

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONTESTS 2025-2026



Topic
"The Moment I Realized I Belonged
— My Definition of Community"

ORATORICAL CONTEST

Beginning in 1928, the Oratorical Contest has become the longest-running program of Optimist International. The contest is designed for young people to gain experience in public speaking and provide them with an opportunity to compete for multiple college scholarships with a pre-assigned topic.

District Scholarships:
First Place: \$2,500 • Second Place: \$1,500 • Third Place: \$1,000
with a chance to win up to \$22,500 at the
World Championships level

ESSAY CONTEST

The Essay Contest is sponsored by Optimist International to give young people the opportunity to write about 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. In addition to developing skills for written expression, participants also have the opportunity to win a college scholarship!

One District Scholarship of \$2,500



Topic
"How My Acts of Service Help Me
Understand What My Community
Means to Me"



Topic
"The Moment I Realized I Belonged
— My Definition of Community"

COMMUNICATION CONTEST FOR THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

This contest offers an opportunity for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing to present their thoughts in the community, gaining skills, which can only come from signing or speaking to a large audience. Patterned after the Optimist Oratorical Contest, the contest offers youth the chance to compete in speech or sign language with the chance to win a college scholarship.

One District Scholarship of \$2,500

SCHOLARSHIPS SPONSORED BY THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF HERNANDO

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ORATORICAL CONTEST:

PERRY MOLDEN, JR. / Ph: 360-550-8045
paillee@hotmail.com

Contest Entry Deadline: January 16, 2026

ESSAY CONTEST CHAIR:

TERRA MILLER / Ph: 901-786-3051
charnell11@gmail.com

Contest Entry Deadline: February 5, 2026

DEAF/HARD OF HEARING CONTEST CHAIR:

PH: (662) 280-8875 / EMAIL: HernandoOptimistClub@gmail.com

Contest Entry Deadline: March 20, 2026

~ Contest open to students at the high school and middle school of Hernando, Lake Cormorant & Lewisburg ~