

# SOROPTIMISTS IN ACTION

WESTERN CANADA REGION NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2021

## 2021-2022 Board

### Governor:

Suzanne Heron  
(SI Victoria Westshore)

### Governor-Elect:

Chari Grant  
(SI Tri-Cities)

### Treasurer:

Donna Duvall  
(SI Abbotsford-Mission)

### Secretary:

Jayne Carre  
(SI Edmonton)

### Member at Large:

Susan Barber  
(SI Chilliwack)

### Parliamentarian:

Colleen Schmidt  
(SI Abbotsford Mission)

## 2020-2022 Chairs

### Program:

Angela Bunting

### Dream It Be It:

Colleen Penrowley

### Live Your Dream:

Angela Bunting

### Public Awareness:

Shirley Stewart

### Fundraising:

Heather Rollins

### Membership:

Linda Cunliffe

### Celebrating Success:

Anna Der

### Advocacy:

Janneke Lewis

### Friendship Link:

Darlene Jamieson

## From the Governor's Desk

Gratitude.

What a difference gratitude makes - in my perspective, in the other person's, in the energy in the room.

Most of you know my husband Dolf has been in hospital for almost 4 months. He and I make a point of showering the exhausted staff with gratitude, please-and-thank-you with every request, sympathy when they are short-staffed. When we are particularly exasperated with The System, we practice the Gratitude Game, taking turns. Sometimes it takes lots of turns, but eventually we both feel lighter and more patient.

I'm feeling our Region's collective frustration with seemingly endless months of Zooming, difficulties in reaching new people, delivering programs, staying connected. So it seems like a great time to play the Gratitude Game.

Grateful to Anney Ardiel of SI Victoria Westshore (Chair), Barbara Bell of SI White Rock, Dana Martin of SI Chilliwack, Nicole Cuillierier of soon-to-be Canada West Online, and Wendy Stevenson of SI Surrey Delta, for forming our WCR Social Media Committee! They are ramping up awareness of Soroptimist, our amazing work, the women and girls we serve, the fun we have, throughout our Region...which leads ultimately to more members, more engaged members, more community support - and more empowered women and girls.

Grateful to Catherine Fast of SI TriCities, Colleen Murphy-Beresh of SI Saskatoon, Erin Weber of SI Victoria Westshore, Feezah Jaffer of SI Surrey Delta, Lori Jackson of SI Chilliwack, volunteer Monica Joshi, Veronica Loat of SI North & West Vancouver, Violet Poruchko of SI Surrey Delta (Chair), for breathing new life into our Virtual Career Library with video compressing, editing, interviewing mentors and writing up the website policies we will need. And especially to Ching Shih of SI Vancouver for technical consultations!! This resource will enable us to get hundreds of girls fired up about their futures, and to inform women and schools throughout the Region about Soroptimist.

Grateful to Barbara Thomson, Claudette Fitzsimmons, Janet Stitt, Joan Jackson, Lia Ashbrook, Rhona Beaumont, Sandra Sterling-Weicker, Suz Mandy, and Terry Parent (Chair) of SI Victoria Westshore for putting together a fabulous Region Conference April 28 - 30, 2022 in sunny Victoria - mark your calendars!

Grateful to Dana Martin of SI Chilliwack, Lourdes Rodriguez de Hall & Veronica Loat of SI N & W Vancouver, and Maria Lepeult of SI Victoria Westshore for starting us on the road to Conference 2023. This will make Dana the undisputed champion Conference Chair.

The GEN 4 Committee...our new No Barriers. Period. Committee...the online club group...oh dear there are so many Soroptimists working on increasing membership, public awareness, fundraising, awesome programs, I have not run out of gratitude but out of space. So THANK YOU for all you do, each and every member, for continued dedication and creative problem solving, increasing our collective ability to enable, educate, and empower women and girls.



## Welcome SIA's new Executive Director



Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc., welcomes Michelle J. Burnett, of Wyncote, Pa., as its new Executive Director/CEO. She replaces Soroptimist's long-time Executive Director/CEO, Elizabeth M. Lucas of Lake Bluff, Ill., who resigned in August 2021.

Burnett has served as Soroptimist Chief Operating & Financial Officer since October 2019. In that role, she provided direction, management, and the vision necessary to ensure Soroptimist had the appropriate resources and systems in place to effectively support the organization's growing impact while ensuring its financial strength and operating efficiency.

Since September 2021, Burnett served as the organization's Interim Executive Director/CEO, a position appointed by the Board of Directors in July 2021. In this role, she assumed the additional responsibilities of SIA Executive Director/CEO.

Prior to Soroptimist, Burnett served as chief financial officer at Turning Points for Children, a Public Health Management Corporation affiliate, that brings social and health services to vulnerable youth and families in Philadelphia. While there, she was a key member of the executive leadership team that guided the organization through rapid growth from 70 employees and annual revenue of \$8 million to over 700 employees and annual revenues of \$66 million in less than five years. She began her career in the United States Navy as a Contracting Officer in 1994. Her career includes over 20 years of quasi-government and nonprofit financial management, consulting, and capacity-building experience.

"I am honored and thankful to the board for this opportunity. It has been through many remarkable accomplishments that our leaders, members, and staff have laid a strong foundation over the past 100 years," says Burnett. "I am looking forward to partnering with them as we build on that foundation and position SIA to support and encourage women and girls into the next 100 years. This is an exciting time to be a Soroptimist and I am eager to see what we will accomplish together."

As Soroptimist's Executive Director/CEO, Burnett will guide the overall operations and services provided to members and women and girls worldwide. Working with the Board of Directors, she will craft the organization's strategic direction and ensure resources to scale impact. In addition, she will guide the organization's brand strengthening campaign and efforts to engage more people in the Soroptimist mission.

"We are so pleased to welcome Michelle J. Burnett as our new Chief Executive Officer," says Soroptimist President Kazuko Morita. "As we look forward, we are confident that Michelle's experience and her passion makes her uniquely qualified to help Soroptimist transition into our next chapter and continue to serve our enduring mission as an inclusive, supportive organization .

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## WE'RE LOOKING FOR NEWS!!



The Region Newsletter is an opportunity for clubs to share the great things they are doing! Please feel free to send items to be included in upcoming issues.

If you are able to keep items to 500 or so words that's great – I understand sometimes reports need to be longer so we can work with that! Here are the deadlines for upcoming issue:

Spring 2022 issue: Submissions received by February 18  
Released by March 1 or 2

**Send articles and photos to Public Awareness Chair Shirley Stewart ([mrmackb64@gmail.com](mailto:mrmackb64@gmail.com)).**

## BOARD NOMINATION DEADLINE APPROACHING

This is a gentle reminder that the deadline for nominations to our Board are to be received at this email address by December 15th.

Please remind anyone who is thinking of running to submit their information as soon as possible so that they don't miss the deadline.

Melanie Kenny



## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: SOCIAL MEDIA PACKAGE

**UN Women** has shared with us, this year's 16 Days of Activism package. The United Nations is marking the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence** from **25 November to 10 December 2021**, under the global theme set by the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign: **"#OrangeTheWorld: End Violence against Women Now!"**

**#ORANGE  
THEWORLD**

Nearly 1 in 3 women have been abused in their lifetime. In times of crises, the numbers rise, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic and recent humanitarian crises, conflicts and climate disasters. While pervasive, gender-based violence is not inevitable. It can and must be prevented. Join us in speaking up, **#OrangeTheWorld** to stand against gender-based violence, and let's kick off the #16Days of Activism!

- The social media package is available in English, Spanish and French on Trello: <https://trello.com/b/LazSoGkN>
- You can also download the entire package from Dropbox: <http://unwo.men/ZpmZ30s0U8l>
- The official hashtag is #OrangeTheWorld in English. Please use this in all social media messages.
- The hashtag #16days can be added whenever possible to tap into the broader conversation and activities by partners.
- The hashtags are translated into more than 20 languages and will be activated with an emoji on Twitter starting from 22 November.
- Check out the "How to help end violence against women" face filter on UN Women's Instagram profile and Facebook page.  
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ar/663035664581458/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fbcameraeffects/tryit/663035664581458>
- Change your social media cover photos and orange your profiles on Facebook and Twitter. You can download new banners here: <https://trello.com/c/LWpKO6SF>
- You can also add an orange heart 🧡 next your name and include #orangetheworld and #16days in your bio.

# SI of The Langleys Candlelight Vigil

Submitted by Shirley Stewart, President

Soroptimist International of the Langleys and Ishtar Women's Resource Society have stood together on November 25th for 22 years to show we care.

The 16 days from the International Day to End Violence against women on November 25 through to Human Rights Day on December 10th aims to raise public awareness and mobilize to end violence against women and girls worldwide.

Violence against women and girls is a human rights violations that has been perpetuated for decades. It is pervasive, but not inevitable, that is unless unless we stay silent. We invite the community to speak out, "Orange the World" and break the cycle of abuse during the 16 days of activism.

Over the years, we have been joined by representatives from Ishtar Women's Resource Society; Kwantlen First Nation; MP's and MLA's from Township and City of Langley; as well as the Langley RCMP and the Township of Langley Fire Service.

We thank each of the for their commitment to the women and girls in the Langleys, and around the world who face violence in their lives. While we dream that one day we will not have to have vigils on November 25th, we are proud to be able to stand together to let others know that the Langleys are caring communities.



Club Secretary, Linda Pugh shared a powerful message from Soroptimist Western Canada Region Governor, Suzanne Heron. Soroptimist International President Sharon Fisher also provided an informative message to those gathered, reminding all of the importance of events like this.

Communities have an important role in bringing about solutions to end violence and to providing support to the suffering victims. The men in our lives must be engaged in the process, standing with us as agents of change.

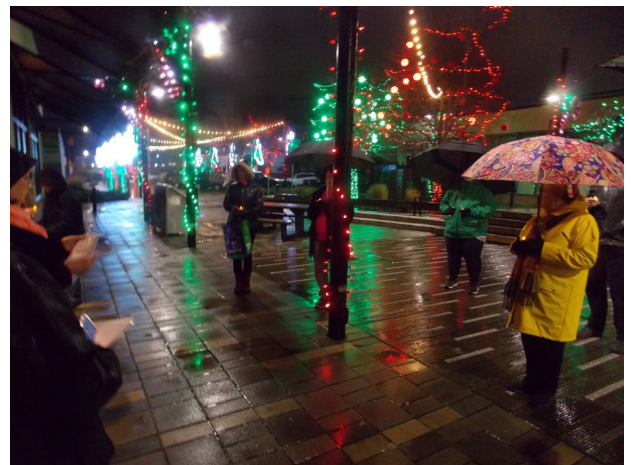
Be the voice for those who can not be heard, speak up when you witness something wrong. It has been said, "I was waiting for somebody to do something, and then I remembered, I am somebody".

**CANDLELIGHT VIGIL**

**ORANGE THE WORLD:**  
*End Violence Against Women and Girls*  
#ORANGETHeworld

**November 25, 2021; 6:00PM**  
(rain or shine)  
**McBurney Plaza**  
**20518 Fraser Highway, Langley**

HOSTED BY SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE LANGLEYS



# **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

*Submitted by Linda Cunliffe, WCR Membership Chair*

Governor Suzanne has ignited the spark to meet her goal of increased new membership within our Region. As a new year approaches (how the heck did that happen so fast???), we are excited to announce two new initiatives that will attract new members AND new sponsors. These unique programs are currently being fine-tuned and will be available for all clubs in early 2022.

## **Soroptimist Leadership Institute:**

The Soroptimist Leadership Institute (SLI) will provide 1 year leadership scholarships to SLI Mentees to create a launching pad for new women leaders. Sponsors will provide a scholarship of \$500 to a Mentee for 1 year. Governor Suzanne defines sponsors as “women with more money than time to help other women, who have more time than money, to empower women and girls through Soroptimist membership” – love it!!!

The Soroptimist Leadership Institute (SLI) is designed to teach leadership concepts to these “Mentees.” If accepted into the program, they will become a sponsored member of a Soroptimist Club. As a member, they will benefit from attending meetings and leadership workshops.

We are planning a series of workshops for the SLI Mentees for them to learn from very inspiring women. In SLI, there will be workshop sessions on topics designed to help our SLI Mentees develop their outlook and skills, and on their way to becoming a respected leader within their community.

## **Corporate Engagement Opportunity (CEO):**

All businesses are concerned with meeting goals, satisfying customers, being good corporate citizens, and demonstrating their active role in the community and that they care. When a business partners with Soroptimist, they will join a global movement to empower women and girls. A partnership with Soroptimist will directly support our advocacy, action, and awareness campaigns by spreading the word or through cause-related marketing. Together we can help every woman and girl reach her full potential.

We are currently working on sponsor packages and benefits that would reflect a business sponsorship level. This opportunity provides benefits to sponsoring businesses which can include but is not limited to:

- Membership in their local Soroptimist club. Based on donation amount, one or more employees may be designated to assume membership for the remainder of the club year.
- Depending on donation commitment, subsidized membership for woman who cannot afford membership fees (i.e. Live Your Dream Award winners, single moms, students, etc.).
- Reduced price for tables and/or complimentary tickets at Soroptimist events, and recognition of the business with table signage.
- Recognition of donation in club publications, club website and social media, at events and all promotion leading to event.
- Increased awareness of the company and networking opportunities within the community through association with the club and its mission to help improve the lives of women and girls.
- Opportunities for all employees to participate in hands-on club projects.
- Morale building by encouraging teamwork among employees outside of the office, and helping employees become more aware of the community at large.

Contact me for more information and sample documents that can be customized for your club.

May you all be Blessed this Christmas season, and may your New Year bring peace, good health, and success to you, your clubs, and your families.

## NO BARRIERS. PERIOD.



Committee Chair Rita Mackenzie (SI Abbotsford-Mission) reports that the committee is finalizing the logo for the **NO BARRIERS. PERIOD.** project.

A detailed information package will be available to all clubs soon with complete details.

A Club Grant of \$300 is available to any club within BC.

To apply for the club grant please complete this Google Form: <https://forms.gle/9LcR1XrhEhy5w6Ar7>



Would you like to be part of the dynamic team that gets to organize the 2023 Western Canada Region Spring Conference?

We are searching for Soroptimists from across the region who want to be involved in planning Conference 2023. Roles that need filling include AV person, memorial chair and dignitary wrangler.

For more information, please email Governor-Elect, Chari Grant at [chari.L.grant2@gmail.com](mailto:chari.L.grant2@gmail.com)

## 2022 Western Canada Region Conference

*April 28 to 30 in beautiful Victoria!*

Watch for information coming to you soon about registration and accommodations. Just think! We may be seeing each other in person finally!! (Fingers crossed!)



Don't forget to be documenting your events, fundraising and activities to submit for the **Celebrating Success Awards**.

This year's deadline for submissions is **June 30**. Only 8 clubs entered in 2020, it would be great to have more clubs participate this year.

If you have questions please contact Celebrating Success Chair Anna Der ([anna.der@siedmonton.org](mailto:anna.der@siedmonton.org))

Period Poverty and  
Public Policy

What next ?

Saturday February 5, 2022  
1 PM PST

**Tickets: Eventbrite**  
<https://bit.ly/3FAOrHF>



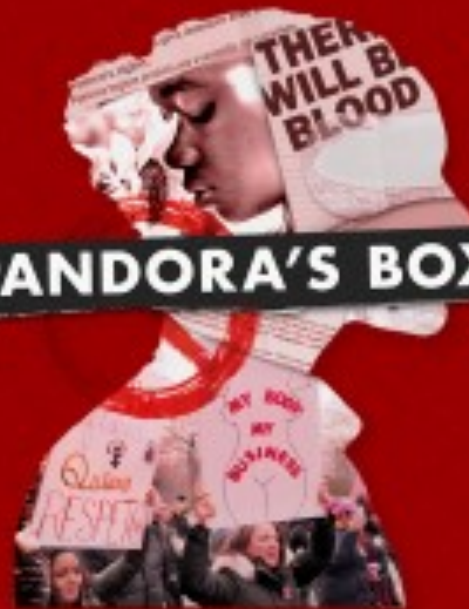
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# SI Central Alberta Purple Light Nights

Submitted by Sherri Smith, President



This November, Soroptimist International of Central Alberta held their annual Purple Light Nights campaign, bringing awareness to domestic violence in our communities. November in Alberta is Family Violence Awareness Month.

Purple Light Nights is an awareness campaign to honor those who lost their lives to domestic violence, to support survivors, and give hope to those still living with abuse. Shine purple lights on porches, trees, bushes, and businesses to say "Domestic Violence has NO place in our community". Shine a light. Save a life.

We are excited to continue to have great support from the many communities in Central Alberta.

Proclamations declaring November to be Family Violence Awareness Month in their community were done by the City of Red Deer, Town of Innisfail, Town of Sylvan Lake and the Town of Blackfalds. Purple lights of all kinds continue to be lit up in the City of Red Deer, Town of Penhold, Town of Sylvan Lake and Town of Blackfalds.



Our Facebook page, **Central Alberta Purple Light Nights**, continues to share articles and posts about family violence, and other agencies and organizations working on this issue. To date, we believe Central Alberta is the only place in Alberta to hold a Purple Light Nights campaign, and have been doing so since 2016.

We sold our Purple Light Night Tshirts, our purple light bulbs and our beautiful purple wreaths. Our member, Sylvia Bouteiller, created a new wreath this year, check out the facebook page!!! The proceeds from the sale of T-shirts and wreaths goes into our Purple Angel Fund. This fund was created to help children who have lost a parent to domestic violence, with educational opportunities they might not be able to afford such as band, school trips, etc.





## Friendship Links

*Submitted by Darlene Jamieson (SI Surrey/Delta), Friendship Link Chair.*

What a busy couple of months many of us have had with attending so many wonderful SI Centenary Celebrations and club charters. I hope you were able to attend a number of virtual celebrations.

How many of you and your clubs have connections through Facebook and other social media with other Soroptimist International clubs, club members, regions and federations? I make a point of sending congratulatory greetings on behalf of my club and SI Western Canada Region Friendship. This is a great way to start a dialogue, connect and reconnect.

If you have a new friendship or renewed friendship links consider sharing the news through social media and let us know on our Western Canada Region Facebook pages or websites. Here is a great example of a friendship link renewal announcement from SI Peterborough Eastern Canada and a look back their history of friendship links. <https://soroptimistpeterborough.ca/2021/05/friendship-link-renewed-with-si-lisburn-ireland/>

Two of my club members, Kim Chauhan and Heather Cross, are in the process of making Friendship links with SI Calcutta India and Trinidad Tobago respectively as they have personal connections with these cities/countries. Do you or your club have a connection with another country?

My thanks to Joan Jackson (Victoria Westshore) and Jayne Carre (Edmonton) for forwarding an email from SI Chatline with a request for a Friendship link with Irene Kolosa of SI KDS King Sabata Dalindyebo club in Mthatha Eastern Cape South Africa. <http://sisannetwork.org/si-ksd>.

Irene has been a Soroptimist for 17 years. If your club does not already have a friendship link in the new African Federation, please consider forming a Friendship link with SI KDS or another club.

I hope or rather challenge each of our clubs to form a connection and/or formal friendship link with a club in each of our five Federations! Let me know if I can help.

I had not heard of the Chatline but with Joan's help I was able to connect with its creator Kate Moore SI Stafford, Midland Chase Region, SIGBI. Join the Chatline by sending an email with your name and club info to [kate@kate-george.co.uk](mailto:kate@kate-george.co.uk). Kate shared the Chatline was launched in 1997-24 years ago in the early days of the internet when most people/groups connected via fax.

International President Elect Hilary Page became interested in the work Kate was doing to assist her late Rotarian husband access the International Computers Users Group of Rotarians. Hilary recognized the potential for extending International Goodwill and Understanding using the internet. She challenged me to 'do the same for Soroptimist,' so I set to work.

It is not a Chat Room. It was a closed E-Mail list which is now a closed Google Group. It has always been open to all Soroptimists at no cost. New members are welcome. It has been used to share ideas, projects, and further friendships, networking between individuals and clubs from around the world.

Since the inception, the Chatline has initiated many worthwhile service projects including:

- A "Limbs for Life Peace Quilt" which toured the world
- The Soropti-sheet programme in Mongolia
- Been involved with several SI South Africa AIDS Projects including the financial support of two young, orphaned girls. Sadly Zandile was murdered by her boyfriend when she was 16, but Kate is in regular contact with the younger girl Buisiswe – now a recording star!
- We were instrumental in obtaining life-saving treatment for the 10-year-old daughter of a Soroptimist in Mongolia – Kate is in regular contact with Bolor
- There is also a 'Chat Line' Ring of Redwood Trees in Soroptimist Grove 8, in Big Basin State Park near San Jose in California.
- Have supported hundreds of Soroptimists, their families, friends, and Club members with our 'multi-faith' prayer chain.

The Chat Line is still going strong with over 300 members worldwide. At all international conventions there is a normally a breakfast gathering where you can meet in person rather than virtually. I can't wait to meet up at the SI Convention -Dublin July 2023.