



# Best for Women

A Publication of Soroptimist International of the Americas®

## President's Message

Hear from SIA President Dawn Marie Lemonds

## Big Goal Updates

Read about the success of our organizational change strategy

## Moving Forward in FY16/17

View SIA's year-end infographic



***Dream It, Be It Success Stories***

# Preparing Girls for a Brighter Future



SOROPTIMIST®

## Stars, Dreams & Wishes

We look forward to seeing you in Yokohama, Japan, where we will celebrate our stars, explore our dreams and make wishes for the future.

Visit the SIA convention page to plan your trip, learn more about Yokohama and see all the fun activities SIA has in store.

Join the convention community, connect with other attendees, and get the latest news by following the convention on Facebook and Twitter (#SIACnv2018). 🌸



YOKOHAMA, JAPAN • JULY 30-AUGUST 2, 2018

## Identifying the Women and Girls We Help

You may have noticed that recently SIA started to use the phrase “disadvantaged women and girls” to describe the population we target. We began using this phrase when we realized not all our clubs and leaders were on the same page when it came to identifying the women and girls we want to help. We took our cue from the United Nations—which uses this term to describe women and girls most in need of assistance—to help educate our members, clubs and leaders. We have heard from several members that they found the use of this term offensive because it labels our target population of women and girls. It was never our intention to disrespect the amazing women and girls we serve. We have taken the objections seriously and have changed the phrase we use to describe our target population to: women and girls who face obstacles such as poverty, violence and teen pregnancy. We thank our members who took the time to bring their objections to our attention. 🌸

## President's Message: Who is “She”?

**T**he most compelling part of my Soroptimist membership is the work we do with women and girls.

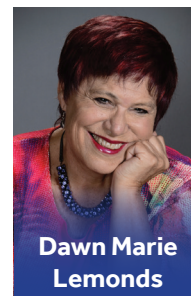
It is my practice to keep a list of “she’s” in my mind when I talk about our programs. They are women and girls Soroptimist has helped overcome extreme obstacles. Our focus is to make the SIA Dream Programs the center of the work your club does. These are the “she’s” we seek to help. Both programs empower the participants to work toward their goals and change their economic and social situation through education and support. These are OUR SIA-branded programs, and they directly show our support of five of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Who are YOUR she’s? I wonder what great things would happen if every member could tell about Soroptimist’s impact and specifically

some of the stories we hold close to our hearts?

As this is my last message, I leave you with this quote. It was posted by one of my “she’s,” Gayle of SI/Davie, FL (Southern Region). It was made even sweeter on the heels of the sadness she and her family are feeling after being personally affected by the school massacre in Florida. “Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do.” —Pope John XXIII.

Visit <<http://bit.ly/sia-president-message>> to read more. 🌸



Dawn Marie Lemonds

## Transformation: A View from Spruce Street

*A message from the SIA Executive Director & CEO*

**I**s your club taking the necessary steps to create our future? Are you strengthening and unifying our Soroptimist brand as a leading women’s organization economically empowering women and girls who face obstacles such as poverty, violence or teen pregnancy?

To achieve greater impact and be better known for it—the first step is a unified brand across regions and clubs.

A unified brand conveys—through word, deed as well as visually—the promise we make to the public. It communicates what the public can expect from us, and distinguishes us from other organizations.

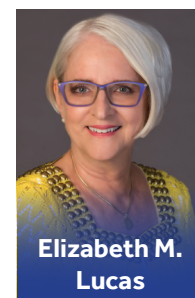
It’s also exciting to know our focus on our Dream Programs supports the work of the United Nations. Women’s economic empowerment is at the heart of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals Agenda. In fact, the UN cites economic empowerment as an

essential component of work to improve the lives of women and girls.

To help achieve our goals, use the Club Roadmap <<http://bit.ly/club-roadmap>>, updated annually in all six languages. It details what is expected of clubs with respect to our Dream Programs, membership recruitment and retention, gaining greater recognition, and funding our programs.

When every club offers our brand-unifying Dream Programs throughout our 21 countries and territories, we fulfill our brand promise and gain global recognition.

To read more about the future of our organization visit <[Soroptimist.org/members/transformation.html](http://Soroptimist.org/members/transformation.html)>. 🌸



Elizabeth M. Lucas

## Dream It, Be It: Preparing Girls for a Brighter Future

SI/Grand Erie, ON (Eastern Canada Region), SI/Oakdale, CA (Sierra Pacific Region) and SI/Simi Valley, CA (Camino Real Region) are three great examples of clubs that have conducted successful *Dream It, Be It* projects.

SI/Grand Erie has held three *Dream It, Be It* projects. The club heavily promoted the event and formed a “Community Champion” network (school boards, educational mental health team, health units, sexual assault centers, corporate and local business sponsors). SI/Grand Erie also worked with an Advisory Committee of Girls, which included past participants.

This year, 49 girls participated—double from the previous year. The club asked participants about their intended career path and each girl received a “career envelope” that reflected specific information around that career choice. The girls proceeded through the sessions as the person reflected in the envelope.

In addition to empowering girls and gaining recognition, SI/Grand Erie received a corporate grant and attracted two new members.

SI/Simi Valley conducted a *Dream It, Be It* project that reached 45 girls. Several well-known and respected women from the community led the various sessions.

The event resulted in a long article in the *Simi Valley News*. Member Wendy Mayea was quoted as saying: “I want them to feel empowered to be able to accomplish their dreams ... and know they have connections and people who care about them in the community to help them get there.”

Emily Bartholomew led a breakout session on balancing stress and turning failure into success. She had personal

experience with both topics: Emily is a past *Live Your Dream Award* recipient. Formerly homeless with her son, she is now a full-time student earning a degree in art therapy. “I hope to leave the girls with a little bit of knowledge from something that I’ve gained over the years, like when you don’t like the way things are looking, change the way you are looking at them,” she said.

The SI/Simi Valley *Dream It, Be It* participants reported feeling more confident in their future success, more prepared to pursue their career goals, and more equipped with tools to overcome setbacks.

SI/Oakdale had 28 participants in grades seventh through 10th in their *Dream It, Be It* program. The club used the Discovering Your Dreams, Creating Achievable Goals and Turning Failure into Success sessions from the *Dream It, Be It* curriculum.



SI/Simi Valley *Dream It, Be It* participants.

The event included a yoga session to teach the girls how to manage stress, a session on Internet safety to help them understand how online predators might target them, and a session on skin-care with the goal of communicating the importance of cleanliness and diet to help build self-confidence.

One of the most successful activities was the Dream Collage project. Girls made posters with quotes and pictures to communicate their thoughts and feelings.

Congratulations to all three clubs for helping to put local girls on a healthy and hopeful path to their futures. 🌸



SI/Oakdale participants were encouraged to create dream collages.

# Soroptimist Progress in FY16/17

September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017

## Empowering Women & Girls Through Our Access to Education Dream Programs

### Live Your Dream Awards

- **1,476 deserving women** received an award (+8%)
- **\$2,095,093** was given through the program (+11%)
- **96%** of recipients reported increased self-esteem
- **80%** of recipients who completed their education reported having an increased standard of living



### Dream It, Be It

- **12,265** girls participated (+42%)
- **83%** said they have the tools to overcome obstacles to their success
- **87%** feel more prepared to pursue their career goals
- **34,979** volunteer hours by clubs (+41%)



## Gaining New Members & Supporters

- **4,056** new and charter members (+13%)
- **91,948** LiveYourDream.org supporters (+18%)
- **20,290** program activities conducted through LiveYourDream.org (+53%)



## Attracting More Financial Support

**\$1,871,245** raised (+11%)

- **\$792,720** in total individual contributions (+6%)
- **\$728,813** contributed through Club Giving (+9%)



**Corporate Philanthropy**  
relationship established with North American retailer Torrid



**\$13,659,277**  
in Net Assets



## Growing Recognition

- **758,277** visits to Soroptimist.org and LiveYourDream.org (+3%)
- **38,366** social media followers (+10%)
- **2.43 million** people reached through SIA and LYD.org social media networks (+13%)



*\*Percentage increases over FY15/16*



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LIVEYOURDREAM.ORG

# Soroptimist Source

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

## Program

### Increased Collective Impact

We are excited to share meaningful changes clubs are making to support our Big Goal! **SI/Canton/Stark County, OH (Midwestern Region)**, increased support of the *Live Your Dream Awards* by integrating another project established in memory of a friend. The club now provides four *Live Your Dream Awards* totaling \$4,000! **SI/Corona, CA (Golden West Region)**, is shifting their long-standing girl program to *Dream It, Be It*. The club invited college professors to share about the application process and financial aid. They offer a scholarship to participants who create a career/education plan.

## Membership

### The Exceptional Member Experience

Feeling welcome in your club, having your ideas heard, and working on fulfilling programs are just some of the ways member experience is shaped. Is it time to evaluate what you are doing in your club to determine areas for improvement? Visit <http://bit.ly/enhance-member-experience> to access tools to enhance the member experience so our clubs remain healthy, members are happy, and prospects are excited about joining us!

## Public Awareness

### Annual Report

View SIA's latest annual report <http://Soroptimist.org/pdf/annual.pdf> to learn

about all of the hard work, dedication and impact from our clubs and members. When we work together we make great things happen for women and girls around the world!

### New Website

SIA is working hard to bring you a new and engaging website! We collaborated with a reputable design firm (which also did LiveYourDream.org), gathered input from leadership and members, and are making sure to deliver a responsive and mobile-friendly design that features our Dream Programs, highlights our impact, and boasts a better-organized members area. Stay tuned as we prepare to launch.

## Fundraising

### The Inspiration Circle

**Ohran Choe**, current Fundraising Council and incoming SIA Board of Directors (2018-2020) member, is a new member of the Inner Circle—the Laurel Society's highest giving level. She shares: "The Dream Programs are an essential activity and they need to be continued to build a healthier world. I support the Dream Programs of SIA because I believe that I can help women in difficult situations. I can help their economic independence and improve their quality of life." We thank you, Ohran. 🌸

## In Memoriam

### Marilynn Hofstetter,

1980-1982 SIA president and 1987-1989 SI president, passed away in January. Throughout her life, Marilynn was a champion of women and a role model to many. She was Whittier's first woman and Democratic mayor (1968-1970), and served on the City Council from 1960-1972, where she helped raise awareness of the impact on women of the laws and policies of the city. Visit <http://bit.ly/soroptimist-in-memoriam> for more information.



### Joyce M. Blake,

past SIA president (1984-1986) and governor of Western Canada Region, passed away on February 17. Joyce traveled the world promoting women's issues on behalf of Soroptimist. Her proudest moment was becoming a Member of the Order of Canada, awarded in part for her work with Soroptimist. Joyce had a long and distinguished career with the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, Canada. Visit <http://bit.ly/soroptimist-in-memoriam> for more information. 🌸



## Club Giving: Working as One

**C**lub Giving supports and enhances SIA's life-changing Dream Programs. We know when women and girls are educated, they have opportunity and choice. They are much less susceptible to the many issues that can disrupt their lives. They will be less likely to live in poverty, less vulnerable to sex traffickers, more likely to leave a domestic violence situation, able to access healthcare, and raise stronger healthier families. Our Dream Programs uniquely position Soroptimist to reach even more women and girls through a focused effort that connects our vast network of members with our long history of women helping

women. We know that focusing 10 percent of our fundraising efforts will enable us to extend opportunity to women and girls in areas that have traditionally been underserved.

Since the Dream Programs are implemented at the club level, Club Giving equips us to deliver on the international promise of our organization. Ninety percent of what we raise in our community supports our Dream Programs and other important women and girl-focused programs; the other 10 percent helps fund the Dream Programs that our global organization is known for, enabling us to deliver on our international mission. 🌸

# SIA'S Big Goal

## 2012-2021 BIG GOAL: Increase Collective Impact

In 2012-2013, SIA adopted a big goal of increased collective impact to empower more women and girls, and to be better known for our work. To achieve this big goal, we identified the need to work differently, moving from a club orientation where clubs undertook individualized action in their own communities to one where we work as one to build the collective impact of our organization through our Dream Programs.

**After just five years, all indications are that our change strategy is working!**

*By working as one we have:*



Increased the number of women empowered through the *Live Your Dream Awards* by 20%



Increased the amount of funding given to women by 29%



Launched *Dream It, Be It*, which has empowered 20,000 girls in just two years



Signed our first retail corporate partner, Torrid, attracted through LiveYourDream.org



Received the highest Summit Award from the American Society of Association Executives for *Dream It, Be It*



Increased our funds raised by 31%



Attracted about 100,000 supporters to LiveYourDream.org



Slowed our membership decline from a 3% loss rate to a 1% loss rate

## 2021-2031 BIG GOAL: Invest in the Dreams of Half a Million Women and Girls through Access to Education

The success of our current big goal is setting the stage for our next 10-year big goal. Clubs selected this 2021-2031 big goal and told us they could reach 500,000 women and girls by focusing their efforts on our brand-unifying Dream Programs.

**Clubs identified these top 10 actions to achieve our next big goal:**

- 1 Improve our club experience to support recruitment and retention
- 2 Collaborate with other clubs or community organizations to increase the impact of our Dream Programs
- 3 Stop being tied to long-standing activities and projects that do not directly support SIA's goal of increased collective impact
- 4 Stop spreading our resources across several projects
- 5 Educate our members about the global impact of our Dream Programs
- 6 Stop being resistant to changing our organization's focus
- 7 Stop being exclusive about who we invite to become members
- 8 Stop responding to every request for financial support we receive from the community
- 9 Focus on increasing the impact of our existing Dream Programs
- 10 Stop financially supporting other organization's projects

## OUR NEXT STEPS

For the next three and a half years, we will continue to build on the successes of our first big goal of increased collective impact.

*This will include:*



Continuing to engage our members to finalize our plans



Building our organizational capacity to reach more women and girls



Providing tools and resources to clubs and regions to support the change in the way we work



Communicating the change in the way we work to community stakeholders



Increasing corporate and foundation philanthropy to support our Dream Programs



Providing leadership development to ensure our readiness to achieve our next Big Goal



Defining our measures of success

## YOUR NEXT STEPS

**Celebrate!** We all have work to do while we continue to grow our increased collective impact and prepare to undertake our next big goal. But first, take some time at your next club meeting to celebrate the outstanding achievements we've had by working as one! Celebrate, take pictures and share them on our Facebook page <<https://www.facebook.com/Soroptimist-International-of-the-Americas-69575569890/>> with the hashtag **#SIABigGoal**.



For more information about SIA's Big Goal, visit <<http://bit.ly/big-goal>>.



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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](http://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](http://Soroptimist.org/members/membership/clubadmin.html) or contact [siahq@soroptimist.org](mailto:siahq@soroptimist.org). 🌸



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