Rancho Cordova Area Soroptimist Club Selects Its 2017-2018 Award Winners

Story and photo by Soroptimist International

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA - After a very difficult task of judging applications, the Live Your Dream and Ruby Awards were selected, and awards given out at the Soroptimist International of Rancho Cordova & Gold River's (SIRCGR) recent award reception.

Our "Live Your Dream Award" winner, Scarlet, is well deserving of this scholarship. Scarlet has faced many difficult challenges growing up being raised by her single mom with her two siblings. Scarlet has faced, and overcame poverty, substance abuse and even attempted suicide. Her suicide attempt, "sobered" her up, and put her on the path to taking control of her life. She fell in love, moved to Virginia, and had a beautiful daughter. Then her marriage became emotionally abusive. After seeking help, she saw her future, to open a similar facility that provided her help and support, in Rancho Cordova. She's presently attending Sac State studying for her bachelor's degree in Social Work, with her goal of receiving a Master of Social Work, becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and opening a clinic dedicated to helping women overcome mental health and societal issues such as domestic violence, child rearing, career challenges and general mental health. Scarlet's tenacity and drive, along with her family's love and support, will ensure that Scarlet achieves her goals.

Our Ruby Award was given to Lisa Wrightsman, founder of the Street Soccer USA: Sacramento Lady Salamander program. Lisa's story is just as inspiring as Scarlet's! Lisa was introduced to street soccer while living in a transitional housing and employment program for the homeless. Lisa excelled in academics and athletics, which led to a college soccer scholarship, then a semi-professional soccer career. Sadly, this path of that career was cut short due to substance abuse. While seeking help to rebuild her life, she was introduced to street soccer and the Sacramento Mohawks. Lisa participated in the SSUSA National Cup in 2010, then was selected to be on the first All-Women's USA National team representing the USA in the Homeless World Cup in Rio de Janeiro. The impact of that experience was so profound, that Lisa was convinced, compelled and committed to bringing Street Soccer to her hometown of Sacramento. "2018 marks the eighth consecutive year that SSUSA will see the strength and hope of the women in our community. Thus far they've seen women and children reconnect, women overcome interpersonal and physical fears, positive female-to-female relationships develop, women desire a healthier life style and set positive examples for their peers and children, and many other life skills and positive characteristic develop along this Street Soccer journey," says Lisa.

Lisa, Scarlet and Sheryl stand proud of their accomplishments. Soroptimist is an international nonprofit organization who seeks to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

"Our club is extremely proud of all our award winners. We are confident that they will achieve and exceed the goals they have set for themselves and we look forward to remaining in touch and perhaps develop a partnership of continued support," says Soroptimist International of Rancho Cordova & Gold River President, Sheryl Longsworth.

The goal of the Live Your Dream Award is to help head of household women improve their economic status by preparing them to enter or re-enter the workplace. Unlike other scholarship programs, the Live Your Dream award can be used for books, childcare, transportation or any other expense that will help a woman reach her educational goal. The Ruby Award honors women who have worked to improve the lives of women and girls through their professional and/or volunteer work.

The 2018-19 Live Your Dream and Ruby Award application window are open now and both close on November 15, 2018. Both applications may be accessed at our website: http://www.soroptimistranchocordova.org/awardapplications/live-your-dream-award and http://www.soroptimistranchocordova.org/awardapplications/ruby-award.

Soroptimist is an international nonprofit organization who seeks to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. The name, Soroptimist, means "best for women," and that's what the organization strives to achieve. Soroptimists are people at their best, working to help other women to be their best. Please send an email to sirancho cordova@soroptimist.net to receive more information about Soroptimist International of Rancho Cordova & Gold River, how to become a member, or just learn how you can volunteer with our club members or visit www.soroptimistranchocordova.org. ★