



Soroptimist International Midwestern Region

January
2019
Edition

The Vision

2019 Dates to Remember

JANUARY 11

National Day of
Human Trafficking
Awareness

JANUARY 15

Virginia Wagner Award
Applications due to
clubs

JANUARY 15

District Live Your
Dream Award Winner
due to Region Chair

JANUARY 18-20

MWR Winter Board
Meeting, Indianapolis ,
Indiana

In This Issue

Articles from
SI of:

Chicago
Flat Rock
Fond du Lac
Grosse Pointe
Manchester, SIGBI
Middletown
Milwaukee
Mt. Vernon
& Knox County
Trenton

Governor's Message

On behalf of the MWR Board, Happy New Year! I don't know about you, but I was expecting flying cars and Rosie the Robot by 2019. But at least the Bears are in the playoffs!

In all seriousness, I was also expecting a better environment for women and girls, but here we are. The U.S. tried to take language on reproductive health out of a U.N. resolution to prevent violence against women on December 17th. We voted against the resolution. Let me repeat, we voted against a resolution about preventing violence against women. In July, U.S. officials forced Ecuador to stop backing a resolution in support of breast-feeding - opposing decades of consensus that breast feeding is best. We sided with American infant formula producers. But then we dropped our opposition once Russia revealed that they supported it. The point here is that policies are being made with little to no concern for the actual well-being of women and girls. On December 21st, The Violence Against Women Act expired at midnight as the government shut down. Program funds that help victims of sexual assault, domestic abuse and stalking have been stopped until the shutdown is resolved.

As you know, our Soroptimist mission is to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. We are an apolitical group, but that does-

n't mean that we can't support or oppose issues that impact women and girls. Our clubs here in Midwestern Region do a great job supporting women through our award programs as well as supporting girls with the DIBI program. At the moment, we have no plans to create a Legislative Advocacy Committee but it's something to consider. As Soroptimists, it's imperative that we understand policies that impact women and girls. To that end, several MWR members will be in New York this coming March, to attend the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women. I'm thrilled to be one of the attendees and promise to bring back lots of information to share with all of you. Whether you are a social media junkie or a newbie, be sure to follow UN Women on Twitter and FaceBook/Instagram, as they are a good source of news that impacts women and girls. And be sure that you're following me, @SIMWRGOV and MWR

@SoroptimistMWR on Twitter. Here's a link to the CSW site for more information: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw63-2019>

The region board will be meeting during the January 18th weekend. Much of the meeting will be focused on details for the 2019 Spring Conference. We will also be discussing our financial position (which is good); Membership (which is not so good); and our Programs (which are great). If there's anything that you would like for us to be aware of, or if you have

any concerns to discuss, please let us know and we'll address them.

Kris Armstrong
Midwestern Region Governor



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

Soroptimist International of Mount Vernon & Knox County

Membership Mixer and New Member Installation

We were excited to welcome our own District IV Secretary Abby Bouton to our Membership Mixer as a guest on September 11. On September 25 we welcomed new members Kris Compton (Mentor Shelley Coon), Adrienne Harris (Mentor Cousin Andrea Rees) and Cindy Cunningham (Mentor Kelly Brenneman) by presenting them with a yellow rose at our new Member Installation at Mazza's Restaurant. We are excited to have them as members!



Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe Friendship Link Club SI Manchester, SIGBI

Friendship Visit from Martinique It was a great pleasure for members of our club to welcome Michelle on Tuesday the 13th November. Michelle, a retired English teacher, was one of the many kind members of SI Alizes-Sud club in Fort-de-France who took me under their wing during March 2017 when Gus was critically ill in hospital in Martinique. SI Manchester subsequently established a friendship link with SI Alizes-Sud (one of four clubs in Martinique) and Michelle and I continued a very warm personal friendship. Michelle was very keen to meet Manchester Soroptimists and it was a great privilege to welcome President Barbara and 11 club members to an evening of International friendship at our home. (Supper was delicious! Sue) Val Moss led proceedings reminding us all of our values as an organisation. I outlined (for the benefit of our newer members) the circumstances which led to a 5 week traumatic stay in Martinique. The outcome of the care and sur-



gery Gus received are as wonderful as meeting the fantastic members of the Fort-de-France club. Following supper, Regional President (our own) Sue outlined how SIGBI and Regions assisted Clubs to reach their objectives and thrive. President Barbara gave a history of our Club and described our current projects locally and internationally, before presenting Michelle, on behalf of the Club, with a book of the history and unique features of our city and a pennant as a gift to our friendship link club. Michelle then gave an extremely interesting account of SI Europe, the French Union including the overseas clubs in French Regions (similar to our Regional structure). Many projects are very familiar, giving support to a Mental Health Organisation for Women, domestic violence victims, supporting local students and many more meeting Soroptimists goals. The warmth, friendship and international good will demonstrated ensured a most enjoyable evening. **Rosemary Steven (President Elect)**

Soroptimist International of Flat Rock

Soroptimist International of Flat Rock Area (SIFRA) held their Annual Christmas Party at Bridgewater's Landmark Lodge in early December. Members enjoyed a dinner by Deb's Catering.

The club welcomed new member Amanda Alverson. Amanda is a Flat Rock teacher, who helps coordinate the Expect Respect teen workshop with the Sophomore class that is held annually.



Soroptimist International of Fond du Lac

The countdown to the "big day" has begun in Fond du Lac. Our signature event, Chocolate Fantasy, is coming up Sunday, Jan. 27, at the local Knights of Columbus Hall. Enthusiasm is high, thanks to great leadership, teamwork by members and a community that has been supporting this "celebration of all things chocolate" for 23 years.

But that's not all that's keeping us busy. Because we are friends – not just club members – and we enjoy one another's company, our social committee has organized several events just for fun. Two events in early December found 10 members gathering at the home of Jan Youwer for a cookie exchange. Each participant brought a half-dozen homemade cookies and left with five dozen – a great variety and a great start on assembling a stash of holiday goodies.

Cookie exchange night turned out to be much more than anyone expected. Jan served chili, and with other goodies brought by participants, a whole supper appeared. Of course, there was wine (we ARE Soroptimists, after all). Two of Jan's granddaughters, all dressed up, even helped with serving and then led us in some games -- with prizes! Everyone agreed that cookie exchange should be added to our club calendar as an annual event.

Other just-for-fun events so far have included a trip to the Kohler factory, where we toured the plant and plumbing design center where we saw the world-famous brand of plumbing fixtures being made. But the highlight was a detailed look at the factory's artist-in-residence program. Kaitlin, daughter of Jan Youwer, is director of this innovative concept that brings artists into the factory and gives the free rein in creating art from clays, porcelains, metals, paints and glazes used there.

A visit to a nearby "American castle," the Paine mansion in Oshkosh offered a unique art exhibit that filled a few hours on a Saturday for other members. Next up, after Chocolate Fantasy is done, is a visit to an all-woman exhibit at the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass, another American castle venue. We're indebted to our own artist/gallery owner member Kathy Dreifuerst for leading these art adventures.

Each event has broadened our personal outlooks and deepened our club's friendship attachments. We expect more fun days/evenings are on the horizon.

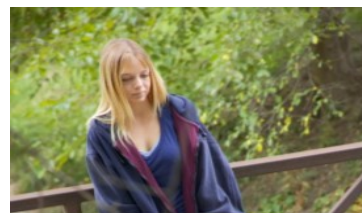
--Renee DuFore Russell
SI Fond du Lac, president

Soroptimist International of Mount Vernon & Knox County

I thank God for sending Me here

When "Amber" came to our Gracehaven house she was so traumatized she hardly spoke. Her traffickers held her in a room for two months and instilled deep fear that still affects her. Understandingly, she coped through angry outbursts and self harm. But she found her voice at Gracehaven, and learned healthy relating and coping skills. She blossomed into the bubbly, funny girl who could make everyone laugh. And most of all, she began a relationship with Jesus Christ. She has graduated from the House, but wrote this letter to everyone who helped in her journey: Dear Gracehaven, This place has helped me with a lot of stuff! I love every single staff and supervisor. You all have been there through everything! Even when I called ya'll rude names when I was upset, ya'll were still there! When I needed to talk, somebody was there to give me good feedback, or to just listen. I love

Rene. She's THE BEST THERAPIST! I just feel so comfortable to tell her anything. The girls though...the girls are a lot!! I really do love all of the girls. It might not have seemed like it, but trust me, I do! I had some rocky moments with some of them, but we went through it together. Whenever I'm down, ya'll were there to make me laugh. We had some great times together! I will never forget them, or you all! I thank God for sending me here, for meeting great, beautiful people! Thank you everyone for taking your time and patience to help me grow and become a wayyyyy better person than I was before! I love you forever, and always. Gracehaven News



Soroptimist International of Milwaukee



Rosalind Metcalf tested the knowledge of SI Milwaukee members on human trafficking when she spoke at the club's November meeting and she was impressed by what she discovered. SI scored 100 percent on the yes-no exam distributed to members.

Rosalind specializes in domestic and sex abuse and prevention and is herself a survivor of abuse as a teen. "When I was 15 I was kidnapped and held for 10 to 11 months," she said.

Questions covered a range of matters, including such basics as the very fact that victims of trafficking often do not understand that they are being victimized. And that those victimized cover a wide range of the social strata. Many are not homeless or from backgrounds of abuse, poverty, drugs or alcohol, but have fled lives of physical comfort in affluent areas because, for them, something is missing in their safe homes.

"It can happen to anyone at any time," Rosalind said. "For me, my mother was a teacher and my dad in the military. I was the kind of person this 'doesn't happen to'."

The trafficked person can have started by consenting to be sexually trafficked or to be used for panhandling or shoplifting or any number of other for-money activities.

They can make more money in human trafficking than they could at McDonald's, Rosalind explained.

They wind up being blindsided because they never understood the long-term effects," she said.

"It's a crime that happens in plain sight, and it happens to boys as well as girls."

Rosalind spoke of the need for adults to make their children aware of human trafficking so they can recognize and avoid it.

Malls are one of the prime locations for slick conmen to approach vulnerable-looking young people and lure them into the life, according to Rosalind.

Prosecuting abusers can be difficult. Often there is no evidence of abuse and victims are reluctant to talk out of fear or embarrassment or the belief that what they have is what they deserve. Many of the people walking the streets have addictions that control them, she said.

We hear much today about human trafficking, but, according to Rosalind, there is not really a whole lot more of it going on than there has been in the past, it's just that there is so much more awareness of it now.

Rosalind tells the story of her own journey to healing and passes on educational information in her book "Smoking Out the Shadows," available through her website www.healingstartstoday.com.

Rosalind defines the mission of her Healing Starts Today Foundation this way: It is to end human trafficking, to prevent violence and to empower our community with the tools to achieve health, personal growth, wellness and awareness through rescuing, education and by helping individuals to develop productive life skills.

Soroptimist International of Chicago

From Terry Phillips Archives--

"We can find meaning and reward by serving some higher purpose than ourselves, a shining purpose, the illumination of a Thousand Points of Light... We all have something to give."

President George H. W. Bush, Founder of the Points of Light Foundation

His 1989 inaugural address invoked the vision of a "thousand points of light," and invited the nation to take action through service to their fellow citizens.

As we reflect on the passing of the 41th President it reminds us that in the Spring of 1998, Soroptimist clubs in the Midwestern Region were designated as **Points of Light Award** recipients for our commitment to help solve the problems in our communities.



Points of Light is an international nonprofit, non-partisan organization headquartered in the United States dedicated to engaging more people and resources in solving serious social problems through voluntary service.

Soroptimist International of the America Branding Tools

Recognition & Branding Tools

We're stronger when we communicate with one brand and one voice. Having a consistent look and tone is important to increasing recognition of Soroptimist, both locally and globally.

It is important that all levels of our organization use the "S" logo consistently, and not alter its look in any way. Having a consistent visual identity is essential to successful branding efforts, which affects SIA's ability to increase our recognition, recruit members and fundraise outside our organization.

You can click on the link for the JPG or EPS versions of the SIA logo's.

<https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/federation-information/recognition-and-branding-tools/logos-downloads.html>



Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe

CONGRATULATIONS!

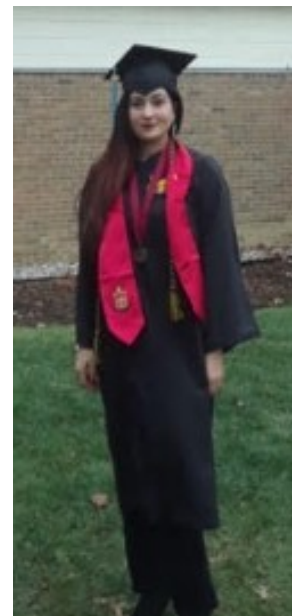
We are thrilled to announce that our club's 2017 Live Your Dream Award winner, Sara Baker, will be graduating from U of M Dearborn on Saturday, December 15, 2018!!

Talk about living your dream!



Sara has overcome many obstacles in her journey to graduate from College. As a single mother of 3 children, Sara left an arranged, abusive marriage to start a new life....in a shelter with basically nothing. Sara set a goal to continue her education, worked several jobs and cared for her children. As the winner of our club's Live Your Dream award Sara went on to win awards at the District and Regional levels. She then went on to win at the Federation level! Sara says that more than the financial support she received (\$18,000 total) it was knowing that a group of women believed in her that made a

difference in her life! She became more self confident and has achieved much more than she ever imagined!



Soroptimist International of Middletown

JOURNAL NEWS

SI Middletown Ruby Award winner: 'It's not about me at all'

Jim and Elsa Croucher's lives changed forever when their 18-year-old daughter, Tina, a 1992 Monroe High School graduate, was killed by her boyfriend 17 years ago.

Since then, the Middletown couple has taken drastic steps to keep other parents from burying their daughters as victims of domestic violence.

To work through their grief and to educate young people and their parents about violent teen relationships, Elsa and Jim Croucher founded Citizens Against Domestic Violence (CADV), a non-profit organization.

They have presented "Dating Violence: 101" to more than 73,000 high school and college students. In the last 1 1/2 years, the organization has assisted 41 victims and 76 children with funds and living necessities such as furniture, appliances, and motel accommodations.

A pinnacle of success for the Crouchers came May 13, 2009, when House Bill 19 — named the Tina Croucher Act — was

passed by the Ohio House of Representatives. This bill will require school districts to adopt a dating violence policy to include dating violence education within the health education curriculum in grades 7-12.

At 4 p.m. today, Oct. 27, Elsa Croucher will address the Ohio Senate about the importance of the Tina Croucher Act. "We want to make an impression," she said.

For all her efforts bringing attention to this cause, she will be honored next month by Middletown's Soroptimist International organization with the Ruby Award, marking the achievements of women who make a difference.

Mary Lu Flynn, who wrote Croucher's Ruby Award nominating letter, praised her for "taking a tragedy and turning it into a movement for change."

The Crouchers probably have told their stories hundreds of times, something she called "very taxing on us mentally and physically."

She continues her fight to honor her daughter's memory. "It's not about me at all," she said when asked about the Ruby Award, named after the first federation president, Ruby Lee Minar. "We don't care if the students remember our names as long as they remember what we're telling them."

Soroptimist International of Trenton

Join us at THE BIG SALAD for the Soroptimist International of Trenton Area RESTAURANT FUNDRAISER!

The Big Salad will donate back to our group 20% of money spent, which will go toward our mission to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. So Join us at THE BIG SALAD, share some laughs, eat some food and "lettuce" help your group achieve their goals.



When: 10:30 am to 8:00 pm Tuesday, January 15, 2019

Where: THE BIG SALAD, 19143 West Rd Woodhaven

Contact Christine Speedie with questions at:

sioftrentonarea@sbcglobal.net

Note: Present this flyer when placing and paying for your order. So don't forget your flyer - feel free to make copies for Family and Friends



Soroptimist International of Flat Rock

Members contributed gifts, which were raffled off, raising \$700.00 for a local charity. This is also an annual event and a fun way to celebrate the holiday season.

In addition, the club coordinates with Adopt a Child and buys two bags of clothing, including a warm coat. Six members also participated in purchasing clothing for young children.

SI Flat Rock Area donated \$155.00 to the Soroptimist International President's Appeal which is Women, Water & Leadership. At least five projects will be supported on five continents with a vision to empower women to become active leaders in water management in 28 countries and work to provide clean water.

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe

- SIGP's Wine Tasting Event this past December brought in a total of **\$6,530**.
- We were able to donate of **\$650** for the SI President's Appeal raised at the Christmas Party with our annual silent auction.
- SIGP raised **\$7,500** on the Dine Around Town this year. This is the most SIGP has made from this fundraiser and will allow us to fund our all our awards this March.
- We raised **\$3,600** on our first 5K Human Trafficking Run, which has been donated to three organization who sponsor and help Human Trafficking Survivors.
- We are also receiving donations from friends of president Aleksa and her new husband Tom. Aleksa and Tom were married in November of 2018 and asked to have donation sent to charities instead of purchasing wedding gifts.

CONGRATULATIONS ALEKSA AND TOM!

WE are helping women and girls around the world
live their dreams and achieve their goals.

Soroptimist International Midwestern Region Board

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Governor-Elect *Darcy Mettitt*

SI Monroe County

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SI Kenton Hardin Co

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District IV Secretary *Abby Bouton*

SI Columbus & Franklin County

CHECK US OUT ON
THE WEB!
WWW.SIMWR.ORG



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Soroptimist International Midwestern Region 2018 / 2020 Board



Back row: Lata Shastri , Christine Shearer, Mary Pilon, Audrey Jarvey, Susan Frankel, Barb Flory, Jenny Prater, Abby Bouton

Front Row: Darcy Merritt , Kris Armstrong ,
Connie Gindt , Missie Austin

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Soroptimist International of the Americas - (siahq@soroptimist.org)

Soroptimist Websites

Soroptimist International Midwest Region - (simwr.org)

Soroptimist International of the Americas (soroptimist.org)

Soroptimist International (soroptimistinternational.org)

Soroptimist Summary (soroptimistsummary.org)

**SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS
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