



## President Cynthia's Message

Dear Incredible Soroptimists,

As I look back on our busy year, I am reminded of the expression, "the more you put into something, the more you get out of it." We all put our time, talent and treasure into Soroptimists this year, and as a result, we got quite a lot out of it!! How many of these do you remember? Fun lunch field trip to San Antonio Winery. Witchy trivia for Halloween. Holiday Party with gift game at Dana Porter's. Stacy Ciulik's presentation at the library on the UN. Fabulous Music Bingo Fundraiser, attended by Ginger Cole, SIA President. Valentina Higgins shared her story. Biggest ever Awards Luncheon. Two sessions of Dream It Be It. And so on. There are too many to list.

Our club's past successes helped propel us forward. Last year's Fundraising Team had the courage to try a completely new concept – Music Bingo—which was a big success! All we had to do this year was build upon that success – and boy, did we. Raising nearly \$100,000 was record-breaking. Next year's leadership will need to plan for a larger room—as well as planning how best to utilize so many dollars! Such a successful event expands our impact in the community.

You know our unofficial slogan, right? *"Come for the service; stay for the friendship."* The friendship element is so important, and I appreciate how we lived that out this year. There were several losses, accidents and illnesses experienced by our members. When difficulties occur, we support each other not only through cards and calls, but by stepping up to help assist with tasks whenever necessary. Thank you all.

Ladies, it has been a privilege to serve as your president this year. It is rewarding to experience what we can do together, making a positive difference in the world. Together, we are Living Our Dreams!

*Serving in Harmony,  
President Cynthia*



## SI WHITTIER NEWSLETTER 2025

### CLUB CALENDAR

#### MAY

- 6th – Business meeting, 12 Noon, Mimi's Café
- 13th – CAPC Program
- 15th – Board of Directors Meeting at Whittier Chamber
- 20th – First Day Program
- 27th – DARK Memorial Day holiday

#### JUNE

- 3rd – Business meeting, 12 Noon, Mimi's Café
- 10th – DARK due to Installation dinner on June 12th
- 12th – 11am Soroptimist Village Ribbon Cutting and Lunch, Reconstructed Buildings
- 12th – **Annual Installation of Officers and Board**, East Whittier Women's Club, dinner
- 17th – ANNUAL MEETING. 12 Noon, Mimi's Café Directors Reports. 12 noon, Mimi's Café
- 19th – Soroptimist Village birthday party, SIW hosts. 5:30 pm
- 24th – Program: Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority. 12 noon, Mimi's Café
- 27th – Combined Board Meeting Dinner, El Cholo Café

#### JULY

- 1st – DARK. No meeting
- 8th – Business Meeting. 12 noon Mimi's Café
- 15th – FUN LUNCHESES. Watch for details
- 22nd – FUN LUNCHESES. Watch for details
- 29th – FUN LUNCHESES. Watch for details
- 25th – Rio Hondo College. 12 Noon. Lunch and distribution of printers to CARE students

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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## SIGNATURE AWARDS LUNCHEON

### A Beautiful Event



Soroptimist International of Whittier's Annual Signature Awards Luncheon was held April 15 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Whittier. Twenty-four young women were awarded \$58,000 in scholarships and recognitions of their perseverance and achievements. Programs included were Live Your Dream, Ruth White Memorial Scholarship, Lois Neece Award, and Mentoring Program!

Heartiest of Congratulations to all the awardees. And an outpouring of Gratitude to all our sponsors and donors who gave of their time and resources in support of this, the reason for what we, as members and friends, do to support our mission for women and girls in our community throughout the year.



*Rio Hondo CARE students with college president and faculty.*



*Live Your Dream recipients with Mayor Joe, Mary Ann Pacheco and President Cynthia.*



*Ruth White scholarship group with Dr. Kristine Dillon and Rebecca Eberle Romberger, and Xenia Markowitt.*





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## UPCOMING EVENTS

# The Next Big Thing!!!

### JUNE 12TH INSTALLATION AND RECOGNITION

The annual celebration and installation will take place at the East Whittier Women's Club beginning at 5:30 pm. All are welcome as we recognize and thank our outgoing President Cynthia Nickell and her Board.

The newly elected Officers and Board members will be installed along with incoming President Denise Fasheh. We sincerely thank all these women for volunteering their time and energy as they assume their new roles for the 2025 – 2026 club year. Congratulations to all!

President .....	Denise Fasheh
President Elect .....	Ana Maria Vazquez-Ramirez
Immediate Past President .....	Cynthia Nickell
Recording Secretary .....	Martha Morales
Corresponding Secretary .....	Susan Halliday
Treasurer .....	Dolores Hayes
Assistant Treasurer .....	Elizabeth Camp
Director of SI/SIA Programs .....	Dana Porter
Director of SIW Programs .....	Kathy Dowling
Director of Fundraising .....	Ruthie Flores Retana
Director of Public Awareness .....	Catalina Gonzalez
Director of Membership .....	Veronica Franco

#### NON-BOARD POSITIONS FOR 2025-2026

Soroptimist Village Director 1 Year .....	Teresa Molina
Soroptimist Village Director 2 Years .....	Mary Ann Pacheco
Soroptimist Village Proxy Director 3 years .....	Veronica Franco

Delegate to Region 1 year .....	Cynthia Nickell
Delegate to Region 2 years .....	Denise Fasheh
Delegate to Region 3 years .....	Ana Maria Vazquez-Ramirez
Delegate to Convention .....	Ana Maria Vazquez-Ramirez

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR

## 78TH ANNUAL

Recognition & Installation  
of Officers and Directors

**THURSDAY  
JUNE 12TH**

**5:30pm:** Social Hour  
**6:30pm:** Dinner & Program

**East Whittier  
Woman's Club**  
14148 2nd Street  
Whittier CA, 90605

**\$45.00  
Per Person**  
Prepaid reservations  
required at  
[www.siwhittier.org](http://www.siwhittier.org)

**RISE UP,  
SHOW UP  
AND JUST SAY YES**

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF  
WHITTIER

Vegetarian option available, Please  
indicate in comments section.

**RSVP by Saturday, June 7, 2025**

Casual Dress: A perfect event  
to share with spouses, friends & family.

Questions: [cstheisen@earthlink.net](mailto:cstheisen@earthlink.net)





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## UPCOMING EVENTS

# The Next Big Thing!!!

JUNE 12TH INSTALLATION AND RECOGNITION PHOTOS CONT.







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## SIA: SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS

### THIS IS JUST A DAY...

By Elizabeth Camp



First timer experience at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69).

Reason to go: to be a part of a civil society of over 7,000 people from around the world. I feel it is important to get out of Whittier and my own routine of service once in a while and learn

from a larger perspective.

2025 3/10/25 to 3/14/25-CSW69 for Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO's) at the United Nations in New York City-I arrived on a morning flight into Newark, NJ- the sun shining, I could see all the waterways between Washington DC and NYC. Beautiful! I landed and got an Uber to the Evan Hotel-tiny room for two women but so convenient to the United Nations location and the two offsite locations where parallel breakout meetings occurred.



First order of business on Sunday afternoon was going with Dawn Marie Lemonds, past SIA President, my guide for the week. We picked up our official badge/lanyard at the US Official Visitors Center to the UN. Keep in mind you need your passport and the approved letter from the United Nations that was emailed to you which Soroptimist International (SI) approved. You must apply to be a representative by completing an application and sending it to SI (not SIA!). There was no cost to apply so it is worth it to apply before the deadline to start the process. Once you receive an invitation and get approved, you must give them your passport number and let them know the hotel where you will be staying. There were just over 100 Soroptimists registered for the first week and over 7,000 people registered for CSW69 and the CSWNGO69. The proud people representing their countries wore beautiful dresses and traditional costumes. Each person must go across the street from the UN and stand in line to get your credentials with your picture taken for it. I ran into **Dolores Hayes** as we left the building and a few Soroptimists we knew including Raelene from SI Westland, New Zealand with her five roommates who rented an apartment for three weeks. We also encountered three others from the Desert Coast Region.







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## SIA: SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS

### THIS IS JUST A DAY... CONT.



On our first day we chose to attend events at the offsite location and attended a panel discussion which included about 10 female doctors in the medical field dealing with women's health. Each was part of the International Medical Association on women's health issues from birth to grave. A few brought up the fact that doctors don't know everything and that if we feel something seems wrong keep asking questions.

The second session is the one we really wanted to hear, it was a panel of human trafficking survivors and prostitution. Each shared the organization they belong to and how they are making a difference in their country. One from Sweden explained the laws in their country. There was an activist named Jeanette who had also marched in 1969, she was from Kentucky and advocated for changing the laws and insisting that the courts prosecute the predators. Despite the seriousness of the topic and the large number of people being tracked and entering into prostitution because they are poor and have no other opportunities, they were each optimistic that they are making a difference.

The third session of the day was on rights of men and boys and the stereotype and expectations of men. A twist on equal rights—men have to make money to support the families, they cannot take time off for a sick kid or to care for an elderly parent. There are prejudices in society and it was found that if a boy or young man witnesses abuse in their family that they are more likely to become abusive too.



That afternoon, at another offsite location, we watched a movie that will come out on PBS on May 1, 2025 titled "American Delivery" about the work done in rural areas by midwives and doulas. We learned the maternal death rate during delivery in California was 16% but in 5 years they were able to bring it down by 50%. We saw babies being born and heard of the issues of too many C-sections for the convenience of the doctors and hospitals. The movie highlighted the visiting nurses who went monthly at the beginning of a woman's pregnancy to the patient rather than the patient going to the doctor. At the University of Kentucky Medical Center, the doctors in traditional delivery rooms worked with the midwives when there were complications at birth. One doctor created a Delivery Clinic in order to make the mother-to-be more comfortable with a backup plan with the local hospital if needed.

This is just a day, it is quite overwhelming with all that I learned and attended. So worth the trip and I hope to do it with some of you in the future, maybe in Geneva! Please let me know if you have any questions. Contact Elizabeth Camp, at [Eecamp77@gmail.com](mailto:Eecamp77@gmail.com).





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## SOLT: SOROPTIMIST ORIENTATION AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

### DESERT COAST REGION SPRING CONFERENCE

By Cynthia Nickell

SIW had a strong presence at DCR Spring Conference 2025 which was held at the Zessa Hotel in Santa Ana. The 3-day event includes a balance of education and business, socializing and celebrating. SIW members representing our club over the weekend included Cynthia Nickell, Denise Fasheh, Petra Schmischke, Dolores Hayes, Liz Camp, Ana Maria Ramirez, Lorraine Quiros, and Maria Maestas.

Lorraine Quiros, DCR Membership Chair, presented a report on Membership, and Liz Camp presented on her experience at the UN's Commission on the Status of Women conference. It turns out the UN is one place where everyone actually knows what Soroptimist is!



Melanie Kenny of Canada is a member of the SIA board. She spoke on 'Embracing Change and Committing to Inclusivity' in our clubs. To honor her home country, Jan Mericle loaned a Canadian flag and pole from the Flag Shop. (Thanks, Jan and Angie!)

Jackie Schrauger, Director of SIA Programs, served as SIA staff presenter. Her workshop helped answer many members' questions on Big Goal Accelerator projects. Last year Desert Coast Region was #2 for Live Your Dream awards. We are shooting to be #1 this year!

Sunday morning is the dessert of the conference: the DCR Live-Your-Dream awards. Nine awardees shared their stories of challenge and perseverance. They gave us a warm glow and made us glad we are able to support them by joining together as Soroptimists.

Participating in the DCR spring conference helps each member feel part of a larger organization, make new friends and share ideas with members of other clubs, and connect more closely with members of our own Club. Every member should attend whenever possible.



Our Live-Your-Dream alumnus Oralia Alcorta presented on Friday afternoon, describing how Soroptimist Clubs can partner with CARE programs at Community Colleges, as we do with Rio Hondo. Three past DCR Live-Your-Dream recipients also spoke, sharing how their awards had made an immediate and long-term impact. We in the audience were moved by their stories of perseverance and accomplishment.





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## SI WHITTIER CLUB NEWS

### SOROPTIMIST VILLAGE FOUNDATION

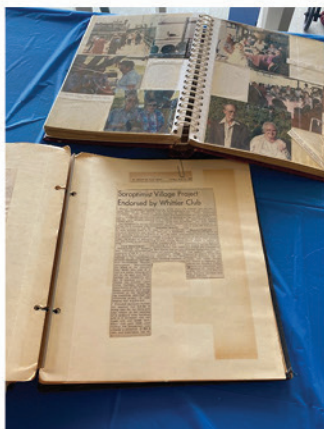
By Teresa Molina

Soroptimist Village is a Senior Housing Project in the City of Norwalk that provides affordable housing for seniors aged 62 and older. SI Whittier, in collaboration with five other Soroptimist Clubs from the Desert Coast and Camino Real Regions, makes up the Board of Directors who oversees the Soroptimist Village housing project.

The Village consists of 52 units, including studio and one-bedroom garden apartments, along with a large community room and an industrial-size kitchen used for resident events and gatherings. Since its inception in 1957, Soroptimist Village has served thousands of residents. The City of Norwalk has been a valued partner in referring and placing seniors in these affordable units.

In 2018, a fire destroyed five of the units, which then had to be rebuilt from the ground up. After seven long years- delayed in part by the COVID-19 pandemic, a Certificate of Occupancy was finally issued in April 2025. With great enthusiasm and gratitude, the Board of Directors hosted a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting to celebrate the reintroduction of these five units to the rental market, providing homes for five more seniors. The event was an overwhelming success, attended by local dignitaries and over 100 guests.

If you would like to learn more about Soroptimist Village, please feel free to contact any member of our Village Board of Directors.







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## SI WHITTIER CLUB NEWS

### 5K Walk 2025 for Shelter's Right Hand

Contributed by Denise Fasheh

On a rainy Saturday in late April 658 walkers turned out to support and participate in this annual event which raises funds to support the Shelter's Right Hand, the auxiliary to the Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter. The sole purpose of the Shelter's Right Hand, a 100% volunteer organization, is to raise money for the Shelter through the 5K Walk and the Thrift Store which is located on Washington Blvd. in Whittier. They also seek to educate and enlighten supporters and the community on the issues related to domestic violence.

Soroptimist was a platinum sponsor (\$2500) once again and was recognized at the event in multiple ways and also on social media. A certificate of recognition was presented to SIW and accepted by President Cynthia Nickell. Our club also had a promotional table at the event and, seated under an umbrella, Susan Halliday and Kathy Dowling represented us by greeting people and making contacts and promoting the Soroptimist organization and our mission.

In addition, these members and friends of SIW participated in the walk that day: Denise, Cynthia, Petra, Veronica, Teresa, Natalia, Ruthie, Kim and her daughter, also Bassem, and Oralía and her children.

The impact of our donation and participation is great as there has been a significant decline in grants and donation to non-profits overall this year.







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## SI WHITTIER CLUB NEWS

### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS FOR MEMBERS APRIL, MAY AND JUNE



#### APRIL:

Liz Camp  
Betsy Angevine  
Sandy Gelmini  
Jenny Herrington  
Emma Narvaez



#### MAY:

Diane Olson  
Melanie Bickley  
Ruthie Flores-Retana



#### JUNE:

Yani. 6/8  
Becky R. 6/13  
Sandy T. 6/18  
Cheryl C. 6/24





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## SI WHITTIER CLUB NEWS

### CARING AND SHARING MAY – JUNE 2025

#### MAY 2025 FINES

Ana Maria told us about her recent work conference, the wedding of her niece in Temecula, and lastly shared her exciting Personal Project of selling opportunities for a drawing of 2 excellent seats at a Dodgers game in June. All of us are encouraged to promote this and to purchase chances. The Big Goal is to earn \$3000 to bring our total of the major fundraiser up to \$100 Grand!

Jane told us about her recent trip to Yellowstone National Park and highly recommended visiting this amazing park in the wintertime, stating it was a very special time.

Jeannie shared about volunteering with the SOLA Lions club and the special activities they have to promote these special athletes.



Melanie recently took a road trip with her husband, Jim, to Yosemite National Park. Along the way she found this lovely bench, donated by Soroptimists, and kindly sent us this photo!

Mary Ann recently competed in the annual Dancing with the Whittier Stars competition to benefit the Whittier Community Foundation and she was the BIG WINNER this year having raised the most money! As her charities of choice Mary Ann designated funds to both Soroptimist International of Whittier and the Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter. A big thanks to Mary Ann and a big congratulations for her bravery and stamina in completing this challenging effort. AND, she had FUN too!

With great pride Ellen announced the recent graduation of her grandson, Parker, who has received his PhD and as a nuclear physicist will now work with the Johns Hopkins Nuclear Accelerator project.

Denise invited all of us plus friends and family to her Installation on June 12 as our incoming President!

Ana Maria paid 3 fines, first for the beautiful wedding of her niece, next for her happy engagement of our member Emma (via Music Bingo Auction) to provide organization in her household and lastly to promote her Personal Project of selling \$25 chances to win 2 tickets to a Dodgers game in June!







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## **YOU MISSED A MEETING? HERE'S A RECAP OF BUSINESS MEETINGS**

### **BUSINESS MEETINGS APRIL-JUNE 2025**

For more details, please see [Minutes of business meetings](#) previously emailed by President Cynthia

#### **HIGHLIGHTS APRIL BUSINESS MEETING 4/1/2025**

President Cynthia reported on donations already disbursed from the Community Projects fund which have come from CUSoCal monies. Today another donation, in the amount of \$5000.00, was made to the Rio Hondo College C.A.R.E. students and accepted by Program Director Laura Verdugo.

The slate of nominees for the 2025- 2026 club year was presented by the Nominating Committee and the election, by acclamation, was approved by all.

Following a request by CAPC, another donation in the amount of \$2500 was approved to fund \$500 each to 5 students enrolled at the Whittier Adult School.

For Soroptimist Village Teresa Molina reported that they at last have the Certificate of Occupancy for the rebuilt units damaged by the fire in 2018.

Liz Camp was honored as the only April Birthday celebrant present at the meeting. Other members with Birthdays this month are Betsy Angevine, Sandy Gelmini, Jenny Herrington, and Emma Narvaez.



#### **HIGHLIGHTS MAY BUSINESS MEETING 5/6/2025**

President Cynthia reported on the April annual DCR Spring Conference. One of the speakers was our past award winner and mentee Oralía Alcorta who spoke about the CARE program and how clubs can work with the local colleges to identify candidates for the Live Your Dream program. Our Desert Coast Region is #1 in SIA in number of LYD awards presented!

Director Teresa reported that 6 ½ years following the disastrous fire at Soroptimist Village they have received the Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Norwalk for the rebuilt units. There will be a celebration at the Village on June 12 at 11 a.m. All are welcome.







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## RECAP OF BUSINESS MEETINGS



**MAY BIRTHDAYS:** Diane Olson was honored as the only May Birthday celebrant present at the meeting. Other members with May birthdays are Melanie Bickley and Ruthie Flores-Retana

### HIGHLIGHTS JUNE BUSINESS MEETING 6/3/2025

Celebrating 220 years of membership today for all those reaching milestones divisible by 5. Two special ladies reaching 40 years of membership are Carolyn Theisen and Elizabeth Camp who joined the same week in May 1985!

We came for the service and stayed for the friendship! Thank you to Jeannie Williamson and Liz Apodaca for the membership recognition presentation!

### HAPPY JUNE BIRTHDAY TO ALL THESE LADIES:

Yani. 6/8  
Becky R. 6/13  
Sandy T. 6/18  
Cheryl C. 6/24







## PROGRAM MEETING NOTES

### HERE'S A RECAP OF PROGRAM MEETINGS APRIL-JUNE 2025

#### HIGHLIGHTS

##### April 8, 2025

Guest speakers were Giselle Fernandez and Ryan Shepherd from the Boys and Girls Club of Whittier & Pico Rivera.

Giselle shared that since **1962**, the **Whittier Area Literacy Council (WALC)**—now part of the **Boys & Girls Club of Whittier**—has provided **free tutoring** to help children succeed in school and empower adults through literacy. This is a year-round program available M-F for 2 hours per week. The students are often 2-3 years behind in literacy. They may come from non-English speaking homes. ESL students are also being served.

Ryan shared that the Boys and Girls Club of Whittier began in 1967 in Whittier and has 42 locations, employing a staff of 460 and serving thousands of students. The Teen Program is very active and works to encourage students' development and leadership skills. Teens can be paid to tutor at WALC. The new model of service is for the Club to function on school campuses instead of having students walking to the club each day. Community mentors are needed especially for the annual Youth of the Year Program.



##### April 22, 2025 SART @ PIHHealth, 20 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

Guests joined us from Forensic Nurse Specialists Inc, PIH support staff and Project Sister. Guest speaker, Malinda Wheeler, RN, MN. FNP provided the impactful report on the past 20 years of our center at PIH Health Hospital. Over her 30 years' experience in the field 28,000 people have been assisted by her company. Sadly, the average number of victims seen each year at PIH Health is between 80 and 100 with the age range being from infant to 94 years. 43% were under 17 years of age, 9% male victims, 3% over 50. Our provision of clothing kits has benefitted 430 women over the years, giving them clean clothes in which to leave the hospital. Due to drugs, alcohol and social media influence the number

of victims has not decreased. Only 1 in 10 victims are brave enough to make a police report and have an exam. Project Sister is a non-profit volunteer organization with advocates on call 24/7 to offer support and follow up for victims when they are called to assist.

##### April 29, 2025 L.A. ZOO by John Peel

Local resident and friend of our club, John Peel, enjoys a unique position and perspective at the L.A. Zoo. He is both a volunteer and a part-time employee. John is a graduate of CSU Fullerton and UCLA and his vocational career has been in the realm of social services working especially with adoption agencies. In retirement he is fulfilling his dream of working with animals in the capacity of conducting zoo tours and part-time animal keeper. Sharing stories of the animals he is in contact with is his delight and provided a happy afternoon program for all of us!







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## RECAP OF PROGRAM MEETINGS NOTES

### May 13, 2025 CAPC

Guest Speakers Shauna Steele, CEO/Executive Director and Natalie Saenz, Director of Development.

CAPC is a service provider for adults with an intellectual disability. Education and housing are the needs for these clients who have started life with deficits. Some are able to be placed in appropriate housing and employment but some remain dependent for all of life. CAPC empowers individuals with disabilities to live and work on their own and currently is serving 100 people with 300 more on a wait list.



### MAY 20, 2025 FIRST DAY HOMELESS SERVICES

Our Guest speaker Ananda Williams, MSW, Program Director at Whittier First Day Homeless Services shared news about the center. She has facilitated the beginning of Group Therapy meetings which are being met with success with the residents.

First Day provides an opportunity for residents to regain their dignity, develop marketable skills, and connect with permanent housing. Residence varies and typically is 1 – 6 months. Help is provided to overcome addiction which affects many of the residents. No alcohol or drugs are allowed within the facility. The temporary housing for women is in a separate area from the temporary housing for men. Their biggest volunteer need is fundraising.

We have recently provided a small grant from our Club's Credit Union Fund.







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# *Thought For Today*

*"Time is the only currency you spend without ever knowing your balance. Use it wisely."*

— AL VILLER

*Communications and brand professional*