



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Soroptimist International of Toronto had another busy year of projects and fundraising to support women and girls in Toronto and around the world.

Our major project was the creation of the Street Haven Therapeutic Garden which was opened in October, 2007. The finishing touches will be in place this June. Thanks to our enthusiastic fundraisers, painters and gardeners and a club grant from SIA this important project was a great success.

In our awards program we have continued to recognize the efforts of women. Our Violet Richardson Award winner, Shravana Tiwari, also received the 2008 Eastern Canada award at the spring conference. Other award winners are described in the Program Committee Report.

Membership continues to be an issue. We welcomed new member Lorraine Gallotti and will continue the effort to increase our numbers so that we can carry on our work.

We had an outstanding range of speakers this year, from award winners, to experts on Soroptimist issues such as trafficking and Sierre Leone. We are now better informed about the issues that we are working on locally and internationally.

There have been a variety of fundraising efforts this year, from knitting scarves to our recent very successful garage sale. We are looking forward to the October 25 Multi-Cultural Women's Fair, a major event which will combine fundraising with outreach to women in the community.

Next year is a major event, our 75th Anniversary, which will be celebrated at a luncheon at the St. George's Golf and Country Club on May 3, 2009. This will be an historic event.

I would like to thank the members of the club for their support over the past year and particularly the members of the Board for their hard work. I would especially like to thank Margaret Gilbey, our Secretary and Past President who is leaving the Board to become Secretary for Eastern Canada Region.

Marnie Taylor, President

PROGRAM REPORT

Awards

SI Toronto participated in the *Women's Opportunity Award* and our winner is Victoria Kuzina (Rodina) a second year student in the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Montreal. She was awarded \$1,000.

We also participated in the *Violet Richardson Award* and this year's winner is Shravana Tiwari. Shravana was awarded \$300 and \$100 was donated to her charity, *Toronto Rehabilitation Volunteer Association*. Shravana is also the 2007-2008 *Eastern Canada Regional Violet Richardson Award* winner.

We participated in *Making a Difference for Women* and our recipient is Marcie Ponte, Executive Director of the Working Women's Community Centre. Marcie received a certificate and a cheque for \$200 for the *Working Women's Community Centre*. Shravana, Victoria and Marcie were honoured at our April 1st Awards Dinner.

SI Toronto awards two fellowships. The *Naomi Grigg Fellowship* is a \$7,500 grant for post-graduate studies in the field of Gerontology. The completed applications have just been received and the winner will be announced later this year. The 2007 winner was Dr. Jacqueline Hochman for her study of osteoarthritis.

The *Helen Marion Walker Grant* is \$10,000 towards research in Women's Health. This is a joint venture with the Women's College Hospital Foundation which they administer. This year's winner will be announced later this year. The 2007 winner was Jo Watson for her study of fluid administration to mothers in childbirth

Both these awards are made possible by generous bequests from past members of SI Toronto.

Celebrating Success

SI Toronto celebrates success by presenting a yellow rose to club members who have made a significant contribution to the club or community during the past month.

Monetary Contributions

SI Toronto contributed \$451.24 to the President's Appeal; \$500 (US) to the SI Quadrennial Project, Sierra Leone; \$500 (US) to SIA's Club Campaign; and \$525 to the Soroptimist Foundation of Canada.

Against Domestic Violence

SI Toronto participates in SIA's program against domestic violence by distributing Safe cards in public places. We are also represented on the Toronto Area Council of Women.

International Women's Day

Our club has an on-going relationship with Street Haven and for the fourth year we served Sunday brunch to the residents to celebrate International Women's Day. Club members also donate toiletries and small household utensils.

Program Focus Reports

Program Focus Reports were forwarded to SIA for our Street Haven Therapeutic Garden project and Sunday Brunch.

Project

SI Toronto's major project this past year was the installation of the Therapeutic Garden for Street Haven, a shelter for homeless women in downtown Toronto. The club held several fund raising events to raise money for this project. We also applied for and received a \$5,000 (US) Soroptimist Club Grant from SIA.

Some of the fund raising projects for this project included: knitting scarves, garage sales, brunch at a SI member's home, selling pepper jelly.

SIT Volunteers

In addition to SI Toronto, club members also volunteer their time in a variety of ways: Out-of-the-Cold, seniors' friendly visitor, school intergeneration programs, income tax for seniors and disabled, conversational outings for ESL senior students, knitting hats for preemie babies, assisting seniors in their homes and taking them shopping, emotional support for girls in high school, and visiting and providing assistance to family, friends and other Soroptimists on a regular basis.

Elaine Spicer, Chair of Program

EVENTS AND MEETINGS REPORT

Speakers

This year SIT has enjoyed guest speakers at the beginning of our meetings. Some of the speakers have included: Erin Harris of the Older Women's Network speaking on Advocacy; Abdulia Bayraytay, who spoke of the political and social issues in Sierra Leone; Linda Pearson, Vice-President Development and Campaign Director for Women's College Hospital Foundation; Sally Jo Martin, Sleeping Children Around the World; David Thompson, Beyond Borders - Trafficking of Children; Jo Watson, Helen Marion Walker Grant; Dr. David Walley, Materncare International (Newfoundland) on his fistula project in Africa.

Dinners

We held four dinners through out the year --- Pink Pearl for a Chinese banquet; Liaison Cooking School for our Christmas dinner; SoHo Bistro for the Awards Dinner; and then our installation dinner at the National Yacht Club.

Kathy Burnie, Chair of Events and Meetings

MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLIC AWARENESS REPORT

The Membership and Public Awareness Committee made a major effort to contact former members and award winners to invite them to a games afternoon in April. Although only

one potential new member attended this was a worthwhile activity. This research will be useful in future, especially in preparation for our 75th anniversary.

An article on the Street Haven garden was published in the Connector and submitted to the SIA Best for Women magazine. An article on our Violet Richardson award winner was published in the Parkdale community newspaper.

One new member was inducted in April. The club welcomes Lorraine Gallotti. The club brochure was revised to provide a clear, more targeted message. There are now a general brochure and one for potential members, which have been distributed at public events and in mailings.

Beverley McClelland, Chair of Membership

FUNDRAISING REPORT

While continuing to support the Awards Programs, the Soroptimist Foundation of Canada, the SIA Club Campaign, SI President's Appeal and SI Quadrennial Project, the fundraising activities also focused on raising funds for the Street Haven garden project. The committee commenced planning a major event for the 2008–2009 year. Recognizing the need for an event that would not only raise funds for future projects, but also raise the profile of Soroptimist and its many projects, in our community, the committee spearheaded a plan to hold a "Multi-cultural Women's Fair" on October 25, 2008 at Trinity-St. Paul's Church in mid-town Toronto. The event will invite other women's organization to participate with Soroptimist International Toronto, in selling their wares and publicizing their projects. Local multi-cultural entertainment is also planned.

As in 2007, our most successful events have been our garage sales. Sales at the homes of Susan Hennighausen and Margaret Gilbey have proved to be very successful in raising funds for our projects, the most recent held in May 2008, raising over \$1,000.

We have also had the inspiration of Kelly Meechan, who started off our club members knitting scarves for sale with wool she donated. Members spent the summer knitting and many colours and textures of scarves were available, packaged in attractive boxes, and sold at the Fall Regional meeting in Hamilton. At the regional spring conference, we introduced a new item for sale – purse caddies. These were also a success and we plan to order more for future sale. We still have bags and T-shirts, which we will sell at any opportunity.

A special thanks goes out to Susan Hennighausen and Margaret Gilbey for opening their homes for our garage sales. We also thank Kelly Meechan for her donations of wool and initiative in getting us all knitting. Kelly has moved to B.C. and we miss her enthusiastic contribution to our club. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of my Committee members who contributed their time and enthusiasm to our fundraising goals but more importantly showed a willingness to participate in the Membership Committee's efforts - Margaret Joyce, Janice Legg, Agnetha Nilsson-Edwards, Pat Shaw, and Gloria Baratta.

Barbro Stalbecker-Pountney, Chair of Fundraising

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The following members have been nominated for the 2008-2009 Board.

President – Marnie Taylor

Vice-President – Barbro Stalbecker-Pountney

Treasurer – Lisa Den Hartog

Secretary – Agnetha Nilsson-Edwards

Director (for 2 years) – Corinne Hyatt

Continuing in their 2nd year as Director – Beverley McClelland and Elaine Spicer

Nominated as Trustee – Janice Legg

Margaret Gilbey, Chair of the Nominating Committee