



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women®

Soroptimist International of the Americas Founder Region Newsletter

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In This Issue

- Governor's Message
- Community Giving
- Fundraising
- Soroptimist Celebrating Success
- SI Dues
- Legislative Advocacy
- Public Awareness
- Joy Swank
- Save the Date

Links

- [Founder Region Website](#)
- [Founder Region Facebook page](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [SIA](#)
- [Live Your Dream](#)
- [Dream It, Be It](#)
- [Barbara Stevenson Award](#)
- [Violet Richardson Award](#)
- [Ruby Award](#)
- [Monthly Giving](#)
- [Key Message Flyer](#)

Governor's Message February 2019



Dear Founder Region Members,

Happy Heart Month!

Our Founder Region Board had a productive weekend meeting where our District Directors shared updates of all of the good work our members and clubs are doing. And, we applaud and thank you for your efforts to improve the lives of women and girls facing obstacles. Our officers also gave reports and we did a lot of planning for our upcoming conference May 3-5, 2019 at the San Ramon Marriott. We hope you are making plans to attend, and we will have the Call to Conference out soon! We shared the link to book your hotel reservation last month. In case you missed it, check out the Conference/Meeting page of the Founder Region website for the link to make your online hotel reservations.

See the Legislative Advocacy report from SI Director of Advocacy which we hope will whet your appetite to come hear our dynamic speakers that we have lined up for our Legislative Advocacy sessions at conference. Water is a precious resource and we need to learn about the seriousness of our own situation, as well as, learn what actions we can take now to empower change for our future.

Region Board

Governor Sylvia Crafton

Gov. elect Kris Chorbi

Sec. Pat Eileen Fisher

Treasurer Vicki Ham

Directors

Elise Balgley, Dist. I

Beverly Gomer, Dist. II

Joy Swank, Dist. III

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Dyann O'Brien, Dist. V

Kristal Koga, Dist. VI

Mailing Address

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That is why we are titling our Legislative Advocacy sessions: “Water Crisis and Climate Change Challenges – Empowering Change for our Future”. You won’t want to miss this opportunity to hear SI President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen and SI Director of Advocacy Bev Bucur speak first-hand about why access to clean water is a critical issue now and into the future.

And, speaking of SI President Mariet, please confirm that your club treasurer has submitted your club’s donation to the SI President’s Appeal on a financial transaction form. We want to be able to share the total with SI President Mariet that all Founder Region clubs have contributed to her President’s Appeal.

As always, we have jammed packed our newsletter with information we hope you will find valuable and pertinent. We know it is hard to catch information thrown at us from so many resources these days and we appreciate the time and effort each contributor gives to our newsletter to gather and share the information with all of our members. We trust our members are being empowered by these newsletter updates and Empowering Change in our clubs, our communities, and our world.

Governor Sylvia

“Empowering Change”

A Look at Soroptimist Community Giving

Soroptimist Clubs are valued organizations within their own communities. Other non-profit organizations that serve women and girls are often the beneficiaries of the funds that local clubs raise under the Soroptimist name. Members often feel very proud for being known in their community for supporting specific and various organizations. That’s great that we are able to support these organizations. Let’s take a look at whether or not their mission is also supporting women and girls facing obstacles. Also consider these questions: How is that relationship benefiting your Soroptimist club? Are their employees/members potential Soroptimist members? Are you getting public awareness recognition in their promotional materials and flyers for the support you are providing? Do their employees/members participate/attend in your club’s fundraisers?

We value the services these organizations provide to women facing obstacles and yet we do need to be cognizant of staying true to our mission. We promote our own fundraisers with the claim that we are

improving the lives of women and girls which we offer as our tagline and we must remain true to our supporters by using their funds as designated. That means all Clubs should be doing our Dream Programs, which economically empower women and girls who face obstacles.

In other words, we can't claim to be raising funds for women and girls facing obstacles and turn around and give it to the Boys Club (a drastic example but it makes the point).

Consider that some of these non-profit organizations look to Soroptimist for financial support because they know we are kind-hearted and very good at fundraising. They don't hesitate to ask us for funds, and yet many of our clubs would never think of asking another 501 (c) (3) organization for funds or even just to support our fundraisers.

90% of funds that Soroptimist Clubs raise is anticipated to remain within their own communities. Consider the amount of funds being raised and look at whether we are doing all we can to support the women and girls in our local communities first, by giving Live Your Dream Awards and conducting Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls programs in a manner that is impactful to the recipients of those awards and programs. Secondly, are the amount of funds being given to other organizations in your local community far exceeding what you are doing for Live your Dream Awards and Dream It, Be It?

This is happening in many clubs, and this is why we are asking clubs to take a look at the "Working as One" exercise. See the link at : <https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/federation-information/sias-big-goal/working-as-one.html> It helps clubs to collaboratively review the work they are doing and ask the tough questions that reveal whether or not they are mission focused.

Clubs can also be honoring their own members by contributing to the Laurel Society in a member's name. Perhaps they chaired a big fundraising event, and the club can give 10% of the proceeds to Club Giving and then also add a discretionary amount to the chairperson's Laurel Society. It's a Win Win situation. The club gives a gift of appreciation to the member which starts or adds to that member's Laurel Society status, women and girls facing obstacles are the beneficiaries of the gift that was given, and the club fulfills the mission of improving the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

Founder Region values the impact that our clubs are making in their local communities, and we are not asking clubs to diminish their visibility in the community. We are asking clubs to ensure that they are staying true to the mission and doing what we say we do and being who we say we are.

Thank you for your continued support of women and girls.

Fundraising

Lyn Lurbe	Chair
Bonnie Mertz	Dist. I
Gina Moore	Dist. II
Tina	
Chechourka	Dist. III
Sandy Frazer	Dist. IV
Andrea Boldt	Dist. V
Denise Ridge	Dist. VI

Fundraising *Spreading the LOVE*

Founder Region Members, HAPPY HEARTS DAY to ALL of you!!!

“Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates LOVE.” – by Lao Tzu

February is the month to show LOVE to all the women and girls of our Dream Programs. As you spread the word about our dream programs, people may ask “why do you only focus on women and girls?”. I hope part of your response would be because they have always (to this day) had a disadvantage simply because of their gender. They become global targets for sex, drug, and human trafficking, for domestic violence, teen dating violence, and many more. Investing in women and girls and our dream programs will help to unleash their power through education. They will have greater confidence in breaking away from domestic violence, be less vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation, more knowledgeable in getting better access to healthcare and a true support group in all of us!

So, show your LOVE this month to our women and girls who deserve to receive some LOVE for a change. By giving to the Laurel Society and giving 10% of your club’s locally raised funds to SIA through the Club Giving program, they can use that to educate and empower them. Then use the other 90% for your local dream programs. That’s a LOVE win for both locally and globally!

With lots of  *Lyn Lurbe, Region Fundraising Chair SI/Central Oahu*

Soroptimist Celebrating Success

As Soroptimists, celebration is an important part of our culture. The Soroptimists Celebrating Success Awards are our way of honoring the extraordinary work of local club projects that improve the lives of women and girls or that promote Soroptimist as an organization that improves the lives of women and girls. This award celebrates the best practices of Soroptimist clubs in the four pillar areas supporting the SIA strategic plan: fundraising, membership, program and public awareness.



The **Fundraising** category recognizes fundraising projects that are successful, creative, involve the local community and promote a positive image of Soroptimist. **Membership** recognizes projects that enhance the club membership experience, thus leading to increased member participation and satisfaction. The **Program** category recognizes club projects that improve the lives of women or girls by addressing issues that affect their economic, social or political standing, and focuses special attention on projects related to our signature Dream Programs: Live Your Dream Awards and Dream It, Be It. And lastly, **Public Awareness**, recognizes projects that have successfully raised awareness for the club and its project, thus leading to an increased public profile of Soroptimist and our mission.

Your participation in this program is an excellent way to share the successes of your project with your fellow Soroptimists throughout the region and the federation. Please take the time to pat yourselves on the back for the good work you do! We are halfway through our membership year and clubs have been actively supporting our four pillars. And, many more clubs have upcoming events planned. We encourage you to submit your applications throughout the year, rather than rushing to do them before the deadline of July 1, 2019. The forms and instructions can be accessed through the SIA website. Submissions are for activities done in the 2018-19 club year.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Region winners will be announced at our Region Conference in May 2020. Working together, the clubs, the regions and the federation can celebrate the outstanding work clubs are doing to increase our collective impact and shape the Soroptimist Future. Debbie Scaife, Founder Region SCSA Chair (707) 599-4652 timberent@suddenlink.net



Soroptimist International Per Capita Dues

To sustain Soroptimist International, and continue membership in SI, a per capita SI dues increase will be reflected in the SIA July 1, 2019 billing statement effective for the SIA 2019-2020 club year. SI dues are paid through SIA on the annual dues form. The new per capita SI dues amount will be \$9.00 USD. It has been 21 years since the last SI dues increase, during which time inflation has averaged 2.6% per year. This is equivalent to an approximate 70% cost of living increase, and during this time, membership has continued to decline worldwide including in our own federation. Since 2011, successive SI Boards have exercised strict fiscal prudence and implemented severe cost cutting measures, including restructuring operations for maximum efficiency and overall cost savings. However, SI has been forced to utilize reserves to bridge the deficit just to keep essential services going and concluded that this has proven unsustainable for the long term. Clubs will want to include this increase in the annual budget planning for the next club year.

Legislative Advocacy

Linda Witong Chair
Carrie Domogalla
Madalienne Peters
Gina Vucci
Angie Haramoto
Sandra Simms

Legislative Advocacy

Bev Bucur is SI Director of Advocacy

To ignore the water crisis is like driving a car and looking in the rear-view mirror, you may solve the old problems, but you don't recognize the cliff ahead until you are right at the tipping point. In 2018, the water crisis was described by the World Economic Forum's **2018 Global Risk Report** as being the fifth-most impactful risk for 2018, and one of the main contributors which was pushing our planet to the brink of disaster. In 2019, World Economic Forum's 2019 Global Risk Report painted an even more somber picture of what lay ahead. It observed that "the year 2018 was another one of storms, fires and floods" and then added that, "of all risks, it is in relation to the environment that the world is most clearly sleepwalking into a catastrophe"¹ The water crisis and its water related events plays a central role in creating this grim future as, in terms of impact, the water crisis ranked #4 in the 2019 Global Risk Report; just

¹ 2019 World Economic Forum Global Risks Report page 15

after weapons of mass destruction and some of the other sources of the water crisis i.e. climate change and extreme weather events.

Water and sanitation services (WSS) are essential to human survival and sustainable development, however, the goal of achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water by 2030 presents a major challenge in many parts of the world. More than two billion people are compelled to drink contaminated water, resulting in a child dying every minute of every hour of every day.² 4.5 billion people lack safely managed sanitation services. Without safe drinking water, and adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities, it is harder for women and girls to lead safe, dignified, productive, and healthy lives.³ Nor does the future offer any solace: current projections are that, by 2050, at least one in four humans could face a chronic lack of fresh water.⁴

Women around the world are disproportionately affected by the water crisis. In many developing countries traditional roles and practices mean that women and girls are responsible for water-related tasks within the home, and as such, many awake each morning faced with multiple challenges in the pursuit of safe water. To begin with, worldwide, women and girls spend an estimated 200 million hours — *daily* — collecting water. In such locations as, for example Afar, Ethiopia, “13-year-old Aysha trudges eight hours, round trip, every day to collect water for herself and her family. Just imagine — those 200 million hours add up to 8.3 million days, or more than 22,800 years,” observed UNICEF’s Global Head of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Sanjay Wijesekera. “It’s as if a woman started with her empty bucket in the Stone Age and didn’t arrive home with water until 2018.”⁵ Responsible for collection, storage and management, paths to water sources may not only be long or remote for girls or women like Aysha but may also be dangerous, with women and girls facing risks to their own and their family’s health through contaminated groundwater, whilst the journeys of others may leave them vulnerable to violence. Moreover, the 2019 Global Risk Report,



² Making Every Drop Count an Agenda for Water Action High Level Panel on Water Outcome Document Page 11 March 2018

³ Making Every Drop Count an Agenda for Water Action High Level Panel on Water Outcome Document Page 11 March 2018

⁴ During the Security Council Open Debate on Water, Peace and Security (22 November 2016), it was noted that water scarcity and its projections revealed that, by 2050, at least one in four humans could face a chronic lack of fresh water. Key Message located in the August 2017 summary of the two working-level dialogues on water which occurred on March 22, 2017 and again on May 30, 2017

⁵ “How Long does it take to get Water, For Asha 8 hours a day” March 1, 2018 by Malcolm G Farley UNICEF USA

predicted that “climate change” means that “women in many communities will even have “to walk father to fetch water”⁶ which will, in turn, increase the time spent to accomplish this goal as well as increase the danger and vulnerability to violence that any woman or girl may face on a daily basis while searching for water for her and her family.

In addition, one of the other greatest threats to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by women or girls is corruption with water governance corruption disproportionately affecting women and poorer households, the latter being twice as likely to be asked for bribes (Transparency International). As a group, women or girls also have limited decision-making powers or influence over natural resources such as land and water, constraining their options and ability to access alternatives when government provided provisions or infrastructure go wrong. One particular danger for women and girls is sextortion, a term used by the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), to define the corrupt actions of those in positions of authority who seek to extort sexual favors in exchange for something they have the power to grant or withhold (IAWJ 2012). According to recent studies, examples of sextortion include “soliciting of sexual favors by male water utility staff. From the discussions in Johannesburg, sextortion seems to be common in a variety of situations where women need access to resources or services. One respondent expressed that “[l]ooking for a job, the manager or the supervisor will ask you to sleep with him” (Focus Group 1 Johannesburg, 2015). Not the least in the role of water provider for the household, women may also be subject to unwanted requests. A extremely sad and appalling example of how vulnerable women or girls can be to sextortion was made by one woman who observed that; “if I don’t have money to bribe the water utility staff “he will sexually abuse me because that’s the only valuable thing I can give him” (Focus Group 4 Johannesburg, 2015). In another region, women observed that :“The engineer comes, or the person to cut the water, and right there they flirt with him and that and ‘let’s go inside’ and so that he doesn’t cut off the water ... or ‘give me your number’ to go on a date” (Focus Group 1 Bogotá, 2015); “When they have come to cut the water or something like that, I dress up and flirt with them” (Focus Group 3 Bogotá, 2015). Yet, like many other aspects of corruption, “the matter of sextortion is far from uncomplicated.” For example, in one group, a woman said “I’m an entrepreneur and [if] I want a tender to distribute water, like the pre-paid, I can sleep with one of the officials there and they will give me a



⁶ 2019 World Economic Forum Global Risks Report page 14

tender... If you want a business, you need to bribe with money and sleep around” (Focus Group 3 Johannesburg, 2015).⁷ In both the studied countries,” misconduct among the front office staff was also viewed as the rules of the game. Moreover, when it is perceived that ‘everyone’ bribes the water meter reader, the opportunity and private gain may trump the fear of women being punished harder than men in the same situation, although women – due to gender roles, social expectations and norms – may also be less willing to take the risk of getting caught in corrupt transactions.”⁸ Transparency International, a global coalition against corruption suggests that women, as primary targets, often remain quiet regarding the abuse they suffer for fear of reprisal, and the shame and stigma that surrounds the practice, together with the lack of protection for women in many countries, makes it less likely to be reported leading to misleading data on the problem (UNDP and UNIFEM, 2010). A report by the UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility (2017), suggests that the gendered experience of corruption taking place in the water sector is informed by an imbalance of power and the reliance on an authority to fulfil a basic need. This imbalance of power and the vulnerabilities caused by water scarcity, poverty, climate change and disaster, create marginalized groups and environments ripe for the abuse of power, compounding inequalities and blocking opportunities for education and empowerment. Barriers to education and training then perpetuate a cycle of inequality and victimization and women can remain unaware or unable to access legal protection, and therefore fail to stand up for their own rights.



It has been observed that “ the express inclusion of sextortion as a concern in water integrity initiatives can provide a basis for addressing the specific dynamics and impacts of this gendered experience of corruption. However, appropriate and targeted strategies to combat it need to be developed, alongside provision of support to victims. The inclusion of sextortion in corruption reporting and anti-corruption policies would also provide a vital recognition of this form of abuse of power. In addition, further research of the factors influencing the extent

⁷ UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility (2017). Women and corruption in the water sector: Theories and experiences from Johannesburg and Bogotá. WGF Report No. 8. Stockholm: SIWI. Page 16

⁸ UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility (2017). Women and corruption in the water sector: Theories and experiences from Johannesburg and Bogotá. WGF Report No. 8. Stockholm: SIWI. Page 17

and prevalence of sextortion in the water sector are also necessary in order improve the strength of knowledge on this topic.”⁹

Soroptimist International is addressing all of these challenges by working with women and girls living in the rural village of Long Tanyit in the Belaga District of Sarawak, Malaysia who are left particularly vulnerable by threats brought on by climate change, deforestation, mining and continuous logging which is polluting the air, sources of drinking water and threatening the rich biodiversity of the area. With no clean water or electricity, no sanitation or medical clinic, the organization is implementing Sustainable Development Goal 4, which deals with quality Education; Sustainable Development Goal 5, which deals with Gender Equality; and Sustainable Development Goal 6, which ensures safe and equal access to affordable, clean and safe water and sanitation for all. Soroptimist accomplishes this by empowering local women to earn their own incomes by utilizing available lands, managing water systems that feed water direct to their homes, and in doing so, creating sustainable futures for themselves and their community, whilst taking steps to change attitudes and social structures that may impede equality.



In addition, in a second project which Soroptimist International is working on, WeWash (Women empowerment through water, sanitation, and health), is reshaping the lives of unemployed and low-income women and girls in the villages of Sulitsa, Sladak kladenets, Preslaven and Kalitinovo in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. Soroptimist International is increasing access to safe water and sanitation and through education, coaching programs and leadership training and is supporting the equitable involvement of women in decision-making; from project design through to implementation.

Soroptimists programs throughout the world serve as an example for the concept that the world cannot ignore the needs of women and girls who comprise approximately 50% of the population. Our goal must be to eliminate one of the main obstacles to achieving women’s rights and gender equality by alleviating the burden and danger of water collection which falls on women and girls such as Aysha and poses tremendous obstacles to her quest for education, a dignified, productive and healthy life or even, for that matter, her survival.

⁹ UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility (2017). Women and corruption in the water sector: Theories and experiences from Johannesburg and Bogotá. WGF Report No. 8. Stockholm: SIWI. Page 20

Public Awareness

Jackie De Vries, Chair
Kathy Johanson
Vicki Dillard
Patti Dutton

Public Awareness- Your Social Media Presence

Once you have chosen your social media platforms it is important to maintain your frequency of posting, this is referred to as social media presence.

Refer to the S.M.A.R.T. goals your club used when developing your Public Awareness plan. You can't just use social media to post club events. You have to build your audience and educate them on what Soroptimist does, our local and global impact, and why they want to support our mission. Then when you post events, they already know the great causes your club supports and will want to attend.

This is achieved by frequent (3 times a week) postings. Remember the infographics available on the SIA website. Use the videos on the Soroptimist YouTube channel to share heartwarming stories and information. If you have a large number of followers, you may want to post even more frequently than 3 times a week. The rule of thumb is the more followers you have the more frequent your posts should be.

Most clubs are getting ready to honor the Live Your Dream awardees. To promote the program, you can post the infographic and some of the videos that can be found on YouTube.

Live Your Dream infographic https://soroptimist.imgix.net/05-for-members/Program_Resources/live-your-dream-awards-club-resources/lyda-impact-infographic.pdf

Live Your Dream YouTube videos,
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=soroptimist+live+your+dream

Autobiography of District III Director Joy Swank



Greetings fellow Soroptimists,
I will give you the short version of my life story because I am pretty sure if I drag you through 69 years of all the highs and lows of my life you will stop reading quickly.

I had a wonderful childhood growing up in Southern California in the town of Chino. I grew up in the country on a dairy with my sister Jackie and brother Henry. They both still like me so I am obviously a super older sister.

At age 10, after taking a birthday cake to my fifth-grade teacher Mrs. Hoover, her sweet thanks and a kind hug set me on the road to my future career. I remember vividly deciding, “Someday I am going to be a teacher.” Fast forward many years.

I won a speech contest at age nineteen and was crowned the Dairy Princess for Riverside and San Bernardino counties and went on to be crowned the first runner up at the state level. Bitter irony, I am now lactose intolerant.

I was married at age twenty, finished college working nights as a waitress, my husband was a truck driver. We grew up together, had three beautiful children- despite the fact Stanford Medical Center said I would never have children. Two surgical procedures and a miracle and three kids were mine. My husband delivered our third child at home, on the bathroom floor. I told the doctor I delivered quickly, but he did not listen. (I guess it is a family issue, my own daughter delivered her fourth child along the freeway on the way to the hospital.) She had to top my story.

After over thirty happy years teaching English to seventh graders I retired. Within two months my brain went to mush. I needed something to do with my time. A friend invited me to join Soroptimist. I was thrilled. I walked into that first conference and saw hundreds of women who shared my desire to make the world a better place. I had another epiphany, “These are my people!” I became president within three years and district director within five. I came looking for friends and had a need to help my community; bingo on both counts. I was inspired by a club member who was filling out a monthly pledge and I signed up too. It makes me feel good to help the organization. After six years of giving I was told I am now a Visionary. Yay me, another “bling” pin, I hope.

For fun I play pinochle with many Soroptimist buds as well as my monthly book club. (What happens in book club, stays in book club.) I adore spending time with my three children, ages 40, 35, and 29 and my six grandchildren, ages seven to two, who like to ask me, “How is

Have an idea for a newsletter article? We are looking for mission focused, informative articles to publish. Please email your article to: Jackie DeVries at soroptimistjackiedv@gmail.com

Soroptimist going Grandma?" My sister Jackie and I spend many hours playing, going to movies, and out to lunch.

I was diagnosed with stage one breast cancer. My doctor said I was lucky to have discovered it early thanks to yearly mammograms. A lumpectomy, radiation and a daily pill are helping me.

Sister Jackie and I decided life is short, we are traveling more. Venice and Greece this April and Egypt in 2020. Jerry, my husband of 49 years is still working so his travels with me are limited to trips in our motor home along the west coast. There you have it- the short version. I am a lucky duck and thrilled to meet so many fabulous women within our organization. Joy Swank LOVES her family, friends, and being a Soroptimist.



Save The Date!

2019 Founder Region Conference
May 3-5, 2019 - San Ramon Marriott, San Ramon, CA
Host Clubs: SI/Antioch, SI/The Delta (District II)



Soroptimist International Founder Region Annual Conference 2019
(May 3, 2019 to May 5, 2019)

MAKING RESERVATIONS

A dedicated website is now available for attendees to book their hotel rooms online. Reservations can be made at this web address:

<https://book.passkey.com/e/49823080>

