

Improving the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women

2007-2008 Program Impact Report

The Power of Soroptimist

In 19 countries and territories, Soroptimist International of the Americas members are helping women and girls to live their dreams. When a woman joins Soroptimist, she reaches out to less fortunate women and girls to provide them with the tools and resources they need to reach their goals. The members of SIA were gratified when SI adopted a mission statement that reinforces the organization's focus on women and girls. Now, 90,000 members in 126 countries are all working toward the same goals. Soroptimists around the world are changing, transforming and improving the lives of women and girls.

In Soroptimist International of the Americas, members work on a number of federation programs that raise awareness about who Soroptimist is and what Soroptimist does. This report tells the story of the collective impact of federation programs so that clubs can identify, not just with their local work, but also with work from around the world. When clubs participate in these programs, or make donations to SIA to ensure these programs remain strong, they are part of an international organization that is reaching women in the 1,400 communities in the 19 countries and territories where SIA members live and work. The financial support members provide to SIA returns to local communities through award programs and club grants and it reaches out to help women around the world.

Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards: Helping Women Reclaim Their Dreams

Established in 1972, the Women's Opportunity Awards is SIA's core program, helping women who have suffered hardships, such as poverty and abuse, to reclaim and live their dreams. Award recipients are able to obtain the skills training and education they need to improve their employment status and standard of living—for themselves and their families.

In 2007-2008, the financial and personal impact of the program was impressive. For the fourth year in a row, SIA distributed more than \$1 million in club, region and federation funds. In 2007-2008, 946 clubs gave awards to a combined total of 1,120 women. This marked a 1 percent increase in club participation from the previous year, increasing participation from 65 to 66 percent.

To date, 92 percent of clubs in the United States are participating, a 3 percent increase over last year. Clubs in Japan saw a 2 percent increase in participation, from 29 percent to 31 percent. The program also reached an additional 50 women this club year as 22 additional clubs gave awards and several clubs increased the number of awards they presented.

This year, 11 regions achieved 100 percent participation, up from nine regions last year: América del Sur, Brazil, Desert Coast, Eastern Canada, Founder, Golden West, Mexico/Central America, Midwestern, Sierra Pacific,

Southern and Western Canada. Five regions will receive additional \$3,000 awards in the 2008-2009 club year: Japan Higashi, Japan Kita, Japan Nishi, Philippines and Sierra Nevada. The region awards for 2008-2009 will total \$377,000, a \$9,000 increase in funding over last year.

SIA's federation-level recipients for the 2007-2008 Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards are: Mispah Evangelio, of Aklan, the Philippines; Joyce Snow of Columbia, Maryland; and Colleen Sword of Ontario, Canada. In addition to club and region awards, each woman received \$10,000 from Soroptimist to help them to achieve their educational goals.

Mispah Evangelio suffered discrimination as a member of the Ati, an indigenous tribe in the Philippines, and grew up in dire poverty. A single mother, she had always dreamed of becoming a school teacher so she could teach her people basic literacy and uplift their situation. Today, Mispah is living her dream of a college education, earning a B.S. degree in elementary education, and reclaiming her dreams for herself, her daughter and her tribe.



Mispah Evangelio

When Joyce Snow was a young girl, she dreamed of becoming a nurse. But life took a different turn when she was raped and later married an abusive man. She fell into a life of despair, drugs and prostitution. Today, no longer defining herself through "bad choices" and "self pity," Joyce works in the nursing field and is finally living her dream, studying for her degree in licensed practical nursing.



Joyce Snow

Diagnosed with epilepsy when she was 5 years old, Colleen Sword used to suffer 30 seizures a day and still takes medication to control her seizures. The single mother also has four small children who have diagnoses of autism and

Women's Opportunity Awards Impact:

- 946 clubs participated
- 1,120 women's lives were improved
- \$1,353,463 was disbursed

Cost per changed life: \$1,208.45

epilepsy. Her dream has always been to work with special needs children. Despite her own health condition and caring for her children, Colleen is living her dream as a full-time student, working toward a degree in psychology and behavioral science technology.



Colleen Sword

Thanks to the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards, women like Mispah, Joyce and Colleen have not only reclaimed their lives, but they are living their dreams for a better future.

Soroptimists STOP Trafficking:

The launch of the new Soroptimist anti-trafficking project, Soroptimists STOP Trafficking, was a success! Nearly 600 clubs ordered materials to participate in the launch event on December 2, 2007 (International Day for the Abolition of Slavery) or January 11, 2008 (United States National Day for Human Trafficking Awareness). Clubs across the federation handed out the trafficking cards and flyers, issued proclamations, held media events, and raised funds to assist victims of trafficking. Thirty-four percent of clubs that responded to the trafficking survey received media attention for their event. One club reported that the program provided "excellent publicity for the club. It branded us with a sense of gravitas, importance."



SI/Oxnard members and supporters wore red, carried signs, and distributed STOP Trafficking materials.

Soroptimist Club Grants: Helping Women and Girls

Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls enable clubs to make a real difference in the lives of women and girls in their communities by addressing specific local needs. In March 2007,

Soroptimist Club Grants Recipients 2007-2008

- SI/Araguari (Brazil) \$10,000, Educa Vida
- SI/Auburn (Northwestern) \$10,000, Initiative for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
- SI/Brasilia Norte-Sul (Brazil) \$8,500, Profiting from Recycled Tabs
- SI/Caloocan (Philippines) \$10,000, Soroptimists Break Poverty Cycle
- SI/Cape May County (North Atlantic) \$2,000, Girl Power Conference
- SI/Coronado (Desert Coast) \$1,000, Live Your Dream: Helping Women Stay in School
- SI/Crescent City (Founder) \$2,000, Rape Crisis Comfort Kits
- SI/Curitiba-Batel (Brazil) \$3,000, Enterprising Women
- SI/Dorado (South Central) \$8,000, Supporting Safe House
- SI/Fargo (North Central) \$2,000, Soroptimist Empowering Women to Build for Themselves
- SI/Fukuoka-Kita (Japan Minami) \$8,500, Foreign Language Classes
- SI/Fukuoka-Minami (Japan Minami) \$6,000, Dating Domestic Violence
- SI/Goiania Cora Coralina (Brazil) \$5,500, Hygiene and Beauty School
- SI/Greenville (South Atlantic) \$7,000, Dare to Succeed
- SI/Makati (Philippines) \$6,000, Barangay Fairview
- SI/Mandaluyong (Philippines) \$5,000, Participatory Project
- SI/Nagasaki (Japan Minami) \$5,000, Dating Domestic Violence Prevention
- SI/Pachuca, Mexico (Mexico/Centroamérica) \$10,000, For a Life Free of Violence
- SI/Pasco-Kennewick (Northwestern) \$10,000, Dental Restorative
- SI/Pocomoke City (South Atlantic) \$10,000, Soroptimist Samaritan Shelter
- SI/Santos-Praia (Brazil) \$5,000, Hope's Store
- SI/Sao Vicente (Brazil) \$5,000, Bem me Quer
- SI/Takamatu, SI/Middle-Kagawa, SI/Tosan (Japan) \$5,000, Mammography Saves Lives
- SI/Toms River (North Atlantic) \$8,000, Adopt a Village
- SI/Toronto (Eastern Canada) \$5,000, Street Haven
- SI/Valenzuela (Philippines) \$7,000, Soroptimist Skills Scholars
- SI/Winfield (South Central) \$2,000, H.U.G.S Program
- SI/Yakima (Northwestern) \$4,000, Yakima Portfolio Project
- SI/Yamaguchi (Japan Nishi) \$4,500, Domestic Violence Victims Support Project

SIA received 92 proposals requesting more than \$691,000 in funding. A task force made up of members of the SIA Program Council reviewed proposals and recommended funding to the SIA president for approval.

For the 2007-2008 club year, a total of \$175,000 was granted to 29 Soroptimist clubs for new or ongoing projects. To date, 26 clubs have completed their projects, while three clubs have been granted an extension. Thus far, the completed grant projects have helped improve the lives of 7,414 women and girls. The grants not only helped women and girls, they also helped the clubs. Of the clubs that have submitted a final report, 85 percent gained new members and 88 percent received media coverage as a direct result of the funded project. Whether or not a club has applied for or received a grant, all Soroptimist clubs can celebrate in the success of the grant funded projects—for it is the generous donations from Soroptimist members and clubs that make possible the Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls and other SIA programs.



SI/Mandaluyong, Philippines, received a \$5,000 Soroptimist Club Grant for Women and Girls for its Participatory Project, which teaches livelihood skills to women to enhance their employment status or enable them to start their own business.

Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award: Young Women Helping Others

Each year, Soroptimist is proud to honor the volunteer efforts of young women between the ages of 14-17 through the Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award. During the 2007-2008 club year, 733 clubs (51 percent) participated, recognizing 837 girls whose volunteer actions have made the community and world a better place. Across the federation, \$250,445 was awarded to girls, with \$111,273 given to their volunteer organizations.



Cindy Berman

At SIA's 40th Biennial Convention in Taipei, Taiwan, Soroptimists were honored to meet Cindy Berman of

Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls Impact

- 2,540 domestic violence victims and their families received shelter, support and counseling in Brazil, Japan, Korea and the United States
- 478 women in Brazil, Mexico and the Philippines received job training and employment opportunities
- 240 women leaving jail or recovering from addiction received mentoring, counseling and support in the United States
- 143 women in the Philippines and the United States received computer-skills training
- 4,579 women and girls learned about the dangers of dating violence, partner violence and their rights under the law in Japan and the Philippines
- 117 women in Paraguay received dental care
- 375 women in Japan received mammograms

Total number of women and girls helped: 7,414

Cost per changed life: \$23.60

Rancho Santa Fe, California, the 2007-2008 federation Violet Richardson Award recipient. While a junior at La Jolla Country Day School, she introduced her school to an online viral fundraising strategy focusing on microloans to help impoverished women in Guatemala. Cindy partnered with Project Concern International when she learned that the organization, due to a shortage of funds, had to stop providing loans to help Guatemalan women grow their coffee crops. Today, Cindy's project, Amigos Para Siempre, has proven the effectiveness of online fundraising and continues to give Guatemalan women economic opportunities. Soroptimist made a \$2,500 donation to Amigos Para Siempre and presented Cindy with handmade jewelry from Guatemala.

Soroptimist Disaster Relief Fund: Reaching out to Women when Disaster Strikes

Soroptimist continues to focus on the special needs of women and girls after disaster strikes. During the 2007-2008 club year, six disaster relief grants were given to clubs for a total of \$87,000. SI/Guayaquil and SI/Quito of Ecuador, SI/Largo Mid-Pinellas County, USA, and SI/Daet, Philippines received grants to help women and girls recover from a devastating flood, hurricane and typhoon respectively; while SI/Trujillo, Peru, received a grant to assist earthquake victims and SI/Siasi, Philippines, received a grant to help women survivors of a large-scale neighborhood fire. Disaster relief projects included the distribution of basic

emergency necessities, funding operational costs for the housing of single mothers, and the establishment of income-generating programs for women. To date, two of the six clubs have submitted final reports, which reported assisting 276 women and their families.

Soroptimist Disaster Relief Grants Impact (to date):

- \$62,139
- 1,328 women and their families helped

Cost per changed life: \$46.80

SIA also received reports from the organizations that had received the remaining Tsunami and Gulf Coast disaster funds in 2006-2007. Project Sri Lanka, which used the funds to establish an annual educational scholarship for girls, reported

granting scholarships to 20 girls. The New Orleans Women’s Health Clinic, which used its grant to pay for staff salaries, reported providing medical care to more than 500 women; and the SARA Center, an organization that provides comprehensive services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, used the funds to provide transportation and legal services to 532 women.



Disaster Relief Fund recipient, SI/Siasi, Philippines, works to provide women and girls with needed medications, clothing and financial aid to repair their houses after a fire devastated the community.

Soroptimist Making a Difference for Women Award: Honoring Women Who Help Women

The Soroptimist Making a Difference for Women Award honors women who have worked to improve the lives of other women and girls through their professional or volunteer work. In 2007-2008, club participation rose from 32 percent to 35 percent with a total of 528 awards given throughout the federation. Of those clubs, 238 gave \$95,840 to the recipients’ charitable organizations. In addition, 191 new club members were gained, with 242 clubs receiving media attention as a result of the program. Leaving a thriving career to found The Voices and Faces Project (TVFP), Anne Ream of Chicago, Illinois, was honored at the Soroptimist 40th Biennial Convention in Taipei, Taiwan, as

the 2007-2008 federation finalist. TVFP, a non-profit national survivors’ network, gives a voice and face to survivors of sexual violence, a horror that Anne knows all too well. When she was raped 18 years ago, she had no one to tell her how to begin rebuilding her shattered life. After her attack, she read more about sexual assault and was bothered by the “absence of names and faces” of victims. While silence protects privacy, “it also renders us faceless and reinforces a powerful stigma,” she said.



Anne Ream

The project’s site features an interactive online “safe zone” with actual survivor stories, a reading room with downloadable literature on rape and abuse, plus links to additional resources. Civic and political engagement is a critical part of TFVP, including a speakers’ bureau and community outreach program. At the heart of the project is a simple belief that “public testimony can change the world, making it a more fair, just and safe place for women.” Soroptimist was pleased to donate \$5,000 to help Anne continue her work.

Making a Difference for Women Award Impact:

- 528 outstanding women were honored with the award
- \$95,840 was given by clubs to the recipients’ charitable organizations
- 242 clubs received media attention for the award

The Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence

Women deserve to feel safe wherever they are—including the workplace. The Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence is an ongoing effort to raise awareness about this issue. In its 11th year, the program focuses on the fact that women do not leave abuse behind when they go to work. Abusers often harass women at work, by phone, e-mail, or in worst-case scenarios, by coming to the workplace.

During November 2007, 397 clubs in five countries—Brazil, Canada, Japan, Taiwan and the U.S.—participated in the campaign. These clubs pledged to help victims of domestic violence and raise community awareness, particularly within the business community. As a result of the campaign, members distributed tens of thousands of domestic violence hotline cards; organized public forums; collaborated with local advocacy groups; and supported domestic violence shelters. Clubs also encouraged employers to adopt and implement policies that protect women in the workplace.

New Program Resources

Each year, the staff at SIA headquarters works to provide clubs and members with additional information and resources to assist them in achieving the Soroptimist mission. Of course, clubs are not asked to use all the resources available to them from headquarters. Rather, the materials are there to support clubs in areas that are important to women and girls in their communities. In the 2007-2008 club year, the following resources were provided:

- Soroptimists STOP Trafficking: club instructions, public relations materials, rack cards, launch event flyers, frequently asked questions (FAQ) on sex trafficking, and a speech about sex trafficking
- Teen dating violence white paper and bookmark
- New white papers on women and education, poor women and breast cancer, teen dating violence and working women's issues
- Soroptimist Disaster Relief Fund FAQ
- Advocacy and the 501(c)(3) FAQ
- Act Now section of the Soroptimist website
- Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards participation flyer for Japan clubs
- Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards webisodes on Live Your Dream website
- Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award blog on Live Your Dream website

All of these materials, and additional resources to support the federation programs, are available on the Soroptimist website at Soroptimist.org. The webisodes are available at LiveYourDreamCampaign.org.



The Renaissance Campaign: Program Update

Goal: 100% participation in the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards.

2007-2008: 66% of clubs participated.

Goal: 90% of clubs will conduct another women or girl-focused project.

2007-2008: 94% of clubs conducted another women or girl-focused project. Goal Met!

Goal: 90% of clubs will support an SI project.

2007-2008: 69% of clubs supported an SI project.

Goal: SIA will have an involved and influential Program Council.

2007-2008: Program Council members expressed more satisfaction in the position this year.

They continued to serve as a resource on program at the region and federation levels.



2007-2008 Soroptimist Program Council Members

Dolly O'Neill Mejia

America del Sur

Maria Roseli Gadens

Brazil Region

Mary Rogers

Camino Real

Lisa Moore

Desert Coast

Jean Skillman

Eastern Canada

Amelia Benko

Founder

Pam Field

Golden West

Kazuko Morita

Japan Chuo

Takako Kondo

Japan Higashi

Michiko Fujita

Japan Kita

Hiroko Nagayama

Japan Minami

Nobuku Fuji

Japan Nishi

Hyo Chul Shin

Korea

Raquel Arreola Ruiz

Mexico/Centroamerica

Terry Phillips

Midwestern

Patti Cullen

North Atlantic

Judy Strong

North Central

Heidi McNamar

Northeastern

Lynn C Tippery

Northwestern

Ruth Flores

Philippines

Phylis King

Rocky Mountain

Chris Otto

Sierra Nevada

Suzanne Doty

Sierra Pacific

Patricia Witt

South Atlantic

Lou Kirby

South Central

Glenda Madison

Southern

Hsiao Hui-Ying

Taiwan

Carell Wingrave

Western Canada

For more information about the programs and this report, please contact the program department at program@soroptimist.org or visit Soroptimist.org.