

June 17, 2008

### SWFAS SNUG HARBOR SPECIAL LUNCHEON

The room was filled with light banter, laughter, and hopes and dreams. The Zonta Club of Sanibel Captiva had invited nine women plus their two counselors to a special Mothers Day Luncheon at Snug Harbor in Fort Myers Beach. The club, who has been partnering with the women's program at South West Florida Addiction Centers (SWFAS) since 2000, had arranged a "girl's day out" for the women in the Transitional Living Center (TLC). Each woman was given a long stem yellow rose in honor of Mother's Day. "It felt so good to be away from the center and to feel a real part of the world again" someone commented.

The youngest women in the program was proudly talking about her acceptance into the special Ft. Myer's construction program where she was learning all of the skills necessary to become a journeyman plumber. She proudly announced that she was leading the classroom in test results. Another budding artist is in the process of creating her own note card business. With the help of an educational grant from Zonta, one woman has enrolled at Edison College in pursuit of a paralegal degree. Lastly, a proud mother had bonded with Sandi Hutchings who attended University of Miami and they shared stories of the Hurricane football team. Sandi told how her husband had been a star player on the team many years ago. Janice from SWFAS has a son who is a junior running back on this year's U of M team.

Accompanying the women were the two counselors responsible for the day to day program for the clients. Linda Robertson is a certified behavioral health care technician and Vicky Elias is her assistant. Following a stint in a 14-42 day residential program concentrated on detoxification the women are admitted to the halfway program. Here they learn to substitute the addictive behavior with life skills to return to main stream society. It isn't easy, and there are relapses. Linda and Vicky with a team of university students in training, auxiliary counselors, technicians and other SWFAS personnel help each woman conquer the addictive cycle. Linda states that there are dark days when she questions her influence, but when the "light comes on" she knows that she is in the right place, doing what she loves best.

The staff at Snug Harbor was hospitable and helpful creating special experience for all of the guests. A special private waterfront room enhanced the occasion, as well as a tempting seafood menu and a delicious sampling from the desert menu.

The Zonta club of Sanibel Captiva is a service organization of professional women working together to provide hands on assistance, advocacy and funds to strengthen women's lives locally and around the world through Zonta International.

Ruth Woodham/Cyndy Lorry

