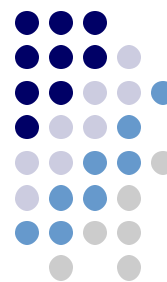




# SINERGY



May 2007

## Family Foundations Program

The Family Foundation believes that women deserve an opportunity to change their lives in a positive manner.

For the past few months, SIN has held its meetings at the Family Foundation and has begun to formulate plans for projects serving the clients of the Foundation. The following story was submitted by member Fran Valenzuela, a Correctional Counselor assigned to the Family Foundation.

Jaime's ride from a Northern California jail to Santa Fe Springs was not a pleasant one. She was awakened at about 12:00 a.m. and shuffled into a transportation van with no explanation as to where she was headed. Shackled and scared, she was hopeful that a bed would be available for her at the Family Foundation Program where her attorney promised her that she would be going. Jaime was facing two years in state prison for a drug offense. Her addiction had finally led her to prison after failing at county probation. The punishment was not just hers, however because Jaime was six months pregnant. Despite the prison term, Jaime knew just how fortunate she was. Had she been sent to a typical prison, she would be separated from her newborn infant two or three days after giving birth. At Family Foundation she would have the opportunity to bond with her child and learning parenting skills while working on her recovery from addiction.



Jaime is among 34 other women and 40 children housed at the Family Foundation

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## Desert Coast Spring Conference

Save Darfur Soroptimist members are urged to support the Genocide Accountability Act, S. 888.

Members of SIN attended the 29th annual DCR Spring Conference April 27-29 at the Hilton Hotel in Irvine. The theme of the conference was "The Amazing Race to Service." Governor Donna Ronca opened the conference at little after noon on Friday afternoon. International Project Chair, ★Cathy Standiford, gave the Keynote presentation: "Genocide on Our Watch: A Call for Awareness, Advocacy and Action." Several informative workshop sessions were held in the afternoon and members had the opportunity to shop at the Trade Faire. First time attendees were presented at all the meeting events, so SIN's newest members, Rosie, Angela and Fran got to stand up and be greeted! The evening banquet honored club Presidents and featured a keynote presentation by Robyn Benincasa

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### Special points of interest:

- SIN welcomes new member
- Conference registration rate increase approved
- The Family Foundation, what is it and who does it serve?
- SIN to start a Library at Family Foundation

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Schedule of Events

- May 3—SIN Board Meeting
- May 8—Village Board Meeting 7 pm
- May 10—SIN Business Meeting
- May 13—Mother's Day
- May 17—SIN Program Meeting
- May 24—SIN Project Meeting
- May 27—Kathy Salama's birthday
- May 28—Memorial Day
- June 1-2 DCR Leadership Retreat
- Pending—watch for the date of SIN's annual Retreat

# May 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8 Village Board	9	10 SIN	11	12
13 	14	15	16	17 SIN	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 SIN	25	26
27 	28 Memorial Day	29	30	31 SIN		

## Letter to Chantal

Angela Knox prepared the following letter that was signed by SIN members and sent to Chantal Nyiramaana of Rwanda, the woman the club sponsors through the Woman to Woman International Program.

"Hello Chantal,

My name is Angela and I am a member of Soroptimist of Norwalk. We received a little bit of your personal information from "Woman to Woman International." First, I would like to say how excited we are about sponsoring you and getting to know you better. We appreciate this opportunity to write to you and find out more about you and your family, your life, as well as your community

and country. I will write you each month on behalf of our club and we look forward to hearing from you if you are able to return a letter. If not, do know that you will continue to receive a letter from us each month. In the next letter I will send a picture of all of us here at Soroptimist of Norwalk. The women at Soroptimist of Norwalk look forward to building a friendship with you and want to be able to assist you in improving your economic situation. Our club consists of a myriad of women of all ages, ethnicities, economic situations, careers, religions, hobbies, wonderful person-

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## Meet Frances Valenzuela

SIN's newest member, Fran Valenzuela, is a Correctional Counselor with the State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Fran a native California who was born in Los Angeles, holds an AA Degree from Golden West College, a B.A. from CSULB in Journalism, and a MS from CSULB in Psychology. Fran's spouse, John Robinson, is a probation officer with Los Angeles County. Fran is currently assigned to the Family Foundations Program.

Gardening, wine tasting, working out and aerobics are a few of Fran's hobbies. She also enjoys dancing, photography, humor and has

a talent for motivational speaking and personal development.

Fran has four brothers so it's no wonder she is a fan of football and basketball. Fran has one son, Jonathan and a daughter, Chelsea. Her home also includes 3 dogs, Gus, Golda and Sola and a cat named Compton.

A veteran of 4 years in military service, Fran says that now that her children are old enough to "fend for themselves," she would like to give back to the community in a way that benefits women and children.



**SIN Welcomes Frances Valenzuela**

*"We must do what we say we do—help women & girls."*

*We must have a great Soroptimist experience and make sure our fellow Soroptimist do too.*

*As we march off the field, ready for anything, we will stay in step, stay together and act as one."*

**Governor Donna's personal Biennium Goals**

## More Conference News

*(Continued from page 1)*

on "The Eight Essential Elements of Human Synergy." Robyn's presentation was thrilling and motivational.

SIN delegates considered four Indices that amended the Desert Coast Region Bylaws. The amendment that caused the most discussion was an increase in the registration fee for conference registration. After discussion and amendments, an increase of up to \$75 was

approved. Other highlights of the conference included announcement of the DCR Newsletter Award, Soroptimist of the Year procession, and DCR Membership and Fundraising Awards. On Sunday the recipients of the Making a Difference for Women, Violet Richardson and WOA Awards were honored.

The SINners attending, Dona, Amanda, Marilee, Cheri, Rosie, Angela, Fran and Gail, had a wonderful celebrating together.



**Amanda,  
Rosie  
Fran and  
Angela**

Soroptimist International of  
Norwalk

P.O. Box 125  
Norwalk, CA  
90651

**One Club  
Touching One Community  
Touching One World**

WE'RE ON THE WEB  
[SINORWALK.ORG](http://SINORWALK.ORG)

**Start saving your books!**

SI Norwalk is planning to assist in the creation of a library at the Family Foundation. Under the guidance of Marilee Stefenhagen, books and magazines for adults and children will be reviewed by FFP staff and catalogued by the clients. Ask Marilee for more informa-



SINERGY

Gail Vasquez-Connolly, Editor

## New Baby Flash!

Terri Casarez happily reports that her daughter Nancy, welcomed her second child on April 19. Isabella Lillian Clark weighed in at 8 lbs. 2 ozs and 20 1/4" long. The proud grandmother says Isabella has lots of black hair and looks just like her mother when she was born.

Congratulations to Terri and her daughter's family.



*(Continued from page 1)*

Program (FFP) located in Santa Fe Springs. FFP is a one-year substance abuse treatment program for pregnant and parenting female inmates and their children. The program is designed for non-violent, non-serious female offenders who have been sentenced to prison for no more than three years. The women participate in an intensive treatment program designed specifically for women and mothers. The program schedule includes classes and treatment groups addressing topics such as parenting skill training, relapse prevention, twelve-step meetings, domestic violence, anger management, staying sober, grief and loss and cognitive focus. The schedule is rigorous and demands personal accountability and discipline from the participants.

The program was created as a result of legislation introduced by State Senator Richard Polanco in the early 1990's. Community groups and re-

*(Chantal Letter—Continued from page 2)*

alities and marital status. The one thing we all have in common is our passion to help and support women and girls who are working hard at making a better life for themselves and their family.

Chantal, we are so thankful that we were matched with you and look forward to writing to you and learning about each other's lives.

Until we write again—May God keep you and your siblings.”

searchers agreed that it was not in the best interest of incarcerated women and their children to be separated for length periods of time or permanently (should the child be placed in foster care and/or be adopted prior to the woman's release). The program was founded on the belief that these women deserve the opportunity to change their lives in a positive and nurturing environment, thus breaking the intergenerational cycle of substance abuse and incarceration.

Currently there are two programs in the State of California, one in Santa Fe Springs and the other in San Diego. A third facility is scheduled to open in July of this year in Fresno. The program is funded by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.