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She travelled to Liverpool in March to meet the S.I. President of Colombo and was filled in on the results of her fundraising effort. Carmel allocated the money to build a preschool for children in the devastated area of eastern Sri Lanka. Soroptimist members negotiated with the Catholic Church for two acres on which to build a two roomed school, each room containing twenty five children. The school will also have a kitchen with a boiler, clean water, bathroom, and will supply a main meal with milk. Each child will be supplied with two boxes (one to take home) containing crayons, and paper. The drawings/plans were on display at the Drogheda Friendship weekend. The Appeal is ongoing and money left over will go into a Trust for the School. It is Carmel's wish to complete this project, and at some stage visit the school and unveil a plaque commemorating Soroptimist involvement.

Carmel has given her full support to the International Project 'Woman survivors of War' to date nearly half a million US dollars has been contributed by Soroptimist International to women in wartorn Afghanistan, Bosnia, Rhwanda, helping them rebuild their lives. On International Women's Day, most Soroptimist clubs reach out to women from these countries and other countries, who are now resident in Ireland and offer hospitality.

The Public Speaking Competition for girls was very successful this year, Newbridge Silverware and O2

sponsored the prizes. Carmel attended local and regional heats and the national final hosted by S.I. Cork in the Great Southern Hotel, Cork Airport, in March, 2005. Carmel presented the winner Roisin Curneen, sponsored by S.I. Sligo with her prize. In April, the National President accompanied the ten finalists to the Euroscola at the European Parliament in Strasbourg along with the six finalists from the Michael Sweetman Trust and the Soroptimist International Northern Ireland finalists. She was very impressed with the girls' debating skills at the Parliament and felt that the trip was one of the highlights of her year.

The National Secretary, Sheelagh Bowers has given great support to Carmel, as has National Treasurer, Maura Stapleton, together with a well organised National Association, and sub committees. Carmel wishes to thank them and all club presidents, officers and club delegates for their support. We, the members, appreciate the time, energy and direction Carmel has put into her year as National President.

Carmel would also like to thank her husband, family and colleagues for their support during the year and especially her own club, S.I. Drogheda, who hosted a very successful Friendship Weekend in September. In October, she attended the Federation Conference in Nottingham where she passed on the Chain of Office to Ann Jackson, S.I. Cork.

K. Brophy, B.A. (NUI)
 National Press Officer.

Carers Respite

BUNDORAN



Soroptimists supporting the Carers weekend in Bundoran
 L to R- Sheelagh Bowers, National Secretary, Carmel Schmidt, National President,
 Helen McKendrick Past President S.I. Letterkenny, and Maura McMahon S.I. Ennis.