



## Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award Frequently Asked Questions

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Information and materials for clubs to participate in the Violet Richardson Award program are available in the program section of the members' area of the Soroptimist website. In the Club Instructions, clubs will find step-by-step instructions to administer the program, including tips for finding applicants, the judging sheet and a club transmittal form. Also available are sample public relations materials such as a fact sheet, pitch letter and news releases to members of the media. Questions about the program can be sent to [program@soroptimist.org](mailto:program@soroptimist.org).

### **Is the Violet Richardson Award a scholarship?**

The Violet Richardson Award is not a scholarship. Rather it is an award to honor girls for their volunteer service in their community. The girls honored by the Violet Richardson Award need not be the smartest girls in school or outstanding athletes or active in other school activities. Instead, they should be girls who have identified a problem in their communities or the world and have worked hard to address the problem. Because this is not a scholarship, schools are not always the best places to look for candidates. Clubs should consider expanding their search for applicants to local non-profit organizations or other places where girls might volunteer.

### **What are the age limits for this program?**

The girl must be between the ages of 14 and 17 on the deadline for the award. In other words, the deadline for the club award is December 1. The recipient must be between the ages of 14 and 17 on December 1 of the year that she applies.

### **Why is the age limit 14 to 17?**

Some clubs in the United States voice concern that 18 year old girls are not eligible for the Violet Richardson Award. This program was designed to focus on the girl-child and an 18 year old (possibly 19 when receiving a region or federation award) is no longer a girl child. Furthermore, it is important that the Violet Richardson Award not be confused with a scholarship and that applicants come from a pool of girls who are committed volunteers. Eighteen year old girls are often looking for scholarship money for college. Advertising in schools increases the chances that the program is mistaken for a scholarship. Finally, school ages and grades are different in each country and clubs are urged to look for applicants through non-profit agencies where girls volunteer rather than to advertise only in schools.

### **Are clubs required to give money to the winner and the charitable organization of her choice?**

The club is not obligated to give award money to the winner or her charitable organization. Focus groups that were conducted when designing the award found that teenage girls were very motivated by public recognition for their work. Clubs are encouraged to put an extra effort into public recognition of their honoree. An honoree may receive certificates or recognition in the local newspaper. This award was not designed as a scholarship, but rather a recognition program. The recipient may appreciate a cash award given in her honor to the organization, agency or charitable organization where she is most active.

**Why is the eligibility limited to only girls?**

The mission of Soroptimist International of the Americas is to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world. SIA does not discriminate against boys or men, but rather chooses to focus on the special concerns of women and girls.

**Is the Violet Richardson Award application available on the web site?**

The Violet Richardson Award materials are not available on the Soroptimist website. This program is only available to girls in areas where there are participating Soroptimist clubs. For this reason, Soroptimist headquarters does not distribute or accept applications. The materials are professionally designed and printed, and originals should be distributed in local communities. Downloading the materials or copying them denigrates the professionalism of the program and the materials.

**How do I get applications for the Violet Richardson Award?**

Clubs can order applications at any time from SIA headquarters. An order form is available for downloading from the program section of the members' area of the Soroptimist website or interested clubs can email [siahq@soroptimist.org](mailto:siahq@soroptimist.org).

**Are "S" Club members eligible for the award?**

"S" Club members are eligible for the Violet Richardson Award. However, in order to avoid any sign of impropriety, if clubs have members of their "S" club competing for the Violet Richardson Award, they should use judges who are not Soroptimists. The honoree should also be encouraged to give her donation (should she receive one) to a different charitable organization, rather than donating back to her "S" Club.

**How can clubs gain publicity for the Violet Richardson Award?**

Sample publicity materials are available in the program section of the members' area of the Soroptimist website. Materials include a sample fact sheet, news release and pitch letter that clubs can customize with local contact information to help spread the word about the Violet Richardson Award program in their local communities. Also included is a calendar outlining when clubs should participate in various publicity activities.

To maximize potential media exposure, clubs should hold a ceremony to honor their award recipient that coincides with International Women's Day, March 8 (March is also Women's History Month in the U.S.). Make it a more prestigious event by also recognizing the club's Women's Opportunity Award and Making a Difference for Women Award recipients at the same time. Invite local dignitaries to participate in the awards gala.