

## FOUNDER REGION, SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS

# Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award Club Instructions

## Program Description

The award honors Violet Richardson, president of the first Soroptimist club, whose lifelong commitment to volunteering reflected her indomitable spirit and sense of personal responsibility. In her honor, it's given to girls pursuing leadership through volunteer service.

The Violet Richardson Award recognizes young women ages 14–18 who identify an issue in their community and address it through volunteer action. Beyond recognition, the program gives recipients leadership opportunities to continue their work as community leaders.

Leadership means identifying a social, political, or economic need — locally or globally — and taking action to address it. Applicants don't need to have founded a nonprofit or achieved something extraordinary; taking a first step toward making a difference is itself a sign of leadership.

Awards recognize volunteer activities only. Projects may address issues such as homelessness, violence, drug abuse, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, or pollution.

Projects that benefit women or girls are especially valued — topics may include mentoring, sexual harassment, period poverty, teen parenting, careers, or finances, among others.

The award is based solely on volunteer work and leadership qualities — an opportunity to honor a girl who might not otherwise be recognized. She's committed to making the world better.

## Who is the Violet Richardson Award Honoree?

- A young woman who is caring, compassionate, creative and most of all committed to making the world a better place.
- A young woman who has shown leadership and initiative both in identifying a problem and in trying to solve it.
- A young woman who has had significant and noteworthy accomplishments as a volunteer.

## Eligibility

- Applicants must be young women 14 to 18 years of age.
- Applicants must be engaged in volunteer activity.
- Soroptimist members, SIA employees, and their immediate families (spouse/partner, parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren by adoption, blood, or marriage) are not eligible.

## Founder Region Program Timeline

**August/September:** Club posts the application on its website or sends letters with the application.

**December 15:** Club application deadline.

**December–January:** Club-level judging.

**January–February:** Club informs applicants of the club's decision.

**February 1:** Application (and Media Consent form) due to District Representatives for District judging.

**February 16:** Clubs are notified of the District Winner by the Program Chair.

## How the Program Works

Local clubs solicit applications in their communities, then hold a judging session to select their club award recipient.

Honorees may receive a certificate or local newspaper recognition. Clubs may also give a cash award, in her honor, to the organization where she volunteers most. Teens especially value public recognition — and clubs benefit from the attention too, so it's worth the extra effort.

Recipients should also get leadership opportunities within the club — research shows a strong link between opportunity and aspiration. A great option: invite her to join your “Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls” advisory group, which builds her skills and gives your club a valuable partner.

## Website Resources

All materials your club needs are available in the Service Programs: [Violet Richardson Award](#) section of the Founder Region website, including:

### Club Participation

Violet Richardson Award Application

Violet Richardson Award Club Instructions

Violet Richardson Award Certificate (writable)

Violet Richardson Award FAQ

### Public Awareness

Violet Richardson Award Information Poster (writable)

Media Consent Form

## Club Instructions

### Step 1: Appoint a Chair

### Step 2: Determine the Award the Club Will Give

Decide what type of award the club will give before communicating with the public or applicants. Since this recognizes volunteer action and leadership rather than funding education, a monetary award to the girl isn't necessary, but most clubs do give a monetary award.

Consider instead a gift that supports her volunteer work, or a donation to her organization, and recognize her at a club meeting or special event.

### Step 3: Prepare the Application for Distribution

The application is available as a writeable PDF, located on the Founder Region website: [LINK]. Clubs can email it to partner organizations or applicants directly, who then complete and return it by email. [LINK](#)

**Add club contact information** on the application before posting to your club website or emailing it to applicants. Consider posting to your club website or Facebook page using a QR code.

### Step 4: Distribute the Applications

In addition to posting on the club website and Facebook you will want to reach out to local non-profits for them to distribute to volunteers who fit the criteria. Applications can be emailed to religious facilities, community centers, libraries, schools, and businesses — though volunteer organizations are often the best source, since their administrators can refer exactly the kind of young woman the award targets.

### Step 5: Schedule Selection of the Honoree

Schedule the selection process and invite panelists.

### Step 6: Obtain Publicity for the Program

The award helps brand Soroptimist as an organization improving the lives of women and girls. Building that recognition requires strong, consistent publicity at the community level, including:

- Publicizing to the local media, nearby schools and community organizations about the availability of applications.
- Providing information about the program on the club website (if applicable).
- Selecting local, prominent non-Soroptimists to serve on the judging panel, such as members of the media, school officials, dignitaries or other leaders in the community.
- Publicizing the program and the club's recipient to the local media and her school.

### Step 7: Select an Honoree

The honoree may be selected by a panel of Soroptimist members or non-members — three or five is recommended. See the interview questions and evaluation form later in this packet.

### Step 8: Acknowledge Applicants

Send each applicant a brief note thanking her, congratulating her on her efforts, and letting her know another applicant was selected.

### Step 9: Recognize the Club Honoree

Recognize the honoree at a club meeting, a special event, or combined with Live Your Dream and Ruby Award recognition.

### Step 10: Provide Recipients with Leadership Opportunities (optional)

Simple ways clubs can foster confidence and provide leadership opportunities:

- Have the recipients serve as an advisor to the club when conducting a girl-focused project, such as Dream It, Be It or “S” Club projects.
- Ask past award recipients to serve as judges for the award in subsequent years.
- Invite recipients to present their work at meetings, conferences, or events beyond the award ceremony, giving them practice speaking about their work in front of others.

## SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Ms. Jones,

Do you know a young woman between 14 and 18 who shows leadership as a volunteer in your community or school — someone who sees challenges as opportunities and believes in the power of volunteer action? She may be eligible for a Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award.

The Violet Richardson Award is Founder Region/Soroptimist International of the Americas’ leadership and volunteer recognition program for teen girls. Soroptimist International of Anytown is one of over 1,000 clubs worldwide whose members volunteer to improve the lives of women and girls.

The award recognizes young women who make their community and world better through volunteer work — not necessarily by founding a nonprofit or achieving something extraordinary, but simply by taking a first step. Volunteer work benefiting women or girls is of particular interest.

Attached is an application — please forward it to any young women you know who volunteer in their community. Our club’s contact information is included so applicants can submit directly to us. Thank you for taking a moment to help recognize a deserving young woman.

Thank you for your time and support. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Diane Banks, Chair

Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award, Soroptimist International of Anytown

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## Violet Richardson Award Personal Interview Guidelines

Clubs can decide whether to conduct personal interviews. While optional, interviews are a great way to gain more information than the application alone provides, and they give girls the opportunity to hone their interview skills.

Begin with easy background and interest questions to help her relax.

- Where do you go to school?
- What are your hobbies?

The remaining questions can focus on her application — ask her to elaborate on her essay or fill in any missing details. These can include:

- Provide an example of a time when you served in a leadership capacity.
- Why do you volunteer?
- How many hours per week do you volunteer?
- Why did you select the organization where you volunteer?
- What is your greatest accomplishment as a volunteer?
- What is your greatest strength as a volunteer?
- How do you think your work, and the work of your organization, helps the community?
- Are there any skills you have learned from volunteering that you think you will use later in life?
- What was your best moment as a volunteer?
- What is your vision of yourself as a future leader?

The final questions can be for the club's information:

- What did you think of this selection process?
- How do you think volunteer leaders like yourself, and other girls should be recognized by their community?

**End on a positive note — tell the applicant how impressed the club is with her and her work.**



## Evaluation Rubric – Violet Richardson Award

**Applicant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Basic Requirements: (A no answer disqualifies the applicant.)**

1. The application is complete, and name is typed on signature line or is signed:  YES  NO
2. The applicant is between the ages of 14 and 18 as of December 31.  YES  NO

### **A. Impact on Women and Girls – 30 Points Possible** **Score** \_\_\_\_\_

- **30 Points:** The applicant’s volunteer work *exclusively* benefits women and girls.
- **20–29 Points:** The applicant works with an organization that serves both genders, but their specific role significantly impacts women and girls (e.g., tutoring girls, mentoring female peers, organizing girl-focused activities).
- **0–19 Points:** Minimal or unclear impact on women and girls.

*Note: The organization may serve both males and females, but the applicant's **direct impact** on women/girls must be clearly demonstrated.*

### **B. Leadership Qualities – 30 Points Possible** **Score** \_\_\_\_\_

- **30 Points:** Strong leadership is evident through stated responsibilities, initiative, and roles (e.g., team leader, organizer, mentor). Leadership is supported in both the application and reference letter.
- **20–29 Points:** Leadership is present but not consistently highlighted across the application and reference.
- **0–19 Points:** Limited or no leadership demonstrated.

### **C. Initiative and Community Need – 30 Points** **Score** \_\_\_\_\_

- **30 Points:** The applicant identified a need and **created their own program or organization** to address it.
- **20–29 Points:** The applicant joined an existing organization that addresses a community need, and they made a meaningful contribution.
- **0–19 Points:** No clear identification of need or evidence of initiative beyond participation.

### **D. Positive Influence and Inspiration – 10 Points** **Score** \_\_\_\_\_

- **10 Points:** Clearly states that the applicant is an inspiration to others, especially girls, and provides examples of the applicant’s positive influence.
- **5–9 Points:** Implies positive influence but lacks strong examples or specific wording.
- **0–4 Points:** Does not mention applicant's impact on or inspiration to others.

**TOTAL SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_ **OUT OF 100 Possible Points**

Name of Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_