

SOROPTIMISTS IN ACTION

WESTERN CANADA REGION NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2020



2020-2022 Board

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Membership:

Linda Cunliffe

Celebrating Success:

Anna Der



Happy Festive Season to all.

Whatever you celebrate at this time of the year – Diwali, Hannukah, Christmas, Winter Solstice or Kwanza – it is a festive season and this year will take a different tone. We will not be celebrating with our extended family and friends and staying home but hopefully we can still enjoy ourselves with our household bubble.

This has been interesting past few months for us all. We started the Soroptimist year virtually and continue to do so. Our May conference and installation was postponed to September as we all thought this would be over by then. How wrong we were; we all know that we ended up having our conference virtually (a learning experience for us all). Thanks to SI Surrey Delta for pulling that off for all of us. It seems our next conference might also have to be virtually again, hosted by SI of the Langleys. Hopefully our Conference in 2022 will be back to person meeting at the Laurel Point Inn in Victoria. By then we will all be ready to get together with our Soroptimist friends.

I know all clubs are finding it hard to hold fundraising events this year which is causing a lack of funds they can provide to Live Your Dream awards and other programs they support. Some have been able to successfully convert them to Zoom events and it seems some clubs are successfully holding “old fashioned” raffles. We know there is a greater need for funds this year as the programs and services we support are not able to raise their own funds either. Once we get back to normal there will be huge needs for funds so plans need to be made now for how that will be done going forward.

Speaking of Live your Dream awards, SIA has announced that for every 30 awards a region gives out, it will receive another Region Award so let's give out as many as we can. That will allow us to assist more women in our communities. SIA's 2021-2031 big goal is to invest in the dreams of half a million women and girls to obtain education.

As Chair of the Membership, Linda Cunliffe is working with a group of great women across the region trying to establish a virtual club. The first in Canada. If you know any women who are not in the area of a club, please provide their contact info to Linda who will gladly connect with them.

The Western Canada Region website is currently being updated. Shirley Stewart, Public Awareness chair will be asking clubs for information to be included on this website, please respond to her as quickly as possible so the update can be done quickly and smoothly as our current website is quite outdated.

In the words of Dr. Bonnie Henry – Be Kind, Be Calm, Be safe. Wear your mask, wash your hands, social distance and stay in your small group (however that is defined in your province).

Until next time, I am wishing to a joyous festive season and great 2021 Here's hoping we will be back to normal early into the new year.

Governor Ro

Season's Greetings from your Region Fundraising Chair!

I know fundraising this year is going to be a challenge, as we are all having to pivot from our usual in-person events, but it is certainly not impossible. I have been excited to see clubs doing some fun online auctions, so make sure you support your fellow clubs if you can.

SI Surrey Delta did a great job holding their on-line *Quarantina* fundraiser – I am sure Linda Cunliffe and her crew would be happy to share their tips and tricks for making it work. Another idea is an on-line raffle. My club, **SI TriCities** is using Raffle Nexus – a raffle service provider that is licensed to conduct raffles in BC and Saskatchewan (sorry, Alberta peeps). Raffle Nexus will set up a web page for you and take care of all the on-line ticket sales. Their fee is 10% of the ticket sales, but there is no minimum charge. If you are looking for other ideas, I strongly encourage you to check out the *Digital Toolkit* on the SIA website here: <https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/digital-toolkit/index.html> The Digital Toolkit has lots of great ideas for fundraising as well as member engagement and even program ideas. If you want a tutorial for how to navigate the Digital Toolkit, check out this video produced by SIA: <https://youtu.be/mxoKH6EnDZI> .

I also want to remind all the clubs in the region that SIA is encouraging every club to give what they can to Club Giving. You may not have as much to give this year, but Club Giving dollars come back to our region in the form of the region Live Your Dream Awards that we give every year, and also for Club Grants for some of our most vital projects.

In closing, I would like to remind everyone that your Soroptimist sisters are there for you when the going gets tough, and I know that this year has been especially tough on all of us. If you need help getting a fundraising idea off the ground, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. I will be happy to offer whatever assistance I can.

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Stay Safe,
Chari Grant
Region Fundraising Chair

Looking Ahead by Exploring Our Past

In celebration of Soroptimist International of the Americas' 75th Anniversary, a commemorative book was created entitled "Serving Communities for 75 Years". Recently a copy was found in SI of the Langleys' archives. The words of the introductory pages still ring true 25 later.

"Since Soroptimist was formed, the world has experienced an explosion of change. By today's standards, the world in 1921 represented a simpler time...when family bonds were durable...when community ties were strong...and when the future lay ahead with dazzling promise."

"When Violet Richardson Ward became president of the first Soroptimist club in Alameda County, CA, she was prescient in her insistence that the organization include an international focus.... The international focus would become an important part of Soroptimist's aims, particularly as the organization began expanding outside of its North American borders."

As Soroptimist begins a new century of serving those needing our help, there are many paths yet to explore. *In the words of Violet Richardson-Ward: "Let us continue to work together and with others toward the development of a better womanhood, a better manhood and a better citizenship."*

Club Spotlight ~ SI North & West Vancouver
Submitted by Hanneke Eyres, President

NOTE: Thank you Hanneke for taking the time to respond and provide an insight into how her club is embracing the challenges of 2020. I'm sure we can relate to many of her points - and may find a few tips as well! Shirley

Retention: I think that Social Committee has an even more important role to play during this time. We did have an outdoor beach party gathering in the autumn when the weather was nice and the guidelines allowed. One of our members is looking at a Zoom games evening. Not sure how that will work out. We have one members who has been very hard at work finding ideas we can do to enjoy in small groups or outside, but COVID restrictions delay any activities for the moment.

We have decided to have guest speakers at each of our monthly meetings related to our charities we support. We had Family Services of the North Shore speak about their Christmas Bureau, and also about the large number of regular patrons who are experiencing hunger. Although they are do not do food delivery, they have stepped up to provide many with one hot meal a day. It helps our members feel a sense of connection that the money we donate does help the local community.

Online Meetings: All our members are online, except for one. But she has on one occasion joined us by phone which worked out fine. She is very busy with her work, so she finds it difficult to join us. Most members find it a relief not to drive the Upper Levels in the rain, wind and any other adverse conditions on dark nights. And it saves time on driving.

Fundraising: We had originally had run into a road block about fundraising online as we were going to have an online wine auction, but the BC government have eased up on their restrictions. So we are proceeding with an online Auction of Wine, Chocolates and more in January in time for Valentines. We would love any lower mainland clubs to participate so long as they are within driving distance.

Membership Retention and Recruitment: We lost one member this year. We have had interest by 2 possible new women but they are holding off right now for various reasons. My concern is the next year 2021-2022 if fatigue sets in.

5) We plan on having a Christmas club Zoom meeting and hopefully can make it interesting.

6) We also have a project which is called Dream Bags where we collect items and goodies to fill small purses or bags which we donate to the various charities, such as North Shore Women's Centre, and Family Services of the North Shore and more. To date we have donated 68 purses to 5 different charitable organizations.

7) We are decorating a tree at the Dundarave Tree Festival of Lights. Donations for the tree and more supports Lookout, a North Shore Homeless Shelter charity. I have included photos of Lourdes and Barbara. Taken one at a time because of current restrictions.

We would love to have input from other clubs about how they are inspiring their members and their communities.



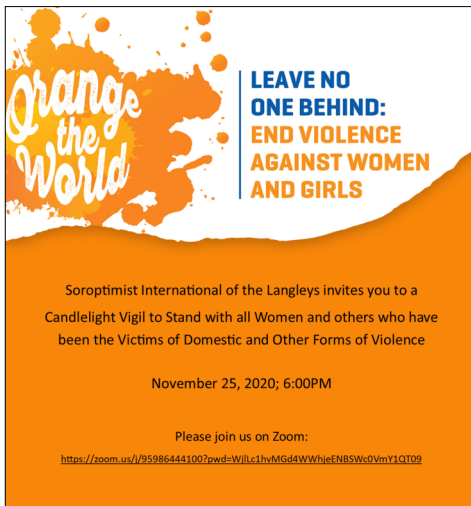
SI North & West Vancouver members Lourdes and Barbara, decorating the club's tree at the Dundarave Tree Festival of Lights.



Planning a virtual recruitment event? Check out SIA's [About Us PowerPoint](#), which you can customize and present to give an overview of our organization to potential members, or even share as part of new member orientation!

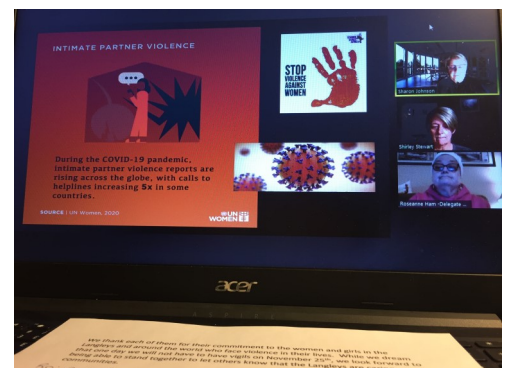
The link to the PowerPoint can be found in the December *Best for Women* which we all should have received.

To find more Awareness tips and graphics, go to: <https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/digital-toolkit/awareness/index.html>.



SI Langleys hosted its annual Candle Light Vigil on November 25th in a virtual format. Consisting of a recorded presentation featuring messages from WCR Governor Roseanne and SI President Sharon Fisher, approximately 20 Soroptimists and guests "attended".

"This is the 21st year our club has hosted this Vigil", said Public Awareness Chair Shirley Stewart. "There was no discussion about not doing it - we must continue to let women in our communities and around the world know we stand with them."



Update from Region Membership Chair

Since taking on the role as your WCR Membership Chair, I have been putting a lot of thought into what I might contribute to the ongoing success of our clubs. I have had the pleasure of attending meetings with **SI New West/Burnaby** and **SI Courtenay**. I have also been active with our new **Canada West Online Club** as they move towards chartering our FIRST virtual club. Through these meetings, it seems that keeping our members engaged is a prime concern, so today I am going to focus on some ideas we might adopt to meet the challenges we are facing.

Your membership team at SIA have put together some valuable tools and resources to help you grow and nourish your clubs. Let's use these tools to enhance our membership experience and keep our members engaged and excited.

Here is a question asked by SIA: *How do we forge the sense of friendship and fellowship in a virtual setting so that we can remain engaged in our Soroptimist clubs even when we may not be able to gather in person?* Here are some ideas you might want to explore:

- Many clubs have made the shift to operating and holding business meetings online. But have you participated in a virtual social event, with no official business at hand? Consider scheduling a regular social, perhaps on a monthly basis. This can be hosted on Zoom or another teleconference platform, or even by conference call. Take the opportunity to "get together" online with other Soroptimist members. In these socials, consider trying some of the following to make each virtual gathering fun and unique.
 - * <https://soroptimist.imgix.net/05-for-members/digital-toolkit/SIAScavengerHunt.pdf>
 - * https://fernandmaple.com/2020/04/15/how-to-throw-virtual-celebrations-parties/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=pinterest&utm_campaign=tailwind_tribes&utm_content=tribes&utm_term=1042387600_48653438_339627
 - * <https://www.onlinecookingschool.com/catalog>
- It might also be fun (and productive) to create our own social media campaigns to showcase our amazing members and projects. SIA has developed the following Social Media Campaign that we might want to adopt:
 - * **#SoroptimistsAtWork** Social Media Campaign Awards – Demonstrate the value of Soroptimist membership across social media platforms. Using a unified hashtag **#SoroptimistsAtWork**, SIA, the regions, and clubs can post photos of Soroptimists volunteering and having a great time in fellowship and friendship together – two things that members value most about SIA membership.
- SIA Diamond Campaign Website (more valuable resources): <https://soroptimist.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e3128916f319566bbd1faf6c3&id=fb387c4fd1&e=6b06949d3c>

Since we can't meet in person this year to celebrate the holidays, let's get creative and find fun ways to stay connected through the rainy and snowy winter months ahead. We are innovative, resourceful women who treasure our Soroptimist membership. Let's share our experiences, challenges, and successes so we can collectively continue to grow and flourish. We've got this, ladies!!

I love attending your meetings to learn more about YOUR clubs, so feel free to invite me anytime. In the meantime, stay safe and be blessed!

Linda Cunliffe

WCR Membership Chair

lindacunliffe14@gmail.com

Call/Text: 604-313-9522

Public Awareness Tips: Celebrating and Honoring Your Live Your Dream Award Recipient(s) Virtually

No doubt we are all brainstorming ways of honouring our Live Your Dream (LYD) award recipients on a virtual platform. It is one of the most fun and rewarding aspects of the awards process! One of the most consistently reported outcomes from past recipients is an increase in their self-esteem and their impact as a role model for their dependents. Honoring your recipient helps her feel respected and valued as a woman in your community. It is also important for her family and friends to see her recognized for her hard work. Holding a virtual ceremony to honor your recipient can be cost-effective and safe alternative to celebrating her in person.

Distribute the funds as soon as possible Award funds should never be contingent on attending an awards banquet or event. Your club should send your award recipient her funding as soon as possible and not wait until an event can be held. Women rely on these funds to complete their education, and delaying fund disbursement is not in the spirit of the program or of Soroptimist.

Host an online recognition event Many clubs choose to honor their recipient at an awards banquet or dinner reception. Consider hosting an online recognition event instead and inviting your recipient's family or important loved ones to join. Recipients consistently remark that feeling encouraged and recognized by women within their community is equally as rewarding as receiving the cash award. Furthermore, seeing their mother, wife, aunt, or sister receive an award is equally impactful on the recipient's family.

Consult the Soroptimist Forward resources for tips on using online video conferencing systems. Be sure to do a test of the video software with another Soroptimist before the event! Make sure that your recipient has access to the internet and a device that will allow her to participate. Remember to consult her before choosing a time and date for your virtual event to ensure that she can attend.

Your recipient does not have to speak at the event at all. Nor does she have to share her story with the audience, even in writing. Ask what would make this a positive experience for her. Perhaps discussing her obstacles would make her feel brave. Ultimately, empowering her to be the author of her own story is the most valuable part of this experience. When introducing her to your audience, rather than detailing her obstacles, consider sharing what about her application inspired your club to select her as a recipient and want to support her. TIP: Assure her that no matter what, you're excited to celebrate her, are proud of what she has accomplished, and want to learn about her aspirations for the future.

Celebrating from Afar If your club cannot host a virtual award ceremony due to lack of technology or internet resources, consider simply mailing your recipient a card congratulating her with well wishes from the club, and consider including school supplies or a care package with the card. Award recipients note that knowing a community of Soroptimists supports them is very inspiring - show her that you stand by her, even if you cannot celebrate in-person or virtually!

Publicize your recipient Many clubs create a news release to further honor their recipients or share their recipient's story on their website to advertise the award to future potential applicants. These are great ideas, but in order to use your recipient's name and story, you will need her to sign a media consent form first. If your recipient gives her consent, your club can record a video of her on Zoom sharing her goals and dreams, which your club can use to inspire other women and encourage future award applicants.

Go beyond a Cash Award In addition to cash awards, many clubs offer non-monetary awards. One of SIA's strategic program objectives is to increase the ability of women to achieve economic empowerment. Therefore, consider what else applicants will need to help them achieve their goals, such as books, computers, groceries, and childcare. Club members can also volunteer their time and experience to assist recipients through mentoring, job training, and financial advice. These activities help to strengthen the quality of the impact that the award has on its winners.

The Amazing Projects of SI Vancouver

Submitted by Christine Buttkus

Kudos to the members of SI Vancouver for their projects and incredible presentation to showcase their work..

PPE PACKAGES

Thank you to the Canadian Red Cross Society for providing funding towards this project!

We will be distributing these to women and families leaving abusive relationships through the BC Society of Transition Houses









What's in a PPE Package?

Each package will consist of:

- Children's mask
- Adult mask
- First aid kits
- Hand sanitizers


QUEEN ALEXANDRA ELEMENTARY

LITERACY BAGS

Thank you to the Canadian Red Cross Society for providing funding towards this project.





ABOUT

This project involves providing goody bags to children in K-Grade 7 with the key focus of reading. We wanted the kids to find ways to relax with their book so we included a stuffed animal as it is a relaxation tool for any age. Each year the bags grew a little bit and the bag now includes:

- Book
- Stuffed animal
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Small toy
- Mittens
- Pencil crayons/crayons
- Colouring book
- Candy cane
- Reusable masks
- Flashlight
- Tissues
- And more



COMFORT BAGS

We will be sending these comfort bags to be distributed to vulnerable women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

Thank you to the Canadian Red Cross Society for providing funding towards this project!




ABOUT

These comfort bags will include:

- Reusable bag
- Reusable mask
- Gloves
- Adult colouring book
- Felt's inks for colouring book
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Granola bar
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Body lotion
- Soap
- Lip balm
- Jewellery piece
- Tissues
- Hand warmers
- Small first aid kit
- Flashlight
- Notepad

We will be sending these comfort bags to organizations in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside serving women such as the Imouto House and WISH




SI Tri-Cities Update

Submitted by Julie Knisley

We have a monthly newsletter that we use to try to keep our members motivated and in touch with what we are doing as a club. We have added a new section this year to help our members to get to know one member a little better each month. The editor picks a member and interviews her and includes it in the next edition. It is our way of getting to know each other a bit better during these COVID times

We continue to hold our monthly business meetings on zoom and try to add in a little fun each month. Most of our programs are also meeting on zoom as it the safest way to meet with the COVID numbers climbing.

We have been very successful with grants being awarded to our Programs this year. We have been awarded grants for our 2 largest programs, Bea's Kloset and Warm Place For Women. Bea's Kloset received \$9,800 from the Red Cross. Warm Place was awarded \$8,800 from community foundations plus \$5,000 from TD Bank.

Also, we have been blessed with some wonderful sponsorships as well - \$10,000 from Townline Homes and \$1,000 from Pacific Coast Terminala.

We are in the process of organizing an on line 50/50 draw to raise funds that would normally come from our Awards event in the Spring. As we are unclear at this moment just how it will look, we are starting our fundraising efforts now.

We continue to receive expressions of interest from women every week on our website, wanting to learn more about our club. Instead of inviting them to attend our regular monthly business meeting, which is currently being held on-line, Sandra (our membership chair) has been meeting potential new members for a socially distanced walk and chat or organizing a telephone call or Zoom meeting. The Zoom meeting format has been a great success.



Warm Place for Women

Even though we are not able to hold our monthly Warm Place Dinners, we are supporting a large number of our families with food security during this time. Many of our families that we support have seen an increase in the price of groceries and have reached out to us for help to support their family's grocery needs. To date, we have delivered **552** meals, **108** grocery hampers, handed out over **\$7500** in grocery gift cards.

We continue to deliver hampers (supported through United Way Local Love Food hub) and find alternative ways to support as many families as possible. Here's a note from one of our families. *'I'm counting on it. I'm so blessed that I found the beautiful ladies of Warm Place. I do miss all the warm hugs and beautiful smiles that I always look forward to every 1st Thursday's of the month. My prayers to you and all the ladies that you will be able to touch more lives and families like us.'*

For our October 10th hamper delivery, the Warm Place team delivered hampers to a number of our families! Our reach was 52 people for the deliveries on this day. Thinking in the past, we supported 120 people per month, we are thankful for reaching so many for Thanksgiving. For these deliveries, we decided to include some special treats for the families to help them celebrate Thanksgiving; \$100 grocery gift card, a pumpkin pie, whip cream, a Halloween treat bag for each person, PPE kits for all members of the families, a pumpkin for carving, and a carving kit! Plus, a chance to win the pumpkin carving contest! Prizes for the contest are themed on food security and giving mom a break from cooking. The top three categories of prizes were: a grocery gift card, a skip the dishes gift card, and a family pizza party.

