

Eastern Canada Region  
Soroptimist International of the Americas  
92nd Annual Spring Conference  
April 26-28, 2024  
**REGISTRANT PACKAGE**  
*A Million Dreams*



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE

*Annual Spring*  
**CONFERENCE**

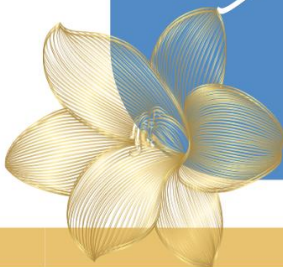
SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF  
EASTERN CANADA REGION

APRIL 26 - 28, 2024

*A Million Dreams*



Novotel Toronto North York  
3 Park Home Ave, Toronto



**ECR Governor Gertrud Hocke**  
**Host Club SI Toronto**  
**Eastern Canada Region**  
**Soroptimist International of the Americas**

**92nd Spring Conference  
April 26-28, 2024**

**A MILLION DREAMS  
Hosted by  
SI Toronto – Celebrating 90 Years!**

**NOVOTEL NORTH, TORONTO  
PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

**FRIDAY, April 26, 2024**

**12:00 PM - ECR Board Meeting with Official Visitor, SIA Director Melanie Kenny**

<b>3:00 PM</b>	<b>Check-in/Registration Desk Opens</b>	
<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>OPENING OF CONFERENCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land Acknowledgement</li> <li>- Welcome</li> <li>- ECR Club Presidents</li> <li>- Official Opening</li> <li>- Call to Order</li> </ul> <b>Introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eastern Canada Region Board</li> <li>- Parliamentarian</li> <li>- Federation Official Visitor</li> <li>- Soroptimist Foundation of Canada</li> <li>- 2024 Conference Committee</li> </ul>	SI Toronto – Jean Skillman President SI Toronto, Estatira Shirkhodaee Governor Gertrud  Governor Gertrud
	Virtual Greetings from SIA  Letters of Greetings	SIA President Bobbi Enderlin SIA ED / CEO Michelle J. Burnett ECR Conference Secretary, Aline Chan
	Governor’s Message Club Anniversary Celebration	Governor Gertrud
<b>6:00 PM</b>	Close of Business Announcements	Governor Gertrud Conference Chair
<b>6:30 PM</b>	Dinner	
<b>8:00 PM</b>	Networking ECR Gift Card Draw Award for Best Presentation for Gift Card Marketplace Begins Special Presentation – 90 Years of Soroptimist in Toronto	SI Toronto Governor Gertrud  SI Toronto

## Saturday, April 27, 2024

8:00 AM	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Ballroom Foyer</b>
8:00 AM	Registration Desk Opens	
9:00 AM	<b>Morning Business Session</b> Call to Order Welcome	Ballroom Governor Gertrud
	<b>Recognition</b> First Time Attendees Past Federation Board Members Past Governors Guests	President Elect Cheryl Ball
	<b>Credentials Report</b>	SI Toronto
	<b>Roll Call of Voting Delegates</b> <b>Adoption of Standing Rules</b>	ECR Conference Secretary Aline Chan
	Minutes of the 91st ECR Spring Conference	ECR Conference Secretary Aline Chan
9:20 AM	Governor's Remarks	Governor Gertrud
9:30 AM	Treasurer's Report	ECR Treasurer Karen Bortolin
	Vote on Budget 2024-25	Governor Gertrud and Treasurer Karen
10:05 AM	Nomination Committee	Past Governor Jennifer Oliver
10:20 AM	Program Update	Directors Kesh Dissanayake and Raheleh Barkhordari
10:40 AM	<b>BREAK and Marketplace</b>	
11:00 AM	<b>Official Visitor's presentation</b>	SIA Director Melanie Kenny
11:30 AM	Pillar Presentation - Membership	Jean Skillman ECR Membership Chair
11:45 AM	Pillar Presentation - Fundraising	Cheryl Ball ECR Fundraising Chair
12:00 AM	Pillar Presentation - Public Awareness	Tanya Fusco President SI Peterborough
12:15 AM	Announcements	SI Toronto
12:20 PM	<b>LUNCH and Marketplace</b>	
1:30 PM	Call to Order Credentials Report	Governor Gertrud SI Toronto
1:35 PM	<b>Workshop</b> Beyond Borders: Passport to Education, Friendship and Adventure	SIA Director Melanie Kenny
2:45 PM	<b>BREAK and Marketplace</b>	
3:10 PM	<b>Presentation</b>	Yllka Bojku
4:00 PM	<b>Close of Afternoon Session</b>	Governor Gertrud
	<b>Announcements</b>	SI Toronto
6:00 -10:00 PM	<b>SI Toronto 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration</b>	Ballroom

**SUNDAY, April 28, 2024**

8:00 AM	<b>Breakfast Registration Desk Open</b>	<b>Ballroom Foyer</b>
9:30 AM	<b>Call to Order</b>	Governor Gertrud
9:35 AM	<b>Credentials Report</b>	SI Toronto
9:40 AM	<b>ECR Soroptimist Remembrance 2023-2024</b>	Jean Skillman ECR Membership Chair
9:45 AM	<b>Soroptimist Foundation of Canada</b>	Wendy Templeton Director SFC
10:00 AM	<b>SIA ECR Region Awards</b> - <b>Live Your Dream: Education &amp; Training Awards</b>	Governor Gertrud & SIA Director Melanie Kenny
10:10 AM	<b>Speakers - Region LYD Award Winners</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner</b>	Daryn Brito, SI Guelph Ida Mensah, SI Toronto
10:30 AM	<b>BREAK &amp; Marketplace</b>	
11:00 AM	<b>ECR Region Awards</b> - <b>Conference Attendance Awards</b> - <b>Membership Satisfaction Award</b> - <b>Recruitment Award</b> - <b>Retention Award</b> - <b>Rose Bowl Award</b>	Jean Skillman, ECR Membership Chair
11:50 AM	<b>Best for Women Luncheon</b>	Ballroom
1:00 PM	<b>Induction of New Board</b>	<b>SIA Director Melanie Kenny and Past ECR Governor Jennifer Oliver</b>
1:30 PM	<b>Looking Ahead – 2024-2026 Biennium</b>	Incoming Governor Cheryl Ball
1:45 PM	<b>Club Announcements</b>	Club Representatives ECR Conference Secretary Aline Chan
2:00 PM	<b>Appreciation</b> <b>Save the Dates:</b> <b>SIA 2024 Convention</b> <b>2024 Leadership Event (Virtual)</b> <b>2024 Fall Meeting (Virtual)</b> <b>2025 Spring Conference</b>	SI Grand Erie  Bellevue WA July 24-27, 2024 September 26, 2024 October 24, 2024 SI Cambridge To be determined
2:30 PM	<b>Closing Remarks &amp; Adjournment</b>	Governor Gertrud

## DELEGATES

1. Each club shall be entitled to three delegates to a region conference. The delegates of each club shall be the President and two members.
2. A club shall be deemed to be in good standing if all requirements of the bylaws, rules and procedures established by Region Conference and Region Board have been met at the time its delegates register. A delegate may represent only the club in which the delegate's membership is held.

## CONFERENCE STANDING RULES

1. In the case of virtual meetings, the requirement for Club Delegates to be seated together is waived.
2. The official program shall be the order of business upon adoption by the conference body. Changes may be made only by majority vote of the Conference body.
3. Cell phones and other devices are to be silenced during sessions of conference.
4. The voting members of the conference shall be the Region Officers and board members, and the accredited delegates of standing.
5. A credentials report shall be given at the opening of each business session and/or any time outlined in the official agenda.
6. To speak at the meeting, a delegate or other member shall raise their hand, address the Chair and after being recognized, clearly and distinctly state her name, Club and position within the Club or Region.
7. During debates, a member may speak two minutes and only once, unless no one else wishes to speak.
8. Both delegates and non-delegates shall be allowed the privileges of the floor, but precedence shall be accorded to delegates.
9. Only registered delegates or registered alternates, when delegate is not in attendance at conference, are entitled to answer roll call or vote.
10. All motions must be submitted electronically to the Secretary at the time they are made.
11. No conference discussion or action shall be released for publicity without the approval of the Region Governor, the Region Secretary and the Public Awareness Chair of the Region.

## RULES OF COURTESY

- Voting delegates to the Conference should be signed in prior to the start of each session.
- All attendees should have their cell phones muted.
- When voting, delegates are to maintain their raised hands until recognized in the count.
- Listen to the opinions of others with an open mind even if those opinions are not the same as yours. You will be afforded the same respect when you speak.

# Minutes from Spring Conference 2023

## Soroptimist International of the Americas Eastern Canada Region

91<sup>st</sup> Spring Conference

May 5-7, 2023

Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton Brantford Conference Centre

Grand Ballroom

Host Club – SI Grand Erie

## Celebrating Soroptimists Around the World Conference Minutes



### Friday May 5, 2023

12:00 PM – Lunch meeting of the ECR Board with SIA Board Official Visitor, President Stephanie Smith and SIA Executive Director and CEO Michelle Burnett was held in the Board Room of the Towne Place Suites. Board members in attendance were Governor Gertrud Hocke, Past Governor Jennifer Oliver, Governor Elect Cheryl Ball, Treasurer Karen Bortolin, Secretary Sue Rivers, Director Keshala Fernando. Regrets – Director Raheleh Barkhordari.

3:00 PM – Registration Desk opened with members of SI Grand Erie welcoming registrants, informing them of the signing in requirements for each session, and providing gift bags to each as they arrived.

6:00 PM – 6:45 PM – After registrants had dinner on their own, the meeting room (Grand Ballroom) was open for the basket raffle and networking prior to the opening ceremonies.

1. 7:09 PM – **Call to Order** - The Spring Conference was called to order by Governor Elect Cheryl Ball, who then informed the conference that Governor Gertrud Hocke had gone to receive medical attention after a fall when leaving the restaurant in Paris, Ontario.
2. **Welcome and Land Acknowledgment:** SI Grand Erie President Wendy Herbert welcomed attendees to the Spring Conference and introduced Kathryn Kissinger who provided the land acknowledgement.
3. **Introductions:** Governor Elect Cheryl then introduced the following to be recognized, asking each to stand as they were introduced:
  - Eastern Canada Region Board Members
  - Parliamentarian – Corinne Rivers
  - Federation Official Visitors – SIA President Stephanie Smith and SIA Executive Director and CEO Michelle Burnett
  - Soroptimist Foundation of Canada Board members
4. 2023 Conference Committee members from SI Grand Erie
5. **Greetings:** SI Grand Erie President Wendy introduced each of the following dignitaries, who brought greetings to the conference:
  - Chief Mark Hill, bringing greetings on behalf of the Six nations of the Grand River
  - Gino Caputo, Brantford Councillor Ward 2, bringing greetings on behalf of Mayor Kevin Davis and the City of Brantford
  - SIA Executive Director and CEO Michelle Burnett, bringing greetings from SIA Head Office
6. **Credentials Report** was provided by Dawn Bowslaugh of SI Grand Erie as follows:  
In attendance according to registration records were  
52 members, including 24 voting delegates  
5 Board members  
2 official visitors  
2 dignitaries

## Friday May 5, 2023 (cont'd)

7. **Governors Welcome** – Governor Gertrud’s welcome speech was read by Governor Elect Cheryl on Gertrud’s behalf.
8. **Soroptimists of the Year**- The following people were recognized by their Clubs as Soroptimists of the Year, and those present received a certificate and pin from the ECR Board. Those not present were to receive their certificate and pin at their next regular Club meeting.
  - SI Cambridge – Sharen Robinson
  - SI Grand Erie – Kathryn Kissinger
  - SI Guelph – Heather Reich
  - SI Haldimand Norfolk – Donna Hutchinson
  - SI Hamilton Burlington – All members
  - SI Kawartha Lakes – Annie Merrell
  - SI London – Sylvia Wright
  - SI Peterborough – Linda McElroy
  - SI Thunder Bay – Karen Bortolin
  - SI Toronto – Bubby Mohan
  - SI York Region – Pat Giusti
9. **Close of Business and Announcements** – Governor Elect Cheryl closed the evening’s business session and Kathryn Kissinger, SI Grand Erie Planning Committee Chair, brought the announcements.
10. **Special Presentation** – In recognition of Red Dress Day, May 5, a day that brings attention to the very serious issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, the following were presented:  
Amber Silversmith from the Six Nations of the Grand River Community talked to attendees about the issue, and about the healing centre/support group that they have called “Love Starts Here”, which helps members of the community who have been impacted by the loss of family members and friends. Amber then introduced an elder from the Six Nations community who shared her story.  
Following this presentation, conference attendees were fortunate to be entertained by the following performers:
  - Nikki Shawarma - Hoop dancing
  - Zibi Jonathon – Jingle Dancing
  - Delbert Jonathon – Drumming solo, and accompaniment of dancers

## Saturday, May 6, 2023

**Live Streaming of the Conference was begun on this morning.**

### Morning Business Session

1. The Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Governor-Elect Cheryl Ball.
2. **Announcements** - Katherine Kissinger, SI Grand Erie Committee Chair brought the following announcements:
  - The link for online participants has been checked and is working
  - Online participants were instructed to put questions in the chat, and to vote using the “reactions” option in Zoom.
  - Mugs distributed to participants are gifts from SI Grand Erie
  - The Marketplace includes items for sale by “Love Starts Here” group from Six Nations of the Grand River
3. **Credentials Report:**
  - 53 members in person, 6 online
  - 27 delegates in person, 4 online
  - 2 official visitors
4. **Roll Call of Voting Delegates:** Voting delegates were called by Secretary Sue Rivers according to the following list. All were present.

Saturday May 6, 2023 (cont'd)

Club	Delegate	Delegate	Delegate	Alternate
SI AC	Christine Wilson	Judy O'Leary		
SI Cambridge	Bonnie Domonchuk	Jaime Griffis	Yvonne Kaine	
SI DAF				
SI Grand Erie	Wendy Herbert	Hannelore Nyman	Cicely Davidson	
SI Guelph	Aline Chan	Jennifer Oliver		Margaret Joyce
SI HB	Theresa Randles	Margaret MacRae		
SI HN	Donna Hutchinson	Patti Dobias Brinker		
SI KL	Susan Peirce	Bonnie Darling	Carolyn LaPorte	
SI London	Najet Hassan	Judy Prevet		
SI Peterborough	Dorothy Macdonald	Tanya Fusco	Dianne Neilsen	
SI Thunder Bay	Cindy Figus	Judy Perrier	Devona Crowe	
SI Toronto	Jean Skillman	Rosita Mandeville (V)	Estatira Shirkhodae (V)	
SI York Region	RoseMary Reid	Corinne Rivers	Kristi Kanitz (V)	

**Point of Order** – It was noted that since Corinne Rivers was serving as Parliamentarian for the Conference, she was ineligible to be a voting delegate for SI York Region.

5. **Board Motion** to accept the Standing Rules as circulated; seconded by Jean Skillman (SI Toronto). Carried
6. **Board Motion** to accept the minutes of the 90<sup>th</sup> ECR Spring Conference; seconded by Wendy Herbert (SI Grand Erie). Carried.
7. **Governor's Remarks** – Governor Gertrud's welcome and remarks were read by Governor-Elect Cheryl on behalf of Governor Gertrud, in her absence.
8. **Treasurer's Report** – ECR Treasurer Karen Bortolin presented a Balance Sheet and Budget to Actual comparison for the 2022-23 budget year – reported to the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.

The balance shown on the Balance Sheet was \$78,043.05.

The comparison of budget to actual showed both areas that were underspent and overspent when compared to the budget. Karen explained that it was difficult to predict budget figures accurately because of the gradual emerging from CoVid restrictions and the transition from a biennial to an annual budget. Projected shortfall based on the current numbers was reported as: \$4,855.00. The final report as of June 30, 2023, will be shared with the membership after review by the appointed accountant reviewer.

9. **Proposed Budget 2023-24** – ECR Treasurer Karen then presented the proposed budget for the year 2023-24, which had been sent out with the registrant package. Discussion points included:
  - That despite efforts to decrease spending in some areas. There is still a deficit projected.
  - That the budget for Membership (Club building and Membership lines) should not be decreased since our focus needs to be on attracting and retaining members.
  - That although the Treasurer states that there is a surplus of funds available to manage the deficit, the surplus figures were not provided.
  - SI York Region voting delegates registered the opinion that proposing a deficit budget is fiscally irresponsible.
  - That the budget is a guideline, and that changes could be made to it based on how the year ahead unfolds.

ECR Treasurer Karen put the Proposed Budget to a vote

Votes in favor – 19 in person + 2 online = 21

Votes opposed – 4 in person = 4 online = 8

Motion was Carried.



**Saturday May 6, 2023 (cont'd)**

**10. Nominating Committee: Call for a Member at Large** – Past Governor Jennifer Oliver explained that the Bylaws call for a member at large from the membership to join the Nominating Committee for nominations to the Board for the 2024-2026 biennium. After several names were put forward from the floor, Aline Chan (SI Guelph) agreed to join the Nominating Committee as member at large. She will serve with Past Governor Jennifer (Chair) and Governor Elect Cheryl (Board rep).

**11. Pillar Presentation – PROGRAM**

Directors Kesh Dissanayake and Raheleh Barkhordari collaborated on the presentation entitled “Hitting our Targets: We can achieve the Big Goal”

Highlights of the presentation included the following points:

- There was 100% club participation in the Live Your Dream program, which resulted in 47 awards being presented.
- SI Atlantic Canada participated by judging all of the SFC-funded awards allotted to Eastern Canada Region. Amy Richards, SI Atlantic Canada was recognized as LYD Chair of the Year
- There were 117 girls involved in DIBI programs over the year, and each region has been challenged to grow their numbers by 10% for the next year.

**Concern raised:** Prior to the break, the following concern was noted. Those participants online, with the current set-up, are unable to interact in real time with the in-person assembly. They can only contribute via the chat and rely on a chat monitor to make their voices be heard. This was seen to be in contravention of current bylaws. The concern was noted and will be considered in planning future conferences.

**BREAK and MARKETPLACE**

**12. Official Visitors Presentation: SIA President Stephanie Smith**

President Stephanie gave the presentation from SIA entitled “Power of the Collective: Small deeds bring big dreams”. The presentation included information about the impact so far, and emphasized that even the smallest contribution can make a big difference for a woman or girl in need. She challenged each of us to think about what our small step or small deed could be.

**13. Pillar Presentation – MEMBERSHIP**

Membership Chair Jean Skillman (SI Toronto) presented the presentation entitled “Get Excited about Engagement: Membership spotlight” in which were presented some ways that clubs have been successful in engaging members for a more satisfying membership experience. She stressed that engagement is very important to both recruitment and retention.

**14. Pillar Presentation – FUNDRAISING**

Governor Elect Cheryl Ball (SI Thunder Bay) presented “Dreaming Big for our Big Goal”, which described the various ways in addition to the Dream Big Campaign that funds have been and can be raised. She recognized ECR members who are Stargazers (monthly donors), and those who were contributors to Dream Big. She also highlighted some of the very successful and innovative fundraising projects held by clubs in Eastern Canada Region.

**15. Pillar Presentation – PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Teena Bhagat (SI Atlantic Canada) gave the presentation entitled “Act Now to Boost our Life-changing Work Online” which focused on digital marketing, and the tools available to clubs to improve their presence online, and successfully promote their work in their communities.

**LUNCH AND MARKETPLACE**

**Afternoon Session** – convened at 1:10 PM by Governor Elect Cheryl Ball

**16. Credentials:** Dawn Bowslaugh (SI Grand Erie) reported the following:

- 49 members signed in
- 8 members online
- 24 voting delegates
- 2 official visitors

TOTAL – 83 participants

Saturday May 6, 2023 (cont'd)

### 17. General Session – “SI, SIA, ECR – Where Do We Stand”

RoseMary Reid (SI York Region), who has among her credentials, past membership on the SI Board, past President of SIA and SIA Board member, and past ECR Governor, presented information that clarified the relationships between and among SI, SIA, and regions, particularly in relation to how statements on global or regional issues are generated. She described the processes that are followed, the partners involved including the United Nations, and how statements are made accessible throughout the organization.

### 18. Workshop 1 – Membership Best Practices

Jean Skillman (SI Toronto), ECR Membership Chair – led a workshop that focused on best practices related to membership engagement. Foundations to engagement were identified as effective club operations, club congeniality and vision and mission focus. Examples were presented from Eastern Canada Region Clubs who had successfully problem-solved, analyzed and implemented new approaches to growing their club membership. Examples were presented from SI London, SI Thunder Bay, SI Grand Erie, and SI Haldimand Norfolk.

## BREAK AND MARKETPLACE

### 19. Workshop 2 – Digital Awareness: Be in Control of Your Digital Life

- Amalia Barthel (Guest Speaker) Privacy Consultant & Advisor, Co-Founder – Decode Series – Digital Leadership track, Lecturer and Academic Programs Advisor [University of Toronto](#)

Amalia gave a very informative talk about how to manage the technology in our lives so that it doesn't manage us and disorder our priorities. She also provided some important points about privacy, and how we should be aware of who is collecting data about us, why it's being collected, and how it's being used. Key takeaways from her talk were: 1 – Be aware of your actions; 2 – Know your rights; 3 – Privacy of your life and lines of defense to protect it; 4 – Configure technology to suit you, not control you; 5 – Common sense, adjust technology to your life priorities.

### 20. Keynote – Connection and Belonging as a Soroptimist

SIA President Stephanie Smith presented some comparative definitions of equality, diversity, equity, acceptance and belonging, and then lead participants in an exercise to review a list of values and rate each on a scale of 1-3 based on how important each was for us as individuals. Then all were asked to pick the top 5 values they rated as “extremely important” and list them on their worksheets. Following that, the group was asked to pair up, with one person as a listener and the other as a storyteller to relate either a frustrated story or happy story from their life experience. On hearing the story, the listener was to try to answer the following questions:

- What does the person value most?
- What might create a conflict for this person?
- What should or could you do differently to honor what is most important to this person?

Some memes to remember:

“Be a faucet, not a drain.”

“Little girls with dreams become women with vision”

“Be the woman who fixes another's crown without telling the world it was crooked.”

“Behind every successful woman is a tribe of other successful women who have her back”

“Empowered women empower women”.

**21. CLOSE OF AFTERNOON SESSION:** Governor Elect Cheryl closed the afternoon session and invited attendees to come back for dinner and a Celebration of Soroptimists Around the World.

### 22. Celebration of Soroptimists Around the World

In preparation for this celebration, each club was asked to choose a country, explore facts about the selected country, prepare a table display, and plan some kind of presentation to represent the country to the other conference attendees.

The countries represented were:

Armenia, Canada, China, England, Finland, Hawaii, India, Ireland, Kenya, Peru, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Presentations were informative, fun and entertaining!

A highlight of the evening was connecting via Zoom with a Soroptimist in Africa (arranged by SI Toronto) who spoke about the impact of the “Period Purse” project in enabling girls and young women to continue to attend school even when having their periods.

**Saturday May 6, 2023 (cont'd)**

## **SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR GERTRUD'S PRESENTATION**

Governor Gertrud was able to join our ECR "Soroptimists Around the World" Spring Conference, via zoom, on Saturday afternoon.

She spoke about how the pandemic impacted the way our ECR Soroptimist Clubs operated. While some members are hesitant about resuming face-to-face meetings, this was an opportunity to find a new balance between our former ways and new possibilities i.e. adopting hybrid meetings. This transitional phase will require patience and perseverance. Governor Gertrud encouraged the members to remember why they joined our organization and the impact they have had on the lives of women and girls.

Governor Gertrud thanked each of the ECR board members for their individual contributions and support during the past year she provided a summary of the successes of our region including the four pillars, the virtual Leadership Academy, the virtual ECR Fall meeting and the new Soroptimist Leadership Fellow Program. She thanked WCR Governor Suzanne for including our region in their virtual events and noted that she was working with Governor Suzanne on a joint webinar series about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Governor Gertrud advised that both ECR and WCR had applied for a grant by the Community Recovery fund of Canada; and they are awaiting a response.

Governor Gertrud concluded by noting that there was a lot of unrest in the world. As ECR Soroptimists, we vehemently support the core values of SI of the Americas – Gender Equality, Education, Diversity and Fellowship. While we recognize that we cannot change the world all at once, we can change the situation of women and girls in our local communities, in our region and our Federation.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Ball  
ECR Governor Elect

**Sunday, May 7, 2023**

1. **Call to Order:** The conference session was called to order at 9:00 am by Governor Elect Cheryl Ball

2. **Credentials Report** – given by Dawn Bowslaugh (SI Grand Erie)

In attendance in person: 53 members

21 voting delegates

2 official visitors

In attendance online: 10 members

4 voting delegates

1 Board Member

3. **ECR Remembrance**

Jean Skillman (SI Toronto), Membership Chair, introduced this time of memorial by reading an excerpt from a reflection by Carter Heyward entitled “Our Passion for Justice”. This was to honour two long-time members of ECR Soroptimist who were lost to us in the last year.

A remembrance of **Carol French** (SI Stoney Creek and SI Hamilton Burlington) was written by her good friend Marilyn Husted, and read by Margaret MacRae, President of SI Hamilton Burlington.

A remembrance of **Jane Hewitt** (SI Cambridge) was brought by Bonnie Domonchuk, President of SI Cambridge.

4. **Inspiring News from Soroptimist International of the Americas Head Office**

Executive Director and CEO Michelle Burnett brought greetings from Head Office, and talked about the many changes coming to Head Office in order to improve the supports that are available to Regions and Clubs. These changes are made possible by the funds raised through the Dream Big campaign and will update the technology and in turn improve the program resources and supports, including data collection and analysis making it all more easily accessible. Michelle indicated that staff at head office do appreciate communications and feedback received from Clubs, and changes made are in response to this input and feedback.

5. **Dream Big Campaign**

Margaret Gilbey (SI Toronto) spoke in more detail about the Dream Big campaign that was to raise \$15 million to support changes to technology (hardware and software) at head office that would in turn provide:

Support For Clubs

- Financial support
- Program resources
- Relationship tool
- Club effectiveness training
- Greater visibility
- Brand awareness

She went on to explain the different ways available to individuals and clubs to get involved by contributing financially to the campaign, as well as fun ways to raise funds, as well as how to recruit sponsors.

**BREAK – Soroptimist Foundation of Canada – Celebrating 60 years!**

A giant cake made its way into the conference room and was shared with attendees as a special treat at this break.

**Sunday, May 7, 2023 cont'd**

6. **Soroptimist Foundation of Canada – Celebrating 60 Years!**

Wendy Templeton (SI Peterborough and SFC Board member) presented information on the history of the Soroptimist Foundation in Canada – why it was established, the changes it has undergone over the years, its current status, responsibilities of the Board, and how funds are received and distributed. The winners of SFC grants for the 2023 year were announced.

7. **Live Your Dream Education and Training Award – ECR Winner – August Parotta**

President Stephanie Smith spoke about the Live Your Dream Awards, their background and impact on thousands of women and families since the awards were initiated in 1972. She indicated that ECR, in the past year, had presented 47 LYD awards with a total value of \$50,566.29, and additional supports valued at \$6,714. She went on to describe the feedback received from former winners about the impact these awards had in changing lives and overcoming barriers.

## Sunday, May 7, 2023 (cont'd)

President Stephanie then presented the Regional LYD Award to August Parotta, whose application was submitted through SI Dundas Ancaster Flamborough. Janet Barnard was in attendance as a representative of the Club. After receiving the award, August shared some of her story, and how receiving the award had impacted her life and future hopes and dreams.

### 8. SIA Regional Awards – Soroptimists Celebrating Success

Serena Cappe-Reynolds (SI Grand Erie), Chair of Soroptimists Celebrating Success, presented slides and special effects to announce submissions under each of the pillars, and the winner in each category.

**Membership:** Submissions were received from SI Thunder Bay and SI Grand Erie. **Winner – SI Grand Erie.**

**Fundraising:** Submissions were received from SI Dundas Ancaster Flamborough, and SI Thunder Bay. **Winner – SI Thunder Bay**

**Program –** Submissions were received from SI Dundas Ancaster Flamborough, SI Grand Erie, SI Peterborough and SI Thunder Bay. **Winner – SI Grand Erie**

**Public Awareness –** Submissions were from SI Dundas Ancaster Flamborough, SI Hamilton Burlington, SI Grand Erie, SI Peterborough, SI York Region and SI Thunder Bay. **Winner – SI Grand Erie**

## LUNCH Break

### 9. ECR Region Awards

**Recruitment Award –** Club that has recruited the highest number of new members in the year April 1 2022 – March 31, 2023. **SI Toronto**

**Retention Award -** recognizes the club that has retained the highest net percentage of membership, June 30, 2022- April 1, 2023. **SI Toronto**

**Member Satisfaction Award -** Clubs who retain over 90% of their members year over year. Most ECR clubs met this criterion. **SI Guelph** was most successful.

**Rose Bowl Award -** Club that had the highest percentage increase in the number of active members from April 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year to March 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year. **SI Toronto**

**Governor's Award -** Club that met the highest number of measurement criteria across all pillar areas of club function for 2022-23 Club Year. **SI Grand Erie** was most successful.

## NOTE:

**Attendance Awards** were presented after the Conference to

**SI Cambridge –** highest percentage of Club members attending the Conference

**SI Peterborough –** Highest number of members in attendance at the Conference

10. **Club Announcements:** Following the award presentations, club representatives were invited to share information about upcoming events in their Clubs.

11. **Appreciation:** Attendees from SI Thunder Bay (hosts of the 2022 ECR Spring Conference held virtually) thanked SI Grand Erie for hosting the first in-person Spring Conference since 2019, on behalf of all attending.

## Sunday, May 7, 2024 (cont'd)

**Save the Date:** Information was presented about the following events that are upcoming for Soroptimists:

2023 Soroptimist International Quadrennial Convention – Dublin Ireland – July 27-29, 2023

ECR Fall Meeting (Virtual) – Hosted by SI York Region – October 19, 2023

ECR Leadership Event (Virtual) – September 25, 2023

ECR Spring Conference 2024 – date to be determined

SIA Biennial Convention – Bellevue, WA USA – July 24-27, 2024

**Closing Remarks –** were brought by Governor-Elect Cheryl Ball, and the Conference was adjourned at 2:45 PM

## **MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR GERTRUD**

My Dear Members of Eastern Canada Region,

I am filled with gratitude and pride for the incredible journey we have undertaken together in the past months. It is heartening to reflect on the resilience and adaptability we have demonstrated over the past months in a post-Covid world. Our normal has indeed changed, and it's inspiring to witness how we've embraced new skills and tools to enhance our Soroptimist experience.

Gone are the days when our chairs' and presidents' meetings were held over the phone. Instead, we now engage in lively discussions during our online meetings, fostering a sense of connection and participation. The increased involvement of our members has infused our conversations with productivity and enthusiasm. Our leadership academy has seamlessly transitioned to the online realm, allowing more members to benefit from the wisdom and experiences shared by our speakers.

The decision to host our fall meeting online has not only reduced costs for our members but also lightened the workload for the organizing club. The substantial participation in both online events serves as a testament to the value and success of this approach.

While some clubs in our region opt for online platforms during the winter months, others have embraced hybrid options. Despite these advantages, the inherent need for social gatherings remains as strong as ever. Clubs have responded by offering social gatherings in addition to their business meetings, leading to great success. In-person fundraising events and DiBi projects are on the rise, showcasing our commitment to making a tangible impact on the communities we serve.

I am thrilled at the prospect of meeting many of you in person at our upcoming Spring conference. There is an unparalleled joy in personal contact, direct interaction, and the shared celebration of our achievements. This year's conference, themed "A Million Dreams," will provide us with the opportunity to come together and dream. We pledge to support the women and girls we care for in reaching their dreams, but it's crucial to reflect on our own dreams. My aspiration is to support as many women and girls as possible, recognizing that together, we can achieve greater success. SIA's goal of "supporting half a million women in 10 years" is within our grasp, and we are making excellent progress.

### **Our Region**

I am immensely proud of our region and the extraordinary team on the Board, who have dedicated their strength, expertise, and time to lead us through the challenges of post-COVID times. Their commitment has been instrumental in steering us towards success.

We have achieved remarkable milestones, notably increasing our LYD award winners to an impressive 58. A heartfelt thank you goes to the Soroptimist Foundation of Canada for sponsoring 17 of these awards. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our LYD chair, Raheleh Barkhordari.

Special appreciation is extended to Keshala Fernando Dissanayake, our Dream it Be it Chair, for her continuous efforts in keeping clubs informed about criteria changes, offering support, and ensuring the success of the program. The number of girls attending DiBi is set to rise further by the end of the Soroptimist year, thanks to meticulous planning by our clubs. As we focus on accelerator projects in the future, the inclusion of educational aspects in local projects will allow their contribution to our common goal of supporting half a million women and girls.

Cheryl Ball, our Fundraising Chair, deserves recognition for maintaining active communication with the Fundraising Directors of the Clubs. This collaborative platform has facilitated the productive sharing of fundraising ideas throughout the region. A sincere thank you to Cheryl for her dedication.

## **MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR GERTRUD (cont'd)**

Karen Bortolin, our Treasurer, has exhibited expertise in managing our finances efficiently. Her perseverance in dealing with the bank has resulted in the acquisition of a credit card, an asset for our region's financial operations.

The backbone of our Board, Sue Rivers, our reliable secretary, has played a crucial role in keeping us organized. Her ability to meet deadlines, record minutes, and maintain connections with clubs by distributing relevant information is invaluable.

I extend my gratitude to Aline Chan, our interim Secretary, who seamlessly supported the Board in times when Sue was not available. Aline's successful management of the Fall meeting and her role in compiling information for the Spring conference are greatly appreciated.

To the entire Board, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the tireless work you do for our region. As Governor, I recognize that my role would not be functional without your collective efforts. The same acknowledgment extends to our dedicated chairs; your contributions are indispensable.

A special note of appreciation goes to Jean Skillman, our Membership Chair, who engaged clubs in discussions about unconventional strategies for gaining members and supporting membership satisfaction. Despite minimal support from SIA, Jean's commitment to strengthening our membership is commendable.

I express my gratitude to Tanna Edwards, who assumed the role of Public Awareness Chair midway through the year. Her efforts in reinvigorating our Facebook page and implementing a communication calendar for easier posting are highly valued.

Susan Peirce, our steadfast website governance, deserves credit for her consistent efforts to keep our website updated.

Our online events run smoothly due to being operated by Serena Reynolds, whose positive and responsive support to our requests is indispensable. Thank you, Serena!

As we reflect on this list of remarkable individuals, it is evident that the success of our region rests on the shoulders of many and relies on the support of each member. Thank you.

Our leadership academy on September 25th was a great success, with Soroptimist Theresa Randles providing a thought-provoking keynote speech. The incorporation of a Bingo game during the Soroptimist Orientation Leadership Training (SOLT) was a creative and well-received way to blend learning about the organization with enjoyment.

The Fall meeting hosted by SI York Region on October 19, 2023, also was a notable event. The presentation from Lara Mills on "Public Awareness in a Post Covid world" provided valuable insights, considering the ongoing impact of the pandemic on various aspects of life. It was rewarding to hear about the successes in our region, including the recognition of seasoned Soroptimists, the Stargazer, the supporter of the Laurel Society, and the Dream Maker Award winner, Marylin White from SI Peterborough. The personality test organized by Kristi Kanitz added a fun and personalized touch to the event, making the evening delightful for everyone involved.

Overall, these events showcase the dedication, engagement, and enthusiasm within our Soroptimist community. We actively work towards fostering a supportive and vibrant community for our members.

### **Unity as Canadian Soroptimist**

Unity among Canadian Soroptimists is a source of great pride and accomplishment. I'm delighted to share the progress we've made in deepening our connection with the Western Canada Region (WCR) and the exciting initiatives that have resulted from this collaboration.

## MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR GERTRUD (cont'd)

At the Soroptimist International Convention in Dublin from July 27 to July 29, 2023, 28 Canadian Soroptimists from both the West and East regions came together to share a delicious meal at the Urban Brewery. This gathering, organized with the assistance of Tanna, allowed us to meet our Soroptimist sisters from the West in person. The exchange of chatter and laughter became a testament to the friendship and joy that binds us.

Throughout the convention, attended by 1500 individuals, we had the privilege of meeting and connecting with Soroptimists from around the world. The experience was not only informative but also offered a platform to strengthen our global network.

To foster and deepen these connections, we participated in the WCR's webinar titled "The Magic of Online Clubs." This provided insights into the work of Soroptimist clubs worldwide, giving our members a valuable perspective.

Our involvement with WCR led to the establishment of the Canadian newsletter "Soroptimist Across Canada," published bi-monthly. This newsletter serves as a unifying force, keeping us informed about developments in our regions, the foundation, the federation, and Soroptimist International. A special thank you goes to the contributors and the dedicated editor team—Colleen Penrowley, Lee-Ann Naletzky, Anamaria Turmacu, and Dianne Nielsen.

One of the highlights of our collaboration is the upcoming online NGO event on March 20, 2024. This event, a first for us, will be connected to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Our approach of sharing Canadian stories to find "Roads to overcoming poverty" aligns seamlessly with our mission as Soroptimists. Speakers from both regions will share inspiring stories, highlighting the support they valued and pinpointing the gaps that still need overcoming. I extend my gratitude to those who assisted Governor Suzanne and myself in organizing this event, including Jennifer Oliver, Sharon Lockhart, and Sharon Fisher, who offered valuable advice.

Looking forward, our next ambitious project involves celebrating Canadian history as Soroptimists. We plan to apply for a grant to conduct extensive research into our past. By the centennial anniversary of SI Vancouver in 2026—the first Soroptimist club in Canada—we aim to have a wealth of history to share with our members, sponsors, donors, and communities. This year, we also celebrate the 90th anniversary of the first club in Eastern Canada Region, SI Toronto, during our Spring conference. I eagerly anticipate the historical walk-through on Friday night and the celebration on Saturday night. Bring your dancing shoes, as we celebrate the rich legacy and contributions of Soroptimists in our region.

To the incoming Governor Elect Cheryl and the new ECR Board, I trust that you will continue our legacy of success. It has been my honour to serve alongside remarkable women who share the dedication to serve women and girls. The unity and friendship within our region have been the driving force behind our achievements.

In conclusion, my sincere thanks to each one of you for your dedication, perseverance, and strength in pursuing our common goal. Let us continue to dream, enjoy, and celebrate the remarkable journey we are on together.

Respectfully,

Gertrud Hocke  
Governor Eastern Canada Region  
Soroptimist International of the Americas



## Treasurer's Report 2023-2024

### SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL EASTERN CANADA REGION 2024-25 EXPENSE BUDGET

Jan 29/24

	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
Accounting	396	500	565	65
Bank charges	101	80	40	-40
D & O insurance - ERC share	356	750	900	150
D & O insurance - Club share	2,970	2,800	2,900	100
Board meetings - travel	0	1,000	1,000	0
Board meetings - accommodations	0	600	600	0
Board meetings - meals	0	400	400	0
Convention registration	0	2,000	2,000	0
SIA Leadership Fellows Program	553	500	600	100
Club liability insurance	3,041	3,250	3,100	-150
Leadership Training	0	100	200	100
Miscellaneous	250	200	200	0
Public awareness	707	1,000	1,000	0
Online meeting platform	0	300	300	0
Supplies	181	300	300	0
Website	<u>211</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b><u>8,766</u></b>	<b><u>14,030</u></b>	<b><u>14,355</u></b>	<b><u>325</u></b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>				
Membership support	0	0	500	500
Membership Madness awards	200	500	500	0
Communication	0	300	0	-300
Printing/copying	0	400	0	-400
Supplies	0	400	0	-400
Travel	<u>0</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>-500</u>
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b><u>200</u></b>	<b><u>2,600</u></b>	<b><u>1,500</u></b>	<b><u>-1,100</u></b>
<b>CLUB BUILDING</b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	<b><u>3,000</u></b>	<b><u>1,500</u></b>	<b><u>-1,500</u></b>
<b>UN TRAVEL GRANT</b>	<b><u>550</u></b>	<b><u>550</u></b>	<b><u>550</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>

Treasurer's Report cont'd.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL EASTERN CANADA REGION 2024-25 EXPENSE BUDGET	CONTINUED			Jan 29/24
	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Budget	2024-25 Budget	Change
<b>REGION EVENTS</b>				
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (virtual)				
Guest speaker	300	500	500	0
Technology	<u>0</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>TOTAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY</b>	<b><u>300</u></b>	<b><u>750</u></b>	<b><u>750</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>
FALL MEETING (virtual)				
Guest speaker	0	500	500	0
Technology	<u>0</u>	250	250	0
<b>TOTAL FALL MEETING</b>	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>750</u></b>	<b><u>750</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>
SPRING CONFERENCE				
SIA LYD awards	6,738	10,000	10,000	0
Federation visitor - accommodations	1,288	475	675	200
Federation visitor - registration	450	250	300	50
Dream Big Campaign (Federation appreciation)	750	0	0	0
LYD recipient & guest - accommodations	219	200	225	25
LYD recipient & guest - travel	0	300	300	0
LYD recipient & guest - meals	0	80	80	0
Speaker - accommodations	0	200	225	25
Speaker - meals	0	60	80	20
Board - accommodations	1,765	1,500	1,800	300
Board - meals	456	250	400	150
Board - registrations	1,325	1,500	1,800	300
Board - travel	904	1,000	1,000	0
Dream Big Campaign (Board raffle proceeds)	250	0	0	0
Technology/live streaming	3,625	0	0	0
Advance to host club	2,000	2,000	2,000	0
Travel grant for distant clubs	500	1,000	500	-500
Printing/copying	20	100	50	-50
Miscellaneous	200	0	0	0

Treasurer's Report cont'd

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL EASTERN CANADA REGION 2024-25 EXPENSE BUDGET	2022-23 Actual	CONTINUED		Jan
		2023-24 Budget	2024-25 Budget	29/24
				Change
Float	0	150	0	-150
Registration refund to first timer attendees	865	600	600	0
Supplies	<u>107</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>-50</u>
<b>TOTAL SPRING CONFERENCE</b>	<b><u>21,462</u></b>	<b><u>19,815</u></b>	<b><u>20,135</u></b>	<b><u>320</u></b>
<b>TOTAL REGION EVENT EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>21,762</u></b>	<b><u>21,315</u></b>	<b><u>21,635</u></b>	<b><u>320</u></b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL OF EXPENSES</b>	31,378	41,495	39,540	-1,955
LESS GRAND TOTAL OF INCOME	<u>27,504</u>	<u>33,680</u>	<u>31,360</u>	<u>-2,320</u>
<b>EQUALS SURPLUS ( - DEFICIT)</b>	<b>-3,874</b>	<b>-7,815</b>	<b>-8,180</b>	365

## Treasurer's Report cont'd

### **SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL EASTERN CANADA REGION 2024-25 INCOME BUDGET**

As of Jan 29/24

	<b>2022-23 Actual</b>	<b>2023-24 Budget</b>	<b>2024-25 Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>				
Bank charge rebate	59	60	0	-60
Club liability insurance levy	3,290	3,250	3,000	-250
Club share of D&O insurance	2,970	3,300	2,900	-400
GIC interest	<u>356</u>	<u>520</u>	<u>260</u>	<u>-260</u>
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b><u>6,675</u></b>	<b><u>7,130</u></b>	<b><u>6,160</u></b>	<b><u>-970</u></b>
<b>REGION EVENTS</b>				
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (virtual)				
Donation from SI DAF	250	0	0	0
Region levy to clubs	<u>500</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>-100</u>
SUB-TOTAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	<u>750</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>-100</u>
FALL MEETING (virtual)				
Region levy to clubs	<u>650</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>-100</u>
SUB-TOTAL FALL MEETING	<u>650</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>-100</u>
SPRING CONFERENCE				
SIA for LYD award	6,738	10,000	10,000	0
Host club advance	2,000	2,000	2,000	0
Float returned	-	150	0	-150
Raffle/auction income	865	1,500	1,500	0
Region raffle proceeds	<u>250</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
SUB-TOTAL SPRING CONFERENCE	<u>9,853</u>	<u>13,650</u>	<u>13,500</u>	<u>-150</u>
<b>TOTAL REGION EVENTS</b>	<b><u>11,253</u></b>	<b><u>16,050</u></b>	<b><u>15,700</u></b>	<b><u>-350</u></b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>				
Dues - new members	508	500	500	0
Dues - renewing & annual	<u>9,068</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>9,000</u>	<u>-1,000</u>
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b><u>9,576</u></b>	<b><u>10,500</u></b>	<b><u>9,500</u></b>	<b><u>-1,000</u></b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b><u>27,504</u></b>	<b><u>33,680</u></b>	<b><u>31,360</u></b>	<b><u>-2,320</u></b>

## LIVE YOUR DREAM REPORT 2023-2024

The Eastern Canada Region had **100% club participation** this year and we received **185 applications** (including non-local applications). This is almost a **42%** increase.

The region awarded **58 women** (23% increased compared to 2022-2023) with a total of **\$54,542 USD** in scholarships. This occurred while 2 clubs in the region were closed in 2023.

Additionally, the clubs devoted **577 volunteer hours** and provided **\$1,273 USD** worth of items and/or services provided to support recipients. Beyond the cash support provided by the clubs, mentorship was included, plus job training/interview preparation, notes of encouragement and gift cards.

Our region was given a first-place award of **\$5,000 USD** and a second-place award of **\$3,000 USD** for the regional LYD program (we reached the SIA benchmark for two awards last year).

Compared to last year, the ECR performance has improved significantly in terms of club engagements, number of applications received, number of awards given, and participation in the SFC program. I believe three important factors contributed to the ECR's success:

1- The SFC program (8 ECR clubs participated and agreed to judge **51 non-local applications**; SFC funded **17 awards** worth **\$17,000 CAD**).

2- The ECR encouraged clubs to use online paid social media advertisements (on Facebook and Instagram) to promote LYD. This could have contributed to public awareness/outreach and led to receiving a higher number of applications. The ECR budgeted for public awareness initiatives through social media for 2023-2024 to increase awareness about the LYD program in the region and to support the clubs. We will continue encouraging the clubs to try online promotions and awareness.

3- The ECR has encouraged clubs to share their applications with clubs that did not receive any applications to increase the number of awards. This may have contributed to 100% club participation.

### **Clubs Performance:**

- **SI Peterborough** gave awards to 8 women, totalling \$9,300 USD; followed by **SI Cambridge** with 5 awards worth \$8,854 USD.
- **SI Thunder Bay** accepted 12 non-local applications to judge (this was the highest number of applications assigned to a club).
- **SI Toronto** received **41 application** - the highest number of applications in the region.
- The first-place regional award (\$5,000 USD) goes to **Daryn Brito (SI Guelph)**; and the second-place regional award (\$3,000 USD) goes to **Ida Mensah (SI Toronto)**.

Raheleh Barkhordari  
ECR LYD Director  
SI Toronto

## **DREAM IT BE IT (DIBI) CHAIR REPORT 2023-2024**

Please many note that many of our clubs are running events in the later part of the year and I have not yet received reports from the SIA portal yet. My second year of the term as the Eastern Canada Region's DIBI Chair has been a wonderful experience. I have greatly appreciated the support of my fellow Board members; senior SIA members; and especially to my mentor, Laurie Cappe, for her continued guidance and for being a wonderful sounding board. In many cases, our Clubs have restarted their networks from scratch. Many of our clubs have done an amazing job re-starting DIBI programs after quite a challenging period. The updates to the DIBI program criteria were well-received by the clubs and I have been seeing far more enthusiasm and creativity in the programs coming out. I am so proud of the progress our clubs have made in reestablishing networks and steering committees. I appreciate all the time various Club Chairs have shared with me during one-on-one chats during personal meetings, and I got to know each Clubs' unique situations, regional and demographic challenges, and club goals. We have had two quarterly meetings with energetic and informative discussions. In each meeting, we have focused on a different area of the program and discussed the changes in criteria and leadership opportunities offered by SIA and ECR combined.

### **SUMMARY OF QUARTERLY MEETINGS:**

#### **Quarterly Meeting 1: September 19, 2023**

Topics discussed: Introduction to New Team (Ice Breaker); familiarize new club/team members with the contents of the SIA/ECR website; Discussed the importance of sending club representation. We have started recording meetings again. A link to YouTube has been created in order to share these meetings recording with the appropriate members. Compliance (HUB and CRSVC and updates to reporting); presentations about each other's events this year so far; updates and news from the club; Reporting (SIA and ECR links and forms); sharing of upcoming events, Fall Regional Conference. SFC Grant was discussed. We also discussed the fact that I am in the process of researching and presenting to the Board a shared ECR Google Drive.

#### **Quarterly Meeting 2: December 19, 2023**

Topics discussed: Club updates about planned upcoming DIBI events; Chairs were told about ongoing updates to website; personal meetings with new Chairs were set up; Reporting of SIA links, and upcoming events; Soroptimist Club Grants: Crafting a Successful Application (January. 9, 2024); Webinar and Spring Conference were discussed. Discussed with chairs the various WCR webinars that have been offered and that are available to attend. Discussed SIA Convention in July 2024 and SIA Conference in April 2023

#### **Quarterly Meeting 3: scheduled for March 18, 2024**

#### **Quarterly Meeting 4 : scheduled for June TBA**

### **KEY ITEMS COMPLETED IN SECOND YEAR:**

- Leadership Academy – Leadership Conference
- Updated and Cleaned up Website for the New Term. Presentations, Club Minutes and Resource Links are available. It is an ongoing process.
- Had one-on-one personal Zoom with many Club Chairs who were available.
- Webinars - received positive and constructive feedback.
- Touched Base with Club Buddies
- Touched Base with DIBI Chairs post Event to debrief.
- Set up YouTube Channel/Link for Meeting recordings to be privately shared.
- Updates on ECR Google Drive

**CLUB DIBI EVENTS:** Kudos to the following clubs who have put together amazing events or are in the process of organizing an event before the end of June 2024. If any Club needs any assistance running an event, I would be happy to work with you.

**DIBI REPORT (cont'd)**

<b>THUNDER BAY</b>	Planning for February	<p>In Person Conference</p> <p>Here in Thunder Bay, we are gearing up for A SIT &amp; TALK CAREER SUPPORT CONFERENCE.</p> <p>Young women between 16-23 supported by CAS and Dilico Family Resource Centre are the focus, but we are also doing an “soft” opening of the event by inviting other young women in our community.</p> <p>The “soft” approach refers to a limited approach to advertising on our Thunder Bay Soroptimist website and FB page to test the waters as to who we can support next year.</p> <p>The SIT &amp; TALK model is several round table discussions with career women in a variety of fields as well as Confederation College Recruitment personnel over 3 hours.</p> <p>As always “if you feed them and reward them, they will come”, so lunch, snacks and prizes will be provided to all young women who attend.</p>
<b>GUELPH</b>	Hoping to work with Cambridge	Wants to partner with another club
<b>KAWARTHA LAKES</b>	Planning for April	In-Person session within schools done. A one-day event in Lindsay on April 5th for Grade 9-10 girls from IE Weldon Secondary School.
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	TBD	Hope to have one in Fall of 2024
<b>TORONTO</b>	TBD	No Response
<b>YORK REGION</b>	TBD	No Response
<b>GRAND ERIE</b>	April 13	In Person celebrating our 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and are planning on a special speaker / session for the girls from JACKS TALKS on mental health.
<b>LONDON</b>	March or April	In Person sessions in partnership with Girls and Boys Club
<b>HAMILTON - BURLINGTON</b>	TBD	No response
<b>HALDIMAND NORFOLK</b>	TBD	No response
<b>PETERBOROUGH</b>	Nov, Dec, Feb, April, May, and June	<p>Working on planning some sessions with the Bridge Youth Centre. There is one in Peterborough and one in Lakefield. I'll keep people posted.</p> <p>We will do a half-day session again this summer with Peterborough Canopy Services for youth on the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum. It was very successful last summer.</p>

Respectfully Submitted by  
 Keshala Fernando Dissanayake  
 ECR Program Chair and DIBI Chair, SI Cambridge member

## **Region Membership Chair Report for 2023-2024**

Things have changed for all of us; coming out of Covid restrictions, we still have Covid, and we have learned. As a result of Covid, many clubs are now embracing digital meetings, making meetings hybrid, all online and in-person where this is possible.

Soroptimist International of the Americas is also changing.

First, the numbers.

The last numbers we have are for the quarter ending in November 2023.

Total members	25,154
Total new, reinstated members	611
Total clubs	1137

In Canada, the numbers are this:

Eastern Canada Region.

Members	210
Clubs	11

Western Canada Region

Members	297
Clubs	16

This is a long way from the hey day of voluntary organizations, when our membership was three times the above. Nonetheless, our work to engage people in improving the lives of women and girls continues, fiercely, and persistently. Soroptimist International of the Americas did not hold any Region Membership Calls this past year: Luz Aponte is now the federation lead for membership, and statistics are published quarterly on the website under Region Membership Chair Resources.

For Eastern Canada Region, I held a call with clubs in January where we shared membership information. Clubs are getting new members, and also resignations, but seem to be holding steady. Only two clubs, as of last November, were 12 and under. The club with the most new members was focussing on onboarding the new members, making them feel worthwhile and comfortable. The clubs were eager to get the Soroptimist Capacity Inventory checklist and so those were sent out to them.

Western Canada has trialled an internship model and is eager to share that with us. We discussed Ambassador and Honorary models of connecting with community leaders. Toronto has been using specific targeted ads on sites such as Volunteer Toronto to fill club positions, as well as interns. We discussed how the structure of meetings affects members and some clubs have moved to a consent agenda to make more time available in meetings for mission-related speakers and activities. Virtual meetings are now the norm. Clubs are re-examining budgets in order to reduce dues, realizing that non incorporated non-profits may use up to 30% of revenues to support overhead of the club. Clubs are revising bylaws to reflect the new environment of digital meetings, human rights, and governance.

I have followed up on all the introduction forms forwarded by Soroptimist International of the Americas and sent out congratulatory cards to all new members (please continue to notify me when you have a new member as I love sending out these cards).

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Skillman  
SI Toronto



## **FUNDRAISING CHAIR REPORT 2023-2024**

This was my second year as Eastern Canada Region's Fundraising Chair. I represented our region at Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA) Fundraising Chair meetings in October and February. This was a change from last year when we met monthly to discuss the progress of the "Dream Big" campaign.

At the ECR Fall meeting, my presentation centered on how to secure business or corporate sponsorships for our Soroptimist clubs' events and/or programs. The presentation outlined the steps to consider taking in order to be successful when asking a business for their support.

I also reminded the attendees of the importance of their continued financial support of SIA. Our donations fund the Dream Programs, and our dues fund the governance of our organization. We continue to be in a situation where the Eastern Canada Region receives more money from the SIA Federation than we have donated.

At the time of writing this report, I have held two meetings with the ECR Club Fundraising chairs (Oct 23, 2023, and January 24, 2024). The third meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2024. The purpose of these meetings is to allow the Club Fundraising chairs to meet one another via zoom; exchange fundraising ideas, both the "Tried and True", as well as new innovative ones that they are considering. There is still some hesitancy for some members to become engaged in fundraising activities. Having said this, we may find that this is no longer the case when we meet again at the end of March.

Now for some statistics:

- 1 Club supported Club Giving between June 1, 2022 and May 31, 2023 giving 10% of their fundraising money. (It is noted that some clubs have restrictions that do not allow for funds to be donated to non-Canadian organizations.)
- 8 Clubs contributed to Founders' Pennies
- 5 ECR Soroptimists are Stargazers (contributing monthly to SIA)
- 1 ECR Soroptimist is a Laurel Legacy member.

A big thank you to all the clubs who continue to support SIA with Club Giving and Founders' Pennies. Thank you to the individual members who continue to support SIA with their monthly contributions. Thank you to the Club Fundraising Chairs who have met with me during the past two years. I have enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your Clubs and your activities!

Thank you to Governor Gertrud for her guidance and to the other ECR board members and Committee chairs. It has been an honour to be Governor Elect for Eastern Canada Region.

I will conclude by suggesting that we collectively give a round of applause for all we do as Soroptimist members to enrich the lives of marginalized women and girls in our communities, our country and around the world. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Ball, Governor Elect, Fundraising Chair 2022-24

Eastern Canada Region



## **Public Awareness Report 2023 - 2024**

As Region P.A. Chair, (newly revived as of December 2023), this is more a looking forward report rather than a look back.

It is taking a little time to reorganize but the Board and I will work collaboratively on a Communication calendar for clubs, this will be augmented with the monthly post suggestions now coming from SIA. We are also updating our Google Drive spaces for sharing and repository purposes.

If any club is having difficulty with public awareness/social media posts, PLEASE reach out to me for assistance. I am sorry that I won't be with you at Spring Conference. Reach out to me anytime!

Respectfully,

Tanna Edwards, ECR Public Awareness Chair, [tannaedwards@gmail.com](mailto:tannaedwards@gmail.com)

## THE POWER OF PLANNED GIVING

LEAVE A LEGACY THAT EXTENDS BEYOND YOUR LIFETIME!

*A remarkable way to make a difference whether through a charitable gift or a bequest in your will.*

*Support individual education grants as well as career and training projects benefiting hundreds of women and girls annually.*

*An intentional and lasting expression of your values and beliefs.*

By choosing to support Soroptimist Foundation of Canada through PLANNED GIVING you ensure your legacy lives on, leaving your mark for generations to come.

Legacy and charitable gifts are the basis of our future planning. With them, we are more able to predict our future and strengthen our ability to invest in the dreams of women and girls.

Did you know, for example, that over the last five years, the growth of our capital has been substantially supported by bequests from fellow Soroptimists like you who knew the importance of securing the future of the Foundation and its programs?

Please consider naming Soroptimist Foundation of Canada as a beneficiary in your will. People like you who want to make a difference will make an impact long into the future.

To learn how to gain a tax deduction and other ways to give smarter, talk to your personal legal and financial professionals, then contact the Foundation.

Questions? Learn more about us at [soroptimistfoundation.ca](http://soroptimistfoundation.ca)

We are ready to accept your gift.  
Email [treasurer@soroptimistfoundation.ca](mailto:treasurer@soroptimistfoundation.ca)



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FOUNDATION  
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To make a donation, use this link:

<https://soroptimistfoundation.ca/donations/>



## Soroptimist International of Toronto

### 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Soroptimist International of Toronto Program

- 6:00 pm. Cocktails  
Walk Down Memory Lane exhibit and stories
- 6:30 pm. Welcome  
Greetings from Governor Gertrud  
Welcome from President Estatira  
Greetings from Sarah Byrnell, Vice President Philanthropy  
and Partnerships, Women's College Hospital Foundation  
Dr Philip Vayalumkal, Ironman athlete and philanthropist
- 7:15 pm. Dinner
- 8:15 pm. Live Your Dream : Francesca Cole  
Soroptimist of Toronto Trust : Corinne Hyatt
- **THE NATURALS** entertain with music of Abba:  
You are invited to dress in costume of the 70's and early 80's
  - Sing along to your favourite ABBA tunes
  - There will be history segments celebrating eight decades of  
Soroptimist in Toronto
- 10:00 pm. The end of our party. We look forward to celebrating our  
Centennial with you.