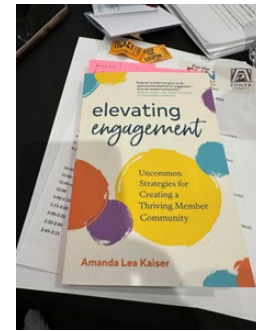


DISTRICT 7 NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2026

LEADING INTO SPRING

April is the month for area meetings, held annually to connect across our clubs in the district. The theme of this year's area meetings was **Putting the Fun Back in the Fundamentals**—exploring ways to elevate member engagement and club success. Each member received a copy of Amanda Lee Kaiser's book, *Elevating Engagement: Uncommon Strategies for Creating a Thriving Member Community*. The interactive discussions, led by the area directors, explored ways to elevate engagement and club health through six steps: observe, assess, participate, contribute, collaborate, and lead. Members shared stories and ideas, identified opportunities, and



At both area meetings, Governor Jane Austin highlighted the importance of upcoming elections and changes in leadership at club and international levels for the next biennium. Lieutenant Governor Penny Briese shared information about “Fit for the Future” Club Health Assessment tools that will be coming soon from Zonta International. Tania Hughes-Kremer updated us on the Zonta Foundation for Women (ZFW): as of March 31st, Zontians contributions have achieved 99% of the overall biennium goal! Those funds support the Young Women in Leadership Awards, International Service Programs, Amelia Earhart Fellowship, and the Rose Fund (which also supports the Women in Business Leadership and Women in STEM awards). Our district is well on its way of meeting our biennium goals of 100% of active clubs and 50% of individual members contributing to ZFW, and greater contributions of clubs and members to the Endowment Fund. As always, our members contributed generously to the Foundation—\$3200 raised in Minneapolis and \$1460 raised in Kansas City, for a total of \$4460. Sincere thanks for your amazing generosity!

The **Zonta Club of Minneapolis St Paul** hosted the **Area 1&3** meeting on April 10th and 11th at the Embassy Suites Minneapolis Airport in Minneapolis; 36 attended, representing all six clubs. We started Friday night with some shopping in the Mall of America while others took the challenge of the Escape Rooms; later all then gathered for socializing in the hotel restaurant. Area directors Nancy Pranke and Deb Kellerman led us in the discussions about elevating engagement in clubs. Our lunch speaker was Maureen Gustafson, Mankato Club; Programs and Donor Relations Director at the Mankato Area Foundation. She spoke of her experiences of bringing diverse groups together on collaborative projects to address needs in the community and attracting members. In the afternoon, members shared club practices, ideas, and successes in fundraising, service, and advocacy via round tables.

The **Zonta Club of Kansas City** hosted the **Area 2&4** meeting on April 24th and 25th at the SpringHill Suites by Marriot Overland Park. Nineteen attended from Jefferson City, Cape Girardeau, and Kansas City. Area directors Ruthi Sturdevant and Marcia Charney led the morning discussions on elevating member engagement. Lunch speaker Marissa Swearingen gave a presentation on her work with *Days for Girls* (<https://www.daysforgirls.org>), which works to eliminate the stigma and limitations associated with menstruation so that women and girls have improved health, education, and livelihoods. Marissa showed the innovative kit provided to girls and women, designed for use in areas that have limited water and sanitary access, the associated educational programs, and how kits are distributed via charities. Volunteer opportunities to help prepare and pack menstrual kits happen weekly at the Liberty KS collection

warehouse (www.facebook.com/groups/210028409401369/). In the afternoon, members shared club practices, ideas, and successes in fundraising service, and advocacy.

At both area meetings, we had fun and energizing weekends of meeting new and old friends, sharing stories and ideas, and sharing our passion for the mission for Zonta. Sincere thanks to our host clubs Minneapolis and Kansas City, and to our area directors for organizing two great events!



Area 1 & 3 - Minneapolis



Area 2 & 4 - Kansas City



affle Tickets
\$ 5.00 each
or
3 for \$10.00

Zonta Club of St Cloud Celebrates their 75th anniversary

In 2025, the St. Cloud club distributed \$42,240 in scholarships, local projects, and international initiatives. Nearly \$40,000 will be distributed in 2026. "For 75 years, we have stood as a bridge between a woman's potential and her success," says Rachel Thompson, Club President. "While we celebrate our local roots and our support of Zonta International's global projects, we are looking toward the next 75 years.

At their celebration event on April 9th, the St Cloud mayor provided a Mayoral Proclamation officially recognizing Zonta's 75 years of service to St. Cloud, an annual scholarship awards was presented to a local young woman pursuing higher education, Deb Kellerman gave a tribute to the past 75 years of service and impact with stories and highlights, and keynote speaker Kim Nagle, author of *The DAMN Plan*®, presented "Bold Truth. Bigger Moves: Legacy in Motion for Leaders Who Decide — and Deliver".



Zonta Club of Austin MN Celebrates their 75th Anniversary

Just under 100 women joined the Zonta Club of Austin MN for a fun evening celebrating 75 years of Zonta and honoring women in our community. After a fantastic dinner, everyone was treated to a video on what Zonta has done in our community. We honored one of two Young Women in Leadership winners, Adah Juliana Baron, and our Nontraditional scholarship winner Miraha Baseman. We played two games of Heads or Tails where merchants donate items and the baskets gave a value of over \$250 or more. There were over 36 baskets for attendees to place tickets in to win once the drawing took place. It was a great night for everyone in attendance!





My Zonta

2026 Club Mailing



MyZonta → Tools → 2026 Club Mailing

Zonta International has provided a wealth of information in the 2026 Club mailing—not just for those attending the Vancouver international convention, but also about the future directions of Zonta. I encourage all members to delve into these topics, not only inform your club delegates, who will be voting on some of these topics, but also so that you are aware of our international programs, educational awards for the next biennium, membership strategy, and possible restructuring how Zonta functions, from clubs to the international board. The Zonta International Board seeks members input to direct policy and programs going forward. Some key items to read:

- ❖ Zonta International Membership Strategy
- ❖ Governance Blueprint for the Future Executive Summary
- ❖ Report on Alternative Funding and Revenue Sources Feasibility Study
- ❖ Proposed 2026-2028 International Projects
- ❖ 2026-2028 Education Programs
- ❖ 2026-2028 Zonta Community Give Back Grants



Zonta Advocacy Series

Tuesday, May 26—*the final Zonta Advocacy Series webinar of the 2024-2026 Biennium:*

CyberSecurity for Women and Girls

https://zonta.org/Web/Web/News_Events/

New to Zonta? Or just need a refresher?

Join the Zonta Headquarters Membership Team on a live Zoom meeting to welcome you. They provide a history of Zonta, the programs we support, resources available to you, and an opportunity to meet with a member of the International Membership Committee. The next ones will be held on **21 May, 16 July, and 17 September** at 10 am or 6 pm. To register, go to [Zonta.org](https://zonta.org) → *Events*. If you miss one of these, check there for later dates.

Understanding the Zonta Foundation for Women (ZFW)

Why do we keep donating? For a deeper understanding about how funding to the Zonta Foundation of Women make a difference and are managed, I strongly encourage you to read the annual reports of our international programs — [https://zonta.org/Web/About/Financial Information/Annual Report](https://zonta.org/Web/About/Financial%20Information/Annual%20Report).

One of our international programs supported by the Foundation is the [ClimateEmpower programme](#)—relating the impacts of a heating climate on women and girls. To learn more about this program, read the article *Climate change, gender inequality – and the power of partnerships in fragile contexts* --- https://zonta.org/Web/News_Events/Articles/ClimateChangeGenderInequalityPowerofPartnershipsUNFPAZonta.aspx

Zonta International (ZI) and the Zonta Foundation for Women (ZFW) are financially efficient, fully transparent and accountable to both our members and donors. ZI and ZFW do not receive any funding from the U.S. or other governments. Money send to ZI and ZFW is 200% safe and will go to its intended purposes.

The Foundation is a way we can make a difference beyond our immediate communities. There are multiple ways to donate, and it's easy! Go to zonta.org → **Your Support** → **Donate Now**.

Learn. Share. Try. Be king. Support all.
Be generous. Be here with a purpose.
Look beyond today. Together we discover.
Have fun with a purpose!

As we move into summer, keep in touch with your fellow Zontians throughout the district, and let us know what you are doing!

Celebrate all that we do by sharing our stories on Facebook, in your community, and contribute to Zonta's "Share your Stories."

Have a great summer!

THE CEREMONY OF SHARED VOICES

*The teachings tell us
that wisdom does not rise alone—
it grows where stories gather,
rooted in the warmth of listening.
Each word offered in sincerity
is a seed placed in open hands,
a quiet promise
that understanding will bloom
in its rightful season.
Community is the circle
that does not close out anyone;
it widens with every truth spoken,
every kindness exchanged,
every memory carried forward.
And in that circle,
we learn the heart's oldest lesson:
that strength becomes sacred
only when it is shared—
a gift passed gently
from one spirit to the next.*

Nativespirit79.com

Celebrating diversity in your club

Below are some tips from the Greater Diversity Working Group and Membership Committee to help build and celebrate diversity within your club and community.



1. Create a welcoming community.

Make space for different voices and viewpoints to be heard so your community can continue growing and be known for being inclusive. By being accommodating and welcoming, you make stronger connections as people will feel comfortable and supported. Remember, people act to their best abilities when they feel accepted and valued.



2. Pay attention to what is important.

Not everyone will celebrate the same holidays. Develop a cultural calendar and join in on the festive days. Build new traditions while driving more visibility to the differences represented in the members of your club and community. Also, be respectful of observed days that are more somber.



3. Build a learning environment.

Keep an open mind and let expression grow in a brave space. From attending cultural events such as book clubs, musical performances, art showings or film screenings to hosting guest speakers – there is an opportunity to highlight the journeys people across the globe take in their lives. While not all paths are the same, the spirit and heart of encouraging and supporting others are universal.



4. Be mindful of barriers.

Differences in language can be frightening to people as they do not want to misspeak in their second or third language. Try to avoid jargon or phrases that do not translate well or could be misunderstood as offensive. Generational barriers can also prevent the easiest flow of communication. Offer trainings to get members on the same platform or remind the group to communicate in ways where everyone can get the message. Utilizing different translation tools, which you can [find on our Translations Toolkit](#), will help share information without causing excessive confusion.