



ZONTA

CLUB OF
QUABOAG VALLEY

THE ZONTA BOG
NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

2025 Dates—Mark your Calendar

Monday, April 14th – Emergency Preparedness – Planning for the Unknown – Ludlow Country Club 5:30 Reception, 6:00 Dinner and program. In honor of Earth Day we will shine a light on impacts a changing climate has on our communities. Guest speaker, Melissa Marshall, will speak on the need for emergency evacuation plans specific to people with disabilities.

In April we sell chances for the May Calendar Raffle! Start making a plan for sharing the news by email, on social media and in person!

Monday, May 12th – Zonta and the Foundation for Women – Ludlow Country Club 5:30 Reception, 6:00 Dinner and program. This is a membership meeting – anyone interested in joining Zonta as a member or supporter is invited to join us at no cost. Learn about the international aspects of Zonta and how clubs in 64 countries work together to make the world a better place for women and girls.

Monday June 9th— Member-Guest Potluck and Social at @ KeoughHuff home at 6pm

June 20-22, 2025—North American InterDistrict Meeting (NAIDM) in Detroit - www.zontanaidm.org/

September 6, 2025—Zonta Golf Tournament at the Cold Spring Country Club. 8:30 shotgun.

Dear Zontians and Friends,

The Quaboag Club made quite a splash on International Women's Day this year! Thank you to all of our Women Making a Difference honorees and our prestigious keynote speaker for an inspiring evening. The highlights on pages 3 - 6 reinforce that we made a wise selection of influential women. It was also great to have so many guests on hand to welcome our three newest Zontians!



April's Earth Day serves as a stark reminder of the growing threat of extreme natural disasters. At our April meeting we will welcome Melissa Marshall who will explain how these disasters exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, with people with disabilities, and especially women, bearing a heavier burden. We will also speak about a potential climate advocacy project on Disaster Preparedness and Response. Guests are welcome! The RSVP count for dinner is needed by 4/9 please.

For more information on Melissa Marshall and Zonta's connection to Climate Action, visit www.zontaqv.org/climate.

Also in April is our Calendar Raffle ticket sales! This is an easy fundraiser - it is a fun gift for anyone. Check out the daily gifts that have been donated on page 9. Thanks to member and supporter donations, 100% of the \$25 ticket sales goes directly to education scholarships and service initiatives locally and globally.

Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Thank you for all you do,
Cyd Melcher, President

PAT PUPEK'S ZONTA DISTRICT 1 FUNDRAISER

ASSIST US IN REACHING OUR \$1,000 GOAL.



CONTACT :
CONNIE HANNEY
413-427-4688
pamperedchef.

Guests are always welcomed!!! Email info@zontaqv.org to RSVP

Dinner cost \$35pp cash or check; \$30 for table of 8 Pay online at www.zontaqv.square.site

Support our District with purchases from Pampered Chef - for yourself, as a gift or as a donation to a survivor restarting her life.

The Zonta Service Grant

is accepting applications until April 1st!

Grants between \$100 - \$2,000
From the Zonta Club of the Quaboag Valley
For Quaboag Valley and surrounding communities

For more information, visit bit.ly/zonta-spring25



Disabled Women, Climate Disasters



Western MA ~ On April 14th, Zonta will host an informational talk on the Impact of Climate Change Fueled Disasters on Disabled Women at the Ludlow Country Club, with guest speaker Melissa Marshall, J.D., the Director of Policy & Programs for The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies. Melissa has over 30 years' experience managing disability rights programs, projects and organizations. Read more about Melissa at zontaqv.org/climate.

Due to the increasing issue of climate disasters, we all need to pay heed to planning for the possibility of emergency evacuation. But climate disasters disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including the elderly, people with disabilities, and those living in low-income communities. Too often, not enough attention is paid to these populations. Tonight we will focus on the specific needs of these groups, including access to transportation, shelter, and other essential resources.

The public is invited to join us on April 14th. **RSVP by April 7, 2025 at info@ZontaQV.org. 5:30 Reception, 6:00 Dinner followed by the Program.**

Pay at the door for the buffet (\$30 for table of 8; \$35 individual) or [pay online](#).

For more information on Melissa Marshall and Zonta's connection to Climate Action, visit www.zontaqv.org/climate.

The club may also like to do a climate advocacy project - sharing information about Disaster Preparedness and Response. See page 7

**Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley
District I, Area II,
Charter 1317 of Zonta
International
Club Officers 2025—2026**

President: Cynthia Melcher
Vice President: Karen Keough-Huff
Chris Keough-Huff
Treasurer: Joanne Turner-Chiacchia
Pam Albertson
Secretary: Mary Knight
Directors: Patricia Pupek
Andreea Rotaru

Website: www.zontaqv.org

Committee Chairs/ Members 2025—2026

Finance/Audit: Pam Albertson,
Membership: Mary Knight, Cherie Braun
Visibility: Mary Knight, Andreea Rotaru
Advocacy—Zonta Says No, Climate Action: Karen Keough-Huff
Service—Hands-on projects, Grants: Mary Ann Rubis, Liz Reeves
Scholarships: Patricia Pupek
Poinsettia Fundraiser: Liz Reeves,
Golf Fundraiser: Chris Keough-Huff, Debra Wood,
Spring Fundraiser: TBD

Nominating: Joanne Turner-Chiacchia, Patricia Pupek, Dana Burton

March 2025—Women Making a Difference Event



Keynote: Vanessa Pabón-Hernandez – CEO of the Women’s Fund of Western MA. She will be awarded the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley’s Honorary Member status for 2025-2026.

On March 10th at the Ludlow Country Club we celebrated Women Making a Difference in honor of International Women’s Day.

Each year in March, the global community celebrates International Women’s Day (IWD), recognizing women for their achievements regardless of national, ethnic, linguistic, economic or political divisions. The Zonta International community also celebrates Zonta Rose Day, a time to reflect and give tribute to the women who have empowered us.

In this spirit, the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley proudly announces its **Women Making a Difference** Award dinner on **March 10th at the Ludlow Country Club**. As the theme of this year’s International Women’s celebration is **#AccelerateAction**, the club has chosen a keynote speaker who heads an organization fueling progress toward gender equity by funding the most promising solutions, collaborating with results-oriented partners, and by elevating the collective power of local women to take charge, and to lead with purpose; and four women leaders in the community deserving of recognition for exemplifying the ideals of Zonta and inspiring inclusion in their day-to-day work and volunteer efforts.

Honorees:



Tanisha Arena is a black woman in community leadership as the Executive Director of ARISE for Social Justice – occupying the world’s messiest intersection, the space where race, gender, culture, identity, politics, and the law all collide.



Attorney Elizabeth Dineen serves as Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA of Western Massachusetts. Throughout her career, she has been a strong advocate for women and children.



Dr. Grace Makari-Judson, a breast cancer specialist and top-rated oncologist, is Professor Emeritus, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School-Baystate.



Elizabeth Wills-O’Gilvie, board member and interim director of Gardening the Community (GTC) is a food policy activist and produce farmer and has made it her mission to address hunger and a shortage of fresh foods in western Massachusetts

The event in honor of International Women’s Day, was well attended with nearly 90 members and guests. Liz Wills-O’Gilvie was unable to participate at that last minute, so we will honor her when she is back on her feet. We were delighted to welcome three new members at the start of the program: Vanessa Pabon Hernandez (honorary), Connie Mahoney and Colleen Moynihan. Atty. Liz Dineen spoke about her background and the incredible work being done by staff at the YWCA of Western MA. Dr. Grace Makari-Judson shared her experience as a cancer specialist, the 1994 inception of the Rays of Hope Walk and Run, and how this fundraiser has grown as an important resource in the western Massachusetts community, raising funds that stay local to support breast cancer care, research, and education. The speeches of Keynote Vanessa Pabon-Hernandez and Honoree Tanisha Arena were targeted messages and we are pleased to share excerpts below:



Vanessa Pabon-Hernandez

“...As the CEO of the Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts (WFWM), I must name and honor our founders Dianne Doherty, Martha Richards, and Sally Livingston for their boldness and being inspired to launch the Women’s Fund almost 28 years ago after attending a Women’s Conference in Beijing China where Hilary Clinton declared that women’s rights are human rights. They realized if they were going to be taken seriously by men they needed to have money – and so the fundraising began.”

[Each year since then, the Commission on the Status of Women meets in NYC to review the progress of goals established in Beijing.]

“At the Women’s Fund

- We commission local research on gender equity to inform regional policies and advocacy.
- We fund local nonprofits (or fiscally sponsored individuals) that support women, girls, and gender-diverse

Continued on Page 4

Vanessa—continued from page 3

individuals in all four counties, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Berkshires.

- We run programs such as the Young Women's Initiative builds young leaders' advocacy and leadership skills through social justice training and participatory grantmaking.
- We are conveners, sharing the role of organizing, advocating, and influencing movement building. Our work has been key in fueling progress toward gender and racial equality, especially during tough times.

“Tonight, as we reflect on Accelerating Action [The theme for International Women's Day 2025], I encourage us to think about its importance and Why Now?”

I say that because some of us have been fighting for gender and racial equity our entire lived experience and I want to remind us that the urgency of NOW, doesn't eliminate our history, and all of the progress we've made and will continue to make. The importance of now IS to NOT feel defeated and overwhelmed. We must activate our collective power and claim our rightful place. We are RESILIENT and We've proven that. I won't pretend that the road ahead is easy. It's never been! But I believe if we make self-care and healing a priority, we will persist.

“As we Accelerate Action

- We must find and build community to understand the challenges and barriers each of us face.
- We need to embrace and put into action DEI so that everyone feels like they truly belong. (It's not a job title or workshop.)
- We must acknowledge our worth even if it's overlooked because it can't continue to be the barrier that holds back progress.
- We might question our abilities, doubt ourselves, and may be forced to think we have imposter syndrome. That's a false narrative. Don't believe it!

I also want to share that one of the greatest accomplishments in my life was gifting myself: a beautiful daughter right after High School but it wasn't welcomed with words of encouragement and despite navigating all of the uncertainties and all the challenges life threw my way, it became the training ground for me to take action. So I say to you, despite all of the NOISE surrounding us, we must keep going, even when the road ahead seems unclear.

“Oh and remember to motivate change. You don't need permission! We all have the ability to be disruptors, be curious, ask questions, but we must offer solutions. Not just complain! We must own our TRUTH! Amplify our story! Speak up, take action, and own our influence. And, yes, take risks. Failure will happen. But don't let it define you. Let it teach you. Every challenge is an opportunity for growth.

“So, I leave you with this call to action:

****Set Clear Goals****: Be intentional and strategic!

****Be Bold ****: step forward with confidence.

****Commit to Learning****: Stay informed. Educate yourself. Ask for HELP!

****Extend a hand****: Don't forget to lift others as you rise.

“Don't overestimate our Collective Power – Our Strength in Unity! When women and girls of all identities unite—when WE ALL stand together and lift each other up—we create unstoppable movements.

We have a CHOICE... You CAN lead with F-E- A -R Forget Everything And Run or Face Everything And Rise.

Please continue to support Zonta and the Women's Fund or connect with me to find out how you can.

Vanessa Pabón-Hernandez 2025”



Tanisha Arena

“First, I'd like to thank Zonta and everyone who has mentioned and protected my name in rooms I wasn't in. I am often saying I just to work and I am often reminded this isn't just work. It is life and death, beauty, pain, purpose and passion.

“Today is March 10, a National Day of Rest for Black women, it also marks the passing of Harriet Tubman, who understood in her work to get folks to freedom, rest was necessary. I took my rest on today, sleeping later than usual, moving a little bit slower and not in a rush to engage in the world. I'm part of the 92% and yep, I'm still angry, still sitting with get somebody else to do it AND knowing my social location doesn't allow me to sit anything out, to be on the sidelines, watching my life go by, being *Continued on Page 5*

Tanisha—continued from page 4

decided by others. Not doing it isn't an option, but deciding HOW I am going to do it, is. This is heavy work and rest is necessary and rest is resistance.

"Arise was started nearly 40 years ago by 4 single moms on welfare. Terrill Winston, Michaelann Bewsee, Cindy Montoya, and Hollee Patterson. Ms. Hollee is still with us, currently residing in Baltimore, MD.

"These women navigated that space of being able to improve the condition of their lives and risking the loss of their public benefits. Benefits that didn't exactly improve their lives and subjected them to discrimination, rights violations, and threats to their very survival. This was the time of the Reagan era and the trope of the welfare queen. These women wanted better for themselves and could identify the ways the very system that was supposed to help caused great harm and prevented any opportunity for advancement. Arise's founders believed that "we as poor people have a right to speak for ourselves, and that as we do, we learn how to build political power for ourselves."

"In our current iteration, we are revisiting these spaces, because if any of this sounds and feels familiar, it's because it is. Over and over, we have been pitted against each other instead of coming together for our common survival. We are in the middle of a class war and it's the billionaires versus everyone else and we are on team everyone else. I don't do this work alone, I've got a small, but mighty team and we meet people where they're at, in the messy, in the challenges. We walk together. Arise is not an agency, we don't have clients. We work alongside our community.

"In the midst of Walmart-style rollbacks to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we celebrate International Women's Day with the theme of accelerate action for gender equality, I want us all to look at the ways we work and how we show up in spaces for women and girls, especially Black women and girls. Why? Because they are the most impacted, the most harmed in these very systems and institutions. When we account for who is most harmed and we design programs, services, and solutions to account for who would have the hardest time with access, we make access easier for everyone else. This designing at the margins is how we show up at Arise. Equity is about making sure everyone has what they need. The safety, the food, shelter, housing, clean water and air, the pay, the opportunities for self-actualization. If maternal mortality rates improve for Black women in Mississippi, who are 3x more likely to die in childbirth, then the maternal mortality rates for other women improve too. When we improve the conditions for those among us who experience the most impact and harm, we lessen the harm and impact for everyone.

"There are no trickle-down economics, but there is a glow up. When we elevate those who are at the bottom, when we meet those needs, we strengthen the roots and society rises. When we kick down doors, shatter glass ceilings and protect from cliff effects, when women and girls are specifically included, encouraged, and supported, society changes, it thrives.

I'm going to quote the prophet Tupac

"And since we all came from a woman

Got our name from a woman and our game from a woman (yeah, yeah)

I wonder why we take from our women

Why we rape our women, do we hate our women?"

"The late Gloria Jean Watkins a/k/a 'bell hooks' described misogyny and misogynoir as being more dangerous than racism. It destroys people who do not conform to gender expectations, it destroys the ability to be educated, to work, and it also encourages domination of every kind and that is something we must know and name and seek to actively dismantle in the way we do the work we do. In order to accelerate, we must elevate. We organize, we rise!"

Tanisha Arena, 2025

On Page 6 are a few comments from attendees.



"I am the Coordinator for the Palmer Domestic Violence Task Force. I was invited by Zonta to one of their previous meetings. It's very informative to learn about the activities of other groups supporting women in the area. Attending these meetings has allowed me to make many valuable friends and network connections. They have assisted me with several projects, and I look forward to opportunities to support them in the future."

Crystal Rondeau

"My name is Ada Diaz, and I am the Program Director for Youth, Violence Prevention, and Court Support Programs at the YWCA of Western Massachusetts. I am here to support our CEO and leader, Elizabeth Dineen, who is being nominated to receive an award from the Santa Club. As women, we seek equality and respect, and we believe that girls are capable of achieving everything that men can. That's my motto. We are here to fulfill a dream."

Ada Diaz-Garcia



"We represent the YWCA of Western Massachusetts. I'm Tiera, and this is Diana Guzman. We are here to support Elizabeth Deneen, our CEO. We're excited to see all the honorees, and we anticipate that it's going to be an incredible event."

Tiera Wright, Diana Guzman

"We're here tonight to celebrate Dr. Makari Judson. It's an honor to be here on her behalf, representing Rays of Hope."

Sandy & John Maybury



"My name is Ellen Freyman. I was invited by Cyd Melcher, but I am also here to support Liz Dineen, who I'm friends with. I'm here to support all the other women being honored as well."

Ellen Freyman

"My name is Roberta Bolduck. Dr. Makari-Judson serves on the board at Bay Path, and I've come to know her over the years. She is a brilliant woman, and we are incredibly fortunate to benefit from her contributions to Springfield, Bay State Medical Center, and the Bay State Cancer Center, specifically the Breast Cancer Center. She's a rock star."

Roberta Bolduc



"I'm looking forward to seeing people that I haven't seen in a while, right here in the community. I have already designated the award to an organization for black artists, which provides mentorship and leadership training for young black women and girls, along with a lot of advocacy and support. These are causes important to me. It's nice to be recognized by the community that I'm a part of."

Tanisha Arena

"I used to work at Zonta International in Chicago about 20 years ago, so I have always been interested in Zonta and have worked to help advance things for women and girls, which is what Zonta is all about. And this is my daughter; you can share why you've attended tonight." "I've heard so many amazing things about Zonta from my mom, and I'm excited to be here today to learn even more."

Rania Kfuri & Alia Ghaoui



"Hi, I'm Jen Petry. I'm a friend of Liz Reeves, who introduced me to Zonta International. While I'm not an active member, I fully support their mission. I'm very happy to help because it empowers women of all races, cultures, and creeds. I'm glad to be here. Thank you."

Jen Patrie

ZQV Board Meeting – March 17, 2025 @6pm Zoom

Present: Cyd Melcher, Mary Knight, Trish Pupek, Andreea Rotaru, Karen Keough-Huff **Absent:** Pam Albertson
Cyd called the meeting to order at 6:10.

March event: Very positive feedback. Andreea got some great quotes. We will publish those with pictures. Mary was able to get copies of speeches from Vanessa and Tanisha – they will be included in the next BOG. Cyd will reach out to Elizabeth Wills-O’Gilvie and let her know we look forward to meeting with her when she is up to it.

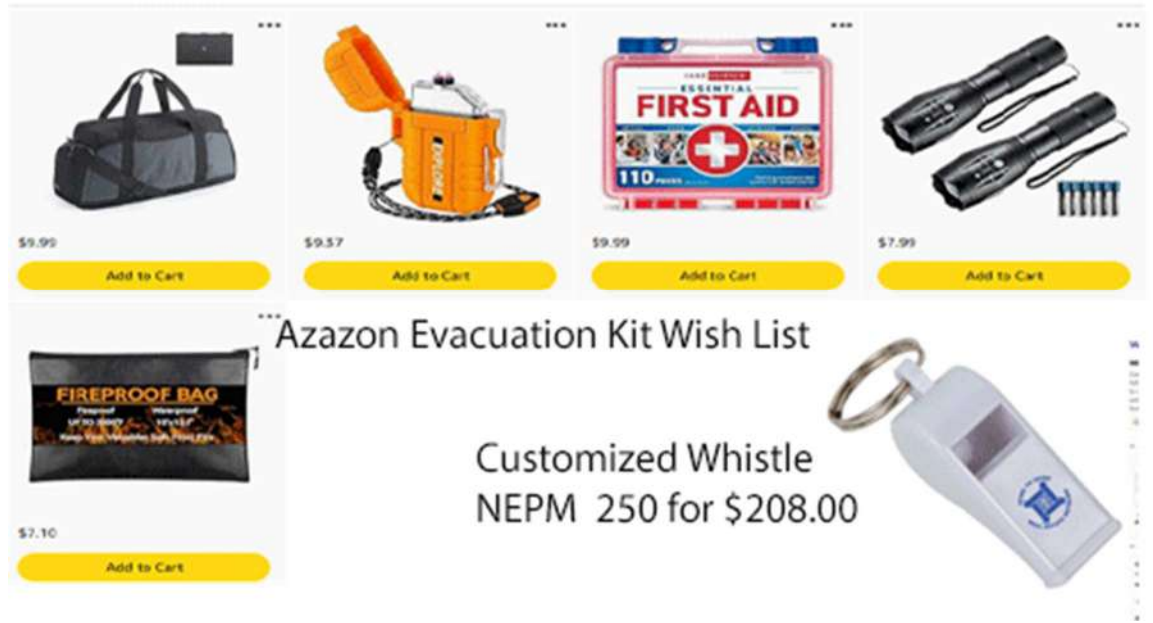
April 14th event with guest speaker Melissa Marshall. Mary needs to create a news release, Facebook event, web page and online registration for this event.

See <https://zontaqv.org/climate/>

We want to reach out to Triad groups, Red Cross representatives, disability advocates, etc. as the focus is on preparedness for disabled individuals.

We would also like to collect some items for go bags and hype the importance of planning for a climate emergency.

For the club’s consideration: Identify a go bag and a few items that would be helpful to include and put on an Amazon Wishlist. Buy a supply of whistles (ZQV logo) and handout with a pamphlet of suggestions for planning.



The club will be asked to vote on buying an initial quantity of the wish list items AND 250 whistles with Zonta label for use in this and other projects.

May Calendar raffle - ALL PRIZES NEEDED BY MARCH 26. Mary will publish what we have so far in the March newsletter along with suggested gift cards

Other items

Cyd would like to advertise upcoming World Affairs featuring Safleullah Safie and Nazifa Safie, refugees from Afghanistan who spoke with our club a couple of years ago.

Karen, Andreea and Trish will be traveling in April and unable to attend our dinner meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at about 6:50.

Mary Knight
Secretary



Zonta International Statement: Why our partnerships matter now more than ever

As global funding for development and humanitarian aid faces steep reductions, programs benefiting women and girls—already underfunded—are now even more vulnerable. That’s why support from the private sector and organizations like Zonta International is more vital than ever.

Thanks to your generosity, Zonta’s international service projects are continuing to deliver life-saving services and protect the rights of women and girls around the world.

Climate Empower, in partnership with UNFPA, protects women and girls from climate-induced violence in Madagascar, Mozambique and South Sudan.

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage remains committed to serving 12 countries, despite major funding shortfalls and reduced government aid.

Laaha, an innovative digital platform developed by UNICEF, continues to reach adolescent girls in crisis settings—providing vital information and support—even amidst a \$1.5M funding gap.

Despite uncertainty, Zonta International and the Zonta Foundation for Women—independent of government funding—remain committed to sustaining these programs and will keep members updated on progress and new developments.

Together, we are a steady force for change. Thank you for standing with us.

Read the full statement here: <https://lnkd.in/gyshXbyR>

The Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley will have a member guest meeting on May 12th with our Zonta Foundation for Women Ambassador Dr. Mary Ann Rubis as keynote speaker. We are hoping that all members will consider donating \$5 or more. to the Foundation at that time so we can publicly announce that “Our club and every member is behind Zonta’s efforts 100%.

Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley

Empowering women through service and advocacy

Calendar Fundraiser \$25 Donation

May 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Total value of gifts in this fundraiser total \$ 1300+ Sale of chances ends on 4/30 at 10pm.			Thank you for your support!	1 \$50 Penzeys Spices Gift Card	2 \$25 Pride Gift Card	3 \$50 The Boat House Gift Card
4 \$50 Talbot's Gift Card	5 \$25 Randall's Gift Card	6 \$25 Rocky's Hardware Card	7 \$50 Big Y Gift Card	8 \$25 Cracker Barrel Gift Card	9 \$25 Dunkin Gift Card	10 \$50 Penzeys Spices Card
11 Mother's Day Gift Basket *	12 \$25 Tractor Supply Gift Card	13 \$25 Starbucks' Gift Card	14 \$50 Big Y Gift Card	15 \$25 Dunkin Gift Card	16 \$25 Panera's Gift Card	17 \$60 Texas Road House Basket
18 \$50 REI and \$25 Amazon Gift Cards	19 \$25 LL Bean Gift Card	20 \$25 Olive Garden Gift Card	21 \$50 Big Y Gift Card	22 \$40 Cumberland Farm Gift Card	23 \$25 Dunkin Gift Card	24 \$45 Spice Sampler Box
25 \$40 Stop & Shop Gift Card	26 \$25 Panera's Gift Card	27 \$25 Krispy's Belchertown	28 \$50 Big Y Gift Card	29 \$25 Amazon Gift Card	30 \$25 Starbuck's Gift Card	31 \$40 Home Depot Gift Card
* Mother's Day Basket value is \$ 350+ Includes \$100 Casa di Lisa Gift Card, Spice Sampler box, potted plant, chocolates, gourmet items from Italy, and pampering items that will surprise and delight the winner.				Special thanks to sponsors and all members of the Quaboag Valley club. Your generosity is critical to our success in empowering women and girls.		

Drawings will be on each day of the month in May. Winning names will be re-entered into the remaining drawings. Proceeds from the sale of this fundraiser will be used to support the work of Zonta, locally and globally.

Please fill out information below and return it with your \$25 donation to a Zonta member **or mail with check** to Zonta of Quaboag Valley, P.O. 1034 Belchertown MA 01007 **or register and pay online at** <https://zontaqv.square.site/>

Rules: Starting May 1st, an announcement of the winner for that day will be posted by 6pm on www.facebook.com/ZontaQuaboagValley and at www.ZontaQV.org/calendar.

The winner will be notified by phone or email to arrange delivery. The winner's name will go back into the pot for the next drawing.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone # _____ Email: _____

Seller: _____