



## Governor's May Message

Conference was amazing in so many ways. We learned many things about stress prevention, addressing life's transitions and got to play BIG drums. We conducted Founder Region's business in an efficient and professional way and were updated on all things Soroptimist. We also awarded funds to eight women in the last year of their doctoral studies, five women who are changing their lives, and five younger women making a difference in their communities. These will help these amazing individuals build their dreams and achieve economic empowerment. Be proud of that and keep those memories firmly in your mind when things are hard.

The time is now to recommit yourself to Soroptimist. Attend one of our Leadership Trainings in June. Learn about the new Code of Conduct. Help your club plan what comes next.

As always, remember YOU matter and YOU are important.

*Governor Elise*

## Upcoming Dates to Remember:

June 6, 2026 — Leadership Training, Concord June 13,

2026 — Leadership Training, Eureka June 14, 2026 —

Memorial Grove

June 23, 2026 — SIA Leadership Round Table (LRT)

June 26, 2026 — Leadership Training via Zoom

### Typhoon Relief

**Any clubs or members interested in sending assistance to SI/Guam or SI/Northern Mariana Islands should reach out to the clubs directly to see what is needed. The contact information can be found in the Founder Region Roster.**

## Pillar Reports

### FUNDRAISING PILLAR- Joy Swank, Chair

#### Raffle Baskets — Yay Us!

**\$12,000+**

Raised on raffle baskets

**2**

Members advanced a Laurel level

**1**

Club awarded a Laurel to a member

What a success! Our raffle baskets brought in over \$12,000, a tremendous result made possible by the creativity and dedication of our clubs. The updated treasurer procedures, shaped by your feedback from last year, made the process even smoother. Super job all around, and a special shoutout to our SIA Official Visitor Sec./Treas. Gail, who was so impressed she bought tickets herself! And...she even bought an ad in the official program.

*"Small amounts mount up before you know it. Please consider joining the Laurel group, becoming a Stargazer with monthly donations, or giving monthly to Fellowship. Every contribution advances our mission."*

See all giving information on the website. Thank you for everything you do to promote our mission.

### MEMBERSHIP PILLAR- Angie Haramoto, Chair

#### Infusing JOY into Membership!

Close your eyes for a moment. Think back to a time you felt pure, uncomplicated joy — happiness, delight, surprise! New experiences enrich the way time feels. Our recent conference presentation explored how clubs can harness joy as a strategic tool for stronger membership, richer programs, and more inspired fundraising.

*"New experiences enrich the way time feels. When we bring genuine surprise and delight into our meetings, we don't just retain members — we create memories."*

How to add joy: change things up! From membership to program to fundraising. Give new members a warm and supportive welcome. Celebrate members' hard work and contributions at meetings, in newsletters, on social media. Let members who are knowledgeable share their knowledge. Have fun — have a costume or theme day!

### Questions for Your Club

- What would work well for our club, given our unique culture and membership?
- What are members most excited about right now? How can we amplify that energy?
- What does our club already do that brings joy — and how can we do more of it?
- Where in our program calendar could a surprise moment make the biggest impact?

## PROGRAM PILLAR-Jackie De Vries, Chair

Founder Region clubs have made an incredible impact this year through the Live Your Dream Awards, Dream It, Be It and Big Goal Accelerator Projects. Thanks to your hard work and dedication, women and girls throughout our communities are receiving support, encouragement, and educational opportunities that can truly change lives.

This year, clubs across Founder Region achieved outstanding success with the Live Your Dream Awards program by recruiting applicants, raising funds, and honoring women working toward economic empowerment through education.

We are also excited to celebrate that Founder Region clubs have already completed and funded 25 Big Goal Accelerator Projects so far this year, helping move Soroptimist closer to our Big Goal of helping half a million women and girls gain access to education by 2031.

Please remember that all Dream It, Be It reports and Big Goal Accelerator Project reports must be submitted by June 30.

Thank you to every member and club for your compassion, service, and commitment to empowering women and girls.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS PILLAR- Sue Pretzer, Chair

**It's May and time to say heartfelt thanks to all outgoing officers of Founder Region Clubs! And Congratulations to all incoming officers for 2026-2027!**



We say THANK YOU to each of you for helping to share the Soroptimist story— amplifying the impact of our clubs and inspiring others to dream big. As we celebrate all we've accomplished together, take a moment to reflect on the incredible work you've supported and shared across your regions. **Why not use this graphic at a Club Meeting to share your "Soroptimist Why" with family, friends, or potential new members.**

## DIRECTORS' REPORTS

### From Across the Region

#### DISTRICT I- Director Laura Koehler

##### An Amazing Conference

From the singing bowl anthem to the Diablo Taiko drummers, this year's conference inspired from start to finish. Speakers brought new insights on women's and children's mental health. The Friday scholarships and Sunday awards fully embodied our Soroptimist mission. Looking forward to supporting the newly elected boards in the biennium ahead!

#### DISTRICT II-Director Dana Holve

##### Pillars of Success

A heartfelt thank you to every club that participated in the Pillars of Success Poster Session. Your fresh ideas and passion for Soroptimist's mission were truly on display. Thank you for the privilege of serving you this past year. The new biennium holds so much promise as we continue empowering women and girls.

### **DISTRICT III-Director Nancy Koski**

Founder Region's 50<sup>th</sup> Conference was a chance to see old friends and new. It was exciting to see first-time Conference attendees making new contacts and getting a broader picture of the range and scope of all we do as Soroptimists. Thank you to all the clubs who brought your Pillars of Success Posters to inspire us all. Four of the top five Julia Bess Combs Membership Increase Awards went to District III clubs! Congratulations to SI/Mendocino-Sonoma Coast, SI/Novato, S/I Clear Lake, and SI/Calistoga! AND, we had elections for officers of Founder Region and Fellowship Boards. The new officers are covered in this newsletter, with a special Thank You to District III Delegates who voted to keep Yours Truly as your District Director for 2026-2028!

### **DISTRICT IV- Director Crystal Arbuthnot**

#### **An Exciting and Impactful Season**

SI/Willits has had a remarkable year. Three incredible recipients were honored through the Live Your Dream Awards, and their March 29 Easter Bunny Photo Event brought joy to local families while raising valuable program funds.

Looking ahead, High School Senior Scholarships will be awarded in June. Their long-running Community Phone Book fundraiser also serves as a powerful Public Awareness tool. Thank you, the Live Your Dream Awards,

### **DISTRICT V-Teri Sato**

We had 18 District V Soroptimists at the Founder Region conference! Your Delegates or President should be updating your clubs. Friday was Women's Mental Health and Fellowship Awards. Saturday Fellowship meeting, President's Procession and voting for new Founder Region Board Members and Fellowship Board Members. Congratulations to Lisa Ma, SIH, who will be our 2026-2028 District V Director and Teri Lynn Sato, SIWFI, as DV Fellowship Director. We heard from SIA CEO Michelle Burnett! Saturday evening was installation of the new Boards. New Fellows, Laurel Society, Club Givings, BGAP were recognized this weekend as well! Mahalo for your Club Posters to display and for the President's Procession! You are all so creative! Mahalo DV!

### **LIVE YOUR DREAM REPORT- Maida Herbst, Chair**

#### **Our Highest Numbers Ever**

<b>128</b>	<b>\$274,750</b>	<b>\$300,000+</b>
Women awarded in 25/26	Awarded by Founder Region clubs	Grand total incl. SIA awards

What an extraordinary achievement. For the 2025/26-year, Founder Region clubs awarded 128 women a total of \$274,750, our highest numbers ever in both awards and dollars. Add the \$27,000 awarded by SIA and Founder Region at the May 3 conference, and our grand total surpasses \$300,000.

*"Founder Region clubs, you put the puzzle together. You are making a real difference in the lives of women and their families on the road to economic empowerment."*

#### **LYD Application Portal Opens August 1, 2026 — Start Recruiting Now!**

- Find head-of-household women who are back in school or in job training.
- Women earning their GED are also eligible.
- Refer candidates now so they receive a reminder when the portal opens.
- Referral link: <https://bit.ly/4c3OjUf>

### **DREAM IT, BE IT-Jackie Arnold, Chair**

#### **Finish the Year Strong!**

As this Soroptimist year draws to a close, it's time to get those Dream It, Be It project reports submitted! The deadline is approaching fast, and we want to celebrate every amazing initiative happening across our clubs.

#### **Deadline approaching!**

Submit your Dream It, Be It project reports soon! The Founder Region Conference was a beautiful reminder of why this work matters — new faces and longtime friends united around a shared commitment to empowering girls in our communities. Thank you for your dedication all year long. Let's bring it home!

## “S” Club- Dawn Shepherd, Chair

### Hello and Happy May!

What an amazing few days at Conference! It was wonderful to see so many Soroptimists come together — from meeting our Fellowship Award winners and learning about their doctoral plans, to hearing the heartfelt and inspiring journeys of our S-Club, Violet Richardson, and Live Your Dream recipients. The energy and commitment in that room was truly something special.

*"We went from meeting Fellowship Award winners sharing their doctoral dreams to hearing the inspiring journeys of our S-Club and Live Your Dream recipients — all in one unforgettable conference."*

## “S” Club Outstanding Senior Award

### Congratulations, Alyssa Boham!

#### Alyssa Boham

Alyssa is a senior at St. Bernard's Academy in Eureka and has been an active S-Club member for three years. She has been active in both her school and community in service and leadership, organizing sock drives for the less fortunate and serving meals at the Community Dining Hall.

**School: St. Bernard's Academy, Eureka | Years in “S”-Club: 3 | Focus: Community Service & Leadership**

SI/Humboldt Bay is incredibly proud of Alyssa and all she has accomplished — and so is all of Founder Region. Alyssa is a shining example of what S-Club is all about.

If you have not planned an installation for your incoming S-Club officers, now would be the time. Remember, it can be as simple as attending their meeting to install the new officers, or more involved such as hosting a lunch for them. Thank you to all of our S-Club Liaisons — you are truly appreciated!

#### Installation Ideas for “S” Clubs

Keep it simple by attending their regular meeting to install new officers — or go bigger and host a lunch in their honor. Either way, your presence makes a lasting impression on these future leaders.

## SIA UPDATES

### News from SIA

Through our combined efforts, we are achieving our Big Goal of helping make the dreams of half a million more women and girls come true by 2031!



#### SIA Updates

- Read SIA's 2024-2025 Annual Report, available in all federation languages, for a comprehensive look at our organization, mission and impact.
- May 28 is World Menstrual Hygiene Day! Join us by supporting the Soroptimist UpliftHER initiative to take action on period poverty.



#### **Founder Region Election Results**

Governor-elect-Kristal Koga  
Secretary-Jan Schults  
Treasurer-Holly Hayashi  
District I Director- Jennifer Chiarelli  
District II Director-Dana Holve  
District III Director-Nancy Koski  
District IV Director-Crystal Arbuthnot  
District V Director-Lisa Ma

#### **Fellowship Election Results**

President- Kay Kelley  
Treasurer-Cara Begley  
District I Director-Kenya Broadnax  
District II Director-Debi Schrader  
District III Director-Nancy Weber  
District IV Director-Loretta Tognoli  
District V Director-Teri Lynn Sato



## FELLOWSHIP REPORT

### “Solving Puzzles by Degrees”

Greetings Founder Region,

Our Friday night gala at Conference was a truly inspiring evening as we awarded eight recipients with \$10,000 each; our plan had been seven awards, but thanks to the generous donation from SI/East Bay, we were able to give an additional award. Seven recipients attended in person and were amazed at the support and encouragement from our Soroptimist members in attendance. Our eighth awardee sent in her video as she was unable to attend because of a prior commitment. To date, Founder Region Fellowship has provided 393 women with over 2 million dollars in funding to help them achieve their doctoral degrees!

Treasurer Danelle is still busy tallying up our profits from the weekend, but from the looks of it, I think we did very well, which is a boost for the awards for next year. I will post our earnings and a list of Fellow winners in next month's newsletter.

Elections for the 2026-2028 Fellowship Board occurred on Saturday at Conference. Congratulations to Kay, Cara, Kenya, Debi, Nancy, Loretta, and Teri. I believe that Fellowship will be in good hands for the next two years.

We want to thank each of you who have supported our fundraisers and have made donations over the past two years. Direct donations to become a Fellow and monthly giving are key to continuing our program. Purchases of our T-shirts, puzzle games, pins, and other Fellowship merchandise are another big way you have supported the region's identifying project.

We will continue to promote enrolling in our monthly giving program. This convenient option makes it easier to reach the \$1,000 threshold required for a new Fellow or to level up your current commitment. Enrollment forms are available on our website, or you may use the QR code provided here.

Please contact your Fellowship Director with any questions you may have. She is always ready and willing to help. We are still in office until July 1st.

President Vicki



### Fellowship Board

President—Vicki Ham

Treasurer—Danelle Tegarden

### Fellowship Directors

District I—Amelia Benko

District II—Kay Kelley

District III—Laurie Gallian

District IV—Tess Albin-Smith

District V—Cindy Rasmussen

Website:

[www.founderregionfellowship.org](http://www.founderregionfellowship.org)

Email:

[vickiham01@gmail.com](mailto:vickiham01@gmail.com)

Treasurer Email:

[danelletegarden@gmail.com](mailto:danelletegarden@gmail.com)

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3505 Pine Street, Eureka, CA  
95503



#### OUR MISSION:

To advance the Soroptimist mission by awarding grants to outstanding women in the final phase of their doctoral program within Founder Region.





## Congratulations!

# 2026 Fellowship Award Recipients



2026 Recipients (left to right):

**Arianna Bunnell**—Computer Science, University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Josefa (Sefa) Munoz**—Marine Biology, University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Leyi (Joy) Zhou**—Social Work/Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley

**Breanna Bullard**—Clinical Psychology, University of California, Berkeley

**Allie Hall**—Fungal Ecology, University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Johanna Reyes Ortega**—Political Science, University of California, Berkeley

**Kuuleianuhe Awo-Chun**—Education, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Not pictured: **Sara Stone**—Educational Leadership, University of California, Berkeley