



Opti - Topics

Bulletin of the Optimist Club of Huntsville

VOL. 66, No.12, January 12, 2012

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President Jim Pepper called the meeting to order promptly at 11:45. Twenty Optimists eventually made the scene, including Jerry Shoemaker, who is in the area for a medical appointment. Jim Berry gave the opening prayer and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jack Fauble reported the status of the **Essay Contest** to be held less than one month from now, February 6. Jack has a 3-page handout available for any Optimist who has contact with potential essayists. The handout is comprised of a letter, the general rules and the specific judging rules.

Alberto Duarte reported on the **Oratorical Contest**. He asked that all Points of Contact for our JOOI clubs inform the school sponsors about the contest and encourage them to recruit speakers. If any POC cannot do this, inform Alberto and he will make the contact himself.

Fabiani Duarte reported on the progress in forming new **JOOI clubs**. He stated he had made a 15-minute presentation to the eleven principals of the Huntsville City middle schools. Principal Greg Hicks of Whitesburg Middle School also gave a testimonial on the JOOI club already formed at his school. At the conclusion of the meeting, five principals stepped forward to say they were ready to form JOOI clubs at their schools: Chapman MS, Challenger MS, Westlawn MS, Williams Academy and Hampton Cove MS.

Fabiani also reported that Morris Elementary School has tentatively agreed to start a JOOI club. He will present the program to the January 19 PTA meeting Morris Elementary would be the first elementary school to have a JOOI club. Assuming approval at the January 19 meeting, the installation of officers would be held February 6.

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The Caring House

This month's program chairman, Fabiani Duarte, introduced our speaker, Ms. Kelsia Smith of **Hospice Family Care**. Hospice Family Care is one of 14 hospice organizations in Huntsville, but is the only not-for-profit organization, getting financial support from United Way, corporations, civic groups, churches and individuals.

Ms. Smith spoke specifically about *The Caring House*, a program established to help children ages 3 to 18 to cope with the death of a loved one. The goal of the organization is to help children and teens learn healthy ways of coping with the death.

Ms. Smith showed a promotional video about The Caring House which showed the various methods used: pet therapy, art, games, books and a "volcano room" where kids could be physically active in coping with their grief. The program holds 2-hour sessions after school, and there is no limit on the length of time a child or teen can attend these sessions.

Following the video, Ms. Smith gave additional information about the program. One interesting statistic she gave is that of all inmates on death row, 85% of them experienced the death of a parent when they were children. The Caring House uses volunteers, as well, and a brochure giving volunteer information was made available after the meeting.

The Caring House is located at 3304 West Mill Dr., one block off of Triana near Milton Frank stadium.

Ms. Smith drew George Ferrell's name first for the **attendance prize**. George was absent, so the next name drawn, Jerry Shoemaker, won the pot, defying the odds. Carl Winkler led our creed to close the meeting.

Optimistic Quote of the Week

“What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains and is immortal. “

~ Albert Pine

CALENDAR

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|------|-------------------|---|
| 1/19 | Thursday 11:45 | Optimist Recreation Center
Business Meeting - Food – (Fabiani Duarte) |
| 1/26 | Thursday 11:45 am | Downtown Holiday Inn
TBA - Fabiani Duarte |
| 1/26 | Thursday 2:00 pm | Regions Bank
Foundation Board Meeting |
| 2/2 | Thursday 11:45 am | Downtown Holiday Inn
TBA - Byrom Goodwin |
| 2/7 | Tuesday 4:00 pm | 1 st Commercial Bank
Board Meeting |