

Loomis Soroptimist Club Education Awards Empower Women

March 4, 2019 (LOOMIS, CA) – Consistent with the mission of Soroptimist International (SI) to “transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities,” the SI Loomis Basin (SILB) club presented grants and awards on February 20 to support education, especially for women and girls. The club distributed nearly \$10,000 in scholarships, teacher grants and support for the Senior L.I.F.E center.

The Ruby Award for Women Helping Women recognized Carol Pepper-Kittredge, Associate Dean, Workforce Innovation, Sierra College for “improving the lives of women through her professional activities.” Through the CCC Maker initiative, she has created an inclusive statewide makerspace model to prepare all students for innovative, entrepreneurial and non-traditional careers. Pepper-Kittredge also previously led the Sierra Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Consortium, according to Gregg Ramseth, Technology & Assessment, Placer Union High School District (PUHSD). “Carol and her team were instrumental in pivoting Placer Union's perspective and outreach, helping us design inclusive programs that build confidence in young women as makers, entrepreneurs, problem-solvers and innovators,” said Ramseth. The club provided funds for Hacker Lab powered by Sierra College makerspace scholarships for women.

The SI Live Your Dream Award celebrates women who have overcome poverty, divorce, domestic violence and other life challenges through education. Ashley Volkerts received a \$3000 scholarship to continue pursuing her associate degree in Counseling at Intercoast College. According to her references, “she has overcome a multitude of obstacles in her personal life, and maintains a beyond amazing attitude, while caring for her son,” and “she is learning how to take care of herself as a single parent. Education is the key to her future. She sees that, and it is her driving force.”

The Loomis Soroptimist Community Service Award of \$1000 was given to Jianna Domingo, a Del Oro student who volunteers with Stand Up Placer, a private nonprofit that provides support to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. Domingo explained that she renovated a play room in the Stand Up Placer safe house. “I hope that this room allows for the mother-child relationship to be nurtured,” said Domingo. The PUHSD also chose Domingo to be an inaugural student board member. She hopes to go into the field of education, work internationally and empower others to fight against injustice and overcome oppression.

Since 1978, the Senior L.I.F.E. Center of Loomis has provided social and educational activities for seniors. SILB was instrumental in establishing the program and continues to support it through this grant that was accepted by directors, Acsa and Fred Hitchen. In addition to classes, the program offers nutritious lunches for participants.

To support education in the region, the club provides Teacher Grants to help instructors fund special projects that will have lasting impact on students.

Casey Mills and Stephanie Meyer, eighth grade teachers at H. Clark Powers received grants. Mills will spark students' interest in reading by adding books suggested by students to his library and encouraging them to complete the 40 book challenge. Meyer anticipates using the grant for a ramp that students will use with the lunar rover they create to explain Newton's law, graph speed and understand the forces acting on the rover.

At Placer Elementary, kindergarten teacher Amanda Ross will purchase a microphone that she can wear around her neck and use in class for singing and talking with students as well as allow the shy children to use the microphone to build their confidence when speaking to groups.

Librarian, Sylvia Edmond, at Newcastle Elementary School, plans to use the grant funds to replace worn out books as well as select new appealing books that will encourage students to read.

Janine Brizendine, kindergarten teacher at Loomis Grammar School, has implemented a writer's workshop and will purchase additional texts to excite the children about writing in addition to white boards students can use to practice handwriting. Also at Loomis Grammar School, sixth grade teacher, Susan McQueen will enable her students to practice the metric system with additional scale and calibration kits for science labs.

Karen Acosta, fifth grade teacher at Loomis Grammar School, will purchase Wobble chairs that allow active students to rock and move their feet while sitting and this continuous movement helps them focus, participate and complete assignments. Third Grade teacher at Loomis Grammar School, Julie Levens-Hupp, will either use her grant for historical costumes that children can dress up in during a biography unit or for flexible seating which research has shown helps students focus and learn.

Leslie Morgan is a middle school teacher at Penryn Elementary School and wants to purchase Lego base plates for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) projects in the school's new makerspace.

Third grade teacher, Julie Woodward, at Franklin Elementary School, intends to use the grant to address students' diverse learning needs by enhancing her classroom environment with standing desks. Bonnie Robinson, first grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School, has found that small collaborative groupings build a positive learning environment and will purchase a rolling television stand and portable document camera to project visual aids from anywhere in the room.

At Loomis Basin Charter School, first grade teacher Christy D'Ambrosio plans new units on space and maps, and will use the grant for new books and listening center equipment.

The Loomis Basin SI club fundraises throughout the year to support the awards program. The next fundraiser is Tostado Bingo on March 30. Tickets are \$30 and available at the Loomis Chamber of Commerce, from members and by calling 916-652-7252.

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.

To learn more about the club, join SI Loomis Basin for club meetings on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 at the Train Depot at Taylor Rd. and Horseshoe Bar Rd. in Loomis. Learn more at www.soroptimistloomis.com and find Soroptimist Loomis Basin on Facebook.

