

# Soroptimist honors women making a difference



Soroptimist winners from left, Bonnie Driscoll, Tatiana Esposito, Abby Abel, Hunter Turney, Annie Buchser, Allyson Swain, Tatum Whatford, Mireya Ortega, and Jordawn Amthauer. Not pictured, Sabrina Green. Photo/Provided

**By Kathryn Reed**

STATELINE – “It’s what you do that counts.”

That is what Lydia Rogers said before the recipients of the Violet Richardson Awards were announced last week.

Rogers, president of Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, and Brenda Knox, president of Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, hosted the annual awards dinner at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe.

This particular award recognizes girls age 14-17 who have taken volunteerism to a new heights. It is named after the first president of Soroptimist “who was committed to creating opportunities for girls and young women through her affiliations with Soroptimist, the Girls Scout Council and the American Association of University Women.”

The six young women who were singled out have spent countless hours volunteering at school and in the community. They are: Abby Abel, Allyson Swain, Hunter Turney, Annie Buchser, Sabina Green and Tatum Whatford. Each received \$100 from Soroptimist.

The Women's Opportunity Award has been renamed Live Your Dream Award to more aptly reflect what it is. The clubs each select a woman who has overcome obstacles that no one should have to face. They each received \$3,000 – \$1,000 of which came from an outside donor. The money is to be used to further their education.

“Still today single mothers trying to go to school and better their lives and their employment opportunities is still a very difficult experience. Very few women have the luxury of being able to stay at home and be supported to achieve all of their goals and interests in life,” Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. Although not a Soroptimist, Kerry is the one who increased this year's allocation. “I was one of those women. I didn't know about any resources really available. But I never wanted to give up on the idea that the current job situation could be improved. I really saw myself in those young girls.”

For Jordawn Amthauer, she is a single mom, goes to Lake Tahoe Community College and works at the college. She was raised by a single mom. She's been working since she was 13. She is the first member of her family to go to college.

Tatiana Esposito, the other recipient, said, “I was a victim of domestic violence. I didn't think I could do anything on my own.”

She grew up in Russia in an abusive household, came to the United States seven years ago, got married, and the abuse continued. She finally left with her two daughters and is on a quest to become a teacher.

The Ruby Award, honoring women who have worked to improve women and girls through their work or volunteerism, went to

Bonnie Driscoll and Mireya Ortega. Driscoll is said to have volunteering in her DNA based on the number of organizations she has been affiliated with, while Ortega for years has been providing free or reduced dental care to youth who otherwise would never have their teeth cared for.

“The women tonight should inspire all of us,” Rogers said as the evening came to a close.