



PANO Standards for Excellence Certification



Soroptimist International of the Americas is proud to display the Seal of Excellence, awarded by the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO). Certification in the *Standards for Excellence* program is bestowed only to the most well-managed and responsibly governed nonprofit organizations that have demonstrated compliance with the 56 specific *Standards for Excellence* based on honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, responsibility and accountability. SIA is one of the first organizations in the state of Pennsylvania to receive this distinction.

The certification program, sponsored by PANO, required SIA to expose all aspects of its operations, including board involvement and policies, programs and services, management, fundraising and financial practices. After the completion of a lengthy standards self-study application, it was submitted to PANO for review. The application was then reviewed by a panel of three trained peer reviewers. The reviewers completed an ethics check-up during which time all operations, work and accomplishments were evaluated. This included a site visit by PANO staff and personal interviews with SIA's president, president-elect and executive director. A Standards Committee made the final decision on Soroptimist's application.

SIA was initially certified in 2004 and successfully recertified in November 2007. Re-certification is valid for five years.

What does the Seal of Excellence say about Soroptimist?

- **The Seal of Excellence is a symbol of trust.**
Organizations that bear the seal not only obey the law, but go beyond the minimum requirements set forth by government regulation.
- **The Seal of Excellence is a symbol for excellence in nonprofit management.**
Organizations that bear the seal are guided by a well-defined mission, have evaluation systems in place to measure the effectiveness of their programs, and adhere to sound financial management policies.
- **The Seal of Excellence is a symbol for excellence in leadership.**
Organizations that bear the seal are led by a volunteer board of directors that accepts responsibility to oversee the organization's mission, policies, program and financial resources.

- **The Seal of Excellence is a symbol for openness and disclosure in nonprofits.**
Organizations that bear the seal have information available to the public, provide truthful, responsible stewardship of all donations and provide a voice for their constituents.

The first *Standards for Excellence* program was developed by a team of volunteers from Maryland's nonprofit community. This program is being replicated in nine partner jurisdictions. For more information about the Standards for Excellence program, visit www.standardsforexcellent.org.