

2015 GWR Spring Conference Workshop: Let's Talk About Programs

"General Programs" Breakout Session

Facilitator: Pat Box, District 2 Program Committee

1. Pre-conference club feedback
  - a. Program committee members solicited pre-conference input from club presidents and committee chairs
  - b. Many clubs said they do not have on-going "Soroptimist" programs beyond Live Your Dream Awards and Dream It Be It Career Support For Girls (i.e. Soroptimist Teen Dating Violence Project, Soroptimist Stop Trafficking, Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence)
  - c. Many clubs said their involvement with "general program" topics is in the form of volunteer time or monetary donations to support the programs of non-Soroptimist organizations
  - d. Many clubs said they are unsure what an "ideal" Soroptimist program project should look like or how to develop one
2. On-Line Resources: <http://www.soroptimist.org/members/program/soroptimistprograms.html> SIA website is an excellent resource to help clubs conduct ideal program projects that best meet the needs of their community and the interests of the club. There are links to various model program kits, white papers and sale items.
3. Details about one of Soroptimist general program: Soroptimist Teen Dating Violence Program
  - a. Why is Teen Dating Violence Program important?
    - i. Because teens have the right to be in safe and healthy relationships
    - ii. Females ages 16-24 are most vulnerable to intimate partner violence than any other age group
  - b. Supporting facts
    - i. 1 in 4 teen girls in a relationship report enduring repeated verbal abuse; 1 in 3 teens who have been in a relationship experience the most serious forms of dating violence and abuse (sexual, physical, threats of physical harm); 1 in 2 teens in dating relationships report being controlled, threatened or pressured to do things they did not want to do
    - ii. Almost 2/3 of parents whose children have been in a dating relationship say dating violence and abuse have not been a problem for their teen; 82% are confident they could recognize if their teen was experiencing teen violence, yet more than half of those parents couldn't correctly identify warning signs of abuse
    - iii. 1 in 3 teens who were in an abusive relationship never told anyone; 80% of girls who have been physically abused in their relationship continued to date the abuser; victims have higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, suicide
  - c. Teen Dating Violence Model Program Kit offers several ideas and approaches for clubs to conduct a project that best meets the needs of their community and the interests of the club.
    - i. Projects targeting teens (Leaders guide for conducting three different 50-minute classroom exercises)
    - ii. Project targeting parents (Leaders guide for a 1 ½ hour workshop for parents)
    - iii. Project targeting school personnel (Guide for presenting a 10-minute teen dating awareness presentation to school personnel)
    - iv. Project targeting teens, parents, and school personnel (Guide for conducting an awareness day at a local mall)
    - v. Model kit also includes guidance for project preplanning, fundraising, publicizing, evaluation for project, handouts, videos, other resources, etc.)

4. Open group discussion to identify club obstacles and solutions associated with conducting Soroptimist general programs in their community

	ISSUE	SOLUTION
a.	Violence and Human Trafficking are disturbing subject matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For attendees: Give assurance that all discussions are confidential; encourage seeking help from a responsible adult</li> <li>For members: Provide education on subject matter so that members will be more confident to handle the topic</li> <li>Anticipate questions and have answers for them</li> </ul>
b.	Difficulty gaining access to key contacts (how to “get your foot in the door”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit members with specific subject matter expertise or leverage (e.g., teachers, counselors, school board)</li> <li>Partner with other organizations, such as a domestic violence center , to bring awareness to girls</li> </ul>
c.	Lack of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start small; incorporate topic with other club projects or existing club mentoring program for girls (e.g., include topic of teen dating violence in club’s DIBI Career Support For Girls program)</li> <li>Partner with other organizations or Soroptimist clubs</li> </ul>
d.	Resource information is difficult to locate	Recommend that program resource information is more centralized so they are easier to locate without multiple searches
e.	Expense and wait time for requirements of Life Scan/background checks when conducting programs involving youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some members may already have completed requirements through their profession</li> <li>Special pricing available for 501©(3) groups</li> <li>Issue will be moot point when club satisfies DIBI program Life Scan requirements</li> </ul>
f.	Low event attendance; transportation issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicize a good “hook” that will draw attendees (goodie bag, food)</li> <li>Hold event at an easily accessible/neutral location (local park, local mall, teen center)</li> <li>Consider holding event on Saturday, after school or during school</li> </ul>

5. Other Recommendations

- a. Free on-line aps are available to interact with teens on a variety of topics that ask survey questions and provide instant feedback
- b. Do not re-invent the wheel; utilize SIA model program kits
- c. Apply for Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls to offset project expense