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Soroptimist La Jolla welcomes new officers, new projects

By [Ashley Mackin](#) 4:20 p.m. Aug. 11, 2015

Eradication of human trafficking. Scholarships. Veterans services. These programs, and more, have all received support from Soroptimist International of La Jolla. The service organization held an Installation of Officers dinner Aug. 6 at the Crab Catcher restaurant.

“We are focused on improving the lives of women and girls through charitable work,” said Bonnie Mendenhall, Soroptimist president for 2015-2016. “We fundraise and then spend that money on projects ... but we do not only give money, we give ourselves in (volunteer) service.”

Founded in 1920 as a sister organization to service clubs such as Kiwanis and Rotary (which at the time only allowed men as members), Soroptimist International has expanded to 130 countries. Soroptimist International of La Jolla was established in 1947.

LA JOLLA LIGHT



Parliamentarian Carol Tuggey, secretary Sharilyn Gallison, incoming president Bonnie Mendenhall, director of fundraising Diana Hill, treasurer Rebecca Ritchey, vice-president Gaylyn Boone and outgoing president Kate Woods

Terms of service

Every three years, the La Jolla-based club decides on a service focus, and engages in community partnerships and projects. Past topics have been ending human trafficking and supporting foster children.

This year's focus, Women in the Military, was determined during Soroptimist's outgoing president Kate Woods' 2014- 2015 term, and will be the group's mission through 2017.

For this effort, Soroptimist will partner with Reboot and the Center for Community Solutions. Through Reboot, an organization offering resources to help female veterans transition into

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Incoming president Bonnie Mendenhall receives her President's Pin at the installation dinner.

civilian life, Soroptimist members will serve as mentors and sponsor workshops. With the Center for Community Solutions, they will assist with programs for females in the military, specifically those in need of therapeutic assistance or counseling after leaving the armed forces.

“They need all hands on deck, so we are donating the money and providing the hands,” Woods said. Mendenhall added that members also volunteer at Veterans Hospital women’s health events, to hand out literature and answer questions.

In

partnership with Just in Time for Foster Youth, the Soroptimists raised funds for teens in foster care about to “age out” of the system. Mendenhall said their help bought apartment furnishings for those approaching their 18th birthdays to ease their transition into adult life.

The last service focus helped victims of human trafficking. Soroptimist member Lisa Lindgren said they partnered with the Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition out of National City to renovate the shelter it operates. “We landscaped the facility and



Previous president Jackie Young (right) thanks outgoing president Kate Woods for her service to Soroptimist.

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added a safe playground for the children, to make it feel more secure and more like a home for these women,” she said.

While human trafficking is no longer the club’s three-year focus, Lindgren said, a joint committee of members from Soroptimist clubs across San Diego formed, called Soroptimists Together Against Trafficking (STAT). Members of STAT meet to screen documentaries about trafficking and assemble discussion panels for special events.

Ongoing commitments

In addition to the three-year themes, Soroptimist International of La Jolla funds scholarships.

The Live Your Dream Award is for women at the head of a household who are trying to better their circumstances

The cash gift can be used or childcare.

The Violet Richardson women, ages 14-17, who their communities a better receives a cash award, and donation to her charity of Dream It, Be It project students in grades 10-11 schools, so they may conference on college explained the selected application) will learn college application, put

resume, turn service projects over when they move on to college, and determine their major.

through education. for course expenses



Award recognizes volunteer to make place. The winner Soroptimists make a choice. Next year the will be open to from La Jolla’s high attend a one-day preparedness. Woods students (by how to complete a together a college

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Becoming a member

Longtime Soroptimist Carol Tuggey explained there are varying levels of membership, starting with a supporting group known as The Jewels, and continuing up to lifetime members. Prospective members are encouraged to attend a meeting to get an understanding of what the club is all about, she said. Annual dues are \$140, plus monthly dues.

