

Living their



# Dreams

Improving  
the lives  
of women  
and girls



SOROPTIMIST

Best for Women

# The *future* belongs to

Throughout the world,  
Soroptimist is helping women  
and girls to live their dreams  
by giving them the resources  
to create positive change—  
for themselves, their families,  
their communities and  
the world.



Chris Pietsch,  
Register Guard

those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

### **The Soroptimist Mission**

Women have made tremendous progress in the last century. Despite these gains, today's women and girls continue to face daunting challenges that prevent them from realizing their dreams: Poverty. Illiteracy. Discrimination. Domestic violence. Sexual slavery and assault.

Soroptimist is an international volunteer organization of business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls. Soroptimist's aim is to create true social and economic equality for women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world. The organization believes in the potential of dreams and the collective power of women working together. Soroptimist's award-winning programs provide practical and sustainable solutions to some of society's most entrenched problems.

**Soroptimist means  
"best for women,"  
and that's what  
the organization  
strives to be—**

**women**

**at their best**

**helping**

**other women**

**to be *their* best.**



Thanks to the Women's Opportunity Awards,

## Women's Opportunity Awards

Every young girl dreams of a future filled with hope and promise. But many girls and women are forced to put their dreams on hold when their lives take an unexpected turn. Since 1972, the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards program has disbursed more than \$15 million and helped thousands of women reclaim their dreams of a better life for themselves and their families. The program provides women who are the primary wage earners for their families with cash grants for education and skills training. Recipients overcome enormous obstacles—including poverty, domestic violence and substance abuse—in their quest for a better life.

One such woman is Pachara Yamazaki. After her marriage turned violent, Pachara found herself alone with three young children to support. She could not speak the language of her new country, had no family or social support, and no way to earn a living. With the help of the Women's Opportunity Awards, Pachara is learning the language of her adopted land and studying to become a home health care provider.



# I am achieving

my dreams of a better life for me and my children.

*Pachara Yamazaki*

## Domestic Violence Focus

Every day, in every country on earth, women and girls' dreams are crushed when they suffer abuse at the hands of an intimate partner. Soroptimist targets a little addressed aspect of this problem: domestic violence as it affects the workplace. Each year on November 25 (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women), members participate in the Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence by distributing hotline cards and sample workplace guidelines in local businesses.



Many Soroptimist clubs also participate in other domestic violence related activities. They hold lectures, raise funds for and refurbish local domestic violence shelters, serve as mentors for women staying at shelters, operate thrift shops that benefit local shelters, and produce exhibits featuring art from domestic violence survivors.



Jean Dunn



## Recognition Programs

Soroptimist believes in honoring those who have a dream of creating a better world. The Making a Difference for Women Award acknowledges women who help other women and girls through their personal or professional activities. The Violet Richardson Award honors girls who donate their time and energy to social causes.

Dr. Elaine Weiss exemplifies the type of woman honored with a Making a Difference for Women Award. She has devoted her entire professional career to

ending the scourge of domestic violence. Elaine teaches medical students and faculty how to recognize and support victims of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. A survivor herself, Elaine is changing perceptions about domestic violence.

Vanessa Mansell, a Violet Richardson Award winner, created Arms of Compassion. Her project makes and donates quilts to people experiencing tragedy in their lives.





## Soroptimist International

Soroptimist International of the Americas is part of a larger organization, Soroptimist International, which has members in more than 120 countries throughout the world. The organization enjoys general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations and is a recognized authority on matters that women value most. Soroptimist International of the Americas joins its parent organization in supporting international projects that help women and girls.

Currently, Soroptimist International is partnering with Women for Women International on Project Independence: Women Survivors of War.

The project supplies direct assistance to women from war-torn countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia and Rwanda and helps them meet basic needs for themselves and their families. Project Independence provides these women with education and skills training to restore their dreams of a self-sufficient life.



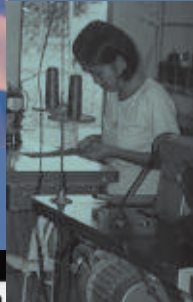
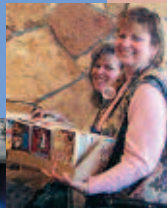
To me, it's vitally important that my volunteer time  
That important connection, along with

## Soroptimist Clubs

Local Soroptimist clubs are the foundation upon which the organization is built. Without their energy and dedication, Soroptimist would not be able to help women and girls to achieve their dreams. In addition to participating in programs offered by the organization, Soroptimist clubs evaluate the needs of women and girls in their local communities and then initiate projects accordingly. Some clubs receive assistance in their efforts through a Soroptimist program that disburses grants for innovative local women- and girl-focused projects.

Sample club projects include collecting books for incarcerated

ed women, working to end the sexual trafficking of women and girls, holding life-skills seminars for teenage mothers, and providing job training for women in transition.



Norman's Photographic

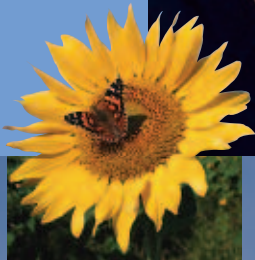




serve local as well as global needs.

our unique **focus** on women and girls,  
is one reason that  
I'm proud to be a member.

*Catherine Standiford*



**Soroptimist Members**

Soroptimists, who are leaders in their communities, are women of all ages, cultures and ethnic groups representing a wide array of professions. The common thread connecting members is their dream to improve the lives of women and girls—an aspiration to which they lend their vast energy, insights and compassion.

Soroptimist membership celebrates the unique power of women. It's a gift that women give to themselves: the chance to help others in an atmosphere of support, friendship and fun; to explore networking opportunities; and to develop leadership and mentoring skills.

**Soroptimist members  
are living their dreams,  
while**

**empowering  
other women and girls  
to live theirs.**

