



# Soroptimist

# 101

# Welcome to Soroptimist!

As Soroptimists, we believe empowering women and girls to transform their lives is the best way to transform the world.

For more than 95 years, Soroptimist International of the Americas has shown that with a financial investment toward their goals, women and girls who face obstacles such as poverty, violence and teen pregnancy can achieve great things.

Our years of experience has taught us that **education is the key to unlocking economic empowerment of the world's women and girls**. When women and girls are educated, they have opportunity, choice and power to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families.

With help from our members like you, clubs, supporters and donors—we're making dreams come true for women and girls.

Thank you for joining us on this journey!



## Our Mission

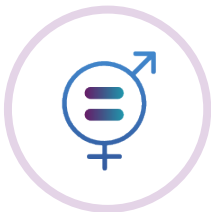
Improving the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

## Our Vision

Women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

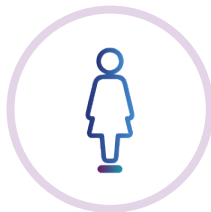
## Our Core Values

*Soroptimist International of the Americas is committed to:*



### Gender Equality

Women and girls live free from discrimination.



### Empowerment

Women and girls are free to act in their own best interest.



### Education

Women and girls deserve to lead full and productive lives through access to education.



### Diversity & Fellowship

Women from varied backgrounds and perspectives work together to improve the lives of women and girls.

# Soroptimist: A Strong History of Helping Women and Girls

Soroptimist is a global organization economically empowering women and girls through access to education. Since our founding in California, USA in 1921, we have grown to include about 30,000 Soroptimists in 21 countries and territories, and over 100,000 supporters in our online activist community, LiveYourDream.org. Powered by our volunteer members, each of our nearly 1,300 clubs supports community-based and global projects benefiting women and girls. Since our signature Dream Programs began, **we have helped more than 65,000 women and girls reach their goals.** Soroptimist's investment is paying huge dividends—not only for these individual women and girls, but for entire communities and nations.

More and more people are beginning to discover what Soroptimists have always known—**the best way to lift up communities and nations starts with educating women and girls.** This growing realization provides an unprecedented opportunity. With strong support from

philanthropic individuals and organizations, we can seize this opportunity to reach more women and girls with our brand-unifying Dream Programs.

Our long history of women helping women in need, our replicated program outcomes, and our vast network of members and supporters positions Soroptimist to effectively reach women and girls in the 21 countries and territories we serve.

---

*We're focused on economically empowering women and girls because it is at the heart of lifting up society as a whole.*

---

And we're just getting started. We've laid out an ambitious—but realistic—plan to reach far more women and girls. We are thrilled you have joined us!

*"Soroptimist offers support and encouragement that is truly transformative. We are educating girls who are the future of the world and helping women who have faced obstacles such as poverty, violence and teenage pregnancy, reach their full potential."*

President Elizabeth di Geronimo Annicchiarico is a member of SI/Miranda, Venezuela, and has been a Soroptimist member for 20 years.

She has held several leadership positions at all levels of the organization including SI convention delegate, SI CSW delegate, SIA board director, region governor, district secretary, club president and club fundraising chair.

Elizabeth studied civil engineering and specialized in structural engineering. Currently, she is a managing director in her family's construction company.

In addition to her volunteer work with Soroptimist, Elizabeth's hobbies include reading, cooking, goldsmithing, and making jewelry that she shares with friends.



**Elizabeth di Geronimo  
Annicchiarico**  
2018-2019 SIA President



# Benefits

---

Soroptimist uses annual dues to ensure our members have a fun and meaningful club experience while accomplishing our collective mission—today and into the future. Surveys tell us members value the following benefits from their membership:

## Mission

Members **experience joy and a sense of accomplishment** by working with other like-minded women on global programs that socially and economically empower women and girls.

## Connection

Members **grow professionally and personally through their friendships** with other club members, connections with women from different cultures and countries, and opportunities for leadership development.

## Assistance

Members **receive assistance and resources from SIA headquarters** enabling them to enjoy a meaningful club experience knowing they are part of a secure organization invested in the future.

In addition to these values, here is a brief overview of the individual benefits members receive when they join Soroptimist:

- Subscription to our twice-yearly, fully translated printed newsletter *Best for Women*.
- Email alerts about updates to our monthly electronic blog, the “Soroptimist Summary.”
- Leadership development and networking opportunities.
- Opportunity to participate in and provide feedback through our social media sites.
- Access to contact information for other members, clubs and leaders via online directories.
- Opportunity to take part in our online activist community, LiveYourDream.org.
- Invitations to take advantage of special offers and discounts through our partners.
- Invitations to international biennial conventions.





# The Soroptimist Dream Programs

---

Soroptimist's Dream Programs ensure women and girls have access to the education and training they need to reach their full potential and live their dreams. Soroptimist is committed to investing in programs that have a sustainable, measurable impact on the lives of women and girls.

## Investing in Women to Achieve their Dreams

Our signature program, the *Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women*, has provided cash awards to more than 30,000 women since its inception in 1972—empowering them to achieve economic independence.

Every year, Soroptimist **distributes more than \$2 million in education grants to about 1,500 women** all over the world.

Over half of our *Live Your Dream Awards* recipients are survivors of domestic violence, trafficking or sexual assault. Nearly all of the women and families we serve **have overcome enormous obstacles** including poverty, teen pregnancy, and drug or alcohol addiction.

*Live Your Dream Awards* recipients may use the cash award to offset any costs associated with their efforts to attain higher education, such as books, childcare, tuition and transportation. This unique program is **helping women find their voice** and purpose while offering the resources they need to succeed.

The women and girls we serve are some of the most courageous, powerful and inspiring people you'll ever meet. Each and every one of them is a superhero. We are honored to share their extraordinary stories, which demonstrate the impact members like you make.

“[Going back to school] will give [my daughters] a positive view of parenting and a sense of empowerment as they reflect on the challenges I face as a single mother. They will also gain a positive attitude toward women entering academics at any age, under any circumstances.”

—Lisa, *Live Your Dream Awards* Recipient





## Putting Girls on a Path to a Brighter Future

Our *Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls* program **empowers girls to break the cycles of poverty, violence, and abuse** by giving them the self-confidence and knowledge they need to achieve success in their future careers and personal lives.

Although all girls face barriers because of their gender, **we prioritize working with girls who have additional obstacles** including poverty, unstable home lives, living in foster care, or teen motherhood. Soroptimist clubs work in partnership with girls in small groups or a conference setting to provide them with the information and resources they want and need to be successful.

By reaching girls while they are still young, we not only can help them stay healthy and safe in the short term, but we can reduce the number of women in crisis in the future. Putting girls on a path will help them realize their dreams.

**“Dream It, Be It really helped me look at my goals long-term. It showed me that I’m going to fail sometimes and I have to learn from my mistakes.”**

**—Dream It, Be It Participant**

## Our Big Goal

Soroptimist has a Big Goal of increased collective impact. That means we make **a cohesive effort** throughout SIA—members, clubs, regions, board and staff—to **make a sustainable and measurable difference** in the lives of women and girls. It is about our organization all working together on the same programs with the same goals. Our brand is communicated through our Dream Programs. When clubs participate in and publicize the Dream Programs, it helps **solidify our brand image as an organization** that works to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

# Spotlight on Clubs

Our nearly 1,300 clubs contribute to increasing our collective impact through the delivery of our brand-unifying Dream Programs. The following examples are just a few of the amazing ways clubs contribute to our impact and brand recognition throughout the world.



Thanks to the efforts of **SI/David (México Centroamérica Region)**, high school girls had the opportunity to participate in a fantastic *Dream It, Be It* conference. In collaboration with two local universities, the Chamber of Commerce, and the United Organization for Education, SI/David invited professional women from various fields to share their stories with girls. Girls also heard from the previous year's participants, who spoke about how the program motivated them to become leaders and follow their dreams. Because of this project, the club has developed strong relationships with local universities and businesses, and attracted nine new members!



**SI/Ogden (Rocky Mountain Region)** describes the *Live Your Dream Awards* as a “pivotal mission point.” The club awarded almost \$3,000 to four women last year, and their goal now is to continue expanding the program. Club members put in a lot of work recruiting applicants, advertising the award online and in schools, and keeping in touch with past recipients.



**SI/Phoenix (Golden West Region)** goes above and beyond in support of their *Live Your Dream Award* recipients. The club keeps in touch with past award recipients by inviting them to events, and reaching out to ask how their schooling is going. Keeping in touch not only lets past recipients know the club is still cheering for them, it also helps the club identify other ways to support them. In one instance, a past recipient shared the exciting news that she completed her classes and was next moving on to student teaching! This accomplishment, however, also came with testing fees. The club showed its continuing support by helping her with these fees.



**SI/Tagum City (Philippines Region)** hosted 150 girls for their first *Dream It, Be It* conference last year. It was one of the most highly attended conferences in the region. The day included *Dream It, Be It* curriculum sessions, as well as information about teen dating violence. In addition to making a positive impact on the girls, the club increased its public awareness and developed a partnership with city government.

# Connect With Us

---

## Soroptimist.org

As you learn more about Soroptimist, remember to visit our robust website to access more information about our programs and impact. Additionally, you'll want to check the **For Clubs and Members Area** frequently to keep up-to-date on resources, directories, and upcoming meetings and conventions.

## Social Media

One of Soroptimists' key strengths is its ability to provide an international networking forum. To add to this strength, Soroptimist has developed several social online groups for members, which serve as a great way to share and exchange ideas with like-minded individuals. You can join one or all of the Soroptimist groups. Simply click on the links below to connect or visit [www.soroptimist.org](http://www.soroptimist.org) and click on the social media buttons at the top right of the homepage:



<https://www.facebook.com/Soroptimist-International-of-the-Americas-69575569890/>



<https://twitter.com/soroptimist>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company-beta/11127183/>



<https://www.youtube.com/user/SIAHQ>



<https://www.instagram.com/soroptimist/>

## LiveYourDream.org

As the world changes, we must evolve as well. To ensure the future of Soroptimist, we are engaging multiple generations of women with our mission ... women ready and willing to advance our mission. To that end, Soroptimist developed an online activist community of change-makers. With over 100,000 supporters, LiveYourDream.org provides opportunities for people who wish to support our mission in new and exciting ways. LiveYourDream.org supporters raise awareness about some of the most serious challenges facing women and girls today, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. LiveYourDream.org supporters help more women and girls access our life-changing Dream Programs. Soroptimists are encouraged to sign-up at [www.LiveYourDream.org](http://www.LiveYourDream.org) and invite their friends and family to do so as well.



## Shop for a Cause

Did you know when you make a purchase from Soroptimist you are showing your support for the world's women? Your purchase funds our life-changing Dream Programs for women and girls. Check out our store at [Soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/shop/index.html](http://Soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/shop/index.html) for a fine selection of pins, jewelry, office accessories, apparel and printed items!



# Glossary

---

Like many organizations, Soroptimist has terms and definitions unique to our programs and members. To help you learn more about our organization, we have developed a glossary of terms you may use for reference.

## “Best for Women”

Soroptimist International of Americas’ fully translated newsletter, which is published two times a year, keeps readers informed of the organization’s programs and club projects, while giving a global perspective on women’s issues.

## Club Giving

Club Giving is the way your club can help women and girls beyond your local community. Clubs are asked to contribute at least 10% of the funds they raise locally to fund our life-changing global Dream Programs and increase the number of women and girls who benefit. When your club contributes to Club Giving it ensures that more women and girls close to home and across the world will have access to our programs. More women will be able to overcome challenges such as sex slavery, domestic violence, poverty and drug abuse, and live more fulfilling lives. More girls will be able to overcome obstacles, increase their self-esteem, and pursue their dreams. Visit the Donate/Fundraise section of our website for more information about Club Giving and to see the benefits your clubs will receive with your contribution this year.

## Convention

Held in even-numbered years, SIA conventions provide education, networking, cross-cultural and socializing opportunities. In addition to inspiring speakers and workshops, members also have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and meet Soroptimists from around the world.

## *Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls*

SIA’s program that empowers girls to break cycles of poverty, violence, and abuse by giving them the self-confidence and knowledge they need to achieve success. Through small group workshops or a conference setting,

Soroptimists mentor girls on setting and achieving their goals, moving forward after setbacks or failures, and discovering career opportunities.

## Founders Pennies

Celebrating the founding of Soroptimist, Founders Pennies are a classic, time-honored tradition for clubs to support SIA’s Dream Programs in a creative way. They are collected by clubs in a variety of ways and are usually submitted with SIA dues. Founders Pennies are calculated by multiplying \$.06 per member times the number of years since Soroptimist’s Founding in 1921. In the 2018-2019 club year, Founders Pennies are \$5.88 per member.

## Laurel Legacy

The Laurel Legacy is SIA’s way of recognizing and honoring the generosity of those whose future gifts preserve the strength of our organization and help women and girls to live their dreams. Arranging a future gift to Soroptimist is an excellent way to guarantee that our programs will continue to help women and girls.

## Laurel Society

The Laurel Society is SIA’s prestigious recognition program for donors who contribute gifts totaling \$1,000 or more. Since 1994, over 7,000 members have contributed more than \$12 million dollars to help economically empower women and girls through our Dream Programs. Donors can choose to designate their gift to the *Live Your Dream Awards*, *Dream It, Be It*, or Unrestricted Support, which provides funding where it’s needed most. Laurel Society members’ generosity provides ongoing financial support beyond their membership dues, ensuring the organization’s global programs have the funding needed to serve women and girls around the world.

## ***Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women***

Soroptimist clubs have empowered women through access to education since 1972 with this cornerstone program. The award-winning, life-changing *Live Your Dream Awards* assist women who provide the primary source of financial support for their families by giving them the resources they need to improve their education, skills and employment prospects.

## **Shaping the Future**

SIA's internal strategy for moving the organization forward.

## **Soroptimist International**

Headquartered in Cambridge, England, SI is a coalition of four federations, which includes Soroptimist International of the Americas. The other three federations that belong to Soroptimist International are: Soroptimist International of Europe ([www.soroptimisteurope.org](http://www.soroptimisteurope.org)), headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland; Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland ([www.sigbi.org](http://www.sigbi.org)), headquartered in Cheshire, England; and Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific ([www.siswp.org](http://www.siswp.org)), headquartered in Sydney, Australia.

## **Soroptimist International President's Appeal**

In honor of United Nations Human Rights Day, the Soroptimist International president invites all Soroptimists to join her in making a personal sacrifice and donating money to be used to benefit Soroptimist International projects in education and leadership.

## **Soroptimist International of the Americas Strategic Plan**

A document that states Soroptimist's vision, mission, core values and strategic outcomes.

## **What's New**

View this area on our website for important updates, headquarters highlights, news from your SIA president and more!

# **Thank you for being part of our dynamic organization!**

We appreciate your time and dedication to the Soroptimist mission!

## **Contact Us**

Get in touch with your headquarters staff! SIA's headquarters office provides many resources and assists Soroptimists with their volunteer work.

Regular business hours are Monday– Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. ET.

Staff can be reached in the following ways:

**Mail:** 1709 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103-6103

**Phone:** 215-893-9000

**Fax:** 215-893-5200