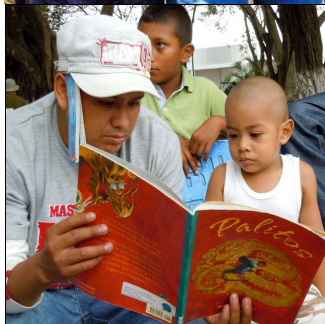


## Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) Highlights

### The Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad



The members of the Foreign Service who serve in Central and South America have seen poverty first hand. They have witnessed young children who yearn to read a book, play an instrument, dance ballet, or simply see running water installed in their village. Both in the cities and in the rural areas, they have seen children at orphanages who appreciate, beyond imagination, new bunk beds, sheets and towels, and a basketball court with a hoop. One does not have to venture far outside the comforts of home to find worthy volunteer projects with people in need. Even in Canada to the north, SOSA nominated volunteers have found meaningful projects helping fellow human beings. Every country in this region has need and SOSA volunteers have risen to the call.



Ninety-five (95) nominations from 25 countries in the region were submitted to AAFSW for SOSA consideration in the last 19 years. Many who begin their volunteer work in this region continue in other regions in the world. It is not surprising that a majority chose to focus their efforts on the plight of orphaned and/or forgotten children. Whether rocking infants and providing warmth and human contact on a daily basis, or enrolling street children in school and vocational training, or using medical training to provide sophisticated assistance with surgeries and patient care, volunteers reach out to give children better lives and hope for a better future.



On the following pages, you will read about people who genuinely care about what happens to others. One volunteer made a film to explain how drug traffickers target young backpackers and tourists to assist in bringing drugs into the United States. Her goal was to prevent young Americans from falling prey to such tactics and landing in a foreign jail. Another volunteer brought classical music to public spaces so that children could hear and enjoy the art form, while others enriched the cultural lives of many through ballet and dance projects. Several volunteers strengthened existing organizations by serving on their Boards and seeking grants and other funding. After much perseverance, they left these organizations in better shape, with income-generating activities, sustainable programs, and the ability to make a positive impact for years to come.

Equally important, the stories that follow show how members of U.S. Embassies and Consulates in the region encouraged their friends and colleagues to get involved. They showed others how to raise money and how hard work and stick-to-it-ness can bring results.

Four special profiles follow which illustrate the breadth of volunteer experiences in the region. For an overview of the entire region, shorter success stories follow in the Country Highlights section.



According to Mary Jo, “*Libros para Niños* continues to thrive under the direction of Eduardo Baez and just celebrated 15 years of work. They have expanded significantly to include working with pre-schools, selling books to generate income and publishing over a dozen high quality children’s books in Spanish by well-known Nicaraguan authors and artists. In addition, they are coordinating school library programs in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras.”

Mary Jo was nominated for her SOSAs by the U.S. Ambassadors in both Nicaragua and Guatemala. Ambassador John R. Hamilton (Guatemala) stated, “Many Americans give generously of their time to help raise funds for charities and to assist in their activities. I have never before seen, however, someone put together such a significant project, essentially all on her own. She is an amazing example of what this award was created to recognize.”

## Mary Jo Amani (1995) Encouraging a Love of Books and Reading among Children in Managua, Nicaragua

Mary Jo Amani fully intended to place her children in the local Nicaraguan schools. However, when she explored the local school system, she found virtually no resources, overcrowding, and children in the first two years of primary school repeating grades. Despite dedicated teachers, the schools were ill-equipped due to years of government neglect. On average, it took nine years for a child to complete elementary school. This reality shocked Mary Jo and spurred her into action. She launched *Libros para Niños*, an innovative NGO that brought books to thousands of children in elementary schools throughout Managua.

Mary Jo and her husband invested their own money at first to provide a fully-equipped library enclosed in a brightly painted portable bookcase to elementary schools. Once the bookcase arrived at a school, it was shared by all classrooms. Teachers were trained in techniques to engage children in the written word. They read books aloud, questioned children about the story presented, and reviewed and discussed the pictures. Reading aloud involved the children in the magic of the words. When the teacher finished the book for the day, children were allowed to select a book of their own from the bookcase. Returning to their desks, silent reading would begin.

Under Mary Jo’s direction, *Libros para Niños* earned a grant from UNICEF Nicaragua for \$30,000 and raised an additional \$30,000 from the United States. As the program grew, the NGO hired teacher trainers, carefully selected new reading material, purchased more portable bookcases, developed a working staff and became self-sustaining.

In recent years, *Libros para Niños* has also introduced community lending libraries in more than a dozen small towns in Nicaragua – both from reading centers and from homes with a volunteer coordinator. Both children and adults borrow books to take home to read with their families. It seems a more effective and sustainable system for getting books to people where they live. Mary Jo still visits the reading corners and community lending libraries in Nicaragua. After her last trip she reported, “*The enthusiasm and love for reading is inspiring!*” For more information on the NGO, visit it on Facebook at “*Libros para Niños*” or “*Books for Children, Nicaragua.*”

Almost ten years after winning a SOSA for her work in Nicaragua, Mary Jo won again in 2004 for her volunteer work with disadvantaged youth in the marginal areas of Guatemala City and the surrounding countryside. With books as her passion, she improved the quality of education within Safe Passage, a Guatemalan community service organization that works to enable children of families living at the Guatemalan city dump to attend school. Education at the public schools – with the required fees for books, uniforms, and enrollment – was beyond their reach. At the Safe Passage facility, Mary Jo developed Montessori-like approaches to teaching children in the younger grades, incorporating hands-on active learning methodologies. She also developed a children’s library to promote reading and engender a love of books in the children. From the now successful *Libros para Niños* in Nicaragua she brought trainers to conduct a workshop for teachers and volunteers. And to help with funding, she wrote a successful proposal to the J. Kirby Simon Foundation to purchase more books, shelves and tapes. For more information about Safe Passage, see [www.safepassage.org](http://www.safepassage.org).

Now living in Mozambique, Mary Jo (pictured right) has expanded the project to four villages there. Based on the *Libros para Niños* philosophy of quality, access, and freedom of reading choice with no evaluation, dozens of community members and hundreds of children in each village are borrowing high-quality children’s literature in Portuguese to read in school and in their homes with their families. See [www.booksforkidsafrica.org](http://www.booksforkidsafrica.org) for more information.



## Ann Ingraham (1997)

### NGO Status for Para Los Niños Improves Services at a Public Orphanage in La Paz, Bolivia

*Ann Ingraham now lives in Amman, Jordan, where her 12 year old adopted son, Michael, assists her in volunteering at a health clinic for Iraqi refugees one morning per week. Ann says, "Taking care of others can never start too early!"*

In 1992, a group of American women formed Para Los Niños (PLN) to organize volunteer visits to the Hogar Virgen de Fatima orphanage in La Paz, Bolivia. PLN quickly developed into a comprehensive support group addressing the problems of malnutrition, understaffing and overcrowding at this large public home for 200 orphaned children. Ann Ingraham joined PLN's ranks in 1995 and focused her efforts on two infant rooms to provide better nutrition and attention to each child's development.

Using her pediatric nursing skills, she trained volunteers and orphanage workers in effective child development practices. She taught her colleagues ways to improve circulation, motor skills and general well-being in everyday activities with the children. According to SOSA nominators Maryann Minutillo and Sarah Hofschire, "Ann was also quick to recognize that many of the newborns could not tolerate cow's milk and was instrumental in having soy milk added as a component of the infant diet." Due to these changes, the rates of illness and hospitalization within the orphanage decreased dramatically.

Perhaps one of her most dramatic volunteer efforts was the "war against scabies." During a massive outbreak, Ann led teams of volunteers to move children out of an infected house and into an "anti-scabies" bath, and to dress the children in clean clothing and move them into houses that had been scrubbed clean. This was a six-day effort, with volunteers personally taking clothing to their own homes for washing. Bolivian Air Force soldiers were recruited to help bathe and shampoo the children. Due to the care of these motivated volunteers, the children became and remained scabies free.

Ann expanded her involvement by joining PLN's Board of Directors. One of her goals was to facilitate placement of children back with a family member or with an adoptive family more quickly than under the previous government bureaucracy. In December 1995, there were 195 children at Hogar Virgen de Fatima. The following year, with the same rate of children entering the orphanage, there were only 103 children who remained on a long-term basis.

Among her many contributions, Ann worked to incorporate Para Los Niños as an NGO. With this official recognition and status in Bolivia, PLN was able to negotiate an agreement with the municipal government to administer the orphanage and play a major role in the coordination of services. PLN was now an established and sustainable organization. A part-time coordinator was hired to integrate volunteer positions into the daily care routine. From these beginnings as a small NGO run by a group of volunteers for the children in the Hogar Virgen de Fatima, PLN today works to improve the lives of residents in 12 state-run institutions in La Paz. For more information, visit [www.boliviaparalosninos.org](http://www.boliviaparalosninos.org).

As a health care professional, Ann also donated her time to the Burn Unit at the Children's Hospital of La Paz. She volunteered to change dressings and deliver donated vitamin and protein supplements to children who had suffered severe burns. Ann assisted in the operating room when a visiting medical team arrived from Dallas, Texas, to perform reconstructive surgeries. She was also one of a group of doctors, nurses and missionaries who helped send the neediest burn victims to Shriners' Hospital in the United States.

An active member in the La Paz Community Church, Ann led the choir and served as treasurer for the Women's Society for Christian Service (WSCS). To support her nomination, Ambassador Curtis W. Kamman wrote, "Ann adds her own considerable quotient of love and affection to her organizational skills, and has inspired others in the community to get involved. I once worried that "PLN" might wither and die. That is no longer a danger, and hundreds of Bolivian abandoned children are and will be the better for Ann's efforts."

## David Beam (winner 2000)

### Clean Water Makes a World of Difference in El Salvador



In 2000, approximately 12,000 children died in El Salvador from gastrointestinal maladies, caused primarily by the drinking of dirty water. In Canton Huertas Viejas, a rural community of about 50 houses, a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) friend of Foreign Service Officer David Beam was working on this very problem. Residents walked several hundred yards, carrying large containers to and from a common water source that was shared with cattle and pigs. As a former overseas volunteer, David knew that installing a potable water system would take time, planning, and the garnering of outside resources.

To assist his friend, David introduced the PCV to an American working for Project Concern International (PCI) who agreed to finance the project and provide technical support. As the project got underway, David routinely drove the four-hour trip (one way) by car to work with other volunteers, members of the local community, and with engineers from PCI. Once completed, some 250 residents were connected with water to their properties.

To further help, David collected clothing, shoes and toys that were then donated to the poorest families. He also donated items to the local school, which in turn sold them in a flea market to raise funds for musical instruments and sports equipment. Clean water, supplies for education, and clothing are considered basic necessities for most children. David assured that one village had what it took to move on to the next level toward improved health and education.



During his three-year tour in El Salvador, the water system for Canton Huertas Viejas was not the only project in which David demonstrated his personal concern for the improvement of the human condition. Water once again took center stage when he volunteered considerable time at Villas Infantiles, an orphanage supporting some 80 children. The facility had no running water,

which forced staff to depend on the unreliable delivery of water by truck. Working in conjunction with USAID contacts, David was able to bring the situation directly to the attention of the water company. Within a month, the company had dug trenches and laid 400 meters of pipe, thus giving the children running water on demand and improved sanitary conditions. Looking at broader needs, he organized a toy and clothing drive during Christmas time, which gave each child an individual gift. He garnered support from other Embassy members, including the Deputy Chief of Mission, who gave of their time to the orphanage and also encouraged the involvement of American School teachers who used their teaching skills for reading and physical activities.

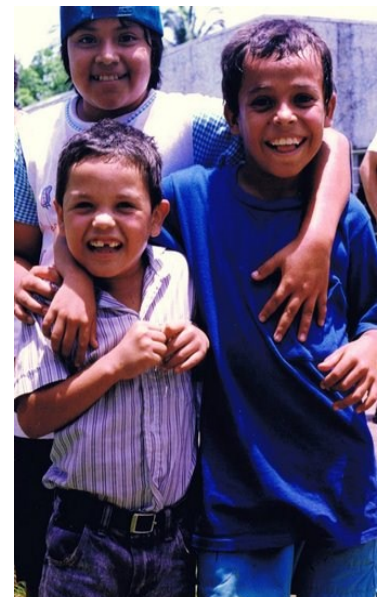
While in El Salvador, David also helped a destitute family in the beach community of Playa San Diego, supported the Peace Corps scholarship program for rural women, served on the Board of the American Society, and supported Salvation Army holiday activities. In nominating David for a SOSA, Ambassador Anne Patterson noted, "While his personal concern is great, David's greatest strengths in being of service are his ability to get others involved and to marshal all resources available to make good things happen."



Left, a woman delivers water to her home the "old way." Above, building the new water system.

*"The lessons I learned from my parents, my Jesuit education and my own overseas volunteer experience all inspire me to find volunteer possibilities when I'm overseas. It never fails that I get a lot more than I give. Volunteering allows for an invaluable exchange at the human level and it also makes me a better FSO. I encourage everyone to get involved with service opportunities abroad."*

— David Beam



## Ellen Brager (2008) Bringing Classical Music to Public Spaces in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Access to a classical music education is limited to a privileged few in Santo Domingo where the support for this important art form is almost non-existent and good teachers are scarce. Only the most persistent of students go on to study at the local Conservatory of Music and few opportunities exist for the casual student to play a classical instrument, develop his or her talent, and perform. Ellen Brager sought to expose young Dominican musicians to a superior music education not available in the country, while bringing classical music to new audiences on the island nation of the Dominican Republic (DR). To this end she organized *Traveling Notes*, an international exchange program for young musicians that promotes the study of classical music and cross-cultural understanding between young American musicians and their host country counterparts.



Over the course of several months in 2007, Ellen planned an eight-day festival of classical music with participation from 18 young players, six parents, and four music instructors from the United States, and one instructor and over 40 players from the Dominican Republic. The musicians rehearsed together and traveled throughout the country to expose people, especially children, to the wonders of classical music and the instruments that produce it.

On their first day, the young musicians performed at the Acropolis Mall, reinforcing the belief that free public performances spread the love of music. Among their other venues, *Traveling Notes* went to a poorer section of Santo Domingo where they performed in a local church jammed full of children. Another morning, the musicians visited a local hospital at the Plaza de la Salud where sick children were treated to a concert. The festival's blog ([dr-travelingnotes.blogspot.com](http://dr-travelingnotes.blogspot.com)) chronicles the entire experience noting that, "*The festival's closing concert, which took place at the beautiful Aula Magna of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo, was the culmination of a week of intensive rehearsals and many public performances. By now the participants had reached a level of synergy that became evident in this magnificent performance.*"

*"For her part, Ellen Brager has focused her time and effort on those less fortunate while working to improve community spirit. She is an outstanding example of public service, the power of creative ideas, and of how one person can make a real difference in promoting bilateral understanding."*

*- From the nomination of Ellen Brager*

To raise the necessary funds for such a massive undertaking, Ellen organized a fundraising concert where young Dominican musicians (many of whom later traveled with the visiting American musicians) performed for an audience comprised of Americans, Dominicans, and other key contacts. In addition, she worked tirelessly to find sponsors from local and international organizations. Through her efforts, nine of the visiting American musicians received partial or full scholarships to offset their travel costs, while the Dominican musicians could participate for a nominal fee.

Without Ellen's hard work and talent, many Dominican children would have never heard classical music performed in public spaces. While the music filled the air, *Traveling Notes* built long lasting relationships between Dominicans and American musicians and served to forge strong ties in support of classical music opportunities in the Dominican Republic.



Since 2007, *Traveling Notes* has touched the lives of hundreds of musicians and thousands of listeners. The program expanded its horizons to include young musicians from Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Germany, Belgium and Spain. Two more international festivals followed the first one: 2008 in Peru and 2009 in the United States. At the end of 2009, *Traveling Notes* musicians from the U.S., Peru, Mexico and the DR produced a music CD with typical music from their countries. Recently the Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic adopted another *Traveling Notes* initiative, specialized workshops for chamber music, as an integral part of the curriculum of the National Music Conservatory. Future programs are in the making, including a performance at the prestigious Flanders Festival in Belgium and a partnership with Fundación Batuta to organize the fourth international festival in Colombia in 2011. Over the past three and a half years the program has found strong supporters in different countries and, with their help, it will continue to provide young musicians with new and exciting opportunities to learn and perform while sharing their love of music with children everywhere.

## Country Highlights

*Mai-Ahn Adams, wife of Ambassador Alvin P. Adams, Jr., arrived in Port-au-Prince in November, 1989, with several frozen turkeys in her carry-on luggage — planning ahead so that her husband would be prepared to invite single employees of the Mission to Christmas dinner at their home. A simple anecdote perhaps, but indicative of the tone the Adams have striven to set. Mai-Ahn has continued in that giving spirit throughout her year and a half in Haiti, working tirelessly to boost the spirits of those with the Mission and those outside the Mission.*

*- From the nomination of Mai-Ahn Adams*

**Mai-Anh Adams (Port-au-Prince, Haiti 1991)**, wife of the then U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, worked tirelessly as Vice President of the Women’s Diplomatic Association to raise over \$31,000 for local charities. As a key fundraiser for the organization’s annual bazaar in 1990, she persuaded businesses to donate hundreds of items for either sale or the popular raffle. The event took place at the Adams’s residence which required lengthy and extensive coordination. To distribute the funds, Mai-Anh and other members of the association spent months visiting hospitals, orphanages and other facilities, examining their operations and determining the best use for the charity donations. During her time in Haiti, she made valuable contacts at all levels of Haitian society and volunteered her time to many worthy causes, encouraging and inspiring those around her to also volunteer.

**Maurice Olfus (Port-au-Prince, Haiti 2004)** also made an impact in Haiti, serving as an extra set of “healing hands” in the operating room of the Bethel Mission Church Clinic in Dumay, located 10 miles east of the capital city. The clinic served the region’s poor who sought medical consultation, medicines, and routine surgeries. Maurice became a key member of the surgical team, working on Saturdays to help prep patients, help patients get dressed, and issue medicines. The medical professionals were so impressed with his abilities that they taught him to suture, give local anesthesia and to apply dressings. His compassion and willingness to join the team were instrumental in improving the quality of care and the human condition in Haiti.

**Elizabeth Fielder (Asuncion, Paraguay 1992)** was instrumental in turning a small, struggling ballet company into the National Ballet of Paraguay. As a U.S.-trained classical ballerina, Elizabeth lent her professionalism to Pro-Ballet where she taught classes on a full-time volunteer basis. As the company improved, she acquired outside funding and helped to arrange visits from dancers from other countries who in turn worked to improve the company’s repertoire. Elizabeth also choreographed a new work set to American music that was incorporated into the company’s repertoire. Under Elizabeth’s tutelage, the company represented Paraguay at a dance festival in Argentina. They also performed at regional theaters throughout the country, bringing ballet to people who might not otherwise have an opportunity to enjoy classical dance. In 1992, the Government of Paraguay named Pro-Ballet as the National Ballet Company of Paraguay. Elizabeth’s long hours and years of effort — with no pay — contributed to the cultural richness of the country.

**Linda Rosenberg (La Paz, Bolivia 1994)** was a driving force behind the revitalization of Bolivia’s National Symphony Orchestra. Drawing on her artistic talents and past experience as Dean of Music Education at the American Conservatory in Chicago, she founded Pro Musicum, formed a multi-national group of volunteers and took on the entire administration of the orchestra. Her volunteer work introduced sound management principles and fundraising techniques to the orchestra’s administration. Free orchestra concerts, performed in churches in poorer neighborhoods, provided inspiration to young aspiring Bolivian musicians. Her Christmas concerts were a special highlight of the holiday season, attracting hundreds of Bolivians and expatriates alike. Linda also changed one girl’s life when she opened her home to a 12-year-old who had been living with her father in prison. Linda helped her gain entrance into a boarding school, paid all of her expenses, and helped her reunite with her family. Linda’s intervention brought security and education to an otherwise desperate situation.

**Margaret Vaughn (Guatemala City, Guatemala 1992)**, upon visiting the government-run orphanage Hogar Eliza Martinez, helped to create a volunteer support committee that improved physical conditions, secured food, medical supplies, school uniforms, and built a playground. More importantly, the committee established an infirmary to separate sick children from the healthy thereby reducing deaths at the home from two per year to zero. Margaret recruited volunteers to hold the babies and convinced her children’s school to offer service credits for those who helped. She also recruited and trained the wives of volunteers with the International Executive Service Corporation (IESC). The presence of volunteer helpers enriched the lives of the children who flourished under the individual attention. Margaret also forged a relationship with Heal the Children (Pennsylvania), whose medical staff

provided consultations and, on some occasions, surgeries. During a deadly occurrence of Shigella, Margaret arranged for local doctors and Pan American Health Organization workers to assist with diagnosis while she sought medicines and bottled water for the children to drink. She brought the plight of orphans in Guatemala to the attention of high-ranking Guatemalan women, including the First Lady of Guatemala. Due to her diligence, Hogar Eliza Martinez became a model for orphanages and homes throughout the country.

*“Ms. Patterson also involves her church in Alexandria, Virginia, with her volunteer work in Guatemala. By sending home Guatemalan-made “artesanía” and having the church auction it, they are able to consistently send all the profits back to Guatemala to be used for charitable projects.”*

*- From the nomination of Sue Patterson*

**Sue Patterson (Guatemala City, Guatemala 1993)** was experienced at bringing deserving charities together with people or groups able to help them. As a “matchmaker” of sorts, she linked a U.S.-based organization called CHANGE with a local Rotary Club that could distribute used wheelchairs from Massachusetts. Her largest voluntary contribution was at Guatemala City’s dump, home to 5,000 people, half of them children who spent their days sifting through garbage looking for items to sell. When an American woman founded a school for these children, Sue helped by linking the school with donor organizations in the United States. As a result, over \$15,000 was raised to fund teacher salaries and daily meals for the students. She assisted with efforts to expand the school’s offerings and provide training for older children. Sue also assisted a local health clinic located on the edge of the dump.

**Rian Harker Harris and Christopher James Harris (Guatemala City, Guatemala 2003)** devoted countless hours to improving the plight of abandoned and abused animals. Guatemala’s only public animal shelter was home to dozens of dogs and cats, spider and howler monkeys, raccoons, and kinkajous. Over the course of several months, Rian and Christopher improved the decrepit living conditions, walked and bathed the animals, and collected food, bedding and toys for them. At Christmas, Chris convinced students at the American School to send charity baskets to the shelter, which resulted in hundreds of pounds of donated food. As the project grew, 50 students, teachers and community members came together to rebuild the shelter.

**John C. Whitridge, III (Ottawa, Canada 1993)** volunteered three mornings a week at the soup kitchen Shepherds of Good Hope, joining other volunteers in preparing a noon-time meal for 300 patrons. Once his duties at the soup kitchen were finished, he delivered meals to shut-ins at the Rideau Chapel housing for destitute citizens of Ottawa. For the Shepherds of Good Hope residence center, John often prepared an end-of-the-month meal for residents who had exhausted their welfare resources. On these occasions, he personally baked his own desserts. To raise funds for Shepherds of Good Hope, John helped prepare and serve monthly spaghetti dinners at local area churches. He also served on the Board of “New Horizons,” a group of senior citizens who had won a \$20,000 Canadian federal grant to begin offering instruction in literacy, and workshops in bicycle repair and woodworking for senior citizens and community members.

**Carolyn Queener (Kingston, Jamaica 1994)** led the Embassy’s Social Services Committee (SSC) to new levels, expanding membership, incorporating Jamaican members for the first time, and infusing committee activities with a strong sense of purpose, caring, and enjoyment. Of special note, the committee assisted children with severe disabilities at the Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital by financing a year-long program of auxiliary health care, distributing medicines, vitamins and clothing, and mobilizing food and cash donations. SSC members supported the Kingston Restoration Company’s teen center and painted an anti-drug mural in the facility’s social room, funded after-school tutors, and provided scholarships to help students pay school expenses. The committee also adopted Jacks Hill School in a poor hillside community above Kingston, joined school leadership to assess priority needs, and responded with a donation of 100 desks and chairs, textbooks, financing for a teacher’s aide, instructional equipment, and new toilet facilities. Supporting Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), Carolyn supplied sewing machines to a vocational training project and food, clothing and equipment to a PCV-assisted orphanage. The committee also assisted numerous Jamaican social service institutions. Carolyn’s humanitarian service reflected tremendous credit on the American Community in Jamaica and for this, she won a SOSA.

Two years later, **Melanie Kerber (Kingston, Jamaica 1996)** also won a SOSA for her educational contributions to the community of Kingston and her leadership with the American Women’s Group (AWG). Melanie spent one morning each week at the Micro Counseling Center, an inner-city facility where she offered free educational evaluations for children and adolescents. With a colleague, she

*“So impressed with Janie were members of the [Habitat for Humanity] group that they invited her to represent the Embassy at the April 1995 community dedication of the project they had completed. Janie continued her friendships with members of the homeowners association of that completed project, even going ...to make several visits to one of them in the hospital. Such continued involvement created a public image of an Embassy full of people who care.”*

*- From the nomination of Janie Peterson*

founded a pro-bono educational consulting partnership that provided free services and educational information through radio appearances, a weekly column in The Observer newspaper, and in-service workshops at several Kingston public and private schools. She was also co-founder of the parent support group Jamaican Attention Deficit Disorder Association. As a career educator, Melanie contributed her expertise and counsel to Jamaican teacher training efforts, complementing USAID’s project “Uplifting Adolescents” which sought to upgrade educational opportunities in Jamaica. As President of AWG, Melanie was in charge of organizing and overseeing fundraising projects and ensuring that proceeds were distributed in a timely and appropriate manner. In nominating Melanie, Phyllis Kata wrote, *“Whereas she has been willing to set aside her own career and earning potential to keep her family together, her high level of energy and sense of volunteerism have resulted in a significant contribution to the international community in Kingston, to the local educational system, and to the Embassy community.”*

**Janet Whetley (Kingston, Jamaica 1997)** was nominated for her community service efforts including her work as a volunteer technical support librarian, maintaining over 25,000 volumes at a library that served the Jamaican Theological Seminary and the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology. The library received donations from seminaries and theological institutes from all over the world, but most came from the United States. Her ability to manage the process for donations — identify duplicates, manage the process required for repeat volumes, correct the Dewey Decimal numeration, and identify coordinating categories — allowed for the volumes to have a wide readership. Janet also was instrumental in the Embassy’s tradition of offering a complete Thanksgiving-Christmas dinner to all U.S. prisoners incarcerated in Jamaican prisons.

**Susan Scassa (Belize City, Belize 1994)** worked with local organizations to help them realize their goals, including the Salvation Army’s outreach program that provided food, clothing and children’s toys to people living on the outskirts of Belize City and the Battered Women’s Shelter that offered refuge, counseling and basic necessities to abused women and their children. She also played an active role in the International Women’s Club activities to raise funds for charitable organizations.

**Cathy Stevulak (Belmopan, Belize 2008)** discovered a crucial need in Belize’s capital among Spanish-speaking refugee children who had come to Belize during the 1980’s civil wars in Central America. Upon meeting with local community members and educators, she determined that a supplemental reading program would effectively help build children’s skills and alleviate serious gaps in their educational preparation. These children entered school with significant learning disadvantages because of their poor command of English, the formal language of Belize. She led a network of volunteers in developing a sustainable program that was coordinated with the Curator of the George Price Center. They began with a summer reading program, and enlisted the Ambassador’s wife, a former educator, to develop the program. Cathy recruited volunteers to work with the children, identified a location for the reading program, developed a method for selecting the children who would most benefit, and coordinated the means of getting them to the location. To jumpstart the funding, she solicited donations from Embassy staff and friends and won a \$2,500 grant from the J. Kirby Simon Trust. The Belmopan International Women’s Group donated \$350. The Mexican Ambassador purchased additional books for the cause. In July 2007, Belmopan’s first summer reading program began with 77 registered children. Cathy further coordinated with local high schools and organized students to visit targeted primary schools once or twice a week to work with younger readers. Her vision changed the educational outcomes of children, making their future prospects brighter because of Cathy’s concern and dedication.

**Janie Peterson (Mexico City, Mexico 1996)** was an avid promoter of Habitat for Humanity, the international non-profit organization founded by former President Jimmy Carter which assists people living in sub-standard housing in building and owning their own homes. She began volunteering for Habitat as a residential construction worker, with responsibility for seeing one housing project to its completion. Embracing the organization’s goal, she enlisted 35 Embassy employees, their dependents, and summer interns to work on a construction project in the Xalpa neighborhood of Mexico City. This group built houses for 14 families. She was a persistent publicist for the effort, using the Embassy newsletter and posters to recruit volunteers. Janie accompanied the Habitat International Director and staff during a visit to Mexico to examine the success of three completed projects and to meet leaders of the communities. She also assisted the Director in organizing a Latin American conference, with delegates from the United States and Central and South America.

**Kristine Luoma-Overstreet (Merida, Mexico 2003)** worked with a local school to create a "Reading is Fun" program that increased English-language literacy and combated poor reading habits. She organized story hours, introduced the concept of a lending library, obtained donations of books, and began what is now an annual catalog book sale where members of the community purchased over \$2,000 worth of books. She was also the mainstay of the Merida English Library, an all-volunteer shoestring operation which served as Merida's premier public library, organizing multiple fundraising events. Over 100 local residents, both American and Mexican, sent a letter of thanks to the Ambassador praising Kris's selflessness, unparalleled work and seemingly inexhaustible energy.

**Kelly Trainor (Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico 2007)** was an active volunteer for the Toys for Tots program and recruited volunteers and vehicles to distribute 2,500 toys to children in remote areas of Nayarit State. She also helped to coordinate the Culinary Jam Session fundraiser which donated over \$50,000 in a three-year period to local charities; benefiting children's scholarships, an eldercare home, an abused children's shelter, and an abandoned family shelter. She was the founder and coordinator of the International Altruism Festival, benefiting 20 charitable organizations in both Jalisco and Nayarit States. The festival raised increasingly larger amounts each year from its inception in 2004, reaching over \$60,000 in 2007. Kelly volunteered her efforts to the Give a Kid a Back-Pack Foundation and identified a public school and coordinated logistics resulting in the distribution of 250 back packs to needy school children.

**Barbara Frechette (Bogota, Colombia 1997)** volunteered her time to the Ciudadela de la Nina, a home for 130 orphaned and abused girls between the ages of 8 and 18. Under her leadership, thousands of dollars were raised to purchase electric typewriters, sewing machines, video recorders, and televisions. With these items, the home began vocational training to expand employment opportunities for the girls who otherwise would become domestic workers with traditionally low wages. Barbara organized an "Adopt an Angel" campaign for the Christmas season, which gave community members the chance to choose a name and donate \$10.00 for a gift for that child. She organized a Halloween tour of the Embassy for the girls, followed by an afternoon tea. Barbara was also instrumental in getting the Ciudadela painted and playground equipment installed.

**Ann Whitfield (Freeport, Bahamas 1998)** served as President of the Grand Bahama American Women's Club for three terms during two separate tours in the Bahamas. Leading the organization of 150 American women, she formed a volunteer mobile unit to conduct hearing and sight testing for students on the island, established the Georgette Groves Scholarship fund for underprivileged students, opened the Garden of Groves Museum, formed the Children's Library Trust, and refurbished the Columbus Playground. She also served as a volunteer for the AIDS Awareness Committee of the Rand Memorial Hospital and in that capacity organized an AIDS Awareness dinner and served as an "AIDS Buddy" providing care and comfort to HIV-infected patients. Among her many activities, Ann served as President of the Freeport Branch of International Training in Communication (ITC), a worldwide organization which develops leadership and communication skills in young people. She was also a supporter of the Mary Star of the Sea Annual Bazaar, a member of the Bahamas National Trust Fundraising Committee, and a tutor for the "Let's Read Bahamas" program.

Upon arrival in Santo Domingo, **Federico Segarra (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic 2000)** talked to the street children who begged in front of his hotel, located in the busy tourist-filled area of El Malecon. He discovered that many were not in school, and that drugs and other vices were part of their lives. He was successful in placing some of them in a rehabilitation clinic and others in vocational training. He became acquainted with the children's parents and helped them register their children in school and purchase supplies and clothing. Federico also volunteered with Hogar Rosa de Saharon for boys from ages 3 to 16. To improve conditions at the orphanage, he secured a food grant from the Dominican Government and \$10,000 from the German Embassy which was used to purchase dining room tables and chairs, mattresses, and a washing machine and stove. With his own money and labor, he built a basketball court for the boys. During his visits to make repairs on the building, he spoke with the boys about spiritual and moral values. In other free time, he taught them carpentry. Federico donated his time to efforts at other orphanages and homes as well, fulfilling his goal of making a difference for many disadvantaged and underprivileged children in the Dominican Republic.

*"Today, he maintains contact with many of these [street] children and many still visit his home and keep him in touch with their progress. Justifiably, Federico is very proud of having been instrumental in pulling these kids off the street and helping them to receive an education and pursue a better life."*

*- From the nomination of Federico Segarra*

**Marian McGowan (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic 2006)** volunteered with Jackie's House, a home that provides a safe and nurturing environment for thirty-six disadvantaged children. She used her personal resources to teach them English and established a network of donors from friends and family in the U.S. to support the home. With these donations, she provided paper, crayons, school supplies, and even a television and VCR. She encouraged other Embassy volunteers to teach English on a regular basis, organize and implement holiday and birthday parties, read to the little ones, and become mentors to the children. Marian's generosity, vision and willingness to go the extra mile made a huge difference to Jackie's House. She energized the Embassy community with this opportunity to give back to the host country.

**Kristina Dodd (Caracas, Venezuela 1999)** served as President of the Embassy Volunteers' Association (EVA). Under her direction, the organization achieved its twin goals of promoting high morale among Mission members and supporting charitable organizations within Venezuela. At the helm of EVA, Kris has continued financial support for three homes: the Madre Marcelina pensioners' home with 55 elderly persons; the Osman Home for 55 teen mothers between the ages of 12 and 18; and the Jose Gregorio Hernandez girls' home. EVA donated \$100 each month to each of the three homes, provided Christmas gifts for residents, and gave additional support on special occasions. Funds came from profits from an EVA store that sold Embassy T-shirts and other items. EVA also supported Children of the Street by selling their products, with half of the profits going directly to the children who produced beautiful handmade notebooks and half going towards the purchase of supplies. According to her nomination, "*Kris is a person who says "Yes, let's do it!" and "What can we do to help?"*" Outside of EVA, Kris organized a holiday bazaar which gave vendors the opportunity to sell their products. During the summer turn-over season, Kris organized an enormous garage sale with the Foreign Service Nationals Association handling food sales and the Marines selling drinks to earn money for the Marine Ball. Kris also took charge of logistical arrangements for the community-wide July 4th celebration held on the Embassy grounds.

Two years later, **Anna Savinon (Caracas, Venezuela 2001)** won a SOSA for her role as Charity Director of the Embassy Volunteer Association (EVA). She spearheaded a major expansion of EVA activities and convinced the Board to increase support to six charities in Caracas in an effort to get more volunteers involved. She developed successful partnerships with all six. Through her example and drive, she generated great excitement in the Embassy community and increased the number of individuals involved in working with homes for unwed mothers, recovering alcoholics, the elderly and three orphanages. Anna was especially skillful in matching specific skills of individual Americans with the unique needs at the six locations. With a distinctly human touch - warm and sincere - she won praise from her colleagues.

**Kendall Moss (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2001)** wrote a winning proposal to the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust to begin a computer training program at the Romao de Mattos Duarte Orphanage, which houses homeless children in the notorious Rio *favelas* (slums). With the funds, he purchased three computers and recruited an Embassy systems manager to help assemble them on site. Kendall devoted considerable time organizing volunteer teams who spent time at the orphanage passing on their computer skills to the children.

**CB Toney (Brasilia, Brazil 2001)** organized a major public event to mark African American History Month. According to nominator Gregory Frost, "*He single-handedly wrote, produced, funded, and directed 'Realizing Dream Through Song and Dance,' which was presented on Brasilia's most important stage, The National Theater.*" The evening drew an audience of more than 1,000 Brazilians and international theatergoers. Groups showcased American music, dance, and special readings. CB also chaired the Embassy Special Support Association (ESSA) which operated a commissary, food and gasoline services, and car rentals among other services. CB turned an inherited debt of \$67,000 into a positive cash flow. He systematically removed outdated food items, replaced them with new American-type products, and terminated programs and services that were not generating a profit. Furthermore, he surveyed the community to ask what types of products they wanted. In volunteering for many community activities, CB displayed a gift for working with people to achieve the maximum effort. He embodied the true spirit of teamwork and leadership.

*"CB has the gift of working with people in order to achieve maximum effort for each of the projects he undertakes ... he does so with great will, determination, positive enthusiasm and a joyous spirit. It is through his determination, that he has been able to provide superior level voluntary-type service and leadership over the past year. When he puts on the gear himself and asks you to join in, he lifts the morale and sense of fun of everyone involved, which ultimately deepens the impact of the key programs."*

*- From the nomination of CB Toney*

**Ron and Sheri Verdonk (Sao Paulo, Brazil 2004)** volunteered at the Casa de Menor Carente do Cipo, located in the city of Embu Gauçu about an hour outside of Sao Paulo. Boys who lived at the orphanage, ranging in age between 4 and 18, were unable to be adopted due to legal issues and had to remain at the facility until they became adults. The Casa's budget of \$1,200 per month was not sufficient to cover all the needs of the children. The boys were often without food, clothing, medications, toiletries and other necessities. The Verdonks applied for a grant from the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust and were awarded enough funds to purchase 12 bunk beds, 24 mattresses, and to build a multi-purpose sports court. After purchasing the beds, they held a successful bedding drive at the Consulate. They also hosted a Christmas party and collected clothing, school supplies and toys for each child. In addition, the Verdonks hosted food drives to assure that the children had food on their plates. On their bi-monthly visits to the orphanage they played basketball, taught arts and crafts and started English classes for the older boys with the help of American teenagers whom they recruited. The Verdonks's nomination stated, *"Their warmth, caring, and compassion for others is not something reserved for the occasional weekend volunteer service, but is an important part of the way they live and all here at post are richer from their example."*

*Jaimee Neel's nomination was entitled "Helping Kids, Helping Colleagues" and stated, "Every time an officer goes to a vendor and explains why she is buying 40 pairs of low-top Converse All-Star sneakers, it shows that the U.S. Consulate isn't just occupying space in the neighborhood, but we're actually getting involved and making a difference."*

**Jaimee Neel (Sao Paulo, Brazil 2005)** was deeply touched by Sao Paulo's endemic problem of 4,500 homeless children. Using her background in inner-city school teaching, Jaimee channeled her experience with at-risk populations to volunteer with the Santo Amaro Youth Home, a facility for street children. The home, which had 40 permanent residents and served 120 children as a center during the day, had a bakery where children learned to bake breads and cakes. The facility offered computer training to give the children professional skills and tutored in school subjects. Jaimee began by teaching English to the children. She received a \$4,000 grant from the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust to renovate the home, the bakery, and purchase necessities. She sought matching funds from her community and helped the home realize a dental clinic, a new computer lab with 8 terminals, industrial washing machines, toys, clothes, and school supplies. One anonymous donor purchased the property next door for expansion. The grant money helped to renovate the new house and 20 of the youngest children moved to the facility. Previously occupied bedrooms at the old house were turned into sewing workshops for the children. Jaimee recruited her Embassy colleagues, both American and Brazilian, to help with her service project, forging new friendships and boosting morale. Jaimee's efforts helped to promote the U.S. Consulate in the immediate community.

**Eleanor Geiger (Lima, Peru 2002)** volunteered with the people of Huancavelica, a remote, desolate Peruvian village, with the goal of helping them to be self-sufficient in the modern world while remaining faithful to their traditions and culture. A talented seamstress, she identified ways to market locally crafted textiles. She sought to preserve traditional art while developing sources of income for the local artisans. A role model among Americans in Lima, Eleanor became a bridge to bringing more attention and assistance from the Lima community to the people of Huancavelica.

**Irina Wunder (Lima, Peru 2006)** brought to Peru her life-long passion for ballet and dance. She saw that special needs children and orphans, especially the handicapped and underprivileged, were overlooked. This motivated her to open Lima's very first dance studio dedicated to children with disabilities, using funding from the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust and individual contributors. In recognition of her talents, she was invited to serve on the Board of Peru's National Association of Dance, where she worked closely with the Ministry of Education to promote dance in underprivileged communities and public schools. Her involvement in Lima's community included a wide range of volunteer efforts. She directed the U.S. Embassy Association's (USEA) annual Christmas party for children with special needs hosted at the Ambassador's residence, coordinated USEA's annual Noche de Arte 2006 fundraising event held at the National Museum, raised money for a local orphanage, and established and taught a free community dance program for children with mental disabilities at Centro Ann Sullivan de Peru (CASP). She also raised \$1,700 to purchase fitness equipment for Los Angeles de Arena, benefiting homeless teenage boys from Lima's poorest slums, and created and taught a free dance program for orphaned children at the Hogar Juan Pablo II Orphanage in Lurin, a poor suburb of Lima.

**Mari Jenefsky-Titus (Quito, Ecuador 2006)** produced “*A Backpacker’s Guide to Goats, Mules, and Drugs.*” The documentary, a 40-minute professional quality film about drug trafficking, explained how those involved in the drug trade target young backpackers and tourists to assist in bringing drugs into the United States. Tourists that knowingly bring back drugs are known as “mules” but those that unknowingly assist are called “goats,” hence the title of the film. Mari conceived of the idea after meeting a young American girl in an Ecuadorian prison. The film is told through the personal accounts of American teenagers and young adults serving time in foreign prisons for participating in drug trafficking. They tell their stories in their own words and explain how even the smartest traveler can fall prey to drug traffickers. Mari’s unending passion, perseverance, and commitment to making the film were extraordinary.

**Portia Josephine Lino Watkins (Tegucigalpa, Honduras 2006)** visited the small town of Ojojona on an Embassy morale and recreation trip. Discovering that the village had limited sanitation facilities, she set out to bring latrines to 180 families. She coordinated with the local water board and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) living in the town, and petitioned local businessmen for assistance. The resulting project used a Peace Corps design for the latrines and community labor for installation. Most of the funding for materials came from donations. Proper sanitation translated into improved health. Portia also organized a Christmas toy drive and visit from Santa Claus for Ojojona and a nearby town, providing 250 children with holiday joy.

**Mairgreg (Meg) Mahoney (San Jose, Costa Rica 2006)** co-founded “Project heArt” to improve the lives of Costa Rican children through art projects. Project heArt’s first project at the Children’s Hospital in San Jose remodeled a hallway with new lighting, paint, a large friendly monster mural, and 3-D art pieces and donated over 600 stuffed animals on Christmas Eve. Meg also arranged for a Christmas party for 20 Costa Rican girls living in a shelter for abused children. With donations from the U.S. Embassy and local business community, she presented gifts and led the girls in decorating gingerbread houses. Meg was also actively involved in the installation of two public playgrounds. In nominating Meg for a SOSA, Jean Frisbie said, “*The projects she takes on have specific benefits for the Costa Rican recipients, and, equally important, inspire others in the Embassy community to try out their ideas for volunteering.*”



*Pictured above and to the right: Maria Regina with women and children from the town of Los Amadores. The basket technique involved rolling newspaper into extremely tight but flexible tubes from which baskets were fashioned, then treated with a type of varnish, then painted. The end product resembled something made out of plant or tree fiber such as rattan or bamboo.*

**Maria Regina Barros Pontes (Managua, Nicaragua 2007)** taught a small group of women in the community of Los Amadores to generate income by making baskets out of newspaper, a craft popular in her home country of Brazil. Los Amadores, located 20 miles from Nicaragua’s capital, is a primarily agricultural community of approximately 500 people. Maria Regina visited the community once a week with her car laden with newspapers and other donations from Embassy employees and businesses. She inspired others to take interest in teaching the craft and each Thursday the small church at Los Amadores was transformed into a busy artist’s studio, with women from the community learning how to weave the baskets and apply the varnish and paint. She made contact with owners of arts and crafts galleries in Managua and craft fairs as venues for selling the baskets. The basket makers first displayed their wares at a fair sponsored by Nicaragua’s first lady and caught the attention of the press. Maria Regina, with other colleagues, appeared on national television and exposed the work of the artists of Los Amadores to the Nicaraguan public. Further TV appearances and news articles about the artists drew more attention. She went a step further and convinced the mayor of La Concha to create a space in the public market where the artists could sell their wares. She also convinced him to restore an old building where the ladies could establish their headquarters. The mayor agreed and expanded the project to include teaching the adults of Los Amadores to read and write. Maria Regina was awarded a grant from the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust to develop the de facto artists’ cooperative. Her nomination stated, “*She unselfishly gave her time and often used personal resources in order to help develop the project. Maria Regina believes that poverty and ignorance can be overcome by motivation, education, self-reliance, and most of all, opportunity.*”



*“Katia has also brought the hospital into contact with international experts. Katia found that there is a lack of research into treatment and diagnosis of heart problems at altitude (the hospital is located at around 12,000 feet, with many patients living at over 14,000 feet). In conversations with her former professors in Sao Paulo, she succeeded in sparking their interest in the topic and they named her as a fellow at the Pulmonary Vascular Research Institute (PVRI). She went on to gather the four pediatric heart specialists in La Paz and all of them came to the Hospital del Niño to participate in the worldwide PVRI video conference.”*

*- From the nomination of Katia Stewart*

**Katia Stewart (La Paz, Bolivia 2008)** completed medical school and her advanced pediatrics training in Brazil. She spent a second residency in Sao Paulo at InCor, the largest cardiac facility in Latin America, where she specialized in pediatric heart problems. When Katia married a U.S. Foreign Service Officer, she accompanied him to La Paz only to face barriers to legally practicing medicine in Bolivia. She quickly identified the key medical figures in the city and, after meeting with the director of the largest public children’s hospital, the Hospital del Niño, agreed to work informally with them to raise their capacity to diagnose and treat infants with severe heart problems. Katia’s contribution saw the hospital death toll of these children fall from nearly 100 percent to around 70 percent. She volunteered 2-3 times a week, doing rounds and working with the residents. She strived to connect the hospital to both the local and international medical communities and identified critical material needs. One of her most important goals was to help the residents recognize possible heart problems and to also become better doctors. To these ends, she formulated and taught two classes that were recognized by the hospital and incorporated into the training of residents. The hospital lacked basic equipment for the diagnosis and treatment of heart conditions. Working with the Military Group at the Embassy, Katia solicited and received an EKG machine (with connections appropriate for infants) and an oximeter to measure blood oxygen levels. Additionally, she was able to get a special table built for the EKG machine using a donation from the local charity HOPE. From the Embassy medical unit, a used defibrillator and infusion pump were also donated to the hospital. In a special ceremony, the Ambassador turned over the equipment and thanked Katia for her service to the Bolivian community.

**Jan Irene Miller (Panama City, Panama 2009)** demonstrated exceptional leadership and innovation in support of the Panama Chamber of Commerce project to resolve metropolitan transportation issues. The Panama Chamber president sought assistance from the Embassy to identify the best urban transportation solution for Panama City. Trained as an executive coach with 20 years of managing global technology projects, Jan agreed to meet with the Chamber’s Transportation Commission and quickly became a key member and adviser. She coordinated the many ideas generated by public and private stakeholders and read hundreds of research reports, studies, and manuals from global expert sources. Jan then built an effective website as a repository for the information that enabled Commission members to stay informed. Not content with merely posting the information, Jan analyzed the data and assessed proposals and their impact on environmental protection, labor skills, world class technology, and infrastructure challenges. Armed with this data and analysis, the Commission prepared a summary presentation to the Panama Presidential candidates and the Chamber’s Board of Directors. Following the May elections, the Commission met with the incoming government which responded by establishing a cabinet level position to lead the multi-billion dollar, five-year mass transit solution promulgated by the Commission. Tirelessly leveraging her skills as a team builder, Jan organized and analyzed data, developed ideas, and produced substantive changes that served both Panamanian and American interests.

## SOSA Award Winners and Nominees

Winners are noted with an asterisk (\*)

### BAHAMAS

2001 Arlene Riggs (Nassau)  
1998 Ann Whitfield (Freeport)

### BARBADOS

2002 Constance Dierman (Bridgetown)  
1998 Sandra Byrnes (Bridgetown)  
1997 Peggy Sue Zabriskie (Bridgetown)  
1996 Phoebe Miles (Bridgetown)

### BELIZE

2008 Cathy Stevulak (Belmopan)  
1994 Susan Scassa (Belize City)

### BOLIVIA

2008 Katia R. Stewart (La Paz)  
2004 Kathleen Ahern (La Paz)  
1997 Ann Ingraham (La Paz) \*  
1994 Linda Rosenberg (La Paz)  
1992 Bonnie Hash (La Paz)

### BRAZIL

2005 Jaimee Neel (Sao Paulo) \*  
2004 Ron and Sheri Verdonk (Sao Paulo)  
2001 CB Toney (Brasilia)  
2001 Kendall Moss (Rio de Janeiro)  
1999 Mary Gadzinski (Brasilia)  
1997 Linda Vranek (Brasilia)  
1992 John Reddington (Brasilia)

### CANADA

1993 John C. Whitridge III (Ottawa)

### CHILE

2008 Carolyn A. Hightower (Santiago)

### COLOMBIA

2005 Debi Fairman (Bogota)  
1997 Barbara Frechette (Bogota)

### COSTA RICA

2006 Mairgreg Mahoney (San Jose)  
2005 Janae Cooley (San Jose)  
1994 Atim Ogunba (San Jose)  
1992 Penny Hughes (San Jose)

### CURACAO

1995 Bernard Woerz (Curacao)

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

2008 Ellen Brager (Santo Domingo) \*  
2007 Ellen Brager (Santo Domingo)  
2006 Marian McGowan (Santa Domingo) \*  
2000 Federico Segarra (Santo Domingo)  
1998 Brian Rudert (Santo Domingo) \*  
1997 Gail Arias, Valerie Wride, Elizabeth Visbeck and Mary Warner (Santo Domingo)

### ECUADOR

2007 Elizabeth Black (Quito)  
2006 Mari Jenefsky-Titus (Quito)  
1997 Janice Davis (Quito)  
1995 Susan Watson (Quito)

### EL SALVADOR

2000 David Beam (San Salvador) \*

### GUATEMALA

2004 Mary Jo Amani (Guatemala City) \*  
2003 Linda Gould (Guatemala City)  
2003 Rian and Chris Harris (Guatemala City)  
2001 Lourdes Farley (Guatemala City)  
1995 Dinah Hall (Guatemala City)  
1994 Virginia Gilcrest (Guatemala City)  
1993 Sue Patterson (Guatemala City)  
1992 Margaret Vaughn (Guatemala City) \*

### HAITI

2004 Maurice R. Olfus (Port-au-Prince)  
1991 Mai-Anh Adams (Port-au-Prince) \*

### HONDURAS

2006 Ana Patricia Baide (Tegucigalpa)  
2006 Portia Josephine Lino Watkins (Tegucigalpa)

### JAMAICA

2000 Carmen Cason (Kingston)  
1997 Janet Whetley (Kingston)  
1996 Melanie Kerber (Kingston) \*  
1994 Carolyn Queener (Kingston) \*

## SOSA Award Winners and Nominees

*Winners are noted with an asterisk (\*)*

### MEXICO

2007 Kelly Trainor (Nuevo Vallarta)  
 2005 Ginger Kopp (Monterrey)  
 2004 Maria Pastrana Lujan (Mexico City)  
 2004 Elaine Saxe (Mexico City)  
 2003 Kristine Luoma-Overstreet (Merida) \*  
 2002 Hengameh Rastegar Murphy (Nogales)  
 1996 Janie Peterson (Mexico City)  
 1995 Bibi Meer (Mexico City)  
 1994 Christina Taylor (Monterrey)  
 1993 Doris Persley (Mexico City) \*  
 1992 Linda Mora (Mexico City)

### NICARAGUA

2007 Maria Regina Barros Pontes (Managua) \*  
 2004 Judy Snellgrove (Managua)  
 1995 Mary Jo Amani (Managua) \*

### PANAMA

2009 Jan Irene Miller (Panama City, Panama) \*  
 2004 Angel Rivera (Panama City)  
 1997 Dennis Middaugh (Panama City)  
 1996 Sergeant Moraima Camarillo (Panama City)  
 1992 Teresa Cook (Panama City)

### PARAGUAY

1992 Elizabeth Fielder (Asuncion)

### PERU

2006 Irina L. Wunder (Lima)  
 2005 Harold Price (Lima)  
 2002 Eleanor Geiger (Lima) \*  
 2001 Patricia Larimore (Lima)  
 1996 Maria Teresa Orr (Lima)

### SURINAME

1994 Ann Hope (Paramaribo)

### URUGUAY

2002 Stan Myles (Montevideo)

### VENEZUELA

2007 Sarina Penn (Caracas)  
 2003 Kristina Dodd (Caracas)  
 2001 Anna Savinon (Caracas) \*  
 1999 Kristina Dodd (Caracas) \*  
 1994 Gail Kenna (Caracas)