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## **Founders Day and Founders Pennies**

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### **Founders Day**

Soroptimist celebrates Founders Day on October 3, which acknowledges the day in 1921 when the first club in Alameda County, California, called to order its first business meeting. Clubs can celebrate the founding of the organization with activities to promote the organization and its early mission to “foster the ideal of service” through programs that now focus on improving the lives of women and girls in local communities and throughout the world.



Photo showing the members of the first Soroptimist club, SI of Alameda County, with their guests celebrating the club's 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary in 1924.

### **Founders Pennies**

The collection of Founders Pennies, an important Soroptimist tradition, is often linked to Founders Day. Each year, every Soroptimist is offered the opportunity to make a voluntary contribution of six pennies for each year of Soroptimist's existence. These contributions directly fund SIA's annual programs such as the Women's Opportunity Awards, Soroptimist Club Grants, and the Violet Richardson Awards.

The Founder Pennies tradition began in World War II as the Madame Noel Fund, which collected one penny for each year of Soroptimist's existence, and used the money to help re-establish clubs in Europe that had disbanded as a result of pre-war political conditions and the war itself. After World War II, the fund was renamed the Founders Fund, and

provided international fellowships, scholarships and other award to improve the status of women. Beginning in the 1960s, Founders Pennies provided funding for the Youth Citizenship Awards, and in 1972 the Women's Opportunity Awards (then called the Training Awards Program.) Founders Pennies are now used to fund SIA's programs that support Soroptimist's mission to improve the lives of women and girls in local communities and throughout the world.