Optimist INTERNATIONAL
Dakotas – Manitoba – Minnesota District

**Dear Optimist Essay Contest Chairs,**

Thank you for encouraging students to participate in the 2026–2027 Optimist Essay Contest!

This year's topic is **"Finding My Voice in a World Full of Noise."** Please share this opportunity with interested students and encourage them to express their thoughts, ideas, and perspectives through their writing.

**Please review the following important information and requirements:**

**Club Deadline:** Each sponsoring club determines its own deadline for students to submit essays. Please keep the District deadline in mind when setting your club deadline.

**District Deadline:** All winning club essays and required documents must be received by the District Essay Contest Chair no later than **February 28, 2027. There will be NO exceptions.** If you are mailing your winning essay, please allow enough time for mailing to ensure your entry arrives by the deadline.

**Submission Instructions:** You may mail or email your club's first-place winning essay and all required documents to:

Wanita Parker
1745 Knottingham Drive
Sartell, MN 56377
Email: wanita1110@yahoo.com

**Important:** If emailing your winning essay, the essay must be attached as a **PDF file. Google Docs links or Google Documents will not be accepted. You will receive a confirmation email that I have received your documents.**

**Required Documents:** The following documents must accompany your winning club essay:

- District Essay Contest Entry Form (page 11 of the packet)
- 2026–2027 Application for the Optimist International Essay Contest
- Age/ID Verification — a copy of the student's birth certificate or passport
- A copy of the first-place winning club essay in PDF format if submitting electronically, or a printed copy if mailing

Please take time to read the attached Essay Contest Club Planning Guide to ensure you understand the contest requirements and submission process.

Thank you for helping students find their voices and giving them the opportunity to share their ideas with others. I appreciate your time and commitment to making this contest a success!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at wanita1110@yahoo.com.

Optimistically,

**Wanita Parker**
District Essay Contest Chair
wanita1110@yahoo.com