

Sixteenth Annual Scholarship Luncheon



On April 27, 2024, Soroptimist International of Long Beach (SILB) held its Sixteenth Annual Scholarship Luncheon. SILB's annual philanthropic commitment culminated in the awarding of \$26,000 to local individuals who are pursuing their dreams and educational goals. All who attended were inspired by the awardees' stories of overcoming obstacles of poverty, violence, and loss.

The afternoon began with a welcome from co-President Margo Wheeler. She welcomed invited dignitaries Lola Abrahamian, Camino Real Region Governor, Cynthia Jarvis, CRR Governor-Elect, Janice Kurihara CRR District 3 Director, Lisa Swett Sagario, Camino Real Region Live Your Dream Chairperson, and Jan Kellogg, CSULB Development Coordinator for Women & Philanthropy. Lunch followed with the following awards announced.

Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards. The Soroptimist *Live Your Dream Award* provides a monetary award for women who are the primary wage earners in their families and are pursuing education and/or career training. There were eighteen recipients selected. Judy Murphy, chair of the Philanthropy Committee, introduced Lisa Swett Sagario, Camino Real Region Live Your Dream Chairperson and previous LYD awardee. Other presenters were Sue DeRuyter, Julia McConaghy and Jaye Johnson.

Some of our recipients in their own words:

First place Live Your Dream winner, Kim. I'm currently a student at Cal State Dominguez Hills pursuing my Bachelor's Degree in Child Development. I am currently working in education providing high school students opportunities to pursue their dreams. My goal and passion is to one day become a Special Education Teacher. I am truly thankful to Soroptimist International of Long Beach for awarding me with this scholarship and their continued support. Thank You for helping me Live My Dream.

Laura. I'm a student at LBCC studying for my AS in Business Administration and I want to transfer to CSULB to earn my Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and Finance. I would like to find a job that helps me support myself and my son.

Naah. I have always dreamed of having a better life than I was provided during my childhood. Now as a mother, I want to show my daughter how important education is. I have been in school pursuing my Bachelor's in Psychology and it has added to my self-worth and my dreams of a better life.

Renay O. I'm a student at LBCC pursuing an AA degree in math and science. I plan on going into the LVN program in the Fall of 2024 then to RN program once I've gained some experience in my field of study. My plan is to give back to my community and to help mothers complete their educational goals by modeling and counseling women.

Jessica. My goal in life is to make sure more single moms in my shoes know they're not alone. Once I am able to fully help myself, I can begin to help the women who feel alone, unseen and forgotten; the moms who have sacrificed so much and have unfortunately gained so little. I am currently taking classes to be a community health worker. I plan to build a nonprofit that helps single moms and dads understand each other, and provides resources for mental, financial and child care help.

Stacey Anne. I'm currently finishing my first year at LBCC and to my surprise I was on the Dean's List last semester. I'm so proud of myself. I never thought I'd be in college working towards my dream. I really love working in the community and helping others and, with my career, I'm blessed to be able to do so. I hope to one day become a social worker, working with families to bring them together and also working with those who suffer from addiction.

Hannah. Currently, I am pursuing my Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts at Cal State Long Beach. I am working three jobs and going to classes at night. My goal is to be hired by a big company like Disney or Nike and eventually open my own graphic design business.

Rochelle. I am a single mom of two, currently enrolled in LBCC and working toward a Bachelor's Degree in Art History. With my Bachelor's Degree in Art History, I would like to become an Art Teacher in an underserved district. I would like to make a difference in our youth by showing them how to express their emotions and experiences through Art and hope to be the change my Art Teacher was to me.

Latrice. I would like to graduate with an AA degree, transfer to earn my Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. Ultimately, my goal is to become a Nurse Practitioner which will lead me to my ultimate career goal.

Danisha. I am currently attending school for human services/addiction studies/social work. With this education I am going to be helping low income families who are dealing with DCFS and a history of addiction. I want to advocate for them because someone's past does not define who they are today.

Laquesha. My career plan is to grow at my current job and become a coach while attending school to get my dream job in social work. I would like to become a social worker working in my community.

Liliana. My dream is to be the first in my family to establish a career so that my 8-year-old son can be proud of me. I want to motivate and inspire him by example to pursue an education. My dream career is to be a Mental Health Therapist. I want to help others heal their traumas and readjust to society by providing them with the skills and support they need to thrive in life.

Diana. Life's challenges often test our resilience, but through hard work and determination, I persevere. Despite moments of doubt and fear, the love and resilience of my children inspire me to keep pushing forward. Their happiness fuels my drive, reminding me of the importance of our journey. I've rebuilt my life, seizing educational and professional opportunities to ensure a better future for my family. Currently, I'm pursuing my AA-T to transfer to a four-year university, determined to open even more doors for us. Step by step, I'm progressing towards my goals, fueled by the belief that anything is possible.

Quanasha. I am a first-generation college student, and single mother of three awesome children. I grew up in poverty and homelessness, and these things also showed up in my adult life. This May I will have accomplished my goal of becoming the very first in my family to receive a Bachelor's Degree. I will graduate with honors, completed the California College Corps cohort, serving over 450 hours in community service, am a member of The National Society and Leadership of Success, and am preparing for my Master's Degree in social work, slated for Fall 2025.

Mystique. I am currently in the nursing program at Cypress Community College. My hope is to earn my Associate Degree in Science by 2026. Ultimately, my goal is to be a Nurse Practitioner in the field of Gynecology. My focus is on helping women with their specific health needs.

Dr. Katherine White Achievement Award. This award is given to a previous SILB scholarship recipient. The award honors the memory of Dr. Katherine White, a dedicated leader in SILB for 43 years, and is made possible by a generous donation from Dr. White's family. Sally Lane introduced Candace Meehan Kuykendall, an SI Long Beach member and previous LYD and Katherine White award recipient.

This year's award recipient is Doshima. In her own words, "I am a previous 'Live Your Dream' winner and will receive my Bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts next month from Cal State University Long Beach. I have been accepted into the MFA Program (Master of Fine Arts) at UC Irvine where I will continue my formal education and earn the tools I need to be a professional actor. My goal is to complete my education and perform on Broadway. I lost my mother in 2021 and became guardian for my younger brother. I work hard balancing two jobs, attending school full-time, and handling responsibilities at home."

Women & Philanthropy. For over 25 years, Women & Philanthropy at California State University, Long Beach, has helped many of the non-traditional students work towards obtaining their degrees and has supported them to overcome obstacles in their path to graduation. All funds raised by donors to Women & Philanthropy are used to support student scholarships for reentry students looking to improve their lives through higher education.

Lori Brault introduced Jan Kellogg, who represented CSU Long Beach's Women & Philanthropy. Lori announced the Scholarship Awardee, Ali, who was not able to attend the luncheon.

Long Beach City College Scholarships. For the past 41 years, SILB and Long Beach City College Foundation have worked together to provide scholarships for women attending LBCC. Students are selected from both campuses, who are returning to LBCC in the Fall, transferring to a four-year college, or enrolled in a Vocational Education Certificate Program. The recipients may be enrolled in any career area, maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA, and demonstrate financial need. Victoria Wang presented this year's award recipients.

Elise. Once I complete my coursework at LBCC, I intend to transfer to a UC school and eventually earn my PhD in biochemistry. From there, I will pursue a career in disease research and pharmaceutical drug design. My ultimate dream is to be able to give people with chronic diseases hope and ensure medications are accessible to everyone.

Kennedy. I was a young orphan who moved to "the big city" to seek a better life. My dream is to one day work in Healthcare. I will be graduating this year with an Associate of Science Degree in Chemistry and an Associate of Arts Degree in English Literature. I support myself by working full-time

for the Office of Student Conduct at LBCC. I am transferring this Fall to a four-year University. This scholarship will help pay for my Bachelor's Degree in Science, which I hope to earn Spring of 2025.

Raeven. I graduated from Paramount High School as a straight A Honor Student. I am currently completing my Associate Degree in Business Administration from LBCC. I hope to transfer to UC Irvine to finish my Bachelor's Degree. My long-term goal in life is to maximize the opportunity my family has provided me and reciprocate their support as they sacrifice their own aspirations to give me a greater chance of achieving mine.

At the end of the luncheon, Victoria Wang, Co-President, presented several awards to SILB members, including an award as a Distinguished Member of SILB to Sue DeRuyter, a 25-year service pin to Diane DeWalsche, a 25-year service pin to Minnie Douglas, and a 10-year service pin to Judy Murphy.

