

# SITM Update

*Soroptimist International of Truckee Meadows*

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[www.sitmnv.org](http://www.sitmnv.org)

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## Calendar

Feb. 19 – Attendance Committee

Feb. 26 – Ron Kmetovicz, AI

Feb. 28 – District 5 Forum, National Auto Museum

Mar. 5 – Stuffing Candy Bags

March 7 – D5 Walk for Women

Mar. 10 -- Board Meeting, Pam Robinson's Office/Zoom

Mar. 12 –Business Meeting, Atlantis/Zoom

Mar. 19 – Public Awareness

## SITM Meets...

### Thursdays at Noon

at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa  
Second Floor Convention Center  
\$34 plated; \$35 credit/debit.

RSVP to [info@sitmnv.org](mailto:info@sitmnv.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.sitmnv.org](http://www.sitmnv.org)

## A Great First Half, Even Greater Things to Come

The first thing I want to mention is that we left the gate in January with a bang! Soroptimist International of Truckee Meadows is wonderful and successful because of all of the amazing hearts of yours that serve to fulfill our mission of helping women and girls grow and succeed through education. I have been around a long time and have not belonged to a community of women as consistent and caring as you all are. I am blessed to be a part of this club with you.

Two of the important things coming up are the Celebrating Success and Public Awareness Star awards so our VP's are working on getting those applications in by April 1st. Also, we decided on our new Nominating Committee set to put into place our 2026-2027 Board which is very exciting. Jeanna Naccarato is leading the Nominating Committee along with Dot Watts and Gayle Kmetovicz and we are grateful to them for stepping up. I have so greatly enjoyed being on the board this last year and a half and would highly recommend that if you are approached, jump in feet first. It may seem daunting at first but you are given so much amazing support it will be more fun than scary.

After our January meeting where each of the committee coordinators share about their committees, have you thought about "What Committee Fits You" because in April we will have sign-ups for the committees for our 2026-2027

year. I know that I am already deciding on where I would like to serve and I am very proud of the fact that there is a committee for everyone according to their specific talents, passions, and availability.



**Co-President Lisa Robinson**

Ladies, how wonderful was it to see the deserving women that were chosen to receive a "Live Your Dream" award at our luncheon on February 5. It is a privilege that we are able to see the fruit of our giving and service as each woman came up to the podium to receive the award. We get to see our mission as Soroptimists coming to life each time we do this. Looking forward, our two High Tea coordinators, Jeanne and Linda have hit the ground running to make our Queen Of Hearts Tea for 2026 a wonderful success. That is our biggest fundraiser and honestly, even for those that serve in the planning and

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coordinating along with those of us who help out that day is great fun as well.

Lastly, as Soroptimists we are always looking to make new connections in our club as well as reach out to other Soroptimist Clubs in our area. It helps to make our presence known as well as gives us the opportunity to help others to be successful. Marilyn and I met with the President of the 20th Century club to discover what we are each about and it was

a lovely meeting. They primarily fundraise to help women with nursing school which is a valuable gift to our city of Reno as we always need more nurses. We are looking at possible collaborations to encourage each other along the way. New friends are always a gift. Also, on March 7 we are joining others from District 5, Sierra Nevada Region to participate in The Walk For Women. Details are in the Friday Digest sent on Feb. 13. Blessings to each one of you as we walk out our Soroptimist Mission together!

Co-President Lisa Robinson

## An Update on the Food Bank of Northern Nevada

Most commercial businesses thrive on annual growth, more customers and income. But if you are nonprofit food bank providing food to a hungry community, that template is not something to strive for.

At the February 4 meeting celebrating SITM's Live Your Dream recipients, Nicole Lamboley, President and CEO of the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, provided an escalating picture of the challenges they face while providing 23 million meals per year to 160,000 neighbors with the help of 144 local partners.

Nicole says she has always told her staff to pivot or change direction when facing challenges. "Today, I've started telling them that they have to pirouette, or employ a rapid spin," she said. She was referring to the government shutdown in November, which temporarily halted SNAP benefits to Nevadans. She credited the State of Nevada and FBNN's steadfast and generous donors to help them to increase their food distribution to those finding themselves without a paycheck.

Nicole thanked SITM members for their generous donation of canned soups, chili and stew during a January food drive. "On behalf of myself and the staff of the Food Bank, thank you. You do make a difference," she said.

She also explained that FBNN uses cash donations to purchase food. Because of their quantity purchases they are able to provide three meals for every \$1 donated. FBNN is also looking for volunteers, singles or groups. Currently an army of 4,000 volunteers donate time at the Food Bank, the equivalent of 12 paid employees.

Sign up for the FBNN electronic newsletter. Go to [www.fbnn.org](http://www.fbnn.org) and scroll down to the bottom of the page to enter your email address.



### Canned Meals Collected for the Food Bank

During the month of January, SITM members were asked to donate canned food, especially protein-rich items, that seniors could easily prepare, even without contemporary kitchen facilities. Doris Phelps has revealed the totals collected.

155 cans of soup  
 65 cans of chili  
 18 cans of stew  
 Plus a few miscellaneous cans of ravioli, lasagna, sweet potatoes and boxes of mac and cheese.

Doris estimated the total value at \$425.

Thank you to Doris, Kay Dunham and Diana DeMatei for your collection efforts. Continued thanks to all of the generous members who donated food. There are many seniors who will appreciate your generosity.

## Six Live Your Dream Recipients Honored

By Annette Friedlander, Women's Scholarship Committee  
Biographies by Mary Ann McCauley

On Thursday, February 5, 2026, SITM held its Live Your Dream Award Luncheon. There were six recipients, four of whom were able to attend. It was my honor to present each recipient with the Live Your Dream award and certificate along with a beautiful bouquet of roses.

This year marks the 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Live Your Dream program. Through this program, Soroptimist International of America has been empowering



**LYD Recipient Justine Jackson with member Cynthia Cramer.**

women through access to education since 1972, disbursing more than \$49 million to over 47,000 women who have overcome life challenges. Our own club, Soroptimist International of Truckee Meadows, has disbursed over \$71,000 to 57 women since 1998. The Live Your Dream Award is intended for women who are the primary financial support of themselves and their dependents, have a financial need, and are enrolled or accepted into a vocational training program or an undergraduate degree program. It is unique in that it is a grant that goes directly to the individual woman rather than a scholarship paid to an educational institution on her behalf. It empowers the recipient to decide for herself how to use the grant to cover her education expenses, whether it is to pay for childcare, buy a computer, or pay for her tuition. Here is a brief look into the stories of our recipients:

Justine Jackson is pursuing a career in social work while raising three young children who are 3, 6, and 11. She is enrolled at Truckee Meadows Community



**LYD Recipient Shae McDonald and daughter with member Linda Walker.**

College with plans to graduate with an associate degree in 2027. Justine said that she chose this field so that her chances of success are a little higher than average. She wants to be able to give back to the community that has helped guide her back to the right path.

Shae McDonald is returning to Truckee Meadows Community College to finish pursuing her dream of becoming a veterinarian technician. Her path had several barriers that she's pushed aside to achieve her goal of a better life for her and her 9-year-old daughter. She has worked in veterinarian care since 2012. Currently, she works full time at Washoe County Regional Animal Services and part time at Blue Pearl Animal Hospital. Shae said her long-term dream has always been to become a licensed veterinary technician. "A better life for my daughter and myself is what drives that determination each passing day."

Darby Clark could not be at our meeting, but here are highlights of her story:

Darby is working toward an associate degree in nursing from Truckee Meadows Community College with plans to graduate in December. Her goal is to be a Trauma ICU Nurse. She currently works at Northern Nevada Medical Center as a critical care technician in the Intensive Care Unit. Darby said, "This employment has provided ample training and hands-on experience to further my educational and career goals. "Darby's greatest strengths are perseverance, tenacity, and dedication," said her advocate at TMCC.

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**LYD recipient Caryl Anne Simontacchi with daughter Emma and member Margie Hermanson.**

Caryl Anne Simontacchi is a single mother with a 17-year-old daughter. She's begun classes at the Milan Institute of Cosmetology with the goal of becoming a nail technician. Caryl Anne plans to offer manicures and pedicures to persons in nursing homes and senior living communities where she can bring some joy into someone's day. She feels doing mani/pedis as another art form that expands on her earlier 20-year career as an independent art therapist. Caryl Anne said, "A huge reason the nail tech field works perfectly for me is because it's a job I can do while being wheelchair-bound. CarylAnn is so excited about this new chapter in her life.

Karla Rodriguez could not be at our meeting. Here are her highlights:

Karla Rodriguez, a single mother of a one-year-old son, is seeking a career in nursing at Truckee Meadows Community College with a longer-term plan to achieve her BSN. Karla said, "My strength to pursue my education despite challenges for my son's well-being continue to motivate me to do my



**LYD recipient Erica Brandt with member Margie Hermanson.**

best." Her goal is to work on the acute pediatric unit or the pediatric ER. Within two years she would like to earn her bachelor's degree in nursing to eventually transition to working as a school nurse or a part-time clinical faculty instructor at TMCC.

Erica Brandt is attending Truckee Meadows Community College majoring in HVAC/R. She has decided to work toward her degree. She is a single mother of a 17-year-old and an 11-year-old. Her goal is to have a satisfying career that enables her to support her family at a comfortable level. She earned her GED and is now working to reach the next level of her education at TMCC. Erica told us, "I dream of being the person who gets called to do maintenance and make repairs for refrigeration systems. I like to fix things."

## The Positives of Music Therapy

Thanks to the STEAM Committee, Manal Toppozada from the Note-Able Music Therapy Services educated us at the January 23 meeting about the effect music has on all of us, but especially the therapeutic effect it can have on people with neurological disorders, addiction, PTSD and other disabilities.

Note-Able Music Therapy Services started in 1999 as a music class at the Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living. The class quickly became the performing group, the Note-Ables. Then, in 2003 The Note-Ables became a nonprofit and began providing music therapy and adaptive music, along with the performance group.



**Manal Toppozada**

In 2012 the Note-Ables became Note-Able Music Therapy Services, raising awareness of the services they provided: music therapy, neurologic music therapy, adaptive music and dance classes, adaptive lessons, inclusive events and activities, and community performances throughout the region.

Note-Able Music Therapy Services is located at a low-income district of downtown Reno surrounded by four complexes housing people with disabilities, seniors, and people living near the poverty line.

Note-Ables is accepting donations of money or volunteer hours to work on an outdoor garden. Information on volunteer opportunities can be found on their website: [nmtsreno.org](http://nmtsreno.org).

## Join the Soroptimist Walk for Women March 7

Get ready to step into empowerment with Soroptimist's [exclusive Walk for Women 2026 apparel](#), now available for pre-order!

On March 7 SITM members will be joining others from District 5 Sierra Nevada Region to participate in The Walk For Women.

These commemorative shirts and sweatshirts are the perfect way to show your club's support and join the movement as we gear up for the Walk for Women 2026 campaign launch on **March 1**. We also have some new additions to this year's storefront, so be sure to check it out!

With the 3rd annual **Walk for Women**, we are calling on members to make a global effort to showcase Soroptimist's impact throughout the month of March. Gather with friends and fellow Soroptimists, plan a Walk for Women event, and engage your local community.

**Co-President Marilyn shows off the Walk for Women shirts available from SIA. Details are in the Feb. 13 Friday Digest**



## Get an SITM Exclusive Shirt from Kay



At this year's SNR Conference, June 5-7, 2026, the region will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. The colors black and gold have been designated as part of the anniversary celebration.

If you would like a unique SITM shirt, Kay Dunham has graciously agreed to use her magic labeling machine to create special shirts for SITM members.

If you would like one, please bring your choice of a black shirt to Kay and she will affix the specially designed SITM name/logo. A polyester and cotton blend shirt works best.

Please don't wait until June to get your shirt to Kay.

## District 5 Forum February 28

District 5 Clubs will meet for their Winter Forum on Saturday, February 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the National Automobile Museum in Reno. Cost is \$45 and includes continental breakfast, buffet lunch and dessert. District 5 Director Susan Horst has themed the meeting, "Driving Change: Women on the Move". See the attached for more information and link to register.

**Kay shows off her shirt design.**

## February Board and Business Report

By Faye I. Andersen

In February, the SITM Board had only a few motions to review and recommend to the members.

### CD Renewal Approved

General Fund Treasurer Cynthia Cramer recommended that the Certificate of Deposit with First Independent Bank, that matures March 26, be renewed for a period of 179 days. The rate for this CD is 3.4%. The motion was approved by the membership.

### Honoring a Member at Spring Conference

Kay Dunham brought forward a motion to allocate \$100 from the General Fund to participate in an advertising program offered by the Sierra Nevada Region at the Spring Conference. To honor SNR's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, SNR is offering clubs an opportunity to honor their longest serving member by purchasing a business card sized ad in the conference program. SITM's longest serving member is Charter President Jaci Jones, beginning when SITM was chartered on October 23, 1978. Motion approved.

### Welcome Spring Social Set for March 25

The board recommended and the membership approved a motion for the Membership and Hospitality Committees to conduct a Welcome Spring Social event for all SITM members and prospective members. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25 at Ethan Allen from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. The committees were seeking a \$200 budget from the General Fund to underwrite the cost of refreshments. The membership approved the motion.

### Parking Lot Sale May 16

A motion by Kay Dunham, on behalf of the Fundraising Committee, was made to hold a "Parking Lot Sale" on May 16, 2026, with set-up May 15 at Kay's business office complex, First Wall Street Financial Advisors 190 W. Huffaker Lane in Reno. Permission from the property manager has been approved. Members' time and donated treasures are needed. This was approved by the membership.

### Nominating Committee Searching for Volunteers

At the February Business Meeting, Gayle Kmetovicz was selected by the membership to serve on the Nominating Committee. Co-Presidents Marilyn Pearson and Lisa Robinson selected Jeanne Naccarato as the coordinator of the committee, and the Board selected Dot Watts.

This committee will develop a slate of officers to stand for election to serve next year. If you would like to be a part of the club's leadership team, speak to any member of the Nominating Committee.

### Money Matters and Happy Dollars

A total of \$7,500 from SITM's Nepal Funds at the Community Foundation of Nevada has been joined by a similar donation from SI/Sierra Reno to continue funding for our project, "Removing Barrier to Education for Girls in Tulipokhari, Nepal". The funds will provide room and board in the new dormitory, and scholarship tuition for 32 girls, salaries for a cook and house mother, and a field trip for the girls in the Spring.

Happy Dollars collected in January totaled \$326 for the Jo Ann & Dee Ann Roberts Memorial Scholarship for Education Majors. SITM also received additional donations: \$5,000 from Faye I. Andersen to the General Fund to help underwrite member attendance (first time or recurring attendance) at district meetings, region conferences, SIA and SI conventions; \$150 from Andrea Caldwell for Women's Scholarships; a \$40 miscellaneous donation from Mary Ann McCauley.

### February Birthdays

Celebrating February Birthdays were, from left: Marilyn Pearson (February 8); Margie Hermanson, Hospitality Committee, and Millie Mitchell (February 23).



Also celebrating birthdays were Gayle Kmetovicz (February 22) and Mary Ann McCauley (February 20).



# SITM Update

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Liza Chalen

Annette Friedlander

Cynthia Cramer



For information about our organization, check out these Soroptimist Websites:

Sierra Nevada Region: [www.soroptimistsnr.org](http://www.soroptimistsnr.org)

Soroptimist International of the Americas: [www.soroptimist.org](http://www.soroptimist.org)

Soroptimist International: [www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org)

## SITM Board 2023-24

### Co-President

Marilyn Pearson

Lisa Robinson

### President-Elect

Holly Nash

### Vice President/Program

Mary Ann McCauley

### Vice President/

### Membership

Billie Mendiola

### Secretary

Bev Perkins

### Treasurer/General Fund

Pam Robinson

### Treasurer/Service Fund

Cynthia Tashiro Cramer

### Delegate

Debbie Richards

### Director

Jeanne Naccarato

### Parliamentarian

Doris Phelps



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Investing in Dreams

## Did you know . . .

### Get Out of the Comfort of the Club!

by Co-President Marilyn Pearson

Faye I. Andersen has given SITM members a way to experience Soroptimism outside our club. Her generous donation of \$5000 is to "help underwrite member attendance (first time or recurring attendance) at district meetings, region conferences, SIA and SI conventions. During my years as a Soroptimist, I both enjoyed and benefitted from the camaraderie and knowledge of the world I gained in attending these events. I would like to offer an incentive for other members to experience the same."

Members may access these funds by registering for an event, filling out a check request, and giving the request along with a receipt to our General Fund Treasurer Pam Robinson for reimbursement. The Board felt most of the donation would go for district meetings and our annual Sierra Nevada Region (SNR) conference. This year is SNR's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a wonderful time to experience the conference June 5-7, 2026. For more information, contact Pam Robinson: [pamrobinson@pamrobinson.com](mailto:pamrobinson@pamrobinson.com)



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**Soroptimist International of the Americas  
Sierra Nevada Region  
District 5 Winter Forum Leadership Summit  
Hosted by SI Sierra Reno**

**Friday, February 27, 2026**

**5:00-7:00 pm** *Meet and Greet with no-host bar and appetizer menu.*  
**Renaissance Reno Downtown Hotel and Spa**  
**One South Lake Street**  
**Reno, Nevada 89501**  
**775-682-3900**

**Saturday, February 28, 2026**

**9:00 am-3:00 pm** *Driving Change: Women on the Move – a fun-filled day with activities and a compelling message from our guest speaker, Tracy Ostrem. Our District 5 Club Presidents will be sharing membership success stories.*

**Location:**

**National Automobile Museum**  
**1. Museum Dr.**  
**Reno, NV 89501**

**Registration Link:**

<https://registration.soroptimistsnr.org/events/2026-d5-wdm/>

**\$45 fee includes continental breakfast, buffet lunch and dessert.**

**Guest Speaker:**

**Tracy Ostrem, Vice President for Advancement, University of Nevada, Reno. Tracy specializes in fundraising campaigns, notably 'Creating Futures' and 'Be Boundless.' She is a dynamic presence in engaging individuals and organizations about the pivotal role we play in the future of our communities.**

**Market Place:**

**Shop with local artisans during breaks!**

**Hotel Suggestion for overnight guests:**

**Renaissance Reno Downtown Hotel and Spa**  
**One South Lake Street**  
**Reno, Nevada 89501**  
**775-682-3900**  
**Room block with discount is available**