

NEWS RELEASE

Soroptimist International of the TriCities Donates Over \$18,000 to Women & Community Organizations

7th Annual Women's Recognition Awards a Huge Success

Port Moody, BC, Canada – February 26, 2007 – Soroptimist International of the TriCities was pleased to give away over \$18,000 at yesterday's 7th Annual Women's Recognition Awards Luncheon. With six worthy women to honor and financial grants going to three community organizations, the 200 people in attendance were also treated to keynote speaker Janneke Lewis, speaking on "Human Trafficking" and Soroptimist Western Canada Governor Patti Dolan, speaking on "Project Independence" in Rwanda.

"It is volunteer organizations like Soroptimist that make communities thrive. I'm proud to attend this event and bring greetings from the premier" said Harry Bloy, MLA for Burrquiltam. "It's encouraging to see organizations like this help women and girls overcome obstacles in life and then go on to make a difference for others in the community."

Other notables in attendance included award winners, emcee Maureen Molloy from Global TV, MLA's Mike Farnworth and Diane Thorne; Coquitlam Mayor Maxine Wilson, Acting Port Moody Mayor Megan Lahti, Acting Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore; Port Coquitlam Councilors Michael Wright and Mike Forrest; Coquitlam Councilor Richard Stewart; and Port Moody Councilor Diana Dilworth.

A variety of club fundraisers, combined with grants from the BC Government's Direct Access Program, enabled Soroptimist International of the TriCities to sponsor this event, the award programs and grants to community organizations. "Funds from the 90 silent auction prizes and raffle go directly back into the TriCities communities," said Soroptimist International of the TriCities President, Dana Martin. "We thank all who support this event, whether by attending or so generously donating fabulous prizes."

Award Winners

The **Making a Difference for Women Award** honors women who work to improve the lives of women and girls through their personal volunteer or professional efforts. This year's winner was PJ Borghardt, a lifelong volunteer & current BC Camping Advisor with Girl Guides. \$500 will be donated to Girl Guides Canada on PJ's behalf. Honorable mention in this award category went to Dr. Shauna Little, Board Chair of Pacific Post Partum Society and the Honorary Lifetime Chair of the Board of Directors of New View Society.

The **Violet Richardson Award** recognizes girls 14-17 whose volunteer efforts help to make the community and world a better place. 1st place went to Aaria Rahim who volunteers with "Teens Transforming the Community" and many other organizations. She received \$500 for educational pursuits, and her cause will also receive \$500. Honorable mentions went to Humaira Haidary who spends significant time with MY Circle Action Team and to Janelle Eichel who donates her time to Timberline Ranch.

The **Women's Opportunity Award** gives women the chance to make a better life for themselves and their families through increased access to better education. This award went to Mini Varghese, who has overcome language barriers, poverty and abuse, and is on her way to accomplishing her goal of becoming a nurse; she was granted \$1,500. The Curves on Austin Street in Coquitlam also raised funds and contributed \$1,483 to Ms. Varghese educational goals as well.

"I'm so thankful to be honored by Soroptimist," award recipient Mini Varghese commented. "Their financial help and more importantly, their recognition that what I am doing is worthwhile, will help me achieve my goal of becoming a psychiatric nurse."

Community Organization Grants

Soroptimist International of the TriCities was also pleased to be able to grant funds to the following organizations:

- Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education Society – \$7,000
- Pacific Post Partum Support Society – \$6,500
- Children of the Street Society – \$1,000

In addition, a raffle was held, with proceeds of \$885 going to Ridge Meadows Women's Center.

About Soroptimist

Soroptimist International is a worldwide organization for women in management and the professions, working through service projects to improve the lives of women and girls in our communities and throughout the world. Almost 100,000 Soroptimists in 120 countries and territories contribute time and financial support to community-based projects. The TriCities club has been involved with numerous community projects and agencies, and encourages female leaders to join the club. For more information, please visit www.wcsoroptimist.org or www.soroptimist.org.

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