



SOROPTIMIST  

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Best for Women

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## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Soroptimist International of Raleigh

Soroptimist International of Raleigh will hold its 20th Anniversary Celebration on November 13, 2007 at Café Luna, located in Downtown Raleigh. The theme of this anniversary celebration will be "Living the Dream, Continuing to Soar." During the anniversary celebration, Soroptimist of Raleigh will reflect on all the organization's successful community impact. As Soroptimist International of Raleigh has had a significant impact on the community, the organization will take a look retrospectively at its beginnings, remembering the past, recognizing its achievement, and focusing on the future. Several distinguished state and local government offices will be represented at the celebration, including the offices of State Senator Doyle, Governor Easley, Mayor Meeker, and Secretary of State Marshall. In addition, November 21 has been proclaimed Soroptimist International of Raleigh Day.

Soroptimist means "the best for women". [Soroptimist International](#) is the largest professional women's service club in the world committed to enhancing the lives of women and girls!

Chartered November 21, 1987, Soroptimist International of Raleigh, NC is a local club of Soroptimist International of America, an international volunteer service organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world. Raleigh members join with almost 95,000 Soroptimists in about 120 countries and territories to contribute time and financial support to community-based projects benefiting women. The Raleigh club helps women seeking employment and who are referred by a partner agency by providing business-appropriate clothing at no cost through the Professional Clothing Closet. Locally the organization also supports several initiatives for prevention of domestic violence.

In addition, at the local, regional and International levels Soroptimist award grants to female heads-of-household returning to school to improve the lives of themselves and their children. Internationally, Soroptimist works with [Women for Women International](#) to empower refugee women in war-torn countries through counseling, training, mentoring and micro-loans.

Soroptimist members are professional women with business, management or executive skills who have a heart for service. To accomplish goals each member takes an active role in fundraising and hands-on service projects, all as volunteers. For more information about how Soroptimist International of Raleigh improves the lives of women and girls, visit our website at or contact club president Pat Lynch at (919) 846-1321.

**SOROPTIMISTS ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE!**

## Release Addendum

Our service projects have focused in areas of health, education, environment, status of women, and economic security. Locally, we have partnered and collaborated with many organizations, such as City of Raleigh, Habitat for Humanity, Pan Lutheran Ministries, American Heart Association, Duke Children's Miracle Network, Wake County Human Services, Urban Ministries of Raleigh, Nursing School at Wake Tech, NC Child Abuse Prevention Coalition InterAct, Wake County Literacy Council, Peace @ Work, Jubilee Jobs Step Up Ministries, YWCA, Work First, Job Link, Raleigh Rescue Mission, Casa Works, NC Department of Human Services, NC Smart Start program.

We have received formal recognition and been grantees of community funds, such as: City of Raleigh awarded a plaque in recognition for our efforts collecting household hazardous wastes; City of Raleigh has granted us a Beautification grant in collaboration with Robinwood Neighborhood; Wake County has granted two grants, one in collaboration with Robinwood Neighborhood, one for our efforts with the county-wide Professional Clothing Closet; State of North Carolina incorporated us as SmartStart partners and Summer Food Service Program providers.

In addition, the Wake County Business Area has recognized us as their 2007 Community Partner of the Year. We have received many recognitions within our international organization for our efforts as well. Our current areas of service are:

### **Clothing Closet** (2001 to present)

Operation of our county-wide Soroptimist International of Raleigh Professional Clothing Closet is our way to help job-seekers in need as they find employment. We have formalized a network of agencies and organizations within the Raleigh area working with people to help them develop job skills and find jobs. This network of partners refer their clients who do not have appropriate clothing for interviewing and working in a business environment. We collect donated business appropriate clothing and make it available at no charge to these referred clients in a personal shopper appointment. We typically give an interview suit and five days of clothing with shoes and accessories. During the appointment, we can celebrate the client's uniqueness by advising and educating them about professional image, styles and colors best suited for them, and offer encouragement for their efforts to improve their economic situation. Our clients are smiling when they leave. We are indeed grateful to Hillyer Memorial Christian Church for providing the facility which houses the Closet.

### **Domestic Violence** (1989 to present)

Domestic Violence is another Soroptimist focus area. The Raleigh club supports Domestic Violence initiatives by supporting Interact, a private non-profit United Way agency that provides safety, support and awareness to victims and survivors of domestic violence and rape/sexual assault. We also partner with local organizations such as StoriesWork, and Peace at Work to promote domestic violence awareness as a workplace concern and offer measures proven to minimize the impact.

### **Robinwood Neighborhood** (1997 to present)

Our club mentors the female heads of household in Robinwood, a low-income, multi-ethnic community in Southeast Raleigh. As Smart Start partners for two years, we established a family resource center in one of the apartments within the neighborhood as a place for multiple activities, such as enrichment and informational sessions for families with pre-school children; after school fun and learning activities for children of all ages; community meetings to address common concerns and problems, community-wide events to conduct health screenings, celebrate Mother's Day, Fall Festival, Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July. The community residents planned and implemented these activities with support and some assistance from our members. Our members participated in reading contests, gardening projects, helping parents give Christmas gifts to their children, helping children celebrate their mothers, cooking classes, community cleanups, community meetings and administrating all the Smart Start grant requirements. With the building of the community center at Peach Road Park, the needs are now being addressed by the City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation staff at Peach Road Park. Our role is collaboration with the community leaders and the staff at the community center. We do continue helping mothers give gifts to their children at Christmas time.

### **Project Independence**

Every four years our organization, Soroptimist International, adopts a service project that is international in scope. The project for 2004 through 2007, Project Independence, collaborates with Women for Women International, whose efforts address the needs of women survivors of war. Project Independence targets efforts in Rwanda, Afghanistan, and Bosnia to rebuild the lives of women following war and civil conflict through human rights education, job training and microloans to establish livelihoods for their families and their communities.