



**ZONTA**  
INTERNATIONAL  
**DISTRICT 3**  
EMPOWERING WOMEN  
THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

## **Zonta Club President Year Summary June 2017- May 2018** **Zonta Club of Suffolk County**

### **Club Highlights 2017-2018 Year**

**Service: We have a robust service program:** We continued our second year of our girl's empowerment and life skills workshop for girls ages 12-18 at a local school for girls. These girls may have physical, emotional, and social needs. Topics this year were yoga for meditation, goal setting, emotional strengthening, therapeutic

This year's topics included applying for a job, sexual and reproductive health, mindfulness, and fun activities like pumpkin decorating. Each girl was provided with an art journal to reflect on the topics and express her feelings in words and art. The participants learned new information and skills, developed a sense of camaraderie, and met role models who shared their own journeys and encouraged them to pursue their goals.

In addition, this year we selected one graduating student to receive our first Empowerment Incentive of \$500 to continue her education and support her goals as she transitions out of the group home. The club members will mentor the awardee throughout the coming year, and consider her for future financial support if possible.

This activity aligns directly with Zonta International's mission to advance the status of women by providing life skills to young women who are disadvantaged and in need of support. Our community, like many others, has its share of hardships, and the girls who reside at Madonna Heights are there because it is safe and can provide trauma-informed mental health treatment in a residential school environment. These are the "forgotten girls" of America – coming from dysfunctional families, often neglected, mentally ill, abused, and defiant. Our empowerment program provides them with life skills that enrich their lives and introduces them to role models who are "successful," in as much as we take care of our responsibilities and ourselves, and try to help others.

In addition to the students and Zonta members who participated, the staff who supervise the girls participate in the activities. Many of the staff members have come from the treatment community, and also come from dysfunctional backgrounds. They are learning the skills alongside the girls.

This service project has kept our club together; almost all of our members participate in one way or another. Unfortunately, we have not publicized our activities, partly due to privacy restrictions for the students, and mostly because we don't have anyone in our club who can easily handle that task.

**Membership/Mentoring:** At our May meeting we appointed a membership chairperson, which we haven't had in several years. This will allow us to put more emphasis on getting new members this year.

**Advocacy**

1. Our club sponsored a panel discussion program on human trafficking, which is related to ZI's project in Nepal. We discussed sex trafficking and the efforts underway to help the victims who get caught up in the criminal justice system.

We partnered with a student club at Suffolk County Community College, and brought together victim's advocates, police, prosecutors, and the judiciary for a discussion on the human trafficking in our community. We showed the short film Chosen, from Shared Hope International as a starting point for discussion. The program was very well received.

2. A president I was the key note speaker at Madonna Heights for their celebration of the International Day of the Girl. My theme was personal advocacy and related thoughts and experiences on how to stand up for one's self and have more gender equity in their lives.

**Other**

- 1) At our Comedy Club Fundraiser we raised approximately \$1200. We sold tickets for \$25 and raffled 6 baskets and a 50/50.
- 2) \$500 scholarship being awarded to a student at Madonna Heights with potential for additional \$500 after she starts first year of college.