



# The Economics of Breast Cancer:

Costly Side Effects  
Add up for Women

By Marielena Zuniga

One week after the first of three surgeries that would end with a mastectomy, Dr. Felicia Knaul went for a walk. She felt frustration, pain, loss, confusion—and most of all—fear. In November 2007, at 41 years of age, she had been diagnosed with breast cancer, somewhere between late stage one and two. A native of Canada, she and her husband, Julio Frenk, had been living in Mexico where he was Mexico's Minister of Health.

As Knaul walked, she thought of a different scenario, of not having access to, or the ability to pay for treatment. For the first time in her 20-year career working as a health economist in developing nations, she had a revelation: She knew exactly how the women whom she had served felt.

"I could internalize the terror felt by a patient who had to choose between paying for health care or her children's school books," says Knaul, the mother of two girls, "or, not knowing who would care for her children while she was in a hospital. I was torn and sickened by the injustice of my having access to care and her not."

Before undertaking chemotherapy, she had another gut-wrenching awareness—that the only thing worse than having the treatment would be not having it because of inability to pay. Knaul understood all too well that the majority of women in the developing world constantly confront this reality.

"What enabled me to face the treatment was the conviction that I could use the experience to help other women," she says.

Today, Knaul—director of the Harvard Global Equity Initiative (HGEI) <<http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k62597>> in Boston—is doing just that, on many levels. She has converted her personal experience into a program, *Cancer de mama: Tomatelo a Pecho* ("Take it to the Breast" also loosely translated as "Take it to Heart") to combat the breast cancer epidemic plaguing Mexico and Latin America. The program focuses on promoting information for patients, families and providers, funding for research and innovation in providing early detection.

Knaul also spearheaded an international symposium of cancer specialists from countries around the world at Harvard last year, "Breast Cancer in the Developing World: Meeting the Unforeseen Challenge to Women, Health and Equity." The meeting centered on devising a plan to attack the troubling increase of breast cancer in developing countries, where nearly two-thirds of

women aren't diagnosed until it has spread through their bodies.

Although breast cancer is generally a treatable condition when detected early, the chances of dying is much higher in poor countries. In the poorest parts of the world, the estimated ratio of cases to deaths is as high as 56 percent, compared to a reported 24 percent in wealthier countries. Knaul estimates that only 5 to 10 percent of breast cancers among women in the developing world are caught early, with the percentage even lower among poor women.

"The common thought until very recently was that this is a disease only of wealthy women and wealthy countries," Knaul says. "This is no longer true. The majority of cases occur in developing countries. Barriers, particularly those of poverty, to early detection combined with lack of access to treatment mean that developing countries account for an even higher proportion of deaths. The injustice of differential survival is such that if a woman gets breast cancer in the developing world, she has a much higher probability of dying than a woman who gets breast cancer in the developed world."

When it comes to this disease, Knaul and other experts agree: Poverty is a lethal carcinogen. And economics can be the strongest barrier to saving lives.

### The high cost of breast cancer

The statistics are sobering. Globally, breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer-related death in women, with some 411,000 deaths each year. There are 1.5 million new cases every year, and about 4.4 million women are believed to be living with cancer. An estimated 1.7 million women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020—a 26 percent increase from current levels—most in developing countries.

In developed nations, recent numbers were high as well, with China reporting 145,472 cases, Brazil at 47,343 and Japan at 33,619. In the United States, breast cancer kills an estimated 40,000 women each year. One in eight U.S. women will develop breast cancer at some time in their lives. The majority of these cases, however, are detected and treated in early stages, when the five-year survival rates are 98 percent, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS) <[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)>.

Another issue facing women in all economic groups is the high cost of battling the disease. Judy Hodges of

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## A little-known breast cancer

Most women have never heard of it. But inflammatory breast cancer, or IBC, is one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer. Why? Because unlike other cancers, the disease has symptoms often not recognized.

While IBC occurs in both women and men, it largely affects women. IBC is very rare, however, accounting for only 1 percent of breast cancers, with about 2,000 women diagnosed annually.

“For most breast cancers, a mass can be seen on a mammogram or a patient can feel a lump. With IBC, it’s not a lump or mass but often presents as changes in how the breast looks or feels. Often IBC can be misdiagnosed as an infection,” says Dr. Debbie Saslow of the American Cancer Society (ACS).

While called “inflammatory” breast cancer, the disease isn’t caused by inflammation. Instead, it’s the result of cancer cells blocking lymph vessels in the skin, according to health experts.

The most common symptoms of IBC include redness, warmth and swelling; skin that appears discolored or dimpled like an orange peel; and itching and pain in the breast. While there are no specific risk factors, the ACS reports that IBC occurs more in younger women and African-American women appear to be at higher risk than white women. The average age at diagnosis is 58—about three to seven years younger than the average age of a woman diagnosed with other forms of breast cancer.

At the end of 2009, representatives from all continents gathered at the Inflammatory Breast Cancer World Alliance in San Antonio, Texas. Investigators and advocates from 30 countries joined forces to find more effective treatments for IBC, which is prevalent in North America, much of Europe and parts of Africa.—M.Z.

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Richmond, Virginia, is one of the many upper middle-class American women who, despite insurance coverage, struggled mightily through the blizzard of medical bills around her breast cancer treatment.

Married for 27 years with three daughters, one of them with a developmental disability, she remembers receiving the news after the needle biopsy of a suspicious lump in her left breast.

Diagnosed with stage one breast cancer, Hodges was 51 years old and devastated. “You run through the house ranting you’re so upset,” she says. “You have cancer and you’re so angry. We were good people. We went to church. I taught Sunday school. My kids aren’t juvenile delinquents. This wasn’t supposed to happen and it wasn’t fair.”

What also wasn’t fair was the cost of breast cancer. Her husband, five weeks into a new job, had insurance coverage with a \$25,000 cap for the first year. On December 13, 2006, Hodges went with her husband and daughter to start chemotherapy and met with a patient coordinator. She still recalls being in a cramped office and hearing the young woman’s opening comments: “We’ve called your insurance company and they won’t pay for this. You have to write me a check for \$38,000 before we start treatment.”

Hodges was stunned. “I looked at her and said, ‘I have a daughter with a rare genetic disorder and I spend a \$1,000 or more per month for her drugs to help her. Do you want me to stop giving her those drugs so I can pay for my treatment? If I do, she will go downhill.’ The woman looked at me horror stricken and shuffled some papers and said, ‘C’mon, let’s get started.’”

With her husband’s insurance maxing out at the sixth chemo treatment, Hodges still needed two more rounds of chemo, as well as surgery (a lumpectomy) and radiation. When all was said and done, her breast cancer expenses totaled a whopping \$147,000.

But she was fortunate. Most of her medical bills were covered because of her determination and research in seeking out sources to pay down the debt, such as the American Cancer Society, as well as the Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF) in Hampton, Virginia <[www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org)>. PAF provides effective mediation and arbitration services to patients to remove obstacles to healthcare, including medical debt crisis, insurance access issues, and employment issues for patients with chronic, debilitating and life-threatening illnesses.

“The woman who worked with me [at PAF] was Cheryl and I call her my ‘pink angel.’ She would speak with hospitals and insurance companies when I was too sick to be on the phone and took care of it. It was like being adopted,” Hodges says.

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## A perfect storm

Hodges' story reflects a trend about the economics of breast cancer. Despite having private health insurance, cancer patients are running up large debts, filing for personal bankruptcy and even delaying or foregoing treatment because they can't afford care, according to a report by the ACS and the Kaiser Family Foundation, a non-profit that focuses on the major health care issues facing the U.S., as well as the U.S. role in global health policy.

The reasons? Call it the perfect storm of converging health-care issues: More employers are pulling back the amount of money they are paying for employees' health care coverage; the overall cost increase within the medical system has driven prices up everywhere, from surgery to drugs; and the economic downturn has impacted budgets and cutbacks in mammogram services that women depend on.

Dealing with rising budget deficits, more and more states are cutting breast cancer screening programs. As a result, low-income women in at least 20 states are being turned away or put on long waiting lists for free cancer screenings provided by the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (NBCCEDP), according to the

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). The NBCCEDP of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provides access to breast and cervical cancer screening services to underserved women in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories.

In Ohio, for example, the mammogram program was slashed from \$2.5 million for 2008-2009 to \$800,000 for 2009-2010. A federally financed program that provides free cancer screening for poor, uninsured women in Rhode Island ran out of money earlier this year, drained by soaring demand as more women lost health insurance. As a result, that program suspended all breast cancer screening and diagnostic services for two months and only reopened because of a large private donation.

"I just talked to a woman in New York who was saying her mother died of breast cancer," says Mona Shah, associate director, federal relations for ACS CAN. "Her grandmother is a breast cancer survivor and now, at 40-something years old, this woman is at risk for breast cancer but her local program ran out of money and she can't afford to pay the out-of-pocket cost."

The most catastrophic cuts are in California, where the Department of Public Health said its breast and cervical cancer early detection program, "Every Woman Counts," would permanently shut its doors to women in their 40s, and not accept any new patients of any age until July (as of this printing).

For women with no health insurance, poor insurance policies, or are between jobs or at low-income levels, routine tests are too costly. Hardest hit are the uninsured, and according to one report, 40 percent of uninsured women are likely to be diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer.

"Breast cancer is an expensive and deadly disease and we don't believe women should decide between their life savings and saving their lives," Shah says.

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## Taking Action

- Soroptimist clubs can help women in their communities by undertaking projects that stress the importance of detecting breast cancer early. Use Soroptimist's "Early Detection of Breast Cancer" model program kit, located in the program section at <[Soroptimist.org/members.html](http://Soroptimist.org/members.html)>. The kit helps clubs assess the needs of their communities and get ideas for implementing programs. Apply for a Soroptimist Club Grant for breast cancer detection and prevention projects, such as providing low-cost or free mammograms to women in need. Use the Soroptimist whitepaper, "Breast Cancer and Low-Income Women," to raise awareness about this important issue that plagues women worldwide.

- Soroptimist has formed a partnership with the Love/Avon Army of Women, which seeks to recruit one million women to help researchers learn what causes breast cancer and move beyond a cure to prevention. By joining the Army, Soroptimist members can become part of this massive movement to find out what causes breast cancer and how to prevent it. Visit <[armyof-women.org](http://armyof-women.org)> for more information on the initiative and to join the fight.

- Breast cancer is often treatable if caught early, but sadly many women forego routine screenings because they cannot afford the tests or time off from work. By participating in the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards program, clubs can help women enhance their economic prospects and land jobs with better health benefits, including insurance coverage and paid sick time.

- Clubs can help women suffering from breast cancer by assisting them with childcare, transportation to doctor's visits and treatment, and by providing them with much-needed companionship and support. Members can also offer to help women weed through medical bills and research alternative payment options (visit <[patientadvocate.org](http://patientadvocate.org)> for more information).



## Breast Cancer: The Number One Killer of Japanese Women Ages 30–55

In 2004, the risk of breast cancer for a Japanese woman was one in 30. Today, according to Philadelphia-born Vickie Paradise Green, that risk has increased to one in 20—the rate of increase among the world’s highest. Green, a businesswoman, is the founder of Run for the Cure, a Tokyo-based nonprofit foundation dedicated to combating breast cancer in Japan.

“On average, a Japanese woman dies from breast cancer every 55 minutes and a third of the women diagnosed this year will not survive,” Green says.

Unlike in the West, which has fewer taboos about visiting gynecologists or taking breast exams, lack of awareness in Japan discourages women from getting regular checkups that can spot breast cancer before it’s too late, says Green, an 8 ½ year breast cancer survivor. She also points to other risk factors. “More women are having their first child in their late 30s or not having children at all. The birth rate in Japan is one of the lowest in the world,” she says, of the correlation between delaying birth and breast cancer. “A more Western diet is also a suspected factor.”

The national health insurance system in Japan does not cover annual screenings and recommends that women 40 and over have a mammogram every two years, she says, even though it is the number one cancer killing Japanese women between the ages of 30 and 55.

“However, if a woman chooses to have a screening but cannot afford to pay for it,” Green says, “her local ward office will offer a free or reduced rate screening through a lottery system or on a first-come first-serve basis, every other year.”

Run for the Cure currently raises money to fund breast-cancer education and awareness programs throughout Japan, and to donate mammography machines to rural screening centers, train technicians and fund screenings for underserved women.—M.Z.

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### A recipe for disaster

Add to the toxic mix the recent recommendations by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) on scaling back mammograms. Last year the task force recommended that women at average risk for breast cancer should have mammograms every two years starting at age 50 instead of annual screenings starting at age 40. Women, especially those who can’t afford mammograms, are taking those guidelines to heart and not going for their screenings.

In some states, access to mammograms for women ages 40 to 49 decreased since the release of the USPSTF guidelines, according to an online survey by the Avon Foundation for Women <[www.avonfoundation.org](http://www.avonfoundation.org)>. The respondents said that the task force recommendations and other factors, including budget cuts, have resulted in fewer women having mammograms.

“It’s a recipe for disaster,” says Knaul, who was diagnosed at age 41, “and a very poor decision for the economics and health of women. Moving from age 40 to 50, women will still get breast cancer and be treated later and more heavily at greater cost. Early treatment means costs are lower, both to the health system and to the woman in terms of what she has to endure.”

Age is definitely a factor in developing nations, where breast cancer is striking women 10 years earlier than women in the West. While some analysts attribute the earlier increase to lifestyle practices imported from the West, such as delayed childbearing, weight gain, alcohol consumption and reduced activity, two factors are even more deadly for women—poverty and gender inequality.

All the more reason for early breast cancer screenings and detection, Knaul says, which remain very low in Latin America, where only one in five women report having mammograms.

“For women in time of economic crisis, particularly the poor will put off anything they don’t think is causing them any danger,” Knaul says. “If you’re poor and have to pay 300 or 500 pesos for your mammogram or for your children’s school tuition, there’s no way to convince women to have that mammogram.”

### Costly side effects

No matter where a woman lives—in developing or developed nations—the financial cost of breast cancer adds up quickly. Besides hospital bills, women face treatments that include out-of-pocket expenses, such as medication, prostheses or wigs; transportation to and from treatment or to distant hospitals; or lodging for the family if the hospital is far away. This often makes it difficult for families to cover basic expenses, such as food, utilities and childcare.



Wage loss is another costly economic side effect of breast cancer, one that few studies have examined. But a new report, published online in *The Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, highlights the financial toll breast cancer takes on women. The study focused on 459 Canadian women who were working at the time they were diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer. It found that on average, the women lost more than a quarter of their typical income during the first 12 months after their diagnosis. Many in the study reported missed work or reduced hours.

While the economics of breast cancer continue to impact women, so does the social stigma associated with the disease, something Knaul has witnessed firsthand. In one instance, nurses were training women in rural Mexico to examine their breasts for cancer when one woman raised her hand and objected, saying, “My man would leave me [if the woman were to lose a breast to cancer].” With that abandonment would come a loss of family income.

Knaul’s husband, today the dean of Harvard’s School of Public Health, calls the real cancer the “cancer of machismo” in Latin America. Knaul agrees. “The bottom line is that women do not seek care even when they know something is wrong because they feel their partner will abandon them if they lose a breast,” she says.

## Economics and education

Despite the economic impact of breast cancer, the overall fight against the disease, at least in the U.S., has seen some bright spots. Survival rates overall have steadily improved in the last two decades, especially among women younger than 50, thanks to earlier detection of the disease and better treatment. And although poor women are more likely to skip screenings, nearly 77 percent of American women over 40 have received a mammogram within the last two years, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation’s analysis of the CDC statistics.

Still, in many parts of the developing world, economics—and education about the disease—remain barriers to screening and early treatment. At the HGEI conference, some approaches included training midwives and other rural health providers to perform regular breast exams, using the power of touch in

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places where mammography machines are too expensive.

“What we’re doing in Mexico is training our health promoters not only in awareness building, but identifying those women most at risk and doing a clinical breast examination,” Knaul says. “And many women don’t feel comfortable having a man examine them so many of our health promoters are midwives and they are the perfect people to teach about breast health.”

In the fight against breast cancer, many researchers propose a long-term solution of providing more money in the developing world. The latest figures show that only 5 percent of global resources for cancer go to developing countries. Experts believe that more financial resources will guarantee access to the necessary infrastructure and educational programs that can facilitate breast screenings, early detection and cure, and advice to overcome the social stigma of breast cancer in poor countries.

In the United States, low-income or uninsured women can seek out programs offered by many nonprofit organizations, including the American Cancer Society, The National Cancer Institute, the Susan G. Komen Foundation or the Avon Foundation’s Breast Care Fund <[www.avonbreastcare.org](http://www.avonbreastcare.org)>, the latter providing breast cancer education and screening for medically underserved women.

Today, Knaul considers herself a fortunate patient. She is on breast-cancer fighting drugs and admits she is still learning to live with the long-term effects of chemotherapy. She also realizes, however, that for many women in the world today, the economics of breast cancer can be deadly. Helping these women is now the goal of her work. And her personal experience has changed her on many levels.

She says, “Before my diagnosis, I talked about the statistics in developing nations; now I live those statistics.” 🌍

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***In the next issue: Women and disasters. Please email Editor Jessica Levinson <[jessica@soroptimist.org](mailto:jessica@soroptimist.org)> with relevant information.***



**Renaissance Campaign 2004-2010**

**I**n 2004, SIA launched the Renaissance Campaign with five major objectives:

- Increase declining membership numbers
- Increase member satisfaction with products and services from headquarters
- Improve satisfaction with volunteer leadership at every level
- Increase club participation in Soroptimist projects
- Increase public recognition of the name and mission
- Improve SIA's financial ability to serve women and girls through targeted fundraising efforts.

SIA established goals in four areas: program, membership, public awareness and fundraising.

**PROGRAM**

SIA's first goal was to get ALL clubs to participate in our signature project, the Women's Opportunity Awards. Only 46 percent in 2004, the participation rate has increased to 74 percent!

In addition, clubs were asked to conduct at least one other mission-related project. Based on results of the club award form, this goal has been met with 100 percent participation!

Another goal was for at least 90 percent of clubs to donate to either SIA's December 10th President's Appeal or Quadrennial Project; 75 percent of SIA clubs currently contribute to the success of these SIA projects.

The last program goal was to have a strong, involved and influential Program Council. Based on surveys and input for

each iteration of the Council, this is another successfully met goal.

**MEMBERSHIP**

The goal of 50,000 members turned out to be unrealistic for several reasons. Although clubs actively recruit more than 4,000 members annually—ultimately more members are lost than gained. In fact, SIA lost 10 percent of its membership during the previous five years.

SIA hoped that building new clubs would be an additional strategy to increase membership, and set a goal to charter 250 new clubs. This goal was not met, but enough new clubs were started to just about offset those that disbanded. The number of clubs decreased by only 2 percent.

The Soroptimist Affiliate was developed as a strategy to enlist interested women outside of the club model. After several unsuccessful pilot projects and attempts to market this status to business and professional women, the strategy was abandoned. Going forward the focus will be on strengthening existing clubs and forming new clubs in a new, modern model.

SIA has been concerned about its ability to attract and keep members under the age of 45. However, given the sheer size of the different generations and changing socio-economic factors about when women are marrying, having children and building careers, age is not a good indicator of relevance. A club's ability to attract and retain members and engage them in a positive club experience with meaningful women and girl-focused projects is a much better gauge of SIA's success as an organization.

**PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Public awareness efforts were stepped up at every level during the past six years. The first goal was to increase name recognition by 5 percent. It was obvious from the results of the 2003 market research that SIA's baseline was zero—fewer than one out of 100 strangers, when asked about the word "Soroptimist," knew about the organization or its mission. Thanks to the use of social media and an interactive and more user friendly website, SIA is inexpensively garnering increased name recognition and attracting non-members to the mission. This has been documented through the tracking of web statistics.

Clubs have embraced the idea that they have to blow their own horns about what they do to improve the lives of women and girls in their communities. To support that goal, SIA made available sample speeches, press releases, website guidelines and branding information. SIA also produced promotional cards, eye-catching brochures in multiple languages and a variety of downloadable resource kits. The biggest challenge for busy Soroptimists is finding the time to actually reach out to the public and media.

One of the public awareness goals was to have more than half of clubs place at least three press releases, ads, or public service announcements locally each year. With resources and encouragement from SIA, that goal has been surpassed!

SIA still has a long way to go, but name recognition has increased and those who have heard of Soroptimist know that it is a woman's organization concerned with women's issues.

## FUNDRAISING

The last of the four inter-related goals is fundraising. Without sufficient funding, it is impossible to meet our program, membership or public awareness goals. SIA's largest source of revenue is the per capita dues. It was envisioned that with more members, the per capita dues amount could remain stable and contributed income could become the major source of revenue. SIA understood that clubs and members would still need to make donations, but hoped to significantly increase revenue from corporate sponsors, grants and donations from non-members. As of now, SIA is still dependent on dues as the major source of revenue.

The first fundraising goal was to have 100 percent of clubs support SIA programs and projects like the Women's Opportunity Awards through the Annual Club Campaign. While this goal was not met, the total amount contributed by clubs increased 123 percent and those clubs that did give, gave an average gift of \$500. This generosity is one of the reasons SIA has been able to continue programs at the current level of funding, despite the global economic downturn.

SIA sought 100 percent participation in Founders Pennies. More than 98 percent of clubs participate in this voluntary program. Founders Pennies add up to big dollars—more than \$200,000 annually!

The Laurel Society is designed for individual, not club, giving. This program consistently raises about \$.5 million annually. For many members, SIA is the charity of choice.

SIA had high hopes for corporate sponsorship at the beginning of the Renaissance Campaign. The lack of name recognition and a relatively broad mission made it difficult to get in the door of companies that might have been a good match for SIA. The organization has managed to attract more than \$67,000 in cash and in-kind donations for laptop computers and media partnerships. This fell short of the expected results, but the efforts continue.

### Renaissance Campaign 2011—Strategies for Progress

The federation took some risks by setting high goals and trying new strategies. As

an organization, a lot was learned and each board made course corrections along the way. They guided the staff with clear, strategic direction; listened to the clubs; and invested in professional marketing research and skilled consultants. These strategies were undertaken to assure that SIA remains relevant, responsive and forward-looking. The Board of Directors, with the concurrence of the region governors, has made a commitment to continue the Renaissance Campaign with the following objectives:

- Focus on SIA's impact as an organization committed to improving the lives of women and girls through strong local clubs
- Conserve volunteer and financial resources at every level
- Concentrate on creating and sustaining happy, healthy clubs
- Keep the Renaissance Campaign simple and easy to understand with minimal top-down demands
- Make sure clubs know that they are not expected to "do it all"
- Have fun as clubs and members go about conducting serious work in support of the SIA mission.

The goals of the Renaissance Campaign 2011 match the goals of the SIA strategic plan (available on the SIA website). The campaign seeks to communicate to clubs their essential role in SIA's success as an organization committed to the mission of improving the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world.

What clubs should do is outlined below under the goal statement from the SIA strategic plan.

## PROGRAM

Soroptimist programs and initiatives will enable women and girls to achieve social and economic empowerment.

- Give a Women's Opportunity Award
- Conduct another local project that benefits women and girls
- Hold a program meeting focused on women and girl issues
- Enter Soroptimists Celebrating Success!

## MEMBERSHIP

Soroptimist will be a thriving organization of clubs and members committed to the mission.

- Conduct an annual club assessment
- Hold at least one recruitment event
- Have a leadership succession plan
- Orient new members
- Fulfill administrative obligations

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

Soroptimist will be known for its efforts to help women and girls achieve social and economic empowerment.

- Participate in the Live Your Dream Campaign
- Conduct media outreach around women and girl-focused projects
- Engage in SIA and club social media
- Implement SIA-produced club website templates

## FUNDRAISING

Sufficient funds will exist for Soroptimist to accomplish the mission.

- Donate at least 10 percent of local fundraising to SIA to support programs
- Contribute to local projects that benefit women and girls, and report the amount

SIA resources are already available in every area with additional tools under development. The new Soroptimist Club Award is a checklist of strategies that will help clubs and the federation achieve progress in each of the four areas of the Renaissance Campaign 2011. No more "points" are necessary in order to win the award. Just report and win! Each region governor has been provided with tools to explain the new campaign and how easy it can be to be a Renaissance Club in 2011.

Good luck and best wishes to all SIA clubs and winners in their quest to achieve the newly streamlined goals of Renaissance Campaign 2011: Strategies for Progress! 🌍

# Reclaiming the Dream:

## 2010 Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards Recipients

**L**isa M. Boyd of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; Myla H. Ningala of Baliwag, Bulacan, the Philippines; and Kimberly M. Thompson of Ashland, Oregon, were the three women chosen to receive the finalist 2010 Women's Opportunity Awards, Soroptimist's major program. The finalists each received \$10,000. The awards can be used for tuition, books, child-care, carfare or other education-related expenses.

### Lisa M. Boyd

In 2002, Lisa Boyd found herself with two babies living on an isolated and derelict property, alone, and without the proper amenities to sustain daily living. She had no indoor plumbing, no hot running water, no heat, phone or vehicle and most of all, no escape.

Lisa also suffered financial, sexual, emotional, physical, mental and verbal abuse at the hands of her drug-addicted husband. The situation grew to its worst when she was harassed and terrorized by violent people to whom her husband owed drug-related debt.

"I hid with my children in an old chicken coop in the barn," Lisa recalls. "I literally waited for my opportunity to walk miles into town with my babies and call the police. But I was petrified the authorities would take away my children."

The police and Family and Children's Services, however, found Lisa to be a loving, caring mother, who needed an opportunity to start over. Not wanting to go to a shelter or into subsidized housing, she cashed in a life insurance

policy and sold some belongings so she could survive.

Soon after the house she was living in was condemned, Lisa met a woman wearing a "Habitat for Humanity" T-shirt. She questioned the woman about the organization, hoping that someday she could apply for a Habitat home. The woman, sizing up Lisa's situation, offered her and her children a basement apartment in her home.

"She and her husband are both police officers and have two young daughters, just like me," Lisa says, "and if ever I had to call anyone family, they are family! They supported me so much during this pursuit of my academics."



Lisa Boyd

Today, despite being newly diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, a degenerative neuromuscular disease, Lisa is pursuing her dream of becoming a social service worker. Nominated by SI/Guelph, Eastern Canada Region, she plans to graduate with a social service worker diploma from Conestoga College in Kitchener, Ontario, in 2011.

"As a social service worker, I intend on providing front-line service to those who are marginalized within our communities," she says. "This encompasses immigrants, the elderly, women, men, children, youth, drug addicts, people with mental health issues, the homeless, the unemployed—anyone in need of a helping hand to see them through their crisis."

Lisa, who is extremely grateful for Soroptimist's help, says her decision to return to school also benefits her daughters. "It will give them a positive view of parenting and a sense of empowerment as they reflect on the challenges I face as a single mother. They will also gain a positive attitude toward women entering academics at any age, under any circumstances."

### Myla H. Ningala

Myla H. Ningala of Baliwag, Bulacan, the Philippines, became a victim of human trafficking when she tried to escape poverty and create a better life for herself and her children. Always a good student and earning honors, she had to drop out in her third year of high school to help her sick mother and earn money to help support the family.

Myla eventually was able to enroll in college, but in her first year, she again had to drop out because her mother could no longer afford to pay tuition. Myla found factory work where she met the father of her three children, but after five years he left her, without explanation.

"I tried to sell whatever commodities in the market I could to augment our daily needs," she says. "I had to work hard to earn our living. Poverty pushed me to dream of something great for my kids, but my earnings were not enough to give them a better life and a good future."

Myla had always dreamed of working abroad when a neighbor approached her, asking if she wanted to work in Malaysia. She thought it was the answer to her prayers. Even though the salary was meager, it would provide a proper life. With her few earnings and

the money she borrowed from a friend, Myla bought a ticket and headed off to Malaysia, leaving her children behind with her mother.

That's when her nightmare began. Her employers, a married couple, forced her to take drugs, and verbally, physically and sexually abused her. At one point, she managed to use her cell phone to call her mother for help, but when her employers caught her, they beat her, confiscated her phone and locked her in her room. For days and weeks, she was often imprisoned in her room, without food.

Myla finally managed to escape by writing a note, "Please help me!" and throwing it out the window. A security guard found the note and rescued her, but then, she was homeless, with no money, on the streets of Malaysia.

For seven months, she did what she could to survive. She washed clothes and ran errands, but at one point was arrested by the Malaysian police and thrown into prison. Confined in a cramped cell, she and the other prisoners had little food or water, and had to sit in the hot sun for hours at a time. When a co-prisoner was being rescued, Myla begged her to get in touch with her mother, who eventually was able to arrange Myla's release from prison.

Nominated by SI/ Baliwag, Philippines Region, Myla today is working on her bachelor of science degree in business administration at Baliwag University, majoring in computer science.

"I think the good Lord was paving the way so I could meet the Soroptimists and through them, be given the chance to receive the Women's Opportunity

Award," Myla says. "I can now fulfill my dreams in life for my kids and for my mother."

### **Kimberly M. Thompson**

For the first 21 years of her life, Kimberly M. Thompson of Ashland, Oregon, suffered chaos and instability. Her mother was diagnosed as a schizophrenic and her father was equally unstable, resulting in Kimberly and her six siblings being removed from their home. Living in the foster care system from the age of 10, she was moved often, and suffered emotional abuse at the hands of a foster mother. She was told frequently that she would end up like the rest of her family—on drugs and homeless.

After graduating from high school, she found herself alone and with no family to support her. She found work, met a man and ended up pregnant and in an abusive relationship. She admits it took courage to walk away and start a whole new life. "I knew that I would rather be homeless than allow him to beat me in front of my little girl," she says.

Kimberly did become homeless, living in a car with her daughter. They eventually moved in with Kimberly's sister until they were forced to move again.

Throughout her emotional, turbulent years, Kimberly credits her teachers for providing the support and direction she needed. As a result, she wants to return the gift to other young people and is studying for her associate's degree in

early childhood education at Rogue Community College in Medford, Oregon. With a 3.8 GPA, she plans to graduate in 2011, and become the first in her family to earn a college degree. "How amazing is that!" she says.

Nominated by SI/Ashland and Northwestern Region, Kimberly is also employed with the Head Start Program. "I love every aspect of my job," she says. "I have always felt the need to help children and teach them and being a former foster child, education has been my outlet for a better life."

Most important, Kimberly wants to give her daughter some valuable lessons. "I want to show her that you can be anything you want by working hard and getting a good education," she says. "I want her to grow up knowing she is loved and has a bright future ahead of her." 🌍



Photo credit: Don Tracy

**Kimberly M. Thompson**

**By Marielena Zuniga  
Staff Writer**

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*By participating in the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards program, clubs can make a profound difference in the lives of women like Lisa, Myla and Kimberly. Without generous donations from clubs and individuals, it would not be possible to continue this remarkable program. To make a donation or download program materials, visit [Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org).*

“... Success happens slowly, one small act at a time. Believe in your dreams. Find others who believe in them, too. You have the power to make the world a better place!”

Photo credit: Don Tracy



## Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award 2010 Federation Recipient: Talia Leman

**T**alia Leman, 15, of Waukee, Iowa, has a simple yet profound mission: To help kids help others. Her journey began in 2005 when, at age 10, she saw the story of the victims of Hurricane Katrina and was moved to action. She rallied 4,000 school districts to unify fundraising efforts for hurricane relief, raising more than \$10 million—ranking their giving power among the top five U.S. corporations.

As a result, she founded RandomKid, with the tag line, “The Power of ANYone,” a nonprofit to educate, unify and empower young people of all backgrounds and abilities to make a measurable difference in their efforts to help solve real world problems.

Today, RandomKid works on such projects as providing crutches and artificial limbs to victims of the Haiti earthquake; planting vegetables for local homeless shelters; and unifying schools to sell their own labeled water to raise funds for water pumps in Africa.

“All our programs and projects are initiated by kids, random kids,” says Talia, CEO of the nonprofit. “For us, it’s all about ‘the power of ANY one.’ Kids often have big ideas. RandomKid takes their ideas for a better tomorrow seriously and helps them generate the momentum that inspires others in order to make their ideas a reality.”

RandomKid provides ideas, project templates and seed funds to launch entrepreneurial endeavors. Seed funds

are made possible because every project invites kids to set aside 10 percent of their proceeds to launch the next kids’ ideas.

In her everyday life, Talia reaches out to schools and youth groups through the Internet and travels across the country to speak to kids about their power to impact world issues. Kids, schools and youth groups then contact her through her website (RandomKid.org), and she unifies fundraising efforts with similar goals to fund solutions for people and communities in need.

For her work, Talia was recognized with Soroptimist’s 2010 Violet Richardson Award, which honors young women between the ages of 14 and 17 for volunteer service to their communities. As the Des Moines, Iowa, Soroptimist club’s finalist, she received \$500. As Soroptimist’s North Central Region winner she received another \$1,000 for herself and \$1,000 for her nonprofit, and as the SIA Violet Richardson Award finalist, she received an additional \$2,500 for RandomKid.

Talia’s future plans continue to evolve. Her organization will be partnering with Ashoka, another nonprofit, to unite kids from all over the world and to leverage the power of youth for an economy of positive change. Ashoka is founded on the premise that the most effective way to promote positive social change is to invest in social entrepreneurs with innovative solutions that are sustainable and

replicable, both nationally and globally.

She also has recently launched Big Return, part of RandomKid, a high-yielding crusade to promote local business and community leaders to come together and invest in local youth by generating a monetary fund, which will support original, society-based pursuits to better the world. On a personal level, Talia hopes some day to become a physician.

“One of the key messages I share with youth is that small efforts matter most,” Talia says. “This is because success happens slowly, one small act at a time. Believe in your dreams. Find others who believe in them, too. You have the power to make the world a better place!”

**By Marielena Zuniga  
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*The Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award program helps young women like Talia improve their communities and the world in meaningful ways. Without generous donations from clubs and individuals, it would not be possible to continue this program. To make a donation or download program materials, visit [Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org).*

“I want to thank all Soroptimists for believing in the potential of dreams and in the collective power of women to transform dreams into realities.”

Photo credit: Don Tracy



## Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women 2010 Federation Recipient: Lisa Culp

From a very young age, Lisa Culp of Sacramento, California, wanted to make a difference. As a teenager, she volunteered with Loaves and Fishes, helping to feed Sacramento’s homeless population by delivering sandwiches. After completing college and living in Nicaragua for 10 years, Lisa returned to Sacramento to work as an employee with Loaves and Fishes.

But she noticed a change—the face of the homeless population was including more and more women and children. Lisa watched homeless mothers raising their children on the streets and saw these children grow up, still homeless, to become mothers of new babies born into homelessness. She knew there must be a solution to ending this cycle of poverty.

Working with focus groups at Loaves and Fishes, Lisa listened to women share their stories and needs, which included assistance in the areas of training, housing, counseling, vocational guidance and avoiding domestic violence. In 2001, Lisa worked with community leaders to create Women’s Empowerment, an immediately successful solution to ending the cycle of poverty.

The multi-faceted program educates and empowers homeless women with the skills and confidence necessary to get a job, maintain a healthy lifestyle, and regain a home for themselves and their children. Services include counseling, resume writing, interview skills, daycare, parenting classes, transportation and housing.

In 2004, Women’s Empowerment became an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Since the program’s inception, more than 600 homeless women and their 658 children have graduated from the region’s only job-readiness program. Women’s Empowerment also has seen 84 percent of its graduates get into permanent housing and, despite the economic downturn, counts 66 percent of its graduates as financially stable.

For her work empowering homeless women, Lisa is the recipient of Soroptimist’s 2010 Ruby Award: For Women

Helping Women, which acknowledges the efforts of women who through their personal or professional activities work to improve the lives of women and girls. As the federation finalist, originally nominated SI/Sacramento, California, Lisa received a \$5,000 donation to her organization.

Receiving her award at the Soroptimist 41st Biennial Convention in San Francisco, California, Lisa said, “I want to thank all Soroptimists for believing in the potential of dreams and in the collective power of women to transform dreams into realities.”

She added that the ultimate mission of Women’s Empowerment is to end homelessness one woman at a time. “If you save a woman, you save a family. In my experience, it is this transformative power, of women helping women, that is at the heart and soul of both Women’s Empowerment and Soroptimist.”

**By Marielena Zuniga  
Staff Writer**

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*The Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women program honors women like Lisa who are working to make the world a better place for other women and girls. Without generous donations from clubs and individuals, it would not be possible to continue this program. To make a donation or download program materials, visit [Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org).*

Soroptimist members work to improve the lives of women and girls by accomplishing strategic outcomes as outlined in SIA's Strategic Plan. **Program Notes** provides information pertaining to these objectives. To read SIA's Strategic Plan, visit [Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org).

### **New UN Agency for Women**

**O**n July 2, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly voted unanimously to merge the four UN agencies focusing on women into one group: the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN Women. Consolidating the bodies into one entity will increase resources and mandates for greater and more efficient impact. UN Women will be headquartered in New York and led by an under-secretary-general appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The under-secretary-general will be a member of all senior UN decision-making bodies and report directly to the UN secretary-general.

The creation of UN Women came as the result of a recommendation from former Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 2006 System-Wide Coherence Panel to explore how the UN system—including entities that address gender equality—could be strengthened in terms of coherence and coordination. Following the recommendation, the Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign (GEAR) formed to mobilize women's groups—including Soroptimist International—to advocate for the adoption of a new single UN entity for gender equality. After four years of advocacy, GEAR celebrated the United Nations General Assembly's unanimous resolution. Going forward, GEAR will focus on the transition process and implementation, ensuring that the new body has the human and financial resources necessary to succeed. For more information on GEAR, visit [www.gearcampaign.org/](http://www.gearcampaign.org/). Also, see the *Soroptimist and the UN* resource located in the member's area at [Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org).

### **Human Trafficking Report**

**W**hile the United States ranks among the world's top countries in its efforts to stop human trafficking, more needs to be done according to U.S. State Department's 2010

report on Trafficking in Persons released in May.

For the first time, the report included a ranking of the U.S. based on the same standards to which it holds other countries. "The United States takes its first-ever ranking, not as a reprieve, but as a responsibility to strengthen global efforts against modern slavery, including those within America," said Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. "This human rights abuse is universal and no one should claim immunity from its reach or from the responsibility to confront it."

Countries are ranked in three tiers according to their compliance to meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's minimum standards. Thirty-one countries, including the U.S., were ranked in Tier One, compared to 28 countries in 2009. The report listed 12 countries in Tier Three—the worst category—down from 17 in 2009. To view the entire report, go to <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/index.htm>.

### **Tobacco Targets Young Women**

**A**lthough 80 percent of the world's tobacco smokers are men, young women in developing countries are being increasingly targeted by tobacco companies eager to hook more customers, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Particularly troubling is new data from three countries—Bangladesh, Thailand and Uruguay—indicating greater exposure to cigarette marketing among young women (ages 15 to 24) than older women, according to the CDC study.

"Tobacco kills more people each year than HIV, tuberculosis and malaria combined and tobacco deaths are increasing steadily," said CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden, M.D. "The results of the survey show one of the key reasons for the tobacco epidemic—marketing, including to women and girls," he said. Countries around the world should establish and

enforce comprehensive bans on advertising, sponsorship and promotion of tobacco products."

### **Japan's Flat Birthrate**

**J**apan's low fertility rate stayed flat in 2009, halting three years of modest increases in the rapidly aging country, according to a government survey. Japanese women have an average of just 1.37 babies according to latest data, sparking fears over a looming crisis as the number of workers expected to support a burgeoning population of pensioners dwindles.

By 2055, one in 2.5 people in Japan is expected to be 65 or older, unless the government can persuade citizens to have more children. Japan's government has forecast its population will fall by half to 60 million by 2100.

Japanese women have put off starting families, seeing it as a heavy burden on their lifestyles and careers (women in Japan are still expected to leave their jobs when they start families). In addition, the economic slowdown and tough employment conditions have discouraged women from having children. The government has made efforts to improve child-care facilities and ensure maternity leave for working women in an attempt to make having children easier and less expensive. But these efforts have not made a significant change in the attitudes or behaviors of young people in Japan.

### **Day for Women and Peace**

**I**n June, the United Nations (UN) organized "Global Open Day for Women and Peace," at which UN officials met with women peace advocates in post-conflict countries to discuss how to increase women's participation in sustainable conflict resolution and peace building.

Special representatives of the secretary-general and other high-level officials in more than 20 countries participated in the

consultation, which took place to honor the 10th anniversary of landmark Security Council Resolution 1325, which focuses on women, peace and security.

“This anniversary is an opportunity to reaffirm the core message of that landmark text: sustainable peace is possible only with women’s full participation—their perspectives, their leadership, their daily, equal presence—whenever we seek to make and keep the peace,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a message.

While some progress has been made since the resolution was adopted 10 years ago, gaps remain in the implementation, according to the UN, with women still not playing an equal role in peace processes or seeing their concerns fully reflected in peace agreements. UNIFEM’s online 1325 petition is available on its global advocacy platform <[www.saynotoviolence.org/](http://www.saynotoviolence.org/)>. Signing the petition encourages governments to support Resolution 1325.

## Japanese Women Support Tradition

**H**usbands in Japan should “work outside [the home] and wives should stay home and focus on housework and childcare,” according to 45 percent of respondents in a 2008 survey conducted by the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry’s National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

The survey, conducted every five years, was the fourth of its kind with some 13,000 households nationwide participating. It is the first time in the past 15 years that the number of married females who support the nation’s traditional values of wives’ roles in marriage has increased.

About 53.6 percent of the respondents supported the idea in the first survey in 1993, but the figure continued to decline, down to 41.1 percent in the previous survey in 2003, rising to 45 percent in the 2008 survey.

## Club Grants

**T**he deadline for applying for a Soroptimist Club Grant for Women and Girls is March 17, 2011. This program provides cash awards for local club projects that improve the lives of women and girls. Also check out Soroptimist Project Matching: A Joint Project of SIA and SIE. Information about both is available in the program area of the SIA website.

## News from Soroptimist International

**Long Term Project:** The topic for the long term project of Education and Leadership was confirmed by the SI board of directors at its August meeting in England. This topic received an overwhelming number of club votes from around the world. The SI programme team will now move forward in designing the project that will launch at the convention in Montreal.

**Project Sierra:** This is the last year to support the 2007-2011 SI Quadrennial Project and to help SI meet its fundraising goal of \$2 million. So far, more than \$1 million has been raised to help women and girls in Sierra Leone rebuild their lives after a devastating civil war. A new video of project participants thanking Soroptimist in song is available at <[projectsierra.org](http://projectsierra.org)>.

**Website updates:** Please visit <[www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org)> for new information including recent advocacy efforts and an updated programme blog.

**SI Best Practice Awards:** SI honored best practice projects in program objectives 5, 6 and 7 at its recent board meeting in England. Immediate Past SIA President Cathy was honored to accept certificates for SI/Yamanashi-Crystal, Japan, and SI/Guayaquil, Ecuador. SI/Yamanashi received the federation best practice award in program objective 5: improve access to clean water, sanitation and essential food resources. SI/Guayaquil, Ecuador, received the overall best practice award for program objective 7: meet the needs of women and girls during and after armed conflicts and disasters. In addition, SI also honors an overall best practice award from those submitted in all three objectives. Congratulations to SI/Guayaquil’s disaster recovery project for receiving the overall best practice award.

For more up-to-date information on women around the world, join the SIA Facebook page. 🌐

By Lori Blair

Senior Director of Program Services

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# PROJECTS

## Soroptimist International of the Americas projects:

- Soroptimist Women’s Opportunity Awards
- Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls
- Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence
- Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award
- Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women
- Soroptimists STOP Trafficking
- Soroptimist Disaster Recovery Fund for Women and Girls

**For information about these projects, model program kits, and other resources and materials, visit <[Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org)>.**

## Soroptimist International projects:

- SI Quadrennial Project: Project Sierra
- December 10th SI President’s Appeal

**For more information about these projects visit <[SoroptimistInternational.org](http://SoroptimistInternational.org)>.**



# SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS 41<sup>ST</sup> BIENNIAL CONVENTION SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA JULY 7-10, 2010

SIA's 41st Biennial Convention in San Francisco was a huge success. Attendees met and heard from 2010 Women's Opportunity Awards recipients Lisa Boyd and Kimberly Thompson, whose stories are on page 20 in this issue of *Best for Women*. They also heard about the great work both Violet Richardson Award recipient Talia Leman (page 3) and Ruby Award recipient Lisa Culp (page 24) do to help others. In addition, Soroptimist made strides when convention delegates boldly recommended to pass the resolution against the prostitution of women and girls. More information about the resolution is available in the convention recap page at [Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org).

Throughout convention, SIA's social media sites were active and full of information about what was happening in San Francisco. Members used Twitter to share news about general sessions, speakers and workshops. They also posted pictures on Facebook, enabling Soroptimists not at convention to be a part of the action. Here's what some members posted on SIA's Facebook page:

**Sandi Naba** SIA convention was fabulous; a warm and amazing experience! Looking forward to [the SI Convention in] Montreal!

**June Ward** Federation convention in San Fran was fantastic! Our speakers were top notch! Looking forward to Hawaii!

**Laurie Moses** Absolutely wonderful convention in San Francisco. Really liked having our nights free.

**Linda Silveira** This was my first SIA convention. So much to learn! Thank you for such a well-organized convention.

**Toni Raney** The SIA convention was very good this time around. Business meetings went quickly and speakers were good. Really enjoyed meeting so many great Soroptimists from so many different countries and cities in the U.S.

**Pat Lynch** SIA's San Francisco convention has come to an end—and it's good to be home—but what an outstanding opportunity to glimpse the big picture of the ways Soroptimist enhances the lives of women and girls around the world. The workshops were full of great information and tips on making clubs more effective and more fun, and showcased the great work being done by many. And how impressive are the women who lead our organization! I'm honored to be a Soroptimist.

Visit SIA's Facebook page to read more thoughts about convention.

#### Here are some numbers to note about this year's convention:

- Attendees—1,597
- First-time attendees—441
- Countries represented—19
- Past governors at the past governors breakfast—96
- Members who participated in the Leadership Development Program—227
- Registered guests—28
- Voting delegates—548

Visit the meetings/conventions section of [Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org) to read highlights from San Francisco, view photos, watch video clips, and download workshop presentations and handouts.



Updates, highlights and other news of note from Soroptimist headquarters.

**Club Giving—Empowering Women to Live Their Dreams**

Welcome to club year 2010-2011! As Soroptimist moves into its 90th year, our clubs continue to provide essential financial contributions that enable us to transform the lives of women and girls locally and globally. For the new club year, we are excited to announce a brand new title and design for the Annual Club Campaign—Club Giving: Empowering Women to Live Their Dreams. The new design offers a broader scope of recognition, as well as fun, innovative ways to showcase club projects. Learn more about these exciting opportunities in the member’s area at <Soroptimist.org>!



**Live Your Dream Art Contest**

Get ready for Soroptimist’s third annual Live Your Dream art contest! This year’s contest asks students to draw a fictional woman from literature who inspires them. Visit <LiveYourDreamCampaign.org> to obtain publicity materials.



**New Club Award Form**

The focus for Renaissance Campaign 2011 is to have happy, healthy Soroptimist clubs with members engaged in select projects that advance the mission and who truly enjoy their club experience. Visit the members area at <Soroptimist.org> to view a checklist of strategies that will help your club and the federation achieve goals in each of the four areas of Renaissance Campaign 2011: Strategies for Progress.

**SIA Executive Director Co-Authors Book**

SIA Executive Director Leigh Wintz, CAE, recently co-authored a book, *The Will to Govern Well: Knowledge, Trust, & Nimbleness, 2nd Edition*. Published by ASAE Press, the book discovers how today’s most successful organizations thrive and overcome challenges. The book’s co-authors include, Glenn Tecker, Paul Meyer and Bud Crouch. In addition, Leigh was quoted in an article that appeared in two meetings-focused publications: *Helms Briscoe* and *Meetings Focus*. The articles discussed how associations are increasingly turning to third parties for help with event planning and meetings management.

**U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)**

- 1. **Publication title:** *Best for Women*
- 2. **Publication number:** 0097-9562
- 3. **Filing date:** October 1, 2010
- 4. **Issue frequency:** Four times a year
- 5. **Number of issues published annually:** 4
- 6. **Annual subscription rate:** \$11.00 U.S. \$15.00 all other countries
- 7. **Complete mailing address of known office of publication:** 1709 Spruce St., Philadelphia, PA 19103-6103
- 8. **Complete mailing address of headquarters of general business office of publisher:** 1709 Spruce St., Philadelphia, PA 19103-6103
- 9. **Full names and complete addresses of publisher, editor and managing editor:** Publisher—Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc., 1709 Spruce St., Philadelphia, PA 19103-6103
- 10. **Owner:** Same as publisher
- 11. **Known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1% or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities:** None
- 12. **For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the tax exempt status for federal income tax purposes:** Has not changed during preceding 12 months.
- 13. **Publication title:** *Best for Women*
- 14. **Issue date for circulation data below:** September/October/November 2010

	Average no. copies each issue during the preceding twelve months.	No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date.
<b>15. Extent and nature of circulation:</b>		
<b>A. Total no. copies</b> (net press run).	30,300	30,300
<b>B. Paid and/or requested circulation.</b>		
<b>1. Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541.</b> (Include advertiser’s proof and exchange copies.)	28,660	28,420
<b>2. Paid in-county subscriptions.</b> (Include advertiser’s proof and exchange copies)	none	none
<b>3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution.</b>	none	none
<b>4. Other classes mailed through the USPS.</b>	none	none
<b>C. Total paid and/or requested circulation.</b> [Sum of 15 b(1), (2), (3), and (4)].	28,660	28,420
<b>D. Free distribution by mail</b> (Samples, complimentary and other free).		
<b>1. Outside-county as stated on Form 3541.</b>	none	none
<b>2. In-county as stated on Form 3541.</b>	none	none
<b>3. Other classes mailed through the USPS.</b>	650	625
<b>E. Free distribution outside the mail</b> (Carriers or other means).	none	none
<b>F. Total free distribution</b> (Sum of 15d and 15e).	650	625
<b>G. Total distribution</b> (Sum of 15c and 15f).	29,130	29,045
<b>H. Copies not distributed.</b>	990	1,255
<b>I. Total</b> (Sum of 15g and 15h).	30,300	30,300
<b>J. Percent paid and/or requested circulation</b> (15c divided by 15g x 100).	99%	99%

# membership



## Embracing Rejection

**T**he recruitment of new members has kept our organization alive and continuously moving forward throughout the 20th century. New members mean new ideas and new energy. It's critical to the long-term success of Soroptimist—and the women and girls we serve—that all clubs attract, engage and retain members.

However, not everyone is gung-ho about the idea of asking someone to become a member. The reason? Hearing the one word no one likes to hear—NO. Rejection can stop you in your tracks. In fact, so many people have a fear of rejection that they may avoid any possible negative reaction whatsoever.

Realistically, rejection is a given. No matter how wonderful we are, at some point, we will hear the word NO. Despite the good Soroptimist is doing in the community and beyond—be it walking 40 miles to raise money and awareness for breast cancer research, securing a grant from local government to help women and girls in need, or working to end domestic violence—someone is going to say NO when you ask her to join this dynamic organization!

To add insult to injury, women tend to take rejection more personally than their male counterparts. So when you are asking someone to make the commitment to Soroptimist and you get a negative answer, it's important to realize it's not about you. There can be myriad reasons why someone says NO:

### Time

When recruiting new members, what is one of the most common excuses you may hear when someone says no? Time. More specifically, they don't have it. If you take a close look at the members in your club, you will probably see a room full of women with families, careers, and many other commitments, including their dedication to Soroptimist.

And why is that? Because people make time for the things they love. People make time for things they believe in. For you, as a Soroptimist, being a member is an important and worthwhile part of your life.

Although we have some very serious business to accomplish as we work toward our mission of improving the lives of women and girls, we need to make sure that the Soroptimist experience and our clubs are enjoyable, exciting, and inviting places where business and professional women want to spend their time.

### Lack of information

It's possible that your prospects do not have enough information about Soroptimist. It could be they saw a picture in the newspaper of your club hosting a bake sale fundraiser and now they have the impression the only thing you do is make cookies for

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**“A rejection is nothing more than a necessary step in the pursuit of success.”—Bo Bennett**

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charity. What they may not understand is that those funds are being put toward the Women's Opportunity Awards or another local women-focused project.

By articulating what Soroptimist is, our mission, and what kind of activities your club participates in—and why—a better and bigger picture is painted for prospective members.

### Perceived value and WIIFM

Potential members need to see the value in becoming a Soroptimist—how is being part of this group going to satisfy their needs and requirements. This is also sometimes known as WIIFM—What's In It For Me?

Don't be offended that someone would even ask that question. It is an important concept. Numerous opportunities exist for people to spend their volunteer time and money, so it's not incredibly selfish for them to wonder ... WIIFM?

If you have difficulty seeing or expressing the value of your club's membership, it may be time to perform a club assessment. Take a closer look at the “product” you are endorsing and see what is and what is not working. A club assessment can help identify strengths and weaknesses and establish priorities. A sample is available at <Soroptimist.org> in the Membership Resources and Information area under the Membership Retention button. Clubs are encouraged to modify, add and delete questions based on specific areas of concern.

### YOUR attitude

It's possible you are sabotaging yourself! If you go with an attitude of, “I don't think she will be interested” or “I know she is going to say no,” you've already sealed your fate. If you believe Soroptimist is a wonderful organization and someone would be lucky to be a member, then it's time to release that confidence and passion onto a prospective member.

Remember, you can't please all people all the time. Most likely, not everyone you approach will say YES to becoming a member. But keep your chin up and be persistent. One statistic says it often takes hearing NO from your prospect five to seven times before you'll finally hear that coveted YES. If you really believe the organization and mission will benefit the person you're approaching for membership, a YES will surely be the answer you receive. ☺

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# program



## Soroptimists STOP Trafficking

Three years ago, Soroptimist International of the Americas launched a federation-wide campaign to raise awareness about the sex trafficking of women and girls. In 2007 far too few people knew what trafficking was and the devastating effects it had on women and girls, families, communities and the world. Soroptimists from all over the globe have been participating in the campaign by handing out fliers at transportation centers to spread information about this heinous crime.

However, despite the work of Soroptimist and other organizations, not enough people are informed, outraged and fighting against sex slavery. Some clubs are ready to take the next step by assisting victims and preventing trafficking before it starts. In collaboration with its clubs, SIA has discovered that to end slavery a multi-dimensional approach is needed. In addition to raising awareness, assisting victims, and preventing slavery from happening, advocating for better laws and enforcement is also critical.

In order to assist clubs, Soroptimists STOP Trafficking has been revised and expanded to offer tools for approaching slavery in a multi-dimensional way. The Soroptimists STOP Trafficking section of the SIA website is being redesigned to provide information and new tools in each of these areas. Each section will also include pertinent Soroptimist club projects to highlight Soroptimist's impact around the world. The goal is to offer knowledge and resources to engage both members and non-members alike in campaigns and strategies to stop sex slavery.

For example, the section on advocating for better laws and enforcement will include information about what model laws would look like, and resources for creating a signature campaign advocating for the Swedish model of legislation where the selling of sex

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**“It is a violation of rights when women are trafficked, bought and sold as prostitutes.”—  
Hillary Clinton, U.S.  
Secretary of State**

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is decriminalized and the buying of sex is criminalized. A law like this sends a message that women and girls are not commodities that can be bought and sold. In the area about assisting victims, information will be provided on buying gift cards to local stores and sending them to Soroptimist headquarters for distribution to clubs that are working directly with organizations assisting victims.

The new website section will also house the monthly trafficking news alerts currently sent out from headquarters that highlight important news about trafficking and slavery. And, finally, there will be a “take action” section that will change monthly and provide simple advocacy efforts to help Soroptimists end the enslavement of women and girls.

The updated section will be available by the International Day for the Elimination of Slavery (December 2), and will be located at <[Soroptimist.org/stoptrafficking.html](http://Soroptimist.org/stoptrafficking.html)>. 🌐

**By Lori Blair**  
**Senior Director of Program Services**  
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**Watch a MIND TV video with SIA's Executive Director Leigh Wintz and Senior Director of Program Services Lori Blair as they discuss sex trafficking and what can be done to stop it: <<http://tinyurl.com/265wvpg>>.**

### Sex Slavery Facts:

- 12.3 to 27 million human beings are enslaved around the world.
- 79 percent of trafficking victims are forced into sexual servitude.
- 66 percent of human trafficking victims are women and 13 percent are girls.
- In the United States, the average age of entry into prostitution is 12 to 14.
- 90 to 96 percent of prostituted women studied stated they wanted to leave prostitution immediately but could not because of a lack of healthcare, money, education and other basic resources.
- Human trafficking is the second-largest and fastest-growing criminal activity in the world.

# public awareness



## Welcome to the Video Age

Welcome to the age of video. Social media and video work hand-in-hand, especially for organizations and businesses. In recent years, online video has emerged as a primary marketing and communication tool for organizations that wish to increase awareness of their mission and initiatives. Video works with social media to get the message out.

Many organizations are using online video, but not just on YouTube. YouTube may be the largest video-viewing website, but organizations, including SIA, are also adding video to their own sites. It can quickly and easily make websites more engaging, dynamic and entertaining. Online video can also boost social networking efforts. With the amount of time people spend online, they are often drawn to what they can watch more than what they can read, which is why online video has become so popular.

While professional filmmakers and videographers are still the go-to people for professionally produced work, the availability of inexpensive equipment and editing software makes it possible for anyone to produce and post video. The vast majority of videos posted on YouTube.com are not professionally created. Most “viral” videos housed on YouTube are shot with inexpensive cameras or even cell phones.

Clubs are certainly not expected to produce videos on top of everything else they have to do (like helping women and girls!). However, for those clubs wishing to create their own videos, below are some helpful tips.

### Creating Video

- Keep videos short. Viewers will more likely watch the whole video if it is short. Deliver messages in three minutes or less.
- Stick to one focus. Don't include multiple subjects in one video.
- For branding purposes, prominently display the Soroptimist logo somewhere in the video. Either keep it up the whole time or flash it on the screen at key points throughout the video.
- Include the club's web address. Putting it at the beginning of the video ensures viewers won't miss it. It can also go at the end where it is the last thing viewers see.
- If interviewing someone, ask that they avoid wearing clothes with busy patterns, as they appear to “dance” on the screen. Videotape the subject against a

contrasting background so she stands out. Also make sure the background is uncluttered and free from distraction. The subject should be the main focus. Lastly, find a quiet location with good lighting.

- Get permission. Be sure to secure permission from those being filmed for any future use of the footage.

### Sharing Video

- Give videos catchy titles. Coming up with a good video title is like creating a headline for a newspaper article. A catchy title will attract more attention.
- Set up a YouTube account to house club videos online. But don't stop there. Always embed videos onto the club's website as well. YouTube provides the html code to do that. Embedding video on the club site will increase web traffic and encourage visitors to spend more time learning about Soroptimist. In addition, Google's algorithms calculate how many times people watch each video, including the videos embedded on the club website. The more people view a club's videos, the higher they will turn up in Google searches.
- Post videos on the club's Facebook and Twitter pages, where they can get excellent exposure. This is where social media and video really work together. The more locations the videos are in, the more people can find and watch them.
- Many television stations have a section on their websites where people can upload their own videos. TV stations often play some of these videos during their televised news broadcasts. Clubs, for example, could submit footage of members distributing Workplace Campaign hotline cards in October, or of members running a heart-health-awareness day in February, or of the club's Women's Opportunity Award recipient getting her award.

**For clubs without a video camera, the Flip Video Camcorder is a great option. The small, inexpensive camera is fun and easy to use. Visit <TheFlip.com> for more information.**



Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words—but a video is worth so much more! 🌐

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# fundraising



## Women and Retirement Planning

**W**omen face special challenges when planning for retirement. Because their careers are often interrupted to care for children or elderly parents, women may spend less time in the workforce and earn less money than men in the same age group. As a result, their retirement plan balances, Social Security benefits and pension benefits are often lower. In addition to earning less, women generally live longer than men, and they face having to stretch limited retirement savings and benefits over many years.

But another significant concern is that many women—busy balancing their family, home and work responsibilities—simply haven't given retirement planning much thought. But if women don't put retirement planning at the top of their to-do list, they risk short-changing themselves later on. And married or not, it's critical for women to take an active role in planning for retirement. Otherwise, they may be forced to make important financial decisions quickly during a period of crisis. Unfortunately, decisions that are not well thought through often prove costly later. Women need to arm themselves with knowledge, and pave the way to a worry-free retirement by committing to spending just a few minutes a day learning the basics of investing and retirement planning.

### Here are some tips:

- **Begin saving now.** Estimate how much income you'll need and set a retirement savings goal that you can work toward. Use your current expenses as a starting point, but note that your expenses may change dramatically by the time you retire. Be sure you keep track of your progress.
- **Plan for income in retirement.** At age 65, women can expect to live, on average, an additional 19.8 years.\* This means that women should generally plan for a long retirement that will last at least 20 to 30 years. Find out how much you can expect to receive from Social Security, pension plans, and other sources. What benefits will you receive should you become widowed or divorced?
- **Save for retirement—no matter what.** Even if you're staying at home to raise your family, you can—and should—continue to save for retirement. If you're married and file your income taxes jointly, and otherwise qualify, you may open and contribute to a traditional or Roth IRA as long as your spouse has enough earned income to cover the contributions.
- **Save as much as you can—you have many options.** Save regularly, save as much as you can, and then look for ways to save more—dedicate a portion of every raise, bonus, cash gift, or tax refund to your retirement savings. If your employer offers a retirement savings plan, such as a 401(k) or a 403(b), join it as soon as possible and contribute as much as you can. Consider purchasing long-term care insurance to help protect your retirement savings and income from the high cost of nursing home care.

These retirement basics should help you get started, But remember, you don't have to do it by yourself—a financial professional has the knowledge and experience to help you identify your retirement goals and choose the most appropriate investments. 🌐

**By Adrienne Horen**  
Vice President/Investments  
Janney Montgomery Scott LLC

*With more than 20 years of financial service experience, Adrienne has managed the assets of Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA) since 1988. Her experience and expertise is in helping women chart a strong financial road map to preserve and grow their wealth, regardless of their situation. It is her belief that it is through financial strength and independence that women can create and enjoy the life they choose. To learn more, contact her at 215-665-6672 or [www.jmsonlinefc.com/askadrienne](http://www.jmsonlinefc.com/askadrienne).*

(\*Source: National Vital Statistics Report, Volume 58, Number 1, 2009)

### Why I participate in SIA's monthly giving program

**Carla Armstrong, SI/San Francisco, California**

I have been a member of Soroptimist going on about five years now, and while I have taken an active role in my club through serving as an officer for several of the five years and participating in club projects, I did not feel connected to the larger Soroptimist organization. Donating through the monthly giving program allows me to support Soroptimist programs such as the Women's Opportunity Awards, Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls, and more. It enables me to do this in an affordable way while connecting me to the larger organizational mission. These are programs I have come to care about passionately, and I want to do my part to continue to contribute to them and work toward entrance into the Laurel Society. I hope to continue to support the wonderful mission we have through my donations for many years to come.



### Benefits of monthly giving:

- **Satisfaction!** You will be providing a stable source of funding for our mission of improving the lives of women and girls. Having a consistent donation base helps us to plan our efforts better and to make the best use of your dollars. Plus, your total contribution will accumulate faster than you realize, painlessly moving you to a higher level of giving.
- **Convenience.** You will be fulfilling your intention to support women and girls with no worry about paperwork or forgetting to send in your donation!
- **Complete control and flexibility.** You can suspend, decrease, or increase the amount of your gift at any time, however you wish.



# BEST *for Women*

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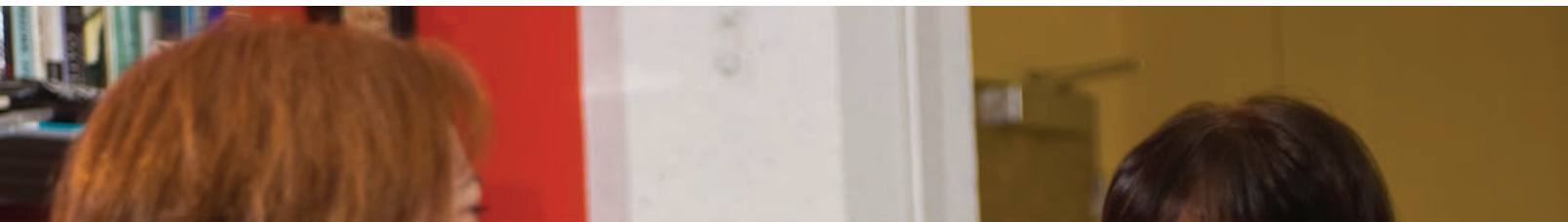
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