


Soroptimist International of Long Beach

Annual Report
2005-2006



Soroptimist International is a worldwide organization for women in management and the professions, working through service projects to advance human rights and the status of women and girls.

Message from President Pamela Seager



It is a pleasure to present this first Annual Report for Soroptimist International of Long Beach. From our beginnings in 1924, the club has grown and modified its philanthropies as community and global needs have dictated but always keeping our eye on the core vision of enriching the lives and women and girls locally and throughout the world.

Globally, more than ninety thousand women help others through Soroptimist. Whether it is starting a craft collective to generate income and gain independence, providing scholarships, or helping women develop skills in non-traditional, vocational trades - every small step, every dollar, every helping hand, contributes to an enormous effect.

The benefit of giving time, talent, or funds has a ripple effect and helps not only those who are in need but very much enriches the lives of those who help. For more than eighty years we have found fellowship in working together, in working with those who need help and seeing the results that a small gesture of support can bring. A perfect example was seen in our June program entitled "Shopping with Soroptimist." In collaboration with a superb nonprofit entitled "Working Wardrobes" a group of ten women entering or re-entering the workplace were given an image building workshop, makeup and hairstyling, and then Soroptimists served as personal shoppers, helping each guest select business clothing, shoes, a handbag and jewelry to create a business outfit. Coordinated extra blouses, skirts and pants expanded upon the basic outfit. A vital element was the quality of the outfits at Working Wardrobes and the superb organization that made it feel just like shopping in a department store. This is certainly no thrift shop operation and they only accept women who are referrals from social service agencies or organizations such as ours.

The results were astonishing. Women who came in with low self-esteem were transformed into beaming, proud women as they showed off their selections and new look; they literally seemed to see themselves in a new light. We spent a wonderful morning getting to know women who were embarking on new and challenging directions in their lives and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, wishing everyone good luck as we said our goodbyes and they left with shiny, bulging South Coast Plaza shopping bags.

This kind of spirit and sense that with some help, life's challenges can be met if we work together and help each other is at the heart of enjoying being a part of a caring and supporting network. At the other end of the spectrum are Soroptimist projects to provide assistance and support to women who are victims of war or violence in locations such as Rwanda and Afghanistan. Through Soroptimist International of the Americas, dollars from SI Long Beach and all of the other clubs, also flow into these projects to help meet international needs.

Soroptimist International of Long Beach is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization and all gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Planned gifts and bequests are directed to a Fellowship and Memorial fund administered by the Philanthropy Committee. We welcome your participation at any level and hope that you will visit our web site to stay current on news, grants and other activities. In the meantime, I thank our members, sponsors and donors for making this a banner year for philanthropy for SILB.

Club History

Soroptimist International of Long Beach (SILB) with 48 members got its official charter on March 24, 1924, the seventh SI club in the world, right between London, England and Paris, France. The club adopted as its first service project in 1925 the establishment of Rockhaven House, a home and education facility for girls ages 4 to 16 who were too ill with tuberculosis or malnutrition to attend regular school. The school board provided the house on a dollar-a-year lease and a teacher. Rockhaven, however, did not survive the 1933 earthquake.

Through its various fund development projects, the club has been able to develop such major club projects as the construction and furnishing of Soroptimist House on CSULB campus in 1957, then donated as a gift to the Associated Students; the establishment of Long Beach Meals on Wheels in 1971, which the club totally supported until its incorporation in 1974 and still supports with a substantial annual contribution. The Shopping with Soroptimists project provides work appropriate wardrobes to needy re-entry women. The club also gives annual scholarships to assist career-oriented women heads of households to complete their education.

Every year club members continue to fulfill the Soroptimist's fundamental goal of advancing the rights and welfare of women and girls with contributions to programs and services throughout the community.

Highlights of this Year

"S" CLUB - Among this year's landmark projects has certainly been the launching of the S Club – a junior Soroptimist Club for women students at Poly High School that Soroptimist International of Long Beach helped to organize and continues to sponsor. Only a year old, the Poly S club membership has doubled and the girls have taken on many challenging responsibilities. The club raised funds to purchase books for children in Nicaragua, stuffed holiday stockings for needy neighborhood children, "adopted" a young girl for her birthday and made her a gift basket, volunteered to help with many community fundraising projects such as SILB Holiday Fiesta, Childrens Benefit League, and the beach walk for We Can Pediatric Brain Tumor support group.



WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR WOMEN - April 1, 2006 marked Soroptimist International of Long Beach's 25th annual luncheon honoring women in this community who have made a difference in bettering the lives of others. Since 1981, we have honored 66 women as well as 13 businesses and organizations for outstanding commitment to advancing the status of women. The 2006 luncheon attracted 342 attendees. The awardees were:



Dr. Jan Kehoe, president Long Beach City College
Jean Egan, founder of the project BLAST

Amy Coppenger, Director of Education, Aquarium of the Pacific

Dr. Guadalupe Padilla-Robb, neonatologist at Miller Children's Hospital

Alex Torres, Executive Director, WINTER ☪ Nancy Kindelan, American Red Cross

Children's Benefit League selected as the business or organization best advancing the status of women

Grants and Scholarships



- Women's Opportunity Awards \$5,000
- Meals of Wheels of Long Beach \$9,000
- Scholarships \$13,500
- St Mary's Women's Heart Health Program \$15,000
- Nondesignated Service Projects \$20,922

In 2005-2006, Soroptimists of Long Beach distributed \$ 63,422 to advance the status of women & girls.

SERVICE PROJECTS - The funds Soroptimist International of Long Beach (SILB) makes each year from events such as the Holiday Boutique are funneled back into the community as scholarships and as support of non-profit programs furthering the needs of women and girls. This year, SILB raised nearly \$58,000, which was donated to such organizations as Meals on Wheels; Shopping With Soroptimists that provides working wardrobes for low-income women; Children's Dental Clinic; Su Casa, and Interval House; and a variety of scholarships for women, often single heads of household, to continue their education.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE - Angela Fowlkes is typical of our scholarship recipients. She describes herself as a 37-year-old African American, single mother of five daughters for whom the last eight years have been "the most challenging and rewarding of my life." During those years, Angela managed to enroll and graduate from Long Beach City College and is currently working on her Master of Arts in Marriage, Family and Children. "I have matured from a withdrawn student not sure if I was equipped with enough substance to make it though a semester," she writes. Angela adds, "The greatest joy I have experienced has been allowing myself to become liberated enough to share my new defined self with my daughters."



HEART HEALTH AWARENESS - "Love Your Heart," a major SILB service project, was able to provide 400 women from diverse underserved ethnic communities with health screenings to help reduce heart attacks. Free screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and sugar, as well as counseling on smoking and screening for osteoporosis reached 150 Cambodian and Laotian women, 100 women in the Hispanic American community, and 150 women from the African American community. Heart health videos will be broadcast on Cambodian and Spanish-language cable TV to reach an even larger audience.



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