



# KONALOHA

A Publication of Soroptimist International of Kona  
P.O. Box 5196, Kailua Kona, HI 96745

**March 2005**

*Co-Presidents: Judy Jones and Mamie Bramlet, Editor: Linda Smallwood*

## AWARDS PRESENTED TO FOUR AMAZING WOMEN

On February 24th, Soroptimist International of Kona held an awards luncheon where we presented awards to four remarkable women.

Founder Region Governor, Cathy Mitchell, was the keynote speaker.

In honor of the late **Sarah Rosenberg**, an applicant and strong contender for the Youth Citizenship Award, who died tragically in a car accident last December, a \$500 **Voilet Richardson Award** was donated to one of Sarah's favorite causes: Project Grad.

Project Grad holds a drug and alcohol free graduation party for all of the graduates of Kealakehe High School each year, and garners community support to encourage all students to attend.

The Violet Richardson Award is named after the president of the first Soroptimist Club. Her motto was "it's what you do that counts", and she lived accordingly.

Cathy Simmons accepted the award for Sarah.

The **Youth Citizenship Award** winner was **Victoria Sheverda**. She is a senior at Kealakehe High School and volunteers for Ironman, Relay for Life, Red Cross Blood Drive and she is an AYSO certified soccer coach. Born in Russia, she is fluent in two languages.

In school she has helped design and present lessons regarding reckless driving. As a member of her school's morning broadcast team, she has to arrive early each morning and she has produced video projects which are shown to the entire student body.

\$1000 was awarded to Victoria.



**Victoria Sheverda speaks to the club after accepting the Youth Citizenship Award.**

The Women's Opportunity award is presented to single mothers who have gone back to school to further their education and provide a better life for themselves and their children. This year's winners are also planning to focus on making the world a better place for all of us.

**Crystal Kannegaard** was the recipient of the \$1000 **Women's Opportunity Award**.

Crystal is a 4.0 student Hawaii Community College, and  
*continued*

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**Crystal Kannegaard, center, accepts the Women's Opportunity Award from Sally Alapai, Awards Committee Chairperson, left and Cathy Mitchell, Founder Region Governor, right.**

expects to graduate in Spring 2005 with an Associate of Arts certificate in Environmental Science. She also works part time as a library assistant.

She has accomplished all of this despite having left home at 13 to escape an abusive family life and having raised two children on her own after leaving their fathers because of abuse.

She plans to attend the University of Hawaii at Hilo in the fall to pursue a baccalaureate degree in biology with an emphasis in ecology and environmental science.

Her goal is to be an advocate for the 'Aina (Hawaiian word for the land) through environmental and cultural preservation. She will work to preserve our island resources using biodynamic farming, sustainable agriculture and specifically focus on eradicating invasive species. She also plans to find ways to involve the community by incorporating ancient Hawaiian cultural techniques to enrich and educate our children today, so that they may pass on this valuable knowledge to future generations.

Currently, she volunteers for the Natural Resource Conservation Service cataloguing plants around the island, and is serving on the Student Activities Council and Pohai Poohala (Hawaiian culture club) at Hawaii Community College.

We had such strong candidates for the Women's Opportunity Award this year that we were compelled to present a second award.

The \$500 **Women's Opportunity Award** went to **Shelly Stephens**.

Shelly attends the University of Hawaii at Hilo, majoring in Marine Science



**Shelly Stephens, center accepts the Women's Opportunity Award from Cathy Mitchell, Founder Region Governor, left and Sally Alapai, Awards Committee Chairperson, right.**

and minoring in Occupational Safety. She will graduate in four more semesters. Her goal is to work with the National Historic Preservation Department with cultural resource management for botanical, eco-system/biosphere, (global warming research) and marine studies.

Shelly has raised 4 children, and still has a daughter, age 15, and a son, age 13, at home. She had to drop out of college at 19 because she was pregnant. She promised her parents that she would return to college one day and that she would graduate. She is now fulfilling that promise.

She has received awards in Math, Physics, and Biological Illustration. She has written documents that went before President Clinton on the Protection of Ocean Resources during the Executive Order for the North Western Hawaiian Islands and also written resolutions that may be introduced on the agenda at the United Nations for the Protection of Living Resources.

She also volunteers for the Special Olympics and has

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**Cathy Simmons, left, accepts the Violet Richardson award in Sarah Rosenberg's honor, from Sally Alapai.**

worked as an art therapist helper for children who have been institutionalized due to illness.

Her goal is to complete her college education so that she can land a good paying job and be a good example for her children. She has already had several job offers from the Aquatic Department at the University of Hawaii, and is anxious to graduate so that she can accept one.

All four of this year's winners are truly amazing people!!!!

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