



SI Los Angeles NEWS *Fellowship with a purpose!*

Greetings!

SILA Members,

I bring you greetings as we gear up for our annual fundraiser, the awards luncheon. I hope you have notified your friends and relative to save March 27 for a truly memorable event. We need to make this a successful fundraising effort in order to shore up our treasury. It promises to be enjoyable. Maria and her committee are working hard and need your thoughts, donations and energy. Let's have a sell out crowd!



Please plan to attend our meeting on February 17 where we will have a guest speaker from the Downtown Women's Center. Hopefully we can partner with them for a day of service in March.

Time is fast approaching for our annual elections, so please let me know if you are interested in being on the Nominating Committee.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting on Feb. 17.

President Jeri

In This Issue

- February Meetings
- Report on Meetings in January
- SILA Supports Anti-Trafficking Efforts
- SILA Has a WOA Winner!
- Member Happenings

Quick Links

- [SILA's Website](#)
- [Camino Real Region Federation \(SIA\)](#)
- [International \(SI\)](#)

2009-2010 Board

- President: Jeri Durham
- 1st VP (Programs): Ginger Cole
- 2nd VP (W&M): Maria Romero
- Secretary: Dona Lawrie
- Fund Treasurer: Karen Johnson
- Club Treasurer: Irene Recendez
- Directors 2008-10: Joyce Jacob and Barbara Jury
- Directors 2009-11: Lupe Solorio and Cindy Van Steelandt

February Meetings

Both meetings in February will be held in the Library at the **Downtown Business Magnet High School** at 1081 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles. Dinner will be provided at the meeting on Wednesday, February 17th at 6:00pm. Please RSVP by responding to the email which will be sent out shortly.

Contact Information

For more information about SILA or this Newsletter, please contact:

President Jeri Durham at jrd18@sbcglobal.net or 626-826-2224

Editor Janet Elliott at jvelliott@cox.net or 310-809-2438

Report on Meetings in January



The SILA program meeting on Wednesday, January 6th at the Downtown Magnets High School, member **Carole Oglesby** encouraged SILA members to bring in and celebrate "some proud moments and 'metal-winning' performances that we were a part of against great odds." And what an award-winning group it was! Eight members shared memorable projects, events, and accomplishments along with corresponding trophies, plaques and momentos. In all, it reflected the many ways SILA members have succeeded in living full, dynamic lives and made a difference through their professional work.

Unusually severe weather conditions and concerns for members' safety prompted 1st VP **Ginger Cole**, acting in the absence of **President Jeri**, to cancel the business meeting on Wednesday, January 20 and reschedule it for the following Wednesday, January 27. At the rescheduled meeting, 2nd VP **Maria Romero** presented plans for the Awards Luncheon coming up on March 27, reminding all members to solicit and/or donate items (or send a minimum \$40 monetary donations directly to **DeAnna Blaylock**) for the silent auction by March 12. WOA Chair **Joyce Jacob** announced this year's winner (see story below). Finance Committee Chair **Sheila Tatum** moved, and the club approved, the committee's recommendation that the 1st VP acquire a year's supply of gift items through the SIA on-line store (costing no more than \$15 each) which could be given to program speakers. Member **Julie Mairs** reported on SILA's participation in Trafficking Prevention activities (see story below).

SILA Supports Anti-Trafficking Efforts

"Jennifer" is an intelligent, thoughtful girl from Oklahoma City. She runs away from home after her mother's boyfriend begins to sexually abuse her. While wandering aimlessly in a mall, a handsome young man approaches her and offers his friendship, a safe place to sleep and some spending money - all things Jennifer desperately needs. Jennifer is happy to have a new friend who really seems to care about her, until they arrive at his apartment and the nightmare begins...

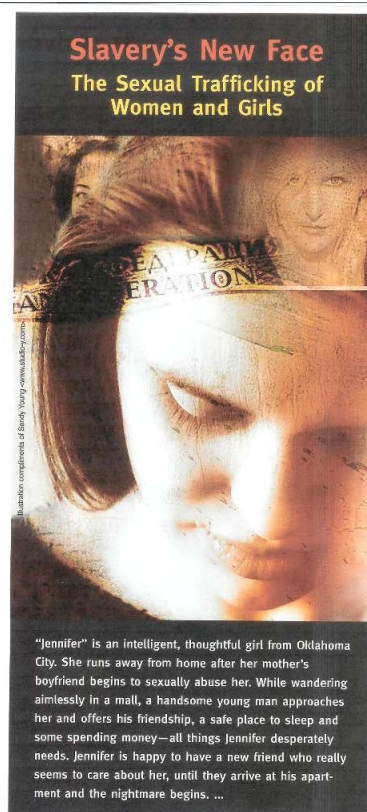
Once inside, the "friend" sets an alarm system and locks Jennifer in the bedroom. Over the course of a week, she is help in isolated captivity and sexually assaulted by numerous men. Then one night, she is ushered outside, locked in the trunk of a car and driven to a truck stop several hours away. There, upon threat of her life, she is ordered to provide sex to any man who will pay for it. Her days are now spent traveling from truck stop to truck stop where her nights are filled with unimaginable pain, humiliation and despair.

Unfortunately, Jennifer's story is not unique.

It is the story of hundreds of thousands of women and girls who are tricked or forced against their will into the web of sexual slavery. Each year, between 800,000 and 900,000 people - 80 percent of whom are women and girls - are trafficked across international borders. An estimated 75 percent of all victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation, suffering horrific physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Currently, about two million women and children are held in sexual servitude around the world, although many believe the actual number may be 10 times higher. Sexual slavery perpetuates a culture of violence, destroys communities and families, fuels organized crime and ruins lives.

These women and girls are not anonymous, faceless victims: they are someone's daughters, sisters, mothers and friends. Enslaved in communities throughout the world, they need your help.

In late 2007, Soroptimists launched a major campaign aimed at raising awareness about the devastating practice of sex trafficking. Member **Julie Mairs** is taking an active role as the Chair of Camino Real Region Soroptimists STOP Trafficking campaign. Most recently, she attended a panel at the RAND Corp. on the importance of researchers, practitioners and advocates informing each other's practice by working together on the matter of human trafficking. The panel was developed by the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking in Los Angeles (CASTLA). Member **Priya Mohan** reports that this summer, she did some research for Prof. Kathleen Kim who heads the Anti-Trafficking Litigation Support Team (ATLAST) at Loyola Law School, is working part-time at a labor law firm, and hopes to convince some attorneys to bring a civil action on behalf of trafficking victims. Member **Carole Oglesby** has distributed the Trafficking Rack Cards developed by SIA to bring more attention to this devastating issue.



SILA Has a WOA Winner!

By Joyce Jacob, 2009-2010 WOA Chair

Alisha Ruiz has been selected as SILA's 2009-2010 Women's Opportunity Award winner.

The criteria for selection are:

- A women with primary financial responsibility for herself and her dependent
- Enrollment in an undergraduate degree program or a vocational skills training program, and
- Financial need

Alisha is 22 years old with a 6 year old daughter, working full time at HomeGirls as a lead cook in the café. She has been accepted at Pasadena City College in the Culinary Arts Program.

Now hear her story: At 13 she ran away from home, smoking marijuana and using meth, as she states, "taking her to places she thought she would never go; partying in motels, sleeping at other people's houses; to stealing cars and taking from stores", which placed her in juvenile hall. She was in and out but the last time it was for something that was serious. She was involved in an accident with her best friend who passed away beside her. She was taken to a hospital and released by mistake, which started her running from the police. She ended up pregnant with fraternal twins. They were born premature; one died 8 hours after birth weighing 1lb. 4 oz. The other daughter was in an incubator weighing 2 lbs. 3 oz. and required heart surgery. As she states, "the police found out where I was staying. I had the twins September 13 and they arrested me on the 25th."

Her reference letters were outstanding. This is from one of the letters:

"I have known Alisha Ruiz for the past 8 years in both a personal and work related environment. I have had the awesome experience of watching Alisha turn a life of dysfunction, despair and hopelessness, involving drugs, alcohol and state incarceration into a life of responsibility, integrity and moral culpability. Alisha has made remarkable and almost unbelievable accomplishments on

her path to sobriety, accountability and in her responsibilities as a single mother. She demonstrates each day an aspiration to better her life in a professional and educational environment, evidenced by solid work ethics and the desire to pursue a Trade School course of study. Additionally, she makes continuous strides to provide her daughter and herself with a preferred style of living. Today, Alisha sustains a full time job while caring for a young child and providing the both of them with a stable, caring and loving home environment. Her strengths in all of the aforementioned can be attested to the outstanding progress she has made in her overall choices in life."

Our SILA WOA Winner will be awarded \$1,000 at our Recognition Luncheon on March 27. Her name will also be submitted to Camino Real Region to be considered for a \$5,000 region award. If Alisha were a regional winner, she'd be eligible for a \$10,000 award from SI of the Americas.

Member Happenings



Member **Gloria Romero** is headed to New York for a week in April to participate in the American Express Nonprofit Leadership Development Academy. This trip kicks off a year-long program which will enhance her management skills. Gloria is currently the Director of Finance at United Way of Los Angeles.

Member **Joyce Jacob** and her husband George will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on March 5th in Hawaii. Congratulations Joyce and George!



Try it FREE today.