



Message from President Denise



Dear Soroptimists,

To quote soccer star Mia Hamm, *"The backbone of success is hard work, determination, good planning and perseverance."* This year embodied that truth in every way.

We began the year with tremendous momentum thanks to a generous \$25,000 donation from the Credit Union of Southern California in August 2025. An Ad Hoc Committee was formed to thoughtfully distribute these funds, allowing us to donate \$10,000 to the Welcome Home Project, \$3,500 to the Interfaith Food Center, \$5,000 to the Rio Hondo Care Program, \$5,000 to the Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter, and the remaining balance went to our Mentoring Program. It is always a privilege to deliver these contributions in person and to hear directly from the organizations whose work strengthens our community.

In September, planning began for our annual fundraiser. Thanks to months of dedication, teamwork, and the engagement of our entire club, the event was a tremendous success — grossing over \$111,000. Fundraising is never simple, but when I saw our group photo with 35 members present on the night of the event, I knew we were poised for something extraordinary.

These successful fundraisers allow us to fulfill our mission: ensuring that women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams. This year, we awarded \$68,000 to 28 honorees and provided a \$500 award to 19 students who applied for the Live Your Dream Award.

We also received meaningful recognition for our work. Soroptimist of Whittier was honored by Assembly Member Lisa Calderon with a \$2,500 check, by Supervisor Hilda Solis with a County of Los Angeles Commendation, and by the City of Whittier with a Proclamation in celebration of Women's History Month. It is always an honor to be acknowledged for the impact we strive to make.

As the year comes to an end, I would like to thank each and every one of you and express my deepest gratitude for all your kindness and support. Working together is what makes us successful and enables us to achieve our goals of helping women and girls. It's what we do best and I'm so proud of everything we've accomplished this year.

President Denise N. Fasheh,
SIW President 2025-2026



*Celebrating 100 Years
Of Soroptimist*

A global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. Our name means "best for women." And that's what we strive to be—women at our best, investing in other women and girls to be their best.

SI WHITTIER NEWSLETTER 2026

CLUB CALENDAR

JUNE

- 19th JOINT BOARD MEETING, 6 pm.
Mission Square Restaurant
- 20th Friendship Link visit. SI Whittier, SI San Diego,
SI Tijuana Centro lunch meeting
- 23rd SIW ANNUAL MEETING, 12 Noon,
Mimi's Care
- 30th DARK

JULY

- 7th Business meeting, 12 Noon, Mimi's Cafe
- 22nd to 25th Biennial Convention, Incheon, South Korea

AUGUST

- 4th Business Meeting, 12 Noon, Mimi's Café



**Join for fun and socializing at
various restaurants around
Whittier.**

Tuesdays, except for July 7 and
August 4 Business Meetings.

Organized by Wendy K. and Susan H.

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SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams



Our Signature Awards Celebration Luncheon



April 21, 2026

Over 160 guests attended the beautiful Signature Awards Luncheon on April 21 this year. The club welcomed the 28 award recipients, their very proud family members, representatives of the Whittier Union High School District, Whittier College, Rio Hondo Community College, community members, Whittier City Council members, our members and guests and friends.

\$68,000 was presented to 28 awardees each of whom was filled with gratitude, encouraged by our support and awed by the experience of the luncheon itself and the impact felt by all the recipients. As always, some tears were shed amidst the

joy and celebration permeating the room at the DoubleTree Hotel in Whittier.

From the SI/SIA focused Live Your Dream Award, to SI Whittier's own unique programs including Lois Neece Award for high school students, Ruth White Memorial Scholarships for upper-level college students, and Mentoring Awards for those continuing their educational pursuits but still qualifying for support, we as members are thrilled to witness the culmination of our year of fund raising in order to provide these invaluable awards to local women and girls.





SOROPTIMIST®

Investing in Dreams



AND JUST SAY YES

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF WHITTIER

Hello,
I wanted to thank
you all for this
wonderful blessing.
Your gift has been
truly life changing
not only for my education
but for my family as
well. I feel so
honored to have
been chosen. I will
forever be grateful.
Thank you so much!
♥ Lupe
Gutierrez



Truly
Grateful
for you.

05/2026
Thank you so much for your kindness
and generosity. Your support means
the world to me, and I truly appreciate
all that you've done. Thank you for
being God's vessel.

With love and gratitude,
Celine Gonzalez

Dear Soroptimists,
Thank you from the bottom of my
heart, for your generosity and will
to help so many women such as
myself. This will not only assist
me on my educational journey, but
will be the ripple effect to hopefully
one day pay it forward. With
much love & gratitude

Crystal Orjoe

To the wonderful Team of Soroptimist ♥
Thank you so much for all the amazing contributions
not only have you helped me personally, but its
been amazing for me to witness how your help
has changed the lives of my personal friends!!
That boost of support means so much to all of us
and I hope you know that it matters more than
you know ♥ Keep inspiring us, Teaching us &
Supporting our dreams. It is wonderful to be
a part of the Matriarchal world where dreams do
come true!! We will continue this Legacy
with love... of future Mental Health Dr. *Dr. [Signature]*

THANK
YOU

Dear Scholarship Donor,

Thank you so much for your generosity and support. Receiving this scholarship means a lot to me and
will help me continue toward my educational goals. I truly appreciate your kindness and investment
in students like me.
-Nadia Geronzo

Words can't explain my gratitude for your love and generosity. As
a single mother your kindness means more than I can put into
words. I'm so grateful and I truly appreciate your support.

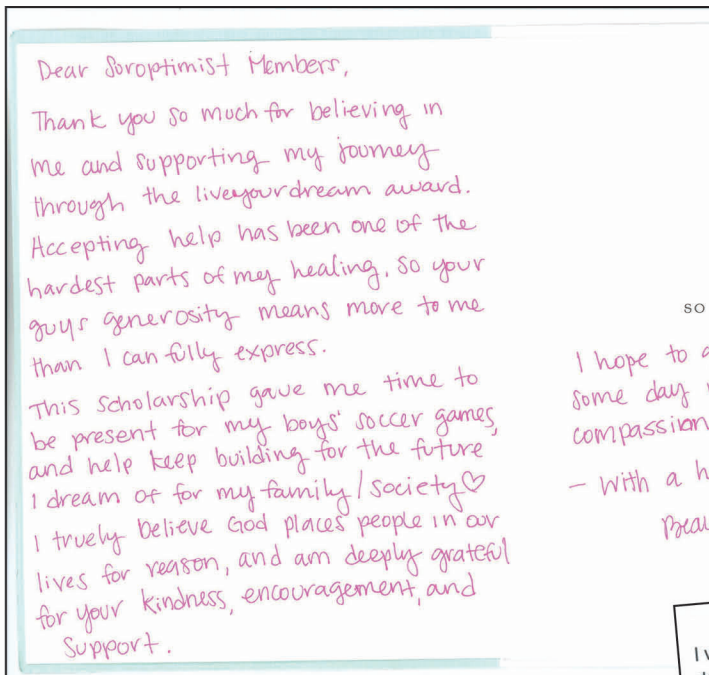
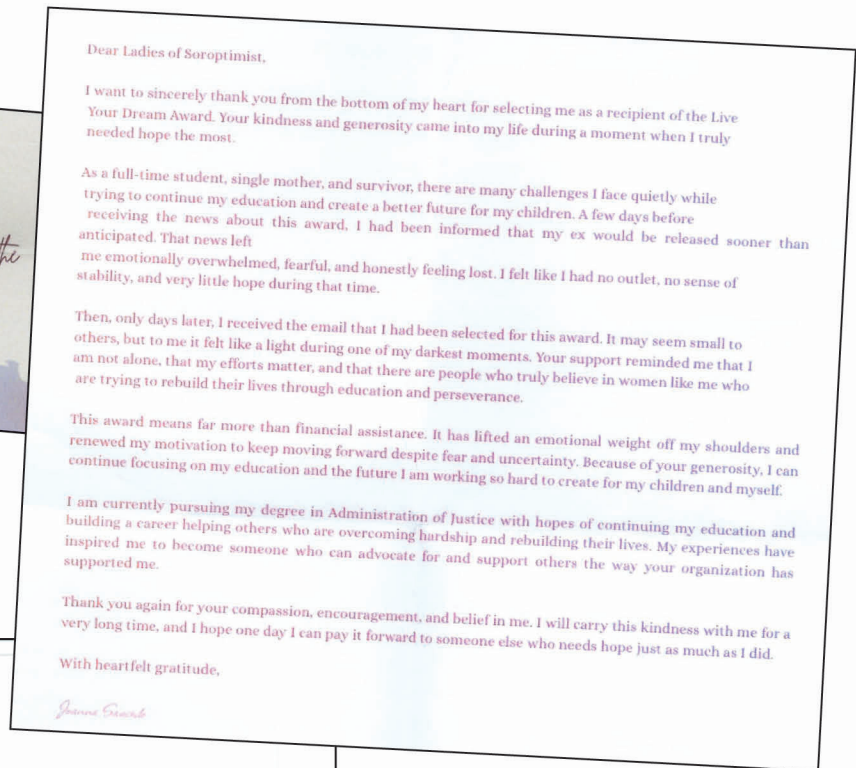
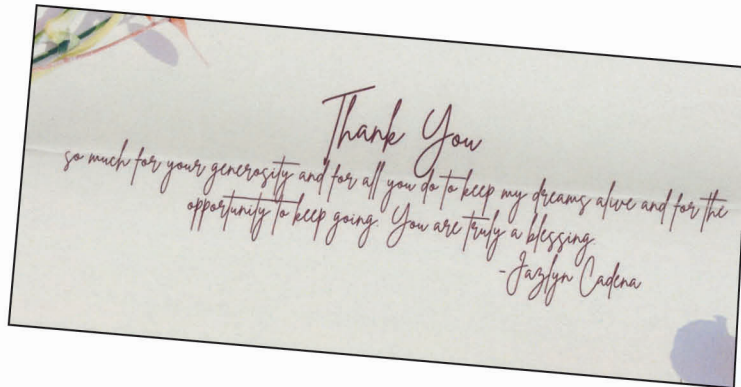
-Christina Garduno

Dear Soroptimist Members,
Thank you so much for choosing
me as a recipient of your
Scholarship. Your generosity &
support truly mean a lot to me
during this season of my life.
As a single mother working toward
building a better future for myself
& my son, this Scholarship will
help relieve some financial stress
and allow me to continue focusing
on my education and goals. ♥
More than financial help, being
encouraged and believed in
by women who support other
women is incredibly meaningful
to me. Your kindness reminds
me that hard work, perseverance,

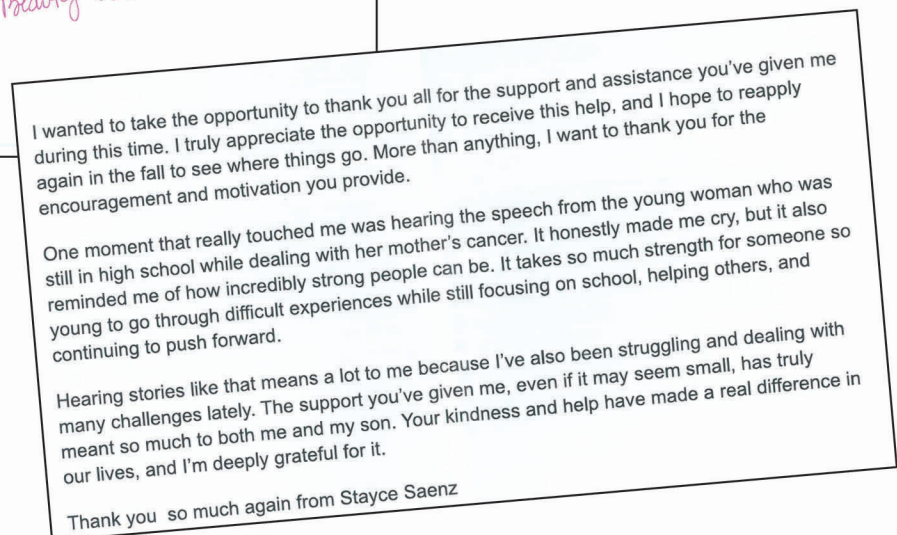
and growth are seen and
valued!

I am sincerely grateful
for your support and for
the impact your organization
makes in the lives of women
in the community.

With gratitude,
Eliana Lomeli



so much!
I hope to give back to others
some day with the same
compassion!
- With a heartfelt gratitude
Beauty Garcia ♥





Chanel Gomez
(562) 347-8780
chanel_gomez1@yahoo.com
8th June 2026

Dear Soroptimist Members,

Thank you so much for choosing me as a recipient of the Live Your Dream Award. I am truly grateful and so happy to have received this scholarship.

As a single mother of two and a full-time college student, there have been many moments when I wanted to give up, but I kept going. Receiving this award reminded me that all the hard work, sacrifices, and late nights are worth it.

This scholarship means so much to me and my family. It brings me one step closer to earning my degree and creating the future I dream of for my children. More than anything, it reminds me that there are people who believe in women like me and want to see us succeed.

Thank you for your generosity, encouragement, and support. I will never forget this opportunity, and I hope to one day give back to my community the way you have given to me.

Sincerely,

Chanel Gomez.

6/1/26

Dear Soroptimist,
Thank You, for having such a beautiful program "Live Your Dream" for us CARE students. Thank you for the \$500 check that was given to us. I was able to buy my daughter a crib and still had enough for other things. When I shared my story through the application, I got instant relief and it gave me strength to not stay quiet about my current situation. Although, I did not get picked as Top winners, I feel like I won something either way. I felt very special to be part of the audience at the ceremonial dinner and it was very inspiring hearing other women and their stories. This program including CARE and Soroptimist has changed my life. Thank you once again, and Thank you Laura Verdugo.
-Kiara Gomez

Dear Soroptimist,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for being selected for Soroptimist. This scholarship will significantly contribute to my educational journey, and I am truly honored to have been chosen.

As a nursing student at Rio Hondo, I am committed to pursuing my academic and professional goals in nursing. With the financial support provided by this scholarship, I will be able to focus more on my studies and less on the financial burdens that happen often in higher education. This generous award will not only ease some of those challenges but also motivates me to continue striving for excellence in all of my endeavors.

I am deeply grateful for your belief in my potential, and I want to assure you that I will continue working diligently to make the most of this opportunity. I look forward to the day when I can give back to others, just as you have so generously given to me.

Once again, thank you for your support and for making a positive impact on my academic and professional aspirations. I am truly appreciative of your kindness.

Sincerely,

Jennifer



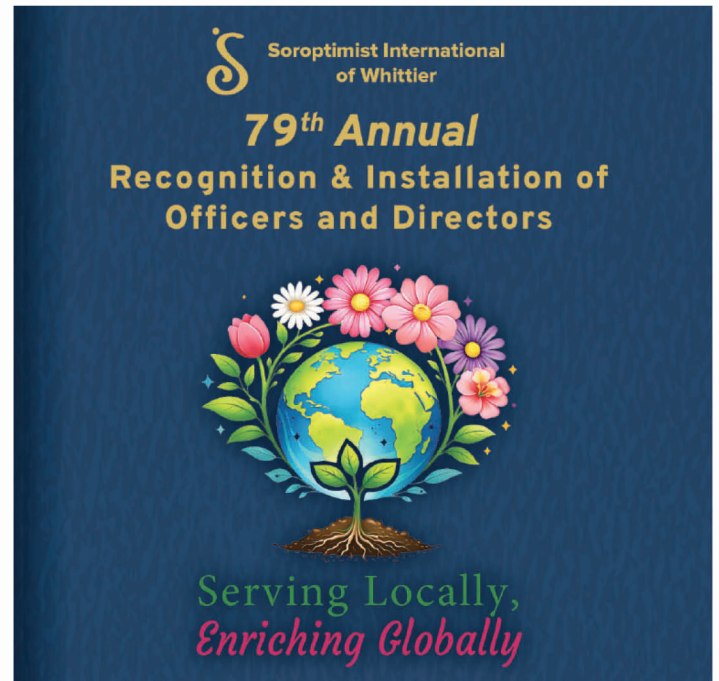


INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 2026 - 2027

Members, friends and guests attended the June 11 Installation of Ana Maria Vazquez-Ramirez as the 79th President of Soroptimist International of Whittier. Her theme for the year, "Serving Locally, Enriching Globally" was reflected around the room with international foods for dinner, international flags, and members wearing outfits reflecting their countries of heritage.

We are proud of and grateful for the accomplishments and recognition of immediate past president Denise Fasheh and her Board.

We are encouraged by the gracious acceptance of the newly installed Officers and Board of Directors and we thank them all for their generous commitment of time and energy to the mission of this club. Enjoy the photos of this fun and enlightening evening.





A DASH OF SOLT



SOROPTIMIST ORIENTATION AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

WHAT ARE FRIENDSHIP LINKS?

Submitted by Liz Camp, Director SI/SIA

Soroptimist **Friendship Links** are formal connections established between different Soroptimist clubs worldwide. They allow members to bridge cultural divides, share best practices for empowering women and girls, collaborate on international projects, and build lifelong cross-border friendships.

SI Whittier has 3 long-standing Friendship Links including:

- SI Tijuana Centro, Mexico, also part of our Desert Coast Region.
- SI Dewsbury and District, UK, in SI Great Britain/Ireland Federation. SI GBI
- SI Port Elizabeth, South Africa, Soroptimist International Africa Federation, SIAF

SI Tijuana Centro, Mexico started when one of our members was the extension chair for the federation and went to charter clubs in Mexico including SI Tijuana Centro and Rosarito Beach, Baja Mexico. At one time there were 6 Soroptimist clubs in Tijuana.

Tijuana Centro used Home Tours as an early fundraiser and a few Whittier members attended. Later on, they started the Annual Margarita Shopping Parties including lunch and mariachis and dancing and,Margaritas! This served to support the Soroptimist School in Tijuana.

For years we chartered a bus with about 40 club members and friends. In Tijuana there would be 200-300 guests in attendance from as far away as Oak Harbor, Washington (one

of their friendship links) to San Diego (another one of their friendship links). Each club nominated a Margarita Queen candidate and one became the Queen of the party! There were lots of opportunities to win prizes during the party with raffle tickets. We now communicate via WhatsApp and emails.



One of SIW's projects was organizing a kitchen shower for the Tijuana school. About 4-5 carloads of the Tijuana members drove to Whittier for a luncheon at Annie Ricker's home, organized by Carolyn Nall (both past presidents). Each of us had to bring a kitchen item in order to participate.

Our 1995-96 president Pat Hakimian was Whittier High School's Principal and knew the district was replacing the desks for the students. She arranged to donate them to the Soroptimist School in Tijuana. Liz Camp drove a big PDQ Truck to Chula Vista with 60 desks. Tijuana club members drove them across the border. That year before a DCR Conference there were 6 of us who drove across the border to visit the school. We learned their library had few books so Donna Theeck started a book drive and we presented the boxes of books collected at the SIA Convention in Anaheim.



SI WHITTIER CLUB NEWS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS FOR MEMBERS APRIL, MAY AND JUNE



APRIL:

Sandy Gelmini. 4/7
Betsy Angevine. 4/25
Liz Camp. 4/30



JUNE:

Dr. Yani Feliciano 6/8 Sandy Thorstenson 6/18
Becky Romberger 6/13 Cheri Carey 6/24

MAY:

Melanie Bickley. 5/2
Diane Olson. 5/3
Ruthie Flores-Retana. 5/7





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

HIGHLIGHTS OF BUSINESS MEETINGS APRIL - JUNE 2026

Please refer to the Official Meeting Minutes as distributed by President Denise

APRIL 7, 2026

The treasurer's report indicates that the General Fund is in a stable place after successful measures were taken to cushion the cost of lunches at Mimi's Café.

Officers and Directors for 2026-2027 were elected by acclamation.

April Birthdays were celebrated for Liz Camp and Sandy Gelmini

MAY 5, 2026

At the Annual DCR Spring Conference, two of SI Whittier's members were elected to Region Offices. Lorraine Quiroz will serve as Region Secretary for the next biennium and Cynthia Nickell will assume the role of District 1 Director. Congratulations ladies, and thank you for volunteering for these expanded roles in service in the Desert Coast Region!

The May business meeting brings us to the annual Membership Milestone Recognition at which time we celebrate and honor those who reach 5- year incremental years of service, presenting them with award certificates and pins.

It was later discovered that Elaine Kindle, who transferred her membership to SIW a few years ago, has been a Soroptimist for 45 years! Congratulations, Elaine!

Those celebrated today are:

40 years Jan Mericle
20 years Diane Munoz Olson
20 years Katherine L. Dowling
15 years Liz Apodaca
10 years Dr. Judi Henderson
10 years Karen Bjorquist
10 years Lori Eshilian

JUNE 2, 2026

Fun Lunches are coming up during July and August (except for the 1st Tuesday of the month)

Wendy and Susan H will let us know when and where to meet for a casual luncheon somewhere in the Whittier area.



WHITTIER CLUB ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



April 21 - Tuesday in the evening at Soroptimist Village was the Spring Birthday Party celebration hosted by the Village Board



April 25 - 30th Anniversary of the Shelter's Right Hand 5K Walk to benefit the Women's & Children's Crisis Shelter.



May 1-3, 2026 Desert Coast Region Spring Conference



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WHITTIER CLUB ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



Ruthie's Mom joined us to celebrate Ruthie's May birthday, AND she brought the party with her!



JUNE 19 - Soroptimist Village Birthday Party hosted by SI Whittier



JUNE 19 - Annual "CHANGING OF THE GUARD" Joint Board Meeting. Held at Mission Square Restaurant.



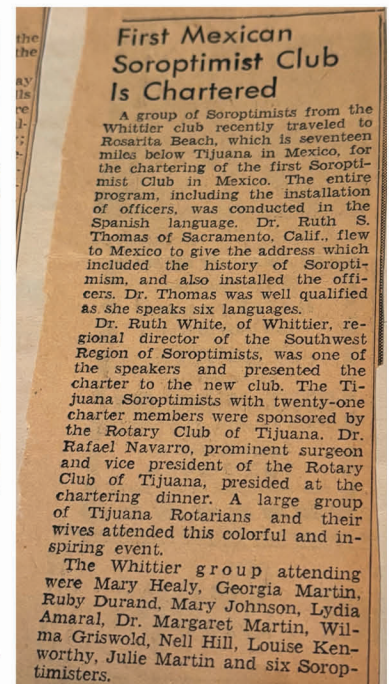
WHITTIER CLUB ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



FINES BINGO NIGHT - JUNE 17 - Club members gathered at the beautiful home of Dolores and Glenn and enjoyed appetizers, desserts and beverages on the lovely patio. Veronica led us in several games of Bingo and all had a fun and relaxing evening together. **AND**, we contributed some needed funds for our Conference Fun which is used for the education and meetings attended by our delegates and others attending Spring Conferences, District Meetings and SIA Conventions!



JUNE 20 - Soroptimist Friendship Link meeting with SI Tijuana-Centro, Tijuana Rio, Tijuana La Mesa and SI Whittier members thanks to SI San Diego Club for hosting! We heard about the various service projects and possible ways we can help in the future. International Goodwill and Understanding is one of the ways we help women and girls both locally and globally! A great time was had by all!





Some Thoughts For Today

"When life gives you Monday, dip it in glitter and sparkle all day."

—ELLA WOODWARD

British food journalist and businesswoman

"Camaraderie doesn't happen by accident; developing a strong sense of trust, accountability, and togetherness around team goals requires intentional effort."

—DON YAEGER

American author

Birthdays are good for you; the more you have, the longer you live