

Zonta Grant Distribution

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Submitted by Barbara Nagle

Zonta Distributes more than \$56,000 to Organizations Helping Women and Girls

The Zonta Club of Sanibel Captiva recently announced \$56,400 in grants to local and international organizations that work to advance the status of women and girls. The funding went to partner organizations on the islands and in Lee County, to several other groups that support its mission and to Zonta International. The funds for these charitable grants are raised primarily through the Club's annual *"A PEEK at the Unique: A Tour of Island Homes,"* and distributed by the Zonta Foundation of Southwest Florida.

"I am personally delighted that we have been able to provide more than \$46,000 in local grants, as well as \$10,000 to Zonta International, for this fiscal year," said Sue Denham, president of the Sanibel-Captiva Club. "This achievement is due to outstanding efforts by our club members and to a renewed focus on the Zonta mission which is to enhance the status of women. We also thank the many community businesses and individuals who have this possible."

Based on the guidelines and direction determined in the Club's comprehensive "Futures Strategic Planning" process, members voted to focus major funding as well as volunteer service and advocacy in seven areas:

- 1) Combating Human Trafficking through Prevention and Education
- 2) Addiction, Recovery and Mental Health
- 3) Toward Self-Sufficiency for Disadvantaged and At Risk Persons
- 4) Serving Women on the Island
- 5) English as a Second Language
- 6) Women's Health
- 7) Zonta International Projects

Most grants are linked with Zonta Service Teams comprised of members willing to volunteer their personal and professional skills in organizations working on these issues.

Combating Human Trafficking

Miracles in Action -- \$2,500

Guatemalan Rural Adult and Children's Education Project (GRACE) -- \$5,000

Since 2004 Zonta has been at the forefront of the fight against human trafficking through the establishment of the Lee County Human Trafficking Task Force. This year's efforts expand Zonta's involvement through GRACE and Miracles in Action, two local organizations that work in Guatemala to prevent human trafficking. A major component of this human trafficking effort is to circulate a CD called "Lucia's Letter." In the recording, two survivors of human trafficking reveal the experience of being trafficked from Guatemala to Lee County, Florida. Club volunteers have also assembled nearly 2500 "birthing kits" for distribution in rural villages; the kits are small packages of sterile supplies to enable better quality health standards for child delivery. In addition, there are projects to provide sewing machines and supplies to help women earn a living, to offer teacher training and to supply books in rural schools.

Addiction, Recovery and Mental Health

Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS) \$13,000

Zonta has partnered with SWFAS since 2000, assisting women in recovery from substance abuse to return the workforce and be reunited with their families. This year's funding provides scholarships to assist women with rent, tuition, and child care costs while they continue their education. Club volunteers also provide programs in nutrition, meditation, life skills, and job readiness skills.

Toward Self-Sufficiency for Disadvantaged and At Risk Persons

PACE Center for Girls in Lee County -- \$6,500

This non-residency, delinquency-prevention program works with girls in a range of capacities. The grant will enable them to start a "Baby Can Wait" program in which girls role-play the life of a pregnant teen from conception through early child care. Zontians also plan to establish a Z-Club (Zonta club for high school age girls) to develop leadership skills, promote career exploration and encourage girls to participate in community, school and international service projects.

Serving Women on the Island

Friends In Service Here (FISH) -- \$2,500

Community Housing and Resources (CHR) -- \$2,500

These grants are focused on serving women on the Island. Eighty-five percent of FISH clients are women, many of whom are either older and in need of services such as transportation, home visits and respite care. FISH has grown and needs assistance in upgrading its office equipment and administrative procedures. Community Housing and Resources is in the midst of renovating ten units of newly-purchased, affordable housing. This is Zonta's first project with CHR and the Club expects to focus in months ahead on services needed by low-income single moms.

English as a Second Language

Brightest Horizons Child Development Center -- \$5,900

This English as a Second Language pilot literacy project will offer an English immersion program for both parents and teachers at the school. Zonta volunteers have been trained and are providing one-on-one English tutoring to these adults.

Women's Health

Lack of access to affordable health care disproportionately affects women because of traditionally lower incomes, the types of jobs they hold and their absence from the workforce due to child rearing. The Zonta Health Care Access Advocacy Team is initiating and participating in community dialogue through education, advocacy and involvement at local, regional and national levels. For example, in early April, Zonta sponsored an evening presentation by Jim Nathan, president and CEO of Lee Memorial Health Systems, on the looming health care crisis in Lee County. Other such events are being planned.

Other Local Grants

The Club also provided \$8,500 to local organizations that are not service partners. They are: Our Mother's Home (\$2,500); Footsteps to the Future (\$500); Redlands Christian Migrant Center (\$500); Planned Parenthood (\$2,500), and Partners for Breast Cancer Care (\$2,500).

Zonta International

Zonta International - \$10,000

The gift of \$10,000 to Zonta International was the largest in the Sanibel-Captiva Club's history, and the largest, by far, single gift among the 44 clubs in District 11, which governs Zonta clubs from South Carolina to Puerto Rico. Contributions to Zonta International support programs that assist women globally. Some of the programs fight poverty and AIDS in Niger; support education and health in Afghanistan and Bolivia; develop economic self-sufficiency in Sri Lanka; and fight human trafficking in Bosnia and Croatia. Contributions to the Zonta International Foundation also support programs focused on violence against women and scholarships for women in business and young women in public affairs.

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 on the islands, in Lee County and around the world through Zonta International. Additional information about Zonta is available at www.zontasancap.com.

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Photo Caption: Members of the Zonta Club of Sanibel Captiva not only raise funds to support programs that improve the status of women and girls but also advocate on issues affecting them. Recently, the Club sponsored a public presentation on the island by Jim Nathan, president and CEO of Lee Memorial Health Systems, on the looming health care crisis in Lee County.



Photo Caption: Among the programs supported by the Zonta Club of Sanibel Captiva are those assisting women in recovery at Southwest Florida Addiction Services. In past years, funding helped to create a "Zonta Learning Center" where women can learn computer skills and prepare for future jobs.



Photo Caption: In recent months, Zonta Club members and community volunteers assembled thousands of "birthing kits" for distribution in rural Guatemala; the kits are small packages of sterile supplies to improve health standards during child delivery.



Photo Caption: Zonta members have been trained and are teaching English-as-a-Second Language to parents and teachers at Brightest Horizons Child Development Center, located just off the islands.



Photo Caption: One of the major areas for service, advocacy and funding for the Zonta Club is the fight against human trafficking. The Club is working to prevent human trafficking from Guatemala through distribution of "Lucia's Letter," the story of a woman trafficked to Lee County; and through assistance that increases the economic and health standards of women and girls in Guatemala.