



The Vision



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

from Governor **Kris Armstrong**

Hello Midwesterners,

March has been a helluva long year, hasn't it? I hope that everyone is well and practicing all of our "new normal" rituals: staying at home; working from home; social distancing; staring into space; tv/book bingeing; and napping. As you know, Spring Conference has been canceled. It really was not a difficult decision, as the health and safety of our members is my highest concern. However, it absolutely stinks. We had such a great weekend planned, with fabulous guests and the installation of a new Governor and Board of Directors.

Please continue to follow the guidance you receive from SIA and the MWR Board. Until the National Emergency is lifted, and until you hear from us, all in-person club activities must be canceled. It's a great time to try your hand at virtual meetings, I'm looking forward to attending a few. In fact, we have a region board meeting scheduled for this weekend, after which we will have some tasks for all of the clubs to complete. We need to vote on a couple of things: the new biennium budget; by-law updates; approval of Minutes; and we need to vote for a new Board of Directors. All of that will be coming your way by the end of April. I do want to thank you all for turning in your Governor Award Forms to me and your Program data to Governor-Elect Darcy. We will still be giving awards, but it may be October before you receive an official certificate.

So, those are our plans for April. And I had planned to wait until the May issue to publish my State of The Region Address, but it's as done as it's going to get, so it's included in this issue. I hope you like it.

In closing, I want to let you know that one of our members in Michigan has been hospitalized with COVID-19, please keep her and her family in your prayers.

Wishing you all health & wellness.



Kris Armstrong,
Midwestern Region Governor

Inside April 2020 Edition are:

Articles from
SI of...

- ◆ Chicago
- ◆ Cleveland
- ◆ Dayton
- ◆ Greater Macomb
- ◆ Grosse Pointe
- ◆ Lucas County
- ◆ Milwaukee
- ◆ Mount Vernon and
Knox County
- ◆ **Membership Chair,**
Roseanne Horne
- ◆ **Editor,** Karrie
Blankenship
- ◆ **SIA President,**
Tina Wei-Kang Pan

2020 State of The Region Address

(When you read this, you have to imagine that you're me speaking out loud.)

To paraphrase JayZ: I got 99 problems and Midwestern Region ain't one. Let's be clear, I am my own favorite person and I've had a helluva a good time being Governor.

Even though this is my final State of The Region address, I'm not going to make you sit through a Castroesque monologue in which I catalog our struggle. This weekend we've heard from our pillar chairs about our success with program, fundraising, public awareness and membership. And we sure as heck got a preview of our overarching direction from that fabulous panel discussion yesterday and from Governor Darcy's installation speech last night.

Last spring conference, I asked y'all to look around the room to see if you recognized any potential leaders and that perhaps it was you. We installed six new board members last night. Six! That's half the board. Thanks to all for stepping up and good luck in your Soroptimist leadership journey. Thanks to Governor Darcy and Governor-Elect Christine, as well as the returning board members for their continued service. Of course, a big thank you to my retiring board members & committee chairs. When I said that Midwestern Region is not one of my problems, it's not simply because my term is ending. It's because we all pulled together to get Soroptimist done. Great job, everybody!

I entered into this job with a theme of Leadership is Fundamental, for which I had some semi-intellectual, big thinking ideas about -I wrote a manifesto for heaven's sake, who remembers that. I've talked, typed and memed a lot about leadership in all of its forms. So as time winds down, I've been partaking in some introspection about the last two years, about leadership lessons learned and moving forward. Has it been perfect? No. But nothing is. Yes, that's a rationalization. I may have been guilty of having some delusions of grandeur, but we have focused on leadership development without being too pushy about it. Anyway, out of this introspection has come a leadership epiphany: think small. Which leads me to Twitter, which is where all good epiphanies are born.

I love Twitter. One of my favorite follows is a guy by the name of Patrick Skinner, a former CIA officer who moved back home and became a police officer. He talks a lot about the importance of serving his forgotten neighbors by performing small acts of service, because that is where you effect meaningful change. The small things are often the things that matter most.

How do we lead? By tending our own garden. By being there for our communities and forgotten neighbors. Because, what would the world look like if we didn't? Is it a small thing for a girl to be inspired by a local Dream It Be It event? Is it a small thing for a woman to win an award from your club? Is it a small thing for women & girls to feel that they matter? Is it a small thing if someone finds value in being a Soroptimist?

In this region, in your district, in your state, in your county, in your city, in your town, in your neighborhood, on your block, in your home, it starts with you. Leadership lives in you. Soroptimist lives through all of us. Let's get out there and be small together.



Helping women and girls
live their dreams

Soroptimist International of Greater Macomb

In spite of the virus, March was very productive for SI Greater Macomb. Even though Spring Conference was cancelled, it is heartening to be able to say we had over 50% of our membership registered to attend, including two first-timers (ten of 19 !!!). We were finalizing plans for our April Awards Banquet/75th anniversary celebration. The good news is: our banquet has been re-scheduled for September.

We had another Dream It Be It session on Saturday, March 8. Once again it was held at the Verkuilen Building in Mt. Clemens in collaboration with the 4-H organization. We may not have had a large enrollment but the girls all received personal attention and they gave us very positive feedback. We were very fortunate to get it in before just before the notice to cancel because of the virus.

The long awaited Spring edition of the [Macomb Now magazine](#) (*click the link and then click the arrow to the right once to read the article*) hit the newsstands with its profile of our club. Within a week or so of publication we heard from a prospective new member; we're hoping that there are other interested women who are waiting for the pandemic to pass to contact us.

We are looking forward to returning to business-as-usual. We have two potential opportunities to partner with other organizations for the benefit human trafficking survivors:

- 1) a local restaurant owner who seeks to raise funds for a Macomb County shelter and
- 2) working with the Joseph Project to helping in some small way to advance their goal to obtain pro bono legal work for survivors. We will know more about this when we get our teleconference scheduled with their leadership.

Soroptimist International of Cleveland

Hello Soroptimist Family,

The last few weeks have been extremely challenging with parents becoming teachers, the shift to working from home, and stores closing. All of this while we all navigate COVID-19. Our club has had to pivot just like all of you. You will notice that our meetings from March-May will be virtual. Please see our Facebook page for log in information to join us virtually in April and May. We have also added a "coffee talk" for our first Anniversary. Join us virtually as we celebrate our first year of success!

Stay Healthy,
Cleveland Club

Unlock the potential of women and girls

Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc.

SIA President Tina Wei-Kang Pan

Dream Programs and COVID-19

In these difficult times, we are focused on protecting ourselves, our families, and our communities from the spread of the COVID-19. We are canceling club meetings and events. We are social distancing and following the mandates of government and public health officials. And, because we are Soroptimists, we are worrying about and wanting to help the most vulnerable members of our communities.

As you are managing the work of your club, we wanted to offer some suggestions about our Dream Program participants. Please consider:

As you are canceling events, please note that women and girls were looking forward to and eager to participate in *Live Your Dream Award* recognition events and *Dream It, Be It*. Although canceling is the right thing to do, use gentle and supportive yet clear language. Let them know that you will reschedule as soon as it is safe to do so.

Remember that women are counting on their *Live Your Dream Awards* – now more than ever. You do not need to wait to distribute the funding at an event. Do not delay in getting the money to your recipients as quickly as you can.

If your club has the resources, consider providing gift cards for grocery stores and pharmacies to your *Live Your Dream Award* recipients and *Dream It, Be It*. These are a population of women and girls who we have identified as facing barriers to their success. They need us more now than ever.

Stay in touch with your Dream Program participants. Social distancing can be very isolating and reaching out to say hello and see how women and girls are doing could make the difference in their day.

[Share messages of support with women and girls](#). Some affirming messages would be helpful to all of us right now.

Share local resources that may be useful for women and girls—free meal sites, domestic violence resources, and other aid opportunities.

Send online learning resources to moms who might be at home with their children. Many organizations are providing resources for free. Make it easy for women to find them.

Consider starting an online book club with girls who would have been participating in *Dream It, Be It*. Provide free access to the book on-line.

Share some online resources with teen girls – your favorite podcasts or TedTalks. Let them know they can ask you for additional resources.

Consider hosting your *Dream It, Be It* planning committee with girls via Zoom or other video conferencing platforms.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our Dream Program participants at this difficult time. If you have any great ideas or have had any success supporting women and girls during this time, please share with us at program@soroptimist.org.

Soroptimist International of Dayton

SI Dayton Update for March 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all our upcoming events have been postponed and re-scheduled. The Movie Event *-I am Jane Doe* is now scheduled for August 15th at the Downtown Dayton Metro Library Theater Room. We will re-open registration after our June 27th brunch at Event Bright at www.eventbright.com.

Our Educational Awards Brunch originally scheduled for May 2nd, is postponed until June 27th at The Dayton Woman's Club.

We sincerely hope you and your loved ones are well and remain healthy. We remain united by our Soroptimist values. We are Soroptimist Strong.

A Message from the Editor, Karrie Blankenship

For the past four years I have had the pleasure of being the editor of the Midwestern Region's newsletter, *The Vision*, and for the past two years your Regional Public Awareness Chair. My time has come to say farewell to both these positions.

At this year's spring conference my intentions were to introduce to you, in person, the new editor of your regional newsletter, Ross Braun, a member of the SI Grosse Pointe club. Ross has kindly accepted the position of Editor for *The Vision*. (I didn't even need to twist her arm) She will be working with Darcy Merritt, our 2020-2022 Midwestern Region Governor, to bring to you an astonishingly new and motivating newsletter for the next two years. More information will be forthcoming.

Once Ross and I can meet to establish her protocol and with Darcy's approval, an article will be posted in the newsletter with instructions on article submissions and email addresses. Ross will begin her editorial biennial in July of 2020.

It has been my pleasure working with and meeting all of you. Thank you to those who have been instrumental in making my job easier to create a newsletter that our members looked forward to reading each month.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during our transitional period, and please allow the same courtesies to Ross.

Karrie Blankenship
SI Grosse Pointe



Ross Braun
2020/2022
Vision Editor

A Message from your Midwestern Region Membership Chair Roseanne Horne

Membership Article for the April Newsletter submitted by Roseanne Horne Midwest Region Membership Chair

SIA Membership updates:

For those of you interested in learning more about Membership total for our clubs, region and federation please see below:

Soroptimist of the Americas

Individual Members: **29,980**

Total Clubs: **1,260**

SIA showed a net increase of 223 members during February 2020. This is a 7.5% decrease from the previous 5-year average net increase of 241 members during the month of February. The organization also showed a net increase of two total clubs this month.

Region Membership updates:

- ◆ During February 2020, 24 regions showed a monthly increase in membership over January 2020. Meanwhile, one region decreased in membership this month and four regions showed no change during February.
- ◆ Additionally, 13 regions (América del Sur, Board Directed SIA Northern Philippines, Camino Real, Central East Coast, Desert Coast, Founder, México-Centroamérica, **Midwestern**, Northeastern, Northwestern, Philippines, Taiwan, and Western Canada) show growth in a year-over-year increase in membership compared to February 2019, more than at the same period last year when five regions showed year-over-year growth.

Club Membership updates:

Midwestern Region Club Membership Totals: (as of 2-29-2020)

Midwestern Region:

Individual Members:**740** (as of 2-29-2020)

Total Clubs:**30**

Clubs	Total # of Members
1 Chicago, IL	17
2 Fond Du Lac, WI	40
3 Milwaukee, WI	16
4 Bloomington-Normal, IL	23
5 Suburban-Chicago, IL	15
6 Illiana, IL	26
7 Indianapolis Metro, IN	15
8 Dayton, OH	17
9 Middletown, OH	18
10 Anderson, IN	25
11 Kenton, OH	34
12 Tipp City and the Upper Miami Valley, OH	15
13 Urbana, OH	21
14 Lucas County, OH	12
15 Hancock County Area, OH	10
16 Tri-State Midwest	12
17 Cleveland, OH	36
18 Flat Rock Area, MI	38
19 Grosse Pointe, MI	67
20 Greater Macomb, MI	20
21 Monroe County, MI	41
22 Oakland County, MI	9
23 Trenton Area, MI	45
24 Downriver Area, MI	16
25 Canton/Stark County, OH	30
26 Columbus and Franklin County, OH	20
27 Fremont, OH	33
28 Mount Vernon & Knox County., OH	31
29 Zanesville, OH	26
30 Suburban Franklin County, OH	12
	<hr/>
	740



**SI Illiana and SI Suburban Chicago club
members showing our support for
2020 theme #EachforEqual.**

**Helping women and girls
live their dreams**

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe

Soroptimist Presents \$8,500 in Awards

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe (SIGP) held its Annual Awards Ceremony at Assumption Cultural Center on March 11, 2020. SIGP President Aleksandra Andjelkovic announced that six women would receive monetary awards to honor their achievements and fund their educational efforts.



The **Live Your Dream (LYD)** award is the signature award of Soroptimist International of the Americas. It is awarded to a woman who is enrolled in school to improve her employment opportunities, is head of household and has financial need. The first-place winner of \$3,000 was **Deborah Smith**, a single parent. She is a student at Wayne State University in the Social Work bachelor's program with a goal to continue into the master's program. She plans to use her degree to help women gain understanding on how to overcome adversity and achieve dreams.



The second-place LYD winner, **Lavina Hutchinson**, was awarded \$2,000. At an early age she was the primary support for her two younger half-sisters and continues to be the primary support of her 18-year-old sister, taking on the "mother role." Rising above these challenges, she earned an Associate Degree in general studies from Wayne State University and is currently in the Macomb Community College nursing program working on her Associate Degree in Nursing. She plans to graduate at the end of this academic year and will immediately begin a bachelor's degree in Nursing at Oakland University.



Angeles Cuevas Cervantes was awarded the **Virginia Wagner Educational Award** that honors a woman who is going to school in pursuit of a bachelor, masters or doctoral degree. The award of \$3,000 was presented to **Angeles Cervantes**, a first-generation college student from Southwest Detroit, who will complete her bachelor's degree at Eastern Michigan University in Language & International Careers-Spanish. Her goal is to become a licensed certified interpreter and start a business using her talents in her community.



The **Soroptimist Ruby Award** is given to women who have made a positive difference in the lives of other women and girls. **Amanda Good**, CEO and one of the founders of **Alternatives for Girls (AFG)**, was awarded a \$500 donation to be used to help homeless, high-risk girls and young women avoid violence, exploitation and teen pregnancy.

Soroptimist International of Illiana

DREAM IT BE IT CAREER DAY

Our 5th Annual DIBI Career Day was held on Saturday, March 7, 2020 at the Thornwood High School in South Holland, IL. (Thanks to our member Nina Graham, President of School District 205). We had 37 girls to attend from Arthur Ashe Elementary School, Coolidge Middle School, Rosa Park Middle School and Home-wood Flossmoor High School. SI Suburban Chicago club also joined us.

The girls were able to interact with ladies of various careers, a judge, lawyer, police officer, pediatrician, nurse practitioner, nurse, entrepreneurs, chef and engineer.



Pictured: Devra Collier, DIBI Chairman; Pauline Washington, Vice President; Marydale Donald, President and Nicole Rogers, DIBI Co-Chair



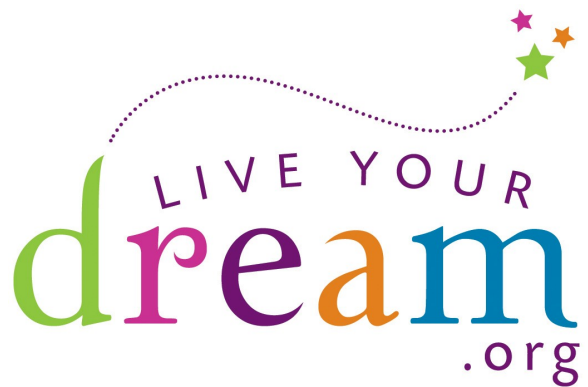
The girls participated in a self-defense class by Mr. John Venson, 9th Degree Black Belt from The Martial Arts University.



The girls participated in a hands on cooking class with Chef Bianca Wilson.



Chicago Police Officer, Alise Buford had an interactive conversation with the girls about trafficking and how to prevent from becoming a victim.



Soroptimist International of Lucas County

Lucas County had our LYD dinner which was held on March 5. The three women honored were present along with their guests. Great food and good company made for a very successful event. There was interest in joining our club by some of the guests that we personally invited. Obviously some of what I said is valid...we do have to delay two of our upcoming events, and the October 5 wine tasting has to be rescheduled due to change in management at our venue. There may be dates we can share in the next Vision. I do wish you all to be safe and hope we can meet again soon .

Soroptimist International of Mount Vernon and Knox County



Live Your Dream Award Winner Heidi Rousseau, a COTC student (left) that overcame many challenges receives \$1,000 presented by Becky Chamberlain, SI of Mount Vernon and Knox County.

Soroptimist International of Chicago

SI Chicago and Corporate Sponsor Wintrust Bank Presented: *Money Smart Program for High School Seniors*

As part of **SI Chicago's Dream it, Be it curriculum**, arrangements were made to have our corporate sponsor **Wintrust Bank** speak with High School seniors about college and car loans, renting and building credit scores.

SI Chicago member, Terry Phillips, also contributed real life situations to help illustrate things to take into consideration when making decisions. The 25 students were very attentive and had lots of questions.

The bank is very interested in presenting again now that we have a better indication of the student's interests. **Wintrust Bank is a community bank and has committed to a \$1,000 grant for the Chicago Dream it, Be it Program** in the public schools.



THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN 27TH JANUARY 2020 SIHQ CSW64

The sixty-fourth session of the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9 to 20 March 2020. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world will join together with 100 delegates of Soroptimist International (SI).

SI Director of Advocacy Bev Bucur, says: “I am excited to be coordinating the activities for CSW64. SI President, Sharon Fisher will be leading a delegation of almost 100 Soroptimists from around the world at this important meeting focusing on the anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The theme of this year’s CSW64 *‘Realizing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls’* focuses on the outcomes of the [23rd special session of the General Assembly](#) and current challenges in meeting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

Soroptimist International will have many activities, including several Parallel Events and Side Events, planned in partnership with the Federations, and other partners. You can participate even if you cannot personally come to New York. Official sessions will be broadcast on [UNWebTV](#). Be sure to visit the Soroptimist International website, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter for the latest news”.

SI President Sharon Fisher says: “Having attended the United Nations CSW numerous times, I have gained a broad understanding of the role of Soroptimist International and the dedication consistently shown by our delegates each year. This particular year is particularly significant, due to it being the anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. With 100 Soroptimists joining together in New York, together with member states, civil society and other members of our global community, I look forward to working to accelerate the realization of gender equality, and sharing the experience with Soroptimists from all over the world”.

This year the global community will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the [Fourth World Conference on Women](#) and the adoption of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) (1995) in numerous ways. A five-year milestone will be reached towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

Soroptimist International of Milwaukee

Suggestions Could Help Women Under Stress

From the Live Your Dream Blog

Women in today's workplace are under more stress than ever. Workers are often given too many tasks to complete on short deadlines. People spend more time at the office than they do at home. On top of this, working women often feel even more overwhelmed due mainly to issues that stem from sexism and familial responsibilities. Society also conditions women to say yes more often, according to the Live Your Dream Blog. It offers up these suggestions to help avoid some of the stressors:

Look the Part

Often women are asked to look the part in their workplace. They must be cheerful and friendly, even when they don't want to be. It's well-known that men often tell women to smile if they are not. This is just one example of the simple fact that many men, willingly or not, internalize a specific idea of how a woman is supposed to look and act and push that on the women in their lives. Women often feel the need to style their hair and do their makeup before work. If they don't, many women report that men assume they're tired or even sick. To combat this, women can build their self-esteem by finding the morning routine that works for them and sticking to it no matter what anyone says. Feel free to ditch the heels for flats and forget the eyeliner.

More Expectations at Home

In the past, it was rare for women to hold jobs, as their role was to maintain their households. With their husbands at work, they cleaned the house, cooked meals and cared for their children. Now, many more women are employed. Unfortunately, women still often feel a sense of responsibility for the people around them. After work, they have to pick up their children, make dinner and tidy up. All of this creates an immense amount of stress on top of the anxiety that comes from their jobs. Women should not be responsible for this—instead, they need to ask for help, from inside or outside the family.

The Pressure to Take on More

From a young age, women are told to be pleasant and roll with the punches. With that comes saying yes, even when they'd rather not. This is the case in nearly every aspect of a woman's life. At work, women continuously agree to take on last-minute projects or stay after hours to help clean up. Bosses jokingly say they can't trust Jim or Mike to do this task, so it's up to you. As a result, the performance and well-being of the women in an office are put to the test more often. So many women are afraid to say no, but it's important that women keep this word in their arsenal in order to feel stronger and less overworked.

Consistent Low Wages and Positions

It's no secret that there's a wage gap—women are more likely to earn less money than men, even when they perform the same duties. Then, if they cannot make ends meet, they often have to turn to part-time jobs and other employment on top of everything else. Doing so creates an incredible amount of pressure and anxiety. Combine low pay with high workplace expectations, and you have a recipe for disaster. This isn't to say men have it easy, but it should be noted that women consistently have more on their plates. Women must be able to advocate for themselves, especially when the time comes for a raise or promotion.

Looking on the Bright Side

If you find you're dealing with one or more of these workplace stressors, do your best to turn the bad into good. Most situations won't resolve themselves overnight, so make an effort to see the best in things. Crack a joke or divert conversations to more comfortable topics. Practice saying no and learn how to defend yourself, so you can take on a suitable amount of work and improve your well-being. Practice self-care and remember that you can always ask for help. Don't be afraid to speak up. Your experience matters.

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe

SIGP and partners St. Lucy's Church and the Lakeshore Family YMCA held our 2nd annual 5k walk/run event last year on September 21, 2019 to help bring awareness to our communities about this horrific issue we have going on in our own back yards--HUMAN TRAFFICKING. Our event raised enough money enabling us to donate funds raised to two different non-for-profit organizations. These organization are helping Human Trafficking survivors overcome the violence that was in their lives and still may be in their lives. Each organization received a check in the amount of \$1,575 to be earmarked for Human Trafficking Survivor needs.

Elli's House:



Elli's House is a 501(c)3 nonprofit serving homeless & runaway women involved in human trafficking in the city of Detroit. Their mission is to abolish sex trafficking in the city of Detroit through building relationships, offering safe shelter, and providing education.

Deb Ellinger

Executive Director and founder of Elli's House

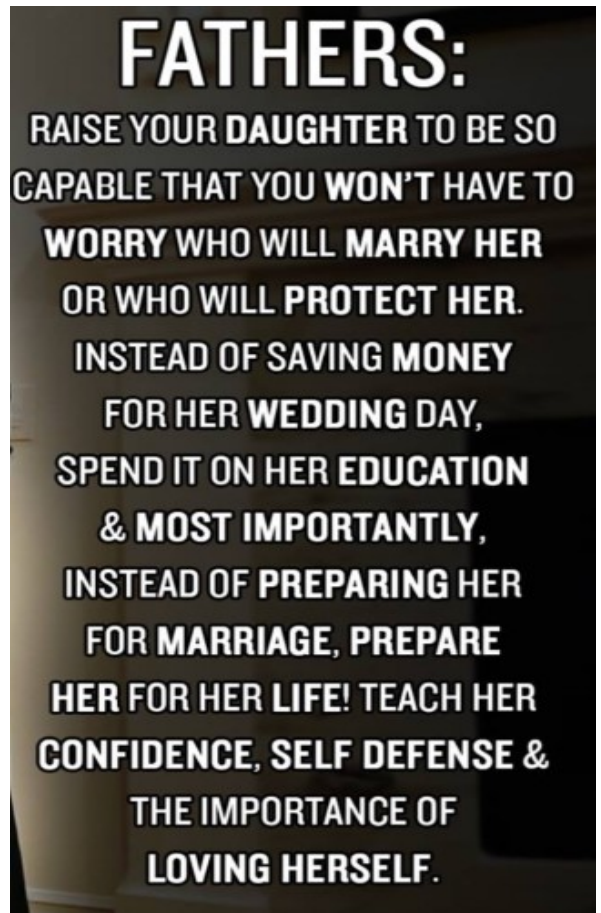
Phoemale: (pronounced female)



Phoemale is a non-profit organization created by and for women. They help those who have overcome domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and/or homelessness rebuild their lives, and like the Phoenix, rise from the ashes.

Jenelle Lefief

President of Phoemale



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Soroptimist Websites

Soroptimist International Midwest Region - (simwr.org)

Soroptimist International of the Americas (soroptimist.org)

Soroptimist International (soroptimistinternational.org)

Soroptimist Summary (soroptimistsummary.org)

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MIDWESTERN REGION 2020

January 10-12	Winter Board Meeting - Time and Place TBD
January 11	National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness in the US
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
February 1	Club Live Your Dream Report due to District Director
February 15	Virginia Wagner Club Award winners due to District Director
February 15	Region LYD Winner info due to both SIA and Treasurer Audrey Jarvey by Region Chair
March 1	Soroptimist Club Grant applications due at SI HQ
March 8	International Women’s Day
March 8	Virginia Wagner District Winners due to Region Chair
March 15	Award Report due from District Directors to Governor Elect Darcy
March 31	Region Virginia Wagner Award Winners names to Region Treasurer Audrey Jarvey by Region Chair
March 31	Governor’s Award Form due to Governor Kris Armstrong
April 23 & 24	CANCELLED - MWR Board Meeting Kensington Hotel - Ann Arbor, MI
April 24 - 26	CANCELLED -2019 Spring Conference Kensington Hotel - Ann Arbor, MI
May 31	Club Giving and Founders Pennies contributions to SIA for 2020 recognition
June 1	Dream It, Be It Online Club Reporting due to SIA
July 1	Club Celebrating Success forms due to Kris Armstrong
July 10-12	MWR Summer Board Meeting, Location TBD
July 22 - 25	SIA 46 th Biennial Convention- Bellevue, WA
July 26 – 27	Governors Roundtable – Bellevue, WA