



Best for Women

A Publication of Soroptimist International of the Americas®

MEET SIA'S 2016-2017 PRESIDENT

Get to know RoseMary Reid of Newmarket, Ontario, Canada

ALL ABOARD THE MEMBERSHIP WINNERS

Meet the clubs that showed the greatest recruitment increases during the first phase of the campaign

SPOTLIGHT ON SOROPTIMIST CLUBS

Learn about clubs and members working to empower women in their local communities.

MEET SOROPTIMIST'S 2016 LIVE YOUR DREAM AWARDS RECIPIENTS

The True Meaning of Strength and Perseverance



Like so many Soroptimist *Live Your Dream Awards* recipients, the 2016 finalists have faced unimaginable obstacles. They've endured darkness and heartache beyond belief. But despite the inconceivable challenges that would knock most down for good, these women have risen, embodying the true meaning of strength and perseverance. Each is a warrior fighting for the dream of a brighter future. For these brave women, the path to victory is clear. Though they are on separate journeys in different parts of the world, their courage and unconquerable spirits connect them. Their inspiring stories serve as a reminder of how much women can achieve with just a little bit of help. Meet the 2016 *Live Your Dream Awards* finalists. (continued inside)

SIA Immediate Past President Susan "Sam" Collier Buchenau (left) with 2016 *Live Your Dream Awards* recipient Terriea Wadud



President RoseMary Reid, Past President Cheri Fleming and Past Fundraising Council Chair and Board Member Sandy Schultz (left to right) at the 2016 SIA Convention in Orlando, Florida, USA

Meet SIA 2016-2017 President RoseMary Reid!

What first attracted you to Soroptimist?

My involvement with Venture. Later, as I learned more about how we helped women, I gladly transitioned to a Soroptimist club.

How has Soroptimist membership affected your life?

Being a member has helped me to enhance my leadership skills and advance in my career. Hearing our *Live Your Dream Awards* recipients talk about the obstacles they overcame gave me the strength and courage to be an independent woman.

What function should volunteerism play?

Volunteers play an integral part in our communities globally. The highlights for me are not so much what I have *given*, but how much I have *received* in return.

What are your thoughts about LiveYourDream.org?

LiveYourDream.org is a wonderful way for SIA to reach more people and involve them in our mission.

Why is it important that SIA's focus be on women and girls?

We need to remove the obstacles facing women and girls. Our Dream Programs do that by empowering women and girls to live up to their potential.

What are the most pressing organizational issues facing SIA?

Membership. Without members we can't deliver our programs.

How will you help to "shape the future" of Soroptimist?

I will encourage our members to increase our collective impact by following the Club Roadmap for Success; focusing on our Dream Programs; and increasing our member and financial resources. Together, we can and will make dreams come true for more women and girls! 🌸

To read the full interview with President RoseMary, visit bit.ly/MeetPresidentRoseMary.

Welcome to the New Club Year!

A message from the 2016-2017 SIA President

Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." On the tails of celebrating our "Soroptimist Story" at the 44th Biennial Convention in Orlando, we are now beginning a new club year and biennium. I'm inspired by the stories of how we have helped countless women and girls improve their lives and fulfill their dreams.

While we can take pride in many past achievements, we face new challenges in the changing world of volunteering. You all have a contribution to make to increase our collective impact to ensure we have the capacity to meet the future needs of women and girls.

In order to continue celebrating our story, we need to work together to engage, inspire and motivate our current members while recruiting new members and chartering new clubs.

As Ann Frank once said, "No one has ever become poor by giving." We need your commitment to provide the financial

resources needed to continue our life-changing programs.

As you begin your new club year, I ask: Are you going to ask someone to join Soroptimist? Are you going to charter new clubs?

Are you going to become a monthly giver/Laurel Society member? Is your club going to donate at least 10 percent of funds raised to SIA?

I look forward to this coming year with much anticipation. Our convention was uplifting and empowering. I am confident you returned to your clubs more energized and more inspired. Together, we can and will make dreams come true for more women and girls! 🌸



RoseMary Reid

Transformation: A View from Spruce Street

A message from the SIA Executive Director & CEO

For almost 100 years, we have been steadfast as we have helped countless women and girls on their journeys toward self-determination and success.

As we come up on our 100th anniversary, it's time to think of the future. Members, leaders, and staff in our 20 countries and territories are all part of our team—as we define what we want to do and how we want to do it in our next century.

Currently, our Big Goal is to Shape Our Future for Increased Collective Impact. To take us into our second century, our next Big Goal will need to be audacious, brave, daring—and measurable.

More than 600 clubs participated in our first Big Goal planning exercise. The concepts of "invest in dreams" and "access to education resources" were the clubs' preference.

To achieve our next Big Goal, clubs said we needed to:

- Focus on our membership experience
- Increase the impact of our Dream Programs
- Improve public awareness, and
- Increase outside funding for our programs.

Please participate in our next survey to identify how to make our new Big Goal a reality, and how many women and girls we think we can reach. Submit your club's feedback no later than **December 30, 2016**. We are counting on you to exercise your club's voice!

To read more about the future of our organization visit Soroptimist.org/members/transformation.html. 🌸



Elizabeth M. Lucas

The True Meaning of Strength and Perseverance

2016 Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards Finalists

Continued from cover

Esperanza*

Esperanza was born into poverty, which caused her parents to do the unthinkable. They sold her as a teenage bride to a man she didn't know. When that man died, Esperanza found herself trafficked into a life of prostitution on the U.S. side of the border.

Though she eventually escaped, she was homeless until a caring woman took her in and helped her get back home to her children and family.

It was not long after that she happened to see one of her previous captors with a young girl in town. That chance sighting put Esperanza on a mission—a mission to rescue trafficked girls trapped just as she had been.

Yet her mission came with a price, a tragic one. When the men discovered she had rescued 11 girls, they broke into her home. They beat her, and they raped her. And when she didn't return the girls to them, they killed her son.

Despite her unfathomable grief and the many dangers she faces, Esperanza continues to fight sex trafficking. She is currently building a shelter for these girls. With some support from the government, she is responsible for living expenses for both the girls and their newborn children, since many were pregnant when she took them in.

Esperanza is using her *Live Your Dream Awards* to pursue a degree in computer science and has been accepted into law school. Her long-term goal is defend victims of sex trafficking and bring to justice the men who profit at the women's expense.

She says, "My goals are many but I can summarize them all in one word: SERVING."

(*Esperanza's name has been changed to protect her identity.)

Sandra Rojas Fernandez

Life first began throwing challenges at Sandra Rojas Fernandez of Bolivia when she was just a baby. When she was 7 months old, her father passed away, leaving her young mother alone to care for Sandra and her three brothers. Times were hard and even the young children had to pitch in, washing clothes and cooking for other people.

When the children almost drowned washing clothes in the river, her mother sent them to live with relatives hoping they would have a better life. Unfortunately, for Sandra, that led to a childhood filled with neglect, physical abuse, and rape.

At 15 years old, Sandra got pregnant. She eventually married the father and they had three more children. But the cycle continued as her husband was an abusive alcoholic.

Though she was finally able to get a divorce and move on, her oldest son committed suicide because of depression.

And then, during all this emotional chaos, a dynamite explosion at a nearby mine destroyed her home and all her belongings. She lived in a tent with her children for some time.

Though she has endured incredible hardship, Sandra is determined to keep going and to improve her life and her children's lives, including a young grandson whom she supports.

At the age of 43, she is picking up the pieces and working to gain her high school diploma, with the help of her *Live Your Dream Awards*. Her ultimate dream is to study at the university in Orujo City and become a chef.

Terriea Wadud

Terriea Wadud is from Vancouver, Canada. Like many other indigenous people from that area, she was adopted at a very young age. Her adoptive mother physically and emotionally abused her until she was placed back into the child welfare system at the age of 12. The chaos in her life continued in group homes. She ran away and fell prey to the sex trade in Ontario.

After a brutal beating by her pimp, she decided she was ready to press charges—as she had just learned she was pregnant with his child. At 16 years old, and 8 months pregnant, she testified against him and helped land him in jail.

When her daughter was born, Terriea vowed not to be anything like her adoptive mother. However, her traumatic past made being a

good mother very difficult. She turned to drugs and alcohol to numb her pain.

Then an opportunity presented itself to Terriea and became the first step in turning her life around. She completed a program called the Transitional Year at the University of Toronto and continued with a volunteer training program at Battered Women's Support Services, where she was eventually hired.

Just when things seemed to be getting on track, the program lost funding and Terriea was laid off. At the same time, she had a miscarriage and ended a three-year relationship. Not being able to afford rent on her own, she and her children became homeless.

Now staying with friends, she has accepted a temporary position with her previous employer, and is hopeful that it will lead to a full-time job.

Terriea is using her *Live Your Dream Awards* to pay for her tuition so that no matter what this next year throws at her, she won't have to put her



2016-2017 SIA Leadership

RoseMary Reid
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PRESIDENT-ELECT

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CAE, MBA
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
& CEO**

Dana Martin

Visit Soroptimist.org/best-for-women.html for more information about SIA's Board of Directors and governors.

SIA's 2016-2017 President-Elect

SI/Oita-Midori and
SIA board member
Yoko Ichigatani is
SIA's 2016-2017
president-elect.
Congratulations,
Yoko!



education on hold. Her dream is to start her own counseling/life coaching business.

"I have a purpose. I will use my voice to share my story to inspire others to do the same. The *Live Your Dream Awards* will help me to further my growth, accountability and commitment to be a transformational agent and end this cycle for my family!" ❀

Read more about these inspirational women at: Soroptimist.org/awards/recipients.html.

Soroptimist Source

Keeping you up-to-date on important news and information from SIA headquarters.

Program

Target Audience for *Dream It, Be It*

The target audience for *Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls* is girls in secondary school who face obstacles to their success. The program was designed for girls ages 14-18 based on extensive research about the needs of this specific age population. In order for Soroptimist to have increased collective impact and to understand how our global efforts improve the lives of girls, clubs should use the provided curriculum with girls who fit within the 14-18 year-old age range. When considering what group of 14-18 year-old girls to work with, clubs should target girls who encounter disadvantages to their success. These disadvantages may include: coming from a low-income family; a single-parent household or an unstable home environment; not having access to adults who can help with post-secondary education options; or not having caregivers who are involved in school activities or who offer consistent support.

Membership

New Members Talk: Orientation Experience

Orientations are a best practice for laying the foundation for an optimal member experience. Fortunately, our website has a number of materials to help with orienting new members. Because orientations are a critical

step to inspiring new members to become active, long-term members, we conducted a survey of new members from all over SIA to hear about their orientation experience—or lack thereof. Learn more about orientations and what new members had to say: bit.ly/NewSIAMembersTalk.

Public Awareness

Art Contest Discontinued

Starting with the 2016-2017 club year, SIA will no longer administer the Live Your Dream art contest or provide contest materials. Participation rates have steadily decreased each year. As we work to meet our next Big Goal, we encourage clubs to focus on conducting our Dream Programs (*Live Your Dream Awards* and *Dream It, Be It*), financially supporting our Dream Programs through Club Giving, recruiting new members, and raising awareness of your club's impact on women and girls. Thank you to all the clubs that participated over the last eight years. Please contact siahq@soroptimist.org with any questions.

New SIA Website!

Over the next club year we will work with a design firm to rebrand SIA's website. The main focus of the new site will be to feature our Dream Programs and highlight the impact we have on women and girls around the world.

Scheduled to launch in early 2018, the site will have a responsive design. This means that it will automatically adjust to any device you use, whether it's a mobile phone, tablet, laptop or full-size computer. The new design will also serve to better link both the Soroptimist and LiveYourDream.org brands. Stay tuned for some sneak peeks throughout the coming months!

Fundraising

Investing in Girls is Investing in a Better Future

Become a monthly giver and know that you're making a difference in the lives of women and girls in your local community and around the world. While your Laurel Society grows, so do the possibilities for women and girls! A contribution of \$50 a month given over one year—designated to *Dream It, Be It*—helps make the delivery of this vital program possible. *Dream It, Be It* helps the next generation pursue their ambitious dreams to become legislators, surgeons, engineers, and teachers. It gives them the tools to make their dreams come true. Enroll today at bit.ly/monthlygiving and you'll change lives for years to come. Visit Soroptimist.org/rise/donate to make a contribution to the program of your choice today. ✨

All Aboard the MemberSHIP Winners!

We are pleased to announce the 2015-2016 winners of the *All Aboard the MemberSHIP* campaign! The following clubs showed the greatest increases in recruiting new members during the first phase of the campaign and were recognized at the 44th Biennial Convention for their hard work. They each received \$500 USD to use for their *Live Your Dream Awards* recipients.

First Place: SI/Kwangjoomoojin, Korea Region (267 percent increase in new members!)

Second Place: SI/Elko, Nevada, Sierra Nevada Region (143 percent increase!)

Third Place (tie): SI/Kwangjoo Moodeung, Korea Region (77 percent increase!) and SI/The Greater Daytona Beach Area, Florida, Southern Region (77 percent increase!)

Fourth Place: SI/Jinjo, Korea Region (64 percent increase!)

Fifth Place: SI/Northern Mariana Islands, Founder Region (58 percent increase!)

Also, one region was recognized for having the highest percentage of new and charter members—Korea Region! The region added a total of 250 new and charter members during the campaign period and received \$1,000 USD to provide an additional region-level 2016-2017 *Live Your Dream Award* or to support club *Dream It, Be It* activities in their region.

Sincerest thanks to our winners for their efforts to engage more members in our mission. Congratulations!

But wait ... our cruise continues! Find out about the latest information and resources for the next phase of the campaign: bit.ly/SIAMemberSHIP. ✨

The Club Giving Effect

Did you know that tiny bursts of wind created by a butterfly flapping its wings can have a big impact elsewhere on the planet? At Soroptimist headquarters, we see the Butterfly Effect every day. For example, last year SI/Anderson, Indiana, Midwestern Region, held a film festival fundraiser. Through a Club Giving contribution of at least 10 percent of the proceeds raised, their dollars traveled the globe like a gust of wind, helping women like Sandra in Bolivia. In addition to club and region awards, Sandra received one of the three \$10,000 finalist *Live Your Dream Awards*, made possible by contributions from clubs just like SI/Anderson.

The Butterfly Effect begins with one small flap of wings—the film festival in this case—and when combined with the efforts of the other 999 Soroptimist clubs that gave last year to Club Giving, lives are changed forever. Sandra's life—dominated by great perseverance in the face of abandonment and rape, a dynamite explosion and a son

who committed suicide—changed dramatically when she learned of her amazing windfall. Thanks in large part to the dedication of clubs like SI/Anderson that contribute at least 10 percent of their locally raised funds, hard-working Sandra is on her way to being a chef, and providing her family with the stability they need and deserve.

The women who bought their tickets to SI/Anderson's film festival had no idea who they were helping, but they knew their money was going to a good cause. That's the assurance Soroptimist can provide you—your Club Giving contributions of at least 10 percent will help a woman or girl who doesn't yet know how her life might change forever. Contributing at least 10 percent of your locally raised funds helps give wings to the dreams of women and girls, and give wings to our own dreams to serve even more women and girls through our Dream Programs. Help make dreams come true—encourage your club to make a 10 percent Club Giving contribution! ✨

What's "In It" for You?

Often, members of dues-supported organizations wonder what they "get" for their dues.

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. Members pay \$70 for SIA dues. The return on that investment—that is the dollar amount it would cost each member for all the services and benefits SIA provides—is \$165, or a 235.7% return.

Surveys tell us our members value the following benefits from your membership:

Mission: 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: Professional and personal growth through your friendships with other club members, connections with women from different cultures and countries, and opportunities for leadership development.

Assistance: Resources and support from SIA headquarters enabling you to enjoy a meaningful club experience knowing you are part of a secure organization invested in the future.

What's your favorite benefit of Soroptimist membership? Let us know on the SIA Facebook page and use the #SoroptimistBenefit hashtag.

44th Biennial Convention

More than 850 members attended SIA's Biennial Convention in Orlando, Florida, USA. In addition to learning new things, members met new people and heard from inspiring speakers. The event offered members an opportunity to celebrate Soroptimist's accomplishments benefiting the lives of women and girls, as well as to improve their own lives by gaining personal and professional development skills. To read more convention coverage, visit <http://bit.ly/SIAConventionRecap>.



Spotlight on Clubs and Members

MEXICO/CENTROAMÉRICA REGION

In 2011, *SI/Volcán, Panama*, decided to hold workshops to provide life-skills training for women and girls in their local community. However, without a permanent location, the club faced obstacles preventing them from facilitating their programs. With the help of two Soroptimist Club Grants, donations from other Soroptimist clubs, and various fundraisers, members built a facility. Recently, the club held its first professional hair styling training, which attracted more than 20 participants. The new skills help women enhance their earning potential and support themselves and their families. Said member Ariadne H. de Berard, "A new world has been opened for them." The club plans to hold additional workshops in coming years.



Learning employment skills

the Teenage Dating and Early Pregnancy Advocacy project. The club has held various events throughout the year, which educate girls about healthy relationships, sexually transmitted diseases and the effects of teenage pregnancy. Club President Asuncion Karen Labiaga, President-elect Elma de Guzman and member Jocelyn Crisostomo promoted the project on Naimbag Nga Morning Kapamilya—a live morning news and talk show program. The club has reached more than 150 students and plans to make this an ongoing project.



Teenage Dating and Early Pregnancy Advocacy participants

SIERRA NEVADA REGION

SI/Loomis Basin, California, recently held its fourth annual "It's in the Bag" designer purse fundraiser, which raised more than \$10,000. The event included dinner, door prizes and entertainment. Club members sold raffle tickets for new or gently used purses and organized prizes. More than 250 people from the community attended the event, including members from nearby Soroptimist clubs. Funds will be used to support the club's *Live Your Dream Award* and *Dream It, Be It* programs. 🌸



Fundraiser attendees enjoying a night out

NORTHWESTERN REGION

SI/Friday Harbor, Washington, recently participated in a local parade, which celebrated 100 years of National Park Service. Club members dressed as historic women who have had parks and landmarks named after them, including Emily Dickinson, Harriet Tubman and Eleanor Roosevelt. Participants carried signs describing the woman they represented, and location and date of the establishment. The event was a creative way to highlight women while participating in a community activity.



Club members as women from history

PHILIPPINES REGION

After learning that teenage pregnancy rates are high in their local community, *SI/Cordillera, Philippines*, established

Want to see your club news featured? Email information and photos to *Best for Women* Editor Laurie Sutton at laurie@soroptimist.org.



SOROPTIMIST

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and more at <Soroptimist.org/rise/store> and order today!



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DOES SIA HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Members:

Email is the primary way we communicate with
our members. Make sure you are receiving
important emails and alerts by reviewing
your profile at <Soroptimist.org/members/membership/updateprofile.html> and making
any necessary changes.

Clubs:

The best way for headquarters and potential
members to contact clubs is through the
Soroptimist club email accounts. A designated
member should be checking the club email
account regularly (at least once per week) to
keep up to date with the latest SIA news or to
connect with potential members.

For help with setting-up or accessing
the account, see the members area on
SIA's website <Soroptimist.org/members/membership/clubadmin.html> or contact
<siahq@soroptimist.org>. ✿



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