

THE SOROPTIMIST SWP



Volume 34 No 1
February 2014
ISSN 0157- 437X



a global voice
for women

Soroptimist  International

Federation of the South West Pacific

Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific

ACN 147 990 627

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THE SOROPTIMIST -SWP

The Magazine of SISWP



From the Editor

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Here I am having coffee once again. This time I am with the SI Benalla scholarship committee, Ellen Crocker, and Patricia Thompson, and our 2014 scholarship girl. It has been pointed out that most clubs have a project that offers a scholarship or bursary for education. These projects cover a huge range of offers from underprivileged Primary school children through to older age women who wish to upgrade their education levels and require financial assistance. All these projects follow the *Educate to Lead* Soroptimist Programme.

This edition of the SWP Magazine covers articles from the *Educate, Exchange Connection* ambassadors; and the *Walk the Talk* events that take place to highlight our stance to stop family violence. I hope you enjoy looking at all the photos

Conference of Clubs 2014 in Kuching, Sarawak.

To make things even more interesting, 2014 is *Visit Malaysia Year* and as such, the whole country is laying out many interesting events for its visitors throughout the year. So, attend the COC 2014 and take the opportunity to enjoy *Visit Malaysia Year* events as well.

For more information on *Visit Malaysia Year 2014*, please visit their website: www.vmy2014.com.

that have been sent in to illustrate the joy and the purpose of both events. Such enthusiasm in all photos.

I would like to wish you all a safe and happy new year. May our membership increase and our projects all prosper. I look forward to seeing as many of you who are able to go to the CofC at Kuching, as it is always great to catch up.

The next SWP Magazine, that hopefully you will receive before May, will be the last production of my term as Editor. I finish my 8 year term in May 2014.

Kerry

Front cover photos of Walk the Talk event. Top photo is SWP President, Siew Yong, with members of the Malaysian clubs, photo below is SI Nelson and SI Waimea, NZ

The deadline for the May 2014 SWP Magazine is **30th March 2014.**

Articles, letters and all other matters appearing in this magazine do not necessarily express the official views of Soroptimist International or of the Editor of The Soroptimist SWP.

Greetings from your President

May I extend wishes for a very bright and fruitful year for 2014. May we all look forward to a year of more meaningful programmes of service in creative ways to meet the unique needs of the communities we serve.

“Walk The Talk” events to stop violence against women with the theme, “Zero Tolerance, Zero Violence, Zero Victims” were sighted in many of the SISWP countries, from Mongolia to Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji, Australia and New Zealand. Thank you to all the clubs and regions for your commitment and action to Walk the Talk to advocate “Zero Tolerance, Zero Violence, Zero Victims”.

Thank you to our partners, sponsors and supporters for joining us to show we will not tolerate any form of gender violence. Together we speak for victims of violence everywhere and walk to say no more victims, please.

As a picture speaks a thousand words and you have done your “Walk”, I shall let the pictures on the following pages do the “Talk”.

President Siew Yong



Malaysia



Brisbane Water



Fremantle



Albany



Ipoh



Kapiti Coast



Cairns



Tauranga



Gore

Walk the Talk march to raise awareness and act to stop violence against women November 25th - December 10th 2013



Bangsar

On the 16th of November 2013, SI Bangsar, in collaboration with Etiqa Insurance & Takaful, organized a Charity Treasure Hunt in conjunction with SI Bangsar's 21st anniversary. The main objective was to raise funds to conduct workshops to educate on ways to prevent and halt violence against women and children.

Themed "Hunt with a Heart 2013" the annual charity motor hunt saw 32 cars racing to the finish line, while solving mind-boggling puzzles for a chance to win attractive prizes. There was good participation from six Malaysian clubs.

SISWP Federation President Siew Yong Gnanalingam, SI Bangsar President Dr Chang Lee Hoon and Acting Chief Executive Officer of Etiqa were at the Dataran to flag off the participants.

SI Bangsar members were successful in raising RM16,800. They will be organizing a workshop in the near future.

Helena Cheah

Adelaide

In South Australia the four city clubs, SI Eastern Districts, SI Adelaide, SI Southern and SI Torrens met on Adelaide's Parliament House steps where they were addressed by the Honourable Steph Key representing the Premier and Mary Handley our Region President. From there we walked with our banner to the Botanic Gardens. Here an artwork was presented to Ms Maria Hagais from Central Domestic Violence Service by the artist Ms Elizabeth Gebler- Hughes, SI Adelaide.

Louise Bruce
SI Eastern Districts, SA



Griffith

The Griffith Domestic Violence Group organises a *Reclaim the Night* march in October each year. Four members of SI Griffith are also members of this group and our club also supports them. This year, to "Walk the Talk", eight of our members took part in the march. One of our members read a poem written by a member of SI Moreton North, one of our Friendship Link clubs. We distributed 100 battery powered candles which were lit as the poem was read, in memory of all women who have lost their lives as a result of gender violence.

Will Mead
SI Griffith, Riverina

Hobart

Last year SI Hobart partnered with the Hobart Women's Shelter to accomplish our first "Walk the Talk" rally. This year members of SI Hobart were joined by members of Zonta (Derwent). Also joining the march was State Minister Cassy O'Connor.

Julie Marsaban
SI Hobart, Tas.



Christchurch

SI Christchurch joined the *Stop Violence against Women* street march in November. Our city centre is still affected by the earthquakes so we assembled near the Bridge of Remembrance and marched down to Cathedral square. Jennie Benecke and Lesley Fursdon are seen here saying *Soroptimists support the elimination of violence against women and girls.*

Lesley Fursdon
SI Christchurch, NZ Sth





Mongolia

In Ulaanbaatar, the Mongolian Women's Foundation organized a donation event during the 16 "awareness to stop violence against women" days. SI Ulaanbaatar (SIUB) members made donations of books, paintings, food, toiletries, gloves, CDs and children's

clothing to those women suffering from violence.

On 30th November, President SIUB, Tugs-Oyun, visited the shelter house run by the National Centre Against Violence with members Tugsjargal, Erdenechimeg and Tuya. Doctor Erdenechimeg conducted a health training session and provided infants and women staying at the shelter house with free medical check-ups.

SI Ulaanbaatar also handed over children's clothing to SI Darkhan and SI Erdenet, to be given to orphan children and poor women in Darkhan and Erdenet.

SI Darkhan organized a seminar on "Stop domestic violence".

15 dedicated women participated from each Bag (district) of Darkhan Soum (region).

Also, within the framework of "Walk the Talk" they visited the government office of 2nd Bag of Darkhan /Ger district and gave work clothes and children's warm clothes for poor people of this Bag.

Altantuya Perenlei
NR SI Mongolia



SI Darkhan



Sigatoka

"We all have to play our part to realize the dream of a world which is free of any form of violence against women" said SI Sigatoka President, Savitri Lingam, during SI Sigatoka's awareness

programme on November 26 as part of the 16 days of activism for the elimination of violence against women.

The programme started with a march through Sigatoka Town. Apart from SI Sigatoka members the crowd of around 200 people included members of Cuvu and Kavanagasau women's clubs, and the students and staff of three local schools. The march was also well supported by the Nadi Woman's Crisis Centre, Sigatoka Social Welfare Women Interest Department and several other government departments. The

awareness created was through banners and placards which focused on the theme, 'Zero Tolerance, Zero Violence, Zero Victims.'

One of the speakers, the officer in charge of Sigatoka Police Station Mr Steel, spoke to the participants about the types of cases that are reported and the actions that are taken. "I am using this platform today to send out the message that it is very important to report cases of violence and confide in people you trust as this can save lives."

Zareena Bi
NR SI Fiji



Gold Coast

SI Gold Coast members and friends led the Gold Coast Walk for White Ribbon Day. As they walked, members carried on high a newly produced three-metre long banner displaying the Soroptimist International pink and blue "Walk the Talk" logo. Team Captain Dorothy Elliott led the group organised by the Palm Beach Neighbourhood Centre. Other participating groups included the Queensland Police, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, and the GC Suns Football team, whose fully-costumed red

and yellow mascot, Sunny Ray, helped carry the SIGC banner along part of the walk. Sunny's presence helped generate even greater attention to the banner and cause.

Marilyn Mitchell
SI Gold Coast, Sth Qld.

Hornsby

SI of Hornsby partnered with Hornsby Police, the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai DV Network and Hornsby Council to organise the "Walk the Talk" march on Friday 29th November. Following the White Ribbon Breakfast, about 45 people joined the Hornsby Soroptimists to walk the 4.5 km from Asquith to Hornsby Mall behind our banner. It was overcast, and a slight drizzle of rain accompanied the walkers. We had a police escort as we made our way down the Pacific Highway, and were



greeted with many beeps from passing motorists. As we approached Hornsby Mall our numbers were swelled by a contingent from the Chinese group organised by our Multicultural Liaison Officer from Hornsby Police, who marched with us waving the flags with the WTT logos.

Julie Griffith
SI Hornsby, NSW



Cobram Barooga

December 10th, 2013 SI Cobram Barooga chose the Barooga Botanic gardens and for the more enthusiastic a 3km walk through the Bush for "Walk the Talk". A Gold Coin and/or Sponsorship helped raise funds for local organizations supporting women in crisis. Forty five participants put their walking shoes on for a fun stroll on a perfect summer evening. SI Melba kindly loaned their banner which gave the evening focus and emphasized the "Walk the Talk" slogan.

Pam O'Dwyer
SI Cobram Barooga, Vic.



Beenleigh

On a damp November morning about 20 stalwarts participated in SI Beenleigh's "Walk the Talk". We were joined by brave members from SI Bayside, SI Brisbane, SI Logan and SI Gold Coast, Federal and State ministers, two local councillors and members of a local domestic violence support group. We started at the Police Citizens' Youth Club (PCYC) and walked to the Beenleigh Historical Village under the supervision of Senior Sergeant Mark Haestier, Officer in charge of the PCYC. Much needed coffee was enjoyed at the Historical Village café and Sergeant Mark ferried walkers back to their cars in the PCYC bus. He is very supportive of our cause, as he said, "Violence doesn't stop because it rains".

Jean Fornasier
SI Beenleigh, Sth Qld.



Logan

A number of our members joined with SI Beenleigh to participate in their "Walk the Talk" march on a very wet November day. (see photo above)

As part of the 16 days of activism to end the violence against women and girls, SI Logan held a High Tea. Guest speaker was Steve Swenson, a Logan City Councillor, and an ambassador for the White Ribbon Organization. His commitment was obvious with his entertaining talk outlining his reasons for supporting the organisation. He told us there are many understanding males who are trying to prevent the devastation that domestic violence causes.

Ann McFarlane
SI Logan, Sth Qld



Benalla

To support "Walk the Talk", SI Benalla joined forces with the Benalla White Ribbon march in November. We walked across the bridge and down to the Rose Gardens where we listened to the guest speaker, who herself had been a victim of horrific violence. This year students from a local secondary college marched with us. Also a large number of the local police added bulk to our numbers. Benalla Rotary catered for the 100 participants.

Janet Gourley
SI Benalla, Victoria



Victoria

A number of clubs in the Region joined SI Victoria for their "Walk" against family violence on 1st December. From the Flagstaff Gardens to Federation Square is a long march on a hot day. We ended up in the Square with banners, speakers and entertainment by the Decibelle Singers.

Maggie Mitchell
SI Business on Collins (SI BOC), Victoria



Educate to Lead

The Soroptimist theme applies as much to our members as it does to our programme of service. We will reach the potential of our movement’s mission when we fully embrace learning and leadership opportunities to offer Soroptimists.

The journey to leadership is personal to each member. What I share is some of my journey, and I do so in the hope that it might encourage those who are willing, but hesitant, to make their next step or to try again. I would never have

progressed to this point without the encouragement of others. I thank my SISWP sisters for your vote of confidence in me to serve as the SI President 2015 - 2017.

Leadership occurs whenever someone follows. You can lead without a position or title: when you lead by example and strive to be the best you can be. You also lead by encouraging others to be the best they can be. You may see potential where the person concerned can see none or little.

I recall the moment when I was asked to stand in for the club president to run a club meeting. I said no. I couldn’t do it. I had no understanding of what she did. I was too unsure. What the request did do was cause me to wonder what it did involve. With new eyes I started watching... and learning.

I recall being at a NZ conference and being taken aside by the SWP President and her encouraging me to look at taking office. My initial reaction was that it was a lovely gesture. A seed was sown... And it was nurtured by others with encouraging comments, which often came at the least expected moments.

I recall the second time I stood to be NZ National Representative. I wasn’t going to stand again after not being elected the first time... But an experienced Soroptimist wagged her finger at me and said it was my turn!

I recall standing for SISWP President. I had been told by another experienced Soroptimist that I was not well known, and that I would not get it. I would have to stand more than once. It was my choice to keep my nomination open.

I recall my term as President Elect when I decided I had two years to gain twenty years of insights into the culture and history of the Federation. I spent many hours on the phone with trusted experienced Soroptimists who willingly filled in the gaps.

Being a Soroptimist has made me more compassionate, more grateful, more aware, more confident ... a better person. These destinations are available only once we embrace the journey and trust the process. Go for it!

Yvonne Simpson
SI President Elect
SISWP Immediate Past President



Celebrate education

SI Sentul brought together 17 children from two schools in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on November 9, 2013 at their annual Bollywood Bhangra Blast to celebrate the children’s high-achiever status in the recent 2013 Government exams for primary school-leavers.

Present, together with club members, was the club’s Honorary Member, Datin Paduka Komala Krishna Moorthy, to give away special gift books to the children. These books had been individually signed by the Minister of Health,

Malaysia, Datuk Seri S. Subramaniam as well as by the author, Mr Lim Teck Hoe. Mr Lim has for the past four years been working closely with the club to assist these children with tips on how to develop their memory to retain information.

In 2014, SISentul is seeking to extend its education work. We want to include other schools with underprivileged children, who can benefit from its innovative methods to assist primary school children.
Amu Tharmarajah
SI Sentul, Malaysia



Awards night

Courtney McLeod is the winner of the annual SI Benalla scholarship for girls entering Tertiary education in 2014. Patricia Thompson, member of the SI Benalla Scholarship panel, presented the \$1500 cheque to Courtney at the Benalla College awards night. This scholarship has been awarded for over 20 years.

Patricia Thompson
SI Benalla, Victoria



Educate Exchange Connection (EEC) was a truly beautiful celebration of friendship and sharing of our unique diversity. As our SWP November 2012 Magazine was only able to feature the "Educate. Exchange Connection" activities during the ambassadors' transit in Kuala Lumpur, the activities

of our ambassadors in action during the stay at their host clubs are featured in this issue, as a pictorial record of the wonderful and unique experiences of the ambassadors and to complete the story on the "Educate. Exchange Connection". I believe some of the ambassadors have also done their part

to share their experiences at their club and region levels. Thank you to the wonderful host clubs and regions for your hospitality, friendship and sharing extended to all the ambassadors. Thank you to AirAsia and AirAsia X for making the 'Connection' possible.

SISWP President, Siew Yong



Denise with SI Bangkok members during a visit to Sretsis

delegates about my Exchange experience.

My presentation included photos and information showing all aspects of the trip including my participation in the

I was able to do my presentation about my club, SI Albany and the region SI Western Australia to SI Bangsar and to SI Bangkok whilst away.

As part of my presentation to the Western Australian region, I talked about the projects that I had learned about from my visit to Thailand, including SI Bangkok's annual fundraiser and 36th anniversary celebration, the club's support of nannies for orphaned children and the fabulous Sretsis for Soroptimist Project. As a result of the exchange, SI Albany should soon have new friendship links with SI Bangkok and SI Singapore Gardens.

We also hope to use some of the ideas I learnt from SI Bangkok from their annual fundraiser and apply these ideas to a similar concept that SI Albany is currently working on for 2014.

I would again like to express my gratitude to my hosts SISWP President Siew Yong and Sara Wamontri – and all the wonderful Soroptimists I met during this incredible experience. The Exchange has made me even more passionate about Soroptimism and its power and potential to transform the lives of women and girls.

Denise Smithson
SI Albany, WA
 Ambassador to SI Bangkok

Albany to Bangkok

It was a wonderful and challenging experience to be an ambassador as part of the SI SWP Education Exchange Connection 2013.

Prior to leaving on the exchange, I was able to secure a story in my local newspaper about my involvement in this unique initiative from which I received positive feedback. The article's publication provided me with the chance to talk to and answer questions about Soroptimists from people in my local community. As a result of this article being published, I also received a letter from one of my regional politicians congratulating me on my selection for the exchange.

In November at the SI Western Australia region meeting in Perth, I was able to make a presentation to the SIWA club

Tourism Malaysia briefing and tour, along with encouraging members to attend the Conference of Clubs in Kuching in May 2-4 2014.

I also shared information about the business sessions held in Kuala Lumpur with the ambassadors on the role of SI at the United Nations putting the international role of SI into perspective. For those members who had not heard this before it was very powerful – understanding why we all do PFRs and the importance of reporting is so important. I also talked about our discussion on how SI could attract younger members in the future. As a consequence, I have received some great feedback from SIWA members. I thought it was important for me to show SIWA members what I had shared while I was away so included some slides from my presentation.



EDUCATE • EXCHANGE
CONNECTION

3RD - 13TH OCTOBER 2013

Keshvi Lal of SI Sigatoka, with members of SI Garden City at the Cheshire Home



Supriya Dunham, SI Sydney doing kids yoga observed by SI Petaling Jaya members



Hayley Denoual of SI Wellington, visiting a long house in Kuching



Belinda Campbell of SI Auckland, with SI Phnom Penh members



Euphemia Haraewa of SI Brighton & Southern Districts, with children of the SI Seremban sponsored Learning Centre



Rachael Taylor, SI Wellington with members of SI Jakarta



Anne Marsden, SI Bayside, with SI Erdernet, Mongolia members



Any Aryany of SI Jakarta, Indonesia with members of SI Sigatoka, Fiji and Zareena Bi, NR Fiji



Shamala Ramasamy, SI Bangsar with members of SI Port Moresby



Agnes Goh, SI Garden City, Singapore at home with SI Albany members





Karen Chan addressing a group of SI Victoria Soroptimists at Soroptimist House, Melbourne

toiletary bags for the children who attend camps organized by the centre. In the evening I attended the SI Victoria region council meeting at Soroptimist House on Toorak Road.

Like all very large cities throughout the world, Melbourne has a lot of underprivileged people. Also, with

the increase in numbers of immigrants there are also an increasing number of children from vulnerable families. The SI clubs that I encountered mainly focus on projects in these areas where they work closely with different centres.

The highlight of the whole trip was the privilege to attend the region council meeting. I did my presentation to Presidents, delegates and proxies from clubs from SI Victoria and was hosted by Sue Whitehead, President, SI Victoria on my last night.

I feel that in order to attract younger women to be members, social media is one way to inform them about our existence. Then, there should be programmes that spark interests in the younger generation, perhaps in terms of self development or in networking. I believe a lot of young working women want to meet more people from all backgrounds. With strong friendship links there could be exchange programmes with other countries with perhaps the occasionally hosted trip

to entice a young member.

Due to the travelling involved it's not easy to convince members to travel when they have young children, but we have to stress that it is a learning experience, a fun experience and a time for each member as an individual to have a time for themselves.

I think that conferences and interclub visits offer ways that club members can interact and bond. So SI Penang has started dance sessions and will soon organize talks on feng shui and CPR. As long as members can make the first move to participate, the connection will start to develop.

After embarking on this trip I felt it had inspired me with a new passion for Soroptimism. I had the chance to meet and speak to people from many different backgrounds and communities. I was very grateful to my hosts for their warmth and hospitality and most importantly to the friendship and connection we built in that one week. This is one experience I will cherish and I wish to encourage more Soroptimist members to be a part of this wonderful journey.

Karen Chan,
SI Penang, Malaysia
Ambassador to SI Brighton & Southern Districts, Victoria



Penang to Melbourne

After an overnight flight from Malaysia, I touched down in Melbourne at 10am local time. This was my first experience travelling with Air Asia X and I loved it!

Theresa Lyford, SI Brighton, my host collected me from Melbourne airport. I spent the next two days walking, eating and chatting all around Melbourne, sightseeing, and exchanging notes and sharing experiences about the different cultures and projects done by both SI Brighton and SI Penang.

During this time I was dropped at Prahran Mission to meet Erica Myers-Davis, PE of SI Melba and General Manager of the Centre. Prahran Mission is an NGO that helps people suffering from mental illnesses to get on with life through counselling and training courses.

On day three I visited SI Deakin, and was taken to meet SI Deakin's project partner Banyule Service centre, a community based centre for disadvantaged families. SI Deakin's members create

Left: Sharon Saw, SI Petaling Jaya, with her host, SI New Zealand Central.



Right: Nicole Tan of SI Seremban hosted by SI New Zealand North





A day in medical research

On Thursday 12th September 2013, SI Brighton and Southern Districts ventured into the city on a very wet and wild day. Our planned outing, started at 10.30am at St. Vincent’s Institute of Medical Research. Here we were met by staff encouraging us to enter a warmer and drier domain and gather for a delicious morning tea. Here we met our host, Madeline Whiting, We watched a slide show showcasing the history of the institute, followed by a video presentation concentrating on female scientists who work at the Institute. This discussed the difficult choice many women face between having a family or a career. The Institute has devised a method of allowing their female staff to be able to chose both, if they desire, by encouraging sponsorship to cover the maternity leave replacement of their staff.

Our first guest speaker, David Asher, is an expert in the field of Alzheimers research. David used a simple analogy to explain how Alzheimers affects the brain. *“Close your eyes and imagine it is evening. You are in an aeroplane and about to land in Melbourne. In front of you are all the lights of the city. Now imagine those lights over time are dimming and extinguishing – this is similar to what happens in our brain when we have Alzheimers”.*

We then moved to the laboratory section where we met Nicole Walsh who conducts research into Arthritis. Nicole explained the internal structure of bones and how they change over time. She reiterated the need to maintain our calcium and vitamin D levels and encouraged moderate exercise to assist in the production of bone requirements. After thanking Madeline we wandered along to the Lyceum Club for a light but extremely appetising finger food luncheon. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Lydia Holmes
SI Brighton and Southern Districts,
Victoria

News from the Clubs



Project Respect speaker

DELICIOUS food, art, music and a stimulating speaker - this is exactly what guests received at The Optimist Dinner, organised by SI Mornington Peninsula Inc. (SIMP) on October 16.

Our group, led by Bronwyn van der Meché, spent weeks preparing for the dinner, for more than 100 guests. On arrival, guests received a complimentary drink in the foyer as they chatted - accompanied by members of Mornington Secondary College’s Band. They also admired a VCE art installation piece, created by Hannah Herbert one of SIMP’s student scholarship recipients.

A sumptuous three course dinner was served - courtesy of Mehro’s Afghani Kitchen. Mehro and her family fled Afghanistan several years ago and are building a new life with a catering business here in Melbourne. A musical accompaniment was provided by Sally-Ann Slater - daughter-in-law of SIMP member, Sue Slater. Before dessert was served, Bronwyn and Region President, Sue Whitehead (SIMP member) gave an address then introduced our guest speaker, Kelly Hinton, Executive Director of Project Respect, Kelly is a member of SI Business On Collins.

Kelly, a young woman, stunned the audience with stories of the plight of sex trafficked girls in our home city of Melbourne. She discreetly shared some of the horrors and emotional trauma affecting girls that Project Respect has helped, and guests were visibly shocked. Bronwyn says of the evening: “The evening went extremely well. Guests enjoyed themselves, and we generated about \$3,500.”

Helen Beeby
SI Mornington Peninsula, Victoria

Photo. Bronwyn, guest speaker and Sue



Banner raising

Our new banner on display at a fundraiser for funds to support George, a horse that the Christchurch Riding for the Disabled own. Every year we have a Bake and Jam stall at a Country Horse Race Meeting. Standing beside the banner is President Ann Hudson of SI Christchurch, Melva Clarkson and Ruth McPherson both Past Presidents in the background. Over \$1000 was raised.

Lesley Fursdon
SI Christchurch, NZ



Lots of balls

On my recent trip to Peru I distributed balls to some of the underprivileged children of the Sacred Valley. Ten soccer and ten volley balls were purchased from funds donated by Cobram/Barooga. Washington, our local guide, assisted me to buy the balls and chose the recipients, and he said that our project was the best thing about being our guide! It was such a rewarding experience to bring some joy to those children! I travelled with The Sisterhood Women’s Travel Group and the women on the tour also enjoyed the experience..As individuals we also donated hygiene and school packs to the underprivileged of Peru.

Jennifer Gaylard
SI Cobram Barooga, Victoria



20th celebrations

SI Damansara was the third Soroptimist club to be chartered in Malaysia. The club was chartered on 20th July 1993 by Janice McDonald, who was then SISWP President. 24 professional women received their badges and constitution. This chartering created history when it was deemed by SISWP that three clubs in a country would enable the

establishment of a Region so the Soroptimist International Region of Malaysia (SIROM) was formed in 1993.

Our 20th anniversary celebration was held during October, a month that is dedicated to Cancer Awareness. SI Damansara members, dressed in pink, and celebrated with good food and cheer in the company of SISWP President Siew Yong, the SIROM National Representative, the SIROM President and Soroptimists from our sister clubs.

Our own Damansara President Laila bte Johari turned poet for the night ...

*Today is the celebration of love, trust, awesome teamwork, tolerance and tenacity
It is time to say thanks to God for his gift of love and patience to all of us in our club
Let's celebrate the beauty, the gift and the blessings of enduring sisterhood,
Happy 20th anniversary my lovely sisters of SI Damansara.*

Charter President, Indrani Manuel said she was proud to stand tall and say that SID had stood by its pledge and done its best during these last 20 years. Our service record had attracted the attention of JP Morgan who will continue to support generously SID's literacy programmes. She thanked Pushpa, Mazlinda, Agnes and Kathryn for having stood by her since the Charter in 1993. As a progressive club we will continue to do our utmost to keep the SI flag flying.

Indrani Manuel
SI Damansara, Malaysia



Oak's day 2013

Last Thursday 158 well dressed ladies headed to the Sherbourne Hotel for our first Oak's Day Luncheon in three years. The venue was first class, and with much chatter it was hard to be heard even with the microphone. Anne McCamish our MC made the afternoon run smoothly. The judges had a tough job picking the lady of the day and the best hat.

The meal was very well presented and the fashion parade by Warwick Jones, and Pampens showed spring fashions, along with accessories by Just me Patsy. Our two members Ann Starritt and Robyn Neville did an excellent job as well as our other models.

We have had a lot of positive feedback, so it looks like this will become an annual event for us once again. We have booked the venue for next year and hopefully it will be bigger and better.

Jeanette Berry
SI Shepparton, Victoria



Sewing with Girl Guides

To celebrate UN Day of the Girl Child and UN Children's Day, four members of SI Port Pirie teamed with five Crystal Brook Girl Guides at the Guide Hall. Soroptimist members brought sewing machines, basic sewing equipment and material to add to the supplies collected by District Leader for Crystal Brook, Lorraine Saunders. Each guide worked 1:1 with a Soroptimist for 1 1/2 hours, learning basic sewing and machine skills. In between, they were able to chat about common interests and favourite activities. At the end of the meeting all were impressed with the colourful results: two draw string bags and three bags with handles. Soroptimist members were interested to hear about a Guides recent fundraiser which resulted in \$200 for simple birthing kits for Africa.

Plans are underway for another combined activity in 2014.

Heather Hunt
Port Pirie, SA

Photo: Kenya Styles (6) newest member of Crystal Brook Girl Guides worked with Karen Dopper, newest member of SI Port Pirie.



Fight against NCDs

Women play a vital role in the fight against Non-Communicable diseases (NCDs) since the normal family diet is almost always decided by women. This fact was stressed by Ministry of Health's NCD Project Officer West Kanak Kumar at a NCDs' workshop for more than 30 participants. The workshop was organized by SI Lautoka.

According to Kumar the sharp rise of NCDs like Diabetes and High Blood pressure in Fiji is a major concern for the Ministry. The participants were educated on the sugar and fat content of foods and encouraged to cook with less oil and salt. Processed foods should be avoided since the preservatives harm the body and ultimately lead to NCDs.

The President of SI Lautoka Ranjini Sanjay said their club has designed forms to collect data on health issues of the elderly at such workshops. These will be later presented to the Ministry.

Zareena Bi
SI Fiji