



SOROPTIMIST®

Investing in Dreams

# Soropti - Scoop

*A Communiqué by  
women and men dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls  
through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.*

Volume 30, Issue 6

Soroptimist International of Sequim

**Celebrating 78 Years of Service**

December 2025

## Officers 2025 — 2026

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Roxann Harr

### President-Elect:

Natasha Merkuloff-Nichols

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Sandy Lawrence

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Kathy Purcell

### Director: 2 year

Shirley Legg

### Director: 1 year

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### Director: 1 year

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### Immediate Past- President:

Linda Klinefelter

### Newsletter Staff:

Kathy Purcell

Jan Hartig

Jane Manzer

Pat Willis

**“Christmas is  
most truly Christmas  
when we celebrate it by  
giving the light of love to  
those who need it most.”  
~Ruth Carter Stapleton**

## President’s Message

Dear Soroptimist Friends,

December is here, and with it comes one of the busiest yet most magical times of the year! From shopping and baking to wrapping presents, traveling, and gatherings with family and friends, it certainly keeps us busy! But let’s not forget, children experience the magic of Christmas from a wonderfully different perspective.

Growing up, my brothers would venture out into the forest to bring home the tallest tree they could find, often a huge giant that had to be trimmed to fit in our living room! We’d decorate it with colorful ornaments, popcorn garlands, multi-colored lights, and oh-so-delicate tinsel—all under Mom’s watchful eye to make sure there weren’t any clumps—one strand at a time!

The Christmas tree never had much under it: a fruitcake from Dad’s work, a bag of nuts, and oranges were staples. Yet, Mom made sure each of us received at least one present. I still vividly remember a moment from Junior High when the cutest boy in my class knocked on our door with some grownups bearing gifts for our family. I could hardly believe my eyes – I was devastated as I realized he could see our situation. The gift tag for me simply said “girl 12 years old,” a reminder that I was unknown to the person who chose and wrapped it.

As a parent, I found myself wanting to create a different experience for my children, ensuring they felt the joy of the season without missing out. Now, as my family participates in the Holiday Joy program, we approach this opportunity with thoughtfulness and love, selecting gifts we hope will bring joy to the children we support. We wrap each one carefully and make sure the person’s name is on the package “from Santa.” This experience not only allows us to spread holiday cheer, but also strengthens our bond as a family, creating a tradition of giving that we hope will last for generations.

From our family to yours, I wish you a wonderful Christmas filled with joy, laughter, and the spirit of giving. May you find the same joy in helping others as we have!

Merry Christmas from the Harrs.



President Roxann



## Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends,

It's December—the month with the greatest number of days with the fewest hours of daylight. During the hours of less light, we notice more coolness in the air around us. Here in the Pacific Northwest, winter is knocking at our door.

While Mother Nature is adjusting the outside temperature, inching closer to freezing, we are adjusting the inside temperature, turning up the thermostat. It's time for a bowl of chili with cornbread, hot chocolate with marshmallows, or warm apple cider with a cinnamon stick. For those who have a fireplace, it's time to feed it with logs and light them. There is something special about the fire in a fireplace. The flames move in an unencumbered, delicate dance; you can see it even in the shadow it produces on the wall. The flames appear as a beautiful golden light.

Speaking of light . . . December is often called the Season of Light. December is a time when people across the world gather in celebration—whether it be Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or the winter solstice. All of these include lights. People use lights in many ways this time of year. Some have garlands with lights on them. Some have lighted candles, sometimes as a table centerpiece adorned with sprigs of pine branches. Some people have strings of lights around their windows. Some will have a Christmas tree with lights.

Speaking of Christmas trees with lights . . . have you driven past 7 Cedars Casino/Hotel and the Tribal Center? WOW! Every tree and bush is covered in lights! Some of the trees have lights that are all of one color; there are red, white, green, purple, and blue trees. Some trees have lights of multiple colors; from a distance it looks like dots of paint running together. As you get closer you see the separate colors. It must have taken many hands and many hours to change all that greenery into vibrant, twinkling color. Some things are just worth it. Like all the special things involved in the holiday season. Like the work we do as Soroptimists.

The trees with multiple-colored lights remind me of our club. We all have different experiences and different talents; we all have an inner light that highlights those talents. When we work together—when we combine our lights, we are like a tree of many colors. From afar we look like colors beautifully melded together; looking closer we can see each individual light. Each of us is important. Sometimes someone is a light for us; sometimes we are a light for others.

I also see us similar to the fire in the fireplace. We shine a light on the resources that are available to improve others' lives. It might be through scholarships, or through the Sequim Food Bank, or through Healthy Families' Holiday Joy Christmas program. What we do allows the light within others to shine forth, making things brighter for everyone.

As we celebrate the Season of Light, let us continue Empowering through Encouragement, knowing it draws out the light in others and adds to the vibrancy of our world.



~Kathy Purcell, Editor



**“The light within us gives power for good actions.”**  
**~Lailah Gifty**

## CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2025

- 2 GGS Core Cmt Mtg
- 5 Board Meeting
- 9 Business Meeting
- \*16 Holiday Party

### JANUARY 2026

- 6 GGS Core Cmt Mtg
- 9 Board Meeting
- 13 Business Meeting
- 27 Program Meeting  
Human Trafficking  
Awareness

**\*Evening Meeting**



**“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”**  
**~Albert Schweitzer**



**“If everything around you seems dark, look again. You may be the light.” ~Rumi**

*Celebrate Life!*

**DECEMBER 2025**

Denise Bayer  
Dave Fickes  
Kecia Gilliam  
Mark Karjalainen  
Virginia Kostanich  
Sandy Lawrence  
Elaine Powlesland

**JANUARY 2026**

Susan Coffee



Note the phone number for our  
**MEDICAL LOAN CLOSET**



“When we recall Christmas past,  
we usually find that the simplest things  
—not the great occasions—  
give off the greatest glow  
of happiness.” ~*Bob Hope*

**A REMINDER—2025-2026 MEETING LOCATION**

We meet at  
Fifth Avenue Senior Independent Living  
500 W. Hendrickson, Sequim at 8 a.m.

**See you December 9th.**



**Christmas Party! New Time! New Location!**

Our annual Christmas Party will be held at  
**Riverhouse Bistro**  
**120 West Bell** (here in Sequim)  
**4 pm to 6 pm**  
**Tuesday, December 16th**

We hope our working members will be able to join us; we recognize it may be difficult but have our fingers crossed that you might be able to get off work a bit early to celebrate our half year’s achievements. Since it’s getting dark early perhaps folks will form carpools so that there will be four sets of eyes watching the road.

Dinner will consist of appetizers of bruschetta and stuffed mushrooms, Lasagna for dinner, with salad and warm focaccia bread. The club is happily able to cover the cost of dinner, so no one needs to cook. However, please come with a bit of money to leave for a tip. Also, any beverages will be on your own.

We will be having a gift exchange... otherwise famously known as Dirty Santa, so please bring a gift valued at no more than \$15.

**RSVP to Natasha at [nmerkuloff@gmail.com](mailto:nmerkuloff@gmail.com) or text to 707-738-7840.** Looking forward to seeing you then.

**SOROPTIMIST MEETING DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Olympic Peninsula Area Meeting**  
Port Angeles Jet Set  
February 21, 2026



**NWR Conference**  
Grouse Mountain Lodge  
Whitefish, MT  
April 23-26, 2026



**49th Biennial SIA Convention**  
Incheon, South Korea  
July 22-25, 2026

## MEET THE OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER GIRLS OF THE MONTH (GOM)

### AREYA WESTON-WEBB



We are proud to announce Areya Weston-Webb as the October Girl of the Month. Since starting high school, Areya has consistently been on the honor roll. She has been a member of the soccer team for the past three years and has discovered a passion for her food science classes, which she may pursue after graduation. After completing high school, she plans to participate in the Youth with a Mission (YWAM) program and then, after completion, will consider attending either vocational training or college.

### TY "INDI" MIXON



Ty "Indi" Mixon has been recognized as the club's Girl of the Month for November, and it's easy to understand why. A remarkably active student, Indi excels in various sports, including cheerleading, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, and track and field. When she isn't showcasing her talents in athletics, she spends her time volunteering at the local YMCA and working at Domino's. Indi has a profound love for singing and aspires to attend Berklee College of Music after graduation, aiming for a career in music and singing.

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*"If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it." ~Margaret Fuller*

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### LIVE YOUR DREAM AWARD

We now have six applicants this year for the Live Your Dream Award. The next step is to gather a group of non-Soroptimists to judge the applications. That will very likely happen soon after Christmas. Once we receive the results, a decision will need to be made as to how much money is given to the first, second and third place women. More on that later.



~Natasha Merkuloff-Nichols, LYDA Chair



### DIBI PROGRAM TAKING SHAPE

The Dream It Be It program is gradually taking shape. Meetings have been held with the Sequim School District and the Boys & Girls Club to explore various ways to identify girls aged 13-18 who would benefit from the program. The event is scheduled for May 16th and 17th, with empowerment activities taking place at the Boys & Girls Club in Sequim on Saturday. A fun day is planned for Sunday at Northwest Bras and Maurices in Port Angeles. We are currently developing applications and sponsor sheets, and more information will be provided in the coming months. ~lk



## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Thanks, members, for the great attendance recently and for warmly welcoming our guests. We want to remind you that **Becky Archer** is our “**Sunshine**” club member, so she will send cards on behalf of the club if you know of any member who should be sent a card. Just let her know!

It’s been recently decided that our new members this club year and 2024-25 will receive a free short-sleeved Gala Garden Show T-shirt. Should they want a long-sleeved T-shirt, they will pay the difference. Details as to T-shirts and how to order are elsewhere in this newsletter.

Lastly (and most importantly to Shawn and me:>), we are looking for one or two members to take over chairperson(s) of the Membership Committee for 2026-27. We will happily mentor you for the balance of this year. Shawn has been doing it for many years, and I’ve done it for several years this stretch as well as several more over the past 24 years. It’s time for a change and we’re looking forward to hearing from someone (or two) who has a heart for membership! It’s an important committee and very rewarding. Please let one of us know if you’d like to explore the possibility!



~Shawn Dredla and Jane Manzer, Membership Co-chairs

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“Just as treasures are uncovered from the earth, so virtue appears from good deeds, and wisdom appears from a pure and peaceful mind. To walk safely through the maze of human life, one needs the light of wisdom and the guidance of virtue.”  
~*Buddha*

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## PATHWAYS UPDATE

The Pathways committee continues to meet on the first Saturday of the month. Our next meeting will be on December 6th. We are all enjoying our time together and grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the club and the Soroptimist organization!

Several of our committee members have adopted families in support of the Holiday Joy project. It is such a blessing to have the opportunity to bring joy to those in need during the holiday season.

Our main focus at this time however is identifying and developing our volunteer project. After gathering information from several organizations, we have decided to focus our efforts on the Sequim Free Clinic. The clinic has a free pantry for their clients as many of them have food insecurities. The clinic staff have been challenged to keep the pantry stocked on a regular basis. This month several Pathway members took a tour of the clinic to help us better understand the scope and size of the pantry and how we can help develop, support and stock up the pantry. Stay tuned for more information as we develop our plan...you will all have the opportunity to help stock the pantry!!



~Denise Bayer, Pathways Committee 🌱



## HAPPY HOLIDAY MEMORIES

### Expecting the Unexpected

When our son Ethan was 4, he was VERY worried because there were NO PRESENTS under the tree! And worse, on Christmas morning, his stocking was shockingly thin. He was VERY upset. However, he took down his stocking and found some paper inside. It was an airplane ticket to ..... Disneyland!! He was thrilled, and so excited about his first airplane ride. We had a great time at Disneyland, and the first evening, we stayed late to see the Christmas parade in the dark. Ethan was on Dad's shoulders, wanting to see everything and everybody in the parade. He spotted Santa riding his sleigh, and started waving wildly, shouting, "Thank you, Santa! Thank you a lot!!!" And amazingly it seemed as though Santa heard him, because he looked right at our son, smiled and waved. It was the perfect present!



~Natasha Merkuloff-Nichols



### Rose Tree Brought Romance Into Focus

My parents were practical, frugal, old-world people. Christmas morning would find new underwear for Daddy; something for the kitchen for Mother; and clothing and a game or toy for me under the tree. One Christmas morning Mother found something else under the tree. My usually non-romantic Father had constructed a "rose tree" for her made up of origami folded one-dollar bills. Mother was delighted.

~Becky Archer



### Windows with Meaning / Singing in the Holidays

My mom was a good singer and a good artist. Unfortunately, neither of those traits wound up in my genes. I tell people the only way I can carry a tune is in my jeans pocket. And as for drawing, I'm still at the level of stick people—though I like to think that I draw with my words. Two Christmas memories come to mind; the first . . . in my early childhood we lived in a place that had a huge picture window in the living room and two narrower windows on each side. Every Christmas my mom would bring out the tempera paints and draw designs on the panes of glass. The center window often had a nativity scene, and the side windows had a Christmas tree, snowman—or maybe a child on a sled in the snow.

My second Christmas memory is of when we went Christmas caroling. My siblings and I—and some of the neighborhood kids would go caroling; we'd cover about a four-block radius. I know, you're wondering how I did that when I can't carry a tune. The funny thing is, when I sang with the others, we all sounded pretty good. It shows the beauty of collaboration.

~Kathy Purcell



## HAPPY DOLLARS

### November 11, 2025

**Sara Maloney**—is excited that Soroptimist members attended and contributed to the Boys & Girls Club auction which brought in approximately \$781,000.

**Roxanne Harr**—had a busy week that she's grateful is over.

**Stephanie Soha**—is happy to show us her Gold medal for bowling, we're so proud of her.

**Connie Tallman**—is excited and ready for the Elk's Club Christmas bazaar, Saturday November 30th.

**Jane Manzer**—is happy to share about what a great job Sara Maloney did at the Boys & Girls Club fundraising breakfast in the spring.

**Jeanne Martin**—is delighted with the two kittens she and her husband adopted, they're growing up so fast.

**Sandy Lawrence**—was delighted with board retreat last Saturday.

**Patty Lebowitz**—is happy to finally get a chance to celebrate her daughter's 35th birthday belatedly.

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*“Christmas is a season for kindling the fire for hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart.”  
~Washington Irving*

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## **SOME 2026 GALA GARDEN SHOW NEWS**

It was wonderful to see so many of the GGS Core Committee members able to attend our December core meeting! We could feel the energy flowing amongst all of us—it was synergy—SI energy. Thank you for that gift!



Two upcoming things to keep in mind:

1. It is important that all members wear Flower Power T-shirts while working at the show. Why is this important? Only Soroptimists wear the Flower Power T-shirts. If a vendor or visitor has a question, they simply look for the Flower Power logo and know who to ask. **Janet Real** volunteered again this year to coordinate ordering T-shirts; see page 11 for full details on how to order yours.
2. **Chirs Snow** is our Volunteer Staffing Coordinator for the 2026 Show. She has already started organizing her spreadsheet. Chris will be contacting Chairs of the GGS Sub-committees to find out how many worker bees each one needs. It is recommended that there be a written job description for each job so the workers know what their responsibilities will be.

We wish you all a safe, happy, joyful holiday season.



Roxann Harr and Kathy Purcell, 2026 Gala Garden Show Co-chairs

**FUTURE GGS MEETING DATES:**  
**January 6/February 3**

**Note the future dates** for upcoming GGS Core Committee Meetings. **Please try to work your schedules around these dates. For continuity and effectiveness, it is important to have as many of the core committee members present as we get closer to the show.**

**BLAST FROM THE PAST: HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES**



**Bell Ringing; Kathy, Missy & WIN Students**



**Amanda Sings "I Am a Soroptimist Bell Ringer"**



**Pat Willis**



**Betty Osborn**



**Holiday Joy**



**Stocking Tree**



**Kris, Amanda, Janet Popelka**



**Holiday Joy Family Day**



**Christmas Party 2009**



**Let's Party**



**Gala Gift Show**



**Bake Sale**

## NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MEDICAL LOAN CLOSET

### November Activity Overview

Our call and equipment volume has settled back into typical norms. During the month, we answered **215** calls and lent **156** items. We received **94** equipment returns or donations and received **\$450** in contributions from our generous community clients.

### New MLC Volunteers

We are in the process of welcoming and training new members of the MLC Committee. **Denise Bayer** spent time with **Jane Manzer** at the Closet and she will spend another week with **Chris Snow** at the Closet in January. **Glen Varvil** is interested in learning more about the Closet and potentially joining the Committee. A friend of Susan's will be spending a week at the Closet with her in December to learn about Closet operations. Chris has a friend who would like to join SIS and the MLC Committee when she returns from Arizona in the Spring. If all join the Committee we will be at 15 volunteers! Please reach out to any of the MLC Co-Chairs if you would like to know more about joining the MLC. We are hoping to boost our Committee to 20 members, which would comfortably enable us to have two MLC per week at the Closet. This would enable us to serve more clients in a shorter amount of time and pair new MLC members with 'veteran' members.

### Help! The MLC is Bursting!

Do you, a loved one, or a friend, need a shower chair, bath bench, toilet safety frame, bedside commode, crutches, two-wheel walker, or stand-up walker? We have an excess of these items. Please contact Chris if you would like to check out our excess inventory!

With gratitude,



**Susan Coffee, Elaine Powlesland, and Chris Snow**  
*Medical Loan Closet Co-Chairs*



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“Christmas—that magic blanket that wraps itself about us, that something so intangible that it is like a fragrance. It may weave a spell of nostalgia. Christmas may be a day of feasting, or of prayer, but always it will be a day of remembrance—a day in which we think of everything we have ever loved.” ~*Augusta E. Rundel*

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## EXPANDING IDEAS AT THE BOARD RETREAT



On November 8th, board members came together for a retreat skillfully facilitated by **Kendra Waggoner**. A native of Port Angeles, Kendra is an alumnus of Peninsula College and Evergreen State College. With 26 years of experience at a local bank and is currently a Master Gardener. She brought valuable insights to the retreat. Throughout the retreat, Kendra effectively led interactive discussions that inspired fresh perspectives and innovative ideas. Her expertise ensured a constructive environment where everyone felt valued and heard. We look forward to the possibility of Kendra joining us again for future board retreats, as her contributions were greatly appreciated. ~lk

## PROGRAM MEETING—NOVEMBER 25, 2025

On Tuesday, November 25, the members of our club had the pleasure of hosting a visit from a Continuing Education award recipient. **Samantha Salazar** received the award in both 2023 and 2024, based on her needs, goals, and educational accomplishments. Samantha was a joy to listen to; she exuded energy and confidence, and she is now applying her skills at WorkSource in Sequim.

Pictured (left) **Samatha Salazar** and (right) **Cat Xander**, Co-chair- Scholarships and Awards.



Our club was privileged to host **Linda Spreine**, who presented valuable information regarding **Project Lifesaver**. Linda discussed how this essential program aids in safeguarding individuals of all ages who may wander due to conditions such as Autism, Down Syndrome, and various forms of dementia. Her informative presentation underscored the significance of Project Lifesaver in providing security and support to families affected by these challenges.

Pictured (left) **Linda Spreine** and (right) **Natasha Merkulooff-Nichols**, President-elect / Program Chair

## Garden Show Flower Power T-Shirts

It is time to order T-shirts for the Garden Show. I will be taking orders until January 16<sup>th</sup>. You can order by sending me an email ([jack.janet.real@gmail.com](mailto:jack.janet.real@gmail.com)).

There are four different styles to choose from: short and long sleeve classic fit and short and long sleeve feminine fit.

The base prices are as follows and they include the charge for screen printing:

Short Sleeve, cotton, classic fit -	PC54	\$ 9.13
Long Sleeve, cotton, classic fit -	PC54LS	\$14.63
Short Sleeve, cotton, feminine fit –	LPC54	\$ 9.13
Long Sleeve, cotton, feminine fit -	LPC54LS	\$14.63



The above price is based on ordering twelve or more shirts in any style.

If less shirts are ordered, the price will increase (for example: if eleven shirts are ordered, the cost of each shirt will increase by approximately \$4.00, if six shirts are ordered the cost will increase by \$5.00, and if three shirts are ordered the cost will increase by \$8.00). An additional \$1 is added for size XXL and \$2 for 3XL. Tax will be added. I will not collect payment for the shirts until they are delivered.

Each type of shirt is available in a range of colors specific to the style selected. To find the colors, go to <http://www.captaints.com> and click on CATALOG.

To find the colors available for the different style shirts:

- Put the style # in the search box
- Click on the word GO in the red circle next to the search box
- The shirt you chose shows up in the 1st box on the left  
Click on the chosen shirt to find the colors available for that style  
Hold the cursor over the color you want and the color name will display.

Avoid ordering light colored shirts as our logo is in white and will not show up well.

Please send me the following information when ordering a shirt: your name, style of shirt, the color desired (include full name), and your size.

I will bring examples of the different shirts to the December and January business meetings. Please let me know if you have any questions.

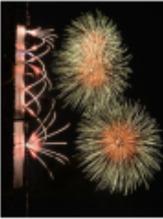
Thank You,  
Janet Real, 2026GGS T-shirt Coordinator

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*“For centuries men have kept an appointment with Christmas. Christmas means fellowship, feasting, giving and receiving, a time of good cheer, home.” ~W.J. Ronald Tucker*

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# December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH</b> Denise Bayer Dave Fickes Keria Gilliam Mark Karjalainen Virginia Kostanich Sandy Lawrence Elaine Powlesland 	1	2 GGS Core Committee Mtg 1st Security Bank 9 am	3	4	5 BOARD MEETING	6 Pathways at The Lodge at Sherwood Village, 600 W. Evergreen Farm Way, 9 a.m.
7	8	9 Business Meeting	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 	26	27
28	29	30	31 			

# January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH</b> Susan Coffee 						
4	5	6 GGG Core Committee Mtg 1st Security Bank 9 am	7	8 	9 BOARD MEETING	10
11	12	13 Program Meeting Human Trafficking Awareness	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Program Meeting (Human Trafficking Awareness)	28	29	30	31

## **A Low-cost Christmas** by Robin Davis

December comes every year  
Bringing joy laughter and cheer  
Filling hearts with lots of love  
Shining like an angels love

Christmas is a time to show  
Others your sweet inner glow  
Giving presents you don't wrap  
Not falling in the buying trap

Free gifts are the very best  
Come on put it to the test  
Give someone the present of  
Kindness wrapped in heartfelt love

Hugs fit every shape and size  
Return this gift—you'll be surprised  
At how this will mean so much  
From a warm and gentle touch



Soroptimist International of Sequim  
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Sequim, WA 98382

SOROPTIMIST®

**Investing in Dreams**

*Soroptimist®: a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.*

To a Person Making a Difference for Women