



Soroptimist Across Canada

Eastern and Western Canada Regions – Fall 2024



Soroptimists in both Eastern and Western Canada Regions recognize that we live, work and play on the traditional ancestral lands of many First Nations across our country. We acknowledge the tumultuous history endured by the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, and we commit to moving forward with mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.

Let's meet our new Governors

Chari Grant, WCR

SIA Convention 2024 (or, what I did on my summer vacation). SIA Convention 2024 in Bellevue Washington was an absolute blast! I had a great time connecting with Soroptimists from all over our Federation, but especially all the Soroptimists from both Western Canada Region and Eastern Canada Region. This was the first time that ECR Governor Cheryl and I got a chance to meet in person and it was lovely to get to know her outside of a computer screen. There were so many wonderful memories from Convention, but some of the highlights included:

WCR's own Public Awareness Chair, Rochelle Prasad, carrying the Canadian flag in the parade of nations at the opening ceremonies.

SI Edmonton President Anita Konzi's brilliant idea to have the Canadian delegates wear red and black Buffalo Plaid as our "national dress" at the Wednesday night Friendship reception.

A group of Canadian delegates being the "last ones standing" along with SIA President Bobbi Enderlin at Friday night's *Denim and Diamonds* dance party.

Watching both our WCR and ECR Live Your Dream award recipients give such heartfelt and eloquent presentations as the recipients of the Federation LYD awards. I could not have been prouder of these two incredible



Cheryl Ball, ECR

The 48th SIA Convention was my first convention and the first time I had been to the state of Washington. I felt a bit like John Candy in the movie "Trains, Planes and Automobiles" since travelling from Thunder Bay to Bellevue entailed a 7 ½ hour drive by car followed by an almost 3-hour flight to Seattle.

What awaited me was truly inspiring! The first day included the Governor's Orientation session where I got to meet other governors including WCR Chari Grant. The next day, the SIA General Business meeting was attended by 685 Soroptimists. The Canadian Soroptimists were bursting with pride when our two winners Daryn and Maryam spoke about their struggles and journeys that led them to winning the federation Live Your Dream Awards!

Sandra Garcia spoke about "Encountering Your Inclusive Leadership Potential. Robyn Benincasa spoke about GRIT (Guts, Respect Innovation and Teamwork) and her experiences as a Champion Adventurer. With all the changes we face daily, the workshop on "Insight "Insight into the Future", as well as "Strategic Alignment" were very pertinent.

Another highlight was the first Soroptimist Leadership Fellows Program Graduation (SLFP) ceremony! All 32 graduates were treated like celebrities. (The SLFP is a multi-

young women who have already overcome so many obstacles and who will no doubt leave their marks on the world.

Being part of the inaugural class of 32 Soroptimist Leadership Fellows along with fellow WCR members Past Governor Suzanne Heron, Governor-Elect Shirley Stewart, SI Edmonton President Anita Konzi, SI Victoria Westshore member Vinny Awasthi and ECR Governor Cheryl Ball. It was truly an honour to be in such company.

I am so excited for SIA Convention 2026 in Incheon, Korea and I sincerely hope to see many of you there.

In Soroptimist Friendship,
Chari Grant
Governor 2024-2026
Western Canada Region

year certificate program that gives members an opportunity to enrich their leadership skills.) The following day, the newly minted SLFP graduates attended the final day of training which covered a host of subjects that as Soroptimist leaders we may encounter - "Unscripted Leadership: Leading Through Uncertainty", Conflict Management, and the "Art of Facilitating and Presenting."

It was a jam-packed five-day event for me! In addition to all the learning and sharing opportunities, I attended dinner with other Canadian Soroptimists arranged by Shirley Stewart. Like Governor Chari, the convention highlight was speaking to other Soroptimists and learning about their clubs and the work being undertaken by Soroptimists around the SIA federation. As Soroptimists, we are in the Dream Business! - helping women and girls achieve their dreams through education!

Cheryl Ball
Governor 2024-26
Eastern Canada Region



Graduates of the Soroptimist Leadership Fellows Program.

Canadians at Convention



Western Canada members showing off our red & white, and our Buffalo Plaid!

Eastern and Western Canada members together for dinner.



SOROPTIMIST FOUNDATION OF CANADA: We are Soroptimists...For Cake?

By Wendy D. Templeton. Wendy is a board member of Soroptimist Foundation of Canada and an estate planning lawyer.

Estate planning is often considered an unpleasant task. As Soroptimists however, we have an optimistic outlook on life, we care for others, and believe in the power of change. On this note, there are some very positive aspects of estate planning. We think of a “celebration of life” after someone has passed away. Estate planning offers peace of mind: people are often grateful once they have finished their planning, knowing that they have “taken care of business”. Further, many get great satisfaction in honoring the causes they support one last time through their estate.

Your Will is the last opportunity to contribute to a charity you have supported during your lifetime, and “make a difference”. And a donation to Soroptimist Foundation of Canada (SFC) can be part of that difference. Our history shows that Soroptimists like you have made a very big difference to SFC.

This past year, SFC’s assets for the first time hit the \$3million mark. This, coupled with our 60th anniversary in 2023, is a historic time for us. But we cannot be complacent. Many of you have already made SFC a beneficiary in your Wills, and that legacy will help ensure that SFC’s programs, including our post-graduate Grants for Women (GFW), carry on in the future.

SFC wants to encourage *more of you* to think about making a donation to SFC in your Will. The largest factor in the growth of the assets of SFC, especially in recent years, is bequests. We on the Foundation Board know that continuing donations are important to secure our future. New tax rules now required charities to spend a greater portion of their capital on charity – from 3.5% to 5% annually on assets over \$1million, a 42.8% increase since 2022! And we see so many worthy applications from deserving women with plans for post-graduate studies in fields that will directly impact on the future of women and girls.



You don’t need to do a whole new will to make a bequest. A simple amendment can be made if your Will is otherwise up-to-date.

And here is “food for thought”. SFC celebrated the two recent milestones of 60 years and \$3million at the Western and Eastern Conferences in 2023 and 2024 respectively with spectacular cakes! Some of us are saying SFC stands for “Soroptimists for Cake”! If this little slogan helps encourage you to include SFC in your plans, so be it!



SAVE THE DATE

October 26th 2024

11:00 AM Pacific Time / 2:00 PM Eastern Time

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

via Zoom

Link will be shared closer to the date

- **Clubs - Appoint your Voting Delegate!**
- Attend the AGM and help celebrate the **achievement of our \$3Million goal!**
- Learn how the Foundation has invested in women and girls with **Club Grants, Live Your Dream Awards** and **Grants for Women!**
- Hear from **2024 Grants for Women** recipients about their efforts to improve the lives of women and girls!
- Learn about the work of Foundation Board members and **consider becoming a nominee for next year's Board of Directors!**

All Canadian Soroptimist International members welcome to attend

Soroptimist visit—East to West

Submitted by Estatira Shirkhodae, SI Toronto

This June, I attended a sustainability conference in Victoria, which provided an excellent opportunity to share my insights with other academics and explore the city's natural beauty. Victoria's Butchart Gardens, coastal views, and vibrant atmosphere created the perfect backdrop for the conference. After my time in Victoria, I embarked on a trip across the ocean to Lasqueti Island, where I finally met my dear friend Suzanne in person after four years of online friendship. The island's untouched landscapes offered a peaceful retreat, far from the bustle of city life. I was captivated by its serene beauty and tranquil atmosphere and overjoyed to spend a day with Suzanne.



Following that I took a ferry to Vancouver, where I continued to be amazed by the breathtaking nature, from dense forests to picturesque coastlines. During my trip, I had the privilege of meeting with Soroptimists from the Victoria, Vancouver, North & West Vancouver, and Tri Cities clubs to learn about their inspiring projects.



Upon arriving in Vancouver, I met with Lois, Lourdes, and Veronica for dinner, and earlier in Victoria, I enjoyed a lovely lunch with Joan. Colleen and Maryam, who travelled all the way from the Tri Cities, showed me around Vancouver before handing me



over to Janet and her husband, who kindly took me to the beautiful Queen Elizabeth Park before taking me to the airport. The way these Soroptimists coordinated to make me feel welcomed was a testa-



ment to their commitment to one of Soroptimist values: friendship. This journey, enriched by nature and meaningful connections, was truly unforgettable. I can't wait to go back to beautiful British Columbia!



Soroptimist visit—West to East

Submitted by Yolanda Broderick, SI Tri Cities

This summer I had the chance to visit SI Thunder Bay, Ontario as Paula, our daughter got a big job as Director, Student Success with Lakehead University starting July 15, 2024. I was in Thunder Bay from August 2nd to 7th and visited her and her 3 year old puppy, now a 90 lbs. dog. Colleen Penrowley connected me ahead of my visit to Cindy Figus, president and to Cheryl Ball, Eastern Canada Region Governor. I was invited to tea on August 4th at the house of Lee-Ann Nalezty, Friendship Links Chair. In attendance were Cindy Figus, president; Cheryl Ball, ECR Governor; Lucy Doucette, a young carpenter and new member who recently moved to Thunder Bay in March 2024; Shirley Smith; Enid McKenzie and me.

Cheryl Ball discussed her attendance at the July 2024 SIA convention in Bellevue, Washington and mentioned she met with Western Canada Past-Governor Suzanne Heron and newly installed Western Canada Governor Chari Grant and April Neave, Soroptimist Foundation Board Chair.

I broached the idea of a friendship link between our clubs, and everyone was excited to the idea. Cheryl was specifically impressed with Bea's Klostet and wanted to find out more. SI Thunder Bay is also wondering if there is a project that both our clubs can collaborate on in the future. Fast forward, we now have established a Friendship Link with SI Thunder Bay as our first friendship link. SIA has also been informed about this and they have acknowledged and updated the SIA Friendship Links Directory. I would like to thank Suzanne Heron and Darlene Jamieson, Western Canada Friendship Links Chair and Colleen Penrowley for encouraging me to work on this. Here are photos of my August 4th visit to SI Thunder Bay.



L to R: Shirley Smith, Yolanda Broderick, ECR Governor Cheryl Ball, Lee-Ann Nalezty.



Cindy Figus, President, SI Thunder Bay and Enid McKenzie.



L to R: Lucy Doucette, Shirley Smith, Yolanda Broderick, ECR Governor Cheryl Ball.

Sponsorship

Submitted by Linda Kozina, SI Tri Cities, on behalf of the Sponsorship Committee, for the club newsletter last Spring. Linda gave permission to share it here.

Thank YOU, each and every Soroptimist from our Club! Each of you shine and quietly go about serving women and girls in this community in our various programs. Your good works have spread the deeds of Soroptimists and we are gaining recognition, respect, and momentum.

When someone from the sponsorship committee receives a recommendation from one of our club members, we have the ability to research that sponsor, and the tools to make the request actually quite effortlessly.

Yes, it does take some finesse and diligence to ask and do the necessary follow up to receive a financial commitment from a sponsor or donor. It is a well known fact that it takes eight "asks" to get a nibble of interest and lots of follow up to secure that sponsor.

And the job isn't done at that point. We must keep in touch with the sponsor, engage them in what interests that sponsor. A classic example is Westwood Honda. They have sponsored us for several years, always the same amount and we express gratitude and appreciation. I asked for a new car this year (which we didn't receive) in addition to our regular sponsorship, but the Manager put us in touch with one of his employees who thought of a novel idea of rewarding customers who bring in gently used purses. Customers receive merchandise from Westwood Honda for their purses, we receive 50 purses for Warm Place for Women filled with toiletries, period products, make up etc purchased by a budget from Westwood Honda.



Further, we asked Westwood Honda for a woman to make a presentation at our May general meeting on what we as females, need to know before meeting a salesperson or having our car maintenance or repairs done.



Ladies, it takes an entire club to work on sponsorship. We are grateful for the tech support we received for the website and logos, the awesome sponsorship package which sells itself, and our Treasurer who has assisted this committee in countless ways.

And last but not least, thank you for your volunteer efforts. Our Give Her Wings event will be a huge success this year.

Below is the beginning of Linda's submission to the club's Annual Report in June.

Thank you to the efforts of our entire Soroptimist of the Tri Cities club, we were able to generate new sponsors, raise more dollars for our programs and \$50,500 in sponsorships this year. Three new sponsors, Burb, Coquitlam Continuing Education and CI Assante Wealth Management were the direct result of referrals from club members. Encompass came back this year in the form of a contribution to our Coquitlam Foundation bursary account. In total, we had 16 sponsors this year.

Developing and Implementing an Online Dream it, Be it Event

Submitted by: Barb McCoy, President SI Canada West Online (CWO)

Let's be truthful, Covid prepared all our members to reluctantly embrace Online activities in all aspects of club events.

When transferring to Canada's only Online Soroptimist club, our DiBi committee needed to consider how we could approach the delivery and implementation, not only for DiBi, but also using the same principles in Fundraising, Membership and Public Awareness.

The following report is serving SICWO as a guideline to utilize all the benefits of being virtual and online for being successful.

Our club had just finished its first year of operations. A DiBi program had not been established yet. In my previous club, DiBi had been established in person, with ongoing projects for 8 years...easy peasy! Starting from scratch was a daunting task.

First steps

- Choosing a topic that would interest girls.
- Brainstorming with other clubs to discover their successes.
- Asking for assistance (be specific) I asked for volunteers to sit on an DiBi advisory board for 1 hour a month for 4 months)



Our club could never have had this success without assistance from members of SI Vancouver as well as individual members in the WCR.

Since we are the only online Soroptimist club in Canada, our territory spans across all of Canada from coast to coast, to coast, with a focus on the North. This guideline also applies to our LYD program recipients.

You would think that having such an expansive territory, it would be easy to find an organization or school to embrace our DiBi program. After many phone calls and emails to numerous schools, girls organizations and northern outreach programs, I did not receive one reply. It became apparent that I needed support from club members to assist with getting my foot in the door. I turned to my own club for assistance. It so happens that one of our members (Chyler Webb) attended a school in Northern Manitoba and still had connections with the teachers and principal. And better yet, her younger sister was still a student at the school.

The success of online delivery of a program is not only getting your foot in the door, but ensuring there is a person within the school or program that will be to help manage the organization of the event in your virtual world. Chyler's sister, Erin, took our DiBi flyer and showed it to her computer teacher. In turn, the computer teacher took the flyer to the principal, who approved of the event. One

of many hurdles achieved!

Communication

I immediately set up a ZOOM call to the teacher, and Erin, to see how we could deliver our DiBi program to the girls in the school. We discussed room and attendance availability. Since the teacher ran the computer room, she was able to organize laptops for each girl as well, she wrote to all parents seeking permission for their daughter to attend. She also volunteered to inform teachers to release the attendees for a 2 hour session. Without a qualified organizer on the other end of a webinar, it would be very difficult to run a session in a school. Our point person in the school had the ability to run the computers and excuse the girls from other classes in order to attend our webinar. Due to the success of this webinar, we have been invited to come back.

Advisory Board

In developing and delivering our AI&YOU program, our DiBi program Lead held monthly sessions to ensure we were on the right track on not only the content, but of the delivery. I invited Erin to be our Girls advisory person and 3 members of SI Vancouver also stepped forward to assist. SI Vancouver also asked one of their girls advisors to review the content of the presentation. Their opinions were invaluable and they brought a wealth of experiences in the development of the presentation. SI Vancouver also provided 3 guest speakers (pre-filmed) to support our AI&YOU presentation. This project would never have been this successful without the generous support of SI Vancouver and their experience in delivery of their many girls education projects. ***Lesson Learned: Don't be afraid to ask for assistance from other clubs.***

Delivery of the program

It also helps to have a very qualified technical advisor as a club member. If you do not have someone in your club with these abilities, send out an email to other clubs for assistance.

Brooke Gordon was our tech advisor and assisted by speaking with the computer teacher on the classroom setup and proceeded to organize and support our club in the delivery.

Followup

Our committee followed up with the computer teacher and reviewed the comments from the girls on the webinar. The teacher also filled us in on the rich conversations she heard from the breakout sessions. We received 9.5 out of 10 stars on the topic and the teacher said she would be willing to host another session at her school! The girls stated they would have preferred questions through Kahoot instead of breakout rooms...so we now have a Kahoot license!

Next Project

Our club will still offer AI&YOU webinars to outreach areas. We also want to explore Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots program to join volunteers who are on the ground, that could support an educational webinar on the Environment and the Girl (SI focus for the next 4 years)

Celebrating Success—SI North & West Vancouver Soroptimist Family Camp

This is one of numerous interesting projects submitted to the WCR Celebrating Success Chair, Megan Eastwood.

Since 2018 our club has sponsored a Family Camp weekend for up to 40 mothers and their children aged 0 to 14. The Soroptimist Family Camp is intended to build community strength, foster unity, resilience, and lasting connections within families. This initiative, conducted annually at Camp Jubilee, brings together diverse families from our community for an immersive and enriching experience in the heart of nature.

A few of the details of this Camp :

- The event is held in May at Camp Jubilee, on the north shore beside Indian Arm Provincial Park.
- The objective is to provide a weekend camp experience to those families who for various reasons would be unable to have an opportunity such as this on their own.
- Soroptimists liaise with North Shore Neighborhood House and other community organizations to identify and connect with families who may be interested in participating in the weekend camp. Former applicants of the Soroptimist Live Your Dream program are encouraged to attend.
- Camp Jubilee provides food, accommodation, a personalized approach, comfortable facilities, and a variety of program options.
- The families can participate in a number of organized activities arranged by Camp Jubilee staff such as hiking, archery, low ropes, outdoor games, orienteering, shelter building and much more.
- Soroptimists provide transportation to and from the camp, purchase supplies not provided by Camp Jubilee, liaise with the families, and carry out pre and post camp organizational duties.



Photo from the Camp Jubilee website.

Each attendee is given a welcome pack with several goodies including a store gift card. For those who do not have sleeping bags, one is provided. This entire weekend experience is offered free of cost to the attendees. Current costs for a group of 40 persons is \$11,500. The organizing Camp Committee consists of 6 Soroptimists. Approximately 10 Soroptimists are involved with the transportation of families from their homes to the ferry terminal and back at the start and end of the camp.

The benefits of holding such an event, are numerous. Three Soroptimists + 1 non-Soroptimist with nursing experience accompany the group to Camp Jubilee and the stories they relate when they return are truly heartwarming. The camp strengthens family bonds, helps families share experiences and create a sense of camaraderie that often extends far beyond the camp weekend as families continue to engage with each other long after the camp concludes. The skill building workshops and outdoor nature activities are extremely popular and the nightly singalongs around bonfires help cement fun and friendships.

[CLICK HERE](#) to take a look at the camp video and to see how **Soroptimist Invests In Dreams**

Region Teams

Western Canada Board 2024–2026

Governor:

Chari Grant (SI Tri Cities)

Governor-Elect:

Shirley Stewart (SI Langleys)

Treasurer:

Pamela MacDonald (SI Canada West Online)

Secretary:

Shelley DellaMattia (SI Langleys)

Member-at-Large:

Lana Deruyter (SI Chilliwack)

Parliamentarian:

Dana Martin (SI Chilliwack)

2024-2026 Committee Chairs

Membership:

Colleen Penrowley (SI Tri Cities) &
Heather Rollins (SI Chilliwack)

Public Awareness:

Rochelle Prasad (SI Surrey Delta)

Fundraising:

Rhona Beaumont & Sandra Sterling Weicker (SI Victoria Westshore)

Program:

Colleen Schmidt (SI Abbotsford-Mission), Melanie Kenney (SI Saskatoon), LYD Colleen Beresh (SI Saskatoon), DIBI Ching Shih (SI Canada West Online)

Celebrating Success:

Megan Eastwood (SI Tri Cities)

Advocacy:

Carrell Wingrave (SI Canada West Online)

Friendship:

Darlene Jamieson (SI Surrey Delta)

Social Media:

Anney Ardeil (SI Canada West Online), Barbara Bell (SI Surrey Delta), Dana Martin (SI Chilliwack)

Soroptimist Leadership Institute / Virtual Career Library:

Suzanne Heron (SI Canada West Online)

Website: wcsoroptimist.org

Facebook: facebook.com/wcsoroptimist

Eastern Canada Board 2024–2026

Governor:

Cheryl Ball (SI Thunder Bay)

Governor-Elect:

Keshala Fernando-Dissanayake (SI Cambridge)

Treasurer:

Karen Bortolin (SI Thunder Bay)

Secretary:

Aline Chan (SI Guelph)

Director:

Raheleh Barkhordari (SI Toronto)

Director:

TBD

Past Governor:

Gertrud Hocke (SI Cambridge)

2024-2026 Committee Chairs

Membership:

Cheryl Ball (SI Thunder Bay)

Public Awareness:

Tanna Edwards (SI Peterborough)

Fundraising:

Keshala Fernando-Dissanayake (SI Cambridge)

Program:

LYD Raheleh Barkhordari (SI Toronto)
DIBI Cheryl Ball (SI Thunder Bay)

Laws & Resolutions:

RoseMary Reid (SI York Region)

United Nations:

Judy Dickson (SI Kawartha Lakes)

Archives / Historian:

TBD

Website:

Susan Pierce (SI Kawartha Lakes)

Website: ecsoroptimist.org/

Facebook: facebook.com/Soroptimist.EasternCanada

Newsletter Team:

Colleen Penrowley (SI Tri Cities)
Lee-Ann Nalezty (SI Thunder Bay)
Dianne Nielsen (SI Peterborough)
Veronica Loat (SI N&W Vancouver)