



SOROPTIMIST®

Investing in Dreams

# Soroptimist International of Benicia

## **IMPACT REPORT** Winter 2020



Women at their best,  
working to help other women  
to be their best

# SOROPTIMIST

**Soroptimist** was formed in 1921 in Oakland, California, at a time when women were not permitted to join service organizations. Our name, loosely translated from the Latin, means best for women. Our network of around 72,000 club members in 121 countries work at a local, national and international level to Educate, Empower and Enable opportunities for women and girls.

## Who we are

Women at their best, working to help other women to be their best.

## Our Vision

Women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

## Our Mission

Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.

## Who we serve

We believe it's time to change the narrative for women and girls in our community, state, country and world. The best way to make that change is through education and financial assistance. The statistics are dismal for uneducated women and those caught in a cycle of abuse.

- 1 in 3 women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. *(Amnesty International USA)*
- 1 in 4 high school-age girls in the United States does not graduate. *(National Women's Law Center)*
- Of single mothers under 30, only 7% have finished college in the U.S. *(The Shriver Report)*
- Women earn \$.52 to every \$1 earned by men [global average]. *(World Economic Forum)*

The women and girls we serve are some of the most courageous, powerful and inspiring people you'll ever meet. Each and every one of them is a superhero. Soroptimist International is proud to support these women through grants, awards, education and shelter.

## Letter from our President

*Soroptimist International of Benicia has provided needed assistance to women and girls in our community since 1976. Our vision is for women and girls to have the resources, education, and opportunities to reach their full potential and be able to live their dreams through economic empowerment.*

*Women are economically empowered when they have control over their own finances and a voice in financial decisions that shape the lives of their families. When women and girls are empowered, they have a personal sense of autonomy, self-confidence, and the ability to control their lives. We focus on access to education because we believe it is the most effective tool in our mission.*

*We are living in unprecedented times. Underprivileged women and children have been hit hard by the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Solano County, the number of domestic violence and sexual assault calls has increased tenfold. Therefore, our help is needed now, more than ever.*

*In addition to our own programs, we work with Safequest Solano, an organization dedicated to helping victims of domestic violence. Working with the City of Benicia and Safequest Solano, we hope to provide a permanent safehouse in Benicia. This safehouse will serve to help survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking in their transition to build better lives.*

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our normal "hands on" fundraisers have been cancelled. Instead, we are reaching out to the community to help us raise funds for this long-term project and our farther-reaching goals. We hope you will help us continue to provide this much needed program here in Benicia.*

*In partnership,*



Bobbi Enderlin | President



# Soroptimist International of Benicia

District I of the Founder Region of Soroptimist International of the Americas. At Soroptimist International of Benicia (SIB) we pride ourselves in the daily contribution to individual and community well being. We believe that by sharing common values we can increase the opportunity of each woman in our community. Founded in 1976, we have 53 members and we meet twice a month.

## Yearly Programs That Support Our Community

### Relay for Life

- For 20 years, SIB has participated in the American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life".
- Club members walk for the cause sponsored by their supporters.
- SIB booth, "Treasure Your Chest" reminds women to get screened for breast cancer.



### CAC Thanksgiving Dinner

- SIB donates time and food to the Benicia Community Action Council (CAC) Thanksgiving Dinner each year.
- CAC is a non-profit organization that provide services to the disadvantaged in Benicia.
- Held at the Clocktower, the dinner is a joyous, well received event.

### Saturday of Service

- Held to entertain the residents at Casa de Vilarassa, senior housing.
- Games and refreshments are provided along with prize gift cards, donated by the club, who with Benicia High School S Club decorate and serve at this festive event.

### Spring Fling

- The annual Spring Fling "dance" event is for Special Needs Middle School - High School students and young adults.
- The event is coordinated with PACE (Partners for a Collaborative Education).

## Domestic Violence Vigil and Sex Trafficking

Two issues that Soroptimist International of Benicia is passionate about are also problems facing women world-wide: Domestic Violence and Sex Trafficking. Soroptimists believe that through education, women and girls, can build their confidence, learn more about their options, and establish self esteem so they may have a healthy and productive life. That's why most of our programs focus on education- we provide scholarships to young people graduating from high school, we support our region's Fellowship Program, which provides grants to women completing their doctoral studies, and we support our Soroptimist Federation's LIVE YOUR DREAM Award. These all result in strengthening the abilities and confidence of women so they will not be vulnerable to abuse.

SIB has sponsored forums in our community to educate the public on the worldwide problem of sex trafficking. This is not only a global problem, but a problem happening right here in our community and surrounding areas. Benicia Soroptimist holds an annual "Domestic Violence Awareness" vigil in October, to ensure community awareness. We also have partnered with Safequest Solano, a nonprofit agency that provides 24/7 advocacy and support to members of our community that experience domestic violence, sex trafficking, sexual assault, and other forms of physical abuse.

### SIB and SI/Accra Ghana

In 2018-2019 SI/Benicia partnered with SI/Accra in Ghana to provide school girls there with reusable feminine hygiene products as well as a day of education about reproductive health and the importance of attending school. Girls in Ghana don't go to school when they are menstruating, so they miss out on their classes, and eventually drop out. This program reached nearly 2000 adolescent girls in 31 schools. Club member Liz Jones works in Ghana and has participated in all of the sessions. This is the type of program that creates far reaching positive outcome in the lives of girls and women.



## LIVE YOUR DREAM Award

Soroptimist LIVE YOUR DREAM Award program is a unique education-related grant for women who provide the primary financial support to their families. The LIVE YOUR DREAM Award gives women the resources and support they need to improve their education, skills, and employment prospects, to achieve their dreams. The program begins at the local Soroptimist club level where recipients can then become eligible for region level awards. Region award recipients go on to compete at the international level. Since the LIVE YOUR DREAM Award program began in 1972, about \$30 million in education grants have been disbursed to assist tens of thousands of women to achieve their dreams of a better life for themselves and their families.

Over half of Soroptimist LIVE YOUR DREAM Award recipients are survivors of domestic violence, sex trafficking, or sexual assault. Nearly all of the women and families served have overcome enormous obstacles. Award recipients may use the cash award to offset any costs associated with their efforts to attain higher education.

This year our club received so many outstanding applicants that we decided it was imperative to invest in and reward not just one, but all four of the exceptional women we interviewed, to support the positive impact we know they will make in our communities.

## LIVE YOUR DREAM Award Recipients

### First Place ■ Tressies



Our first place winner, Tressies Wells is full of tenacity and drive as she reenters the academic realm as a single grandmother motivated to pursue her dream. Despite various hardships, including the loss of her fiancé, and physical disabilities needing to be managed, she continues to have a passion for her patients and putting smiles on their faces. While raising her granddaughter who is in the 5th grade she recognized the “need [for] serious educational skills to survive in order to succeed”. This award will allow her to pursue her longtime dream of working in health care technology and administration.

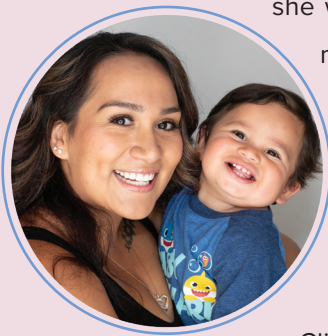
## First Runner Up ■ Cassie

Cassie was forced to be an adult at a young age, going directly from high school to the workforce. She faced obstacles such as depression, neglect, and without any real guidance she found herself in the wrong crowd looking down the wrong path for a bright future. Cassie found herself in an abusive relationship and nearly lost her life, next lost her home, and found herself homeless and pregnant. With determination to turn her life around and a child counting on her, she was able to find additional work and has her goals set on helping young adults with disabilities.



## Second Runner Up ■ Kimberly

At a young age Kimberly was taught not to get her hopes up because soon enough she would be disappointed. Raised in a home with a physically and mentally abusive mother and no guidance, she felt stuck. She met her son's father who appeared to be her knight in shining armor, but turned out to be another abuser. After her son Noah's birth she finally had enough. Kimberly has gone back to work and enrolled in school to "pay it forward" for the support received from her therapist throughout the years, by becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker or Psychologist.



## Third Runner Up ■ Midori

Midori has come across so many obstacles such as facing an abusive situation, lack of familial support, and financial stability. It hasn't been an easy road for Midori to focus on schooling as a single parent. There have been nights where she and her children have had to stay in her car. Her own family disowned her for having a biracial child, rather than celebrate this new life and Midori's achievements. Set to receive her certificate, her goal is an AA degree as well, and Midori is determined to show everyone she can overcome anything.

## Scholarship Awards

### Benicia High School | Liberty High School



Sarah Hoyle  
Benicia High School

Soroptimist International of Benicia established a scholarship program at Benicia High School shortly after the club was founded in the city in 1979. Several years later a program was also established at Liberty High School. Originally two scholarships were given, one to a student at each high school. Over the years the club has been able to not only increase the number of scholarships awarded, but also increase the scholarship amounts. This has been made possible because of successful fundraising by the collaborative efforts of the membership.

At Liberty High School, the scholarships are awarded in the names of Leeann and Bill Cawley. Longtime business owners in the City of Benicia, they have devoted countless hours to the good of our community. A founding member of Soroptimist, Leeann remains a contributing member of the club. The scholarships at Benicia High School are awarded in the name of Mary McKay. Mary was also a founding member of the club, and remained active in Soroptimist until she passed away.

The process in applying for a Soroptimist Scholarship is two-fold. An application is submitted, in which the student lists their accomplishments and achievements both in school, and in the community, including volunteer activities and work experience. As part of the application, the student submits an essay, highlighting their educational goals and future aspirations, both personal and career. Semi finalists are selected from this pool of applicants to be interviewed by the Scholarship Committee, which is composed of current, active members of Soroptimist of Benicia.

This year the two scholarship recipients at Liberty High School are Brian Casillas and Elliot Foy. This is the first time the awards have been given to young men. At Benicia High, the recipients are Sarah Hoyle, Tristan Keene, Grace Kioko Gabel and Hannah Saitz. These six students exemplify the admirable qualities that the scholarship committee looks for in the awardees... strength of character, community awareness, and the passion to reach for success. Soroptimist International of Benicia is honored and proud to help these students along in their educational journey to reach their full potential and live their dream.



## S Club

In 1966, Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA) established S Clubs, providing Soroptimists the opportunity to mentor high school age girls to instill within them a desire for volunteerism. Mentoring girls through the sponsorship of an S Club enables Soroptimists to impart invaluable support and guidance while providing growth and leadership opportunities.

SIB sponsors/mentors an S Club at Benicia High School. With approximately 25 members in any given school year, the S Club at Benicia High mirrors its mentor club, with the identical mission of improving the lives of women and girls, leading to social and economic empowerment. With a board of elected leaders, and an active membership, some of the S Club projects include:

- **The Backpack Project:** providing backpacks filled with school supplies for students in need.
- **Pajama Project:** providing pajamas at Christmas time for the Benicia Community Action Council.
- **Volunteering in the community:** working at local fundraising events selling tickets, helping with set up/take down, serving food, and fulfilling needs as they arise.
- **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month:** in February each year, the club hosts an assembly open to all students at BHS. Invited speakers address the students on how to identify and prevent teen dating violence, and how to leave an abusive relationship.
- **Fundraisers:** Pizza Night takeovers at the local pizzeria and Christmas blinky light sales during the City of Benicia Christmas Open House.



Through these projects and volunteering, S Club members accumulate volunteer hours to add to their college resume. They learn how valuable volunteering and serving others is in their communities. S Club builds a sense of pride and confidence, and many S Club members continue volunteering after graduation. Open to all students, S Club is known as one of the premier volunteer/community service clubs at Benicia High School.

## Service Projects

### SCOOP Closet

Soroptimist International of Benicia receives a grant, in a two year cycle, from the City of Benicia, through the city's Human Services Board. This grant augments its own contributions toward the SCOOP Closet. SCOOP stands for Soroptimist Closet of Opportunity and Provisions. Its purpose is to provide needed resources to women and girls in the form of necessities that are not covered by food stamps or other assistance programs. Some of the items that are provided include diapers and wipes, toilet paper, household cleaning supplies, toiletries, and feminine products. These items are stored at the SCOOP Closet located at the City of Benicia's Family Resource Center. This grant cycle the Soroptimist club will offer car seats and a limited number of emergency gift cards. Outreach is conducted through the city's Family Resource Center and through word-of-mouth by individuals who use the closet. In the final annual report 238 families were served this fiscal year, with 193 returning families, and 45 new families. A total of 280 adults and 486 children were served. Total number of items provided was 3,311. Nearly \$8,000 was spent, \$5250 coming from the City of Benicia grant, and the remainder from Soroptimist of Benicia. Soroptimists also contributed back to school backpacks, pajamas for the holidays, and gift cards for the holidays.

### House of Hope

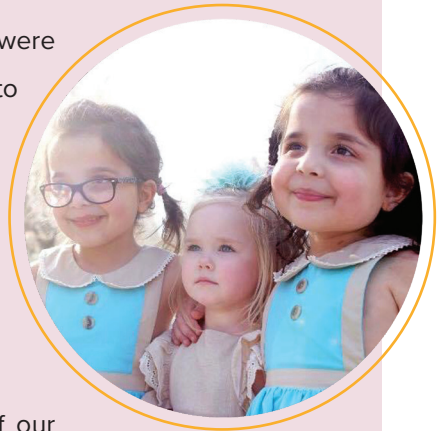
Soroptimist International of Benicia has partnered with Safequest Solano, to support the rental of a safe house called the Soroptimist House of Hope, for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking. This partnership started in 2016, and the club pays part of the rent for a safe house, as well as providing additional support for the survivors. Annually the club budgets about \$15,000-20,000 to provide furnishings, supplies, welcome baskets, clothing, gift cards, toys, holiday gifts, and other needs of the residents of the safe house.



## COVID-19 Projects

### Childhood Cancer Patients

The twin granddaughters of one of our members, both diagnosed with cancer, were in need of assistance. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the girls were unable to get to their doctor's and treatment appointments. In addition, the girl's birthdays were coming up during the quarantine. Members donated over \$800 worth of gift cards and items to help these kids and their mom get through an extremely stressful time.



### Food for fellow Benicians

Members rallied via emails and phone calls when we discovered from one of our members that many of our fellow Benicians, as the pandemic unfolded, didn't have enough food for their families. The Soroptimists sent cash, checks, and gift cards totaling approximately \$500.00 to member Raquelmarie Clark, who arranged for groceries and meals delivered to those in need. Working through One House Bakery, they provided bags of food to those in need.

### Food Pack Project

SIB found that the Benicia Unified School District Nutrition Services was unable to provide its student meal program during the summer. Soroptimist of Benicia applied for a grant from the Solano Community Foundation, and got approved. Receiving \$8200, the funds were directed to Food is Free Solano, to distribute food through the Food Pack project. This has helped ensure nutrition for 100+ students per day, 7 days a week. Foods were brought to multiple locations that have minimal barriers to access and where children can pick up food when an adult is not available.



# SIP with Soroptimist

## Party with a Purpose

Party meets purpose with Soroptimist International of Benicia's yearly wine tasting gala. The event includes an evening of wine tasting, heavy appetizers, delectable cakes, live music, and dancing. In addition, a wine pull, raffle prizes, and an amazing silent auction entertain guests for this enjoyable event. The purpose? The proceeds from this major fundraiser support its many worthy projects.



The Benicia Clocktower is transformed into an elegantly festive venue for this evening of celebration. Premium wines from Napa, Sonoma County, and the Central Coast are featured, including Grigich Hill, Raymond Vineyards, and Joseph Phelps, to name a few. Scrumptious cakes are available at auction from bakeries Fox and Fawn, Farm and Flour, and Epicurean Delights. Plentiful appetizers are provided by Benicia's finest restaurants. Live music and dancing follow the silent and live auctions.

Proceeds from SIP with Soroptimist/Party with a Purpose have benefited the local Safe House, and a wide range of local and regional projects, including numerous high school scholarships, the LIVE YOUR DREAM education award for women, and the SCOOP closet at the Family Resource Center. This wine tasting gala event would not be possible without all of our sponsors.



# Financial Impact

## Program

### LIVE YOUR DREAM Awards®

- \$70,703 LIVE YOUR DREAM Awards were given through the program
- 87% completed their education and improved their standard of living

### Scholarship awards

- \$35,352 Scholarships were given
- 90% feel prepared to pursue their career goals and are confident about their future success

### Philanthropy & Grants

- \$212,110\* in total contributions

### Impact

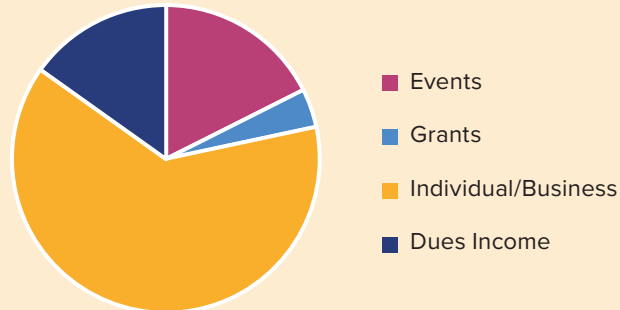
Together we will provide a sustainable impact on the lives of women and girls who face obstacles such as poverty, violence and teen pregnancy.

### Future

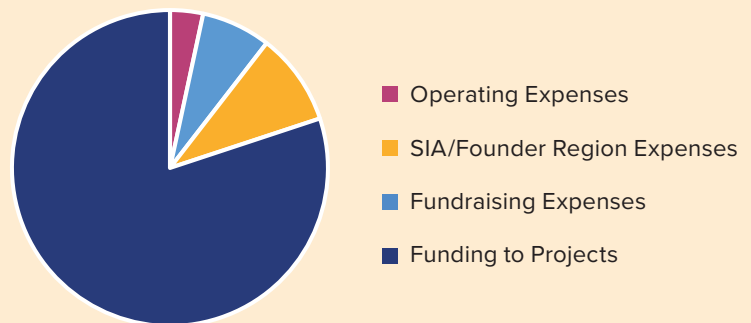
In our second century we will serve more women and girls through our Dream Programs.

## Visual Breakdown

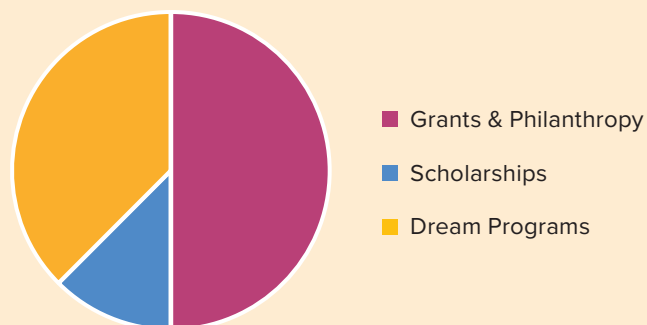
### Sources of Income



### Uses of Funds



### Funding Breakdown



\*2014 through 2019

## How You Can Help

We all have unique gifts to share with the communities who need it most. By empowering women and girls through access to education and training, the lives of individuals, families, and whole communities can be improved.

As a donor to Soroptimist, you or your business join a global movement of volunteers, partners, fundraisers and donors who believe in the power of women and girls to change the world.

### Help Women & Girls Live Their Dreams

Your gift reaches women and girls facing extreme obstacles such as violence, poverty, and teen pregnancy, by helping them achieve their educational goals.

### Join our Club

Volunteers are the heartbeat of Soroptimist. Our volunteers serve as global AND community leaders. Fill out an introduction form and we'll connect you to a local club in your area.

### Become a Soroptimist Stargazer

A monthly donation could mean the difference between covering a student loan bill or sponsoring multiple education grants for women in need. Join more than 775 Stargazers investing in dreams today.

### Partner with Us

When your company becomes a Corporate Sponsor, you join upwards of 165,000 volunteer members and supporters all over the world committed to improving the lives of women and girls.

### More Ways to Make a Lasting Impact

Are you interested in honoring someone special? Or leaving a legacy gift? We can show you how to honor loved ones while investing in dreams.

## Soroptimist International of Benicia All Stars 2019-2020



Brooke Bovo  
Soroptimist of the Year



Raquelmarie Clark  
Soroptimist of the Year



Lori Mathews  
Rookie of the year



Sissy Coffeen  
Club Fellows



Penny Stell  
Club Fellows



Helen Kennedy-Lazar  
Club Fellows

Founder Region of Soroptimist International, awards grants to women in the final phase of their doctoral degree. The funding of these Fellowship grants comes from donations. A local club or Founder Region donates \$1000 toward the grants to honor a member as a Club Fellow, or members can donate this amount to become a Club Fellow.



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volunteer organization  
that provides women  
and girls with access  
to the education and  
training they need  
to achieve economic  
empowerment.



SOROPTIMIST®  
Investing in Dreams



BRIGHT PAST  
BRILLIANT FUTURE

Presented by Soroptimist International of Benicia Fundraising Committee:  
Terry Baldwin, Committee Chair, Kelly Baldwin, Leeann Cawley, Rhonda Danielson,  
Patty Gavin, Mary Hand, Dani Jones, Julia Warner and Bobbi Enderlin, Ex-Officio

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