



Agenda

Penny Babb, Governor
SI Happy Valley of the Sun

Fund Development Announcements

Vanessa Liesen
SI Lake Havasu City

Mistress of Ceremonies

Karen Saelens, Program Chair
SI Phoenix

Live Your Dream Awards

Carolyn Lutz, LYD Coordinator
SI Saguraro Foothills

Live Your Dream Presentation

Governor Penny Babb
SI Happy Valley of the Sun

Special Presentation Governor Penny Babb

Dona Gaddis Wolf, SIA Boardmember
SI Pittsburgh, CA

Fund Development Announcements

Vanessa Liesen
SI Lake Havasu City

Announcements

Debbie Dematteis-Miller
SI Corona
Spring Conference Coordinator



The **Live Your Dream Education and Training Award program** (formerly known as the Women's Opportunity Award) assists women who provide the primary source of financial support for their families by giving them the resources they need to improve their education, skills, and employment prospects. The Live Your Dream Awards involves three levels of cash awards. The program begins at the local Soroptimist club-level, where award amounts vary. Local-level award recipients become eligible for region-level awards of varying amounts. Region-level award recipients then become eligible to receive one of three international-level awards. Recipients may use their cash award to offset any costs associated with their efforts to attain higher education, such as books, childcare, tuition and transportation. Since the Live Your Dream Awards program began in 1972, about \$30 million in education grants have been disbursed to assist tens of thousands of women achieve their dreams of a better life for themselves and their families.



For younger girls Soroptimist offers **Dream It, Be It** which helps high-school age girls take control of their lives and live their dreams. Support is offered through access to professional role models, career education and the resources to live their dreams. As Live Your Dream Education & Training Award is Soroptimist's cornerstone program for assisting women, **Dream It, Be It** is the primary way the organization assists girls. Both programs are designed to ensure women and girls have access to the education and training they need to reach their full potential and live their dreams.



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women



MISSION IS POSSIBLE

2017 Golden West Region
Live Your Dream Banquet

Mia – Submitted by SI Flagstaff



Mia is a mother of two who is set to change the world around her despite all of the struggles she has endured. She grew up with 6 siblings, 5 whom where step-siblings. She was abused mentally and physically by her stepmother and her biological mother. Her stepmother was involved in gangs and drugs. On several occasions she woke up with a gun to her head. Mia said "The only outlet that I had from this struggle was running cross country and my education."

She had a child at the age of 19 and decided to join the Navy Reserves to show her daughter that, despite challenges, anything can be accomplished. The Navy showed her discipline, dedication, attention to detail and the ability to accomplish tasks under pressure. Mia states "Being able to serve my country is an honor as well as another way to keep

myself disciplined."

Mia was an electrician in the Navy. After having her second child, from an abusive partner she decided to take her career further by enrolling in school full time. She is currently pursuing a Science Degree at Coconino Community College. She wants one day to have a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering and wants to complement that with a minor in Anthropology.

"When looking back at my life and how I have lived it, I do not regret any part of it nor do I pity myself. I do not want anyone to pity a woman like me because of what I have gone through. I want people to look at me and know that I am serious about what I want in life because nothing has been out of my grasp if I want it."

Autumn Gambill – Submitted by SI Gold Canyon



Autumn was born in Temp, Az. When she was 13 years old her mother dropped her off at a mental hospital after which she became a ward of the state. Her mom was subsequently diagnosed as bi-polar.

Being a child in the foster care system was difficult. When Autumn was 15 and living in a group home, she and another resident took a quick walk to a corner store for a soda. Two young men offered them a ride. They were taken to the desert where they were raped and left. When she was asked how she coped or overcame these parts of her life she said "You just move on thru it."

Autumn has two small children and they are her top priority. Her challenges are spending quality time with them, continuing to get good grades and working.

Autumn is enrolled in the Diesel Mechanic program at Arizona Automotive Institute and she loves it! Several years ago she needed a new starter for her car. She looked up the repair and did it herself. It took her 6 hours but when she was done she felt a great deal of satisfaction and pride and decided to make Auto Mechanics her career.

In 3 years she sees herself in her own home with a good job with good benefits. In 5 years she sees herself owning her own small business doing the work she loves.

Agni Guerrero – Submitted by SI Las Cruces



Agni grew up in Juarez, Mexico with a single mother who emphasized the importance of education. She began her college career with a three to four hour daily commute to El Paso Community College that included walking across the international bridge and riding the bus. The long commute time, financial struggles and not being fluent in English made college challenging. Agni was placed in remedial math and English classes and saw this as an opportunity to better herself and improve her life. She was hired for a work-study job on campus, bought a used vehicle and took extra classes to improve her skills. After completing the core course at El Paso Community College Agni transferred to New Mexico State University where she is studying Electrical Engineering. Agni maintains a high grade point average, works part-time and participates in several internships at Dow Chemical Company.

When Agni was 21 her mother started the paper work to become a resident of the United States. Her mother did not speak English and could not work until she received her work permit. Agni became financially responsible for her.

Agni says, "The Live Your Dream Award will relieve financial pressure during my senior year, allow me to help my mother and achieve my dream of becoming a power engineer."

Sandra – Submitted by SI Baldy View

Sandra is a student at Chaffey College in the Pre-Law Program currently completing her Associates Degree in Administration Justice. She is planning on transferring to a 4-year college to acquire a Bachelor's Degree and attend Law School to fulfill her dream of becoming an attorney. She wants to eventually provide pro-bono legal services to low income families and victims of domestic violence. Sandra was raised by immigrant parents who came from a poor area of Mexico. Her parents worked hard to provide for their next meal and a roof over their heads. Due to the fact her parents did not have experience with education, they were not supportive of her continuing higher education. After high school, out of necessity, Sandra found and supported her parents due to her father's ill health. During this time, she met a man and married him. She lost her first child at 27 weeks. When she was pregnant with her second child, her husband became abusive. She chose to leave him to protect her unborn child. Sandra is pursuing her education to accomplish her goals for her daughter and their future.

Devin – Submitted by SI Moreno Valley



When Devin was 16 years old she was removed from her home by Child Protective Services. The next few years were difficult but she managed to finish high school. A few days after her 18th birthday she was married. Her 13 year marriage was plagued by emotional and psychological abuse.

Devin recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. She wants to pursue a future in healthcare and healing with ultrasound as well as other holistic healing methods. She plans to continue her education and become licensed in spiritual healing and one day open her own wholeness and wellness retreat.

Devin is the single mother of three children two of which are on the Autism Spectrum. She will continue to strive for the life she wants to create for herself and her children. She wants to set the example for her children that they can accomplish their goals as long as they work hard and believe that they can.

In May 2015, Angela obtained a position with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office in the Bureau of Internal Oversight as an Administrative Assistant. She has since obtained a professional certification in Law Enforcement Audits and Inspections, and is currently pursuing a degree in Public Administration.