

The Signpost



Making a Difference for Women and Girls for 99 Years

Soroptimist International of Kansas City
South Central Region

SOROPTIMIST® July 2025

Investing in Dreams



The Signpost



President's Message Mysti Meiers

First and foremost, I would like to thank our Immediate Past President, Lynn LeCount, for her exceptional leadership throughout the 2024–2025 year. Her vision and dedication laid a strong foundation for our club and helped shape the direction and goals we have set for the year ahead.

I would also like to recognize the incredible work of our committee chairs and members. Thanks to your efforts, we significantly increased the visibility of our club through social media, had a very rewarding fundraising year, awarded over \$10,000 in Live Your Dream (LYD) Awards, and donated \$56,000 to local nonprofit organizations that align with our mission of supporting women and girls in Kansas City. These achievements have set a high bar for the year to come—but I am confident that we are ready for the challenge. I believe we all share in the excitement of what lies ahead.

This year marks a truly special milestone: Soroptimist International of Kansas City is celebrating its 100th anniversary—our Centennial Year! To celebrate, we are honored to host the South Central Region Conference in April. Our committees have set ambitious goals for the year, including enhancing our social media presence, growing our membership, and establishing long-term fundraising traditions that will support our mission well into the future.

To honor this milestone, we've created a special 100-year commemorative image that will be featured in our Signpost newsletters, email communications, social media platforms, and event promotions. I encourage all members to use and share this image throughout the year as a way to celebrate our rich history and collective accomplishments.

Lastly, I want to thank you for trusting me with the privilege of leading SIKC during such a significant year. I can't think of a more intimidating, challenging, and scary opportunity, but I know it will be rewarding. I'm also grateful to be surrounded by an outstanding board who will be by my side every step of the way.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you, and I hope the board and I make you proud. Let's make this centennial year one to remember!

President Mysti

Inside This Issue

Calendar	2
Period Poverty Project	3
Installation	4
Grant Recipient Fundraisers	6
Soroptimist History Part One	8
Adieu, Bonnie	11

Kay Stewart, Editor

Caitlin Miller,
Photographer and Reality
Checker

www.kcsoroptimist.org

Soroptimist Kansas City Foundation
Soroptimist International
of Kansas City
1221 West 103rd #224
Kansas City, MO 64114

July Calendar



Board Meeting

July 9, 2025

6:00 p.m.

via Zoom

(contact information to be sent out via e-mail)

2026 SCR Conference Committee Meeting

July 12, 2025

Kay Stewart's Home

1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Business Meeting

July 16, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Fleetridge Elementary School

13001 E. 55th Street

Kansas City, MO 64133



July Birthdays

President Mysti July 4
Melanie Simpson July 17
Tanya Johannes July 26

July Business Meeting Wednesday, July 16, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Fleetridge Elementary School

13001 E. 55th Street

Kansas City, MO 64133

Use your GPS to find the best way from your starting location.

Fleetridge is in the heart of Raytown.

Menu

Boxed lunches from Good Cents Subs

Go to the following link to make your choice.

<https://orders.goodcentssubs.com/menu/goodcents-29-noland-rd>

Program

Following dinner, we will assemble Period Poverty kits for the girls at Fleetridge Elementary.

Details next page.

RSVP to Lynn LeCount

By Sunday, July 13 with your meal choice.

Period Poverty Project

P3

Soroptimist International of KC is seeking donations of products and cash to benefit girls at a Jackson Co., MO elementary school. Visit our website by June 30th to learn how you can help!



Assisting girls at a critical time.

www.KCSoroptimist.org

Community Service & July 16th Meeting Combined

The Community Service Committee's Period Poverty Project (P3) wraps up during our July 16th monthly meeting in the library of the Fleetridge Elementary School (13001 E. 55th Street, Kansas City, MO, 64133).

Park on the circle drive near the Fleetridge front doors.

The Principal has volunteered chilled bottles of water, chips and packaged snacks to accompany our sandwiches.

Please email Lynn by Sunday, July 13th with your choice from the GoodCents menu at <https://orders.goodcentssubs.com/menu/goodcents-29-noland-rd> then pay Grace when you arrive at the school's library.

There will be a brief business meeting while we eat then we'll break into groups. Thanks to your generosity and tenacity, we'll then assemble 160 light-flow and 40 heavy-flow kits. Any remaining products will be given to the Nurse's Office to backfill the P3 kits as needed. We'll be wearing latex gloves while handling the products so please alert Lynn if you have a latex allergy.

We encourage everyone to invite a guest to lend a hand!

See you there,

The 2024-2025 Community Service Committee
Danielle, Dianne, Grace, Lynn, Marcia and Tanya



Please plan on attending!

This is a great way to kick off our new club year, assisting young girls in navigating an important time of their lives.

June is a Busy Month



In early June our club participated in the annual Combined Board and Business Meeting.

All committee chairs presented their year end reports and handed off their committee materials to the next year's committee chair.

The club discussed the last year's accomplishments and planned for our upcoming 2025-2026 club year.

Then We Installed Our New Club Board



Opening the outgoing President's gift.



Passing the gavel.

Our New Board of Directors



L-R: Margaret Smith, SIKC Foundation Trustee; Nora Magee, Director; Marie Parker, Director; Marcia Boutz, Treasurer; Candy Routledge, Secretary; Grace Boswell, President-Elect, Mysti Meiers, President and Lynn LeCount, Immediate Past- President.

Receiving her president's pin.



What a group...

Fundraisers for Good

Some of our Grant Recipients are having their own fundraisers over the next few weeks. Please take a look and if you are available, take some time to visit and participate. It is so inspiring to see the amount of creative thinking went in to making these possible.

Hillcrest Fundraiser

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16omxFLuSx/?mibextid=wwXIfr>

Flourish Furniture Bank

Donations Needed:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0ohzoWrzYJtvQMN44zfLDmGgKvfiSiDmBhScE29yCBdwURme7LcWv43x1N1wTd35vl&id=100064754648620&mibextid=wwXIfr

Jackson county CASA fundraiser

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19CFerrv9u/?mibextid=wwXIfr>

Cultivate KC



Cultivate KC

SAVE THE DATE!

JOIN US for a celebration of urban farming and the diversity of the food in the soil and the folks who grow and eat it!

Midtown Hoedown is a family friendly, farm-centered folk dance + so much more! This event is perfect for farming and food enthusiasts of ALL ages. The evening begins with kid-friendly tunes by Jim “Mr. Stinky Feet” Cosgrove, and continues with the gender-inclusive square dance with music by Halfsider, an old time string band featuring Tricia Spencer, Howard Rains, Isaiah Sibi, and Rachel Krause with dance steps called by Lisa Harris-Frydman. The dances are all taught on the spot – no experience is necessary.

This year attendees will also enjoy carnival games, a small farm animal petting zoo, educational demonstrations, a pop-up farmers market, raffle prizes, and delicious food and beverages for all ages. Western wear is highly encouraged!

September 13, 2025

Longfellow Farm

922 E. 30th Street, Kansas City, MO

Planning is underway for the 3rd Annual Midtown Hoedown! Mark your calendars for this family friendly farm party with live music, called gender-inclusive square dancing, local food and MORE - to benefit Cultivate KC.

Admission is \$25, children 12 and under are free. Tickets include admission to the dance, free kettle corn and beverages for adults and children. Additional activities include games, a small animal petting zoo, educational demonstrations, a pop-up farmers market, and local food vendors.

Tickets go on sale August 1.

100 Years of Helping Women & Girls in our Community

As our club, Soroptimist International of Kansas City prepares to celebrate our 100 year Anniversary, it is a good time to revisit our history and how we came to be. It is always helpful to start at the beginning, how Soroptimist even came into being. Most of us are aware of the man, Stuart Morrow, who came up with the concept and with the help of a group of professional women in Oakland, California, launched the first Soroptimist club in 1921. With this in mind, as History Chair and Signpost Editor (how convenient), I am going to insert a synopsis of our past in each edition of the Signpost throughout our new club year.

This first article is one that was used with permission by Jacqueline Bond, former SIKC member. It is wordy, with a lot of information about the organization's founding and subsequent spread throughout the world. Keep in mind, we were the 16th club chartered in the world. This was in 1926, before there were Soroptimist Federations, SIA, Regions or any other umbrella organizations.

Here we go....

The roots of Soroptimist were actually, unknown to anyone at the time and still seldom recalled, in Buffalo, NY in 1911. In that year the first Optimist Club was formed, a men's service club whose mission was to "Bring Out the Best in Kids". The first club was so successful that it was decided to promote the chartering of new clubs in other cities around the country. So, in 1921 an entrepreneur named Stuart Morrow visited the San Francisco Bay Area of California in search of leaders who might be enticed to charter either an Optimist or Rotary club, since he had interests in promoting both.

In Oakland, Mr. Morrow called on the Parker-Goddard Secretarial School. Presuming men ran the business, Morrow found to his surprise that the school was owned by Miss Mabel Parker and Mrs. Adelaide Goddard, and not by men at all. As Morrow explained his mistake and was about to leave, Mrs. Goddard remarked "When the men admit women as members of their service clubs, I would be interested". This remark sparked an idea for the entrepreneurial Mr. Morrow, and he got together several of the outstanding businesswomen in Oakland to pursue the idea of forming a service club for women.

The preliminary meeting was held Tuesday, May 31, 1921, at 4 p.m., in the Rose Room of Hotel Oakland. Of the six women in attendance only one, Adelaide Goddard, is recorded as showing real interest. Undeterred, Mrs. Goddard immediately began recruiting her acquaintances. Less than a month later, on June 21, the historic First Meeting of Members Committee Luncheon, comprised of 10 women, met at the Hotel Oakland to officially launch the club. The core group met once a week, and in three short months they had gathered the support of 80 women in Alameda County, the number stipulated by Mr. Morrow as minimum to form a charter club. The group also chose the name Soroptimist for the organization at this time, which historical Soroptimist records list as a word coined from the Latin "soror" meaning sister and "optima" meaning best, which was interpreted as The Best of Women. In current usage Soroptimist is interpreted as Best for Women.

Soroptimist History

This change shifted the focus away from the early qualifications for Soroptimist membership to the lives of the women and girls whose betterment is the worldwide Soroptimist mission.

The Articles of Incorporation of this first county-named Soroptimist Club of Alameda, were filed and signed by Stuart Morrow in Sacramento, September 26, 1921. The charter contains the names of the first club officers: President-Violet Richardson; Treasurer-Nellie M. Drake; Directors-Edna B. Kincaid, Doris C. Tilton, Gladys R. Leggett, Blanche Rollar and Adelaide Goddard. At the bottom of the document are the names of the 80 professional women required to file the charter. Significantly, the charter designated that additional clubs would be founded and operated throughout the United States, with the principal business of ALL clubs transacted in Oakland. This immediately set the precedent for an arm of control and cohesion as the organization grew, represented today by Soroptimist International, Inc. located in Cambridge, UK.

The presentation of the Charter and the officer installation ceremony took place in formal style at the Hotel Oakland a week later, on October 3, 1921. This installation date, October 3, is officially celebrated as Soroptimist Founders Day.

The real significance of this first-ever women's service club may today be underappreciated, but at the time it was revolutionary. By the beginning of the 1920s women in North America had established themselves in the political arena through suffrage, and in the



professional world as a result of World War I. But the idea of a service club exclusively for women was unheard of. Thus with the advent of this first Soroptimist club a major social divide had been bridged.

One of the most notable facts about the charter is that Mr. Morrow was the only signer. History also records that Mr. Morrow named himself as originator, founder and general manager of the corporation, retaining 90% of the voting power, property rights, and interest in the corporation. In other words, he owned Soroptimist. ***This, of course, had to change.***

Following the organizing of this first, county-named Soroptimist Alameda Club, Mr. Morrow began to fulfill the vision of an international Soroptimist organization. He started, however, by chartering three additional important and influential national clubs in 1922: San Francisco on March 6, Los Angeles on July 19, and Washington, D.C. on November 27.

Soroptimist History continued...

This accomplished, the enterprising Mr. Morrow, who was familiar with Great Britain and Europe from having promoted Rotary Clubs there some years earlier, crossed the Atlantic. In England he organized the Greater London Club in 1923, with Kathleen, Vicountess Falmouth as Founder President and 112 Charter members. The London Club installation was reported to be the social event of the season, attended by 250 people, including members of the British Royal family.

In 1924 Mr. Morrow went on to Europe, and organized the Soroptimist Club of Paris. The Founding President there was Dr. Suzanne Noel, who later went on to become the first President of the European Federation.

At this point the existing clubs had charters, but they did not own their organization. This untenable situation could not stand, and in 1927, just six years after the Alameda founding club was chartered, Morrow agreed to sell all rights, title and interest in the name Soroptimist, and all rights in the corporation for \$5,500. Eight clubs cooperated to underwrite the purchase, including clubs in Great Britain and Europe. The \$5,500 purchase price may sound reasonable or even a bargain today, but this was 1927, and women were not making significant salaries. The world was still reeling from World War I (1914-18), the 1919 pandemic influenza epidemic that killed between 20 and 40 million people worldwide, and the U.S. was gripped by the wild stock market gyrations that two years later, in 1929, would result in the Great Depression. Times were anything but perfect for acquisition. But early Soroptimists worldwide recognized the pressing need to control their organization, and all contributed to the purchase price in spite of these catastrophic events. From this point forward Soroptimist showed steady and determined growth towards the emulated global organization it has become today.

Another noteworthy historic event took place in 1927, when the First World Conference of Soroptimist Clubs was held in Washington, DC. At this conference the American (SIA) and European (SIE) Federations were formed, as was Soroptimist International (SI), to provide the essential link between all present and future clubs. Other significant milestones at this conference were the decision that Soroptimist International Conventions be held every four years, and adoption of the Soroptimist emblem for the member pin. Designed by Anita Houtz Thompson of the Oakland Club, the original casting of the pin is today on display at SIA Federation headquarters in Philadelphia, PA. In subsequent years the design has been changed a number of times, in an attempt to reflect international as well as developed country's women's attire.

Soroptimist continued its Federation growth when in 1934, eleven years after the first world convention; Great Britain and Ireland broke away from SI Europe to form the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI). Another forty-three years were to pass before 1978, and the founding of The Federation of the South West Pacific (SISWP), with Mary Whitehead as its First President.

Soroptimist History continued...

Soroptimist International of Africa (SIAF) was born in 1987 in Athens, Greece at a Congress with Gisela Freudenberg, Soroptimist International officer in charge of Extension in Africa (1987) and Nina Koumanakou who was then President of Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE). Present at the Congress were Soroptimists from some African countries.

Researched and written by SI San Diego member Anna M. Curren, October, 2010

*Next month: How Soroptimist International of Kansas City was launched.
Stay tuned....*

One Last Thought...

*Long time member Bonnie Cutler is moving to Connecticut.
Bonnie, a forever Soroptimist, has already found another club to join.*

*The moving van arrives tomorrow.
Her family threw a "good bye Bonnie" party on Sunday.
We wish her well. She will be missed...*



Around the table: Grace Boswell, Margaret Smith, Dianne Young, Bonnie Cutler, Elaine Fry, Marcia Boutz, and Candy Routledge (not pictured, Kay Stewart)