

## *OPTIMIST CLUB OF NUTLEY*

WILLIAM LA DUCER

THE NUTLEY OPTIMIST CLUB was chartered on June 28, 1948. It meets every Wednesday evening at 6:15 at Nutley Manor. Currently, its membership roster lists forty-three business and professional men.

Optimism's purpose for existence is contained in its slogan, "Friend of the Boy," although the local group has broadened its activities to include girls as well.

Among the many contributions the Nutley Optimist Club has made to the young people of our Town have been such projects, Optimist - operated, as Hallowe'en Window Painting, Marbles Tournaments, Kiddie Christmas Parties, Touch-Football Leagues, Junior Olympics, and one which has gained wide recognition, a Poison Control Center, one of the first of its kind in existence. Full memberships in the Passaic Y.M.C.A. were given to about twenty boys, in 1955 and 1956. A swimming program, supervised by the Optimists, was maintained on a weekly basis. During the winter, basketball games were added to the program.

In 1954, Ambassador Lodge was honored, at the United Nations, with an award from Optimist International. A photo of the event, at which Nutley was well represented by local club officials, was donated to the Nutley Historical Society.

The Optimist Club spearheaded the drive for funds which culminated in the construction of Nutley's Little League Fields.

Annually, the Optimists make cash contributions to assist other organizations - Little League Baseball, Peewee Basketball, Nutley Sun Camp Fund, Boy Scouts, Amvets (for their excellent Baton-twirling Contests), and the Reinheimer Boys' Club.

Youngsters have come to the Optimists on occasions to seek help for special projects. One such group was outfitted with track uniforms. An aspirant to the U.S. Olympic team was assisted with his expenses to compete in a western state. The Yungers, a civic club composed of young adults, received much help from the Optimists during its organization.

A Junior Optimist Club, numbering about forty boys between nine and twelve years of age, meets bi-weekly under the supervision of Senior Optimists. They conduct their own meetings and arrange their own programs. Annually, an oratorical contest is staged. The winner represents Nutley at the Optimist District Convention. Area winners compete for a four-year scholarship to the college of their choice.

The major project of the Nutley Optimist Club is now its annual Scholarship

Award. Given to a graduating Nutley High School student, it pays the full tuition, for four years, at a New Jersey State Teachers College, or an equivalent amount to any acceptable liberal arts college at which the student will be working toward a teaching degree. Funds have been provided for three of these scholarships, so it won't be long before a teacher a year, sponsored by the Nutley Optimist Club to perpetuate its youth work, will be taking his or her place in the teaching profession. Also, for the third successive year, the Club has participated in the Foster Child Plan, paying \$15.00 a month toward the support of an Italian boy who lives in Rome.

Another scholarship award made at Nutley High School's Graduation Exercises is donated annually by the Opti-Mrs. Club (wives of the Optimist Club members). This has been a \$100 award for the past several years.

Through the years, by its accomplishments, the Nutley Optimist Club has attracted many civic leaders to its membership. Conversely, many civic leaders were developed through their membership in the Nutley Optimist Club.

Presidents of the organization have been William J. LaDucer, Irving T. Cueman, Dr. Saul Goodman, Martin T. Bross, Jr., Everett Vautin, R. Lewis Jones, B. William Carruth, Dr. Robert P. Fruchtbaum, Julio J. Cafone, E. Donald Harrison, James Riccio, Michael F. Viola, and, currently, Vincent DeRosa. Everett Vautin served Optimist International's 27th District as a Lieutenant Governor and Governor; LaDucer, Carruth, and Riccio as Lieutenant Governors; and Julio Cafone as SecretaryTreasurer of the District.

Optimists the world over are proud of the Optimist Creed, whose tenets all of its members strive to uphold.