



# ZONTA

CLUB OF  
QUABOAG VALLEY

THE ZONTA BOG  
NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2025

## 2025 Dates—Mark your Calendar

**Monday June 9th— Member-Guest Potluck and Social at @ KeoughHuff home at 6pm**  
Final meeting before summer break.

**June 20-22, 2025—North American InterDistrict Meeting (NAIDM) –Detroit - [www.zontanaidm.org/](http://www.zontanaidm.org/)**

### SAVE THE DATES

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

**October 24-25—Fall District Conference**  
Embassy Suites, Boston Logan Airport.

**Zonta International Convention**  
July 11-14, 2026  
[www.zontaconvention.com/](http://www.zontaconvention.com/)



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



**Call to Action—This is more important than ever:** Please write or call your local legislators to support I AM Bill (SB.1549 / HB.2483) **Act to increase access to disposable menstrual products.** This will provide access to menstrual products in schools, shelters, and prisons.

Legislator lookup: [www.malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator](http://www.malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator).

Dear Zontians and Friends,

Our Zonta year is winding down. There is much to look back on with pride.

Our goal for the 2024-2025 fiscal year was to work on Membership, Visibility, Fundraising, Succession Planning and Fellowship.



**Membership** – We were pleased to be joined by **Cherie Braun, Andrea Rotaru, Connie Mahoney, Colleen Moynihan, Deborah Alm, Crystal Rondeau and Vanessa Pabón-Hernandez.** We were sad to hear that Dana Burton, Lisa Foster and Christine Chartier will not be renewing membership at this time.

**Visibility** – We continue to work on visibility with print and social media releases, partnering with like-minded organizations, and programming: We participated in Domestic Violence Awareness walks; promoted Zonta Says No to Violence Against Women on social media with the help of The Writing Sisters and attended Sheriff's Shuffle (YWCA of Western MA) and the Sneaker Soiree (Girls on the Run of Western MA). The leaders of Girls On the Run and YWCA were speakers in October and November. The annual Period Project and hands-on initiatives connected to our Service Grant program also help with diversifying exposure. Amelia Earhart is celebrated in January, and we were pleased to have three 2024 AE Fellows from MIT and Brown Universities to enlighten us on their PhD work in the Aerospace and System Engineering fields.

The International Women's Day program honored four local Women Making a Difference:

- Elizabeth Dineen, ED of YWCA W.MA**
- Tanisha Areana, ED of Arise for Social Justice**
- Grace Makari-Judson, Oncologist / Rays of Hope**
- Elizabeth Wills O'Gilvie, Director Springfield Food Policy Council and interim ED for Gardening the Community.**

Each was awarded \$500 donated to a cause they selected. **Vanessa Pabón-Hernandez, CEO of the Women's Fund of Western MA** was our keynote speaker and next year's honorary member.

In April we learned about the need for emergency evacuation plans specific to people with disabilities from **Melissa Marshall**, a climate activist.

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**Birthday wishes to**  
**Mary Ann Rubis 6/15**  
**Christine Chartier 6/19**



## Welcome to our Two New Members!



**Crystal Rondeau**, describes herself as being the person that she needed as a child. Her childhood trauma, years of therapy, and multiple wise mentors throughout her life have resulted in the person she is today; strong, confident and a natural advocate. Since receiving her bachelor degree in Criminal Justice: Offender Rehabilitation and Victim Advocacy, Summa Cum Laude, from Bay Path University she has worked with survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking. Whether in the court or in the community, it is Crystal’s goal that each person she provides services to is validated, their legal rights respected and given enough support to achieve self sufficiency. Crystal’s current role is Coordinator and Executive Director of the Palmer Domestic Violence Task Force. Crystal states that through attending multiple Zonta meetings she has been impressed with the quality of character and compassion of those she

has met there. So impressed, she wanted to become a member.

**Deborah Alm** has a longstanding commitment to international issues, particularly as they relate to young adults. She served as Director of the Springfield College International Center for over 30 years. Deb is an adjunct ESL lecturer at Springfield College and Baystate hospital. She has traveled extensively abroad and speaks a little bit of French and Japanese. She currently serves on the board of directors of the World Affairs Council of Western Massachusetts and is Vice President of the Old Post Road Orchestra. Deb has attended several Zonta meetings over the past three years and has enjoyed the speakers. She is very interested in service projects and has an extensive network she is willing to use to help promote scholarships and awards opportunities.



**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](http://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

## Business Meeting—May 12, 2025 6pm Ludlow Country Club

**Present:** Cyd Melcher, Mary Knight, Liz Reeves, Joanne Turner-Chiacchia, Pam Albertson, Cherie Braun, Mary Ann Rubis, Kris Goold, Debbie Wood, Connie Mahoney, Andreea Rotaru, Karen Keough-Huff, Trish Pupek, Colleen Moynihan

**Absent:** Chris Chartier, Marge Cavanaugh, Chris Keough-Huff, Dana Burton, Lisa Foster

**Guests:** Alegra Giovine, Colleen Ryan, Deb Sheppard, Liz Dineen and Tiera Wright

### Program: The Zonta Foundation for Women, Making a Difference Locally and Globally

Summarized by Andreea Rotaru: *“Tonight, we had the honor of hearing from Dr. Mary Ann Rubis, Zonta’s District 1 Ambassador for the Zonta Foundation for Women. She offered a heartfelt and thoughtful overview of our mission—what we stand for, how we serve, and why it matters. From global scholarships to local service grants, Mary Ann reminded us that Zonta isn’t just an organization—it’s a movement grounded in dignity, equity, and impact. Whether supporting education, ending violence against women, or empowering the next generation, we show up with purpose. Grateful for her leadership, clarity, and the inspiration she brought to the room tonight.”* **Mary Ann’s slides are worth reviewing; they have been posted to the District website: [www.zontadistrict1.org/resources/foundation-for-women/](http://www.zontadistrict1.org/resources/foundation-for-women/)** Members and guests were encouraged to donate to the Foundation tonight and many did! Special thanks to **Susan Seavor** who donated home-made scrub dishcloths that were handed out to donors. They will be available at future meetings for a \$5 donation.

### Service Grant Awards

Service Committee Chairs Dr. Mary Ann Rubis and Liz Reeves are proud to announce that the Spring 2025 Service Grants have been awarded to four organizations:



#### Girls on the Run Western Massachusetts

Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this spring, Girls on the Run is the only national out-of-school-time program of its kind, underscoring the important connection between physical and emotional health and empowering adolescent girls to build healthy physical and mental habits that last a lifetime. Program Manager Coleen Ryan shared how Zonta’s gift will help support youth who could not otherwise afford to participate. Zontians and supporters are encouraged to volunteer. There is something for any time commitment available.



#### Ware River Valley Domestic Violence Task Force

A community-driven, community-led task force covering Ware, Warren and Hardwick, this organization’s goal is to prevent and respond to domestic violence through community-led projects. Deb Shepard spoke about how Zonta’s gift will help support the Library Book Project on Consent and Boundaries for ages 0-8.



Book list:

[www.zontaqv.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/WRV-Consent-0-8yrs.pdf](http://www.zontaqv.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/WRV-Consent-0-8yrs.pdf)



#### YWCA of Western Massachusetts

With a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace justice, freedom and dignity for all, the YWCA serves women and children who are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and homelessness. CEO Liz Dineen, JD and Communications Director Tiera Wright shared that the grant will boost their efforts to educate families in the Y’s shelter about eating locally-sourced, fresh fruits and vegetables—and to show that it’s not just healthier, but more affordable too.



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### Girls Inc. of the Valley

A positive youth development organization serving Hampden County girls and young women ages 5-18, Girls Inc. provides hands-on programs that focus on long-term academic/literacy support and enrichment, social emotional skill-building, college and career readiness and leadership training to empower youth and prepare them for successful futures.

Executive Director Suzanne Parker and Lakisha Coppedge, Director of Licensed School Age Program, shared how Zonta's gift will underscore the girls' connection to the organization, increase their safety and increase the visibility of the organization in the community.



## Business Meeting

**Minutes from April meeting** – There being no questions, the minutes were accepted and filed.

**Treasurer Report** for April – There being no questions the report was accepted and filed for audit.

### Committee Reports

**Climate Action project** – Ad hoc meeting planned for 5/15 @6pm to discuss purchasing/acquiring 'go bags', an initial quantity of wish list items and a quantity of whistles with Zonta logo to distribute with an educational pamphlet advocating that households prepare to be disaster ready. Cherie, Connie, Trish, Crystal Rondeau, Mary and anyone else who is interested.

**Fundraising – May calendar** Volunteers are pulling a winner and doing notifications during May. \$2825 raised and a sizeable donation received; the board will be reviewing and report out in June.

**“Scholarship” Committee – Update on Women in Business and STEM Awards** – Trish shared that announcements have been sent to all higher ed Financial Aid offices. Help is needed in sharing the website [www.zontaqv.org/scholarships](http://www.zontaqv.org/scholarships) with all networks and in finding professors in our many colleges and universities that work with business and STEM majors and/or Women's Studies. If you have time to do some research, we will get targeted letters out in hopes of generating applications for these awards and forging relationships going forward.

**Golf Tournament Committee – Update on September event** – Debby shared information about sponsors and player signup – forms are available at [www.zontaqv.org/golf](http://www.zontaqv.org/golf). Karen announced that sign-up for tasks at the tournament will be circulated at the June meeting.

**June 9 – Member and Guest Potluck @ Keough Huff home in Belchertown**

### Other business:

Kris raised the issue that there are amazing women in the community who are willing to donate time and can add value to Zonta but are unable to afford dues or dinner costs. She made a motion to establish a stand-alone “scholarship fund” to support members in need. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously. Treasurer Joanne will accept donations of any amount earmarked for this fund. Checks should be made out to Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley, with “Member Scholarship” in the memo line.

### Other announcements:

All are invited to an open house at Top Floor Learning at the Palmer Library 5/15 @ 4-7pm. May Baskets (including one donated by our club and assembled by **Debbie Wood**- thank you!!) will be on display and tickets on sale for the June drawing. Pictures and info on baskets are being released at [facebook.com/topfloorlearningpalmer](https://facebook.com/topfloorlearningpalmer)

We adjourned at 7:45

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Knight, Secretary

**Continued from page 1— Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley Summary Report for 2024-2025**

In May, we learned about the work of the Zonta International Foundation for Women and progress on International Service Projects from Mary Ann Rubis, District 1 Foundation Ambassador.

**Fundraising** – We are making the club stronger with fund-raising and fund-giving.

We held three successful fundraisers: a golf tournament (\$7,454), poinsettia drive (\$2,794) and the May Calendar raffle (\$2,825). We also participated in fundraising for the club and District with Pampered Chef purchases – working with members Connie Mahoney and Patricia Pupek.

\$4,500 was donated this year to the Zonta Foundation for Women (funds raised in FY2023-2024)

Over \$5,500 was donated to a variety of projects sponsored by community partners, including Ware River Valley Taskforce, Girls on The Run, Girls Inc of the Valley, YWCA , and the Children’s Advocacy Center. During the December holidays we handed out gift cards to women and families in shelters and sent \$100 checks to local food banks. And we continued the tradition of donating a golf-themed basket to Top Floor Learning in Palmer for their fundraiser.

A \$1000 scholarship was awarded to YWPA winner **Veera Patel** (2024). We had no JMK Women in Business applicants.

**Succession Planning and Fellowship** - We strive to live the Zonta Spirit - recognizing we are all volunteers with important responsibilities outside of Zonta, we support each other in every way we can. We chose to make most of our meetings in person this year at the request of our members. September, December, and June meetings are mostly socializing and fun get-togethers

To provide greater exposure to the networking opportunities in Zonta, we encouraged member participation in the Commission on the Status of Women in NYC, the North American InterDistrict Meeting (Detroit), District Fall Conference (Boston), International Convention (Vancouver, British Columbia), and online webinars offered on topics of interest; summaries of event highlights and links to workshop materials are shared.

The greatest challenge the Quaboag Valley Club faces is sustainability – we need to get new members onboard and assimilated, grow leadership, and use everyone’s time wisely to avoid burnout. We have a good cadre of enthusiastic newer members who are being mentored to share leadership responsibilities. As we enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the biennium and get ready to nominate members for the 2026-2028 Board of Directors and select Committee Chairs, each member is asked to seriously consider stepping out of their comfort zone and stepping up to a leadership position.

Thanks to the current Board and Committees for their dedication and commitment, and thanks to all members for supporting the club and the mission of Zonta. You are making a difference.

Cyd Melcher,  
President



JOIN US FOR A

# ZONTA POTLUCK

Last meeting before summer break - a little business, some tasty food, and a lot of fun!

MONDAY JUNE 9, 2025

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Keough-Huff Home  
357 Stebbins St.  
Belchertown



## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Annual Report** - The accomplishments and challenges of FY2025.
- **Shared Leadership** - step forward, collaborate, let's create our success story, together..
- **District Conference 2025** - 10/24-26 Boston - Stronger Together: Leading with Strength, Positivity, and Resilience

## WHAT TO BRING

- **Food item to share** - appetizer, main dish, side dish, or dessert.
- **Beverage of choice** - water provided.
- **A guest or two** - opportunity to network informally, show our Zonta spirit.
- **Ideas** - your voice matters!

*Bring your enthusiasm, and let's celebrate each other!*

Please share. Or send interested golfers to [zontaqv.org/golf](http://zontaqv.org/golf). Keep your eyes out for raffle items (baskets and gift cards) and check in with Karen and Debbie on how to help on 9/6.



# ZONTA GOLF TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2025  
COLD SPRING CC BELCHERTOWN

**8:30 a.m. Shotgun Start - 18 Hole Scramble**

Your support helps strengthen our organization, allowing us to continue providing the important community and worldwide service projects that further Zonta's vision of a world in which women's rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential. In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on an equal basis with men. In such a world, no woman lives in fear of violence.

Register and pay online at [zontaqv.square.site](http://zontaqv.square.site)

Or

Mail Registration AND Payment by September 1<sup>st</sup> to  
Zonta of Quaboag Valley PO Box 1034, Belchertown MA 01007

Questions: (413) 219-8260

Email: [info@zontaqv.org](mailto:info@zontaqv.org)

Saturday 9/6  
8:30 Shotgun

\$120 /Person  
Includes  
Greens Fees, Cart  
Coffee & Pastries  
Boxed Lunch  
Raffles & Prizes  
Day of Fun for a  
Worthy Cause

Registration Form,  
Online payment,  
and Details:  
[zontaqv.org/golf](http://zontaqv.org/golf)



[ZontaDistrict1.org/fall-conference-2025/](https://ZontaDistrict1.org/fall-conference-2025/)



**ZONTA**  
INTERNATIONAL  

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**DISTRICT 1**

**STRONGER TOGETHER**  
Leading with Strength, Positivity and Resilience

Embassy Suites at  
Boston Logan Airport  
October 24 -26, 2025

