

Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley Summary Report for 2024-2025

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 other programs this year we learned about the need for emergency evacuation plans specific to people with disabilities from Melissa Marshall, a climate activist and progress on International Service Projects from Mary Ann Rubis, District 1's Ambassador for the Zonta International Foundation for Women.

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 2nd 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.