to challenge the younger crowd.

London Knights' Fun/Fundraiser For the second year in a row, club members, family and friends travelled to London to watch the London Knights play hockey, and earn funds for our service work

2015-2016

Club President: Dianne Josling

25TH Anniversary Celebration

25 Years of Community Service 1991-2016

Where did the years go? It's hard to believe that the Optimist Club of Mitchell has been around for 25 years! So many memories, so many young people helped, so many friendships made, so much fun has been had!

Something for the young people-25x\$25

As a year - long way of connecting area youngsters to our 25 years of service to the community, 25 draws of \$25 each are being held at various Optimist events.

70TH Mitchell Music Festival sponsored by the Optimist Club of Mitchell

A community music festival was a dream come true for the late Ern Harley. From the one day festival held May 1947, the festival has grown to take up the better part of two weeks. Hundreds of volunteers, thousands and thousands of young people and countless hours of practice time are part of this seven decades' community tradition. The 2016 music festival features special 'Celebrating 70 Years' classes.

25 Years and Counting!

What will the next 25 years of Optimism bring to our community...?