



Kansas District Optimist Club News

Winter, 2009

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Message from our Governor

Kansas District Governor, Peggy Ingle

Greetings Kansas District Optimists. As I begin this letter to you I am on board a plane bound for the Mid Winter Governors' Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC; a place I have long wanted to visit. And while this sounds like a dreamy venue, after the dreary cold days of our Kansas District winter; I am worried. I leave our beloved district with much trepidation of what lies ahead. Ladies and gentlemen, we are currently down ninety members from our October enrollment. I am certain to be "consulted" (to put it politely) regarding this matter at the meetings this week; maybe even taken to task. When I processed through Governor Elect training in April, I can assure you we were tasked to build and grow our districts; to spread optimism to the far corners of our respective districts. I heard this again at Governor Elect training

at the International Convention in Grapevine in July. So I ask you, can we do this? Of course, without a doubt, **Kansas Kan!** We do however need to come to a consensus of how we are to go about doing this. "Let me count the ways." We began this "Give me 5 for the Kids" year with 58 clubs. Fredonia has turned in their charter and we lost 35 members there. Clay Center is holding on with just their officers but has basically ceased to exist, dropping twenty five members, as has Wichita – Southeast with a drop of sixteen members. We're down to 1,833 members. from a starting figure of 1,922. This equates to 2,700 kids in Kansas no longer having access to the mentoring and motivation they receive from Optimist Clubs. This can not go on. We must take action now as the cost of inaction on our collective part is not an option; it would cost the

youth of Kansas way too much. Twelve of our remaining 57 clubs finished the first quarter with positive membership growth. Fourteen clubs ended first quarter with a negative in the membership column. Twenty four clubs (nearly half the district) have posted no changes in either direction. We need to build momentum and turn around our inverted triangle to positive district growth. Growth in membership means more children receiving benefit from our programs and all the great things that come from our dedicated Optimist clubs. So, what can we do? Well, let's start at the very local level. Have you recruited a new member this year? Have you "Just Ask"ed someone to join in the work we do?

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OLATHE NOON OPTIMISTS RAISING THE BAR FOR LOCAL CHARITIES

Ruth Nelson

For more than a decade, the Olathe Noon Optimists have partnered with the City of Olathe to champion local charities that serve youth through Winterfest and the Mayor's Christmas Tree Lighting project. Letters were sent to Chamber members requesting support for selected charities, and annually the Optimists raised 4-6 thousand dollars which were divided among the 4-6 charities applying for funds. Expenses for Winterfest had to come out of the donations, at that time, reducing the amount available to share with our charities. We were proud of our efforts, and we were making a difference. However, as our community grew from 50,000 to 130,000 it seemed like we ought to be able to do a better job and raise more funds. Winter Fest chairs, Beverly Wittenborn, Marlene Natoli, and Ruth Nelson brainstormed ideas, and it was felt that if we could approach our Mayor and ask him

to put together a "Mayor's Christmas Tree Board" of CEO's of local companies, they might have the ability to help raise the bar for donations from the community! It was the right thing to do. In November, 2007 a Board of twelve was put together, with Mayor Copeland and Ruth Nelson serving as Co-chairs. In January, 2008 \$25,000 was raised for the selected charities, triple the amount that was normally raised, and funds were distributed to seven local charities who serve Olathe youth. As we began the 2008 campaign for distribution in January 2009, one of the Board members set the goal to \$50,000, doubling the amount once again. At this writing, we are within \$1,400 of that goal and anticipate that we will still reach it prior to making decisions on distribution. It was the right thing to do! Ten charities will benefit from this year's cam-

paign. The Noon Optimists are members of the Mayor's Christmas Tree Board they still host Winter Fest. and invite our community to celebrate the season and honor those charities who serve Olathe: Temporary Lodging for Families and Children, The Children's Shoe Fund, Catholic Charities, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Cypress Recovery, KVC Behavioral Care, Kansas Foster and Adoptive Children, The Salvation Army, Olathe Special Olympics, and SAFEHOME, Inc. We are fortunate that we have a giving community, and community leaders who step-up when asked. This is truly a partnership between Olathe and the Optimists. Together, we are making a difference, and it's the right thing to do for children!

A Look Inside the Mid Winter Governors' Conference

Kansas District Governor, Peggy Ingle

I have returned and I survived. No pound of flesh was extracted for our decline in membership but we need to make some progress in the growth department. But before we get into all that, I wanted to give you just a brief overview of some of the goings on in Myrtle Beach. First let me say, I did have ocean view accommodations. It was awesome!

Tuesday afternoon we check in and as we were leaving the registration desk, my sister and I encountered International President Don Seivers and the International meetings coordinator Rhonda Vaughn. We said our hellos and left them to get checked in while we hauled our bags to the sixteenth floor. We'd gone down a couple of days early for the Conference just to have some

down time. The room was fabulous and the view was beyond extraordinary. There was a very small balcony but it was enough to let us walk out and feel the ocean breezes and watch the gulls screaming overhead. Once we'd unpacked and stowed our gear we were off to see that Myrtle Beach had to offer. One thing it didn't have was public transportation.

Thursday afternoon we made a stop by the "hospitality room" which was President Don and Anita's suite. Probably 30 others were there and acquaintances were renewed and stories were shared. They made Clara (my sister) so welcome. Dinner plans were quickly made and about 50 of us all caravanned to the Seafood Hut on the main drag and enjoyed some great food

and fabulous fellowship. Dinner was wonderful and the conversations were loud and sometimes rowdy. A wonderful time was had by all. Upon returning to our hotel we rode up to our room just in time to see the Canadian contingent arrive in full force. The room to our left was Canadian and the two rooms to our right were Canadians. We were in for an interesting few days.

As soon as I got up on Friday morning I rushed over to the patio doors to see if we'd get to see the sunrise over the Atlantic. Fortunately that didn't happen until we were downstairs for breakfast with Doug Kirby, Governor of SAMNW and also in the Great Plains region. We'd just gotten our breakfasts when the sun broke the horizon. It was beyond awesome. And of course, scrap booker me whipped out the camera and was

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Nothing you do for children is ever wasted.

They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks, but what we do for them is never wasted.

-Garrison Keillor

Zone I News

The Armourdale Optimist club recognizes students each month during their Student of the Month program. A small token of appreciation is given to both the student and school which he/she attends. The student's family members, teachers, and occasionally the principal join in on the celebration.

The Northeast Optimist Club is in preparation for its' An-

nual Pancake Breakfast in March. The club will sponsor a Health Fair during the breakfast. The donations from this event will go towards the purchase of new dictionaries for designated elementary schools located in the Northeast area. Members of the club have been sitting in classrooms weekly and assisting with preparing over 200 students for the Oratorical

Lt. Governor./ Zone I, Adrienne Patterson

Contest. The School contest will be held during the month of February.

The Prairie Piper Club has been keeping the students pretty active with their basketball and volleyball leagues in the Piper School District.

Thank you.

CCDHH Scholarship Challenge

Chuck Mansfield

Donations are needed for the second CCDHH Scholarship. Optimist Club Foundation of Wichita (OCFW) has a challenge matcher who will donate one hundred dollars for each two hundred dollars donated. The target is \$1,500.00.

Donations to OCFW are fully tax deductible. OCFW has NO paid help. Ten

Clubs or Members donating one hundred dollars each can provide the second CCDHH \$1,500.00 Scholarship.

Deadline is February 20. Mail checks to Optimist Club Foundation of Wichita, 1101 Sandplum Ln, Wichita, KS 67212-2936.

Thank you.



The “Higher Education” Corner

If you meet new people with a trace of excitement and optimism, then you still have hope.

If you don't have a sense of humor, you probably don't have any sense at all.

In democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.

Do you remember what word is never used in the Optimist Creed?"

HOUSE OF OPTIMISM

House of Optimism Manager, Dennis Young

You can now support OI Foundation at District Meetings at the House of Optimism by purchasing used DVD movies for \$5.00 and it all goes to the foundation. Cecil Cunday has donated the DVD's.

Please place your orders for items from House of Optimism by Sunday April 12, 2009 by calling or emailing Dennis Young. You can then pick up your order and pay at the 3rd

Quarter District Meeting on April 25, 2009.

House of Optimism Manager
Dennis Young
816-361-8573
adedyoung@kc.rr.com

Message from our Governor

(Continued from page 1)

They won't join if we don't ask. Club Presidents you can request a “Just Ask” kit from the membership department of Optimist International. It will be provided free of charge. It's a proven program. Have you reviewed your individual sphere of influence? Membership Chair David Parks puts it out there as **WDYK** – Who Do You Know? Who do you have regular contact with: co-workers, neighbors, relatives, friends, people from your church, parents of children who benefit from Optimist projects; the list is endless. When we take a conscience look, we're often times surprised at all the people with whom we come into regular contact. Ask them to join in a service project or to attend a club meeting with you. You'll be glad you did and so will they. New members bring new ideas and new energy. It's a win-win situation for everyone; especially the youth of the Kansas District.

What about a “**Member A Month**” challenge to your club members? If each club would recruit just one new member each month; look at how we would grow! This year's “High 5” Action Plan requires a plus 5 on the membership line to attain Honor Club recognition. This should be the most minimum goal of every Club President in the Kansas District. Keep your membership recruitment materials on hand at all your **club projects and fund raising events**. If you need membership invitations I have them. They are free for the asking. Please contact me and I'll put them in the mail to you that very day if at all possible. I requested this supply for this

express purpose.

And we have our “**NOW**” Program; “**New Optimists Welcomed**” (a change that we'll be seeing on the new information coming out from the International office). Please remember that our special visitor at the 1st Quarter meeting – Tom Dempsey offered to lend a hand. You just have to follow the recipe and give him a call when you got your program lined up. I have those brochures available as well. Please let me know if you have a need. NOW Programs can be done with a single club, multiple clubs in the same location or even on the Zone level. This is another proven recruitment tool. Please use it to your advantage.

And finally, the ultimate growth tool is **building a new club**. We have Certified Club Builders ready to assist with your new club building efforts. I have the International NCB handbook that I can send you or it's always available on the Optimist Website under forms and publications.

So there you have it. A plethora of options to grow our Kansas District, to offer our programs to the thousands of youth currently unserved or at the very least underserved. I am at your service most any time. Just let me know and I'll make every effort to make myself available. The mission this year is to help our local club succeed. Please let me know if there is ever anything I can do for your club and/or the youth you serve.



Summer Vacation in Florida

Summer vacation in Florida just got better as a result of the December International Board meeting. The Board decided that the ten dollar 'kick-back' they were to receive for each room rented by Optimists should instead be used to reduce that daily cost of the room by TEN DOLLARS (plus tax)! Now, instead of paying \$252.00 room rent plus \$15.00 resort fee plus local and state taxes, your room cost will drop an additional \$10.00 (plus tax) to only \$142.00 room rent plus \$10.00 resort fee plus local and state taxes.

Club Presidents and Past Club Presidents - NOW is the time to volunteer to be your Zone's Lieu-

tenant Governor for next year (2009-2010) so you can enjoy a summer vacation in Florida at one of the World's Finest Resorts. The District will subsidize your trip to an extent, and your club should, to support the honor of having a District Officer in their club, provide for part of your trip's expenses. Training at the International Convention and at District Meetings has always been a Youth Fund expense and is an appropriate way to allocate part of your funds raised to support youth.

Again this year you can register for the hotel and the convention online. Go to www.optimist.org, select International Convention and follow

President's Ambassador, Charles Mansfield

the prompts to take care of everything in one simple setting. This should be the greatest convention in years, and if your family comes along, the greatest time of their lives visiting all the entertainment vistas available in central Florida.

Oratorical Contest



Optimists, still not too late to host an Oratorical contest for your club. The Oratorical Contest is one of the oldest Optimist International events and it is a great activity to sponsor. The topic for the 2008/9 Optimist International Oratorical Contest is "For Me, Optimism is..." It's a great topic! The Oratorical contest provides the youth in your area an opportunity to

gain experience in public speaking and provide them with the opportunity to compete for a college scholarship. Club girl and boy winners advance to one of three Regional contests (there are **no** separate Zone contests), the girl and boy winners from the 3 Regional contests then participate in the District contest to be held Saturday, April 25, 2009 at the 3rd quarter

Lt. Governor / Zone 2, Bennie Smith

District meeting in Manhattan.

The schedule is as follows. Club Contests should be completed by **March 21, 2009**. Regional Contests 1, 2, & 3 should be completed by **April 11, 2009**

- **Region 1 includes Zones 1, 2 & 5**, the Host Zone is Zone 2, Lt. Gov. Bennie Smith

Stanley Blue Valley Optimist Club

Our Blue Valley Optimists have been busy. We just finished a very successful fund raiser with Christmas tree sales, netting over \$10,000 for our youth activity fund.

We had great help this year from Blue Valley high school students wanting to obtain service hours.

One neat thing happened, several parents tagged along

to help out, and two joined our club. So far, we have had 4 new members and we are working on bringing in more new members.

We are putting together our Essay and Oratorical contests and will be starting work on our Poetry contest very soon. Several of our club members also are tutoring at the Blue Valley Academy.

President, Larry Drbal

We awarded a \$1000 college scholarship to Andrew Ozier, an Academy graduate just before Christmas, Andy is enrolling in Johnson County Community College for the spring semester.

Optimist Don Mocker is doing a great job planning our Friday morning programs.

Mid Winter Governors' Conference

(Continued from page 2)

headed out the door to capture this breathtaking event. Once it started it happened really fast so I'm glad I had the camera handy or I'd have missed it.

Once breakfast was over we headed to the second floor and our meeting rooms. Clara and I hauled all the service project items we had gathered to the appointed room and I left her to work with First Lady Anita and the other team mates to sort through the massive donations; assemble them into some sort of order and get the bags ready for their project that afternoon. My meetings started at 8:30 and I was seated with all the other Governors from the Great Plains region and Vice President Tom Hill. VP Tom sends all of you his greetings. Right out of the starting block we heard about the financial crisis and the impact of the current economy slump on the organization. We were briefed on the recent release to Life Members and the request for their additional support. It was stressed this support is purely voluntary. More on that at 2nd quarter meetings. In fact the International Governance Committee was meeting while our meetings were taking place.

Included as part of our curriculum was a series of DVD presentations by Marcus Buckingham called "Trombone Player Wanted." This 6 part series was enlightening to say the very least. I'd like to make a brief presentation on it at the February meetings. But basically it talked about identifying our strengths and "playing" to those strengths in all that we do. Only 2 out of 10 actually play to our strengths. Isn't that amazing?

Then it was time for a Roundtable discussion to evaluate our first quarter; what worked and what didn't. Of course we heard a lot about new club building and membership recruitment. But we'd heard that all before and I was just glad they didn't start pointing fingers. Believe me, we're not alone in our current status; but we do need to take some positive action to turn things around. This discussion was followed by a presentation by Past North Carolina Governor Ginny Fowler who built seven clubs during her year. She shared the "secrets" to her success, her concerns and her pitfalls. After our lunch awards were presented to 5 Governors who built clubs in October. One was from our region. But the biggest builder (in number of clubs and physical stature) was the Kentucky Governor who had finished 3 clubs in the first quarter and had 2 more nearly ready to charter.

Following the awards it was back to "class". Each of the Regional Vice Presidents took turns discussing various topics. Rich Bloom talked about New Club Building as did Gerard _____ from Canada. Then it was commitment time. I turned in a proposed list of where the Kansas District is prepared to build. Now we just need to get it done! We heard about sports clubs, youth center clubs and sustainable college clubs. There was one club recently built at a retirement center. Their first fund raising event was a wine tasting that raised \$5,000 after expenses. Their second event was a golf tournament that raised another \$10,000.

Before we left for our Regional Dinners we had a report from the Governance Committee regarding life membership. There will be no life memberships offered after September 30th of 2009. They're drawing up plans for a new as yet unnamed program to replace that recognition and we heard about how we would be able to convert from one to the other.

The Great Plains Region had dinner reservations for 6:30 PM at Damon again on the main road. Again we car pooled. It was a ruckus crowd. The food was good and a great time has had by all.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny. The winds of the previous evening had died down and we were treated to another wondrous sunrise; then it was off to meetings. The DVD presentations continued throughout the day and by this time I was on total overload with new ideas and information that I was anxious to bring back to our District. One such item was to start each day by devising a list of five things I can do each day that will benefit the Kansas District. When you think about it in those terms it makes every day a winner for the youth of our great district. I'm in day two of that plan now and I'm just now finishing item 5 from yesterday's list. We talked about goal setting, tracking our High 5 Action plans and the importance of communication.

Optimist International staffers from St. Louis were on hand to go over the new, updated Scoreboard that we have access to, to see how we stack up with the other districts and regions. Lots of numbers were tossed around but I had to review my notes to sort all that out. Like I said, by Friday afternoon I was already on overload and it was already Saturday.

Rhonda Vaughn gave us all packets for the International Convention in July. The good news there is that the room rates have been negotiated down for all of us planning to attend. Something else we'll talk about at the February meetings. And again they are extending the early bird deadline for the April and May elections. That's also good news.

We heard about corporate sponsorships they are actively seeking and in our Regional breakouts there was more discussion on the "what worked; what didn't" train of thought. After the breakouts it was back to the general meetings and we had a Q&A time. Here we heard that the 501 c3 issue is basically dead. We have one more review that is in process by President Don isn't very reassuring that anything will come of it. You need to know that if this turns out to be the case, all clubs in the Kansas District will need to once again redo our by-laws to remove that suggested wording in this regard. There was talk about convention training becoming available online or via teleconferences. It is after all the age of electronic information!

Our closing was an admonishment to not spend a lot of time chasing the problems. We need to invest our time and energies in solutions and concentrate on our strengths. Our final event was the Black and White dinner. One of the Canadian VP's and his wife came dressed like Charlie Chaplin, derbies, canes and all. They were very entertaining and some of their delegates sang for us and another group did a rap presentation written especially for President Don's "Give Me 5 for the Kids" year. They also presented the 2nd, 3rd and 4th qtr membership incentives which we'll be hearing about shortly.

And that ladies and gentlemen is as concise as I can make it about what went on at the Mid Winter Governors' Conference. I'll report in more detail in February and I'll have pictures. (Imagine that!) See you in Salina or Ottawa.

Greetings from your Governor Elect

Rod Obermeier

You know as Optimist we dream all the time and I know that we all believe that we can change the lives of all the children in Kansas. I know that is one of my dreams. Well to make this dream come true we need your help! The only way we can make this happen is to think outside the box and find a way to grow. Our individual clubs need to grow and we need to make the number of clubs in the District grow. Every person in the Kansas District knows someone they could ASK to join us in making our dream come true. So I challenge each of you to think about what you can do! Talk about it at club meetings, asked the Membership Chair., David Parks or anyone on the leadership team to help you. If we don't do it now then when will we do it, so take the first step and

bring in a new member. It will make you feel good and just think about the number of kids you helped.

IF NOT NOW WHEN

The year is half over and it is time to start thinking about who is going to replace you in your club and who is going to step forward and take over as Lt Governor's and Governor Elect. We need new fresh faces in our organization so please give of you time and energy and volunteer to take one of these positions so we can continue to bring the very best to kids in Kansas. I will also be filling the Committee Chairs. so let me know if you are interested in any of them. Do not hesitate to give me a call if you have questions about any

position available.

Thanks to everyone who has been sending me a copy of their newsletters. I really enjoy reading them and finding what you are all doing. You all have some great things going on so keep it up.

Do you need a program? Just ask someone from the leadership group to come speak to your group. We have some great programs that we can bring to you.

Plans are coming along for next years and we will publishing next year convention sights and dates very soon.

The Hotline Special Edition

Governor Charles Mansfield

The Hotline Special Edition has been published and is available on line at Optimist.org for everyone to read.

Since some of our members don't get on-line, I will summarize the results for the Ad Astra year here in Kansas. We had no new adult clubs built in Kansas during the year so there were no individuals or clubs who qualified for Distinguished Status. One new JOOI Club was built, but it took two new JOOI Clubs to qualify.

The District ended with a significant drop in membership and several clubs who forgot to pay their dues to International and District

before September 30, so no Honor Governor or Lieutenant Governors.

Recent International Presidents have tried to get increased numbers of clubs designated as Honor Clubs. To do this, the requirements for Honor Club were eroded from seven achievable but difficult requirements to a simple "net plus one, pay your bills, file the President's Pride Report showing at least one activity". Kansas had twenty-two clubs that ended the year with net plus one in membership (one club only had to break even). When the other criteria were applied to these clubs, the number whittled down to NINE.

Optimist International is preparing certificates for the Club Presidents and Secretary/Treasurers. The Club Presidents also get a distinctive pin. Clubs will receive the Honor Club Patch (if it is their first time) and a banner patch with the President's Name and the year. Three clubs will be recognized at the Salina District Advisory Conference on February 7. The other six will be recognized at the District Advisory Conference in Ottawa on February 21. We hope to see all of the persons being recognized at their respective conferences. Also, we would like to see all the rest of the Clubs in the four zones be represented at their respective conference.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Ruth Nelson

There are two opportunities for Kansas Optimists to participate in one-day I-135 conferences during February. Close to home, low cost, and with great training/learning opportunities. Please encourage your membership to attend the conference closest to home!

We will welcome Craig Kelly from Iowa, who is a Certified Club Trainer and he'll bring his workshop on "Peer to Peer Leadership" to you with the able assistance of Paula Reyling, Certified International Trainer. You won't want to miss this duo! In the afternoon, Rod Obermeier and Ruth Nelson will be presenting "Catch A

Rising Star" for those of you who would like to be leaders, but don't know what the jobs are. This will cover Club, District and International progressions and get you ready for "Bringing Out the Leader In You" to be delivered at our Meeting in April in Manhattan.

Other workshop options will be on Personal Growth and Involvement – getting you started and introducing you to a great member retention tool. Would you like to do a CPA book...but don't know how. Well this workshop will help you with the process, and offer you the opportunity to begin building a library of projects for

your club that others can follow as chairs change!

We plan to have some fun, but want to encourage members to attend. A one-day format, at low-cost should be attractive, and we'll be learning a lot to about whether or not this is a format that we want to use more often for our members. Even better, it's a great way to spend some quality time with fellow Optimists and to share your stories, ask questions, and make new friends.

We'll be seeing you in either Salina on February 7th or in Ottawa on February 21st – come join us, we've got the lights on for you!

PICTURE PAGE



Garden City Sunset



Dave & Lisa in Garden City



Lisa and Olga in Garden City



Former KS Governor, Ralph Clement (Center), assists customers with their Christmas tree purchase.



Five Lawrence Breakfast Optimists are ready for "Pancake" business at their annual Pancake Feed. (L to R): Don Sheriff (former KS Governor), Kim Williams, Greg Yowell, Dan Harden & Larry Kline (seated).



Former Kansas Governor, Don Sheriff (Right), talks with Jim Ryun (former Kansas Congressman from the 2nd District & Olympic runner) at the Pancake Feed.



Purposes of the OPTIMIST CLUB

To develop optimism as a philosophy of life; To promote an active interest in good government and civic affairs; To inspire respect for law; To promote patriotism and work for international accord and friendship among all people; To aid and encourage the development of youth in the belief that the giving of one's self in service to others will advance the well being of man, his community and world.

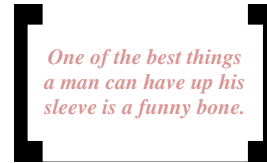
The OPTIMIST CREED

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 to 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.

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Please have your next articles to me by March 15th. Emailed with a word document is best.

Thanks so much! - Anna



Annual Famous Carl Messer Chili Feed

Hosted by the Clockwinders Optimist Club

Where: American Legion, 410 Dennis, Olathe, KS 66061

When: Wednesday, February 18 from 5-8 p.m.

Cost: Tickets are \$6 for all you can eat chili - all proceeds benefit the youth of Olathe.

Dessert is \$1 with proceeds benefiting the KSD Alpha Club.

For Information: Contact Amy Garton
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