

Proudly announcing Zonta's 2009 Grant Recipients

February 24, 2009

The PEEK at the Unique is the Zonta Club of Sanibel- Captiva's major fundraiser. All of the funds that we raised from the PEEK in 2008, after expenses, go to our mission in Lee County and internationally towards our 2009 grant cycle. Locally, we support Brightest Horizons, PACE Center for Girls, Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS), Health Access Advocacy Group, Combating Human Trafficking through Prevention and Education, and Serving Women on The Islands (SWOTI). In early February, our Island club contributed almost \$70,000 to these organizations, including funding International endeavors.

Our Service and Advocacy projects are based in Lee County, although our reach extends our borders in supporting woman and young girls in Guatemala, as well as directly funding selected global programs sponsored and funded by Zonta International, which received almost 25% of our profits.

Southwest Florida Addiction Services- SWFAS has had much written in the news recently, as they grapple with the negative effects of funding cuts. Meanwhile, their substance abuse center moves forward with the opening of a new Detox Center and the construction of an improved Transitional Living Center on their original Ft. Myers campus. The new TLC will house up to 24 residents, an almost three-fold increase over the previous facility.

Since 2000, the Zonta club has provided financial grants and worked hands-on with the women in the TLC, providing services and activities that complement the intensive residential treatment program. Our most recent grant of \$11,300 will purchase smart and durable furnishings and linens for the new TLC that is scheduled to open later this spring.

Photo#1 –Jewelry making results proudly displayed Zontians and women of TLC



Serving Women on the Island-SWOTI is a Zonta project that helps island residents who are mainly single mothers and older women. A vast majority of these women reside on Sanibel in Community Housing and Resources (CHR) Below Market Housing. There are presently 57 renters in CHR housing with women that are heads of households. This year, Zonta's grant of \$5,000 will fund down payment assistance for up to two single Moms to enable them to participate in CHR's new equity ownership

program. One or two ladies will actually be able to purchase their own homes through the CHR program with the help of the Zonta grant.

Zonta also plans to assist women in budgeting for difficult times, job interviewing and certain legal consultations. To kick off these efforts, in February, the SWOTI Committee sponsored a Valentine's party for women in CHR. The purpose of the party was to build relationships between the women and the members of Zonta. Aside from fellowship, the women were also informed about upcoming programs through a job fair-like presentation

Photo#2- Zonta's Valentine event with women from CHR



FRIENDS IN SERVICE HERE- FISH provides services for island residents in need.

This year, Zonta's grant of \$2,825 will help to assist FISH in meeting the growing demands for services for women on the island. FISH is helping women through donations of food, transportation to medical appointments on and off the island, temporary loan of medical equipment as well as helping to find homes for the homeless women and children on Sanibel. These women benefit not only from monetary grants, but also from personal attention and friendships to help ensure their independence.

GOALS: It is the hope of Zonta's SWOTI Committee to expand Zonta's hands-on assistance to island women in need. We plan to accomplish this goal through friendship and mentoring women to become more self-sufficient.

Photo #3- Zontian Nancy Dorrity, a FISH volunteer, sorts food with Board President ,Maggi Feiner



Combating Human Trafficking Through Prevention and Education- Our Club has been at the forefront of the fight against human trafficking, for almost 5 years, gaining international recognition for our accomplishments, including grants exceeding \$50,000 and with a focus on prevention and a total of \$8,895 for '08. Florida has one of the highest rates of human trafficking in the nation, with many victims from Guatemala. By providing hope through education and self-sufficiency, we believe these women and girls will choose to stay in their native land. We also offer help if they are victimized in the US. Current partners and projects include support of **GRACE**'s educational materials and workshops in Guatemala,

including "Lucia's Letter," a recording of the story of survivors of human trafficking and their harrowing experiences being trafficked from Guatemala to Lee County. GRACE received \$4,750 for this year.

Miracles in Action grant (\$2,825) provides water filters and continued distribution of birthing kits. Water Systems & Eco-filters save lives. Carrying water is a daily activity, with women balancing 34 pound vessels of water over steep slopes and rough trails. Drinking this dirty water is leading cause of death.

Photos #4,5, 6 GRACE and Miracles in Action education and projects



Locally we funded HTAP's educational materials (\$500) designed to identify trafficking victims in SW Florida. Local funds were also provided to Our Mother's Home (\$100), in San Carlos Park, where many trafficking victims and their babies have found safety and support.

Brightest Horizons/ESL Service Program- Now in its second year, our English as a Second Language (ESL) service project started with a tutoring program for teachers at the Brightest Horizons daycare and after school center in Harlem Heights. Established decades ago for the children of working poor families, Brightest Horizons follows an "immersion" program, requiring all interaction with its children be in English since studies show language facility is the single most important variable in academic success. Many of the teachers are not native English speakers, and Zonta members have stepped in to help.

Under the aegis of Literacy Volunteers of Lee County (LCLV), members received ESL training and now provide one-on-one sessions twice a week for eight teachers who wish to improve their English skills and work on personal goals such as citizenship. In our second year (granted \$1500), we are building on the success with the Brightest Horizons teacher program by offering an evening class for the parents of the center's children. In addition, LVLC requested Zonta tutors for a program offered twice a week to nearly twenty employees in the housekeeping staff at 'Tween Waters Inn on Captiva. A dozen Zontians and two non-Zontian women are part of the ESL service project.

Photos #7&8-



PACE Center for Girls, Inc. (PACE), Lee County, helps girls 12 to 18 years of age who have experienced many of life's challenges, such as academic problems, neglect and abuse, death of a parent, substance abuse or a family history of criminal behavior. PACE provides its girls with counseling, schooling, training, and above all, advocacy in a non-residential academic setting. Through personal, caring advice and individualized attention, PACE girls discover that life can be celebrated with responsibility, dignity, serenity and grace.

In 2008, Zonta awarded an initial grant of \$6,500 to purchase materials for pregnancy prevention program called "Babies Can Wait", designed to break the cycle of teen pregnancies by realistic role-plays of a teen mom-to-be from conception through childcare. This has been a huge success from both the school and student perspective. In February 2009, partially based on a presentation of their Executive Director, Debbie Webb, a teacher in the Spirited Girl's curriculum, and a student who had completed the program, the grant was increased to \$9,070. This funding will be utilized for 3 initiatives:

- expanding the "Babies Can Wait" program
- making dollars available for medical needs for girls who are uninsured
- small motivational awards for girls that have excelled in the Spirited Girls Program and who are moving to the next level.

We will also be creating a new "Career Speaker's Program" where Zontians, as role-models, will present the history and challenges of women's education and career development and how they overcame various boundaries and obstacles.

Photo # 9&10



Health Care Access Advocacy- Lack of access to affordable health care disproportionately affects women, with 1 in 5 nonelderly women lacking health insurance nationally; in Lee County, it's one to three.. Zonta's Advocacy Team focus on awareness about health care access issues for women, and advocates for programs and policies to address these needs. In April 2008, the Club sponsored a community-wide presentation by Jim Nathan, Lee Memorial Health System President and CEO, on the health care crisis in Southwest Florida. Zontian Sue Denham, opens Healthcare: The Perfect Storm Challenge such as those in Community Housing Resources (CHR). Grants have been issued to Partners for Breast Cancer Care to provide access to mammograms and follow-up care; and to Planned Parenthood's Outreach Education program for teen peer-education to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. This year (granted \$5,000), we are tracking local, state, and national issues in funding and reform. They e are also collaborating with another Zonta team, Serving Women on the Island, to develop a "directory" of resources open to women served by Zonta's partners such as those in Community Housing Resources(CHR).

Grants have been issued to Partners for Breast Cancer Care (\$2,500) to provide access to mammograms and follow-up care; and to Planned Parenthood's Outreach Education program (2,500) for teen Peer education to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Photo#11- Zontian Sue Denham, opens Healthcare: The Perfect Storm Challenge



Submitted by Cyndy Lorry

