



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women®

*Improving the lives of women and girls through
programs leading to social and economic
empowerment.*

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS

Soroptimist One Day Club Projects

Introduction

People everywhere, including Soroptimists, are strapped for time. Women are busy juggling the demands of their jobs and personal lives. They may want to volunteer but only periodically or for a short-term project. This rising trend in volunteerism is sometimes referred to as “episodic volunteering”—basically a one-time (one-off) or short-term volunteer opportunity.

Conducting a Soroptimist one-day club project can be a great way to help women and girls and also provide volunteer opportunities for women in the community—including prospective new members. In addition, a one-day club project can also serve to raise awareness about Soroptimist.

The one-day projects listed below were selected because they are known to be successful, relatively easy to implement, and include sufficient hands-on activities working directly with project beneficiaries. Please keep in mind that these projects are suggestions and clubs are welcome to consider other one-day projects that can benefit the lives of women and girls in their local area.

These projects can easily incorporate non-Soroptimist volunteers and provide them an opportunity to experience a Soroptimist club in action. One-day projects are an especially good opportunity for clubs to engage with prospective new members—women who have expressed an interest in Soroptimist, but haven’t had any direct experience with a club project. After a direct experience of Soroptimist in action, they may be inspired to join the club. In other words, one-day projects can serve as an excellent “soft-sell” membership tool.

In short, one-day club projects can serve as an opportunity to establish connections and build relationships. Working with “episodic volunteers” may be challenging as Soroptimists are accustomed to depending upon a more consistent pool of club members to carry out projects. However, one-day projects provide an opportunity to be innovative and flexible in order to remain healthy in this new volunteer environment. Conducting a one-day project can be ripe with benefits such as:

- Building public awareness.
- Extending Soroptimist programs in the community.
- Generating interest in membership.
- Reaching a wider audience by hosting larger events.
- Creating potential sponsor or donor relationships.

Community Needs Assessment

When deciding on a one-day project, completing a community needs assessment is recommended—to determine what services are currently available, what services are most needed, and to identify potential partners. Conducting a community needs assessment will help assure the project's success, for it would not be advantageous to conduct a project that is already being offered. Also, please keep in mind that ideally the community need should match the interests and skills of club members. The club should be truly interested in the issue and feel a sense of ownership about the project.

Inviting Non-Soroptimist Community Volunteers

In order to seek out episodic volunteers, a club may use traditional means to send a public service announcement to local newspapers, radio, and television. Other contacts can be made through:

- Advocacy groups
- Business and professional organizations
- Human resource departments of large businesses
- Houses of worship
- Schools, PTAs
- Service organizations
- Colleges and universities
- Volunteer centers
- Internet: Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, VolunteerMatch, etc.

When advertising for community volunteers, be as specific as possible regarding the nature of the project. This will help ensure that the interest and skills of the respondents are in sync with the specific project advertised. Most likely, a manageable number of women will respond and the club will be able to easily incorporate them into the project. Be prepared with a contingency plan and ideas for modifying the project to incorporate more community volunteers should you get too many respondents.

When inviting non-Soroptimists to participate, make sure the project provides sufficient opportunities for volunteers to work directly with project beneficiaries, as well as opportunities to develop friendships with club members. In addition, think about ways to make sure non-members feel both welcomed and appreciated. And finally, create a plan for following-up with non-member volunteers. Toward these ends, your club may wish to:

- Provide a sign-in sheet and name tags.
- Begin with a special welcome to non-Soroptimists and offer a brief orientation about Soroptimist, the partner organization (if applicable), and the importance of the project—connecting all to SIA's mission to improve the lives of women and girls.
- Provide refreshments and/or lunch.
- Schedule time at the end for thanking the volunteers, reflecting and debriefing. Distribute the Volunteer Evaluation Survey (sample included at the end of this document) and ask the volunteers to complete it. Collect the surveys and/or designate a drop off area or person to whom they can hand in the survey.
- Send out thank-you cards. Include a Live Your Dream pin and an invitation to an upcoming Soroptimist event.
- Provide volunteers with copies of any positive correspondence received from project recipients.

When conducting a one-day project in partnership with another organization, please refer to the following club resource: [Effective Partnerships for Soroptimist Clubs](#).

Soroptimist One-Day Project Ideas

Below, please find one-day project ideas organized by topic. Clubs are encouraged to submit their own ideas as well. If your club has a one-day project idea to share, please email program@soroptimist.org.

Girl-Focused Projects

Parenting Class for Teen Moms

Teen moms often feel overwhelmed and hesitant in their new role as mothers. They may be struggling with depression, anxiety and/or low-self esteem. Children of teen parents are at a higher risk for health problems, developmental delays and child abuse. Conducting a parenting class is an excellent way to give teen moms the support and tools they need to be happy, confident and skillful new mothers—while also improving their children’s chances of growing up physically, emotionally and developmentally healthy.

Young moms are challenged with reconciling their roles as mother, student and employee while still developing through the stages of adolescence. Class topics that will help assist teen moms integrate these divergent roles include new-born care, health and nutrition, child development, the importance of play, age appropriate discipline, safety, home finance and budgeting, study skills, time management, stress reduction and self-care.

If possible, identify in advance which class topics non-members have particular interest in or knowledge of and invite them to help teach that portion of the class—or at least help field questions. In addition, non-members can help coordinate refreshments and/or help with child care needs. If sufficient interest, invite non-members to help establish a more long-term mentoring program.

Community Baby Shower for Teen Moms

New babies require a lot of material support, including diapers, blankets, crib, strollers, car seats, breast pumps, clothes, and toys. For any new mom these added expenses can create undue stress. For a teen mom, they can seem unattainable. Support teen moms by hosting a community baby shower. Collect baby items, either through donation or purchase, and present them to teen moms. Also collect self-pampering gifts for moms, such as bath salts and body lotions. Create a festive environment including decorations, party games and refreshments. Take photos of the event to give to the moms. Invite non-members to participate by asking them to donate items, wrap gifts, coordinate refreshments and/or lead a game.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Day

As many as one-third of teens experience some form of abuse in their romantic dating relationships, including verbal, emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse. The consequences of teen dating violence are dire, often leading to self-harming coping strategies such as substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behaviors and even suicide.

To help clubs address this issue, SIA headquarters has developed the [Soroptimist Teen Dating Violence Awareness Day model program kit](#). The goal of the teen dating violence awareness day is simple: to educate both teens and their parents about teen dating violence and to inspire them to take action.

An awareness day can be implemented at any community location where teens congregate, such as shopping malls, movie theaters, teen centers, school events, or community festivals.

Invite non-members to help distribute informational literature and [Soroptimist Teen Dating Violence bookmarks](#). Informational handouts are included in the model program kit and the bookmarks can be purchased for a nominal fee from the SIA website. For more information about teen dating violence, please refer to the [Soroptimist Teen Dating Violence white paper](#).

Anti-Trafficking Project

Soroptimists STOP Trafficking

Each year, an estimated 800,000 women and children are trafficked across international borders—and additional numbers of women and girls are trafficked within countries. Eighty percent of trafficking victims are women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation. In addition to the physical abuse endured, trafficking victims suffer extreme emotional stress, including shame, grief, fear, distrust and suicidal thoughts.

In an effort to end this hideous crime, Soroptimist has developed the [Soroptimists STOP Trafficking](#) program—a simple way for clubs to raise awareness about trafficking and sexual slavery. Clubs can participate by distributing [Soroptimists STOP Trafficking](#) cards. The cards, which provide information about the sex trafficking of women and girls, can be distributed on any day. For maximum effect consider distributing them on either December 2, the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, or January 11, the National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness (U.S.A).

Invite non-members to help distribute cards in places such as doctor's offices, hospitals, workplaces, businesses, libraries, universities, police stations, transportation centers, and domestic violence shelters. In addition, refer to the [Soroptimists STOP Trafficking publicity packet](#) and consider planning a public awareness event around the distribution of the cards. For more information on the topic, visit SIA's webpage on [sex trafficking](#). For more involved anti-trafficking project ideas, including working with trafficking victims and advocating for change, please refer to the [Soroptimist Anti-Trafficking model program kit](#).

Projects that Support Victims of Domestic Violence

Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence

Women who experience domestic violence do not leave the abusive relationship behind when they leave their homes. Their abusers often harass them at work, by telephone or e-mail. In the worst case scenario, perpetrators come to the workplace and threaten women and their co-workers. At the same time, the work day may be the only time a domestic violence victim is away from her abuser and her only opportunity to find out about support and services available to her.

The Soroptimist Workplace Campaign provides victims with information about domestic violence and access to services that could help them. SIA has designed [Keeping Women Safe at Work](#) cards, which can be placed in employee paycheck envelopes and in women's restrooms, where women can feel comfortable picking up a card. The cards also provide information about what co-workers can do to help keep women safe at work.

Each year the Soroptimist Workplace Campaign takes place on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Invite non-members to distribute cards at their workplace and to help with any other scheduled domestic violence public awareness raising events. Please refer to the [Soroptimist Workplace Campaign club instructions](#) for more detailed project information and ideas. Also, please refer to the [Domestic Violence as a Workplace Concern](#) white paper.

Domestic Violence Shelter Repair/Upkeep

In the U.S. alone, women experience almost five million intimate partner-related acts of violence. Yet, ending an intimate relationship is never easy. It's even harder if a woman has been isolated from her family and friends, psychologically beaten down, financially controlled, and physically threatened. When a woman does decide to leave an abusive relationship, she may choose to seek refuge in a domestic violence shelter, where she can get the support she needs to begin a new life free from violence.

The wear and tear on domestic violence shelters can be great, while resources for upkeep are often minimal. To support women living in domestic violence shelters, plan a one-day project to do basic repairs and upkeep. Projects can include interior or exterior painting, installing new shelves, cleaning out storage areas, organizing the children's room, hanging window dressings, doing a thorough spring cleaning. or extensive yard and gardening work.

Invite non-members to help by assigning them specific jobs and duties and checking in with them regularly throughout the day. Also, consider inviting women living in the shelter to help as well. For more information and ideas for supporting domestic violence shelters, please refer to the model program kit, [Domestic Violence Shelters: Beginning a Life without Violence](#).

Resume Writing, Job Search and Interview Skills Workshop

Women worldwide earn on average approximately two-thirds of what men earn. These low earnings have an especially negative impact on women in domestic violence situations, as low wages are often a contributing factor in keeping women trapped in abusive relationships.

When a woman does decide to leave an abusive relationship and seek refuge in a domestic violence shelter, she may need to look for a better paying job in order to support herself and her children. On the other hand, some women in the shelter will have been stay-at-home moms and therefore out of the workforce for several years. In either case, they will benefit from a refresher course in resume writing, job searching and job interview skills. Plan a day-long workshop covering these topics making sure participants have plenty of time to practice and role-play what they have learned.

Other related topics that may be included are instruction on basic word processing and basic web search skills. In addition, if time allows consider ending the day with instruction on how to create and stick to a budget. In other words, take time to tailor the workshop to the specific needs of the residents. If possible, also identify in advance which class topics non-members have particular interest in or knowledge of and invite them to help teach that portion of the class—or at least help field questions. Also, partner non-members with specific women to provide one-on-one instruction and support. To learn more about the issue of women and work, please refer to the following SIA white papers: [The Gender Wage Gap](#), [Balancing Work and Family Life](#), and [Women and Work](#).

Holiday and Birthday Meals

Birthdays and holidays can be a depressing time for women living in domestic violence shelters, especially if they have children. Shelter residents may feel isolated, alone and lacking the personal support or financial resources to provide the kind of birthday or holiday experience they would like for themselves and their children. In partnership with a local domestic violence shelter, arrange to spend a day shopping, preparing and cooking a birthday or holiday meal for shelter residents. Join shelter residents during the meal and make an event of the day. Consider providing birthday or holiday gifts for both moms and children. Invite non-members to participate in all aspects of the day, including shopping, wrapping presents, cooking and clean-up.

Comfort, Care and Support Kits

Creating comfort, care and/or support kits for specific women and girls who need them is another way to involve non-members interested in the work of Soroptimist. Although creating these kits doesn't necessarily

provide direct interaction with recipients, it does provide a hands-on project that can easily incorporate non-member volunteers.

Begin the project by inviting a speaker from the community to talk about an issue (sexual assault, breast cancer, homelessness, etc.). Spend the rest of the day assembling and delivering the kits. Invite non-member volunteers to help donate items, assemble and deliver the kits. Please refer to this list for a few kit ideas.

Sexual assault survivors

Partner with a local hospital to distribute comfort kits to sexual assault survivors. Suggested items include: sweat shirt and pants, t-shirt, lounge pants, undergarments, socks, slip-on shoes, travel-size personal hygiene items, coupon for hospital cafeteria, plush animal, journal and pen, water, snacks, and a relaxation candle.

Breast cancer patients

Partner with a local hospital or women's health-care clinic to distribute kits to women who are undergoing chemotherapy and/or who have had a mastectomy. Suggested items include: ginger candies/capsules/tea for nausea, journal and pen, oral hygiene products, ice bag, athletic bandage, sheepskin seatbelt cover, sleeping cap, warm socks, and a relaxation candle.

Homeless women

Partner with a local homeless shelter to provide personal hygiene kits to homeless women. Suggested items include: soap, washcloth, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, brush, oral hygiene products, tissues, feminine hygiene products, razors, and lotions.

Homeless girls

Partner with a homeless shelter to provide girls with back-to-school supplies. Suggested items include: age-appropriate school supplies, personal hygiene items, journal and pen, and gift cards for shoes and clothing.

Incarcerated women

Partner with a local women's correctional facility to provide release kits for women. Suggested items include: personal hygiene items, oral hygiene products, feminine hygiene products, brush, journal and pen, and gift card for local department store.

Conclusion

Soroptimist one-day club projects, such as the ones described above, are an excellent way to accomplish the following three objectives at once:

- Improve the lives of women and girls.
- Engage non-Soroptimists in our mission.
- Promote the work of Soroptimist.

Also, given the busy lives of women – Soroptimists and non-Soroptimists alike – conducting one-day projects will allow everyone involved to make the most efficient use of their time and resources. Please keep in mind that these are only some suggestions. The ideas provided, while known to be successful, are by no means all-inclusive. In addition to implementing these projects, clubs are also encouraged to develop their own one-day projects.

If your club has a one-day project idea to share, please email program@soroptimist.org.



**SOROPTIMIST ONE-DAY CLUB PROJECT: VOLUNTEER EVALUATION
SURVEY**

Thank you for helping us accomplish our mission of improving the lives of women and girls. We would like to learn more about your experience with Soroptimist. Please complete the survey below. We will use the information to better serve the women and girls in our community.

Project Name _____

Please rate the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The project we conducted made a positive impact
on the lives of women and/or girls. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Participating in this project was an effective way to
meet/network with women in my community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I felt a sense of accomplishment at the end of the project. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The project was well organized. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The project motivated me to continue to volunteer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please share a memorable moment from the project.

How could we have improved this volunteer experience for you?

Would you like to be involved in future Soroptimist volunteer opportunities? Or are you interested in learning more about becoming a Soroptimist? If so, please complete the following:

Name _____
 Address _____
 City State Zip _____
 Phone _____ Email _____