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## Respect For Law/Promotion of Non-Violence

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In July 1965, a discussion between Past International President Carl Bowen and former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover resulted in the birth of the Respect For Law community activity. This is the fourth most popular Optimist activity with more than 1,500 clubs participating each year.

### Respect For Law Club Projects

#### Awards honoring Law Enforcement Officers and Citizens (including youth)

- Present an outstanding law enforcement officer with an official Optimist International Law Enforcement Award.
- Present an outstanding citizen with an official Respect for Law Commendation.
- Develop a District award for outstanding officers and citizens.

#### Projects to expose youth/community to Law Enforcement Officers and/or Law Makers

- Build a partnership with police focused on solving problems instead of reacting to crises.
- Organize classroom tours of law enforcement facilities.
- Conduct a community forum in which law enforcement officials can address issues.
- Sponsor a Respect For Law Camp in which youth attend a three-day event acquainting them with police officers and their work.
- Sponsor a forum where lawmakers answer questions from young people.
- Establish a youth council from the community's junior and senior high schools.

#### Project to expose youth/community to the legal process

- Sponsor a trip to the state capital for young people.

#### Projects to encourage youth/community to obey the law

- Develop new programs to focus on a family-centered, neighborhood-based approach to working with at-risk youth and their families.
- Convene an area-wide conference to provide information to professionals about crime prevention and early intervention programs.

- Make sure that all the young people in the community have positive ways to spend their spare time.
- Explore how neighborhood places of worship can play more of a leadership role in preventing youth crime.
- Develop a program in conjunction with local law authorities and insurance agencies.
- Organize a speaker's bureau to deliver lectures on crime prevention.
- Assist local schools and authorities in developing a dropout prevention program.

### Promotion of Non-Violence Projects

#### Family Rally

This project educates children and parents about violence and the alternatives and prevention methods available.

Some things that can be included in a family rally:

- Hang a large piece of paper for children to trace their hand and write their own proclamations of peace inside.
- Distribute brochures, talk about and display other Optimist International projects and Club projects. Be sure to put your Club's meeting time and place in a visible place.
- Request that local law enforcement agencies participate in crime prevention programs or demonstrations.
- Hold a child I. D. program to fingerprint or videotape children.
- Ask local merchants to donate family-oriented door prizes.
- Ask children's dentists and doctors to donate giveaways or coupons for service.
- Have local drama Clubs present a performance promoting non-violence.
- Hold a non-violence art contest working with the local art teachers.
- Hold a poetry contest working with the local English teachers to have students create poetry promoting non-violence.
- Encourage local parks and recreation departments to publicize family-oriented programs.
- Offer a resource center for young kids to locate jobs such as grass-cutting, pet sitting, child care, yard work, etc.



- Offer business owners booth space at the rally to allow youth to fill out résumés and learn about job opportunities.
- Launch a partnership with schools for mentoring programs and a homework place.
- Set up a Victims of Violence display.
- Distribute brochures on crime prevention and safety.
- Encourage the public to bring an item to donate to children for the JOOI “Kids helping Kids” program such as stuffed animals, diapers, baby wipes, clothes, toys, etc.
- Have the K-9 officers put on a demonstration with their dogs.
- Give out Respect for Law awards to the outstanding local officers and citizens.
- Plan non-violent games and contests for all ages.
- Have clowns and pony rides for kids.
- Invite a D.A.R.E. officer to come and distribute drug prevention information or give a speech to kids.
- End the day with an alcohol-free/drug-free dance for youth.

#### **Victim of Violence Monument**

- Set up a physical reminder of those killed in the community due to violence in a prominent area.
- Set up a headstone for each victim or use a life-sized wooden shape painted red depicting the man, woman, or child that was killed.
- Put information about each victim’s life and death beside the figure.
- Arrange a speaker from the community to give an inspirational speech.
- Distribute literature. Good locations for activities would be a local mall, shopping center, police station, park, museum, or library.

#### **Candlelight Vigil Parade**

- A candlelight vigil or parade in memory of victims of violence can end at city hall.
- Arrange for an inspirational speaker to address the gathering.
- Circulate copies of songs the crowd can sing together during the walk.
- Be sure to obtain any necessary city permits or other required items well in advance. When providing candles, be sure to include some protection from dripping wax. A cardboard circle with an X cut in the middle will slide on the candle and protect hands.

#### **Poster Contest**

- Have local businesses agree to display a child’s winning poster in their window.
- Develop contest guidelines including the types of materials that can be used, age categories, deadlines, etc.
- Leave your number for participating groups to call with questions.
- Contact community leaders and those involved with children to help judge the entries.
- Announce the winners.
- Send the children and adults who helped with the competition a letter of congratulations.
- Make arrangements to have the winning posters displayed in a prominent place such as the state capital or Governor’s office.

#### **Classroom/School Program**

- Sponsor a Non-Violence program for a specific school, class or grade. Include the D.A.R.E. officer, a speaker on the consequences of violence, conflict resolution materials, etc.
- Sponsor a speaker to come to the classroom and talk with the children in a more personal setting. Have police officers come and eat lunch or go to recess with the kids to interact one-on-one. Since teachers have to provide their lesson plans in advance, contact schools well in advance for participation.

#### **Toy Trade-in Program**

- Have children trade in their violence-oriented toys: toy guns, water guns, cap guns, etc. In exchange, the kids get to choose a replacement from a box of non-violent toys.
- This program, developed from the adult version of trading in guns for cash, is especially good to use in schools located in high-crime areas.

#### **Anti-violence Brochures**

- Work with the police department to put together a brochure on a topic of concern in the community.
- Give details on what kids should look out for, what to do in case they are approached, and how to report an incident.
- Reinforce the instructions to call 911 in the case of an emergency.
- Give a supply to local schools, churches, organizations, etc.



- Have the mayor and police chief hold a press conference on Saturday, Day of Non-Violence to sign an anti-violence proclamation.

#### **Anti-violence Messages on Newspaper Bags**

- Newspaper bags can be used to deliver domestic violence information.
- Print statistics of the local level of violence, tips on preventing violence, and list agencies that can provide services or assistance in the community on the bags.

#### **Block Parent Program**

- Recruit adults of good character to place Block Parent signs in their windows so children have someone to go to if they are approached by a stranger who tries to abduct or harm them.
- The Block Parent's role is to contact the child's parents, or the police. Interested adults go through a check by the local police to clear them and to qualify as a Block Parent.

#### **Child Aware program**

- Host a day-long public seminar with noted speakers on child abuse and discuss how the community can help.
- The costs incurred are minimal for printing of programs, rental of a location, and assistance with technical equipment.

#### **Neighborhood Watch**

- Put up signs announcing that residents are getting together to discuss forming a watch in the area. Give the time, place and number to call for more information.
- Contact your local police department.
- Officers will give detailed information on how the program works, train residents, and supply the support items such as stickers and signs. Sponsor the first neighborhood meeting and offer some snacks to entice reluctant residents.

#### **Child Identification Programs**

##### **Blockbuster Kidprint**

- Blockbuster Video stores all over the United States and Canada sponsor an annual program of child identification.

- Parents take their children to a Blockbuster Video Store during the month of August. A store representative will videotape the child on a complimentary 1/2-inch videocassette.
- Parents keep the videocassette and, in the unfortunate event that their child is reported missing, they will have a vital record of the child's mannerisms, appearance, and voice to provide to the police.

#### **Fingerprinting Fair**

- Sponsor a "Stranger Danger" Brat/Hotdog fry. McGruff the Crime Dog can make an appearance and give a speech.
- Photograph kids with McGruff.
- Local police departments have contacts for ID packets and are certified to do fingerprinting. They can train Club members or do the fingerprinting for you.

#### **CASA-Court Appointed Special Advocate**

- After training, community volunteers are appointed by a judge to speak for abused and neglected children in court. These are children that have been mistreated by their parents or caretakers. CASA volunteers work with attorneys and social workers.
- They review records, research information and talk to everyone involved — parents, teachers, family members, and of course, the child.
- The volunteers present a recommendation to the judge as to what is best for the child. With this information, judges are able to make informed decisions as to what is best for the child — foster care, reunification with the family, or adoption.

[www.nationalcasa.org](http://www.nationalcasa.org)



## Programs Especially for CANADA

### **P.E.A.C.E. (Positive Entertainment Alternatives for Children Everywhere)**

- P.E.A.C.E is the English program twin of T.R.O.P., a nonprofit, Quebec-based organization.
- Each year P.E.A.C.E. has elementary and secondary school students vote to identify the best and worst in media programming that includes television, movies and now extends to video games and music videos.
- The results of the vote are shared with the students, government and industry leaders, and the local community through the media.

[www.media-awareness.ca/francais/](http://www.media-awareness.ca/francais/)

[www.media-awareness.com/eng/](http://www.media-awareness.com/eng/)

### **Joyce Street Crime Prevention**

- Residents desired a police station in their area, but the budget was tight. In response, they created a community-run volunteer office.
- Community volunteers pass vital information to the police. The office also provides a bicycle engraving program, classes for the public on how the police department works, victim services unit, etc.

### **London Family Court Clinic**

- Committed to advocating for the special needs of children and adolescents in crisis, this clinic works with more than 500 families each year.
- Its mission includes assessment, counseling and prevention services as well as research and training for the community.
- The clinic offers a variety of services, speakers and information Clubs can use.

[www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca)

# Welcome

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Respect for Law Evaluation Form

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Club Name \_\_\_\_\_ Club Number \_\_\_\_\_

Title of activity \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of activities

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Number of Club Members involved \_\_\_\_\_ Number of people reached \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle any other organizations that worked with your Club(s) on the project:

*School*          *Youth Group*          *Civic/Volunteer Group*          *Community Center*

*Local Business*          *Government Office*

Cost of sponsoring this activity \_\_\_\_\_

Did you secure any type of sponsorship?          Yes          No

Publicity received (circle all that apply):    *Newspaper*          *Bulletin*          *Newsletter*          *Radio*

Did you recruit new Members from this activity?          Yes          No

Will your Club conduct this activity again?

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What recommendations would you make for improving this activity?

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. This information is extremely valuable. Please submit the form by either mail, fax or e-mail.

*Mail to:* Optimist International, C/O Programs Department, 4494 Lindell Blvd, St. Louis, MO. 63108

*Fax to:* (314) 371-6006

*E-Mail:* [programs@optimist.org](mailto:programs@optimist.org)