

Optimists donate to the 'After the Bell' program

The Optimist Club of Merrill recently made a \$500 donation to the 2017-18 "After the Bell" program. To keep the cost of the "After the Bell" program free to participants, the program has relied on the generosity and support of organizations like the Optimists to fund the program expenses. During the 13 years the program has existed, 615 different youth have participated. Many of these youth attend the program for all three years they are in middle school. Funds are still needed to cover the cost of snacks, program supplies and paying staff who provide daily supervision for the 2017-18 after school program.

"After the Bell" is a free after school program available for all middle school students whether they attend public or parochial school from 3:05-5 p.m. Monday through Thursday in Room 118 (enter the school through Door 14) at the Prairie River Middle School on regular school days. The program offers middle school youth a safe,

easily accessible place to go after school where they have the opportunity to participate in positive enrichment activities and to learn new skills. Participants are supervised by an adult supervisor(s) with assistance from community and high school volunteers. Each day the program offers students a place to choose to participate in enrichment activities, do their homework, play board games, visit with friends, and/or have a snack. Students do not need to attend the program every day but can choose which days they wish to attend.

If students are interested in participating, they can pick up information and required forms in the Prairie River Middle School office, T.B. Scott Library, the UW-Extension office or the first day they attend the program. Forms are also available on the Lincoln County UW-Extension website at <http://lincoln.uwex.edu/>, click on 4-H Youth Development, then After the Bell Program. Completed forms must be

turned in the second time you attend the program.

If you are interested in volunteering or in making a donation to the "After the Bell" 2017-2018 school year program, please contact Ann Stoeckmann, Program

Coordinator at 715-536-3016 or via e-mail at astoeckmann77@gmail.com or Debbie Moellendorf at the Lincoln County UW-Extension office at (715) 539-1077 or via e-mail at deborah.moellendorf@ces.uwex.edu.



Carri Kennedy, President of the Optimist Club of Merrill (right) presents a \$500 donation to the Ann Stoeckmann, ATB Program Coordinator (left) and some of the participants in the program.