



Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS, INC.®

Celebrating and Honoring Your Recipient Virtually

Honoring your recipient is one of the most fun and rewarding aspects of the Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards! One of the most consistently reported outcomes from past recipients is an increase in their self-esteem and their impact as a role model for their dependents. Honoring your recipient helps her feel respected and valued as a woman in your community. It is also important for her family and friends to see her recognized for her hard work.

Holding a virtual ceremony to honor your recipient can be cost-effective and safe alternative to celebrating her in person. Consult the tips below to prepare for a new way to celebrate your amazing award recipient and her accomplishments!

Distribute the funds as soon as possible

Award funds should never be contingent on attending an awards banquet or event. Your club should send your award recipient her funding as soon as possible and not wait until an event can be held. Women rely on these funds to complete their education, and delaying fund disbursement is not in the spirit of the program or of Soroptimist. Check with your recipient to find the best way for her to receive the funds, whether by a bank transfer or by a check.

Host an online recognition event

Many clubs choose to honor their recipient at an awards banquet or dinner reception. Consider hosting an online recognition event instead and inviting your recipient's family or important loved ones to join. Recipients consistently remark that feeling encouraged and recognized by women within their community is equally as rewarding as receiving the cash award. Furthermore, seeing their mother, wife, aunt, or sister receive an award is equally impactful on the recipient's family.

Consult the [Soroptimist Forward](#) resources for tips on using online video conferencing systems. Be sure to do a test of the video software with another Soroptimist before the event! Make sure that your recipient has access to the internet and a device that will allow her to participate. Remember that your recipient may be juggling work, school, and family, so consult her before choosing a time and date for your virtual event to ensure that she can attend. If your club has the resources, consider having a nice restaurant meal delivered to her and her family to enjoy before the event or a bouquet of flowers so it still feels celebratory.

When inviting your recipient to speak at the event, think about it from her point of view. Consider how writing about your own obstacles in an essay would feel different from recounting them aloud to a roomful of people. Surely, hearing about your most painful life experiences would be compelling for the audience, but might be very difficult for you. Similarly, no matter how empathetic and supportive the audience, not every woman will feel comfortable talking about her obstacles.

For these reasons, your recipient does not have to speak at the event at all. Nor does she have to share her story with the audience, even in writing.

Ask what would make this a positive experience for her. Perhaps discussing her obstacles would make her feel brave. Perhaps, it would transport her back to dark times and make her feel small. If she chooses to speak, encourage her to highlight her strengths and accomplishments. Ultimately, empowering her to be the author of her own story is the most valuable part of this experience.

When introducing her to your audience, rather than detailing her obstacles, consider sharing what about her application inspired your club to select her as a recipient and want to support her (e.g. she has strong goals, cares about her family, eloquently describes dreams for her future).

Whether or not she chooses to speak at your event, your club could invite someone else to speak about the importance of education and overcoming obstacles in pursuit of dreams.

TIP: Assure her that no matter what, you're excited to celebrate her, are proud of what she has accomplished, and want to learn about her aspirations for the future.

Celebrating from Afar

If your club cannot host a virtual award ceremony due to lack of technology or internet resources, consider simply mailing your recipient a card congratulating her with well wishes from the club, and consider including school supplies or a care package with the card. Award recipients note that knowing a community of Soroptimists supports them is very inspiring—show her that you stand by her, even if you cannot celebrate in-person or virtually!

Publicize your recipient

Many clubs create a news release to further honor their recipients or share their recipient's story on their website to advertise the award to future potential applicants. These are great ideas, but in order to use your recipient's name and story, you will need her to sign a [media consent form](#) first. Some recipients may not be comfortable with having their personal story shared and will choose to not sign the form. In these cases, clubs must honor the recipient's confidentiality.

If your recipient gives her consent, your club can record a video of her on Zoom sharing her goals and dreams, which your club can use to inspire other women and encourage future award applicants.

Go beyond a Cash Award

In addition to cash awards, many clubs offer non-monetary awards. One of SIA's strategic program objectives is to increase the ability of women to achieve economic empowerment. Therefore, consider what else applicants will need to help them achieve their goals, such as books, computers, groceries, and childcare. Club members can also volunteer their time and experience to assist recipients through mentoring, job training, and financial advice. These activities help to strengthen the quality of the impact that the award has on its winners. Check out the Beyond A Cash Award document for more tips and suggestions!