

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Volunteers & Teachers recognized by Loomis Soroptimist

March 3, 2014 (LOOMIS, CA) –Soroptimist International of Loomis Basin (SILB) presented community awards on Wednesday, February 26 at the Train Depot in Downtown Loomis. The club’s fundraising efforts, such as the upcoming Tostada Bingo on March 22, enable the club to fund these awards. Soroptimist supports women and children locally and throughout the world.

Violet Richardson Award

Anna von Wendorff, who volunteers for A Touch of Understanding (ATOU), received the Violet Richardson Award that recognizes young women who make the community and world a better place through volunteer efforts. ATOU provides disability awareness programs to over 6000 Sacramento area students each year to help them understand the challenges associated with disabilities.

Von Wendorff explained that she has been a leader with the ATOU Youth FORCE - Friends Offering Respect and Creating Empowerment – for three years and currently serves as president. She plans, promotes and mentors younger volunteers to produce monthly events that are fully inclusive and accessible. “I have been able to experience not only the hard work involved with a nonprofit and its valuable rewards,” said von Wendorff, “but also the careful decisions that must be made at every level.”

Women’s Opportunity Award

Marissa Glen of Auburn was selected to receive the Women’s Opportunity Award. This scholarship aids women who support their families and need additional training to upgrade their employability.

Glen indicated that she discovered her passion for food when she previously cooked for a senior community. “My passion is pleasing people through food,” said Glen. “I want to pursue dietetics as a career. I love the analytical part of a tailor made diet.” She attends Sierra College and plans to transfer to California State University Sacramento.

Ruby Award

Ann Heimberg was recognized for her contributions as volunteer for Stand Up Place, formerly PEACE for families. The Ruby Award for Women Helping Women is given to those who improve the lives of other women or girls through their professional or personal activities.

After completing Crisis Intervention Training, Heimberg began teaching a cooking class at a safe house. Then she joined the Sexual Assault Response Team and been on call more than 840 hours in just five months, explained Amber Whitley, Stand Up Place Volunteer Coordinator.

“Our work involves a high degree of trauma, heighten emotional sates and unpredictability,” said Whitley. “Ann has served our survivors with compassion and taken on the challenges of the work with grace, perseverance and a positive attitude.”

Special Recognition

Fred & Acsa Hitchen received a grant to continue their work at the Senior L.I.F.E. Center of Loomis, a place where adults over 55 years of age enjoy social and educational activities as well as lunch

contributed by local businesses and organizations. Soroptimist International Loomis Basin helped establish the center in 1978 and has supported the program since its inception.

Teacher Grants

SILB provides small grants to help fund teachers' long-term projects that will benefit numerous classes over time.

Julie Smith and Shiloh Rebozzi from Franklin School; Anne Marie Nielsen with H. Clarke Powers School; Kathy Lowry who teaches at the Ophir STEAM Academy; Cindy Zenovic and Kelsie Dales of Placer Elementary; and Kristen Strong and Melissa McCormick from Loomis Grammer all received grants to support classroom programs.

About Soroptimist International Loomis Basin

Soroptimist (soroptimist.org) is 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. Soroptimist International of Loomis Basin is a 501(c)(3) organization. Club projects include providing meals and local produce for Loomis L.I.F.E. center and decorating Sierra College dorm rooms for former foster youth. International efforts include supporting clean water and solar oven projects.

The club is supporting the Red, White & Blue Dance on March 14 in Loomis that is raising funds for Gold Country Chaplaincy and the Sierra College "Boots to Books" Program; tickets available at <http://www.goldcountrychaplaincy.com/dance.html>. Join us for Tostada Bingo on March 22 at the Loomis Veteran's Hall; get tickets at the Loomis Chamber Office or call 916-652-7252.

Those interested in learning more about the Loomis SI club are invited to join the club's weekly meetings on Wednesdays at 8 a.m. at the Train Depot at the corner of Taylor and Horseshoe Bar Roads in Loomis. On the second Wednesday, the club holds an evening meeting at Lorenzo's Mexican Restaurant in Loomis. For information about Soroptimist International of Loomis Basin, go to <http://soroptimistloomis.com/> or contact Eileen Elder, President at (916) 652-4509.

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Photo -- Teachers (LtoR) Kristen Strong, Kelsie Dales, Melissa McCormick, Cindy Zenovic, Kathy Lowry, Anne Marie Nielsen, Julie Smith & Shiloh Rebozzi.

Photo -- Award winners (LtoR) Nicholas Glen (age 5), Marissa Glen (Women's Opportunity Award), Ann Heimberg (Ruby Award), Anna von Wendorff (Violet Richardson Award) and Acsa Hitchen (Special Recognition).