

South Central Region Spotlight



August 2025



Governor Leigh's Message
Greetings South Central Region,

I hope everyone has been surviving this crazy summer weather. Seems everyone in our Region has been dealing with flooding or extreme heat the last month or so. Many of you have expressed concerns and prayers for the clubs in Texas that were affected by the severe flooding. President Judy Brown of Austin, Texas did let us know that all of the Austin club members were ok. For that we are very thankful. Many of you have also asked what might be done to help. While SI Austin is not doing anything, they are helping other community organizations. Please donate to the organization of your choice if you wish to help.

The Call to District Meetings is included in this issue of the Spotlight. Clubs should not plan a club event on the dates of the District Meetings. This year we are again at the Holiday Inn I-35 in Wichita Kansas on October 17th and 18th. I hope every club will make an effort to have at least one member attend this meeting. The trade fair will be back as well, with a minor change. Tables for the trade fair will be set up at the rear of the main meeting room for ease of access, but will only be open for business at the times shown on the agenda. Clubs are being asked to contribute to the hospitality suite as well, each District will be asked to contribute different items. Hospitality will only be open at the times shown on the agenda. The theme this year is "Soroptimist In Bloom". Come and enjoy our garden party. I encourage you all to bring your floppy garden hat, gloves or gardening tools for the Friday night mixer. I will be talking about the new Code of Conduct that SIA is currently developing during my Governors report. And don't forget the President and Treasurer meeting on Friday, October 17th from 4:30 to 5:30.

Last of all, Governor Elect Teresa would love to hear from anyone interested in serving as a Region Committee chair or on a Region Committee.

I am very proud of all our members and their support of our mission to help women and girls. Many of your clubs have been doing wonderful work this year. It warms my heart when I see what generosity and kindness exists in our Region.

Sincerely,

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Governor Leigh

scrsoroptimist.org

Harnessing the Power of Diversity

Jun 5

At Soroptimist, diversity and fellowship are among our core values. While our work centers on advancing gender equality, we recognize that diversity encompasses more than gender—it includes age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education, culture, and lived experience. #SIALeadtoAchieve

Studies show that organizations that embrace diversity are more innovative, successful and resilient. The key to unlocking this potential lies in strong leaders who unite diverse talents to work toward shared goals.

3 Ways to Harness the Power of Diversity Within Your Teams

1. Utilize diverse perspectives to make better decisions

Diverse teams bring fresh ideas and creative solutions. By valuing input from all team members, leaders inspire innovative problem-solving that drives progress.

2. Turn potential conflict into collaboration

Differences in opinion can spark conflict, but strong leaders turn these moments into opportunities for growth. They guide teams through disagreement, helping members find common ground and stay focused on the mission.

3. Create a culture of belonging

Leaders must create spaces where people can be their authentic selves. When individuals feel respected and valued—regardless of background—they become more engaged and motivated. This sense of belonging fosters stronger collaboration and better results.



Each year, Soroptimist clubs make Founders Pennies donations to celebrate the founding of our organization and support its global Dream Programs. Founders Pennies are a classic, time-honored tradition for clubs, and a creative way to help fund life-changing programs. Founders Pennies help create a local and global relationship between Soroptimist clubs and members, and the women and girls who need our support

How are Founders Pennies used?

Founders Pennies are used to fund the *Live Your Dream Awards, Dream It, Be It,* and other SIA programs that improve the lives of women and girls in local communities and throughout the world. Founders Pennies represent approximately 7 percent of the total \$1.4 million contributed to fund federation programs.

How are Founders Pennies calculated?

Founders Pennies are set at \$.06 per member times the number of years that SIA has been in existence (1921). For the 2025-2026 club year, $\$.06 \times 105$ years = \$6.30 per member.

2022-2023 = \$6.12 per member

2023-2024 = \$6.18 per member

2024-2025 = \$6.24 per member

Founders Pennies are remitted to headquarters by each participating club. Clubs collect the pennies from their members in a variety of ways and usually submit them with club dues.

When are Founders Pennies due, and how do clubs give?

The recognition period for Founders Pennies is the same as the club year, running from July 1 to June 30. However, you do not need to wait to give—Founders Pennies gifts may be made at any time of year.

OPTION 1: Give Online. <u>Make a Founders Pennies gift online</u> using a credit card, e-wallet, or bank transfer. After completing your gift, you will be asked to enter the Club Name.

OPTION 2: Mail a Check. Fill out a <u>Financial Transaction Form</u> and send it, along with your check, to: Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc. PO Box 95000 - 2553, Philadelphia, PA, USA 19195-0001

OPTION 3: Pay with Dues. When club officers <u>log on to the Club Portal</u> to generate an invoice for annual member dues, the invoice will show an "optional donation" for Founders Pennies (precalculated based on the number of active members in your club). Check this box to have your Founders Pennies gift added to your dues invoice, allowing you to make both payments together at the same time.

When did the tradition of Founders Pennies begin?

The tradition of giving pennies began in 1943. Clubs collected one penny for each year of Soroptimist's existence and used the money to help re-establish clubs in Europe that had disbanded as a result of pre-World War II political conditions and the war itself. In 1946 the fund was renamed the Founders Fund. This fund provided international fellowships, scholarships and other awards to improve the status of women. Beginning in the 1960s, Founders Pennies began funding for the Youth Citizenship Awards, and now the *Live Your Dream Awards*.

Are Founders Pennies mandatory?

Founders Pennies are a voluntary contribution from Soroptimist members remitted to headquarters by clubs. As with all contributions, Founders Pennies are not mandatory.

What kind of recognition is given for Founders Pennies contributions?

Clubs that participate in Founders Pennies have our deepest gratitude and are awarded a digital badge of recognition to display on their club website. Each year, a new Founders Pennies virtual badge is issued.

I have more questions. Who do I contact?

The SIA Fund Development staff is here to support your club. Feel free to reach out to <u>development@soroptimist.org</u> or call 215-893-9000.

South Central Region News

Are you interested in serving at the Region Level?

Do you have an interest in serving in leadership at the region level? We need people from across South Central Region to serve in various capacities and help carry out our mission and vision. There are opportunities to serve in the next biennium which begins July 1, 2026, and runs through June 30, 2028.

Opportunities include running for Governor-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian and the three District Directors. Region board members must have served as president of their SI club and cannot have served four consecutive years on the region board as of July 1, 2026. The deadline to submit application to the Nominations Chair, Rosemary Robinson, is December 15. She may be contacted at rosemary.robinson@amarillo.gov.

There are also opportunities to lead region committees in the four pillar areas such as Program, Public Awareness, Membership and Fundraising and a new committee per SIA of Education. There are also program chairs like Live Your Dream and Dream It, Be It and other chairs such as Laws and Resolutions, Best in Federation Award, Finance, Invitations, Nominations, Remembrance, and the Spotlight Newsletter. Some of these are committees that need a representative from all three districts as well, including Live Your Dream, Nominations, Laws & Resolutions and Finance.

If you have interest or questions about serving in any of these committee chair roles, please reach out to Gov. Elect Teresa Young at teresa.young@wbu.edu or (806) 239-8979.

Thanks,

Teresa

Cell (806) 239-8979

SI Wichita, Kansas News

Our May meeting took us to WSU Tech (Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology) where we had a tour of the NCAT Campus (National Center for Aviation Training). Following the tour SIW member, Courtney Sendall, Executive Director of the WSU Tech Foundation, gave us an update of the many areas of degree and certificate programs offered by WSU Tech.



Courtney Sendall, Executive Director of the WSU Tech Foundation



SI Wichita, Kansas members

In June, our 2025-2026 Board of Directors and delegates were installed by District II Director Jacque Sappington.



Delegate Jenny Creekmore, Director Courtney Sendall, Delegate Marilyn Wells, Director Sherry Grady, Corresponding Secretary Mandi Gibbs, Director Lee Wadsworth, Treasurer Jessica White-Padgett, President-Elect Jane McHugh, Past President Martha Lewis, Recording Secretary Karen Harmon, President Laura Creekmore, District II Director Jacque Sappington, SI/Carthage, MO.

SI Arkansas City, Kansas News

Arkansas City, Kansas 2025-2026 Officers Installed June 18th



Officers for 2025-26 are left to right, Jill Hunter, parliamentarian; Selena Hansen, treasurer; Tricia Blatchford, president; Angie Bruce, Vice President; Karen Zeller, director; Shelley Gardner, corresponding secretary; Mendy Pfannenstiel, director; and Virginia Donaldson, recording secretary.



Above standing is outgoing President Karen on left and incoming President Tricia on right. On left is Suvanah Perdue of membership committee with Rakiyah Taylor, Jodi Whitmore, and Kelly Dillner. Janet Clasen will be initiated later. Congrats to these 4 new members!



Membership Program Meeting Was Well Attended on May 28th.

SI Arkansas City, Kansas News (continued)



On Wednesday, May 28th, 15 members and 9 guests enjoyed lunch at Pike's Place located in the Chamber Building. The Membership/Social Committee hosted the event with the intent of potential new members joining our ladies for a program meeting and learning more about why Soroptimist is a great organization to be a part of! Members shared how they became a part of Soroptimist, and what is their favorite thing about our organization. The program was provided by Crystal Wood director of Family Life Services.

Arkansas City, Kansas Soroptimists Encourage Self-Esteem For Girls



As part of our Sock Program Plus, our Committee participated with IXL School and Cowley Cosmetology in their BOOST Program. All school year students at Cowley Cosmetology went to the school one morning a week and gave hands-on lessons to girls regarding grooming their hair. The IXL students were treated to a SPA DAY given by the Cosmetology instructors and students. 23 little girls (K thru 5) came to the Cosmetology School and had their choice of having their hair styled or a manicure. Soroptimists provided refreshments for the party. As the girls were leaving to board the bus back to IXL, Soroptimists were at the door giving each a gift bag containing polish, hair ties, emery boards and other grooming items. What a fun experience!!This project was funded by Power of the Purse administered through Legacy Foundation with Soroptimist members Virginia Donaldson, Sandy Smith,

Pam Zimmerman, and Linda Neal assisting with purchasing items and working the morning of May 7th.

SI Arkansas City, Kansas News (continued)



Photos: Nails being done by Cosmetology students and staff (top); Delayne Dale and Amy Pool, instructors, styling participants' hair (top left); closeup of colorful nails (left); Pam and Virginia serving refreshments on left; group photo of Cowley College Cosmetology instructors, staff, and students along with Soroptimist members (below).



SI Winfield, Kansas News



L-R Christina McDonald, Kim Pringle, Sheryl Clower

UPLIFTHER IS SOROPTIMST POWERFUL NEW INITIATIVE THAT WILL FOCUS ON OBSTACLES THAT WOMEN AND GIRLS FACE ON THEIR PATH TO FORMAL EDUCATION AND ECONOMICAL EMPOERMENT.

Quarterly Obstacle Focus: PERIOD POVERTY May 2025

Across the diverse countries and territories of Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc.® and around the globe, many women and girls face difficulty accessing or affording essential period products. This widespread issue, known as period poverty, often leads to absenteeism from work and school, negatively impacting their future. In honor of May 28, World Menstrual Hygiene Day, Soroptimists are coming together to highlight this issue and take action on ways we can help.

WHAT IS PERIOD POVERTY?

The inability to afford or access menstrual products, hygiene facilities, and education to manage menstrual health.

WHAT CAUSES PERIOD POVERTY?

Stigma: Cultural taboos and misconceptions about menstruation that lead to shame and misinformation. High Cost of Menstrual Products: Many women and girls cannot afford sanitary products due to financial constraints. They are taxed as luxury items in many places despite being a necessity. Lack of Water and Sanitation Facilities: Inadequate access to clean water and sanitation hampers proper menstrual hygiene management.

PROJECT:

To support period poverty in our area Winfield Soroptimist Members took up a collection at each business meeting in May to present to the Winfield Food Pantry.

SI Dallas, Texas News

Soroptimist Dallas held its last business meeting for the fiscal year 2024-2025 on Saturday, June 7, 2025 combined with a social at Ida Claire Restaurant in Addison, Texas. While enjoying multi-flavored mimosas, yummy brunch food and mini bundt cakes, members addressed business agenda items and honored and thanked President Ginny Lloyd for a successful and productive year.



I have included the following four pages from SI Dallas that were accidently omitted from the May Spotlight edition.

Soroptimist International of Dallas held its annual A Star Is Born Awards Luncheon on Saturday, April 12. The following were awarded to incredible women and girls who made a difference not only in their lives but also in their communities.









The Live your Dream Awards were presented to women who have primary financial responsibility for supporting their family while attending or have been accepted to a university/college or vocational training program. The Betty Jay Awards were presented to teen girls who have exemplary community service. The Maxine Broyles Awards went to young women who are obtaining their education in a field to work with the disabled. The Career Success Scholarships were presented to qualified single women enrolling in an undergraduate degree program who demonstrate financial need and face obstacles in pursuing further education and achieving economic empowerment.







The Ruby Award was awarded to a woman in the community for exemplary community service. The monetary award is paid to the nonprofit of the awardee's choice. Our 2025 Ruby Award recipient is Saki Milton, founder and Executive Director of The GEMS Camp, and was also our Keynote Speaker. The monetary award was presented to The GEMS Camp, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to empower young women to excel in STEM, build leadership skills, and gain the confidence to shine in all areas of their lives. The GEMS Camp was honored to be selected by the White House for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring (PAESMEM) in 2024. A donation was also presented to Camp Summit, the successor camp to Camp Soroptimist, which was founded by the SI Dallas club in 1947.



We were also honored by our fellow Soroptimist from Grand Prairie TX who joined us in celebrating these amazing women and girls.













SI Dallas' first place recipient of the *Live Your Dream* Award was honored as the second place winner at the South Central Region level, following her win at District III level.

SCR recognized Maria and, on her behalf, presented the certificate and check to Debra Purdon, SI Dallas Live Your Dream Committee Chair, during the South Central Region Conference held in Grand Prairie, TX









SI Dallas members attending the 2025 South Central Region Conference hosted by SI Grand Prairie.

Soroptimist International of Dallas also celebrated its 80th anniversary as a Soroptimist International Club.



SI Dallas member Debra Purdon was honored at the 2025 South Central Region Conference as one of SCR's Outstanding Club Members. She joined Soroptimist International of Dallas in 1979. She has held various positions within the Club including President, President-Elect and currently as Recording Secretary. She has chaired various Committees including the Awards, Audit and most importantly the Live Your Dream Committee. As Awards Committee Chair, Debra has planned and managed one of our Clubs biggest events, A Star is Born Awards Luncheon. Besides all this, and being a Certified Public Accountant, Debra also audits the Club financials and works with the Club Treasurer on the preparation of our annual budget.

Debra is the glue that has held our Club together and we

appreciate all that Debra has contributed to Si Dallas.

Debra is now retired and spends time traveling with her husband Bill, and babysitting her

granddaughter, Allie.



SI Hutchinson, Kansas News



President Jane Holzrichter leading her club board meeting getting ready for the new year



Club members walking and handing out brochures for recruitment and celebrating at the Hutchinson Fourth of July parade.

Walking, Nicole Rogers, Jane Holzrichter, President, MJ Green and Alexis Martinez holding onto the sign and Kim Norwood driving.

SI Rockwall, Texas News

Installation of Officers and Directors 2025



Giovanna Psolka - President-elect , Debbie Branch - Board member, Jody Wright - President '25-'26, Delia Watts - Ex-Officio, Sherri Fite—Board member, Rhonda Wright - Treasurer, Cindy Lindley - Board member.

Kami Webb - Secretary, Sue Reeves - Parliamentarian, not pictured.







SI Rockwall, Texas News (continued)

Installation of Officers and Directors 2025 (continued)



SI Rockwall Presidents: Delia Watts 2024-25, Jody Wright 2025-26



SI Rockwall Members: 1st row - Michelle VanParys, Cindy Lindley, Delia Watts, Jody Wright, Norma Morris, Rhonda Wright, Holly Lyons, Back row: Janet Wold, Debbie Roan, Linda Johnson, Charisa Hauser, Mary Rodriguez, Farrah Brabson, Madelyn Hill, Lynette Coughlin, Ariana Kistner, Sherri Fite, Debbie Branch, Susan Holt, Angela Furguson, Giovanna Psolka

SI Grand Prairie, Texas News

Our club held our final Girl of the Month (GOTM) breakfast in May. We recognized young ladies whose schools selected them for their "overall excellence." After receiving her certificate each GOTM introduces her guests and shares plans for her future. Sometimes this is her first experience speaking in public.



2023-25 President Petra, GOTM recipients and Shebra



A plaque was unveiled at South Grand Prairie High School honoring Dawn's twin sister. Christine Blubaugh. In 2000, Christine was the victim of teen dating violence. Her death inspired the Christine Blubaugh Act allowing schools in Texas to teach about domestic violence, child abuse and dating violence. If this plaque saves just one life.....

Shebra, Patty, Mary, Dawn, Dandreon, Marilyn

SI Grand Prairie, Texas News (continued)

During our May Meeting, Grand Prairie Police Sgt. Brandy Elliott explained the importance of women in law enforcement. Women police officers bring a much needed dimension to the force.

Soroptimist Dr. Priyadadharshini from India was in attendance. Afterwards she asked club members numerous questions as her club, SI Coimbatore, is only two years old. We learned their thirteen determined members help educate the poorest of the poor. Our clubs want to keep in touch by setting up a Friendship Link.



Petra, Tami, Dawn, Liz, Shebra, Pat, Alicia, Donna, Ling, Doranna, Dr. "Priya," and seated Sgt. Elliott, Marilyn, Detra



Dawn, Ling, Shebra, Pat, Donna, Liz, Marilyn

Our club honors Grand Prairie students who have maintained straight "A's" throughout ALL of their school years. Those not yet in high school receive a personalized certificate. Those in high school receive a personalized plaque, and a tab to attach to the plaque representing straight "A's" for each additional year. At the All A Awards presentation, students and guests learn about our SI-GP awards program, our various club and community events, and the Soroptimist Mission.

SI Grand Prairie, Texas News (continued)



SI-Austin invited us to a luncheon inside the Texas State Capitol to celebrate the club's 80th Anniversary. Their featured speaker was retired US Air Force Colonel, Laurel "Buff" Burkel. Her amazing story of surviving a helicopter crash was cut short. Before she could finish, Capitol Security ordered us to evacuate. We thought this was due to the No Kings protest scheduled three hours later. Once safely headed home, we learned four Minnesota lawmakers had been shot, two died. As we exited the Capitol's lower floor meeting room we were split into several small groups. Each was sent down a different corridor and told where to exit. In case of a shooting, this would limit mass casualties. SI-Austin's 80th Celebration was definitely memorable! Now Rebekah, Liz and Marilyn can say, they were "thrown out of the Texas State Capitol."

Rebekah, Liz and Marilyn



Officers was held at Dawn's home. Everyone enjoyed the luncheon, ceremony, and welcoming *new SI GP members.

Our 2025-26 Installation of

Top of stairs; *Michelle, *Rebekah, Marilyn, Tarrance, Patty, Petra, Dawn, *Kelly. Standing; *Debra, Pat, Tami, *Alicia, Detra

SI Grand Prairie, Texas News (continued)



A BIG THANK YOU to immediate Past President Petra Carrillo for the FANTASTIC job she did the past two years. ABIG WELCOME to new President Dawn Inocencio. Good luck "herding cats."

Our annual Planning Meeting was held in July. We enjoyed a potluck luncheon while making final adjustments for our upcoming year.



Back row; Kelly, Dawn, Patty, Debra, Alicia. Front row; Ginny, Tami, Rebekah, Debbie, Marilyn, Liz, Petra, Lala, Doranna

