

PROGRAMME FOCUS REPORT FROM

FEDERATION SI/ EUROPE

New Project /Programme X
Fundraising X

The core purpose of Soroptimist International is to advance human rights and the status of women. In order to do this, clubs undertake service projects in their communities that improve the lives of women and girls. In order to track the success in achieving the core purpose. SI clubs are asked to submit programme focus reports on their successful club projects. Once completed, forward to :
Union and / or federation coordinator : Christiane Hozay

PART I . IDENTIFICATION

Date : 8 mei 2008 Club Name : SI Antwerpen Union : BELGIUM
Club contact Name : Sigrid VAN GELDER E-mail : sigrid.van.gelder@pandora.be

PROJECT TITLE : PLAN-AID

Project Partnership : none

Target Group : Young girls between the ages of 12 and 20 who involuntarily found themselves in a problematic home situation and are in need of a temporarily safe shelter.

Total money spent : 3.000 EUR

Total number of hours spent : minimum 50 u

Total number of persons involved : 9 pers.

PART II . PROGRAMME SERVICE AREA

X Human Rights/ status of Women

X Education

Describe your project

What you did:

We invited Anne DE KEYSER, who explained to us how children experience a divorce. The words of this child psychologist and director of the home "PLAN AID", where girls between the ages of 12 and 20 without a criminal background are referred to by a judge of the youth court, brought about some consternation among our club members. This residential support centre has a grinding financial need to offer the children interesting recreational opportunities and the chance to meet other people

who can teach them there are more ways of living your life than their experience shows. The main purpose is to support the social development of these children and to give them an eye-opener of how their own future family life might be.

Our club donated a € 1.500,00 budget to support newspaper subscriptions, English language course inscription fees, and membership fees to athletic and drawing academy courses. To raise the money, our club organized a Christmas sale of smoked salmon. The raffle profits were sufficient to donate 10 bicycles to "PLAN AID". The girls are now able to move around -either alone or together- under cheap and agreeable circumstances.

Why you did it

Through our financial injection, the girls are now able to participate in social activities. It gives them the opportunity to join their friends who are lucky enough not to find themselves in distressing home situations. We hope we were able to more or less erase the discriminatory situation of the girls.

How you did it

After Anne DE KEYSER explained to a plenary meeting of our club how some children experienced the sometimes messy divorce of their parents, every member was motivated to start a raffle. With the profits we bought second hand bicycles. They were brought a workshop where Antwerp boys, who were likewise coming from disoriented family situations, are put to work on a voluntary basis. The president and some members of our club visited both sites. The repaired bicycles were handed over to the girls by a delegation of Soroptimist Antwerp.

Results and recommendations

This project led to a considerable improvement in supportive leisure time for the girls. Before the donation of our club it was impossible for the girls to move about for free and to read daily newspapers. Now they are enthusiastically looking forward to the daily newspaper. They are able to move about, easier and cheap, on their bicycles. Now their excursions are no longer limited to schooldays but are extended to leisure and sunny days.

As a concluding observation we have to agree all of our club members have profited from learning about children of all ages and the way they personally experience (in a children's world) the divorce of their parents and its aftermaths. Parenthood after divorce requires a grownup communication with respect for the individual. We have to keep in mind, although it remains a taboo for some, that it often pays off to ask questions and listen to children and their own personal needs. Everybody has a right to honest answers. This is the only perfect road leading to a balanced and understanding assimilation of a parent's divorce for a child.