

## **Zonta Club is Inspiring and Helping Island Women**

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The Zonta Club of Sanibel-Captiva has been active recently in several events to help island women facing economic, family and health issues.

The club's SWOTI (Serving Women On The Islands) service project held a Body, Mind and Spirit Workshop for women who reside in CHR (Community Housing & Resources) homes; speakers Joanne Marriott (Zonta member/Mary Kay consultant), and Barbara Gennedy from the Sanibel Rec Center addressed topics such as effective make-up and how exercise improves general health. The women were also invited to "shop" from gently-worn clothing generously collected and donated by Eileen Fisher of Sanibel. Special thanks to Zonta member/Eileen Fisher manager Ruth Mayer.

Most club projects, with the mission of improving the status of women, focus on issues and partners in Fort Myers and the greater SW Florida region. However, a strategic planning exercise held by the club three years ago found that members wanted to have a more direct relationship with island women in need. The result was the formation of SWOTI and a partnership with two island non-profit organizations, CHR and FISH of Sanibel, and with the Sanibel School.

The club made local grants from its 2009 Peek at the Unique proceeds, which included \$7,500 to CHR, some of which will help women access the equity home ownership program; \$4,500 to FISH for food and emergency help for women; and \$5,200 in scholarships for the Rec Center's after school program. When CHR's new Center Place opened in March, the SWOTI team assembled and donated welcome gift baskets containing essential household items. Island businesses are also involved; recently, the Watson MacRae Gallery hosted "Women's Stories: Love, Life and Dreams," which raised funds for SWOTI projects. Special thanks to Maureen Watson, co-owner of the Watson MacRae Gallery.

According to team member Nancy Dreher, more such events are planned during the coming year. Top priorities include workshops on legal matters, personal finances and computer literacy. Dreher said: "Events such as these make use of our members' talents and help expand our club's involvement with the community closest to home."

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. For information, visit [www.zontasancap.com](http://www.zontasancap.com).



At CHR's Center Place with gift baskets are (from L to R) Zonta members Lynn Ridlehoover, Sandi Hutchings and Gail Migliorini and CHR executive direct Scott Marcelais.



Zonta member Nancy Dreher and Barbara Gennedy from the Rec Center, addressing the audience at the Body, Mind and Spirit workshop.