

## Soroptimists present Making a Difference for Women Award

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Published in the [Lodi News –Sentinel](#) on Friday, March 13, 2009 3:08 PM PDT

The Soroptimist International of Lodi recently selected Theresa Larson as recipient of the Making a Difference for Women Award. This award acknowledges women who are working to improve the lives of women and girls through their personal or professional activities. Their efforts help to promote the issues that are important to the Soroptimist organization. Honorees are women who have worked in extraordinary ways to benefit women and girls. The program enables local Soroptimist clubs and the Soroptimist organization to thank these women and encourage others to explore ways to assist women and girls. The program begins on the club level, where the type of recognition varies. Award winners at the club level are eligible for additional awards at other levels of the organization.

Larson is truly a woman who is making a difference for women and girls in the community and throughout the world. She met all of the criteria of this award by authoring a book in 2005 for women who are battling breast cancer. In her book entitled, "My Fight for Life," Larson tells her inspirational story. Although she is an administrative manager for the [Lodi News-Sentinel](#), this book was not written as part of her job responsibility.

She solicited donations from friends and businesses in order to publish the book. Because of her efforts and the generosity of the [Lodi News-Sentinel](#), her publication has been distributed free of charge to over 8,000 women nationwide. She donated some of these books for distribution at the Soroptimist Sierra Pacific Region Conference in 2006. These books are still available by contacting the [Lodi News-Sentinel](#) or by emailing [theresal@lodinews.com](mailto:theresal@lodinews.com).

Larson has not only shared her courageous battle in print but speaks to service clubs and breast cancer victims. She provides support and education to women in the community. She participates in the Relay for Life each year and has modeled in the Pink October Fashion Show and been featured in the Pink October Calendar. The Relay for Life raises money for the American Cancer Society. The Pink October Fashion Show and Calendar are fundraisers for the Geweke Caring for Women Foundation, which provides support to local women during their treatment. For more information, visit [www.pink-october.org/lodi/](http://www.pink-october.org/lodi/).

When Larson learned of her diagnosis she felt a need to share her story with women who may be facing a similar challenge. She shares her story and photos from diagnosis, through surgery, radiation, chemo-therapy and the accompanying hair loss. She is able to express the feelings that accompanied all of these stages, which many women are unable to express. The book helps women to realize that they are not alone and helps them understand the feelings they are experiencing. It inspires women to face the challenges of breast cancer with courage and strength. Larson, in turn, has been moved by the outpouring of love and compassion from friends, family and strangers in response to her book.

Recently, Larson was chosen as one of the breast cancer survivors who is featured on a label for Cleavage Creek Cellars wine in 2008. Budge Brown, the owner of Cleavage Creek Cellars, stated, "We wanted to pick women who inspire other women. Theresa's a dynamite lady." Budge Brown had lost his wife to breast cancer in 2005. The six survivors chosen proved they are an inspiration to their community and in the world of breast cancer. Larson was chosen for her work with Pink October in Lodi and for telling her inspirational story in "My Fight for Life." For every bottle of wine sold, 10 percent is donated for breast cancer research. The winery reports that it has already

donated \$37,000 to breast cancer causes.

Larson has been an inspiration to me and many other breast cancer victims and survivors. I am a Reach to Recovery Volunteer with the American Cancer Society and present this book to women who are diagnosed with breast cancer. I believe Theresa is truly an inspiration to women and girls and very deserving of SI Lodi's "Making a Difference for Women Award."

According to [Marty Weybret](#) of the Lodi News Sentinel, "Theresa goes far beyond a commitment to breast cancer survivors in her community service. She has been a member of the Lodi Lion's Club and the board of directors of the LOEL Center since 1999. She served the Lion's as secretary for many years and is a past president of the board at LOEL. She harnessed the volunteer energy of Lions to help create a beautiful garden area at LOEL. The garden gives the senior citizen center an inviting outdoor venue that not only benefits clients but enhances the rental value and coffers of this vital social service program."

Larson will be recognized at the Soroptimist of Lodi and Soroptimist of Lodi Sunrise Awards Program on March 24 at Temple Baptist Church in Lodi.