



Message from the President

The winter 2006-07 basketball season is well on its way. Players are in full form and teams are enjoying the competition and friendship that they can only experience in the SEYO league. Almost midway into the 10-week season, you can most certainly recall your child making the play that stands out in your mind. Whether it was that ankle-breaking crossover, the swift steal, the no-look pass, the high-flying rebound, the nice jumper, or the game-winning three-point shot....Oh, this isn't the NBA. How about the perfect dribble, the stellar defensive stance, the crisp chest pass, or the awesome fast-break... we've seen it happen from our OCO kids.

As the season continues be sure to encourage your kids for their great accomplishments small or big because they will surely experience the "L's" and the "W's." More importantly, make sure they have a great time playing the sport we truly enjoy, basketball.

Looking back at 2006, I am proud of our accomplishments and the positive impact we've had on our youth. Through our various programs, we've had the ability to reach various communities and thousands of people in ways that promote optimism. Our sports program and our Optimist clubs have continued to flourish and have a bright future ahead.

The success of OCO is not possible without you, our membership. I owe special thanks to all of you who have supported our efforts year after year. Your time, involvement, and generous donations drive the future, your future at OCO.

Looking back is always rewarding, but looking forward is all the more exciting. We have much more to accomplish and countless hours of time and commitment ahead of us. Let's make 2007 the best year yet for our kids at OCO.

Nori Nishida

ELECTIONS for OCO Officers and Board of Directors

Nominations are currently being accepted for various OCO board positions. Term of office (for most positions) is one year, beginning in September 2007.

See enclosed nomination form for more details.

Dear OCO Membership,

As this year comes to an end, I want to express my sincerest appreciation to all of you who have supported our family during this difficult year. We all appreciate the wonderful meals you have brought over, the gift cards, the get well cards, emails and rides you have provided for the boys throughout 2006. I also want to thank OCO for the wonderful huge orange greeting card which contained wonderful messages from OCO children and parents. The card was complete with a beautiful origami good luck crane. I also appreciate all of you who came to donate blood or platelets all the way to the City of Hope in Duarte. I received over 200 blood and platelet transfusions, most of which were directly donated by relatives and friends like you!!!

I'm happy to report that I'm on the long road to recovery. My numbers continue to increase and I feel better every day following my May 2006 bone marrow transplant. As one of the loudest (yes, I'll admit to that) supporters of basketball, I missed most of my boys' games throughout the Spring and Summer due to the over-80-day stay at the City of Hope. I can't wait for the 2007 Spring Season games. Hopefully, I'll be healthy enough to attend the games and continue my cheering from the sidelines (even though it may be through a surgical face mask! Don't get me wrong, I'll still be audible).

Thank you seems like such a small word for all you have done.... But, thank you, nonetheless, from the bottom of my heart. I love you all and you all must know that this "OCO family" is an awesome one!!! You have been an amazing source of strength and optimism for me over the past year. Wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year!

With love and sincere appreciation,
Nancy Sakakura

To become a potential marrow donor, go to the A3M website at www.asianmarrow.org. No more finger stick, just a swab of the cheek!

Junior Optimists

JOs decorated cookies and made several craft projects for the HealthBridge patients.



The holidays and Christmas revolve around bringing peace, love, goodwill, and happiness. That is what our OCO Junior Optimist members did on December 16, when we visited the HealthBridge Children's Hospital in Orange.

HealthBridge is a place where nurses and families help victims (from babies to 21 years old) of an accident, injury, or illness rehabilitate. The hospital is a one-story building, and looks like a house. Patients are able to play with each other and be noisy as if they were in a normal environment. This helps the child feel relaxed and recover sooner.



We felt it was necessary to give some holiday cheer to those less fortunate than us, and it felt like a good chance to help those in need. As soon as we visited the patients, we gave them a bag filled with some toys, socks, and other things, so they could have a Merry Christmas. It was fun because we met new kids, and talked, and played games with them. In addition, we made Christmas crafts like jingle bells and snowmen. We decorated some cookies and read books to them that they enjoyed.

Something that really touched my heart was when we read a book to a boy who was in coma; we logged what we did and wrote something in his daily journal after. We hope that when this boy wakes up from his coma and when he reads his journal he will be as happy as we were to be able to read to him.

When we were about to leave we were somewhat sad, because we had so much fun doing things together with these kids, and felt so good to know that they were all so happy that day. The kids at the HealthBridge Hospital do not often get a group of kids who go to visit them, so they were very excited to have us there.

As Junior Optimists, we do community service and they teach us how to be responsible citizens. It does not matter how serious our activity is, we always enjoy what we are doing and feel that we have accomplished something good at the end of the day. We learn to become a better person and we learn from each experience. In addition, we get to know kids from other grades, so our circle of friends becomes bigger each year.

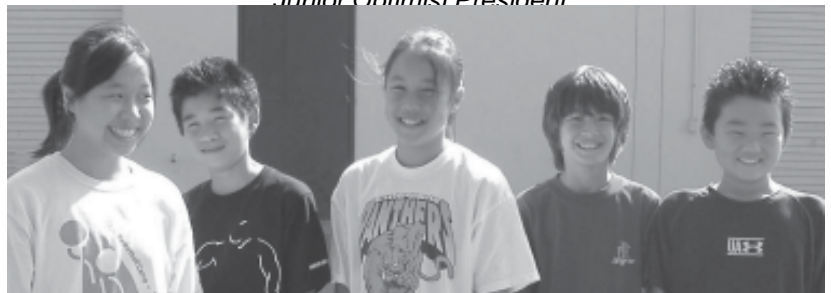
This year we assisted at the OCO Halloween party. At the end of this year, we helped at the Mochi-Tsuki that was held at the Tanaka Farms. Even though we had to work, we still got to pound mochi and have fun with the other kids. At our next meeting, we will be planning our broomball activity.

Thanks to our advisors Mrs. Auerbach, Mr. Hamasaki, Mrs. Yoshinaga, and all the parents and coaches who volunteer for all these activities, so we can become better adults, be more creative, learn about leadership, and make new friends.

Taka Ishiwata
Junior Optimist President

2006 - 2007 Junior Optimist Officers

President - **Taka Ishiwata**
Vice President - **Grant Nishida**
Treasurer - **Emily Kau**
Secretary - **Jennifer Quan**
Activities - **Blake Auerbach**



Octagons

With the start of the new season, we have already become busy Octagons with plenty of events.

So far, some of the events that took place were the OCO Halloween party, Canned Food Drive, Special Olympics, and Hylond Home. I would like to thank the chairpersons of the events above, who did a wonderful job!

Matt Sakurao and **Jordan Hamamoto** were the chairpersons of the Halloween party. We used Rancho's locker room and created a haunted maze for our guests. We had a great time setting up the haunted maze and scaring our guests.

The Canned Food drive was an amazing success. We collected 2400 cans! Awesome job, players! The coaches also helped out a lot by donating money that allowed us to buy turkeys and pies for each of the families that we were supporting. Thanks, coaches! **Mr. Otsuka**, we thank you for donating the produce. Some of our Octagons put on a small skit to help inspire the players to bring in more cans, so thanks to **Jaime and Taylor Yamaoka, Erika and Chelsea Braesh, Sappy Chung, JJ James, Dane Okuda, Kevin and Michelle Joyce, Cody Sakurao**, and **Sara Seto** for performing in the skit! And a special thanks to **Bryce Kubo** for performing his rap. The chairpersons for this event were **Garrett Yamasaki** and **Michael Wong**. We were able to provide food baskets to many needy families in the Garden Grove area that were very thankful for them!

Special Olympics was also a very fun event! We were either scorekeepers or linesmen for volleyball. We were able to talk to the players and support them while they were playing. The chairpersons were **Kevin Joyce** and **Dane Okuda**. You guys did a great job!

The chairpersons of Hylond Home were **Mikey Kinoshita** and **Duane Murata**. These boys did a wonderful job! We sang to the patients and delivered the gifts that were donated by our OCO players. Hylond Home was a good wake-up call for us; we all realized how fortunate we are.

As the new president of Octagons, I am very proud of our members. We are getting a lot done successfully. I would like to continue seeing an increase in members wanting to join the group, participating, and volunteering. As the months pass, we are learning to work together and get the job done, the best we possibly can. We still have plenty of events. This is just the beginning!

Sincerely yours,

Lani Okuda
Octagon President

2006 - 2007 Octagon Officers:

President - **Lani Okuda**
President-Elect - **Garrett James**
Secretary - **Jonathon Lew**
VP Activities - **Tyler James**
VP Membership - **Andrew Sakakura**
Treasurer - **Trevor Carroll**
Treasurer -Elect - **Dalton Doi**
Historian - **Jodi Matsumoto** and **Trisha Asao**
Past President - **Bryce Kubo**

From the Bench . . .

OCO Basketball Committee

Marsha Hamamoto
Caryn Ito
Bob Kubo
Clay Sakurao
Mark Sugimura

Welcome back from the holidays and a break from practice and games. I know for you die-hard basketball fanatics, it was, "I can hardly wait to get back!!!" For the rest, I hope it is, "I can hardly wait to get back, because I miss all of my OCO friends!" More than just basketball, you are finding that out now... four shortened practices to highlight our Boys Junior Upper Blue Teams and an 8th grade co-ed game and General Meeting, Chapman Night, and Tri-Star. These are all things that promote our youths, "Bringing out the Best in Kids." The other is Casino Night, which helps to support our Basketball program. In the short term we lose practice time, but in the long term we get great kids and great young adults from our program.

For all you coaches who promote offense, looking at the local teams UCLA, Lakers, and Clippers... DEFENSE wins games and EFFORT = GREAT DEFENSE. What is the formula to get the EFFORT from your players? If you find out, let me know. I have seen many styles, but the one I found most effective is reward for success, breeds success. So bring on the praise for the extra hustle, sprinting to play defense, diving for the loose ball and finding your opponent to box out. Cheering is not just for baskets.

Bob
Basketball Committee Member

Senior Registration 2007 season (March thru May)

Senior season players ***MUST*** register during one of the following times at Rancho Alamitos High School:

Saturday, January 20, 10:30 – 11:30 am and 7 pm
Sunday, January 21, 11 am

Please be prepared to complete your registration forms. If a player is under 18 years old, we need a parent signature on the forms. You'll need your insurance information, and the following fees are due:

Optimist International Dues - (At least one member of your family must be an OI member) - \$90
One-time new member fee - (payable only if you've never played with OCO before) - \$15
Basketball fee - \$ 80

Questions? Contact Judy James at judyjames@socal.rr.com
or Ellen Natsume at enatsume@cox.net.

Young Adult Optimists

OCO President Nori Nishida presenting the Optimist banner to Michelle Ito.



The Young Adult Optimist club would love to thank OCO for all the support and guidance they have already shown for their new baby club! At the end of October, YAO officially became a club, and we all celebrated in style at our Charter Installation Banquet in November. **Linda Molthen**, from Optimist International, was present to install the 33 Charter Members of YAO, as well as our Charter Officers. Thank you to everyone who came out and to celebrate with us. A huge thank you goes out to **Jesse James** for being a wonderful MC for the night, and to **Nori Nishida** and all of OCO for our wonderful Banner (which unfortunately JAO stole from us, but we will get it back soon!), bell, and gavel. Also, thanks to the whole **James Gang** for their generous gift to the club to help us get on our feet!

YAO really started out with a bang in their first couple of months! The inaugural community service project YAO participated in was a Toy Drive for Orangewood Children's Foundation. Chairperson **Christine Kimoto** did a wonderful job collecting toys during the OCSA basketball season. We really appreciate everyone who brought in donated toys, and special thanks to **Marsha Hamamoto** and **Caryn Ito** who encouraged their friends and teammates to donate also!! We surpassed our goal of 125 toys and were able to donate over 200 toys for the Christmas holiday!

We also had a social BBQ to help celebrate the holidays, chaired by **Marci Asao**. We all enjoyed the delicious meal, and great company with our fellow YAO members.

We are really looking forward to the new year to get more projects underway. Our membership is continuing to grow. We are now a club of 40 members and counting. If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining, please email us at YAOoptimist@yahoo.com for more information!!!

Happy 2007!

Michelle Ito
YAO President

YAO 2006-2007 Charter Officers



President - **Michelle Ito**
President-Elect - **Nicole Nishinaka**
VP Activities - **Casey Kubo**
VP Membership - **Corey Kubo**

Secretary - **Kasey Matsumoto**
Treasurer - **Kenny Tanaka**
Board of Directors - **Marci Asao**
David Hoshi
Christine Kimoto
Dean Otsuka

Hylond Home and Other Highlights

This year's Hylond Home party was one of the most joyous we've had since I've been the chairperson. **Tran** and **Daniel** of the Rancho Octagon Club started the festivities by calling the bingo game. Every bingo player at the party won several battery-operated stuffed toys, which were donated by the Rancho Octagon members and their teacher/adviser and OCO member, **Eric Hamamoto**.

After bingo, the party really began to rock. Five girls from the freshman OCO teams performed for us by singing Christmas carols. The choir was comprised of **Kayla Shimasaki, Kayla Nishida, Tara Bokoski, Michelle Joyce, and Nicole Auerbach**. These five young ladies did a great job getting the party rolling and rocking the house (literally). It was a very memorable moment, which I will never forget. Their energy was contagious as everyone started to join in and sing. The atmosphere was electrifying and attracted most of the staff to come to the party room during their duties. Everyone was smiling, rocking to the beat of the music, and having a great time. That truly was a very touching, heartfelt, and warming experience. You five young ladies were great!

For lunch, pizza, cake, and fruit punch were served. **Kurt Goss** and **Daniel Sii** volunteered to be Santa Claus and delivered all 142 gifts, which were donated by our OCO members, to each and every one of the residents. Believe me, that was no easy task. Thank you **Kurt** and **Daniel**; you both did a marvelous job.

The Santas were accompanied and assisted by Mrs. Claus (**Christina Bartlett** and **Sara Seto**) and their elves (**Dane Okuda, Jordan Hamamoto, Kevin Joyce, Cody Sakurao, Garrett (Big Game) James** and elves-in-training **Sydney Nishida** and **Amy Yoshinaga**). Thank you all.

I also thank my co-chairperson, **Jameson (Jamo) Lee**, Octagon chairperson **Mikey Kinoshita**, his co-chair, **Duane Murata**, Rancho Octagon members, **Eric** and **Marsha Hamamoto, Howard (Doc) Kunihiro, Judy James, Neddy Bokoski, Clay** and **Kathy Sakurao, Ann Joyce, Stacey Yoshinaga, Jeanne Tsuruta**, OCO President, **Nori Nishida**, and especially my wife, **Donna**. All of your helping hands were instrumental in making the party successful.

Special thank to **Bob Kubo** for always being there and helping me all these years. And particularly to you, our OCO members, thank you very much for your thoughtfulness and generosity which fulfilled the Christmas wishes of all the residents. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Sincerely,

Mitch Okuda
Hylond Home Chairperson

New Exhibit at the Japanese American Museum

The Sculpture of Ruth Asawa: Contours in the Air - March 10 through May 27, 2007

This exhibition represents the first complete retrospective of this Nisei artist's enduring and richly varied career. Born on a truck farm in Southern California, Asawa was incarcerated at Rohwer concentration camp in Arkansas during World War II. In the 1940s, she attended Black Mountain College, the famous experimental art school in North Carolina. *The Sculpture of Ruth Asawa* begins with her earliest works—drawing and paintings—created at Black Mountain College, and highlights the signature wire sculptures that formed her visual vocabulary of looped and tied open forms, which she continued to experiment with throughout her career. Organized by the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, this exhibition of more than fifty sculptures and works on paper recognizes one of the most important women artists of the century.

Spotlighting our Optimists

On July 30, 2006, **Alan Hong** (17-year-old OCO basketball member) was in an automobile accident. As a result of the accident, he suffered a brain injury and was placed under an induced coma to allow his brain to heal. Even though the coma medication was removed after one week, he did not fully come out of the coma for another month. He spent the nine weeks after the accident in three different hospitals. Alan's family and friends were constantly present providing support and prayers. This has been a traumatic time for Alan's family and friends, as this type of injury takes such a long time to recover from and no one really knows exactly what to expect. He has come a long way from that day and continues to make tremendous improvements to a full recovery.

Bryce Kubo (another 17-year-old OCO member who has grown up here at OCO) and **Alan** have been friends since Fulton Middle School. Here are their stories:

From Bryce Kubo...

Near the end of this past summer, my friend **Alan Hong** was in a severe car accident. Alan has been one of my best friends since the sixth grade. We've played basketball together on the same team and on opposing teams. We were both on the same varsity basketball team at Fountain Valley High School. But, all of that hit a grinding halt when I heard of his accident. At the time I was in Mammoth for cross-country and another guy on the team got a phone call from one of our friends to tell us that Alan had gotten into a severe car accident and was in a coma. When I heard about this I thought that it was all just a dream, and really couldn't believe what I had heard. When I got back home everything sank in and yet I was still in disbelief, because all I could do was just to pray for him and his family. So I prayed and hoped for his recovery, because I didn't want to lose a friend forever. After a few weeks they were allowing visits, but I didn't want to visit him. I know it seems that I was being a terrible friend, but I just couldn't see my friend in such a bad condition. I just couldn't see him when he was in such bad shape. But he was recovering very quickly, so I visited him when he was at a children's hospital. He couldn't talk, but people were to talk to him so it might help jog his memory. Then, another few weeks passed and I heard that he was able to talk a little, which was a little exciting to know he would respond when you said things. He still was recovering fast and after another few weeks he was at home and able to walk. This was a pretty exciting thought, to have my friend back again. Now, being about six months since his accident he comes to our basketball practices and shoots free-throws on the side court and goes through some drills with us. I am so happy that he has been able to make a full 180-degree turn since his accident.

From Alan Hong...

I'm on my way to a full recovery now. Thanks for all your support. I am hoping that soon I'll be able to play basketball again. I've been going to the basketball practices that I can. I've been doing some of the drills like shooting drills and the free throws. It feels pretty good to be able to do those drills again. Right now I'm going to school for two periods and by next semester I'll be back at school full time. I should be able to graduate with my class. I still plan to go to college, most likely somewhere close to home.

OCO continues to send good wishes to Alan and his family. Stay strong . . . here's to a full recovery!



Long-time friends
Bryce Kubo and Alan
Hong

Orange Coast Optimist is affiliated with Optimist International, a world-renowned organization. Optimist clubs throughout the world are dedicated to the scholastic, physical, moral, and civic development of the youths in every community.

Check out the OCO Website: www.ocoyouth.org

Jabber from the Editor

With each new year brings the hope that it will be a better one than the last! Well, that is how it is for me. The challenge to be a better supporter of my children and their interests, a better friend, etc.

Here's hoping that this edition has inspired you to make the most of each day and opportunity. Time sure flies by...so make the most of it!

Stacey Yoshinaga

Interested in contributing to the *Rak Kan Newsletter*?
Please contact Stacey at StaceyY@att.net.

Upcoming Events:

1/20 - OCO General Meeting:

- 5 p.m. - Coed Exhibition Game
- 6 p.m. - OCO JBU Game
- 7 p.m. - Dinner with special guest
Christine Yamazaki, Go For Broke
Educational Foundation

2/3 - OCO Tri-Star

2/10 - Casino Night

Photos by Judi Kusumoto and Ted Matsumoto



Orange Coast Optimist Club

Newsletter

P.O. Box 28802

Santa Ana, CA 92799