



A Publication of Soroptimist International of the Americas®

MEET SIA'S 2017-2018 PRESIDENT

Get to know Dawn Marie Lemonds of Tustin, California

SAVE THE DATE

Read five reasons to attend SIA's 45th Biennial Convention

THE TORRID FOUNDATION

Learn about SIA's new relationship and how it will generate funding and awareness of our Dream Programs

MEET SOROPTIMIST'S 2017 LIVE YOUR DREAM AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Pursuing Dreams and Overcoming Obstacles

It's been said that real heroes don't wear capes, they teach. Perhaps that explains why all three of our 2017 Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards finalists are pursuing dreams of becoming educators. These amazing women have overcome huge life challenges and are on a quest to create better lives for themselves, their families and their communities. (continued inside)

2017 Live Your Dream Awards recipient Rochelle with her daughter. Photo credit: Cine Verités



President Dawn Marie Lemonds (right) receives her president's pin from Past President Rosemary Reid at the 2017 Recognition Banquet in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Meet SIA's 2017-2018 President Dawn Marie Lemonds!

What first attracted you to Soroptimist?

My grandmother encouraged me to become a Soroptimist. I went to my first meeting at SI/ Newport Harbor Area, CA, and fell in love. I continue to be inspired by the mission-focused work our clubs do that profoundly affects women and girls around the world. Soroptimist has afforded me so many opportunities to be a leader and supporter.

Why is it important that the organization's focus be on disadvantaged women and girls, particularly with regard to access to education?

It is time now to further redefine and embrace the international focus of education and empowerment to an even more focused population—that of disadvantaged women and girls who most greatly need our services. Education is the single biggest indicator in society that has taken people from poverty and despair to self-sufficiency and more meaningful existence.

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 specific goals for your year as president?

I have three major goals related to the crucial areas of leadership, service and membership. It's very important to me that we are providing superior leadership for our organization ... that our impact is increasing and reflective of work done at all levels ... and that every member will value her membership and understand the importance of her part in our collective work. And, of course, everything we do needs to be supported by a sound and fiscally responsible financial plan. 🌸

To read the full interview with President Dawn Marie, visit bit.ly/MeetPresidentDawnMarie.

Welcome to the New Club Year!

A message from the 2017-2018 SIA President

Happy New Year! I always look forward to the beginning of the club year as a time to recommit, refresh, and renew my membership covenant with Soroptimist. Each year, as I pay my dues, I evaluate what I will do new this year to keep my membership vital and important in my life:

- What will I learn?
- What will I lead?
- What will I contribute to?
- What programs and activities will I support that will directly improve the lives of disadvantaged women and girls leading to economic empowerment?

You may think it would be easy to answer these questions as the new SIA president, but I too, must make conscious choices about my time, talent and treasure as each of you do. Here is my plan so far. I will:

- Look forward to learning about the mission-focused work that our clubs undertake in addition to contributing to our important role on the Soroptimist International Board of Directors and through international advocacy.
- Joyfully lead with the SIA Board, SIA headquarters staff, our Fundraising

Council, and governors—through implementation of a dynamic Strategic Plan directed toward positively impacting more women and girls through program and fundraising activities.

- Support clubs and members to find their “spaces” to expand their membership experience with Soroptimist.
- Encourage each member to claim their role in supporting disadvantaged women and girls (through participation in our SIA Dream Programs, SI President's Appeal, and individual giving) and ensure that all programs we do are informed by needs specifically expressed by our participants.

Make your year rewarding so others will be rewarded! 🌸



Dawn Marie Lemonds

Transformation: A View from Spruce Street

A message from the SIA Executive Director & CEO

As we begin another year of Shaping Our Future for Increased Collective Impact, remember: Shaping Our Future is about building the new. Increasing Our Collective Impact is the direction our organization is headed.

And it's coming together! Membership losses are lessening, Dream Program impact is rising, and contributions are increasing.

In just four years, we will celebrate Soroptimist's 100th anniversary. To prepare for our next century we are taking steps to ensure our success. Our success is defined as: Soroptimist being better known for greater societal impact made by economically empowering more disadvantaged women and girls through our brand unifying Dream Programs.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres recently stated, “Women's economic empowerment is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. We will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals if there is no accelerated action to empower women economically.”

The focus of our Dream Programs—to accelerate economic empowerment for disadvantaged women and girls—is rooted in the agenda for women's equality outlined by the United Nations.

Imagine if we worked together—and made our Dream Programs the center of our club work? Our collective focus would make significant progress for disadvantaged women and girls. Our cohesive efforts would quicken the pace of our impact.

I ask you to have an open mind and reconsider the way your club is approaching its programs and projects over the next several months.

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



Elizabeth M. Lucas

Pursuing Dreams and Overcoming Obstacles

2017 Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards Finalists

Continued from cover

Aislinn

"I knew growing up that some women went to college," said Aislinn of Madison, Alabama. "When I dropped out of high school in the ninth grade to help support my parents and take care of my aging grandparents, I put that thought aside in the 'not for me' box."

Aislinn grew up, got married, and had a daughter. She knew she wanted to make a better life for her daughter. But Aislinn wasn't content with making a better life just for her own child. "Everyone is some mother's precious child and we all want better for our children than the world we are given to work with. To do what I needed for my daughter I had to make myself a somebody. The only way to make yourself a somebody is to get an education."

She enrolled in community college and after a few semesters, transferred to a local four-year university. It was there, at the University of Alabama at Huntsville, that Aislinn found sociology and women's and gender studies and "fell in love."

Aislinn's journey has been far from easy. Last summer, her husband was diagnosed with a terminal illness. When she sat her daughter down to explain to her what this news would mean for their family, Aislinn told her if they were going to make it, they had to be their best selves.

Aislinn is on track to graduate in May 2018 with a bachelor's degree in sociology and plans to go on to graduate school. From there, her dream is to pursue a teaching and research position at a college or university, where she hopes to teach and mentor others to promote social equality and economic mobility.

Sara

Sara grew up in Iraq. Her family sent her to the United States to marry a man she did not know, in hopes that she would have a better, safer life and escape the chaos in her country. Her marriage was a nightmare when her husband began physically and mentally abusing her. "I lived in this miserable marriage for 10 years. I did not speak any English and had no friends or family I could ask for help."

When her children started school, Sara began taking parenting classes that provided resources and information about domestic violence. "I realized that if I wanted to leave, I needed a plan for economic independence, so I enrolled in my local community college."

Within two years, Sara completed her associate's degree in pre-elementary special education and graduated with honors. From there, she transferred

to a four-year university, and then the abuse escalated. "[One day] my husband drove me to the university to force me to drop my classes, threatening to kill me if I did not. But in the parking lot, I was able to get away from him and call the police. University staff was able to help me find a place for my children and myself in a first-step shelter."

Sara felt lost and scared, as leaving a marriage is considered unacceptable in her culture. She's still fighting legal issues surrounding her divorce, which she says add a painful layer of emotional and financial struggle, but she is happy that she and her children are surviving and moving forward.

Sara continues to work on her bachelor's degree in elementary special education and will graduate this year. Her dream is to become a teacher and eventually obtain a Ph.D.

"Education is so important for mothers because they have a major influence on their children's education. This award will help me continue my education and graduate, so that I can provide a good example for my children and give back to my community."

Rochelle

As a child, Rochelle dreamed of becoming an elementary school teacher. Growing up in the Philippines, she looked up to her teachers not only as mentors, but as second mothers.

Rochelle describes her own childhood as

challenging. "Unlike other kids, I did not have time to play and have fun because there were so many household chores and responsibilities to undertake. My mother worked abroad and as the eldest, I also had to be the mother to my three younger siblings, one of whom has special needs."

Her difficult upbringing turned even darker, when she was raped by her father and became pregnant with his child at the age of 14. She lived in fear and shame as he continued

to rape her. Wanting to be strong and protect her siblings, she found the courage to tell her aunt, who helped Rochelle file a rape case. After three years in trial court, her father was found guilty and sentenced to a three-term life imprisonment.

Determined not to let her past keep her dreams out of her future, Rochelle keeps moving forward to pursue what she calls her "great vision." "I believe that with [my faith]—combined with hard work, patience, self-confidence, determination, and people who trust me—my dream to get a college education and become a teacher is within arm's reach."



Rochelle with her family. Photo credit: Cine Verités

SIA Leadership 2017-2018

Dawn Marie Lemonds
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Mariza Shuster
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Elizabeth M. Lucas,
CAE, MBA
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
& CEO**

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

SIA's 2017-2018 President-Elect

SI/Miranda,
Venezuela, and
SIA board member
Elizabeth Di
Geronimo is
SIA's 2017-2018
president-elect.
Congratulations,
Elizabeth!



Rochelle is currently working toward a bachelor's of science degree in education and is scheduled to graduate in 2021.

"I will be more than a teacher and a second mother to my students. I will help them find value in life no matter how difficult it can be ... and help others the way kind-hearted people are helping me now." 🌸

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

Dream Programs Receive National Awards

We are excited to announce that Soroptimist's Dream Programs have both received national awards! ASAE (American Society of Association Executives) has named *Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls* a 2017 Power of A Summit Award winner! SIA is one of only six associations chosen for this honor, which is ASAE's highest award given to associations that distinguish themselves with innovative, effective and broad-reaching programs and activities that positively impact America and the world. SIA and *Dream It, Be It* were recognized at the 18th Annual Summit Awards Dinner on October 4, 2017, at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. Additionally, ASAE has named the *Live Your Dream: Education & Training Awards for Women* a 2017 Power of A Gold Award winner! The *Live Your Dream Awards* was selected as one of 23 Gold winners this year from over 150 entries.

Membership

Members Share Their Family and Friend Experiences

Not only do Soroptimist members execute our mission and help numerous disadvantaged women and girls throughout the world, but you are also the best spokeswomen when it comes to recruiting new members! When you talk about Soroptimist to the people in your circle, it becomes one of the most effective marketing methods for acquiring new members because it comes from a trustworthy source—you! Learn more about how members across SIA are getting

their friends and family involved and finding the value and benefits in doing so: bit.ly/members-friends-family.

Public Awareness

Branding & Style Guide

Reflective of our new logo policy, Soroptimist has developed a branding and style guide to help clubs become the best brand ambassadors they can be. This guide provides information on how to build a strong visual identity, the correct way to incorporate the logo into publicity materials and how to speak with proper Soroptimist style! Check it out at bit.ly/sia-branding-style-guide.

New SIA Website

Soroptimist's new website is on the horizon! Set to launch in early 2018, the new site will feature our Dream Programs and highlight the impact we have on women and girls around the world. Stay tuned for the big reveal in the coming months!

Fundraising

Diane Thompson and the Up, Up, and Away Challenge

Diane Thompson, former North Atlantic Region governor and SIA Board member, has issued an extraordinary challenge to members in her region. She will match each and every individual donation to support SIA's programs, up to \$50,000, that members make between now and August 31, 2019. Diane hopes her challenge will inspire others throughout SIA to do the same. Please visit bit.ly/up-up-away-challenge for more information.

The Torrid Foundation

SIA is pleased to announce that SIA/LiveYourDream.org were chosen as the first charity to launch the new Torrid Foundation. The Torrid Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Torrid, LLC, a rapidly expanding women's retail clothing company with over 500 stores across the United States and Canada. This opportunity came to us through LiveYourDream.org, which has as one of its primary goals to attract corporate sponsors and non-dues revenue sources.

Through this relationship, Torrid will feature SIA/LiveYourDream.org brands online and in stores to raise awareness about our programs and generate much-needed funding for the *Live Your Dream Awards*. Further, Torrid will also work with SIA staff to make applications for the *Live Your Dream Awards* available to a larger audience of women in the United States and Canada.

"We are thrilled that Torrid has chosen us as one of the charitable organizations they will be supporting through their foundation," said Executive Director Elizabeth Lucas. "This is an exciting development indeed and we look forward to seeing where this relationship will take us."

The Torrid Foundation launched August 4 in 515 stores in the United States and Canada and to an online audience of over one million via social media. As a 96-year-old organization, for SIA/LiveYourDream.org to be selected as the signature charity for this launch speaks not only to the relevance of our organization's focus on our *Live Your Dream Awards* program but also to our long-term commitment to invest in both our online branding strategy of LiveYourDream.org and diversification of our funding strategy through corporate donors.

Be sure to visit Torrid.com and click on the Help Women Change Lives section to see the promotion of LiveYourDream.org and SIA's award-winning *Live Your Dream Awards*. Stay tuned for more details as this relationship unfolds and grows. ✨

Working as One: The Soroptimist Blue

SIA has much in common with the Pointillism art movement. Each club, as one of nearly 1,300 pixels, has its own personality and hue—some clubs are primary, others electric, and when we work as one, together we compose the beautiful Soroptimist blue.

What unifies us across oceans, what brings us all into the same frame, are our award-winning Dream Programs, which 20 million women and girls meet the criteria to benefit from.

A 10 percent Club Giving contribution is a way of making vivid change in the lives of as many of these women and girls as possible. And not only does Club Giving make their lives brighter, but a unified focus on programs and fundraising across the organization makes Soroptimist a brilliant light that is more attractive to outside funders.

If we are to truly provide the "best for women," each club in our 21 countries and territories must work together. Committing to contributing 10 percent of locally raised funds to Club Giving is not only a symbolic gesture of belief in SIA, but it unifies the organization so we are in a better position to change the lives of women and girls.

Just as each club makes up the Soroptimist blue, the statistic of 20 million women and girls is composed of individual faces, each with a name and story. We want to help as many of these women and girls as possible—and we are excited for your club to help make it happen! Make your gift today at bit.ly/CG1718. ✨

5 REASONS *to save the date!*



**SOROPTIMIST'S
45TH BIENNIAL
CONVENTION**

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN JULY 30-AUGUST 2, 2018



1

This your chance to experience legendary Japanese hospitality, culture and food. Soroptimist friends are waiting to welcome you to Japan and are looking forward to making this an adventure you'll never forget!

SIA will experience global membership like never before! Bond with Soroptimists from all over the world—make new friends and visit with old. You'll also have a chance to get a first glimpse at SIA's plans for celebrating our 100th anniversary.

2



3

The convention agenda will be packed full of prominent speakers and inspiring workshops, and balanced with exciting cultural activities. You'll learn a lot and have fun at the same time!

There's so much to do in Japan! Post-convention sight-seeing tours are available to Yokohama, Mt. Fuji, Kyoto and Nara, and Edo (Old Tokyo). Visit museums, restaurants and more!

4



5

Don't forget the shopping! Japan is a world-class shopping destination. In addition, the convention will feature Japanese vendors selling everything from jewelry to clothing and local food delicacies.

START PLANNING YOUR TRIP TODAY!

Visit the SIA Convention webpage <Soroptimist.org/members/meetings/meetings.html>
for the most up-to-date convention information!



SOROPTIMIST

Best for Women®

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www.soroptimist.org
www.liveyourdream.org

Check out these featured sales
items and more at
<Soroptimist.org/rise/store>
and order today!



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PEARL PIN (#125) \$35



PEARL NECKLACE (#130) \$30

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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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