

## Is Your Club Living the Dream (Programs)?

[SLIDE]

### MISSION

Soroptimist is global volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

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### GOAL

Invest in the dreams of one million women and girls through access to education by 2031.

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### GO!

Your club can fulfill both the mission and goals simply by utilizing resources for Soroptimist's signature Dream Programs.

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Wait. What's a Dream Program?

1. Live Your Dream Education and Training Awards for Women
2. Dream It, Be It Career Support for Girls
3. Online volunteer & activist community at [liveyourdream.org](http://liveyourdream.org)

[SLIDE]

But But But

How can I fully integrate the so-called Dream Programs into all aspects of my club's activities...***When some of my club's activities don't have anything to do with the Dream Programs?***  
**AH HA!!**

[SLIDE]

Avenue of Flags; SI Lake Havasu

Every year, the club would place American, Soroptimist & Arizona flags on the main street in town on national holidays and special occasions. They had done it since 1971—45 years with a rich history of community service, parades, patriotism, and pride.

But they didn't have enough members to continue to participate and the heat and distance they had to cover when walking in parades was too much for many of the members they did have. That's a tough decision, right? But they knew, this project, while loved by the Soroptimist members, was not a Soroptimist project. It did little to attract new members, raise money, or help women and girls. That didn't mean it wasn't a worthy project, it just wasn't a Soroptimist project.

So they found a new home for the flags, the flag trailer, and the rich tradition of flags in the community. It was a win-win. And, without that project weighing them down, they went from a club that was about to disband, to a club with a half dozen new members the next year.

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Evaluate. Or, re-evaluate

Does this activity specifically help women or girls? Fundraising fits here if you are raising money to help women and girls.

(Not families. Not children. Women. Or. Girls.)

Does activity increase access to education for women or girls?

Does this activity increase club membership? IE

Recruitment/Retention

If you are sitting there thinking, “NO WAY” my club is going to listen to me tell them this information? Don’t despair. Your district director, your governor, and, in fact, even little old me, are all willing to help do an intervention of sorts to help you bring this message to your clubs. Help your club look at their activities and answer the questions of whether the activity helps women and girls, whether it increases access to education for women and girls, whether it is positively impacting recruitment and retention. That’s what the Region’s job is—to serve your clubs. Just ask.

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Live Your Dream Education and Training Award for Women Opportunities after the award:

--volunteer at next fundraiser

--adopt a holiday family

--program speaker at program or fundraising event

--applicants for next year

--job reference

--future member

## [SLIDE]

Dream It, Be It Career Support Girls

Opportunities through participation:

- touching actual lives in a meaningful way
- future volunteers at service projects and/or fundraisers
- mentorships
- vendors who join club
- funding from community

## [SLIDE]

liveyourdream.org is an online volunteer & activist community  
**LiveYourDream.org is powered by Soroptimist** a women's volunteer organization that's part of a global coalition of about 100,000 members spanning more than 100 countries.

**Soroptimist clubs support community-based and global programs such as our *Live Your Dream: Education & Training Awards for Women* and *Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls*.** Soroptimist realized that the needs of women and girls far outstripped the organization's capacity. So **in 2012, Soroptimist launched LiveYourDream.org as an extended digital branch for volunteers and activists interested in taking action to help women and girls**—particularly as it pertains to gaining access to education and living free from violence.

## Transition....

So, the description of this workshop promised to give real-life examples of how to live the dream in your clubs. And there are both positive and negative examples of what it is to live—or not

live—the dream programs. I mostly have positives. But this one stuck out for me and, even though it is negative, I think it is a powerful learning tool.

[SLIDE]

### Membership Recruitment and Retention

Our mission and goal naturally draws women to our clubs.

A recent exit survey of a woman who was quitting Soroptimist revealed that one of the reasons she was leaving was that she felt her club lacked focus.

“The club does too much with too few people. Everyone has a pet project, and some of the projects aren’t really helping women or girls. **That is why I joined.** If the club had focused more on education for women, I would have stayed on another year.”

The good news is, that isn’t the typical experience. Five years ago, one of our members invited the Dean of Education from Grand Canyon University to attend our awards program. She was moved to tears that morning at the stories she heard and immediately joined our club. Today, she is our club president. She helps us focus on education and we are slowly championing the dream programs and letting go of those pet projects that don’t actually help women and girls access education.

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### Service Projects

Dream It, Be It is just that, a hands-on service project helping girls set goals for education and careers

We've done it for two years now with three clubs--Kachinas, Happy Valley of the Sun, and Phoenix club. And the most striking thing is this: some girls don't know they can have a dream or a goal. They don't know they can go to college even if no one in their family ever has.

The funniest thing a young woman said to me at Dream It, Be It was, "So let me get this straight, you are here because you want to be? No one is paying you? You ladies are all just doing this for free for us? That seems messed up. [PAUSE] But, I like your SQUAD GOALS. Props for that."

Translation—she approves of my Soroptimist friends and I helping young women like her set goals and dream bigger than their current place in life.

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Service Projects

Live Your Dream Award winners are the shining star of why we do what we do. So, why do clubs ignore their best asset??

What do you do for your Live Your Dream Award winners after the award ceremony?

Do you celebrate them at the holidays?

Does she have a single point of contact in the club who checks in with her every 6 months?

Do you let her tell her story to potential donors at your fundraisers?

## [SLIDE]

Our club decided to stop looking for holiday families about 5 years ago. Instead, we started adopting our Live Your Dream Award winners as our holiday families. It was kind of a “DUH” moment for us. And it has been nothing short of amazing. We get the families wish list and we try to fill all the kids’ requests. We give mom some gift cards to Kohls, Target, etc. and give her a grocery gift card. Then we invite them to come to a meeting to wrap gifts with us and update us on their lives. It is unexpected for them, they are always worried about “why” we are being nice when they didn’t ask.

The first year we started doing it, I got an email from one of the women after dropping the gifts off since she couldn’t make it to the wrapping party. She wrote, ” I don’t know what I did to deserve more help from Soroptimist, the award you gave me last spring was more than I could have ever imagined. But you are angels, I just know it. Last week I found out how much it was going to cost to buy books for next semester and it was a lot. There wasn’t any extra money for presents if I wanted books. So I told my kids that Santa wouldn’t be bringing much this year, I wanted to prepare them for it. Thanks to Soroptimist, boy, are they going to be surprised!”

## [SLIDE]

Fundraising

Who spoke at your last fundraiser? Was it someone from another organization that you gave money to?

The best speaker you can get is one who is already a huge fan of your work and a recipient of a Soroptimist-branded award. That is what is going to pull at your donor's heart and purse strings.

LYDA winners are empowered by telling their story and feeling supported.

DIBI participants grow and mature given opportunities to acquire skills like public speaking.

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Again, this is something many clubs learn the hard way. Once you do it and see the reaction and impact those stories make on your fundraising efforts? It is a bit of a DUH moment.

[SLIDE]

Publicity

The local news doesn't want to cover your next fundraiser (yet!), but they do want to do a feel good story about how you gave a struggling, single mom \$3,000. And, once you know the reporter, you can give her a free ticket to your next fundraiser.

[SLIDE]

I'm going to depart from Dream Programs for a moment to show you an amazing partnership my own club has with local media. I always like ending on publicity because it is something I feel very passionate about and connected to. Luckily for my club, I married a local media personality in 2013. The relationship he has helped us build with his station isn't just

about giving us free publicity and exceeding our fundraising events. Though, yes, those things are nice. The station now does a campaign to buy girl scout cookies from listeners that directly benefits our clubs Operation Women Warriors project. So the first video I am going to show you is from the Mac and Gaydos facebook page where they take delivery of the girl scout cookies.

[SLIDE]

Putting our name and website out there in such a public format has been amazing. But what's even better is that for the last two years, Mac and I have set up our GoPro camera at the care package packing party and then someone on the web content production staff at the station produces an amazing time lapse video for us. For free. So here's the 2017 version of that promotional video.

[SLIDE]

So, if I timed it right, we should be able to do some roundtable. Questions for me. Examples of how your club is living the dream. Though, beware, if you stand up and tell me your collect food for food banks or stuff backpacks for kids, I am going to gently remind you that your projects are outside the mission of women and girl focused efforts. Worthy projects, no doubt, but if you want to live the dream, you have to be living the dream programs!!

[SLIDE]

You guys have been amazing. In my real life, I do freelance work going into corporate settings doing goal setting, team building, and strategic planning. But as I mentioned before, I'm willing to help your club live the dream for free. I'll bring my freelance skills to you for free. Well, almost. If you are in the Phoenix area, it is a no brainer. If you are outside the area, I would appreciate a place to sleep and meals if I travel to your club retreat or board retreat.

[SLIDE]

End slide. Thank you.