

Maureen Thompson

Maureen became a Soroptimist in 1986 giving another route for her passionate work improving the lives of women & girls. A very active member of her club she became President of Soroptimist International of Heswall & District in 1993, later made an Honorary Life Member. After holding the post of Regional President in 1998/9 she went on to be Regional Development Officer and a Trainer for the Federation Teams of Excellence.

Maureen trained as a teacher becoming a Headteacher of Heswall Primary School, Adviser, University Lecturer and Consultant National Mathematics Test Development Team.

Appointed Magistrate in 1981, later Youth & Family Court Chairman, Youth Panel Chairman, and the Chair of Merseyside Youth Panel Chairmen. As Chairman of Wirral Bench, she worked with Probation to organise Women Only Problem – Solving Courts which looked at the support needed to help them meet Court Orders.

In October 2010 Court & Probation asked her to set up a Women's Centre as a direct alternative to Custody which presented a huge challenge, as no funds or premises were allocated. After battling to raise initial funds and secure easily accessible premises, she asked her Soroptimist club, to help as Volunteers. The Charity, Tomorrow's Women Wirral (TWW) opened September 2011.

Without Maureen's enthusiastic work fighting for funds and premises, TWW would not have a contract with the Ministry of Justice which keeps women in their jobs and out of prison. Hundreds of women who have used the Centre would not have been able to turn their lives around after serious problems including domestic abuse. A newly launched Project for females under 18 provides education and support for problems including Mental Health. Maureen continues as a very hard-working Chair of the Board of Trustees. In 2014 Maureen's tireless work was rewarded when she became Cheshire Woman of the Year.

TWW offers a welcoming, safe, non-judgemental female environment where staff, partner agencies and volunteers can work with females aged 18 and over. It is committed to reducing offending and diverting women from Custody by providing support and interventions so women can make alternative positive lifestyle choices and changes. For those within the Criminal Justice System, attendance is specified by the Courts. Completion of Orders has improved dramatically. Other vulnerable women attend TWW voluntarily, either by self-referral or by other agencies.

It was recognised that the most traumatised vulnerable women would benefit from individual professional counselling, and this was set up with Soroptimists being some of the qualified counsellors.

TWW offers meaningful alternatives to prison, providing many opportunities for education and empowerment. More than 180 partner agencies and charities offer a wide range of courses giving women confidence and preparing them for employment. The model fills a gap in Women's Services and includes sex workers in the night-time economy. Over 7500 women have already benefitted, with a weekly attendance of around 650. TWW has been nominated for and received local and national awards on 35 occasions.

In 2018, at the Soroptimist Liverpool Conference, Maureen delivered an inspiring presentation about Tomorrow's Women Wirral to over 1200 delegates and gives countless talks to fund raise.

