

2008-2009 Making a Difference for Women Award Federation and Region Winners

The Soroptimist Making a Difference for Women Award honors women who have worked to improve the lives of women and girls through their professional and/or volunteer work. In 2008-2009, Soroptimist members voted to rename the award. Beginning in 2009-2010, the program will be referred to as the Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women. The new name recognizes and honors the first federation president, Ruby Lee Minar. A ruby is also a deep red gemstone associated with wisdom, importance, vitality, strength, vivacity, power and love: all words embodying the strong and compassionate women who are our award recipients.

In 2008-2009, 36 percent of Soroptimist clubs participated in the program. Clubs around the federation gave a total of 511 awards and donated a total of \$123,700 to charitable organizations. Participating clubs also utilized the program as an opportunity to promote Soroptimist by placing advertisements, conducting awards ceremonies and receiving media attention.

Federation Winner



Brazil Region

Edelvira Gois Ramos, *Casa de Apoio Mae Solidaria*

Edelvira, who is president of her community association, founded Casa de Apoio Mae Solidaria (Solidarity Mothers' Support Home), a day care center in her home that provides child care for the working women in her community. She also mentors women in the community by teaching them vocational skills, helping them find employment and encouraging them to believe in themselves. In addition, Edelvira is currently working on establishing a community sewing cooperative.

Sponsoring Club: SI Curitiba Batel

Region Winners

America del Sur Region

Evangelina Garcia-Prince, *Founder of Several Non-Governmental Organizations*

Evangelina has been a founding member and board member of several non-governmental organizations, including: Gender Equality Forum, Social Research and Women's Development Study Center and Gender, Democracy and Human Rights. She has also served as a public official for both national and international organizations, including serving as Vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee for CEDAW (Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women).

Sponsoring Club: SI Caracas

Brazil Region

See Federation Winner

Camino Real Region

Nina Smart, *Servicing Wild Flowers International*

Nina is the founder of Servicing Wild Flowers International (SWF International) which works to improve the living conditions of women and girls in Sierra Leone. The main goal of SWF International is to raise awareness about and eradicate the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Nina herself barely escaped the practice when she was a young girl living in Sierra Leone. As an adult, Nina has dedicated her life to stopping the practice of FGM.

Sponsoring Club: SI Downey

Desert Coast Region

Lesia Cartelii, *Angel Faces*

At age 9, Lesia suffered severe burn injuries covering over fifty percent of her body. Having thus endured a childhood filled with stares, teasing and rejection, Lesia, as an adult, decided to reach out to girls who have suffered her same fate. To this end, Lesia founded Angel Faces, a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide innovative healing retreats designed to teach adolescent girls with facial disfigurements strategies that will help them reach their optimum potential and give them tools to develop meaningful relationships with themselves, their families and their communities.

Sponsoring Club: SI La Jolla

Faye Dietiker, *Breast Cancer Angles*

Faye, a breast cancer survivor, founded Breast Cancer Angles, a non-profit organization that provides financial assistance to women who are undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Since the organization was founded nine years ago, \$1.5 million has been given to women to help pay for housing, food, medical bills, utilities, home health care and much more. Last year, Angel House was established, a home where women can stay rent free while undergoing breast cancer treatment.

Sponsoring Club: SI Cypress

Eastern Canada Region

Casey Cruikshank, *Waterloo Region Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Center*

For the past 18 years, Casey has worked as a social worker in a variety of settings, including women's health services, domestic violence support services and at a home for unwed mothers. Casey has also worked internationally, having developed women's community health programs in Ethiopia and Papua New Guinea that focuses on nutrition and sanitation. Currently, Casey is the Director of the Waterloo Region Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Center.

Sponsoring Club: SI Cambridge

Founder Region

Christine McManus, *Midwives on Missions of Service*

As an ordained deacon in the Episcopal Church, Christine has dedicated her life to ministering to those in need. Currently, she is serving as board president for Midwives on Missions of Service (MOMS). MOMS works in Sierra Leone where they train women to be traditional birth attendants (TBA). The TBAs then go on to form local councils to promote community education of birth control, breastfeeding, nutrition, malaria prevention and other health issues. So far 97 TBAs from 32 villages have been trained.

Sponsoring club: SI El Cerrito

Golden West Region

Kristi Camplin, *Inspire Life Skills Training, Inc.*

Kristi founded Inspire Life Skills Training, Inc. to give hope to and ignite the potential in young women exiting the foster care system. As executive director, Kristi leads a team of over 45 volunteers and coordinates the life skills training, mentoring and fundraising components of the organization. Kristi's goal for the young women in the program is that they pursue a higher education, fulfill their personal dreams and return to mentor other young women exiting the foster care system.

Sponsoring Club: SI Corona

Japan Chuo

Sakai Hiromi, *Toyama Support Team, Smile Ribbon and Pink Ribbon Campaign*

Sakai was the first woman in her community to become a certified nurse practitioner specializing in breast cancer therapy and care. She then founded the Toyama Support Team, a peer-focused study group to help educate other nurse practitioners, and Smile Ribbon, a monthly support group for women living with breast cancer. Sakai also organized her community's Pink Ribbon Campaign and successfully convinced the Toyama Prefecture Welfare Department to participate in the campaign.

Sponsoring Club: SI Toyama

Japan Higashi Region

Sayaka Murata, *Kamonohashi Project*

While a university student, Sayaka, along with two of her professors, founded the Kamonohashi Project whose mission is to stop commercial sex trafficking. More specifically, the project provides support for women and girls in Cambodia through three main projects: a community factory, a computer school and fundraising efforts. These projects strive to eliminate the cycle of poverty and provide women and girls with skills training and a means to earn a living.

Sponsoring Club: SI Tokyo-Azuma

Japan Kita Region

Atsuko Ito, *Step*

Atsuko, who has a daughter with a severe disability, founded Step, a workplace program for people with disabilities wherein they can create and sell their own products with the goal of helping them become more independent and integrated members of the community at-large. Currently, Step operates two businesses with twenty-two workers and eight full-time staff.

Sponsoring Club: SI Kushiro

Japan Minami Region

Suzuyo Takazato, *Rape Emergency Intervention Counseling Okinawa*

Suzuyo is currently the Director of Rape Emergency Intervention Counseling Okinawa and has worked to improve the lives of women and girls in a variety of capacities. In 1995, she presented a workshop at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Upon returning to Japan, she founded an empowerment and networking campaign called the Unai Festival whose major project is a 12 hour radio show, called 100 Messages from Women to Women, that airs various programs by and about women.

Sponsoring Club: SI Okinawa

Japan Nishi Region

Toshiko Mizumoto, *Idona Cooperative Association*

Toshiko lives in Idona, a small village south of Palestine. There she provides women with training in design, sewing, quality control and business management. She also established the Idona Cooperative Association in which women create embroidery items and sell them to Saramu, a non-profit organization back in Japan that then sells the goods at a fair market value.

Sponsoring Club: SI Heiwa Hiroshima

Korea Region

Jungsook Kim, *Girl Scouts Korea*

As a politician and educator, Jungsook has dedicated her life to improving the lives of women and girls. Most recently, as president of Girl Scouts Korea, she leads efforts to establish Girls' Day as a nationally recognized day in honor of girls in Korea.

Sponsoring Club: SI Seoul

Mexico/Centroamerica Region

Elma Acosta Chavez, *Elected City Official*

As city council woman, Elma fights to overcome the cultural norm that dictates women should dedicate their lives to the sole objective of childrearing. She participates in a program that offers women skills

training while also providing educational programs on maternal health and well-being. She also played a supportive role in the passage of the state-wide Law on Access by Women to a Life Free from Violence. Sponsoring Club: SI Tijuana Centro

Midwestern Region

Rachel O'Neill, *Little Dresses for Africa*

Rachel is the founder of Little Dresses for Africa, a non-profit organization that creates dresses from pillow cases and ships them to Africa for distribution to girls living in orphanages. Currently, women from over 20 states in the U.S. sew dresses and send them to Rachel where she coordinates their delivery to Africa. Since its inception, over 10,000 dresses have been shipped to orphanages in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Gambia and Ethiopia.

Sponsoring Club: SI Trenton Area

North Atlantic Region

Ellen Markowitz, *PowerPlay NYC*

Ellen is the founder of PowerPlay NYC whose mission is to educate and empower girls through sports. An accomplished athlete, Ellen's goal in founding PowerPlay is to provide girls from underserved communities an opportunity to benefit from the competence, confidence and connectedness that can come from playing sports. PowerPlay provides schools and community-based organizations with trained girls sports coaches who lead its STARS (Sports Training And Role models for Success) program. The program serves approximately 400 girls each year.

Sponsoring Club: SI New York City

North Central Region

Krissy Wold, *Weight Watchers*

A graduate of Weight Watchers, Krissy now is a leader at her local Weight Watchers group. As such, she inspires and encourages women to live a healthier life. When a woman reaches her goal, Krissy organizes a congratulatory ceremony for them. Numerous women have blossomed as a result of Krissy's encouragement and leadership.

Sponsoring Club: SI Fargo

Northeastern Region

Nancy Roldan Johnson, *Latina A.R.M.Y., Inc.*

When Nancy thinks about her past as a young Latina girl, she can not recall having any positive role models. As an adult, she decided to provide young Latinas the support and role modeling that she never received. To this end, Nancy established Latina A.R.M.Y., Inc., a volunteer-driven non-profit organization whose mission is to empower young Latinas through a series of free workshops that teach four life tools: journaling for self-discovery; creating positive affirmation from negative thoughts; establishing personal rules; and setting and achieving goals.

Sponsoring Club: SI Greater Bridgeport

Northwestern Region

Suzanne Berrios, *Washington Women's Employment and Education*

Suzanne grew up being shuffled between an orphanage and various foster homes without any support services to help her understand her situation. As an adult, Suzanne has dedicated her life to helping others in need. She volunteers at Washington Women's Employment and Education; serves as a one-on-one mentor for an elementary-aged girl; donates one year's worth of school clothing and supplies for one or two girls each year; and volunteers with the Domestic Abuse Women's Network.

Sponsoring Club: SI Kent

Philippines Region

Teresita Feliciano, *Religious of the Good Sheppard*

As a member of the Religious of the Good Sheppard, Teresita focuses on the welfare of women and girls. She helps to provide skills training for indigenous and immigrant women through livelihood projects such

as piggery, handicrafts and cosmetology. She also helped establish a cooperative store where women can purchase household necessities at a reduced price. Most recently, Teresita has begun working with women whose husbands work overseas.

Sponsoring Club: SI Magalang

Rocky Mountain Region

Sarah Mikesell Growney, *Equality Initiatives*

Sarah is the Program Director of Equality Initiatives, a grassroots education campaign to raise awareness about the plight of women in Wyoming. Women in Wyoming suffer from the largest gender wage gap in the nation and have one of the highest rates of suicide and depression in the country. Most recently, Sarah has been working with other non-profit leaders and with the state legislature to develop talking points for Wyoming's first state-mandated Wage Gap Working Group.

Sponsoring Club: SI Cody

Sierra Nevada Region

Regina Sarmiento, *Acres of Hope*

Regina is the Executive Director of Acres of Hope, a two-year renewal program for homeless women and their children. As E.D., Regina designed the Acres program, a four part program created to help women achieve a healthier and more economically stable life. The program consists of individualized help in goal setting, mental health counseling, parenting classes and employment skills training.

Sponsoring Club: SI Las Vegas Valley

Sierra Pacific Region

Laura Vieira, *Ray of Hope*

A victim of child abuse, Laura's life mission is to provide girls the support and mentorship that she never received as a child. To this end, Laura founded Ray of Hope to help women and girls who are not otherwise receiving the help that they need. Ray of Hope's most recent program, Seeds of Hope, is designed to offer support to pregnant teens and teen mothers. Ray of Hope works closely with the local police department, Child Protective Services and local school districts.

Sponsoring Club: SI Manteca

South Atlantic Region

Jeannette Kendall, *Success in Style*

Jeannette is founder and president of Success in Style, a non-profit organization that provides quality business wardrobes to low-income women seeking employment. In addition, the organization helps women prepare for job interviews. Success in Style serves women from welfare to work programs, crisis pregnancy centers, refugee outreach programs, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters and offender reentry programs.

Sponsoring Club: SI Howard County

South Central Region

Gail Capper, *Empowering Haiti*

After traveling to Haiti and witnessing the level of poverty there, Gail co-founded Empowering Haiti, a non-profit organization whose goals include helping women become more independent. To this end, Gail implemented a micro-lending program that gives women \$100 in seed money to start their own business. In addition, she created a wholesale store where women can purchase household items at a reduced price.

Sponsoring Club: SI Wichita

Sothern Region

Linda Smith, *Shared Hope International*

A former congresswoman, Linda is founder and director of Shared Hope International, a non-profit organization that works to rescue and restore women and girls in crisis; prevent and eradicate sex trafficking through education and public awareness; and partners with local groups to help women and

girls enslaved in the sex trade by providing them with shelter, healthcare, education and vocational training opportunities.

Sponsoring Club: SI Stuart

Taiwan Region

Chin-Jung Lee, *Candlelight Society*

Chin-Jung, a social worker, is a volunteer with the Candlelight Society, a government recognized social welfare organization. As a volunteer, she works one-on-one with women to help them get the social services they need. Chin-Jung often works with domestic violence victims and divorced or widowed mothers. She visits the women in their homes and continues to follow-up with them to make sure they continue to receive assistance.

Sponsoring Club: SI Ping Tung

Western Canada Region

Bette Mitchell, *Highbanks Independent Living for Parenting Youth Society*

After years of working as a counselor for teen mothers, Bette knew all too well the difficulties teen mothers face when seeking safe, affordable housing. To address this issue, Bette created the Highbanks Independent Living for Parenting Youth Society. The Society, through the purchase of a five-unit building, provides teen mothers with safe and affordable individual family unit accommodations. In addition, the Society provides counseling services and parenting and life skills training.

Sponsoring Club: SI Calgary