



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women

**An Invitation to Apply for the Position of
CEO/Executive Director
Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA**

THE SEARCH

Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA), an international federation of clubs for business and professional women whose mission is to improve the lives of women and girls in local communities and throughout the world, seeks an executive director. Founded ninety years ago, SIA continues to work through its local clubs on alleviating the most challenging circumstances affecting the well-being of women and girls. With projects focused on stopping such heinous activity as human trafficking, dating violence, and domestic violence the members of SIA demonstrate their deeply held commitment to the meaning of Soroptimist – best for women. SIA clubs are located across North, South and Central America as well as Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines.

After 20 years of outstanding leadership, the current executive director, Leigh Wintz, tendered her resignation effective September 1, 2011. Over these past twenty years, the federation has evolved to a highly functioning, financially stable organization with a strong professional staff. SIA, located in Center City Philadelphia, PA owns its own gracious building with carefully restored historic elements.

This is a rare opportunity for a truly visionary strategic leader who, working with the volunteer leadership, can lift the organization to its next phase of excellence. SIA seeks an experienced executive with the creativity and entrepreneurial drive to help the Board of Directors, members, and staff mobilize resources to increase the organization's impact and visibility, continue its history of strong financial management and explore strategies for future success.

The ideal candidate will have successful senior leadership experience in a nonprofit, foundation or association with an extensive track record of strategic planning, financial management, membership growth and organizational development. Knowledge of women's issues and advocacy is not necessary but the next executive director must share a passion for the mission of SIA and a hunger to work for the empowerment of women and girls.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, has been engaged to assist with this important search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document. Additional information about SIA can be found at <http://www.soroptimist.org>.

HISTORY AND CURRENT CONTEXT

SIA was founded in 1921 with the establishment of the first club in Alameda County, California. At that time, women who were interested in volunteering in their communities were not permitted to join male service organizations. SIA was founded to provide women with a vehicle, much like Rotary clubs for men, to engage in service work in their local communities.

SIA is one of four federations under the umbrella organization Soroptimist International. The other three federations are Soroptimist International of Europe, Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland and Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific. Soroptimist International is headquartered in Cambridge, England.

Soroptimist members belong to local clubs which determine the focus of volunteer work to their communities. Club projects range from renovating domestic violence shelters and providing mammograms to low-income women, to sponsoring self-esteem workshops for teenage girls. In addition, Soroptimists participate in organization-wide programs including the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards, Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls, the Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence, and Soroptimists STOP Trafficking. Additional program information is below.

SIA has a membership of more than 38,000 who join through local clubs. SIA is now comprised of 1400 clubs each with a minimum of 15 members. Clubs assess the needs of their community and then undertake projects that will best fill those needs. The federation is divided geographically into 28 regions, each with an elected governor. Every region holds an annual conference and the governors attend an annual Federation-hosted Governors Round Table. SIA hosts a larger convention every two years. The next convention will be held July 2012 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Under the direction of the retiring executive director SIA has engaged in vigorous strategic planning. The current 2010-2011 plan firmly establishes the vision of the organization: "Be the leading international organization of business and professional women united through volunteer efforts to enable women and girls to live their dreams, take control of their lives, and live according to their own values." The core values state that SIA is committed to:

- The belief that all women deserve to lead full and productive lives
- Women helping women

- International diversity and fellowship

The strategic plan is structured around five outcomes:

1. Program – Soroptimist programs and initiatives will enable women and girls to achieve social and economic empowerment;
2. Membership – Soroptimist will be a thriving organization of clubs and members committed to the mission;
3. Public Awareness – Soroptimist will be known for its efforts to help women and girls achieve social and economic empowerment;
4. Fundraising – Sufficient funds will exist for Soroptimist to accomplish the mission;
5. Mission Support – SIA will enable its constituents (clubs, regions, SI) to achieve the mission by providing volunteer support and a sound infrastructure.

Programs and Services

While much of the vibrant work of SIA occurs at the local level through the work of individual clubs, SIA itself provides many programs and tools to better assist the clubs to provide community support to fulfill the mission. These include:

Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Award

Established in 1972, the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Award is SIA's signature program. It helps women who have suffered hardships, such as poverty and abuse, to reclaim and live their dreams. In 2009-2010, the financial and personal impact of the program was impressive. For the sixth year in a row, almost \$1.5 million was disbursed in club, region and federation funds. More than 1,000 clubs gave awards to a combined total of 1,201 women.

Soroptimists STOP Trafficking

Last year about 150 clubs reported conducting some type of anti-trafficking awareness project, such as sponsoring speakers, workshops and symposiums. Many events garnered media attention, including then President Cathy Standiford appearing on CNN's "Issues with Jane Velez-Mitchell: Reality of the Sex Trade in the U.S." following the inaugural conference of the Northwest Coalition Against Trafficking, established by Northwestern Region.

Soroptimist Teen Dating Violence Project

SIA has designed a bookmark to be used as a tool for the many SIA clubs striving to end teen dating violence through teen dating violence workshops or parent-teen nights on healthy dating relationships. The bookmarks are available on the SIA website and as a writeable PDF document, which clubs can personalize and print at a local copy store or online printing vendor.

Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence

In 1994, SIA made the prevention of domestic violence an organizational focus. Each year, on November 25 (the International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women), members participate in the Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence. Each year, Soroptimists distribute thousands of hotline cards, and hold lectures and events to raise awareness about domestic violence as a workplace concern. In addition, members encourage places of business to adopt formal guidelines designed to protect employees and (their co-workers) from domestic violence situations. The campaign earned an Award of Excellence from the American Society of Association Executives and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Allies Against Violence Award.

Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls

Soroptimists work to improve the lives of women and girls in their communities and throughout the world. Often the abilities and ambitions of clubs exceed their financial resources. To help clubs meet community need, Soroptimist introduced the Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls in 1997 to assist with community projects that improve the lives of women and girls. Since the program's inception, nearly \$1.4 million has been awarded and clubs have assisted more than 100,000 women and their families. The program is the recipient of an Award of Excellence from the American Society of Association Executives' Associations Advance America designation.

Soroptimist Disaster Grants for Women and Girls

SIA is pleased to join with Soroptimist International of Europe to increase the scope and impact of the Soroptimist Disaster Grants for Women and Girls. In the past, the two federations have worked together to support women and girls in Kenya, Haiti and Chile. This collaboration became official in September 2010 when SIA and SIE combined their disaster grant programs.

Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award

Named for the president of the first Soroptimist club, the Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award honors girls who are making a difference through volunteer service. Each year, Soroptimist clubs honor girls aged 14-17 who donate their time and energy to causes that make the community and world a better place—such as working to end discrimination and poverty, assisting women and children who are victims of domestic violence, or mentoring young girls.

Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women

The Soroptimist Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women acknowledges women who are working to improve the lives of women and girls through their personal or professional activities. Examples of the type of work honored include: spearheading an effort to open a domestic violence shelter, working to secure health services for low-income women, starting a mentoring program for at-risk girls, or lobbying companies to provide on-site child care. The program enables local Soroptimist clubs and the

Soroptimist organization to thank these women and encourage others to explore ways to assist women and girls.

Soroptimist White Papers

As a way to help club members become more educated about issues facing today's women and girls, Soroptimist provides white papers on various women and girl focused topics. The white papers are a summation of the most current research available and also provide resources for gathering more information. There are currently fourteen white papers available that address the following issues: health, violence against women and girls, work, trafficking, education, disasters, child and mail-order brides and women and poverty.

Soroptimist Model Program Kits

To minimize research and development time needed to establish and maintain club projects, Soroptimist has developed a series of model program kits addressing issues facing today's women and girls. Model program kits are designed to provide guidance in planning and implementing projects by offering club members project ideas with proven methods and resources for achieving success.

Soroptimist *Best for Women* magazine serves as SIA's official publication and the primary internal communication vehicle for members. The award-winning magazine, published in various forms since 1931, is mailed to members four times a year. Its content includes feature stories about women's issues and Soroptimist programs and updates on Soroptimist efforts. The magazine received two 2010 MarCom Awards for two writing/feature articles: *Inconceivable: How Technology is Changing the Way Babies are Made* (March/April/May 2010 issue), received the Gold Award. *Teen Dating Violence: Empowering Girls to End the Cycle of Abuse* (March/April/May 2009) received the Honorable Mention Award. Both articles were written by Marielena Zuniga, SIA's staff writer. The MarCom Awards is an international creative competition that recognizes outstanding achievement by marketing and communication professionals.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FINANCE

SIA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization with a group exemption for its 650 clubs in the USA. The association currently employs 27 staff at its headquarters in Philadelphia and operates with a \$5 million budget. The organization has about \$10 million in reserves and owns its headquarters building near Rittenhouse Square in Center City Philadelphia.

The largest sources of revenue are annual dues which account for 37% of revenue, individual contributions which are an additional 28% of revenue; conventions/meetings, currently 17% of revenue; and realized gains which provides about 10% of revenue. Other sources are investment income (5%), sales (2%), and corporate contributions (1%).

SIA is governed by a 14 member Board of Directors, elected from established geographic areas, each serving a two year term. The Board typically meets three times a year. Each

year the clubs elect a President-Elect who serves a one-year term and then serves the following year as President, acting as Chairman of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors annually elects from its members a Secretary/Treasurer. The current president is Sharon Fisher, director and chief financial officer of a crime-analysis software company.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The CEO/Executive Director reports directly to the SIA Board of Directors and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organization. S/he ensures financial well-being through revenue development and prudent financial stewardship; provides leadership to staff and volunteers; and secures and advances collaborations with local, national and international institutions.

This is a challenging opportunity for an innovative, visionary leader to take the helm of an international organization dedicated to women helping women. The position calls for strategic vision, administrative and financial acumen, entrepreneurial drive and a passion for the mission and values of SIA.

CHALLENGES

More specifically, the fundamental challenges for the new Executive Director include:

Strategic Leadership

This 90-year-old organization has gone through several phases of structure and governance and is now at a moment of consequence in which a strategy needs to be developed which encourages the growth of members and the Federation. Membership is slowly declining and the reversal of that trend is the central strategic challenge. The new strategy must address the future of the club-based model as it is currently expressed. The executive director will lead the effort to explore ways to evolve this model to better match the ways young professional women engage in volunteer efforts.

Resource Stewardship

The retiring Executive Director has left the organization on a very firm financial footing and the next ED must continue to provide wise financial stewardship. As membership declines in an industry showing decreased participation in the service club model, serious continued financial stewardship is required to keep the organization healthy. New opportunities for revenue including fundraising through major gifts, foundation and corporate grants as well as expanded membership and membership retention are needed.

Partnerships and Alliances

The primary current alliance for SIA is with Soroptimist International (SI). As one of four federations in SI this is a critical partnership. The executive director will want to

engage in constructive interaction to ensure both SIA and SI are able to advance their shared strategic objectives. The executive director will also work to be a valuable partner to the other three federations in assisting joint endeavors. In managing this complex international enterprise, the executive director will want to embrace the cultural distinctiveness and nuances of working with global partners, both internal and external to SIA.

Increase Visibility

SIA is a vibrant organization that impacts the lives of women and girls on the local, national and international level but it remains largely a hidden secret. The executive director will engage with local clubs, the Board, staff and the other SI federations to enhance the organization's branding and to help tell SIA's story more widely, engage the Federation more substantially in national and international discourse about women's empowerment and bring to SIA more of the recognition it deserves.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Although no one candidate will embody all of the desired qualities, the successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications and personal attributes:

Professional Qualifications

- Substantial executive leadership experience, including working in the senior leadership of a non-profit, and with a Board of Directors. Experience in a club or chapter based organization is preferred.
- Proven ability to provide strategic leadership that encourages creativity and innovation while maintaining sound management practices.
- Proficiency in resource management, including revenue generation as well as non-profit fund accounting, budgeting and endowment management.
- Demonstrated excellence in written and oral communications and in interpersonal skills among diverse audiences, including the public, professional colleagues, agencies, and businesses.
- Experience working in a global context and proven ability to work effectively in other cultures.
- Ability to delegate authority while maintaining effective quality controls.

Personal Qualifications

- A charismatic, creative leader capable of motivating the internal and external community
- A strong enthusiasm for SIA's mission, growth and development
- A global perspective
- Ability to speak a second language is highly desired
- A high level of professionalism and integrity
- The personal credibility and experience to earn the trust and confidence of the Board, staff, major donors, program partners, and other key constituencies
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- Superb interpersonal skills with an impressive and long history of forging strong relationships with diverse constituencies
- A management style that is open, collaborative yet results-oriented; respects the capabilities and independence of staff members while holding them accountable to the highest standards
- A talent for recruiting, developing and inspiring staff; and a commitment to the professional growth of staff
- Ability to travel to represent the organization at professional meetings
- Resilience and stamina for the task at hand, personal grace in dealing with a broad spectrum of personalities, and good humor in leading the day-to-day work of the organization.

TO APPLY

All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

Jackie Mildner
Managing Associate
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 710
Washington, DC 20009
202-216-2278
202-682-1272 fax

Electronic submission of materials (cover letter and resume) is strongly encouraged. Please submit to: 4223@imsearch.com

Soroptimist International of Americas is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and is strongly committed to diversity; women and minorities are especially encouraged to apply.