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Calendar

- May 13 -- Project 150 Sorting, 1-3 p.m.
- May 13 -- Afghan Night 5 p.m. Kay’s Office
- May 16 – Thanks to Youth
- May 23 – Anti-Trafficking Speaker
- May 30 – Soropti-Fun
- June 1 -- Parking Lot Sale
- June 6 – Women’s Scholarships
- June 11 – Joint Board Meeting, Pam Robinson’s Office/Zoom
- June 13 – Business Meeting
- June 20 – Year in Review
- June 27 – Installation of Officers

SITM Meets...

Thursdays at Noon

at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa Second Floor Convention Center \$31 plated; \$33 buffet lunch
RSVP to info@sitmnev.org no later than noon on the Sunday before the Thursday meeting.

Soroptimist Is:

a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.



www.sitmnev.org

Awards and Recognitions Closing the Year

Is it spring yet? It surely must be since our club is very busy with preparations for our two awards programs. First up – Thanks To Youth! We will be celebrating the academic achievements of several high school graduates as well as our unique recognition of Unsung Heroes. These wonderful youths are amazing. They overcome obstacles, work hard on their studies, help their fellow students, give back to the community and are an inspiration to the rest of us. Our entire club is looking forward to this terrific awards event May 16.

Our next big award event in early June will recognize our Dreams Moving Forward scholarship winners. These women are enhancing their academic credentials, obtaining technical or vocational training and enabling themselves to improve their lives and the lives of their families through their hard work. This commitment to education at every level inspires our club members as we work to enable the awarding of these scholarships. We will also be awarding our new Dee Ann Roberts Memorial Scholarship for an Education Major to 3 amazing women

who are pursuing degrees in the education field.

While we celebrate the achievements of all of our awardees, we will also have some fun at our upcoming Parking Lot “Garage” Sale on June 1. With spring cleaning underway, there should be no shortage of amazing “treasures” to display for sale. The committee is hard at work with the logistics to organize everything including barbecuing hot dogs for a donation. This will be a great opportunity for members to work together to benefit our club’s various service programs. We always have fun when we get together and this will be one of those special opportunities.



Our own Sierra Nevada Region Conference is just a month away

[Continued on page 2](#)

Help Needed for Parking Lot Sale, June 1

Time to collect those unwanted treasures around the house to donate to SITM’s June 1 Parking Lot Sale. President Kay Dunham has graciously arranged for us to use the parking lot of her business complex -- the Sierra Pines Professional Plaza at 190 W. Huffaker Lane in Reno.



Your donations can be dropped off on Friday evening May 31. Plus, members are needed Friday night to help sort and arrange the items for sale. Workers are needed throughout the day on Saturday. See Marilyn Pearson to sign up for a shift.

Continued from page 1

– June 7-9. Our club is always well represented and this year is no exception. It is a special opportunity to learn more about Soroptimist and to get to know members from other clubs as well. The added bonus is that we always have a great time! If you haven't registered, please consider joining all of us for an informative and enjoyable weekend.

In gratitude,
President Kay

Submit Your Ceec Abrahams Nominations

Each year the Membership Committee solicits nominations of a member to receive the annual Ceec Abrahams Award for Soroptimist Service. It is presented to a member of SITM who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in her support of the club and its activities.

This award is intended to recognize an SITM member who has contributed her time and resources to our club, to Soroptimist as a whole, and to the community in the spirit of Ceec Abrahams. While many of our members devote a significant amount of time and energy to the club, we are looking to present this award to an "every member", one of those women who is there when you need her, a member you can depend upon to do whatever she has committed to do, and a role model for other members.

Please see Membership Committee Co-Coordinator Doris Phelps, or Billie Mendiola for a nomination form, or go to the SITM website at sitmnv.org and the form will be in the Members Section. This award will be presented at the Year in Review meeting on June 20, 2024.

A nomination form is attached to this newsletter. The deadline for submissions is May 24, 2024.

Getting Books Out to Our Community

by Niki Ewing

If you are looking to volunteer during a fun social outing, then look no further than cleaning children's books! These lovely ladies spent a combined total of 7 hours cleaning books and swapping stories about dogs on the loose. A fun time catching up outside of SITM meetings and helping Spread the Word getting books out into our community.



Shown from left are, Gayle Kmetovicz, Niki Ewing, Debbie Handke and Margie Hermanson.

Website Design with the Hunter Lake Girls

The STEAM program for girls at Hunter Lake Elementary School is about to wrap up for the school year. Using the project's iPads, the girls completed their website design and then worked on color theory, created stamps for their website logo and did some freehand design to fill-in with color.

Thanks to the dedicated STEAM Committee members for their diligence of twice-a-month classes for the girls. They are Coordinators Kay Dunham and Patty Mamola, with Angela Owings, Kaylyn Dazey-Harper, Patty Elam and Pam Robinson.



Angela Owings assisting the girls.



Kaylyn Dazey-Harper teaching web design.

New Soroptimist Store Open for Business

<https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/shop/index.html>

Experience the user-friendly platform, tailored to make your online shopping experience a breeze. Shop membership pins, apparel and other branded items—all designed to elevate your Soroptimist-style to new heights!

A Lifetime of Accounting and Volunteering

By Pam Robinson

When KaCe Gilbert was nine, KaCe moved to Reno from Walnut Creek, where she was born. She graduated with honors from Reno High and with distinction from UNR. She was a licensed Certified Public Accountant for many years prior to retirement.



Her first professional job after college was with Deloitte Haskins and Sells, a big 8 accounting firm. She transferred with Deloitte to Las Vegas when she got married, and her first child, Mikaela, was born there.

At the young age of 25, she was hired by Valley Bank as manager of corporate accounting in charge of the tax department and all

non-bank subsidiaries. KaCe said it was a challenge, but she learned so much!

KaCe moved back to Reno and took a position with Grant Thornton, another nationally recognized accounting firm. She then moved back to her previous company, Deloitte Touche, and was recognized by them as a Nevada Women's Fund (NWF) Woman of Achievement and was

part of her company's Women's Initiative Program. Her second child, Hayley, was born here, just 15 months after Mikaela. She also has a son, Bobby, born several years after Mikaela and Hayley.

After returning to Grant Thornton, KaCe was instrumental in developing new staff for all of the tax department programs in the Reno office and specialized in a variety of industries. When she was recognized again as a NWF Woman of Achievement, her employer wrote of her natural ability, integrity, dependability, earning the respect of her subordinates, peers, and fellow management team members.



Over the years, KaCe has served on various boards, including Food Bank of Northern Nevada, Nevada Women's Fund, Reno High School Alumni Association, and Junior League of Reno. For fun, she likes to hike, play pickleball and ski. KaCe is a wonderful addition to SITM!

After 30 Years in Prison, A Perspective

Dr. Karen Gedney, MD was the featured speaker at the April 25 meeting, speaking about the historic approach to prison reform, what works and what doesn't work. She is the author of "Thirty Years Behind Bars", an autobiography of her life providing medical care for prisoners at the Northern Nevada Correctional Facility in Carson City.

Dr. Gedney explained that most prisons are run by men operating in a military style aimed at punishment of prisoners. She said she was fortunate to work under three female wardens and assistant wardens that took a different approach to prisoner incarcerations. Two of the three were Soroptimists, including former SITM member Dorothy Nash Holmes.

Through her health diagnoses, research and observation, Dr. Gedney learned that many inmates were broken and "thrown away as kids", abused, or suffered from mental illness. She maintained that helping them heal from

these life-altering events was the beginning of rehabilitation.

With the help of the wardens, she was able to assist with prison reforms as providing life skills for inmates, such as completing their GED, training puppies and wild horses for re-homing. The more long-term, senior inmates were enrolled in culinary classes, along with hobby crafts, even crocheting. The result was a dramatic reduction in violence within the prison.



Dr. Karen Gedney, MD

The other problem she saw was the lack of support for inmates released into society, sometimes after many years of incarceration, with few options to make good choices and lead a "normal life".

The Path to Becoming a Leader

Membership Co-Coordinator Doris Phelps reminded members of the Soroptimist tradition of providing leadership training, before presenting the April 18 speaker Christi Cakiroglu. Christi was introduced by Mary Ann Mc Cauley, as she is partnering with Christi on providing services to nonprofits.

A Nevada native, Christi graduated from the University of Oregon. Upon returning to Reno, she held various positions with different nonprofit organizations. In 1999, she became the first Executive Director of Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful. Retiring after 19 years, she founded CC Consulting Solutions devoted to nonprofit organizations.

Christi provided a glimpse into her journey to becoming a leader and imparted some wisdom she learned along the way. She believes everyone can become a leader. First is overcoming any insecurities about leadership, and then developing the baseline qualities for being a leader – caring, honesty, persistence and being able to adapt.

With many projects developed over time to make our area more sustainable and beautiful, Christi's greatest impact was on the One River consortium of local governments, agencies and other stakeholders working together. At times it was a daunting task to bring the varied interests together, however Christi concluded with her favorite quote, "If it was easy, somebody else would have already done it."

The Importance of Food for a Healthy Life



From left, Patty Downs, with Dr Lettia Anderson and President Kay Dunham

Food is medicine. That's the bottom line for Cardiologist Dr. Lettia Anderson. She is the Immediate Past Chief of Staff with Sierra Nevada Medical Center and Governor of the American College of Cardiology Nevada. She's a passionate advocate for the importance of an ample supply of good food for the most vulnerable in our society. Without it, people are more likely to die in greater numbers and at an earlier age than the general population. Dr. Anderson has spent decades researching and documenting her findings

"Eighty percent of heart disease is preventable. Access to healthy food is vital to a healthy body," according to Dr. Anderson.

One of her passions is the establishment of what's called the Prescription Pantry. This is where qualified patients receive a food prescription for the most common conditions such as cardiovascular, diabetes and hypertension issues, to the pantry that prescribes appropriate food for the health of the patient, just like a medication from a pharmacy. The food is assembled for the patient take-away.

Appropriately, Dr. Anderson is a long-time member of the Board of Directors for the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, including pitching in at the distribution

center with her husband and two sons.

She is currently championing a new project called the Oddie Project, enabled by bipartisan legislative mandate and supported by Governor Joe Lombardo. It will be located on the border between Reno and Sparks as it is an underserved, high-poverty area. It is envisioned to be a hub for childcare and food services. It is also planned to house a commercial grade production kitchen and office space for job placement.



Speaker Christi Cakiroglu, third from left, is pictured here, from left, with Doris Phelps, President Kay Dunham and Mary Ann Mc Cauley.

A New Modern Dormitory for Girls in Thulipokhari, Nepal

A little more than two decades in the making, a two-story dormitory, with rooftop garden, has risen amongst the lush green hillside of Thulipokhari, Nepal. The building is a testament to the vision, passion and hands-on work of Soroptimists, generous donors, present and past residents of Thulipokhari and the girls who will occupy it.

It's also a testament to today's modern conveniences and technology built in a location of the world where people live without such "advancements". The dormitory is outfitted with electricity, running water, indoor plumbing and bathrooms, and glass windows. Eight individual rooms house 32 girls. A connected building provides room for an on-site house mother, a gas-equipped kitchen with modern appliances and an open space for meals and meetings. Since the beginning, the cost per girl for tuition, room and board scholarship is \$300 per year. A \$1,200 donation will secure a scholarship for one girl for four years through the two-year high school studies and two-year baccalaureate studies.

The total cost for this new dormitory is approximately \$109,000. With the donation of the land from the Village Council of Thulipokhari, and the labor from the villagers,

20+ Years Educating Girls in Nepal

In the spring of 2000, a young man by the name of Purna Subedi spoke to Soroptimist International of Truckee Meadows members at a weekly meeting. He spoke of his upbringing and education in the small village of Thulipokhari Nepal.

Purna came to the U.S. in 1985 at the invitation of member Jeanne Baxter so that he could pursue his education. Today, Purna holds his doctorate degree in engineering and owns a business in southern California that produces software programs that power telecommunications and other satellites.

During Purna's presentation, members were most anxious to learn about the lives of girls in Nepal. Members learned that the majority of girls were not educated due to the cost. If families could raise money for schooling, they sent their boys. Another added barrier for girls was the long distances between the limited number of schools in Nepal. Girls would have to walk two-to-four hours one way, depending upon the season, to reach most schools. At that time, the literacy rate for girls in Nepal was only 14%, and 47% for boys.

SITM members pondered solutions. Providing scholarships solved only one-half of the problem. With Purna as the go-between, Soroptimists and the Village Council in Thulipokhari, a plan was hatched to build a



The new modern dorm has been constructed and needs furnishing for the girls in the fall.

plus a waiver of the VAT taxes and fees, Soroptimists and other donors contributed approximately \$80,000 to the project. After breaking ground in 2023, the dormitory and all of its amenities will be ready for occupancy for the girls for the fall semester 2024.

girls' dormitory, where the Janata Sudarsham School was located. The girls could walk once a week to-and-from home while receiving tuition, room and board.



The original dormitory, built in 2001, has housed girls for 23 years

Feverish fundraising began as SITM promised to pay for construction materials, while the villagers would pay for the land and labor. In May 2001, the first dormitory was completed at a cost of \$13,846US. In the fall, the first group of girls entered the dormitory. Barriers to at least 32 girls were removed and the two-year high school program for girls began.

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Next came the yearly solicitation of donations for scholarships, along with what would become the first of 40 semi-annual SITM garage sales. In 2006, donations exceeding the necessary scholarships, plus garage sale proceeds were deposited into an endowment account with the Community Foundation of Western Nevada.

Here are a few milestones ...

2003

The Animal Assistance Program was established to provide villagers with low interest loans to purchase water buffaloes, goats, chickens and beehives. Principal payments were used for new loans. Interest on loans was used to support the girls' dormitory.

2005

Two small solar panels were installed on the dormitory roof to power a battery used to provide minimal lighting in the dormitory replace the oil lamps previously used.

2007

Nearly 300 girls have been provided with scholarships.

2010

More than 500 girls have been educated and the literacy rate for girls in Nepal jumped from 14% to 30%. More than 100 families have taken advantage of the Animal Assistance Program.

2012

Four SITM members visited the dormitory and the village. Women in the village began forming Mother's Club modeled after Soroptimist. A brick security wall was constructed around the dormitory at a cost of \$2,300. An additional \$1,860 was sent to upgrade the dormitory kitchen with gas stove, modern kitchenware and utensils and propane cylinders.

2013

Following SITM's visit, the club donated a variety of seeds and watering apparatus to the Mothers Groups to begin the Vital Seeds program.

2015

A magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck central Nepal. Through public awareness and community support, SITM raised \$18,500 in Emergency Assistance Disaster Relief funds for immediate assistance to the families in Thulipokhari to provide food, water, temporary shelters, such as tents and tarps, plus materials to rehabilitate damaged homes and buildings.

2016

SITM gains international recognition when its project is selected to be one of the three grant recipients of SI President Yvonne Simpson's President's Appeal project, "Educate to Lead, Nepal". SITM received two \$20,000 grants for scholarships and literacy.

SITM hosted special guests SI President Yvonne Simpson, SI Assistant Director of Advocacy Sharon Fischer, Past SIA Presidents Cheri Fleming and Poco Davis, and SIA Federation President Samantha "Sam" Buchenau for a special presentation by Dr. Purna Subedi.

Also attending from Nepal were Project Scholarship Chairman Guru Prasad Subedi, his wife Nundakali and son Mahesh Subedi.

2017

Monica House and husband Steve Friedlander visit Thulipokhari and meet with the village council and the Mothers Groups.

A \$14,000 grant from Soroptimist International enabled the establishment of a computer lab at the school for the students and training for women in the Mothers Clubs to use the computers. The lab consists of six desktop and six laptops, computer desks and tables, along with a computer instructor.

2019

SITM sent funds to send the girls on a field trip; visiting other villages and cities, schools, government buildings, and plantation.

2021

Twenty years of occupancy by hundreds of girls, the original dormitory is beginning to show its age and limited amenities. There was never electricity or running water, Latrines were located behind the dormitory. For many years food was cooked over an open fire and windows were only closeable to winter rain and cold by wooden shutters.

SITM commissioned an engineering design to explore the possibilities and costs of building a new dormitory.

2022

With design complete and the Village Council on board, SITM approved construction of a new dormitory and began fundraising to cover the costs. To date, more than 2,000 girls have graduated from the program. The literacy rate for girls in Nepal has risen to 47%

2023

Ground is broken to begin construction.

Monica House and her husband Steve Friedlander visit the village and tour the construction site.

2024

The new dormitory is completed and will be occupied for the Fall 2024 semester.

EmpowHER Luncheon Raises Funds for Girls in Nepal

On April 24, 2024, Soroptimist International of Sierra Reno hosted the “2024 EmpowerHer Luncheon” at the National Automobile Museum, a fundraising luncheon featuring an update on SISR’s and Soroptimist International of Truckee Meadows’ (SITM) long-standing project to “Remove Barriers to Education for Girls in Thulipokhari, Nepal”.

More than two decades in the making, the project now boasts a new dormitory for girls, replacing the original dormitory built in 2001. The new structure features modern conveniences not available 13 years ago.

Judge Connie Steinheimer from SISR welcomed 200 guests, including 18 members and their guests from SITM, to a multimedia program connecting Reno to Thulipokhari, Nepal campus and dormitory administrators and the girls; Dr. Purna Subedi in southern California; and Past SI President Sharon Fisher in Vancouver, Canada.



SITM members and guests attended the luncheon.

Monica House presented a comprehensive picture of the beginnings of the project for girls, showing plenty of photo examples of the progress and expansion over the years, plus how the project has provided benefits to the village of Thulipokhari.

Donations to the project can be sent to SISR, c/o Connie Ostomel, 1140 Alpine Circle, Reno, NV 89509.

May Board and Business Recap

by Faye I. Andersen

With approximately six weeks remaining in the 2023-2024 Club Year, the May Board and Business Meetings were short with mostly announcements, as the year winds down and projects have been, or are nearing completion.

New Budgets Approved for 2024-2025

At the May Business Meeting, the members approved the Proposed Budgets for 2024-2025 year for the General and Service Funds. The Finance/Governance Committee first presented the proposed budgets at the April Business Meeting. Thanks to F&G Coordinators Vicki Schultz and Pam Sutton and committee members for getting the club’s finances lined up for another successful year.

Annual TEase Coming in July

Members approved the Fundraising Committee’s motion to hold the annual TEase for the Queen of Hearts High Tea on Thursday, July 11. It will be the first day of the new club year and will kick off ticket sales. The High Tea will be held Saturday, September 28 at the Atlantis.

Happy Dollars for April

Happy Dollars for the month of April totaled \$317. Happy Dollar funds are designated for a scholarship in the name

of Dee Ann Roberts, Jo Ann’s daughter, for a deserving education major(s). To date, the fund has amassed over \$12,000.

Happy Birthday Soroptimists

Three of our May Birthday Ladies are pictured here at the May Business Meeting, Heather Sloane Altman with Maizey (May 4), Billie Mendiola (May 3) and Debbie Handke (May 20). Liza Chapen (May 22) joined us on zoom.





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Board Meets monthly on Tuesday
following the first Thursday, noon.

Contributing to this issue

Kay Dunham Jeanne Naccarato
Liza Chapen Niki Ewing
Jo Ann Roberts KaCe Gilbert
Pam Robinson Monica House

SITM Board 2023-24

President
Kay Dunham
President-Elect
Jeanne Naccarato
Vice President/Program
Pam Robinson
**Vice President/
Membership**
Dot Watts

Secretary
Debbie Handke
Treasurer/General Fund
Linda Walker
Treasurer/Service Fund
Cindy Burk
Delegate
Patty Elam
Director
Margie Hermanson



For information about our organization, check out these Soroptimist Websites:
Sierra Nevada Region: www.soroptimistsnr.org
Soroptimist International of the Americas: www.soroptimist.org
Soroptimist International: www.soroptimistinternational.org



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams

Did you know . . .

SIA #TechTalks

Reprinted from the SIA Newsletter

Tech Talks are learning labs hosted by SIA to coach members on how to navigate new developments in the member portal and gain new technical skills. [Sign up to be the first to hear](#) how tech is taking your member experience to the next level!

Our first #TechTalks webinar is June 3 for club presidents and treasurers to learn how to manage your roster and process dues online.

Save the Date: Monday, June 3, 8:00 p.m. (ET)

[Webinar: How to manage my roster and pay dues in the NEW! Member Portal](#)

Audience: Club Presidents, Club Treasurers

During this webinar, club leaders will learn:

- * How to log in to the NEW! member port
- * How to manage your club roster
- * How to generate an invoice to pay dues online

Resources:

- * Handout: Getting Started

Link: Member Learning Hub – Online Space for Training Videos & How-To Guides



**CEEC ABRAHAMS AWARD NOMINATION
SITM CLUB YEAR 2023-24**

Each year the Ceec Abrahams Award is presented to a member of SITM who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in her support of the Club and its activities. Ceec Abrahams was a founding member of our Club and worked tirelessly to promote the spirit of community and volunteerism. Ceec was a member of Soroptimist from 1958 until 1983. The Award was instituted in her honor. This Award will be presented at the Year in Review meeting on June 20, 2024.

While our officers and committee coordinators volunteer countless hours of their time fulfilling their duties, this Award seeks to recognize an “every member” for her tireless efforts. This is a member who volunteers readily, perhaps without being asked, is always there when you need her, is reliable and responsible, and demonstrates her support of the organization, its mission and its goals.

Please nominate a member who has demonstrated these qualities during the past Club year. You may nominate more than one member. Please use a separate form for each nomination.

Previous Award winners are not eligible for the Award and are listed below:

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Faye I. Andersen | Monica House | Patty Downs |
| Jeanne Baxter | Pam Robinson | Norma Rash |
| Janice Hoke | Paula Ringkob | Doris Phelps |
| Cindy Burk | Diana Dillon DeMatei | Vicki Schultz |
| Kay Dunham | Michelle Jones | Penney Leezy |
| Connie Steinheimer | Jo Ann Roberts | Jean Neddenriep |
| Bev Perkins | Carrie Porter | Margie Hermanson |
| Laurie Chappelle | Gayle Baxley | Pam Sutton |
| Shirley George | Georgia Baker-Flambures | Jeanne Naccarato |
| | | Linda Walker |

Name of Nominee: _____

Nominated by: _____

Reasons you feel this nominee exemplifies the qualities of this Award. (Use the back of this form or submit your nomination on a separate sheet of paper):

Please send your nomination by email to Billie Mendiola at billiemendiola@att.net by Friday, May 24, 2024. You may also submit your nomination form to Billie or Doris Phelps at any club meeting.

Parking Lot Sale

Sierra Pines Professional Plaza
190 W. Huffaker Lane

Saturday
June 1, 2024
10 am - 3 p.m.
Multi Family
Soroptimist* Sale

*Join us at the hot dog stand
available in the gazebo*



*Proceeds benefit
Soroptimist educational
and community projects.

Contact Kay Dunham
First WallStreet Financial
Advisors #405
775-826-1777
775-560-4374-cell