

The Pointer

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe
April 2024



President's Message: Happy Spring Ladies!



It is that time of year for Soroptimists to get back to doing what we do best, fundraising.

This year's Annual Awards Ceremony was a tremendous success. We gave away \$10,000 to four deserving women: \$3000 to a Virginia Wagner Educational Award recipient and a total of \$7,000 to three Live Your Dream Award recipients. Five-hundred dollars went to the Joseph Project in honor of our Ruby Award winner Amanda Paletz. She was also given a pair of ruby-colored earrings as a keepsake. Each winner expressed her gratitude for the financial boost and was hopeful it would help them achieve their educational goals. (See photos starting on p. 10.)

There's more! We also funded a \$500 Madeline Colavito Continuing Education Award, and our club sent seven Grosse Pointe high school girls to College Quest ACT & SAT Test Preparation, directed by Scott Allen, for \$1,250 (a discounted price).

In other words, SIGP funded a grand total of \$12,750 to women and girls to have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential and live their dreams. WOW! Great job.

Wine & Spirit's Raffle co-chairs Ross Braun and Karrie Blankenship met on Thursday, March 21, to complete the donation purchases and bundle the prizes for the raffle. Your generous donations allowed us to create five winning packages valued at more than \$900. The raffle tickets are will be ready for distribution to members at the April meeting. All members are strongly encouraged to sell \$100 worth of raffle tickets. This will be our major fundraiser for the 2024-2025 awards.

We will need volunteers to help deliver tickets to members who are unable attend to the meeting. Please contact Karrie Blankenship at karrieb40@gmail.com or Ross Braun at braunross@aol.com if you are able to help with distribution.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karrie Blankenship
President

Diana Langlois
Vice President

Bette Lepouttre
President Elect

Mary Bryk
Secretary

Nancy Solak
Assistant Secretary

Ross Braun
Treasurer

Mary Ellen Burke
Assistant Treasurer

Directors

Roseanne Horne

Kerri Green

Carolyn Barth

Aleksa Andjelcovic

The name Soroptimist was coined from the Latin *soror*, meaning sister, and *optimus*, meaning best. Soroptimist is perhaps best interpreted as “best for women.”

We will be voting on whether to raise dues at the Wednesday, April 10, business meeting. (See page 3 for the breakdown and rationale.) SIGP Secretary Mary Bryk will send an email on Monday, April 8, with instructions for voting via email, text, or phone for those unable to attend in person. A quorum is needed, so please refer to your email for instructions.

Since my presidency ends in June, we are looking for new SIGP Board members for the biennial period of 2024-2026. If you are interested in a position on the board, please contact the nomination committee members. See page 4 for more information. The installation of the new board will be at the general meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

Volunteering is a fundamental part of impacting women and girls. To run our club successfully we need volunteers for our board. Do not feel you are too new or do not have enough knowledge about Soroptimist to be part of the board. We need you! How else will you acquire knowledge unless you jump in, feet first? We need your ideas, expertise, and most of all your commitment to our mission. Do not let the word “BOARD” intimidate you! Board meetings are the first Wednesday evening of the month, usually at a board member’s house where we have a wonderful evening discussing Soroptimist issues, making decisions, breaking bread together and most often, making new friends. You will learn a lot and have fun while learning.

The last duty of the outgoing president is to present the Ann Cunningham Outstanding Soroptimist Award to the new recipient who is chosen by the current and previous recipients and the current presidents. This is usually presented at the installation of the new board; however, I will be out of town for the June installation and will present the award at the July meeting.

Our next Seasonal Supper will be Thursday, April 25, at The Continental at The Ford House. See page 15 for details.

I look forward to seeing you at the April 10, meeting. If you unable to attend, be sure to check your email on Monday, April 8, 2024, for instructions on how to vote electronically on the issue of raising dues.

Happy Spring and Best for Women
— Karrie Blankenship, SIGP President

NOTE: We understand not everyone can attend meetings on Wednesday nights. Still, we ask that you vote between Tuesday, April 8, and Thursday, April 10. You will receive an email with instructions. Please be on the lookout for it. Thank you so much for your continued participation. See next page for details on the vote.

WANTED! FOUR GOOD WOMEN

The Nominating Committee needs members to volunteer for our incoming Board of Directors!

You're well aware of the wonderful work SIGP does in the community... here's your opportunity to play an even larger role as our club assists women and girls reach their full potential and live their dreams!

**Incoming President Bette Lepouttre is looking
for four women to complete the 2024-26 Board:**

President Elect (Program Chair)
Vice President (Membership Chair)
Treasurer
Assistant Treasurer (Fundraising Chair)

Nominations to Date

President – Bette Lepouttre
Secretary – Mary Bryk
Assistant Secretary / Public Awareness Chair – Lillian Frazier
Directors – Roseanne Horne, Diana Langlois
Past President – Karrie Blankenship

Board Members meet once a month to plan club activities and then report to the General Membership the following week. [Please note that former board members are always at the ready, eager to assist whenever needed.](#) It's already April – can you imagine how quickly your two-year term will fly by?

We all take great pride in our organization – and we need a strong Board to continue our good work. We, the Nominating Committee, have been calling members, in search of volunteers.

If you think you'd like to play a more involved role in SIGP, feel free to call any of us. We look forward to hearing from you!

Nominating Committee

Kathy DiCenzo - (586) 772-5007, Geri Pleva - (586) 255-0520, Bette Lepouttre - (586) 557-3287

ARTICLE V. Section 2 — Nominations and Elections according to Bylaws. The election shall be held at the May business meeting. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be read again. Additional nominations may be made from the floor provided the consent of the nominee has been obtained. The election shall be by secret ballot if there are two or more nominees for any office.

**Thank you to Nominating Committee Chair Kathy DiCenzo,
and the Committee: Geri Pleva and Bette Lepouttre**

SIGP DUES HAVE NOT INCREASED FOR 15 YEARS IT IS NOW TIME

In fiscal year 2008-10, SIGP dues were \$110. For fiscal year 2010-11, SIGP dues were raised to \$125 where they have remained through 2023-24. During the past 15 years, SIA raised dues and liability insurance several times. Besides our club's loss of revenue due to SIA increases, our operational costs have also increased. Some of these costs include technology, membership development, conventions, conferences, accounting, and meeting expenses. To sustain SIGP's operational costs, it has become necessary to increase SIGP dues.

At the last SIGP Board meeting, the board discussed how to manage to fund our club's operational costs. It was decided we needed to increase revenue and determine if some costs could decrease.

The plan is to raise SIGP dues over the next two years.

A

2023-2024 current dues breakdown at \$125

SIA dues	76.00
Per capita payment to Soroptimist International	9.00
Club liability insurance	11.00
Founders' pennies	6.18
Soroptimist International of the Midwestern Region	15.00
Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe revenue	7.82
Total Dues	\$125.00

- ◆ For 2024-2025 SIGP dues would be raised by \$15, bringing the total to \$140.
- ◆ In 2025-2026, SIGP dues would be raised \$10, bringing the total to \$150.

Hopefully, these two increases will be enough to sustain our club's operational expenses over the course of several years.

B

2024-2025 proposed dues breakdown at \$140

SIA dues	76.00
Per capita payment to Soroptimist International	9.00
Club liability insurance	11.00
Founders' pennies	6.24
Soroptimist International of the Midwestern Region	15.00
Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe revenue	22.76
Total Dues	\$140.00

The breakdowns shown at left illustrate the allocations of SIGP dues payments over this year, as well as the next two years.

At the 2014 Convention in Vancouver, SIA proposed dues increases starting in 2015 for the next three years. In addition, SIA proposed a change to the by-laws allowing cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) to increase dues when it is necessary without needing a vote by the membership. Both motions passed.

C

2025-2026 proposed dues breakdown at \$150

SIA dues	76.00
Per capita payment to Soroptimist International	9.00
Club liability insurance	11.00
Founders' pennies	6.30
Soroptimist International of the Midwestern Region	15.00
Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe revenue	37.70
Total Dues	\$150.00

The SIGP Board has decided to add this COLA increase clause to the SIGP Procedures for when the SIGP Board decides it is necessary to increase dues.

SIGP Board's goal is to keep SIGP dues at a reasonable amount for as long as possible.

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe Raffle

WINE & SPIRITS



Drawing will be held on

Wednesday, June 12, 2024 @ 7pm

at

Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen & Café

on Jefferson Avenue in St. Clair Shores

You do not need to be present to win



Booklet of 5 tickets is \$20 or \$5 each

Cash, check, credit cards or PayPal accepted

FOR TICKET INFORMATION

visit www.grossepointesoroptimist.org

or contact Karrie Blankenship at

karrieb40@gmail.com

First Place—\$200 Value

4 bottles of Wine, 5 bottles of Spirits

Second Place—\$199 Value

4 bottles of Wine, 3 bottles of Spirits

Third Place—\$190 Value

4 bottles of Wine, 3 bottles of Spirits

Fourth Place—\$180 Value

4 bottles of Wine, 5 bottles of Spirits

Fifth Place—\$151 Value

3 bottles of Wine, 4 bottles of Spirits

For details of each prize package see
reverse side of flyer

Ticket sales will support our programs and educational awards for women and girls giving them the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

Mother's Day Bags – Positive Images Project

We are honoring Positive Images women with Mother's Day gifts again this year. As most of you know we give 50 women a Mother's Day gift bag every year. These bags are distributed to all the residents at Positive Images—Coplin and the Boulevard. (NOTE: The intake kits that Dawn Riddle's committee prepares are distributed to the women first joining the recovery program, most of whom may not be clients on Mother's Day.)

We have been collecting these items all year but still need more to reach 50.

- ◆ Mugs—No advertisements
- ◆ Scarves—long type, light fabric, (no square or bandanna sizes)
- ◆ Cosmetic bags
- ◆ Nail Polish
- ◆ Emery Boards
- ◆ Kleenex packs—small purse size
- ◆ Candy individually wrapped peppermint, or chocolate squares

We have already collected or purchased 50 of the following items:

- * Jewelry (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, pins)
- * Decorative 4 X 6 or 5 X 7 gift boxes
- * Journals
- * Pens
- * Gift bags to pack items

Drop off items: MARY ELLEN BURKE'S, 2037 Shorepointe Lane, GPW
APRIL 1 through APRIL 30, 2024.

Preparing bags: MARY ELLEN BURKE'S, 2037 Shorepointe Lane, GPW
TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2024 7:00 P.M.



TEXT Mary Ellen at 313-399-8934, OR EMAIL her at meb65065@gmail.com

Let her know if you drop off any items on her patio & if you are coming on May 7, 2024.

Thank you so much! Sometimes there are women at Positive Images who have never received a Mother's Day present. Whether they have or not, be assured they are always happily surprised and grateful.

Don't miss the LAST Designers Show House! Deadline to reserve your space with SIGP: APRIL 15, 2024

Please indicate whether you are coming for just the tour, or for the tour and lunch.
Rosanne Horne will need payment by Monday, April 15. Guests are welcome!



Make checks payable to: SIGP

Mail or drop off check to
Roseanne Horne, 1247 Elford
Ct., Grosse Pointe Woods, MI
48236

If you have questions, contact
Roseanne at 313-706-1801

SIGP has arranged for a group
tour of the Junior League's **last**
Designers Show House. This has
been its major fundraiser for the
past 50 years.

The house is located at 315 Lakeland at the corner of Jefferson in the City of Grosse Pointe.

Date: Saturday, May 18, 2024 — Meet at the Show House: 9:45 a.m.

\$35 Tour only

\$50 Tour and Lunch (there will be an onsite café)

Lunch will be a choice of salad or sandwich with a bag of chips and a bottle of water.

Happy April Birthday to



Katherine Baetz, April 1

Debbie Rowe, April 2

Donna Fitzgerald, April 11

Cindy Gohlke, April 12

Erin O'Mara, April 16

GP Soroptimist

General Meeting

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Fishbones Rhythm Kitchen & Café

St. Clair Shores, MI

Meeting starts promptly at 6:30.

**Come early to order a beverage
and meet and greet the others!**

Annual Awards Dinner—An Evening to Remember!

On March 13, 2024, Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe (SIGP) honored five women at our annual Awards Dinner held at Fishbones Rhythm Kitchen & Café in St. Clair Shores. At right is SIGP board member and chairwoman of the event Aleksa Andjelkovic.

The first award was the Virginia Wagner Educational Award which honors a woman enrolled in a university degree program who has financial need. She also serves as a volunteer in her community.

This year, **Mercedes Williams** (pictured at left) won the Virginia Wagner Educational Award.

She says, “I would love the opportunity to prove that life’s circumstances are not all of my story, that a young woman like me can achieve levels of success and can contribute to the community.” Her master’s in social work coupled with the money from this award will set her on the path to making her hope of being a community consultant a reality.



Aleksa Andjelkovic.



Karrie Blankenship, Bette Lepouttre & Mercedes Williams.



(Above) The dining room at Fishbones where our club honored six women with financial awards to be used to help them reach their educational goals. Another woman was recognized for her work with the nonprofit The Joseph Project.

Awards Dinner (continued from previous page)

The Ruby Award acknowledges a woman who, through personal and professional activities, has made a positive difference in the lives of other women and girls. **Amanda Paletz** (pictured in the center at left) won the award on behalf of The Joseph Project (<https://josephproject.com/>). The money will go toward the nonprofit which helps connect human trafficking survivors with pro bono legal services.

This year there were three Live Your Dream Award winners. This award honors a woman who is going to school to improve her employment opportunities.

She is head of household, enrolled in a training or educational program, and has financial need. This is the signature award of Soroptimist International of the Americas. It is awarded to women around the world.



(L-R) Ruby Award Chair Laurie Jost with Amanda Paletz and Karrie Blankenship.



Karrie Blankenship, Bette Lepouttre and Simone Picarr Miller.

Simone Picarr Miller was awarded first place of the three Live Your Dream awards. Her goal is to become a nurse, preferably a baby-mother nurse. She says, "Despite facing significant adversities, including the loss of my aunt who played a pivotal role in my life, and the challenges of single motherhood, my resolve to pursue my dreams remain unshaken. This award represents a steppingstone toward achieving my educational aspirations."

Awards Dinner (continued on next page)

Awards (continued from previous page)



Above with Erica Beauliere (center) are Karrie Blankenship, Bette Lepouttre and proud daughters Elayia and Irmalie Marcellus.



Erica says, "I stumbled a lot during my journey, but I never gave up. One of the reasons I left New York and came to Michigan in 2015 was to pursue a better life and to go to school."

The third Live Your Dream Awardee, **Jennifer Maschke**, hails from Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Her dream is to have a private psychotherapy practice in a home respite-type setting. "I would like to gain experience in the field of mental health by working with the Canadian Mental Health Association while working toward my master's degree to become licensed.

As one of the two other Live Your Dream Awardees, **Erica Beauliere** knew from the time she was 22 and started working with the disabled and the elderly that she wanted to become an occupational therapist assistant.

At left with Jennifer Maschke are Karrie Blankenship, Bette Lepouttre and Jennifer's proud son Richie Lloyd.

Awards Dinner (Continued on next page)

Awards Dinner (continued from previous page)

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE JUDGES

SIGP extends special thanks to judges **Mary Beth Calandro**, **Jill Davenport**, and **Mary Jo Magee** who are independent of SI of Grosse Pointe. SIGP members **Carolyn Chandrasekar** and **Erin O'Mara** helped judge the Ruby Award.

For more information go to <https://www.grossepointesoroptimist.net/>. Our group of 52 dynamic members include women from Grosse Pointe, Detroit and the Greater Detroit Metropolitan area.

— Photos by Nancy Solak —



Thank you to judges Mary Beth Calandro, Carolyn Chandrasekar, Erin O'Mara and Mary Jo Magee. (Not pictured) Jill Davenport and Beth Kurta.

Welcome Kits for Positive Images

We plan to deliver the next batch of 20 Welcome Kits some time at the end of May. Donations of items for the Kits and/or monetary contributions are always welcome. Please contact me regarding dropping off or picking up items.

Carolyn Chandrasekar (carolynchandrasekar@msn.com) has generously volunteered to hand-write all the notes of support and inspiration to be included in each of the Welcome Kits. We are in need of blank note cards for the bags. If you have any blank cards you are able to donate, we are very happy to have them. You can either give them to me at the next member meeting or you can give them directly to Carolyn. You can also contact me regarding card pick up if you are unable to attend the next meeting.

Again, thanks very much to everyone who has contributed to helping this service project be a success.

We do make a difference.

— Dawn Riddle (734-718-8825)
riddledf@yahoo.com

Next MENTORING FOR SUCCESS gathering: Saturday, May 11, noon

We look forward to our 2024 awardees attending our next gathering on Saturday, May 11, at noon. We plan to invite awardees from 2021 through 2024 to this session in hopes of checking in with them to see where they are in their education and careers. Please mark your calendar and join in!

Ladies,

A “feel good” mentoring story to share. Often we do not realize what a few words of encouragement or a listening ear can mean to someone.

Member Katherine Baetz texted Lauren Gothro, our 2023 Virginia Wagner Educational Award recipient to say HELLO and to see how her semester was going. Lauren just sent an application for the Continuing Education Award of \$500 and in her application, she wrote:

“Although the year has been incredibly difficult, I can see the scaffolding of support I have around me, mainly strong women. Looking back, I believe the Soroptimist award I received last year gave me the strength I needed to start my new life. You all empowered me to step outside of my comfort zone and brave the unknown. I borrowed your belief in my ability to succeed and I took a leap of faith. I cannot express my gratitude enough. The financial support this year would allow me relief in paying a few months of my student loans until I find a job and am able to make payments. Thank you for your consideration for financial support and for your ongoing emotional support. It is incredible to know I have a team of strong women cheering me on.”



An S.O.S. request from Tonesia Nesbitt, Our 2021 Live Your Dream recipient:

Tonesia's daughter spends her days in a wheelchair and requires round-the-clock care. Tonesia is hoping someone in Soroptimist can help her find a way to obtain a vehicle to transport her daughter while seated in her wheelchair. Does anyone have a connection to a car dealership that sells vans? Or maybe you know of a used van? If so, please contact me, Diana Langlois (313-690-1515), and let's talk!



Ladies of SIGP, It is that time again when we have our SIGP Seasonal Supper

You are invited to join us for an enchanting evening at the **Continental at Ford House** on **April 25, at 6:00 PM.**

Nestled by the tranquil shores of **Lake St. Clair**, our lakeside restaurant promises delightful cuisine, captivating views, and cherished moments with fellow SIGP members.

Enjoy a unique twist on American cuisine at The Continental (inside the Visitor Center) at Ford House. We will dine on the patio (weather permitting), with a view of Lake St. Clair.

Let me provide you with some details:

- Address: **1100 Lake Shore Rd, Grosse Pointe Shores, MI, 48236**
- Phone Number: (313) 884-4222
- Cuisine: The Continental serves American cuisine, complemented by a full bar

Dinner Menu: https://www.fordhouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023_Continental_Dinner-Winter.pdf

Beverages: https://www.fordhouse.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/11/2022_FordHouse_Continental_Menus_1022_Beverage_8-5x14_v2.pdf

Let us savor the flavors, share laughter, and create memories. Your presence would make this gathering truly special.

Kindly RSVP by calling Marlane Washington at 313-720-0102 or contact her by email at marlane-washington@gmail.com by April 16, if you plan to attend or sign up at the APRIL 10, business meeting!

A bit of SOROPTIMIST vest just for you!

I'll be happy to take your order for one or both of these vests! I'll see you at the business meeting or you can mail me a check or contact Mary Ellen Burke to use your credit card! Some sample sizes will be available to try on at the business meeting. Ross Braun will embroider the Soroptimist logo and the words: Best for Women on each vest. Contact me (313-690-1515) if you have any questions.

— Diana Langlois, Membership Chair

Diana Langlois
c/o Soroptimist
3305 Country Club Dr.
St. Clair Shores, MI 48082



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women

!!! SPIRIT WEAR SALE!!!

Soroptimist VEST **\$35** Cash or check **\$38** electronic payments

The Soroptimist "S" logo will be embroidered in white.

Complete order form with your check made out to SIGP. All payments need to be received no later than April 10th. Mail checks to Diana Langlois to address above, OR for electronic payments contact Mary Ellen Burke at MEB65065@yahoo.com or 313-399-8934.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



The material is polyester fleece.

Ladies (S) _____

CIRCLE COLOR CHOICE:

BLUE

Ladies (M) _____

MAGENTA

Ladies (L) _____

ONE OF EACH

Ladies (XL) _____

TOTAL _____

Check made out
to SIGP.

Ladies (2XL) _____

April 2024

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS, INC.®



Registration is Open!

You're Invited to SIA's 48th Biennial Convention in Bellevue, Washington!

Join us July 24-27 to embark on an unforgettable journey to reach new heights in the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

Immerse yourself in four full days of exciting opportunities to connect, learn and celebrate the remarkable impact Soroptimists are making to transform the lives of women and girls globally.

Register and explore all the exciting details on our [convention website](#).

Note: Save with early registration available through March 15!

Dance Party

- Shop exclusive attire to elevate your convention style.

Secure your spot to be part of the most exciting Soroptimist event of 2024.

We can't wait to see you in Bellevue!

REGISTER HERE

<https://blog.soroptimist.org/blog/convention-fees-faq>

Midwestern Region Board

Governor – Christine Fowler Shearer, SI Cleveland
(simwrgov@gmail.com)
Governor Elect: Audrey Jarvy, SI Fond du Lac
(adreyjarv@gmail.com)
Secretary – Sheila Zingler-Gilbert, SI Fond du Lac
(sheilasifdl@gmail.com)
Treasurer – Linda Alpers, SI NE Suburban Franklin County
(Isa6976@gmail.com)

District III

District III Director – Kellie Klingel, SI Flat Rock Area
(ktklingel@yahoo.com)
District III Secretary – Gail Hutra, SI Monroe
(gahutra1960@yahoo.com)

Soroptimist Websites

Grosse Pointe Soroptimist: <https://www.grossepointesoroptimist.org/>
Soroptimist International Midwestern Region <https://simwr.org>
Soroptimist International of the Americas <https://simwr.org>
Soroptimist International <https://soroptimistinternational.org>

Soroptimist Pledge

I pledge allegiance to Soroptimist
and to the ideals for which it stands:
The sincerity of friendship,
the joy of achievement,
the dignity of service,
the integrity of profession,
and the love of country.

I will put forth my greatest effort to
promote, uphold and defend these
ideals, for a larger fellowship in home,
in society, in business, for country and
for God.



SIGP's PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEES

WEBSITE: grossepointesoroptimist.net Lori Schumann
or for calendar grossepointesoroptimist.net/sigp-calendar-.html

Submit photos, club information, news, upcoming events, questions and dates
to this email so the information can be accessed by all public awareness chairs:

EMAIL: grossepointesoroptimist@gmail.com Nancy Solak

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS:

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/soroptimistgrossepointe Nancy Solak

INSTAGRAM: soroptimistgp Nancy Solak

NEWSLETTER & MEDIA: *The Pointer*

is on the club's website and is emailed to each member.

Deadline for photos and articles is the 28th of each month Nancy Solak