



SOROPTIMIST COMPETITION

By Malavika Manoj

On the 17th of November the local heat for Soroptimists was held. Soroptimist is a public speech competition for 4th, 5th and 6th years that has been held for over 40 years that test the confidence and speaking abilities of each student who takes part in it.

'Soroptimist International is a global volunteer movement working together to transform the lives of women and girls with nearly 72,000 Members in 121 countries. The Competition is a three-stage event with local, regional competitions leading to a national final. A selection of topics is circulated to schools and each competitor can choose. A 6-minute speech is presented at the competition on the topic of choice and adjudicated by a panel of 3 judges. Impromptu competitions are held at the regional and national finals. The competition encourages girls to develop the skills to speak effectively and articulately with clarity and conviction, this enables them to improve their self-confidence and personality which in turn will enhance their career opportunities.'

The Soroptimist competition was held in the Riverbank hotel at 7 pm this year, and with the help of Mr. Cornejo, Grace McCormack and I were rearing to perform. Through this experience we got to meet six other incredible women who will undoubtedly shape our future. While all of us did have nerves and fears, every single one of us got up with eloquence and chose to speak about topics that were important to us in relation to the given themes this year such as women's empowerment (relating to Roe v Wade) and peace & democracy (relating to the Ukraine-Russia war).

The competition lasted for around 2 hours with each girl reaching around six minutes of speaking time. The adjudicators sat in the back and with an audience of parents, teachers as well as timekeepers watching, all of us went up and did our speeches. There were girls from many different schools yet by the end of it we all felt incredibly close, as if we had known each other for years.

While neither Grace and I won, the experience was still incredibly unforgettable and the fun I had will never be forgotten. That being said, Grace was put as a standby for the competition, so Loreto is 100% still in the running and in very capable hands should she compete.

Thank you to Mr. Cornejo and Soroptimist for this amazing opportunity. I had the chance to meet other girls and this competition gave each of us a voice that we will keep with us until we're old.