

## **Sisson Shining Star Optimist Award November 2023 – Stephen Courtright**

Congratulations to Stephen Courtright for being honored as the Sacred Heart Academy Sisson Shining Star Optimist Award recipient for November 2023. Every other month, the Mt. Pleasant Optimist Club honors one middle school student (6<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grade) from each of the area middle schools with the Sisson Shining Star Optimist Award. Most recently, Stephen Courtright earned this award for Sacred Heart Academy. Stephen is the son of Ben and Laura Courtright, who are parishioners at Sacred Heart Parish.

Stephen's first nomination was from his language arts & math teacher, Mrs. Julie O'Brien. The nomination read "One of the many things I love about Stephen is his even-temperament and his genuine happiness for others' successes. He has a great sense of humor. He is a hard worker. He exudes optimism even in the face of stress and thinks the best of everyone. He is not exclusive with his friend list – he is genuinely kind to everyone. His moral compass is true, and perseveres through adversity (namely, Language Arts class...) I have known Stephen since fourth grade – he is the real deal, and I am happy and honored to know him."

This nomination was seconded by Mrs. Wendy Lemke, Stephen's homeroom, religion, science, and social studies teacher, who added, "Stephen is one of the kindest and happiest kids in 6th grade. He puts a positive spin on everything! "

The Sisson Shining Star Optimist Award is named to honor the legacy of James "Jim" Sisson Jr. Jim was a life-time member of the Mt. Pleasant Optimist Club, and always carried copies of the Optimist Creed in his pocket to share with others. Jim was always helping others, supporting students, and volunteering. Jim lived his life with integrity, kindness, and generosity. Requirements for nomination specify that the nominee must be in 6th, 7th or 8th grade should exude the traits of optimism as written below in The Optimist Creed:

### 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.



*Above, Stephen is pictured with his parents, Ben & Laura Courtright, at the award presentation.*

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 always and to 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.

Congratulations, Stephen! This honor is well deserved.