



## Fact Sheet: Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence

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### **Organizational Profile**

Headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Soroptimist is an international volunteer women's organization offering programs that primarily improve the lives of women and girls through economic empowerment. Soroptimist, a 501(c)(3) organization that relies on charitable donations to support its programs, also sponsors the Live Your Dream campaign in recognition of the power of women and their dreams. Visit the campaign's online home at: [LiveYourDreamCampaign.org](http://LiveYourDreamCampaign.org). For more information on how Soroptimist improves the lives of women and girls, visit [Soroptimist.org](http://Soroptimist.org).

### **Organizational Mission**

To improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world.

### **Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence**

In 1994, Soroptimist formally adopted the prevention of domestic violence as a major focus. This campaign reaches out to women in the workplace, since most domestic abuse victims are employed outside the home, and violence at home often spills over into the workplace. The campaign includes placing hotline cards at local businesses, in women's workplace restrooms, and in employee paycheck envelopes. These *Keeping Women Safe at Work* hotline cards contain a national hotline number for immediate assistance, warning signs of domestic abuse, suggestions for approaching a co-worker who may be a victim of domestic violence, and ways for employers to support employees who may be suffering from domestic violence.

In 2002, the campaign received an *International Advocacy/Policy Achievement* award from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Associations Make a Better World program.

In 2005, Soroptimist developed a new component—*The Domestic Violence Workplace Guidelines*—which contain information and instructions on adopting domestic violence policies in the workplace. The goal of adding these policies is to raise awareness about domestic violence and to assist employees who might be victims. Sample policies include the flexible use of leave time to attend court or doctor's appointments, providing priority parking or an escort to public transportation, and providing education to all employees about domestic violence. These guidelines received "Honor Roll" recognition from Associations Advance America in 2006.

### **Initiatives to Prevent and End Domestic Violence**

Soroptimist offers several comprehensive projects aimed at preventing and ending domestic violence. These include:

- **Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards:** Soroptimist addresses the economic component that often forces women to stay in abusive situations, and the lack of resources available to these women once they do leave, through its Women's Opportunity Awards program. This program provides cash grants to women who must obtain additional job training or education to realize their goal of economic independence. Each year, more than \$1.4 million in Women's

Opportunity Awards help more than 1,000 women enter or return to the work force in order to support themselves and their families. Although the program is open to all head-of-household women demonstrating financial need, many Women's Opportunity Award recipients are domestic violence survivors. In 2007, the program received the *Associations Advance America Summit Award*—ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership's highest level of recognition.

- **Teen Dating Violence Awareness:** Many Soroptimist clubs undertake projects that raise awareness of teen dating violence. Members distribute literature for teens, parents, and school personnel that present facts about teen dating violence; provide warning signs; and give information on where to go for help. Soroptimist also developed a bookmark to raise awareness about teen dating violence. One side of the bookmark provides the signs of a healthy relationship and the other side lists signs of an unhealthy relationship.
- **Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls:** Many Soroptimist clubs provide direct assistance to local domestic violence shelters in their communities. Through the Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls program, clubs can receive grants (in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$10,000) for initiating or continuing innovative local projects that benefit women and girls. Many of these grants are awarded for local domestic violence projects. Since 1997, Soroptimist has granted more than \$1.4 million has helped more than 100,000 women and their families through this grants program. In 2007, the program received the *Associations Make a Better World Award* from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).
- **Soroptimist Club Projects:** Many Soroptimist clubs throughout the world work on local projects that seek to prevent or end domestic violence. Projects include building and refurbishing domestic violence shelters, mentoring shelter residents and their children, and providing skills training classes to survivors.