

Soroptimist International of the Americas 2008-2009 Annual Report



SOROPTIMIST

Best for Women

Investing in Women and Their Dreams

Investing in Women and Their Dreams: 2008-2009 Annual Report

Women are the world's most powerful asset. When we invest in women, we are investing in families, communities and the world. Yet, during this past year of a worldwide economic crisis, women suffered most.

By responding to their needs during these difficult financial times, our clubs and members truly lived our mission as "best for women." You understood the power of our programs and our mission to change and transform women's lives. You realized that investing in women and their dreams is one of the most significant ways to change the world for the better. In the pages of this report, you'll read how your investments in women and girls have paid amazing dividends.

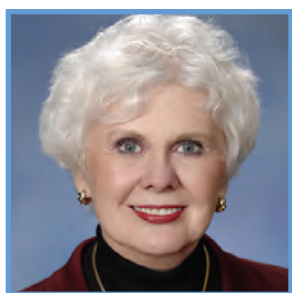
As we complete our five-year Renaissance Campaign, we have made progress in meeting the major goals that support our federation Strategic Plan. In 2008-2009, we continued to focus on Soroptimist's mission as a powerful recruitment and retention tool, welcoming 4,610 new members and adding 17 new clubs to our ranks. This past year we also launched the first-ever Soroptimist Women's Leadership Institute, introducing a new format for leadership development.

Our programs are at the heart of our mission and they continue to provide meaningful avenues through which our members invest in, and empower, women and girls. In 2008-2009, our signature program, the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards, enjoyed a 74 percent participation rate (96 percent outside of Japan) and 70 percent of the clubs supported at least one Soroptimist International project. Through Soroptimist programs, \$2,152,224 was disbursed both directly and through our clubs, benefiting 17,600 women. This past year, the computer laptop giveaway contest was initiated for regions reaching 100 percent participation in the Women's Opportunity Awards (50 percent participation in Japan). And, after eliciting ideas from clubs and members, and then voting through an on-line poll, the Making a Difference for Women Award was renamed the Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women.

Public awareness is another area where exciting things continue to happen. Hits to our website <soroptimist.org> were at an all-time high, increasing to 259,606 visits from 141,467 last year. Our first-ever Live Your Dream Art Contest was quite successful, with more than 4,350 entrees received. The use of video on our site also conveyed our mission in more effective ways, including a video version of this report, Executive Director Leigh's blog, and messages from our president. External awareness of the Soroptimist mission was also extended this past year by creating a presence on various social media networks, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. In addition, we increased awareness through a new 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. Soroptimist was the first ambassador-level partner in this important campaign.

In this annual report you will find substantive, detailed financial information about our investment in the lives of women and their dreams. Through the collective power and passion of our clubs and members, we continued funding our many amazing programs with contributions of \$1,272,152. With corporate sponsors contributing an additional \$35,167, our total contributed income, despite a downturn in the economy, was \$1,307,319. About 73 percent of our clubs contributed to the Annual Club Campaign and 98 percent donated to Founders Pennies.

We can be proud of the great strides we've made on many levels in 2008-2009. Our accomplishments are detailed in this report and would not be possible without the support and dedication of members, leaders and headquarters staff. Thank you for another successful year. Most of all, thank you for investing in the lives of women and their dreams!



Alice Wells,
2008-2009 President



Sharon Fisher,
2008-2009 Secretary/Treasurer



Leigh Wintz, CAE,
Executive Director

In 19 countries and territories, Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA) club members work to improve the lives of women and girls. Through their participation in SIA programs, as well as through myriad unique projects, clubs are able to address issues that affect women and girls. Some of these include education, employment status, healthcare, disaster recovery, domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking. The resulting collective impact is extraordinary. In 2008-2009, more than \$2 million was distributed through SIA's programs, helping nearly 20,000 women and girls live their dreams of a better life.

When clubs participate in SIA programs, and/or give money to ensure the programs remain strong, they become part of an international effort to improve the lives of women and girls. This report details the impact of those efforts and illustrates the power of women helping women.

Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards

Established in 1972, the Women's Opportunity Awards is SIA's signature program. It helps women who have suffered hardships, such as poverty and abuse, to reclaim and live their dreams. Award recipients are able to obtain the skills training and education they need to improve their employment status and standard of living—for themselves and their families.

In 2008-2009, the financial and personal impact of the program was impressive. For the fifth year in a row, almost \$1.5 million was disbursed in club, region and federation funds. In 2008-2009, 1,047 clubs gave awards for a combined total of 1,173 women. This marked an 8 percent increase over last year, boosting club participation in the program to 74 percent.

This increase was due, in large part, to a new club participation incentive program: each region with 100 percent participation received a laptop computer for its region winner. The incentive was a success—15 regions achieved 100 percent participation—up from 11 last year: América del Sur, Camino Real, Desert Coast, Eastern Canada, Founder, Golden West, Korea, Mexico/Centroamérica, Midwestern, Northeastern, Philippines, Rocky Mountain, Sierra Nevada, Sierra Pacific, and Southern.

As a separate incentive, Japan regions achieving 50 percent participation received an additional \$1,000 in award monies. Two Japan regions reached 50 percent participation: Japan Kita and Japan Minami.

Also, as a result of increased participation, nine regions will receive additional \$3,000 awards in the 2009-2010 club year: Eastern Canada, Japan Kita, Japan Minami, Japan Nishi, Korea, Philippines, North Atlantic, Northwestern and South Central. One region, Japan Chuo, will receive an additional \$6,000. The region awards for 2009-2010 will total \$407,000—a \$30,000 increase in funding over last year.

In total, 96 percent of clubs in the United States participated, a 4 percent increase over last year; while 40 percent of clubs in Japan participated, a 9 percent increase.

SIA's federation-level recipients for the 2008-2009 Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards are: Lisa Wuthrich Curless of

Bountiful, Utah, USA; Xiu Man Huang of Tai Chung County, Taiwan; and Miki Kitamura of Otsu City, Shiga, Japan.

Last year, at age 35, Lisa Wuthrich Curless became a widow after her husband committed suicide on his 45th birthday. During the course of their 15-year marriage, Lisa was a stay-at-home mom tending to the needs of their four children, currently ranging in age from 5 to 14. Her husband worked outside the home and managed the household finances. Upon her husband's death, Lisa discovered they were bankrupt, owing hundreds of thousands of dollars to lenders and the government. Her house was foreclosed and her car was repossessed. Lisa found herself lacking the financial management skills and formal education she now needed as a single mother. However, she was determined to survive and knew that getting an education was "absolutely necessary" in order to take proper care of her children. With the help of the Women's Opportunity Awards, Lisa is now working toward her degree in dental hygiene at Salt Lake Community College and is determined to give her children the life they deserve.



Lisa Curless

Because of her caregiving responsibilities, Xiu Man Huang was unable to work outside her home and was struggling financially. She cares for her two adult children who are severely disabled, as well as visiting her chronically ill husband at a long-term care facility. To support herself, Xiu Man learned to make handicrafts at home. She wasn't having much success and decided to try Internet marketing strategies to sell her products, even though she had never used a computer. With the help of the Women's Opportunity Awards, Xiu Man was able to receive computer training. Today, she is making her products at home and selling them online, while caring for her family.



Xiu Man Huang

As a child, Miki Kitamura had been hospitalized several times. The doctors treated her so kindly, she dreamed of becoming a doctor herself some day. While studying for a career in medicine at Shiga University of Medical Science, however, she learned that as a result of her father's sudden death, she and her family were in serious debt. As the



Miki Kitamura

Women's Opportunity Awards Impact:

- 1,047 clubs participated
- 1,173 women's lives were improved
- \$1,453,198 was disbursed

Cost per changed life: \$1,238.87

Laptop Giveaway a Success

For 2008-2009, each region that reached 100 participation in the Women's Opportunity Awards program received a laptop computer for its region winner. As a result of this incentive, overall club participation increased by 8 percent and 15 regions achieved 100 percent participation. And, most important, 15 women received laptop computers. The value of owning a laptop while in school cannot be overstated. Morgan Hepple, the Northeastern Region award recipient, commented: "In this day and age it is essential for a successful woman to own a computer. Having this laptop made my life so much easier, more convenient and really has made me feel like I belong in school ... the positives are endless ... and I truly appreciate this gift." Another award recipient, Lisa Wuthrich Curless, Rocky Mountain Region award recipient (also one of three federation finalists), believes that "awarding the computers to women who are in need is just as important as giving them money." For as Lisa notes: "Having information and technology readily available has aided my education greatly ... I am so grateful that I was awarded the computer."



Northeastern Region award recipient Morgan Hepple and daughter.

oldest, Miki became the head of the household, struggling to pay for school and support her family. Miki calls the Women's Opportunity Awards an "inspiration and blessing" and has been using her awards to finish school.

Thanks to the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards, women like Lisa, Xiu Man and Miki have reclaimed their dreams, and look forward to a better future.

Soroptimists STOP Trafficking

The anti-trafficking project, Soroptimists STOP Trafficking, continued into a second successful year. About 190 clubs reported conducting some type of anti-trafficking awareness project such as sponsoring speakers, workshops and symposiums—with some clubs hosting events on the web in real time. Many events garnered media attention, and across the federation clubs continued to distribute trafficking awareness flyers, cards and other information.

The diversity and creativity of club projects is illustrated in the range of projects completed. For example, SI/Gallup, New Mexico, USA, developed a campaign and website called Pennies for Protection. The campaign's goal is for 1,000 women to donate 1,000 pennies each to help fund a trafficking victims' shelter in

southern New Mexico. In order to promote the campaign, each member put a link to the website, 1000pennies.com, in her email signature. In another example, SI/Chiba, Japan, partnered with city councilors in a signature collection campaign to remove from the Chiba city library adult movies that had been purchased with taxpayers' money. The club also worked to get pornographic magazines removed from convenience and book stores in their community, and developed trafficking awareness projects for elementary and middle school students.



SI/Manila Tourist Belt, Philippines, members partnered with local government agencies to enact a sex trafficking education and prevention campaign.

Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award

Each year, Soroptimist is proud to honor the volunteer efforts of young women between the ages of 14-17 through the Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award program. During the 2008-2009 club year, 741 clubs (53 percent) participated, recognizing 866 girls whose volunteer actions have made their community and the world a better place. Across the federation, clubs and regions awarded \$240,182 to girls and \$90,145 to their volunteer organizations. SIA awarded an additional \$58,500, for a grand total of \$388,827, to girls and their volunteer organizations.

Stephanie Davis of Trumbull, Connecticut, is the 2008-2009 federation Violet Richardson Award recipient. The 15-year-old started volunteering as a child, going with her mother to a shelter for homeless women. When she was 11, she wanted to do more, and connected with the Lighthouse Program in Bridgeport, an after-school enrichment program. Volunteering in two of the schools, she helps students with homework, has been involved in clothing drives, and in 2008 helped raise \$5,495 resulting in scholarships for more than 60 children. Stephanie also volunteers to raise awareness about autism. As the federation finalist, the Lighthouse Program received \$2,500 in Stephanie's name.



Stephanie Davis

Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls

Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls enable clubs to make a real difference in the lives of women and girls in their communities by addressing specific local needs. In March 2008, SIA received 97 proposals requesting more than \$674,000 in funding. A task force made up of members of the SIA Program Council reviewed the proposals and recommended funding to the SIA president for approval.

For the 2008-2009 club year, a total of \$175,000 was granted to 37 Soroptimist clubs for new or ongoing projects. Grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$10,000 and were given to clubs in eight

countries: Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Japan, Panama, the Philippines, Taiwan and the United States. This past year, 34 grant projects were completed, and helped improve the lives of almost 12,000 women and girls. The grants not only helped women and girls, they also helped the clubs. Of the clubs that have submitted a final report, 74 percent gained new members and 80 percent received media coverage as a result of the funded projects. Regardless of whether a club has applied for or received a grant, all Soroptimist clubs can celebrate in the success of the grant-funded projects to positively impact local women and girls.



SI/Curitiba-Batel, Brazil, received a \$3,500 Soroptimist Club Grant for Women and Girls for its Building the Future project, which provides three sewing shops enabling women and girls to produce and sell fabric shopping bags. In addition, the club will also provide educational training on customer service and entrepreneurship.

Soroptimist Disaster Recovery Fund for Women and Girls

Soroptimist continues to focus on the special needs of women and girls after disaster strikes. During the 2008-2009 club year, four disaster recovery grants were given for a total of \$70,000.



SI/Kalibo, Philippines, members work to provide women and girls with the assistance and resources needed to rebuild their lives after a typhoon devastated the community.

The Philippines Region; SI/Kalibo, Aklan, Philippines; SI/Cedar Rapids/Marion, Iowa, USA; and

SI/Blumenau Leste, Blumenau, Brazil, all received grants to help women and girls recover from devastating typhoons and floods. Disaster recovery projects included: building a multipurpose hall where women can learn skills to preserve food, grow vegetables and sew dresses; reconstruction of livelihood centers where women can learn income-generating skills; renovation and restoration of a shelter for homeless women and their children; and providing food, medical supplies and other immediate necessities to affected girls and their families.

SIA also aided disaster recovery efforts in the wake of political violence that erupted throughout Kenya in December 2007 as a result of disputed general elections. Political clashes resulted in nearly 500 deaths and a displacement of 255,000 people from their homes. SIA members donated \$52,000; and in June 2008, SIA sent the donations to Soroptimist International of Europe for distribution to Soroptimist clubs in Kenya. Seven clubs received funds to support women and/or girl-focused disaster recovery projects. Funds ranged from \$2,700 to \$11,800 and were used to provide women and girls with basic necessities, financial support to start or restart businesses, and/or to attend school. As a result, 418 women and 688 girls were helped. In addition, several of the projects are ongoing and will continue to provide women and girls with the support they need to fully re-establish their lives.

Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls Impact

- 4,858 women and girls attended public awareness events on the topic of sex trafficking
- 3,909 women received education and/or support services geared toward their needs as mothers
- 1,203 girls attended after-school or weekend personal development and/or violence prevention workshops
- 1,003 women received educational support, job training and/or help securing employment
- 633 domestic violence and/or rape victims and their families received shelter, support, employment training and/or counseling
- 117 women received dental care
- 295 women received free reproductive health care services

Total number of women and girls helped: 11,901
Cost per changed life: \$14.70

Soroptimist Disaster Recovery Grants Impact

- \$70,000
 - 2,610 women and their families helped
- Cost per changed life: \$26.82

Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women

The Soroptimist Ruby Award (formerly the Making a Difference for Women Award) honors women who have worked through their professional or volunteer efforts to improve the lives of other women and girls. In 2008-2009, club participation rose

from 35 to 36 percent with a total of 511 awards given throughout the federation. Clubs gave a combined total of \$123,700 to the recipients' charitable organizations. In addition, 154 new club members were gained, with 238 clubs receiving media attention as a result of the program.

In September and October last year, Soroptimists were asked to contribute ideas for new names for the award. Nearly 200 suggestions were received.

The choices were narrowed down to two: The Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women and The Soroptimist Best for Women Award: For Women Helping Women. After online judging in all federation languages with 2,399 votes received, the winner was The Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women with 57 percent of the vote.

Edelvira Goes Ramos of Curitiba, Brazil, is the recipient of Soroptimist's 2008-2009 Ruby Award. Since 1985, Edelvira has been devoting her life to helping women in the Curitiba municipal district of Brazil. After seeing the needs of working mothers, she founded a day care center whose mission is to give community mothers a safe place to leave their children while the mothers are at work. Each day, she continues to transform the lives of women in her community, helping them with self-esteem, creating jobs and income, supporting domestic violence victims, and helping young, pregnant girls. "I thank God and Soroptimist for this award, which will allow our work to continue growing, helping women and girls to achieve their best," she said.



Edelvira Ramos

business community. As a result of the campaign, members distributed tens of thousands of domestic violence hotline cards; organized public forums; collaborated with local advocacy groups; and supported domestic violence shelters. Clubs also encouraged employers to adopt and implement policies that protect women in the workplace.

Soroptimist 2008-2009 Awards

- SIA's staff writer, Marielena Zuniga, won the 14th Annual Jane Cunningham Croly Award for Excellence in Journalism Covering Issues of Concern to Women. Zuniga's entry included three articles published in 2008 in Soroptimist's *Best for Women* magazine. "Is There a Doctor in the House?" focused on the number of obstetricians leaving their practices and the role of rising malpractice insurance costs on this scarcity. "The Breastfeeding Battle" examined mothers' ongoing struggles with breastfeeding and the professional work environment, while "Gender and the Media" probed the persistent sexual stereotypes in women's representations in the media.
- SIA's *Best for Women* magazine received The Communicator Award of Excellence for its September/October/November 2008 issue "Gender in the Media." The Communicator Award is a leading international awards program honoring creative excellence.

Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women

- 528 outstanding women were honored with the award
- \$95,840 was given by clubs to the recipients' charitable organizations
- 242 clubs received media attention for the award

The Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence

Women deserve to feel safe wherever they are—including in the workplace. The Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence is an ongoing effort to raise awareness about this issue. In its 12th year, the program focuses on the fact that women do not leave abuse behind when they go to work. Abusers often harass women at work, by phone, e-mail, or—in worst-case scenarios—by coming to the workplace.

During November 2008, 382 clubs in five countries—Brazil, Canada, Japan, Taiwan and the United States—participated in the campaign. These clubs pledged to help victims of domestic violence and raise community awareness, particularly within the

2008-2009 Membership Statistics

In 2008 and 2009, Soroptimist comprised 19 countries and territories including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guam, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, U.S.A., and Venezuela.

- **2008**
Clubs: 1,434
Members: 40,279
- **2009**
Clubs: 1,415
Members: 39,055

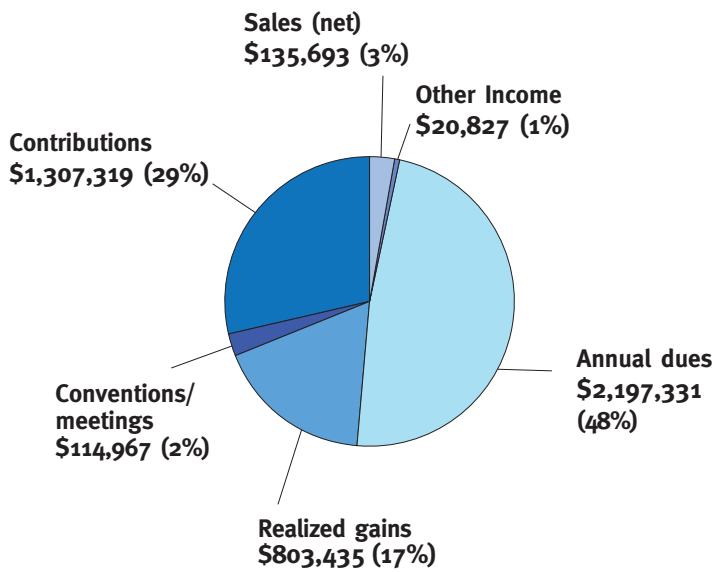
A complete roster is available from Soroptimist headquarters. To obtain this information, contact 215-893-9000 or email siahq@soroptimist.org.

Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position • Year Ended August 31, 2009

Assets		Liabilities and Net Assets	
Current Assets		Liabilities	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,618,382	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$351,203
Marketable securities	9,543,647	Agency funds	30,258
Accounts receivable	51,880	Deferred revenue	33,658
Inventory	202,577	Total liabilities	\$415,119
Prepaid expenses	164,332	Net Assets	
Beneficial interest in charitable remainder trust	14,648	Unrestricted	\$2,014,141
Total current assets	\$11,595,466	Temporarily Restricted	
Fixed assets		Dues received in advance	1,697,258
Equipment	666,569	General remainder trust	14,648
Real estate	2,324,133	Special purpose	
Accumulated depreciation	(984,646)	Disaster relief	117,159
Total fixed assets	\$2,006,056	Venture	140,319
Total Assets	\$13,601,522	Total temporarily restricted	1,969,384
<p>The full audit is available in the members section at < Soroptimist.org .> A copy may be requested by contacting Soroptimist International of the Americas' headquarters at < siahq@soroptimist.org .></p>		Permanently Restricted (Reserve Fund)	9,202,878
		Total Net Assets	\$13,186,403
		Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$13,601,522

Revenue 2008-2009



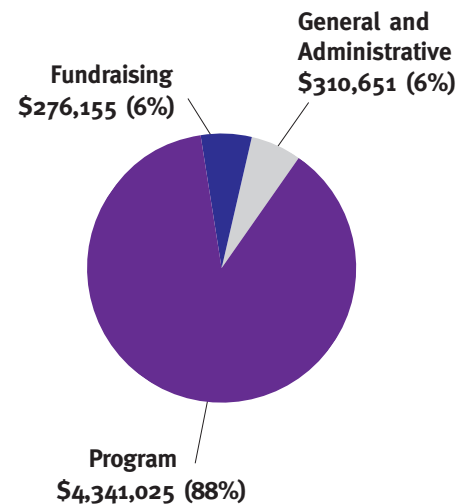
Statement of Financial Activities Year Ended August 31, 2009

Support Revenues and Gains	2008 Total
Annual dues	\$2,197,331
Convention and meetings	114,967
Sales (net)	135,693
Contributions	1,272,152
Corporate contributions	35,167
Investment income	318,196
Realized gain on securities	485,239
Other Income	20,827
Total Support, Revenues and Gains	\$4,579,572

Schedule of Contributions Year Ended August 31, 2009

Contributions	
Founders Pennies	\$200,365
Club Campaign	507,785
Memorials/Honorariums	4,050
Laurel Society	482,929
Disaster Relief Contributions	56,502
Corporate Contributions	35,167
Miscellaneous	20,521
Total Contributions	\$1,307,319

Allocation of Expenses, Program Expenses Year Ended August 31, 2009



Allocation of Expenses, Program Expenses
Year Ended August 31, 2009

Expenses	2009 Total
Membership services	\$142,777
Soroptimist magazine	216,798
Conventions and meetings	122,108
Board and committees	218,640
Fundraising	55,282
Governors Roundtable	137,893
Soroptimist International	258,011
Public relations	108,942
Personnel costs	2,148,812
Office and occupancy	262,463
Depreciation	158,843
Professional services	191,723
Miscellaneous	46,518
Direct Program Expenses	
Women's Opportunity Awards	445,887
STOP Trafficking	2,289
Violet Richardson Awards	70,837
Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence	3,962
Club Grants	176,927
Making a Difference for Women Award	7,586
Disaster Recovery	126,854
Celebrating Success	2,729
Venture	21,950
Total Expenses	\$4,927,831
Change in Net Assets from Operations	(348,259)
Unrealized loss on securities	(2,600,230)
Change in Net Assets	\$(2,948,489)
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$16,134,892
Net Assets, end of year	\$13,186,403

Schedule of Agency Funds
Year Ended August 31, 2009

Fund	
Project 5-o	
Beginning Balance	\$405
Contributions Received	—
Distributions	(405)
Ending Balance	—
Region Dues Pilot Project	
Beginning Balance	—
Contributions Received	15,990
Distributions	(16,500)
Ending Balance	(510)
Quadrennial Project: Project Sierra	
Beginning Balance	20,677
Contributions Received	177,190
Distributions	(174,651)
Ending Balance	23,216
December 10th Appeal: Restoring Dignity, Securing a Future	
Beginning Balance	4,435
Contributions Received	153,670
Distributions	(150,835)
Ending Balance	7,270
December 10th Appeal: Hopes and Dreams For Everyone	
Beginning Balance	—
Contributions Received	282
Distributions	—
Ending Balance	282
Total Beginning Balance	\$25,517
Total Contributions Received	\$347,132
Total Distributions	\$(342,391)
Total Ending Balance	\$30,258



SOROPTIMIST

Best for Women

2008-2009 Board of Directors

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Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Carmen Moral Sgarbi

Santos, Brazil

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