

Soroptimist honor those making a difference

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – *“This is the time to uphold women’s achievements, recognize challenges, and focus greater attention on women’s rights and gender equality to mobilize all people to do their part.”*

These are the words of Pat Papp, a district director for Soroptimist and member of Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra.

While March 8 was International Women’s Day, on March 5 the two Soroptimist clubs on the South Shore came together to recognize women and high school students who are making a difference in the community.

“International Women’s Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities,” Papp said.

The Live Your Dream award is about recognizing women who have overcome obstacles, but are still pursuing their education to make life better for themselves and their families. The two honorees, who both work for Barton Health, were given \$2,000 to further their education.

Since the award was first given in 1972, nearly \$30 million has been bestowed upon recipients worldwide.

Kathleen Dewing of Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe presented this year’s South Shore honorees. She said the people chosen this year are women who will set an example for

their children, who will give back to their communities and who have already overcome so much.

Many who receive this award have endured some form of abuse, been challenged in ways that go beyond what would be considered normal and still find the good in what lies ahead.

Latosha Sanchez and Keyla Trejo were honored last week. Both are working toward their nursing degree. Sanchez has kids who are 6, 2 and 11 months. She a full-time mom and a full-time student.

“I had a troubled childhood. My mom had many men in and out of our lives,” Sanchez said. “I was the shoulder for her to cry on.” Sanchez’s husband is a rock for her to rely on – something she wasn’t used to.

For Trejo, she is a single mom with a 6- and 8-year-old.

“My parents never had the opportunity to pursue their goals career-wise,” Trejo said. “The biggest hardship after becoming a single mom was deciding what to do with my life and for my kids.”

The Ruby award recognizes women who are helping to improve the lives of other women and children. Janey Roeser and Tere Tibbets are this year’s honorees.

Roeser is the club advisor for the S Club at South Tahoe High School. She’s paid to teach English at the school. She is described as having the spirit of volunteerism and the soul of someone who wants to make a difference.

“Selfishly, it has enriched my life,” Roeser said, “I don’t know if they know how much they’ve given to me.”

Tibbetts immigrated from Cuba with her family when she was 13. With her parents being educated, it helped the family survive. This helped Tibbetts learn early on that education makes a difference.

"The more educated your are, the freer you are," Tibbetts said.

She worked for Lake Tahoe Unified School District for 20 years and then went to Lake Tahoe Community College as a counselor.

Today, her big emphasis is on her book club that she created for women whose first language is Spanish. It's getting them to read, to meet others and become educated.

Honored with the Violet Richardson award were five South Tahoe High students and one Whittell High student. The award is in honor of the first president of the first Soroptimist award.

Each of the young women received \$100. The involvement in school ranges from having grade point averages higher than a 4.0, to sports to extensive volunteer work to being involved in and starting clubs at their respective schools. And all are planning to go to college to enable them to pursue careers of their choice.

This year's winners are Haley Chamarro, Kylee Lyons, Emma Sower, Sarah Novak and Joemae Santos from STHS and Kate Krolicki from WHS.