

Evening Optimist Club begins at university

By Bonar Tucker
YELLIN' REBEL

A UNLV branch of the Evening Optimist Club joins with five other Optimist Clubs in Southern Nevada to participate in a variety of Community projects and is welcoming others to join.

The organization, whose motto is "Friend of Youth" has projects promoting attention to youngsters within the community. The belief is that by aiding and encouraging the development of youth, and giving of one's self in service to others, advancement of the well-being

of man, his community and his world will occur.

The new group, being chartered at UNLV, is headed by Jamie Graf and Bill May. Graf, a UNLV student herself, said the club is not idle.

"We are not a business card trading club," said Graf. "We work closely with schools and social services."

Each club is kept small and holds meetings at different times to accommodate members work schedules. Ideas are circulated at the meetings for upcoming projects

for youth.

"We've had fund raisers for the Clark County Optimist Boy's Home, and oratorical contests for both hearing and hearing impaired students," Graf said. "We had a "read-in" at Kim Elementary School to encourage and help with reading and we had a bike safety day at Harris Elementary."

Graf said their group hopes to work on other projects with Sigma Alpha Epsilon whom she calls the "spark plugs" of recent projects and also the UNLV Bike Club who aided in Bike Safety Day.

Scholarships and trophies which will help you become more awarded to youths by the Optimist Club acknowledges the accomplishments of winners.

Optimist Clubs join in Optimist International programs like the "Just Say No" anti-drug campaign for children, where positive peer pressure discourages drug use.

A "Respect for the Law" program aims to instill respect and responsibility to laws of our community and to the enforcers of those laws.

As an optimist, one will participate in any number of activities

involved in issues of the community. The average club directly serves 23 youths for each member in the club. A minimum size charter club of 35 members will, then, provide service to 805 youth.

"We have so much fun," said Graf. "Last year, we sponsored the national finals of go-cart races at Wet and Wild. We had people racing from age 8 to 80. It was safe, regimented, we had no accidents and it was a lot of fun," Graf said.

For more information, call 873-3378.

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