



Zonta Club of Concord

Newsletter February 2020

Happy February

One 12th of 2020 is gone already. Did you set goals for this year? Have you accomplished a 12th of them? Whether it's the number of books you intend to read, the number of miles you intend to run, the poems you want to write, the sales you will make or whatever your personal goals were, it might seem as though time is slipping away from you, and that can be discouraging. It's important to remember that not all measurements should be linear. For instance, it's easier to run when there is no snow and ice on the ground, so May-November can be catch-up months. You really don't have any control of when the muse will visit you with poetic inspiration, so you have to be content with what appears when it appears. I usually read the bulk of my books when I'm on vacation, and I haven't been on vacation yet, so the 1 ½ books I've read this month is okay.

What are your Zonta goals? To attend at least 8 of our 9 meetings? To be more active in whatever committee(s) you signed up for? To recruit at least one new GREAT member? To attend Spring Workshop? To go to the Convention in Chicago? To volunteer for all the wonderful projects the Service Committee is working on (which you'll hear about at the February business meeting)?

Now would be the time to decide which ones can be attained now and which ones need to be postponed until later. And then make an intention to accomplish the ones you can immediately and to put the other ones on your official to-do list or on your calendar. We have the best club in our Area, in our District, perhaps in the whole world...in my opinion. It's up to every single one of us to make sure it stays that way. Remember that pledge we made when we were installed? To

"serve enthusiastically"? What's your Zonta enthusiasm?

VITA

At our January meeting, Cary Gladstone talked to us about United Way's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Remember to tell anyone you know who might be eligible about this free program, especially single mothers. And if the program sparked your interest enough to want to investigate volunteering your time in some way, give Cary a call at 603.625.6939 x 128.

*I raise up my voice—not
so that I can shout, but
so that those without a
voice can be heard. ...
We cannot all succeed
when half of us are held
back.
Malala Yousafzai*

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Our next business meeting will be February 5 in the back room (our regular room downstairs) at the Red Blazer. Social time is 5:30-6:00, and our meeting will officially start at

6:00. We will be installing our new members, Dulcinea and Susan.

Also, Representative Mary Jane Wallner and Moira O'Neil of the NH Office of the Child Advocate will talk to us about bills that have been introduced that affect women and girls. Part of our Zonta mission is advocacy, and we live in a state where it is very easy to advocate for bills that empower women and girls and to advocate against those that don't. Our reps are very accessible (especially the one who is a Zonta member) and a phone call, letter or email can have enormous impact. Mary Jane and Moira will help us determine where our attention should be.

ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

Certainly one of our opportunities will be to advocate for a bill to raise the minimum age for marriage. Our club has been invited to join the National Coalition to End Child Marriage in the US to work on the bill that will be before our legislators sometime in March. Other Zonta clubs across the country have been helpful in raising the age to 18 in their states, and they look forward to our assistance, too. One of the ways they are asking us to help is to have a postcard-writing party. We will send postcards to our legislators asking them to support the bill.

Another way will be to have a presence in their "Chain-In", which will be a march to the State House with women dressed in white wedding gowns carrying chains, the symbol for ending child marriage.

While most US states set 18 as the minimum age for marriage, exceptions in every jurisdiction exist which allow children younger to wed, typically with parental consent or judicial approval.

As a result of such legal loopholes, more than 167,000 children as young as 12 were married in 38 states in the US between 2000 and 2010, according to marriage license data collected by Unchained At Last, the nonprofit dedicated to ending child and forced marriage in the country. We need to at least raise the minimum age to 18 in NH.

March will be a busy month for this issue, and our Board of Directors have talked about this with enthusiasm. We hope our members will be as determined to join us.

I urge you to go to Youtube and watch the TED Talk by Fraidy Reiss, who founded Unchained at Last and who talks about her own experience with child marriage and how she escaped it.

ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE INTERNATIONALLY

As you know, our club as a whole and members individually have been supportive of the projects that Zonta International have funded. One of them is to end child marriage in Madagascar. On January 28 ZI put on a webinar to educate members about progress. If you didn't have a chance to see it, it can be found on the ZI website on the "Membership" page.

The project has three components: a Life Skills Class, the Mother Leader program and Cash Transfers.

In the Life Skills Class for girls ages 10-18, they are taught to empower themselves with knowledge. They are taught about the dangers of early pregnancies, the importance of education and how to have confidence and self-worth. The videos show their enthusiasm, especially with one young woman who was 15 (but because of the widespread malnutrition looked to be much younger). She talked about how she got pregnant because of her lack of knowledge and, although she loved her baby, yearned to play with her friends and envied them when she saw them walking to school in their uniforms. After taking the class, her goal was to finish her education, to become a midwife and to teach her son

to have the confidence to become the President of the republic!

Another story was of the program advocating for a young girl to persuade her parents not to marry her off to an older man.

The Mother Leader classes train women to lead other women in menstrual hygiene, safe water, nutrition, the importance of girls' education and the negative consequences of early marriage.

The Cash Transfers program provides poor families with \$3 US every other month for every child that goes to school with the goal of relieving poverty by allowing for the purchase of food, water, medicine and education materials. Three dollars buys a cup of coffee for us, but for these families it can mean the difference between health and illness, education and misinformation, eating healthy and malnutrition.

If you have a chance to watch the video on Zontainternational.org you'll be proud of the work you did to help raise funds to send to ZI and for the personal donation you might have made.

Women are always saying, 'We can do anything that men can do.' But men should be saying, 'We can do anything that women can do.'

Gloria Steinem

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

In 2012, the UN General Assembly designated February 6 as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, with the aim to eliminate this practice in one generation, by the year 2030. Although a cultural practice for thousands of years in Africa and the Middle East, it is also practiced by people who have immigrated to other parts of the world, including the US. The definition of FGM is all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. As an NGO of the United Nations, Zonta abhors this practice and supports all efforts to eliminate it. While you are on YouTube looking for the Fraidy Reiss TED Talk, watch some of the excellent ones on FGM.

THE PERIOD PROJECT

Remember that the Service Committee is asking us to tell all our friends and acquaintances that we are collecting feminine hygiene supplies for homeless women as a way to empower them. The easiest way to do this is to click on Zonta's registry on Amazon. You can add it to any order or order it separately, and it will be sent directly to our

collection place. If you have Amazon Prime, with no shipping costs. Alternately, you can bring any donations to a meeting and give them to Susan L. We are especially in need of tampons and feminine wipes.

Thanks for being an empowering Zontian.

SAVE THE DATE

AREA 1 SPRING WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2020

**SOUTHERN MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PORTLAND, MAINE**

Featured Speaker: Maureen Farmer, Zonta Club of Halifax



Maureen Farmer is president and founder of an international personal branding and career coaching firm. She has amassed a combined 30 years of experience in the corporate world having earned one of the most elite résumé-writing designations in the world