

# **THE HISTORY OF OUR VALENTINE DESSERT AUCTION**

Soroptimist International of Riverside's Valentine Dessert Auction had humble beginnings in 1996. To raise a little money for our club, our members baked their favorite desserts and those yummy desserts were auctioned off during one of our club meetings. This small fundraiser continued for a few years when it dawned on members that if we grew this event, it could turn out to be a highly profitable fundraiser that the club could hold annually every February.

In the beginning we concentrated only on chocolate desserts but as time passed, we expanded to include all flavors of cakes and cupcakes based on a theme that changed each year. The Battle of the Bakers was developed as the highlight of the auction with various bakers in Riverside creating amazing cakes and cupcakes that were judged and then auctioned off to attendees. The event grew from our club meeting room, to a room in a local church, to a hotel ballroom, to the Riverside Convention Center and finally to the beautiful and luxurious Victoria Club.

Over the years we expanded the live auction to include getaway vacations, fine jewelry, dinners at local restaurants and even adorable puppies in addition to the cakes. We also added a silent auction with a variety of wonderful and creative gift baskets to bid on. For attendees who wanted to find inexpensive valentine gifts, we started a Small Gift Table with treasures for everyone. And finally, a few years ago we added a separate wine auction for 52 bottles of quality domestic and imported wines. This all added up to the Valentine Dessert Auction of today.

The Valentine Dessert Auction and Battle of the Bakers has become SI Riverside's primary fundraiser with 100% of all proceeds going to support our many club projects that help provide women and girls in our local community with the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential and to live their dreams.