

Soroptimist of Corona

WINTER 2013

NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR

December 16 - 5:30pm
Board Meeting at Lechner
Conference Room

December 18 - 12pm
Business Meeting ONLINE

December 25 - Christmas

January 3 - Happy Birth-
day Laura Janik!

January 8 - 12pm
Meeting at TAPS

January 13 - 5:30pm
Board Meeting at Lechner
Conference Room

January 15 - 12pm Busi-
ness Meeting ONLINE

January 21 - Happy Birth-
day Shelly Davis!

January 22 - 12pm
Meeting at TAPS

January 25 - Happy Birth-
day Amy Ladika!

January 26 - Happy Birth-
day Paula Montanez!

January 27 - Happy Birth-
day Debbie Miller!

January 29 - 12pm
Field Trip to ADV

January 29 - 5:30-7:30
Cocktails for a Cause

(continued pg 2)

President's Letter

by Monica Green

While it is always the time of year to give thanks for life's blessing, the theme of gratitude flows abundantly over the holiday season. This president's message follows the theme of the season. No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks." —St. Ambrose

As I reflect over the activities of the last few months, I am amazed and thankful for what a small group of women can do to support a community (and each other) in such a gallant fashion. We kicked off the year with a magnificent Chocolate, Wine & Jazz fundraiser to support our mission. Debbie Miller along with the entire CWJ committee did a spectacular job at orchestrating this memorable event. I am inspired by the countless hours our members donate in serving others. I am thankful for Sherlett Hope's leadership in collecting over 50 drawings from over 24 different schools for this year's Live Your Dream Art Contest and organizing a new local level judging component. This activity gets our youth actively involved in honoring women who have made a difference. I am thankful for Maria Hopkins' leadership in developing a strategic plan to support our Women's Opportunity Award winners over three years. I am thankful for Sherry Mata's leadership in promoting the Violet Richardson Award year after year in our school district. I am thankful for Shawn Dredla's leadership and the committee's

efforts in developing a strategic plan to address human trafficking. Each meeting we are blessed with the opportunity to share with each other a personal tribute through our "Inspiring Women through Soroptimism" storytelling activity. The trust and courage that our members demonstrate as they share with us where they came from, how they became a Soroptimist, and why they continue to be Soroptimist is enormously moving. Paola Ringer, Joyce Pavez, Shawn Dredla, Cyndi Monroe, Debbie Miller, and Marcy Decato ~ thank you for sharing your story! As a gift to you, I share with you an excerpt of a note recently received from our 2010 JFK Middle College High School Scholarship recipient, Monica Nunez:

I graduated from JFKMCHS and transferred from Norco College with 47 units into California State University, East Bay. Going away for college was a mission, I got another job during the summer to save up for clothes, toiletries, food, and bed covers for when I left home. No one in my home supported me leaving (initially), but I was able to leave being the youngest and first one to move out. I recall everyone moving in the dorms with brand new wardrobe, laptops, blankets, and kitchen utensils; and all my stuff was used but I was still proud because it had cost me way more to leave my family and comfort zone... It took me 3 years to graduate with a Bachelors of Arts in Human Development, with



an emphasis in Adult Gerontology; and a Bachelors of Arts in Spanish... All that valuable experience guided me to apply for a Masters of Social Work Program at USC...

Monica goes on to say "thank you" for all those along the way that helped her to earn her degree and propel her pursuit a Master's degree. Monica gives thanks to YOU. You are amazing! I appreciate the hospitality of our members who have opened their homes and hearts to Soroptimists this fall – Denise Middleton, Sylvia Fleming, Joyce Pavez, and Debbie Miller – thank you for hosting our Afterglows and parties. As we get caught up in this holiday season, remember it is all about giving thanks. I am thankful for you as each of you embody our mission so beautifully ~ Soroptimist improves the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. Happy Holidays!

CALENDAR

(Continued from Pg 1)

January 30 - Happy Birthday Deb Murphy!

February 2 - Happy Birthday Marcy Decato!

February 4 - Happy Birthday Jackie Figueroa!

February 5 - 6:30pm
Afterglow location TBD

February 7 - Happy Birthday Irena Norton!

February 12—12pm
Meeting at TAPS

February 17 - 5:30pm
Board Meeting at Lechner Conference Room

February 19 - 12pm
Business Meeting ONLINE

February 26 - 12pm
Birthday Party at TAPS

The Sky is the Limit - by Paola Ringer

Excerpt taken from Column "Today's Culture" By Paola Wong-Ringer

"The afternoon was merry, and merry was the laughter. Everything was fine and good, and above all was the sky. Obscure at times, pale at times. Absent on moments, was the sky. Yet, it was mostly blue, and white, and good. And it was our sky". Liber Falco, Uruguayan Poet and Author who began writing at the age of sixteen.

As we celebrate and work to empower our youth, we must remember how early in their lifetime their path starts to form.

Many young people at an early age become committed to working at their goals and ultimately their destiny. However, a large number do not have that luxury. In particular, if their environment or family circumstances have not served them well, they will have a difficult time attaining success. How do we as a community help break such a pattern of instability so prevalent in far too many families today? And how do we boost their confidence and help them to focus on goals and responsibilities? Growing up in Peru without any form of leadership and supervision during my teen years could have taken a devas-



tating turn. Yet, I consider myself lucky and blessed to have had a goodwill community of teachers, church leaders and extended family. Today, in our communities, many organizations including our Soroptimist club, school system and various nonprofit organizations are there to help. And yet, there is so much we can contribute individually. It is Our Sky, our Sunshine. What a great feeling to be able to share it with them.

Counselors' Luncheon by Denise Middleton

October 23rd was the date for our annual Counselors and Educators Luncheon, the kick-off to setting our service programs in high gear. An invitation was sent to representatives from each of the district Intermediate and High Schools, and I'm so excited that we had 100% participation – every single school responded that they would have someone join us at the luncheon.

Taps offered us the opportunity to try out a

new menu format – a buffet line! We were a bit nervous about trying out something new for such an important event, but it went off without a hitch. Attendees were able to begin eating the delicious array of food (tilapia, salad and asparagus – makes my mouth water just to think about it) as soon as they arrived, so that the program could begin promptly.

The program was brief yet informative – all of our energetic service program chairpersons gave a quick presentation, letting the educators know exactly what each of the programs involves and how much we need their help.

The end result was absolutely a success – The counselors and educators in attendance are committed to being our "partners in service."

Christmas Luncheon

The SIC Christmas luncheon was hosted by Debbie Miller, who made a fabulous lunch of lasagne, salad, garlic bread and peach cobbler.

Members each brought an ornament for the gift exchange game, which Cyndi narrated by video. Everyone brought 3 dozen of their favorite cookies to share and all

members went home with a Christmas cookie medley professionally boxed, Soroptimist sticker adorned as well.

We even had a little elf visit—Paula's new grandson was passed around for all to adore.

It was a lovely day enjoyed by many members.



Member Highlight - Cyndi Monroe

It was exactly 10 years ago this fall that I began attending SI Corona. I had read about the organization in an article about Karen Spiegel and her family. In the article, Karen mentioned this Club of powerful Business women. I was intrigued and wrote Karen a little note asking about S.I. Corona.

When Karen called me and we chatted about the club I asked exactly WHICH Wednesday of the month did the club meet and she told me EVERY week. I freaked out. I had a fledgling non-profit, and boys in elementary school, High school and college. I waited two years more before joining. I wanted to be ready.

The funny thing is, I am surprised I joined at all because I am not someone who normally joins.

Flashback.

I grew up in Southern California in the perfect All-American family. My parents, my brother, Andy and myself. My dad was an auditor for General Motors, and my mom was a housewife. We lived in La Mirada until I was in 4th grade and then moved to Fullerton where we lived until I left for college.

When I was in the 6th grade, my dad decided to follow his lifelong American dream. He quit his very secure but very boring job as an auditor, took his life savings and entire retirement account and opened an Ice Cream store in Fullerton.

The store opened in October in what turned out to be rainiest winter in Southern California in recent history. By February my dad faced the reality that the store was a failure. My parents lost everything except our house. This was an epiphany

moment. First, as a child of the depression, my dad understood how important it was to work, no matter what. He took any job he could get: Selling industrial baking equipment, selling used cars, anything.

My mom, who always loved to sew, stepped up and started an alteration business out of our home. She was hired by 3 or 4 high end shops to do all the alterations for their customers. She would go to the shops or the women would come to our house. I would come home from school every day and some stranger would be standing in front of a mirror wearing some dress that cost more than my parents' combined monthly income. My mom would be on her knees with a dozen pins in her mouth, shortening, lengthening, letting out, taking in the dress. Women would come with arms full of clothes in the winter to take the clothes in for fall or in the spring to let the clothes out because the women had gained so much weight over the cold months. The women would tell my mom everything – it was like she was their hairdresser or bartender.

My mom never considered it lowly or beneath her. She loved tailoring. She made these women comfortable and they loved her. The income she brought in kept food on our table and the electric bill paid. She was so strong and continues to be so.



Learning about Soroptimist mission of improving the lives of woman and girls, especially the WOA award, reminded me of my mom working to provide for our family. She would have loved to go to college but felt she was not smart enough.

I had a different approach as an adult. I never thought there was anything I couldn't do. I know I am not trained or educated – I only completed one year of college, but I do have passion for things I am interested in and I really like to have fun achieving my goals. Still, I didn't enjoy being with groups of women: PTA – Nope. Women's church groups: Nope. Networking clubs: Nope. But I really liked the idea of working with women achievers who are also passionate about their careers and passionate about helping other women.

Many of you have walked with me over the past 10 years as I have nurtured, pushed, cried, sweated over my little arts organization. It has made me feel such camaraderie, such a sisterhood of support and encouragement. SI Corona has fueled my passion to help other women, to help girls to realize their goals.

I love my club. I love that you have embraced me for who I am. I love that we are allowed to be who we are and yet encouraged to be our best. I love how we come alongside each other and mentor new leadership every year. More than anything, I admire you for your commitment.

Soroptimists, as an international organization, is wonderful and thrilling but more than anything, I feel proud and privileged to be a member of SI Corona.



Member Highlight - Joyce Pavez



A tree really does grow in Brooklyn. I know because that's where I came from. I am a miniscule part of a big fun-loving, food-loving, highly-emotional Italian family whom I adore to this day.

Even though I only knew city living, I grew up in a bubble of doting and over-protective first-generation parents who appreciated every opportunity this country afforded. I was raised to appreciate America and to work hard...

My tall, handsome father was a New York City Fire Fighter and my delicate mother's only job was that of seamstress in the famous garment center district at age 14. Marriage to my Dad saved her from the sweat shop experience and my father's 2, sometimes 3 jobs afforded my brother and I the education that they sacrificed dearly for. My younger brother and I went to 12 years of Catholic private schooling and then he went on to Notre Dame University and I to Brooklyn College.

I was a shy child with big dreams. At age 15, I decided to leave my spot at the corner hang-out and traded my skin-tight blue jeans and flashy huge belt slug at my hips for a Summer job in "the city." This move changed my life forever. I worked in Manhattan for an attorney every summer through high school and college until my highly-respected and well-known boss decided it was time for NY to have another World's Fair. He offered me to be his right arm in the planning and I did. As a now 20-year-old participating in the groundwork of the 1964 World's Fair, I learned much and grew up in a flash. I never completed my last two years of college because the excitement, experience and my surprising paycheck were all too tempting.

My basic learning made me realize that I would someday do whatever I could to contribute to the world and leave my footprints behind. I never knew HOW I was going to accomplish this, but life took its course and I moved to California for a life of sunshine and warm winters with no snow. Several years and many turns later, my new husband and our children relocated to Corona to begin our new business when Marsha Calvert invited me to a meeting of "I knew not what." She only told me it had something to do with women. I wish I could remember what compelled me to continue meetings because I felt so young and so intimidated, but a persistency in my soul was the only answer. Recruitment and retention was very different and sophisticated from the way you all know it today.

This is my beloved and loved Soroptimist Club. This is where I grew to another level. This is where I was able to develop my passion to help women and girls, especially in the area of education... formal education and learning tools for life. I found my "home" to be able to help others ... this was the extension of my own foundation of being taught by strong religious women to give back. This is where I grew in confidence to have an idea and where my priceless fellow members gave me the go-ahead and supported me. I am so proud to be a part of the birth and execution of the programs you continue to support today. I will be an active, supporting Soroptimist foreverto give back to this organization what it has given to me.

Member Highlight - Debbie Miller

When I was offered the gift of Soroptimist membership, I was a new mother for the third time. We had just opened bmla Landscape Architects about two and a half years before in 1987. With the third child, I decided to devote my full attention to our new business but with that decision, I was thrust into a world of men! I can hold my own with men as I was usually the only woman in the managers' meetings from my prior life but I was craving women in my life, so when Teresa Costa invited me to lunch...of course I jumped at the prospect.

There are two main events in my life that inspired me to join Soroptimist and remain a Soroptimist for all these years. I am the oldest of 4 children, born to a very young couple enlisted in the military. In the years that my dad was enlisted, we lived in Texas, Alabama, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, North Dakota, and Italy in addition to others. When I was 8 living in North Dakota at the time, I developed a blood disorder that required me to spend months in the hospital and when out of the hospital I was not allowed to be around my siblings or other children. I had a tutor and lived with childless friends of my parents off and on for 2 years when not in the hospital. As you can see, my health today is good but without those family friends stepping in to assist my parents...I would have spent that whole two years in the hospital in the adult ward sequestered from children.

The other event occurred as an adult living here in Corona, we were hosting

my coworkers for the end of summer picnic at our home in Corona. I had rushed off to do the last minute grocery shopping and Baxter was doing the last of the yard work prior to our guests arriving. Ian and Morgan were playing in the front yard while Daddy was mowing the lawn. One of my neighbors found me with a full cart of groceries at Stater Bros and said that there had been an accident at home. I flew out the door and reached home just as the ambulance had arrived. Ian had been hit by a car riding his bike to the neighbors across the street. Baxter had picked him up and carried him inside the house, of course, the wrong thing to do in this situation. The paramedics were determining his injuries, Baxter was in shock...Morgan was taken by our neighbors and I jumped into the ambulance with Ian for the ride to Riverside. Ian was ok, had to stay the night in the hospital, he still has scares on his legs, arms and chest from that day, he had



some nasty bruises on his face and black eyes. When we arrived home that night, our neighbors had purchased our groceries, brought them home and put them all away. Another had cared for Morgan all day. That night, we decided together that that business that we had dreamed about for so many years would have to start very quickly, as we both worked in Orange County and the kids were cared for here in Corona, we just couldn't take another chance if something happened to one of them while we were at work. That day, we decided that no matter what one of us would work near the kids...just in case. Three weeks later, we opened bmla..with about \$3000, a lot of encouragement from family and friends and a whole lot of luck these past 26 years.

These two events...determined for me that I needed to give back for all that had been given to me...as a child and as an adult, some by people that we barely knew!

Today, my best friends are Soroptimists! My business partners are Soroptimists! My daughter is a Soroptimist and if Ian and Aaron had an opportunity, I think they would be too! I will always be a Soroptimist because in some very small way, it's my way of giving back to these friends and family that were there for me and mine probably in many ways that I will ever know.

Women's Opportunity Award

Update:

The WOA application deadline is on 12/15. Several non-Soroptimist individuals will judge the applications and select one individual applicant. The selected applicant will be provided with three years of support via mentoring, coaching, and networking assistance.



Human Trafficking Committee Update by Shawn Dredla

The Human Trafficking Committee has been meeting for the past few weeks to put together a Strategic Plan and to organize an event to raise awareness on human trafficking and domestic violence. January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and we will be partnering with Kim Taylor and Alternatives to Domestic Violence. This will be a night to raise funds and raise awareness on both of these issues. The event, Cocktails for a Cause: Giving a Voice to the Voiceless,

will be on January 29th, 2014 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at a location still to be determined. The tickets will be approximately \$35. This event will feature stories from human trafficking survivors and domestic violence survivors along with some music, appetizers, and champagne. We hope that you will join us for this great cause. Tickets will be on sale shortly. .



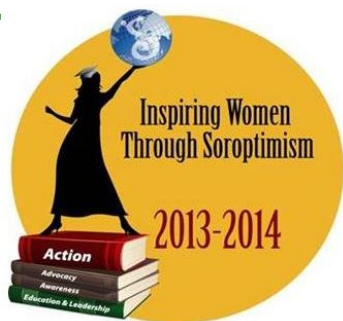
Honoring Violet Richardson— by Sherry Mata

This award is in honor of the first president, Violet Richardson of the first Soroptimist club.

The award honors girls who are making a difference through volunteer service. Each year, Soroptimist clubs honor girls between the ages of 14 and 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, mentoring young girls, etc. These young women complete an appli-

cation and an essay describing their personal stories of volunteer services. The winner at local club level receives \$500 for herself and a non-profit organization. Then her essay will be submitted to compete with the other 28 club winners. One finalist will be chosen from among the 28 winners for an additional award, including a contribution of \$2,500 to the finalist's volunteer organization. Although we realize that volunteering is its own reward, we also know it feels good to be recognized for your actions. And that's why we sponsor this award.





Board Members

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For submissions for the SI Corona
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2013-2014 SIC Board Members

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1st VP of Service

2nd VP of Ways & Means

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Denise Middleton

Linda Holmes

Debbie Miller

Neena Garg

Michelle Volonte

Maria Hopkins

Cyndi Monroe

Seema Lechner

Marcy Decato

Leeza Villagomez

Kristin Barbarosa

Shawn Dredla



2013 Committee Chairs

By Denise

Committee Chairs are in place and Committees are filled. It's going to be another great year of service for all of us! To kick it off we are inviting representatives from the local junior high and high schools to join us for lunch on October 23rd. That's our chance to explain to them what we do and coordinate our efforts with the schools.

Here's the Committee lineup:

Dreams and Decisions - mark your calendar for March 15th, 2014

Leeza (lead)
Kristin (lead)
Shelly
Sherry

Joyce
Crystal
Sylvia
Irena
Sherlett
Debra Murphy
Morgan

Scholarships

Neena (lead)
Judy (lead)
Amy
Sylvia
Sherlett
Debra Murphy
Jackie

Live your Dream
Sherlette

WOS

Cyndi (lead)
Paola (lead)
Leeza
Beth
Michelle
Seema
Shawn

WOA

Maria (lead)
Monica
Michelle

VRA

Sherry
Linda