



SOROPTIMIST®  
Investing in Dreams



March 2021

Volume 3, Issue 3

## President's Message

Calendar

Business Meetings

March 3

April 7

May 5

June 2

June 16

Programs via Zoom

March 10-Giving Committee Awards

March 17-Inspire School of Art & Sciences

April 14-Giving Committee Awards

April 21-Live Your Dream

May 12-North Valley Sparrow Foundation

May 19-Dream It Be It

June 9-Billie's Farewell Meeting



Hello Fellow Soroptimists,

It's hard to believe we are already over halfway through our 2020/2021 club year. It certainly has not been like our past traditional club years, but it has been meaningful and productive. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, SI Chico has continued to be there for our members and our community. The extra challenges this year have provided opportunities for our club members to really shine. Many of our members have taken on new challenges and continue to go above and beyond. This has given extra meaning to our club's "Above and Beyond" Awards.



I would like all our club members to know I appreciate the time and energy they put into making our SI Chico club a success. I would also like to encourage those members who haven't been as active in the club this year, to make a commitment to support our club, our members, and our community. Let's use these last four months of the club year to make a big impact and make a commitment to be there for each other.

SI Chico has already invested **\$43,000** into our local community for our 2020/2021 club year. Despite the pandemic and current restrictions that have been in place, SI Chico is making a "BIG" impact in Butte County. Let's continue to work together these next four months to help improve the lives of women and girls.

With gratitude,

*President Billie*

Here is a recap of all the wonderful things we have accomplished so far this year:

### Community Grants (Local Projects)

- President's Project: Catalyst Domestic Violence  
Funded the Playroom Remodel at Safe Haven      \$6,000
- Girls On the Run      \$1,800
- Chico Science Fair      \$ 500
- ARC of Butte County  
Donated funds for the Playground to make it  
accessible for children of all abilities      \$5,000

**Total given for Community Grants:      \$13,300**



**Continued on next page**

## Recap Continued:

### Scholarships:

• Live Your Dream Awards	\$3,500
• SI Goodwill and Understanding	\$1,000
• Soroptimist Graduate Scholarship	\$1,000
• Soroptimist Aging and Gerontology Education Scholarship	\$1,000
• Butte College Scholarship Foundation	\$1,000
<b>Total given for Scholarships:</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>

### Camp Fire Funds

• Girls on the Run of the North State	\$1,800
• Boys and Girls Club of the North Valley	\$7,500
• Rainforest Art Project	\$6,500
<b>Total given from Camp Fire Funds:</b>	<b>\$15,800</b>

### Bear Fire Fund

• Gift Cards to Bear Fire Survivors	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$6,400</b>

**Total SI Chico has given so far in  
2020/2021 Club Year: \$43,000.00**

## Temporary Pause on Face-to-Face Meetings, Activities, and Travel

By: President Billie Araiza

On January 7, 2021, SIA made the decision to temporarily pause all face-to-face meetings, activities, and travel due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. This went into effect immediately and includes all region conferences, club meetings, and activities until further notice.

With the increase of COVID-19 cases and the new variant, which seems even more transmissible, being reported throughout the Federation and across the U.S. there is no guarantee that complying with local and government guidelines will prevent our SIA members, staff, stakeholders, or the general public from bodily harm or death. Only by temporarily suspending face-to-face activities, can SIA say they are doing everything possible to protect individuals and SIA as an organization.

This is a temporary pause and the federation board will continue to evaluate the changing conditions of this global pandemic. They will remove the temporary pause once it is safe for us to be together again in person. Until then, let's continue to support each other in creative ways, so we can continue supporting women and girls in our community and internationally. More information on the temporary pause can be found at:

<https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/whats-new/2021/pause-face-to-face-meetings.html>

Thank you to all our members who have been joining us online for Club meetings, Board meetings, Committee meetings, SUDS, After Hours, and all other club business and activities. I really appreciate our members adapting to the changing rules and regulations while continuing to actively support and participate in our club.

With gratitude,

*President Billie*

## Soroptimist's Sew Girls on the Run Masks for Spring

By SIC Past President Bonnie Chapman



As part of our ongoing partnership with Girls on the Run of the North State, SI Chico volunteers along with help from SI Bidwell Rancho and some friends, have sewn 300 masks for the upcoming season's participants. There were ten volunteers total, who cut and stitched up a bag of 30 t-shirts each. The shirts were leftovers from prior seasons of the program. Making the t-shirts into masks, featuring the GOTR logo is a great way to repurpose the unused shirts that have been sitting in storage. GOTR anticipates enrollment between 250-300 girls for this spring with in-person and virtual options.

In addition to some school-based teams, there will be several community teams meeting at parks around Chico. The community teams will be comprised of girls from all over town. The program has been modified to accommodate social distancing protocols and of course, all the girls and coaches will be masked with the fabulous hand-sewn custom face coverings made by Soroptimists! The end of season celebration 5K run will once again be as a 5K, your way event since the large community based 5K isn't possible yet. Individual teams can opt to run a 5K course together, or participants can run their own home or neighborhood 5K with their running buddy.

GOTR is grateful for the support of Soroptimist. Our financial and hands-on service has made a huge difference in keeping this great program in Butte County. It aligns with our mission, helps to instill confidence in young girls and is also just, so much fun. Thank-you SI Chico for the help and the love!

## Dress-A-Girl

Cyndi Murdoch and Laura Burghardt, Project Co-Chairs



In spite of all our challenges, our hands-on project, Dress a Girl proved to be a success. Thanks to Shari Hopper's connection with Lauri Kaplan and the wonderful folks at illuminaAide, we were able to ship 60+ dresses to SOS Children's Village, a home of orphans and abandoned children in The Gambia. They were received the second week of December. It makes our hearts happy that we were able to accomplish this in the midst of a pandemic.

A big shout out to all those that made this happen:

Shari Hopper, Vanessa Haro & daughter, Bonnie Chapman and friend, Michelle Siracusa, Jeannie Smith, Janet Earl, Carrie Pavis, Gayle Aylward, Billie Araiza, Tonya Powell, Carol Burr, Stephanie Giacobelli, Carla Bee, Erin Krause, Renee Thatford, Roseann Bradley, Laura Burghardt and her friends Merryl Wright and Jenny Marr, Val Bowlby, and Cyndi Murdoch.



We've just received 10 more dresses from our sister club Nara, Japan. They arrived too late to be included in this year's project, but what a great start to our next project.

By President-Elect Sara Beacham



The *Dream It, Be It* program was established by Soroptimist International of the Americas in 2015 to focus on career-readiness for underprivileged girls who want to start careers post-high school. This program was designed for girls ages 14 to 18 who do not have close ties to professional role models and access to career education. Many of the girls served are in the foster care system, have unstable home lives, or live in poverty.

The *Dream It, Be It* program finds life in Chico, California at Fairview High School. This local *Dream It, Be It* program is administered jointly by both Chico clubs – SI Chico and SI Bidwell Rancho. All sessions this year will be virtual after most sessions, except the first one, were canceled in 2020.

Soroptimist International of the Americas relies on local clubs to reach girls through the Dream Programs, like *Dream It, Be It*. This specific program helps girls overcome barriers and obstacles with curriculum designed by SIA. It covers these topics: Discovering Your Dreams, Exploring Careers, Creating Achievable Goals, Rising Above Obstacles, Turning Failure into Success, Balancing Your Stress, and Putting Dreams into Action. SI Chico is responsible for sessions 2, 4, 6, and SI Bidwell Rancho puts together sessions 1, 3, and 5. Together, our clubs celebrate the completion of the program in session 7.

In order for the Dream programs to be a success, all clubs across the globe must work together to change the way we think about delivering our work. SIA implements these programs because they are evidence-based and create a measurable impact on women and girls in our communities. The fiscal year 2019-2020 had an impact on 17,184 girls who participated in *Dream It, Be It* across the world in 12 countries and territories. This program locally, helps the girls at Fairview High School by introducing them to career goals and professional role models, and helps them define career goals confidently.

This program could eventually see major growth, with outreach to Girl Scouts of Northern California and other circles of girls in need in our community. It is up to us to get busy delivering this amazing content. Our club is looking forward to this year's *DIBI*, **but we need help**. If you are interested in hearing more about the *Dream It, Be It* program, how we serve our community, and how you can contribute, please reach out to Sara at [Sara@ChicoBFI.com](mailto:Sara@ChicoBFI.com) or (530) 591-4161. Our club is looking for a *DIBI* coordinator for this year and next year. The program is already written. You just need to show up with a willing heart ready to serve!

**Dream It Be It FY19/20 Impact Infographic on last page**



By Rosie Potestio, LYD Coordinator

Every year, Soroptimist distributes more than \$2.8 million in education awards to about 1,700 women all over the world. The Live Your Dream Award is a unique education focused award for women who provide the primary financial support for their families and are enrolled in an undergraduate program or a vocational school.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- That 86% of the Live Your Dream Award recipients completed their education and improved their standard of living for themselves and their family.
- That 74% of LYD recipients who completed their educational degree or certification secured higher-paying employment.
- That 93% of recipients report the award has increased their self-esteem.

SI Chico generally awards three Live Your Dream awards annually. This year the first-place winner received \$1,500 and the two runner-up winners received \$1,000 each. The application for our first place winner has been sent on to The Sierra Nevada Region for additional judging.

You will have a chance to meet our three recipients at our annual Live Your Dream awards program scheduled for April 21, 2021, Zoom style. Yes, it will be different this year, but we still have an opportunity to meet these three young women and let them know how proud we are of them.

Spread the word about Soroptimist's Live Your Dream Awards. The on-line portal for the 2021/2022 award year will open around August 1. The criteria are for a young woman who:

- Provides the primary source of financial support for their family
- Enrolled in an undergraduate or vocational school
- Have a willingness to improve her life and the life of her children.

It has been an honor to facilitate the SI Chico Live Your Dream Awards this year.

Rosie Potestio  
SI Chico  
Live Your Dream Coordinator 2020/2021

## Giving Committee

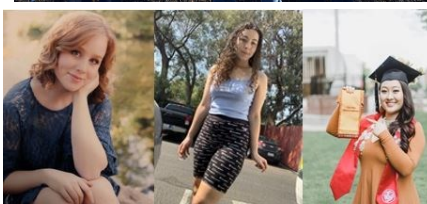
Tri-chairs Kim Huber, Carol Burr & Nancy Hanson



### Soroptimist International of Chico Donates \$5,000 to The Arc Butte County Playground Renovation

SI Chico donated \$5,000 to The Arc. Butte County to refurbish, renovate, and improve the playground so it is accessible to children of all abilities. This playground will be reconstructed at their Chico location and includes a wheelchair-accessible swing, various other appropriate play equipment, and protective ground covering that drastically decreases the opportunity for injury and makes navigating with a wheelchair possible.

Pictured left to right: SI Chico President, Billie Araiza, The Arc Butte County Executive Director, Tom Leonardi & The Arc Butte County Resource Developer/Community Relations, Megan Gaddis



### Soroptimist International of Chico Butte & Chico State Scholarship Winners

SI Chico awarded 5 deserving students each a \$1,000 scholarship grant. These winners are chosen by their school and then submitted to SI Chico to present the scholarship.

Pictured from left to right (top) are Butte College Scholarship Winners Paige Gilliland, Lulonee Thompson and Chico State Aging and Gerontology Education (A.G.E.) Scholarship Winner Salina Xiong. Pictured on bottom left to right are Chico State Soroptimist Goodwill and Understanding Scholarship Winner Ani Ushikishvilli and Chico State Soroptimist Graduate Student Scholarship Winner Anthony Ruiz



Read all about these winners on our website at: <https://soroptimistchico.org/february-2021-butte-chico-state-scholarship-awardees/>

### Soroptimist International of Chico's Ruby Award: Women Helping Women winner Alexa Benson-Valavanis



Soroptimist International of Chico is proud to award Alexa Benson-Valavanis this year's Ruby Award: Women Helping Women. Created to celebrate women who have significantly enhanced the lives of other women through professional, business and volunteer activities, Alexa is being awarded \$1,000 to be donated to a woman-serving non-profit of her choice. Alexa will be honored at the March 10, 2021 award ceremony and her name advanced for another Ruby at Soroptimist Regional & Federation levels.

Alexa struggled to find her passion and realize her worth, seeking acceptance and understanding through what could be called a pilgrimage. It took a spur-of-the-moment trip to China to teach that led Alexa to the incredible philanthropic work she is doing today. In her

moving memoir *Sipping Tea with Buddha and Christ* Alexa charts her soul searching and self-empowerment, a search that made her such a success as an entrepreneur and philanthropist at North Valley Community Foundation.

Alexa's innovative work at the North Valley Community Foundation began in 2005 when she was hired to rebuild the organization. Under her leadership the foundation has grown from serving a dozen non-profits to more than 500 by mobilizing social entrepreneurs and philanthropists locally and around the globe. She has generated \$175 million with over \$100 million going to causes in Northern California. When the Camp Fire devastated Paradise, Alexa transformed NVCF into the lead philanthropic organization in the relief and recovery efforts and now has built a COVID-19 response arm to slow the pandemic and provide relief to at-risk populations.

Alexa has been a warrior for women and girls, fighting for LGBTQ rights, writing a memoir about finding self-acceptance and children's book on the power of unconditional love, providing practical support to women's organizations, being a wife and mother, being a great boss to her staff and a great friend to many. As David Little, her Communications Director, puts it,

So much of what we (at NVCF) do benefits women and girls, or more specifically girls and women in at-risk situations. We try to fill in where funding holes exist for people who are typically overlooked. For example, we coordinated a project with many partners to bring 48 homes to low-income Camp Fire survivors who qualified. I got to know one very well, a woman who lives alone and has struggled for two years to find housing. She was so excited to get a home and is exactly the kind of person who should get one. There were so many recipients like her -- young moms raising a family, or older moms like Tina. They of course weren't chosen because they were women, but so many women were helped by that project.

He goes on to say that having a woman as CEO of any organization means women are going to get a "fairer shot." In the case of NVCF, 70% of its employees are women and a significant portion of its clients are women wanting to start a charitable fund. Indeed, many of the organizations that partner with NVCF are women-run and women focused. Alexa has the passion, perspectives and sensitivities to find practical and compassionate ways to serve her community.

*Soroptimist International of Chico with Christine Mac Shane*

**Paint and Sip Zoom Class**

*Saturday, March 13th at 3:00pm*

**\$20/person**

**\$10 supplies (optional)**

*If purchased, pick up your watercolor supplies on Friday, March 12th, 3:00-5:00pm at the Elks Lodge Front Lot*

**To register, go to:**

[www.givebutter.com/SICpaintandsip](http://www.givebutter.com/SICpaintandsip)

or use the QR code with your smartphone



*Zoom link will be provided after purchase of virtual ticket.*

**Fundraising Committee**

Co-chairs Lupe Medrano & Daran Goodsell

Join us for a fun afternoon of painting in our Paint and Sip Virtual Class Fundraiser on Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm. Local artist Christine Mac Shane will be guiding us live in a step-by-step Zoom class while we sip on wine (or your favorite drink) and create our watercolor masterpiece. No artistic talent necessary, Christine makes the class easy enough for beginners and provides all the materials needed or feel free to use your own. Invite your spouse and kids to join and make it a family event or share the purchase link with a friend so they could sign up and join us virtually. Please pay for all participants, even if they are in the same household and painting alongside you. The deadline to sign-up is Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup> so visit our purchase website now at [www.givebutter.com/SICpaintandsip](http://www.givebutter.com/SICpaintandsip). We hope to see you virtually for this fun social event!

**SI Objectives Committee**

Co-chairs Jami McNamee & Linda Allen

**Senior Moment of the Month**

**December Senior Moment, Barbara (Barb) Evans**



I was born at home in the olden days in Buhl, Idaho, on November 13, 1937. It is worth noting that both of my parents were born in Czechoslovakia. We lived in the country but not on a farm. A doctor was there and I was now joining my sister who was only 14 months older than I was.

To read full article [click here](#).

**February Senior Moment, Patricia (Patti) Cockroft**



Patti was born in Kingston Upon Hull, Yorkshire and it is where she spent her early life but moved to the Unites States during WWII. She has enjoyed sixty-three years of service in Soroptimist and at the young age of ninety-two, was made an honorary member.

To read full article [click here](#).

**Member of the Month**

**January, Nancy Hanson**



**Question: What are some of the jobs you have done?**

Answer: Labor & Delivery RN, Post Anesthesia Care Unit RN, Asst. Director of Outpatient Surgery, Director of Outpatient Surgery

To read full article [click here](#).

## Upcoming Awards & Scholarships

### Giving Committee, March 10, 2021

Awards Presentation (honoring women)

- Betty Boles Award Professional Step Up
- Ruby Award Women Helping Women
- Women Positive Parenting Award



### Giving Committee, April 14, 2021

Awards Presentation (honoring girls)

- Chico Community High School Scholarships
- Violet Richardson Youth in Service
- Dottie Locke Imagining Possibilities

## A Dash of SOLT

By Carolyn Dusenbury

### A Look Back – 1996/97



For her major project, President Carol Braziel chose the SI President’s Appeal “Project SAFE Journey” focused on the elimination of land mines in Angola. SI President Patricia Daniels traveled to Chico on December 11, 1996 to talk about her appeal. Two programs were developed -- “*Messages of Hope*” and “*A Step & a \$1.00*”. *Messages of Hope* distributed foot shaped messages to school children for them to write a message of understanding and encouragement for a child in Angola. For \$1.00 anyone could purchase a foot shaped message to support *Steps Without Fear*. Additionally, a \$22 donation would eliminate a land mine.

SI Chico contacted all of our elected officials, 169 churches, other service organizations and nonprofits and all area schools asking for support. President Clinton’s office sent a reply that, unfortunately, he had a conflict and would not be able to attend the lunch.

Carol and Sandi Decker headed an effort to create a program model that clubs could use to support the effort. The packet described the 8 steps our club used to complete a successful effort along with information and resources about land mines and removal. Results – over 1200 messages of hope from 11 schools, a \$1401 donation to the President’s Appeal. Over 130 people attended the President’s Lunch and several local organizations requested presentations or information. SNR requested a presentation at the Spring Conference and other SNR clubs were invited to join the effort.

SI Chico was recognized by SI and SIA and was named a finalist in the 1997 Soroptimist Celebrating Success Award. This included an invitation to present “Steps Without Fear” at the June 1997 National SOLT Conference in Chicago.

## International Project



Christi Myers is the Director of Nursing at Lassen Community College and the proud daughter of Susanville Soroptimist member Sharon McBride. Christi has partnered with the Susanville Soroptimist chapter on multiple projects and has a passion for justice for all of humanity. Christi recently presented an international project idea to the Susanville chapter and shared her idea with the region. The Susanville chapter has graciously supported the idea of embracing this international project and look forward to the progress of supporting Preeti Misra along her journey.

Preeti Misra is a young lady who grew up in the slums of India. Raised by a father struggling with Polio and a mother who has recently passed due to cancer, Preeti maintains a positive and optimistic attitude as she sets goals for herself in a culture that struggles embracing ambitious young women. After crossing paths with Christi nearly a year ago, Preeti has made it her mission to attend nursing school in Northern California, a place where girls are free to succeed. This humble young lady has made a lasting impression on both Christi and other regional Soroptimist sisters. As international projects are often funded from a distance, supporting Preeti in her journey will provide an opportunity to see first-hand the success story that lies ahead.



Preeti has begun her education at Lassen Community College through online learning and is completing her third prerequisite on her journey toward nursing school. Preeti plans to complete nursing education through LCC and take the learned skills back to her home town to support her father and her community. Preeti embodies the mission of Soroptimist and provides an opportunity for us to further understand our sisters around the globe. [Click here to read Preeti’s story](#) in her own handwriting.



# Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls® Preparing Girls for a Brighter Future

## OUR GLOBAL IMPACT IN FY19/20



17,184 girls participated across 12 countries and territories

## GIRLS ARE EMPOWERED TO LIVE THEIR DREAMS



feel more confident about their future success



created achievable goals for their future



feel more prepared to pursue their career goals



were introduced to professional role models

## GIRLS ARE INSPIRED BY POSSIBILITIES

They said:

- *“Thank you for everything you gave me, and for the space to clarify my dreams.”—America del Sur*
- *“I learned to be around people who support me and to use my voice for good.”—Philippines*
- *“I learned that I am not alone in this world and there are resources and people that help and genuinely care about me.”—Desert Coast*
- *“I was relieved to hear that we may make a mistake in the future and that that is part of learning.”—Japan Kita*

View the full *Dream It, Be It* Impact Report at: <http://bit.ly/DIBImpact>



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