
SOROPTIMISTS IN ACTION

Western Canada Region – Spring 2023

2022-2023 Board

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Governor's Message to LYD Recipients and Supporters

There is a river of adversity running through all of our communities, that catches more women and girls and gender diverse people. Some are swept downstream in the deep and dangerous currents of abuse and abandonment, addiction, sexual exploitation. Others are in shallower water of low income, harassment and discrimination, health challenges, unequal pay and other river rocks. We've all had at least our toes wet by the river. We Soroptimists are not generally standing chest deep in the river pulling people out. We are on the banks of the river, ready to reach a hand out to women who have made their way to shallower water.

All of you Live Your Dream Award winners have been somewhere in the river, and you have made your way to shallow water. With one hand you've held your family above water, with the other you have pushed the water aside, swum, whatever you had to do. With grit, determination and a dream you have made it to the bank. You have done this. And that is where Soroptimists are, reaching out with Live Your Dream Awards, to pull you to solid dry ground.

I won't say the Live Your Dream Awards are all you need to stay out of the river and fulfill your dream. There will be challenges, there always are. We Soroptimists believe in you. We have confidence in your resolute tenacity, perhaps downright stubbornness, and we believe in your dream. Because we know you are the strongest women in this room, and you have told us what your dream means for you and your family.

So imagine how the trajectory of these women's lives will be changed in reaching their dreams of economic empowerment. Imagine how their children's lives will be different, being out of the river. Imagine how their children's lives will be uplifted. And imagine the ripple effect of these women, role models and giving back, on their entire community. Just by being themselves, they are lifeguards for other women and girls by the river.

Now imagine the tsunami effect of half a million women and girls reaching economic independence, and moving into positions of power and decision making, across our world. This is the goal of Soroptimists from Canada to Brazil to the Philippines and many other countries - to invest in the dreams of half a million women and girls like these winners by 2031. Giving them access to the education they need is our fastest route to gender equality, and that will indeed change our world.

Did You Know?

OBSTETRIC FISTULA
& OTHER FORMS OF FEMALE
GENITAL FISTULA



Guiding principles
for social management and
programme development

The United Nations proclaimed May 23rd as **International Day to End Obstetric Fistula**.

It's easy to ignore things you don't know anything about. **Obstetric fistula** is one of those things. But it's a devastating childbirth injury to women who experience it, usually fatal to unborn babies (90 per cent of cases end in stillbirth) and – here's the encouraging news – not only treatable but preventable.

Obstetric fistula is a hole in the birth canal caused by protracted, obstructed labour in the absence of timely medical care, leaving women to leak urine and faeces. Left untreated, it can lead to infection, disease and infertility. Sentenced to a life of misery, stigma and isolation – husbands and families abandon them, communities ostracize them, employment opportunities vanish – they can suffer from mental health issues and deepening poverty.

The injury has all but disappeared in rich countries but persists in poorer countries with inadequate maternal health care – an estimated 500,000 women and girls live with the condition. Young bodies not ready for childbirth in cases of child marriage or unintended pregnancy are especially vulnerable. Women can develop fistula because they cannot afford transportation to a health facility or the services of a skilled birth attendant like a midwife.

The injury can be prevented by sexual and reproductive health care, access to contraception and access to skilled birth attendants and high-quality emergency obstetric care. It can be treated with reconstructive surgery, though many women and girls don't know about treatment, can't access it or can't afford it.

Word Search by Cathy Waters—Global Advocacy

E	M	P	O	W	E	R	S	M	A	N	S	H	E	S
O	S	T	T	O	D	M	A	N	A	L	O	T	L	V
W	S	N	U	J	U	A	I	M	Y	L	P	R	O	T
E	O	T	O	E	C	R	U	Y	T	C	I	I	H	A
L	O	M	G	I	A	H	S	K	I	G	C	N	I	E
B	G	H	E	T	T	B	R	I	L	E	G	H	L	T
A	S	A	N	N	I	A	F	A	A	R	I	B	P	R
N	A	G	D	M	O	L	N	R	U	K	A	S	I	E
I	A	L	E	O	N	S	N	D	Q	N	D	G	I	T
A	E	O	R	D	G	L	O	Z	E	O	H	O	C	A
T	O	B	A	E	S	A	T	A	L	T	B	E	A	C
S	H	A	E	E	R	O	O	S	S	I	I	O	N	O
U	T	L	I	R	E	G	A	R	U	O	C	N	E	V
S	D	A	L	F	P	L	A	G	E	E	A	G	U	D
D	E	V	E	L	O	P	M	E	N	T	L	E	S	A

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Advocate | Global |
| Development | Goals |
| Education | Human |
| Empower | Rights |
| Enable | Sustainable |
| Encourage | United Nations |
| Equality | Voice |



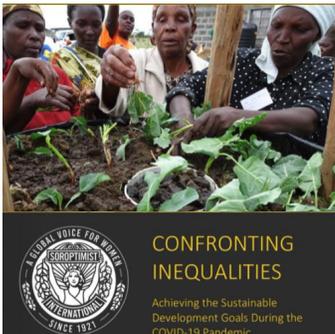
Soroptimist at the United Nations

Submitted by Sharon Fisher

Soroptimist International is accredited with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. ECOSOC is one of 6 UN bodies working in conjunction with the General Assembly to promote initiatives of international importance.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the body dedicated to promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world and shaping global standards. Each March thousands gather in New York to participate with other NGOs as member states, civil society and UN entities discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document for gender equality. Member states agree on further action to accelerate progress and promote women's rights all captured in an outcome document called agreed conclusions. This document is then forwarded to ECOSOC for follow up. <https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/advocacy/commission-on-the-status-of-women/>

During WCR Region Conference the topic of the "agreed conclusions" was mentioned and Governor Suzanne suggested a newsletter article to explain briefly what happens after CSW. First, I want to say there are many meetings throughout the year and not just CSW. SI participates in many of these meetings and makes statements and interventions throughout the year on topics impacting women.



As a follow up to various meetings held throughout the year including CSW, ECOSOC hosts The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) established in 2012 as a follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At HLPF there are voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to look at the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In 2023 there are 39 countries presenting voluntary national reviews. If Canada was one of the countries presenting, we might want to look at their report to understand the progress they claim on the topic under review. Soroptimist International publishes and files an HLPF report each year to showcase our work internationally on the review theme where our relevant projects are profiled. These reports combined are a valuable resource as an indication of what is working and what is not to measure the success of the SDGs.

In 2023 the theme will be "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID 19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels." HLPF 2023 will also review Goals 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.

The HLPF reports authored by Soroptimist International each year can be found on the SI website at <https://www.soroptimistinternational.org>. (Bottom of page) The SI report provides a full explanation on the SDG review themes, projects, and provides a Call to Action and our Conclusions all thoroughly explained. This forum is not so much about negotiating wording but on measuring results and identifying successes and gaps to determine work that remains. It is a great resource for identifying project work and gives us an advocacy focus. After reading the HLPF report you can see the value of reporting projects as that is the source of information for this report.





Our Landscape

By Sabrina Samuel, SI of Central Alberta

Women, with our gorgeous landscapes - our peaks, sometimes hilly, sometimes mountainous

Women, with dangerous valleys flowing crimson rivers and oozing molten pleasure lava,

Sometimes, others name boats and cars after us and even though we have stunning exteriors we,
are, so much more

But let's be clear, if I was a car, I would want to inspire awe the way a Mercedes does

Women are the only people on the planet that can spark an entire revolution with what grows out
of our heads and when we speak the name Mahsa Amini, we affirm women all over world are birth-
ing freedom from the labour of losing her

Women belong only to ourselves every inch of our ever-changing landscape, be it barren fertile an-
cient young trans reformed mastected deformed

Sometimes, the sheer grace of just one woman creates sounds in silence and destroys gender
based violence

It is the others who surround her that listen and ground her

When they name storms after us it's because we have patterns bigger than the weather some-
times, we are all four seasons in just one day

And when you give a woman a chance put a song in heart and a reason to dance she will rise but
won't stop there she will grab the hand of the next fallen angel or rising star and take her with her
too

With her grandmother the moon recharging and reminding her all things under the sky smile upon
her she may go forth and shine like all the stars and planets, or alone as bright as the burning sun

We are the only presidential authority of our territory we decide who crosses our border who
comes in who goes out

Each woman her own beside the next making the whole world complete with her landscape



Invitation to a Tea Party

By Doreen Janko, submitted by Kim Bush, SI Canada West Online



Kim invited me to a Tea Party recently ... "Where?"

"Here," she said. "at the dining room table"

Good Grief, I thought, I'd better get busy and do some dusting

But I was assured that wouldn't be necessary, because you see the Tea Party would be 'Virtual' so no dusting needed!

Virtual and No Dusting Already I'm interested.



The Virtual Club idea is NEW. Everyone is just getting the hang of it. There are still a whole raft of 'buts' to answer, ignore, or otherwise just throw out. The "Oldies", like me, are quick to shout, "Whaddya mean, Club???"

How can you have a club with your members scattered here there and everywhere???"

"How can you have a fund raiser without the Organizing Committees"

(I personally, will miss the Clean Up Committee.)

I muttered, then my queries became vocal. Let's face it, many of my comments were negative ... I scoffed at these 'fanciful ideas' I asked How in the world is this going to WORK? I got answers thoughtful, calm, creative and Meaningful Answers.

So I attended my first Virtual Soroptimist Meeting And here's what I discovered:

Tea Party Virtuals are SOOO Young. They have the energy of youth. They accept the computer as an everyday partner in their lives. They multi-task. In many cases, they have close personal touch with the inequities facing women and girls around the world. They don't have to rely on the 6 o'clock news for interpretation. They seek the Friendships that Soroptimist Women around the world enjoy. They can go to their Virtual Meeting while waiting for the kids at hockey practice. And yes, a Dinner Meeting these days is sometimes a serious stretch on the budget. Easy to grab a sandwich at home AND, are you ready for this? My first Virtual Meeting swept me away on a good old fashioned 'Soroptimist High' ... it's a feel-good thing that pops up after making a Soroptimist Connection. Old Soroptimists, like me, have experienced this unique effect for years ... and by gosh! It works Virtual-ly!!

The history of Soroptimists has been one of timely change....it looks like we're heading up a new path ... a virtual freeway where the innovations come thick and fast. The new Virtual members and the new Virtual Clubs will evolve to meet the needs of women throughout the world, and will experience the Soroptimist sincerity, joy, dignity, and integrity.

To the Girls at the Pink Tea Party: Thank you for the Warm and Friendly Virtual Introduction.

Doreen Janko, retired Soroptimist,
South Okanagan,
British Columbia.

Soroptimist Friendship Submitted by Darlene Jameison

Are you attending the Soroptimist International Convention in Dublin? <https://sidublin2023.com>

More than 1500 Soroptimists have registered from around the world. I look forward to attending. Did you know that there is a "Friendship Night" at convention? There are a couple of Friendship groups that meet at conventions that include but are not limited to:

Friendship Links- Currently 8 of 16 Western Canada clubs have 31 Friendship links in 14 countries. Friendship links share newsletters, projects, letters, cards in person and online visits.

This past summer our region hosted and met with Soroptimists from the UK, USA, India, and Kenya.

Have you attended any of our "Sharing Soroptimist Stories Through Friendship" zoom calls? We have featured Soroptimist storytellers from around the world. Our last call included SIA Presidents from our past -Sharon Fisher, present Stephanie Smith, and future Bobbi Enderlin as well as SIA CEO Michelle Burnett.

SI Chat Line- creator/coordinator Kate Moore- SIGBI was one of our first storytellers in January 2022. The Chat Line began over 25 years ago now run as a Google group. It is only available to Soroptimists and Associate Soroptimists subscribers. There are over 300 members around the world with whom we keep in touch. From the earliest days we've said, "once a Chat Liner – always a Chat Liner!" Chat line friendships last a lifetime! This a good link to connect before traveling and for connecting with Soroptimists or SI clubs. A Chat Liner can connect you with Kate.

OHOD-Open Heart Open Door is a directory that provides opportunities to connect with Soroptimists from around the world. Options available include:

1. Home hospitality for one or two Soroptimists or a couple.
2. Contact person and guide in city/town. No guestroom.
3. Exchange visit on a professional visit.
4. Holiday-Exchange (city home/chalet/apartment/holiday-house) by mutual agreement at the same time or at a different period.
5. Youth Exchange Programme for a daughter/son, niece/nephew, grandchild. Age and specific time periods listed.

As of December 2022, there were 548 participants from 62 countries. For example, there are 98 participants from Germany and 8 from Canada. The Directory is very extensive. Prior to arriving in Dublin, I will be flying to Copenhagen to board a Scotland and Ireland cruise. I sent an email to an OHOD Soroptimist from another city in Denmark, who connected with a Soroptimist in Copenhagen. I also plan to contact Soroptimists from some of my other ports of call. Perhaps some of these contacts will become new Friendship links.

For information or an application please email Henny at info@ohod.eu Henny asks that we promote OHOD within our clubs. Henny was one of our storytellers at our second zoom call.

Yours in Soroptimist Friendship and Sisterhood

Darlene Jamieson

SI Western Canda Region Friendship Chair darjamieson@gmail.com



**SOROPTIMIST
FOUNDATION
OF CANADA**

SFC at Spring Conference

Submitted by Lois Taylor, Director



The Soroptimist Foundation of Canada (SFC) board members opted to establish a presence at our April 27-29 Western Canada Region Conference. We wore red and white to match our logo. SFC Chair April Neave kicked off the festivities by treating conference delegates to a beautiful cake in honour of SFC's 60th anniversary. April also gave an informative presentation about SFC's role, how SFC contributes to the Soroptimist mission and values, and how individual members can contribute through donations or bequests. Such a win-win: SFC and its recipients receive much needed donations and donors gain tax receipts as well as the knowledge they have helped deserving recipients!



The SFC board members are thrilled with the warm reception we received at the Western Canada Region Conference from the Region Board, from conference delegates, and from visiting SIA dignitaries President Stephanie Smith and ED/CEO Michelle Burnett.

To express our gratitude for the many generous donations both now and over the years, the SFC board gifted SFC-stamped phone wallets to our Canadian Soroptimist members. Here is Sue Knott with Lois, showing off a coveted phone wallet gifted to Canadian Soroptimists.



We also marked this special occasion by holding a designer purse fundraiser. Your good wishes and generous donations will help us improve the lives of many Canadian families, both now and in the future. Here are the proud winners with their new purses.

Soroptimists in Eastern Canada held their conference the following weekend, and the ECR members also received cake and phone wallets, and participated in a purse raffle.

Save the Date! Please help us celebrate the SFC 60th Anniversary Celebration via Zoom at 4 pm PST (7 pm EST) on June 11th, 2023. Watch for further details.

These are the donor recognition pins, red for \$500, silver for \$1000 and gold for \$2500. Monthly donations add up over time!



What happened at Conference?

Submitted by Colleen Penrowley, Newsletter Editor

What happened? Way too much to report in this edition of Soroptimists in Action! As always, there were reports from everyone on our Region Board, and excellent presentations. I will save those for the next edition, to end our year. In this edition I want to show those members who did not attend, a few of the non-business, fun times we had.

The fun started with the wine tour on Thursday afternoon at The View Winery.



Then at the opening reception on Thursday evening, randomly-chosen teams were given bags of stuff, and expected to create a costume in a short time. Here is one of those creations.

And on Friday evening our hotly-contested lip sync contest resulted in much hilarity! Here are the three competing teams: Chilliwack, Tri Cities and Victoria Westshore. SI Tri Cities won for Harper Valley PTA.



Club Events—SI of Central Alberta

Submitted by Sherri Smith, photos by Kristen Adolfson

Sunday, March 12/23, Soroptimist International of Central Alberta held their annual International Women’s Day event at the Penhold Memorial Hall.

Besides celebrating International Women’s Day, the club also celebrated their 35th anniversary of helping women and girls in Central Alberta and presented awards to our 2023 winners. There was also a wonderful presentation from Vonda Peterson, our guest speaker, who spoke about her story and her book, “A Hole In Our Hearts”.



The Violet Richardson award, for young girl volunteers, was presented to Ashley Bull. Ashley is a Grade 12 student attending St. Joseph High School and she volunteers for The Mustard Seed.

The first Live Your Dream Award was presented to Delaney Leger, who is in her last year of her bachelor’s degree for a Bachelor of Arts Psychology.



The second Live Your Dream Award was presented to Kalisha Mendonsa, currently in the second year of the Social Work Diploma program at Red Deer Polytechnic.



The Ruby Award – for Women Helping Women, was presented to Mercedes Messinger. Personally and through her family business, she supports many organizations, but the one closest to her heart is the Central Alberta Pregnancy Care Centre.

Donations of menstrual pads and tampons were collected at the event to support our menstrual equity project and help end period poverty. Three organizations in our community will receive these donations.



Club Events—SI of North and West Vancouver

Submitted by Veronica Loat

Honouring Outstanding Young Women for Volunteer Action

On April 19, 2013, Soroptimist of North and West Vancouver hosted our Annual Awards Ceremony that included **The Bonnie McLaren Awards** which recognize outstanding and diverse young women who are making an impact by volunteering in the local community.

<https://www.soroptimistnvwv.org/our-programs>

The Award is granted to those who make community service an important part of their education, identify social or economic issues that are important to them in their community, and taken positive action to address these issues through volunteer efforts.



Meet **our first-place winner, Ulwiana Mehta-Malhotra**, an exceptional grade 11 student from Mulgrave School, who has driven positive action as an environmental leader and climate advocate. Ulwiana dedicated her time towards high-impact climate change programs and was very influential in driving change in her community and beyond. She extended her environmental efforts through the Canada-wide Climate Action Accelerator Program and attended the UN Association of Canada's Environmental Festival where she shared her *Clothing Consciousness* project and plans for expansion to other schools.

"I seek to inspire and mobilize the next generation so that we can effectively and positively mitigate the climate crisis. The values of Bonnie McLaren speak to my heart, and I aim to exemplify them."

Meet **our second-place winner Serena Zhu** from Collingwood School for her contributions as chair of the Strathcona Alumni and Friends Association Junior Board. As chair, Serena helped drive positive change through fundraising, education, friendship and support for impoverished people of the Vancouver's lower east side.

"My work as Chair of this grassroots non-profit organization allowed me to find my passion in building community with dedication and compassion. Through this, I learned the importance of resilience and adaptability to create meaningful change in my community."



Our third-place Winner, Stephanie Kostamo of St. Thomas Aquinas Regional High School, is recognized for her volunteer action with *Door is Open Soup Kitchen* that supports people of Vancouver's downtown east side. Stephanie demonstrates tireless devotion to the improvement of her community.



"I volunteer for the Downtown East Side because it allows me to provide assistance to those in dire circumstances, but also displays, through the lives of those living on the streets, the resilience of the human spirit."

Club Events—SI of the Langleys

Submitted by Shirley Stewart

Power of the Purse

SI of the Langleys brought an annual event back to the community in fine style on the evening of May 4th. The Power of the Purse unites previously loved, gently used purses with new owners - for a steal of a deal!



The club presented the Live Your Dream Award to their first place recipient, who shared her story and how much support of other women and this award means to her and other women in her situation.

Governor-Elect Chari brought greetings on behalf of Governor Suzanne, providing guests with an insight into the impact of women helping women.



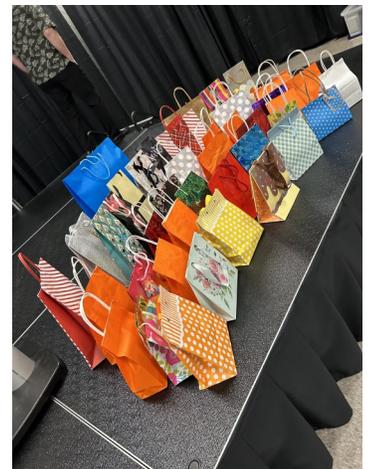
Sales tables were loaded with purses priced from \$5 to \$50 for guests to choose from. A select group of new and unique purses were included in the live and silent auction, including several Kate Spade bags and an amazing Tory Burch purse donated all the way from Florida.



For those who love jewelry, the club carried on the tradition of setting up tables of the amazing finds of our dear Karen Wandler. Two tables of gold and silver drew a crowd all night.

The funds raised at the Power of the Purse will support Soroptimist community programs.

Thank you to the members from neighbouring clubs for joining us for a fun evening!



Club Events—SI of the Tri Cities

Submitted by Colleen Penrowley

Give Her Wings Awards Evening

Give Her Wings is both our club's annual awards event and our major fundraiser. This year it was on April 12th at the Port Coquitlam Community Centre. The fundraising consisted of a 50/50 raffle and a silent auction. Each auction item had a QR code, so that bidding took place online, both before and during the event.



Our keynote speaker was Member of Parliament Bonita Zarrillo, one of our club members. Bonita presented the club with a Certificate of Appreciation for our work on gender equality.

We gave three Live Your Dream awards, one to a woman whose application we received from SI Calgary. Only our first-place recipient gave media consent. This is Brishna Tata.



The Bea Kelly Volunteer award is given to young women in grade 12 who excel in community service. These are our five lovely young recipients: Jihyueng Lim, Nele Kaufmann, Vanessa Asaad, Ava Cervas, and Shanali Beligala.

Our Ruby Award recipient was Carol Todd. This award recognizes women in our community who are making an extraordinary difference in the lives of women and girls locally or internationally, through efforts in either their volunteer, personal or professional life.



And our hard-working judges! Tracy Price, Lora Covinha, and Melanie Briggs in between Cindy, Nav, and Nancy.



Club Events—SI of New West / Burnaby

Submitted by Carey Stoneberg

Multicultural Afternoon Tea



On May 7, 2023, SI New West/Burnaby held our Live Your Dream Award at a Multicultural Afternoon Tea to honor our winner, Hamasa Khan, originally from Afghanistan and a single mother of five, who has just completed her Social Worker program and wants to join the club.



This was the first time we were able to host an in-person celebration since 2019 and there were over 30 attendees, including many club members from various parts

of Metro Vancouver. We were honoured to have Governor Suzanne celebrate with us.



We are a small club of six members with a very diverse ethnic membership from Fiji, Indonesia and various areas of Canada, very similar to the overall membership of Soroptimist International clubs.

We used the opportunity of this event to raise some much-needed funds. Club member Teresa Rehman's aunt donated a number of saris, matching blouses and skirts. Club member Sadhana Kumar displayed them for sale at \$5.00 per set. Well, this initiated an interesting, colorful and lively activity – sari dress-up and sari sales. I think at least half of our guests bought one or more saris. We also had a silent auction, raffle prizes and the food was plentiful and delicious.



Everyone enjoyed their day and many plan to wear their saris proudly. After the success of this event, we look forward to many more celebrations to come.



A joint Dream It Be It Girls (DIBI) Conference January 21, 2023 at KPU Surrey Campus

It all began at the 2022 SI Western Canada Region conference in Victoria. Members of SI Surrey/Delta and SI White Rock had the opportunity to chat about Dreams programs & awards. Kathie Alary advised that SI White Rock had never done a DIBI conference. Given that White Rock is part of the Surrey School District, we began talking about the possibility of a joint DIBI conference once both clubs were consulted. SI Surrey/Delta has hosted many DIBI events and club president Linda Cunniffe & Violet Poruchko (Violet Richardson/youth registration chair) had a tried-and-true format which we utilized in the planning process...a valuable resource!



Balbir Gurm, a KPU Nursing Instructor, founder of NEVR (Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationship), and a past SI Surrey/Delta Ruby award recipient assisted in connecting our committee to key contacts at (KPU) Kwantlen Polytechnic University (<https://www.kpu.ca/>) KPU not only waived the room rental but also provide a \$1000.00 Tuition certificate raffle to a DIBI attendee ages 16+. (The recipient is excited to begin a degree in criminology at KPU in September.) Both clubs received the \$1000.00 club grant from Soroptimist Foundation of Canada.

Co-chairs, Darlene Jamieson & Kathie Alary, attended SI Tri Cities DIBI on Oct 25th for ideas and career mentoring contacts. Thanks to their SI DIBI chair we were able to connect with several mentors, borrow tablecloths and frames for our event.

Our target group was students aged 13-18 who identified as female, trans-gender, or non-binary. Printed Invitation packets were circulated to high schools in Surrey and Delta school districts, private schools & to community partners in Delta, Surrey and White Rock. We put up posters, sent out information on social media, contacted the local press and radio to spread the word.

We had nearly 50 career, educational institutions, resource and volunteer fair participant/mentors represented by 70 mentors. Many of the mentors were SI members, Violet Richardson, Live Your Dreams and Ruby award winners. Our youngest was 9-year-old mini-entrepreneur Lily of Lily Lou's Aromas <https://lilylousaromas.com/pages/meet-the-maker>



We reduced printing costs as much as possible. This was achieved by focusing an electronic program with the help of SI White Rock's hard-working webmaster Michele Partridge. (<https://www.soroptimistwhiterock.ca/supporting/dream-it-be-it/>). 105 girls registered via Eventbrite and 82 students attended. The appropriate consent forms were obtained. The girls received a DIBI backpack and Certificate of Participation. They collected swag at the career fair tables. There were many door prizes for the girls and mentors donated by the mentors and community partners and sponsors.



Our emcee, google survey & tech support was Rochelle Prasad, our Violet Richardson winner in 2016. (<https://www.rochelleprasad.net/>).

The Keynote speaker, Dr. Jennifer Mervyn PhD (past SI Foundation of Canada post graduate grant recipient) provided a very informative an inspirational discussion and



facilitated a dynamic question and answer period. Panelists Sheila Early (Forensic Nursing), Elenore Sturko (MLA), and Kim Gramlich and Puma (Victim Services, Delta Police) also shared their life experiences, challenges, and wisdom gained in their career life.

We presented Violet Richardson awards for the three cities. Each of the awards was fully sponsored: Surrey by Coast Capital Savings, White Rock by Sources Community Resource Centers, and Delta by Trenant Park Pet Clinic.

We created a photo board, with magnetic printed photos of each of the mentors. Each mentor was able to take her photo home as a memento of the day.

We are very grateful that the event was supported by and sponsored by various donors and community partners. Two community partners, Imran and Sonum of "Let Her Talk" with Solid State Industries Inc (<https://www.solidstate.coop/>) and their Rotten Banana Productions provided photography for the day and created a video presentation of the day which is a great representation of the event, and can be viewed at: <https://www.soroptimistwhiterock.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DIBI2023-100mb.mp4>

Overall, the day was a resounding success. Our two groups worked very well together and hope to collaborate on another DIBI in the future. Kathie & Darlene enjoyed spending the day at the SI Victoria Westshore DIBI in March to share ideas for our DIBIs and connect with other Soroptimist club members. Dream It Be It. Dream Big.



SI of Saskatoon
Submitted by Pam Bennett

SI Saskatoon Dream It, Be It Event

On February 11, 2023 the SI Club of Saskatoon was proud to host our second ever Dream It, Be It (DIBI) event. This was a free, in-person event that ran for 3 hours on a Saturday with lunch and refreshments provided. Participants were young women in the 12 to 18 age range.

The event started with a 2-hour interactive session which covered the themes of *Discovering your Dreams*, *Exploring Careers*, and *Overcoming Obstacles*. We also talked about self-love and healthy relationships including what they look like and what is not acceptable. Our vibrant club members facilitated an engaging session and kept the participants





involved, thinking, talking, and laughing. Each young woman was given a booklet (zine) to fill out to take home with all the ideas and strategies that they wrote down during the day to look at in the future and keep on track.

After the interactive session and lunch, we had a 1-hour panel with four professional women working in different fields. The panel consisted of: an Indigenous teacher and land-based educator from Oskayak High School, a welder who was also a new mother, a surgical pathologist originally from China, and a fire-fighter/paramedic. The panel was delightful, and we could have talked with these women for hours. Each woman introduced themselves and answered questions about their career including what they enjoyed about their work and a

description of how they overcame obstacles along the way. The panel also answered questions from the event participants.

Our club's first Dream It, Be It event last year in 2022 was successful in many ways but we will admit we were slightly disappointed to have only three lovely participants. This year we are pleased to report we had 22 participants for our 2023 DIBI event! On this metric alone, we felt the event was a success! We also received excellent feedback from the participants (see below) which made our hard work planning and executing the event well worth it.



“You face a lot of obstacles in life and things will be hard, but it’s important to never give up and know there are people who will support you.”

“That you can be what you want to be no matter what gender, ethnicity you are.”

“I learned that it is not at all unusual for there to be a lot of twists and turns in a person’s career path. It makes me feel more determined to overcome whatever obstacles I face later in life. “



SI of Victoria Westshore
Submitted by Rhona Beaumont

Dream It, Be It Conference, Victoria March 2023

Wow! What an amazing event transpired from all the hard work of the event team. A small, but mighty team of Pat Masters (event lead), Vinny, Erin and Loreli created an incredible conference for 120 young women in Greater Victoria. Aply supported by President Sandra, acting as consultant with her experience of organizing previous events.

The stunning location, with its ocean backdrop, acted as the perfect venue for over 12 workshops, a mentorship “Walk of Life” and a fabulous lunch with keynote address.

There were so many highlights to this event! The previous years of Covid, had caused a gap in our annual event. There was a concern as to whether the girls and teachers would be interested in



attending an in person event. Like many of you here who have organized events since Covid, there is a level of anxiety around the willingness of participants to attend in person. We have heard the stories of the new norm, post Covid, where many young people have continued to study in virtual environments, struggle with social anxiety and large spaces. However, after a flurry of last minute registrations, the team exceeded their target of 100 registered. It was closer to 120!

The second challenge was to keep the girls engaged once they had arrived. Yes, it wasn't school, so that was certainly a plus point! What worked well however, was the mix of events. The girls were first given the opportunity to meander their way through their own personal Walk of Life.



Women from all walks of life engaged them in discussion around working in trades, Police, Coaching, Phlebotomy, not for profit organizations joined us and the lovely Carla from SI Vancouver came to talk about work in the wineries. The girls were incredibly chatty and excited as they toured the tables. I had a rather large



crowd of girls pulling Angel Cards and asking great questions about how to follow their passion in their work life.

Snacks were provided from Food Share Network, and the cookies disappeared at lightening speed!

After an hour and a half, the girls were ushered in to their morning workshops, topics which they had preselected such as Body Image, Understanding Mental Health, Interview Skills and Money Matters. 12 workshops in total took place, and the girls chose two .

At lunchtime, Vinny performed excellent keynote address around menstrual equity and awareness based on her own experiences. It was interesting to see the girls react, extremely positively, to her speech.

One of our sponsors, Big Wheel Burger, was so impressed by the event, he wanted to chat about being the main key sponsor for 2024.

A truly fabulous, engaging day!



Dream It, Be It Career Fair, October 2022

Our first DIBI event in three years took place near the beginning of this club year, back in October. Shari Workman and Joan Turner, both new members since last time, did an excellent job of leading our team. I'm writing this at the last minute because I forgot to ask them to submit something. Fortunately Darcel Moro documented the event with photos on our Facebook page.

Much like in 2019, this DIBI was a career fair with women mentors from a wide variety of occupations. We held it at Centennial Secondary in Coquitlam on a Friday that was a professional development day for staff throughout SD 43. The evening before, mentors were invited to enjoy wine and snacks with club members, and to set up their tables.

On the day, we greeted the young women as they arrived, gave them programs and donated swag, and directed them to the back to grab some breakfast. With close to 40 mentors, 105 teens, and club members, the place was buzzing! After a welcome by Shari everyone headed into the theatre for an inspiring keynote by Kirsten Anderson.



Following Kirsten's session it was time to mingle with the mentors, ask questions, and in some cases try out tools. The tradeswomen and police officers especially received a lot of questions.



After lunch we were back to the theater for a mentor panel where with women from widely varied occupations discussing their careers and challenges.



We wrapped up the day with a draw for door prizes generously donated by some of our mentors.



Club Projects—SI of the Tri Cities

SI of the Tri Cities has a new program, monthly visits with the women staying at Joy's Place, a local transition house. Lynne Scott wrote this for the club newsletter.

April was a time for making Body Sugar Scrubs with the ladies. After the scrubs were made, they were placed into jelly jars with the seal and screw top and decorated with fabric covers tied with their choice of coloured ribbon. Suzanne helped the children make cute lady bugs out of paper plates painted red, decorated with eyes antennas, mouths or however the child's imagination guided them.

Dessert was a chocolate cake. There were 3 adults and 3 children, a fun evening. Suzanne helped the children and Maureen and I helped the women with the scrubs. Our prize draw was a beautiful quilt and the winner was a young mom with 2 boys. Needless to say she was so excited to be the winner of such a lovely quilt.

Recipe for Sugar Scrubs:

Combine

1/4 cups of sugar

3 Tbsp melted Coconut oil

1 Tbsp Lemon Juice

1/4 tsp of essence of Coconut Bath Oil or we used Lemongrass Essential Oil

Place mixture in a Jelly Jar with rubber seal ring and Screw cap.

Coconut oil has antibacterial and anti-fungal properties and moisturizes skin.

Lemons also has antibacterial properties.

With scrub in palm of hand, add a few drops of water and rub onto your skin. NOT THE FACE. Sugar is a great exfoliant for the body and feet. Enjoy!

Period Promise—No Barriers. Period.

For the past two years we have partnered with the BC United way in their [Period Promise](#) campaign to collect menstrual products for people in our community who need them. We plan another collection day for May 20th at Como Lake Village shopping centre in Coquitlam.



As well, several members attended the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce IWD celebration on March 8th, and collected products there. These are going to the women we support at Bea's Kloset.



Submitted by Veronica Loat

In 2010 the *Violet Richardson Award* was replaced by *Dream It Be It - Career Support for Girls* in keeping with SIA's new Dream programmes. It was in the same year that Bonnie McLaren, a former member of our club, passed away and left a legacy to our club. Bonnie had headed the VRA Award for several years and on receipt of these funds the club unanimously decided to continue with the award which was re-named *The Bonnie McLaren Award* and her legacy allowed us to fund this programme for several years.

A few years later her family set up a large endowment fund with the West Vancouver Foundation, and all revenue earned by the investments were for the use of SI of North & West Vancouver. We are incredibly fortunate to be the beneficiary of the fund and it supports three large club projects each year – *The Bonnie McLaren Award*, the *Family Camp*, and the *Dream It Be It Empowerment Program*.

We are deeply grateful to the McLaren Family for recognizing Bonnie's passion for the Soroptimist mission and for trusting us to keep her dream alive.

Bonnie's Soroptimist spirit truly lives on.

Editor's Request

Veronica sent the story behind her club's Bonnie McLaren Award after I asked clubs to tell us about your sponsors. There must be other stories! Care to share them?

For our next edition I would love to see some member profiles! And club profiles! What projects do your clubs do that the rest of us might not know about? What are your plans for the next club year?

My club's AGM and installation of officers is in early June. If yours is as well, please send a writeup and photos. Or if your photos are on Facebook I can grab them from there.

Deadline for our next edition? Please send me your submissions by **June 19th** and I will do my best to have it out by the end of the month. Feel free to send me stuff any time between now and then, no need for us all to be in a last-minute rush!



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