



Notes From the President

BY MONICA PHILLIP

Where has the year gone? I can't believe we have only one more meeting for this year. Incidentally, that meeting will be Saturday, June 15th, at The Brass Key. We had to go with the third Saturday in June due to the fact that the restaurant has a big party coming in on June 8th. Remember, our first-place Live Your Dream winner will be there. With Lunafest and our fundraiser at the Elks Club we have had a very successful year. Thanks to all for your input and hard work. We hope that perhaps next year we can increase the amounts given to our awardees.

The Board discussed having a picnic during the month of August, since we will not have business meetings in July or August. We will have more discussion on this event at the June meeting. Also, it was recommended by the Board to have our first meeting of the 2019-2020 calendar Sept. 14th, at Sojourner Family Peace Center. We would again invite potential members to attend (and other guests you might want to invite).

Update on SIA's 2012-2021 Big Goal: After just five years, all indications are that our change strategy is working. We have increased the number of women empowered through the Live Your Dream Awards by 20%, increased the amount of funding given to women by 29%, launched Dream It, Be It, which empowered 20,000 girls in just two years, signed our first retail corporate partner (Torrid), attracted through Live Your Dream, Dream It, Be It, received the highest Summit Award from the American Society of Association Executives, increased our funds raised by 31%, attracted about 100,000 supporters to LiveYourDream.org, slowed our membership decline from 3% loss rate to a 1% loss rate. We aren't finished yet, these numbers will improve.

The 2021-2031 Big Goal: Invest in the Dreams of Half a Million Women and Girls Through Access to Education. The success of our current Big Goal is setting the stage for our next 10-year Big Goal. Clubs selected this 2021-2031 Big Goal and told us they could reach 500,000 women and girls by focusing their efforts on our brand-unifying Dream Programs. I will elaborate on the top 10 actions in the next newsletter.

Yours in Service,
Monica Phillip, President

New Member Mary Chooses To Help Women



Mary Leach-Sumlin is a woman on the go.

Mary, SI Milwaukee's newest member, became a Soroptimist at the club's March meeting with her sponsor, Barbara Collignon, at her side. Mary adds club membership to her already-busy life as associate director of Franciscan Peacemakers, a non-profit organization that provides a pathway to a sustainable, healthy, safe, productive life for women engaging in prostitution due to trauma, human sex trafficking, or drug addiction. "Basically I'm a facilitator for my ladies," she said. "I figure out what's needed and how to get it." One of the things they need is to be treated with respect, to be seen as someone whose life matters, according to Mary.

Mary said she is not a counsellor. She does work with the women who are trying to better their own lives. She graduated from Milwaukee Trade and Technical High School and was involved in health insurance while earning her degree in Business Administration from Cardinal Stritch University. Her additional concentration on economics and oral communication has proved to be exactly what is needed for her current job. "I do a lot of public speaking," she said. Mary's work often takes her out at night and in all kinds of weather. In the winter, Franciscan Peacemaker volunteers give out caps, mittens and scarves as part of the street ministry. These are all donated. In addition, she serves families with lower incomes who want housing, a service she has continued since her employment with ACTS Housing, a HUD-certified non-profit real estate brokerage. This brought her into contact with many neighborhood associations working for better conditions for all. Mary is the mother of an adult son, Mario Sumlin. "I was divorced when he was three, but I kept the 'Sumlin' as part of my name because it was Mario's identity. At one point, he wanted his name to be called 'Leach-Sumlin', but he grew out of that," she said.

Travel is fun-time for Mary and she was especially delighted with a recent trip to Georgia where she had the opportunity to see former President Jimmy Carter. "He still teaches Sunday school and after that he and Mrs. Carter posed for a picture with me," she said.

At other times, Mary also enjoys making bath products, reading when she can find some free time, and listening to jazz, both classic and contemporary. "I've never heard anything I didn't like from Boney James, and I love Wes Montgomery's guitar," she said.

She also enjoys walking—enjoys it so much that she keeps track of the number of steps as she's on the go each day. "I try for 10,000. Sometimes I get there, sometime not," she said.

Inspirational Young Women Recipients of Soroptimist Awards

Their stories are inspirational, their achievements are admirable and they are wide open to building a bright future of helping themselves and others.

Natalie Anumolu, recipient of the Dr. Virginia M. Wagner Award, and Shaunna Brown, one of two Live Your Dream winners, received their awards at SI Milwaukee's annual awards dinner April 23 at Meyer's Restaurant. First-place Live Your Dream winner Tania Hernandez, who is attending school in Madison, will be receiving her award at the club's regular meeting on June 15 at The Brass Key.

NATALIE ANUMOLU

Home-schooled in Milwaukee, Natalie is about to graduate from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., and will be entering Medical College of Wisconsin in August to pursue an interdisciplinary major in biochemistry, public health and international development.

"I have a deep desire to connect with others through medicine," Natalie said.

Her special interest is in resource-poor settings overseas, both treating patients and developing low-cost, innovative solutions supported by primary care training. She has shadowed physicians in Nepal and Haiti as well as volunteering for several years for Bread of Healing, a Milwaukee organization that provides primary medical care for uninsured and underinsured patients, including labs, medications, diagnostics and tertiary services for those who do not qualify for state or federal insurance.

Kumar Sinniah, professor of chemistry at Calvin, described Natalie this way:

"Natalie has the chops to be successful in medical school. She has been a leader in student organizations at Calvin and knows how to balance her academics with extra-curricular activities. She has a warm personality that enables her to easily interact with other students. Natalie discovered the joys and challenges of medicine while shadowing physicians in Nepal. She knows the complexities of medicine, and that it takes more than academic chops to be a successful physician."



Barbara Collignon, left, and Monica Phillip flank awardees Shaunna Brown, second from left, and Natalie Anumolu at the April 23 Awards Dinner.

SHAUNNA BROWN

Shaunna wants to be a nurse, but beyond that she wants to be an RN Case Manager.

Currently attending Columbia College of Nursing, Shaunna says she is deeply grateful for the opportunity to be on the right path after a rocky decade in which she paid dearly for a youthful mistake involving misdemeanor drug possession that bounced her out of nursing school and seemed to be a death sentence on her future.

"No institution would give me a chance," she said. "Finally someone suggested I try a certain nursing school. I cried the day I met with the college administration. I revealed my background and they still said yes. It was one of the best days ever!"

"It solidified for me that working as a nurse was my divine purpose and I thank God more than you can know for this opportunity."

In addition to caring for her two young children, attending school and working at Froedtert Hospital, Shaunna takes on additional responsibilities and is always ready to help out others, according to her supervisor, Nikki Lehmann.

She has participated in Hometown Hospice efforts toward fall prevention, a Thrivent Action Program to make meals for the homeless, and the Student Nurse Association at Columbia College, according to Heather Ritter, staff RN/Educator. Shaunna received the Bobby Petasnik award this spring which is based on dedication to patient care at Froedtert.

Heather said "Shaunna is a truly compassionate professional individual and is committed to becoming a nurse because she wants to care for others."

Lunafest Debuts



An attractive display featuring SI Milwaukee and Lunafest materials and plenty free Luna Bars greeted those attending the first Lunafest celebration of women and film March 19 at Marquette University. Below, organizer Aundrea Price, SI President Monica Phillip and Aundrea's husband, Tim Bailey, make sure that all is ready.



A Good Beginning

Organizer Aundrea Price was pleased with results from Lunafest 2019, the first-time film festival cosponsored by SI Milwaukee and Marquette University Women's Innovation Network and created by the makers of Luna nutrition bars.

The March 19 presentation of eight short films by, for, and about women attracted an audience of students, the public and club members, including members from Fond du Lac and Chicago.

Laurel Nett, Fond du Lac was so delighted by the story-telling in the brief films that she said she will try to get the Fond du Lac club to invite Lunafest next year. "It was so impressive the way even the shortest films told real stories of real women," she said.

"We learned a lot from this first annual event, and I do hope that our club will participate again next March during Women's History Month," Aundrea said.

According to Luna, the traveling festival that celebrates, showcases and champions women in film

is making a mark in the industry by creating a platform for women's untold stories and increasing opportunity for women filmmakers. It was created in 2000 but the SI Milwaukee presentation was its first in Wisconsin.

Proceeds from Lunafest will be used to support Dream It, Be It, Aundrea said.



An unexpected treat for some of those attending Lunafest was provided by Desiree Grin of SI Fond du Lac when she happily displayed the new Soroptimist logo tattooed on her upper arm. Soroptimists from the Fond du Lac and Chicago clubs were among those attending.

Dates to Remember

Saturday, June 15, 2019, 11 a.m.—Soroptimist business meeting at The Brass Key Restaurant, 4952 W. Forest Home, Milwaukee.

July 18-21, 2019—SI International Convention, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Saturday, Sept. 14, 11 a.m. – Soroptimist business meeting at Sojourner Family Peace Center, 619 W. Walnut St., Milwaukee.

Oct. 18-19, 2019—District I and II meeting, Essenhous Inn and Conference Center, Middlebury, Indiana.

July, 2020, SIA 100th Anniversary Convention—Bellevue, Wash. More information will follow.

Some of Kris Armstrong's State of the Region Highlights

Midwestern Region Gov. Kris Armstrong presented some good news and some challenges in the State of the Region Address she delivered in April during the region's spring conference in Columbus, Ohio. Here are some highlights. "Entering the final years of our first century of service, we must lead. Challenge yourself to make a difference. Be intentional, be strong, be bold—be a Soroptimist," she said.

Although two new clubs have been chartered in the region in the past months, "membership numbers are not great and we have not met the goals for total numbers. On the other hand, 100 percent of the clubs participated in Live Your Dream, but not all have established Dream It, Be It programs."

"The region's finances are in excellent shape," she said.

"Many clubs are making changes and improvements large and small that will make them stronger. Keep making changes, keep putting in the work," she said. But she noted that it is not the goal to make every club the same. "It is our differences that make us strong. We are not getting rid of our region logo, we're not changing our strategic plan, and we're not dumping the Wagner award to concentrate solely on the Dream programs."

She also challenged members to think of themselves in leadership roles because "we are the future. We're the ones we've been waiting for," she said.

"So let's be a region that inspires. Let's be a region that innovates. Let's be a region that works hard and does awesome stuff. Let's be a region that leads. Get out there and be great, because we are," she concluded.

All Clubs Gave to LYD

SIMWR Gov.-Elect and Program Chair Darcy Merritt reported in the April edition of The Vision that the Midwestern Region had 100 percent participation in Live Your Dream Awards this year. Across the region, 49 women received Live Your Dream Awards and received a total of \$52,050.

To be consistent across Soroptimist International of the Americas, clubs should strive to make the award amount no less than \$1,000, Darcy said.

At the time she submitted this information Darcy did not yet have figures for the Dr. Virginia M. Wagner Award winners.

(Find The Vision on the SI-Milwaukee.org website in the Media section.)

Accolades Aplenty

SI Milwaukee received special honors at the Midwestern Region Conference in April.

Two included a certificate of appreciation from Soroptimist International of the Americas in honor of the club's efforts to increase SIA's collective impact and another for its participation in the Live Your Dreams program. The club also received special recognition from Dawn Marie Lemonds, SIA president, for its LYD role, for supporting Founders Pennies and for projects for a Celebrating Success Award.

In addition, Midwestern Region Gov. Kris Armstrong sent the following glowing email directly to President Monica Phillip:

"I have received and reviewed your Governor's Award form - great job this year! There's really not much I can say that you don't already know, so this is a short note. I was very impressed with your new Lunafest project, your program results are good and you've done a nice job with membership. Keep up the good work!"

Penny Babb next SIA President-Elect

Penny Babb has been chosen 2019-2020 president-elect of Soroptimist International of the Americas. Her term begins Sept. 1 and continues through Aug. 31, 2020. On Sept. 1, 2020, when she will assume the post of SIA president through Aug. 31, 2021.

Thoughts to Inspire

Monica Phillip read the following inspirational verse at the club's May meeting.

The seeds we sow are made to grow

In acts and deeds we do.

And what we harvest in, in return,

Is what our efforts grew.

So, if we sow God's seeds of love--

Throughout our years of time--

The crops we harvest, every day,

Will always be divine.

It is for us, to sow His cares

In deeds of every kind

And live the Christian way of life--

In body, heart and mind--

So we may harvest, every day,

The joys He wills to be

..To gardeners of His love and care--

..And Christianity.

By Michael Dubina

In "A Shower of Blessing"

A Winning Smile



Beautifully attired Janet Nortrom displays the Global Educator Award she received from the United Nations Association of the United States of America, Greater Milwaukee Chapter.

Janet Nortrom's Interests Know No Boundaries

When it comes to reaching out to help others, no one is more involved than Janet Nortrom.

This is the second in a series of stories about Soroptimist members whose charitable instincts go far beyond the boundaries of SI Milwaukee into a variety of activities to help others. It is inspired by the latest award Janet received, this time from the United Nations.

On May 4, with Marlowe Nortrom, her husband of 59 years by her side, Janet was presented with Global Educator Award by the United Nations Association of the United States of America, Greater Milwaukee Chapter. Janet has been a teacher at Milwaukee Area Technical School for nearly 30 years and is currently conducting a program for recovering women prisoners. But her interests and influence stretch far beyond the classroom.

"My biggest concern right now is climate control and the environment. If we don't get the air cleaned up nothing else will matter," she told the gathering.

Janet has had leadership roles in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, The Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, and the American Association of University Women as well as active roles in the Shorewood Women's Club and the League of Women Voters. She is especially proud of receiving the Frank P. Zeidler Award for her efforts to promote social justice, literacy, voter education and the environment and the Unitarian Universalist's Clara Barton Award given for promoting justice and equity for women and girls. She also was recently named a Shorewood Great Citizen.

As a U.N. envoy she has helped bring officials from the United Nations to Milwaukee and she says she is stimulated by seeing where she can help bring about change.

As part of this she doesn't just talk the talk, she walks the walk, traveling to Washington for Million Woman Marches, and marches to stop gun violence and support Planned Parenthood. She's also been known to slip out of SI Milwaukee meetings just a bit early so she can get to local protests on time.

With all the world's problems, Janet maintains her hope for a better future.

"I wouldn't be able to get up in the morning if I didn't believe I could help bring about change by collaborating with those around me," she said.

Her mantra, Speak Up, Stay Involved.

Let There Be Peace on Earth



Memorial Day

May 27, 2019