

ZONTA ZEST

Zonta Club of St. Louis

President's Message to the Club

Dear Zonta Sisters,

As I sit down to write this message and reflect on 2025, my heart is full of gratitude and pride. What an incredible year it has been for our Zonta Club of St. Louis! Together, we've made a real impact by championing women and girls, building connections, and lifting up our community in ways big and small.



👉 Community in Action

This year, our members truly embodied the Zonta spirit by rolling up their sleeves and working alongside some amazing organizations. Whether it was packing diapers at the St. Louis Area Diaper Bank, filling Alleluia Baskets, supporting The Women's Safe House, or lending a hand at Rung for Women, Valeda's Hope, Gateway Alliance Against Human Trafficking, The Salvation Army, and Grandma's Hands—we were there, making a difference. Thank you for bringing your passion and kindness to every project!

🎓 Investing in Future Leaders

Empowering women and girls through education lies at the heart of Zonta's mission. I'm so proud of the scholarships our club has awarded in 2025: the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award, Zonta Women in STEM Award, Women's Another Chance (WAC) Scholarships, and our endowed scholarships at Saint Louis University, Washington University in St. Louis, Barnes-Jewish College Goldfarb School of Nursing, and Maryville University. Of course, we cannot forget our amazing partnership with Charity Clothing Pick Up that helps generate funds for the WAC scholarships.

 Supporting St. Louis

Our club also extended grant funding to organizations doing vital work in our city: Immigrant Home English Learning Program, Hope Ignites, Welcome Neighbor STL, Girls in the Know, St. Louis Public Library, and the Kathy J Weinman Shelter. These partnerships are at the core of our mission, and I'm so grateful for the ways we've been able to support them.

 Celebrating Growth and Milestones

One of my favorite highlights this year was welcoming four new members—Bee, Mezzy, Jessica, and Staycee! With their energy and ideas, we are now a group of 40 dedicated Zontians. We also took time to celebrate member anniversaries: 5, 10, 15, 20, and even an amazing 50 years of service – Congratulations again, Uma! And how about our November 13th Centennial Celebration? Launching the Centennial Scholarship and raising over \$24,000 for future leaders—it was a celebration to remember!

If you could not be there or want to experience it again, be sure to check out this 10 minute [Centennial Celebration Video](#), and much shorter [highlights reel](#), both courtesy of Maryville student, Brett Belpulsi. You can also view event [photos](#), courtesy of Audrey Branson Photography (another Maryville student).

 Looking Ahead

As we step into 2026, I want you to know how grateful I am for each and every one of you. Your dedication, generosity, and spirit are what make our club so special. Together, we'll keep empowering women, advocating for equality, and supporting the next generation.

With deep gratitude,

Stacy Donovan
President, Zonta Club of St. Louis

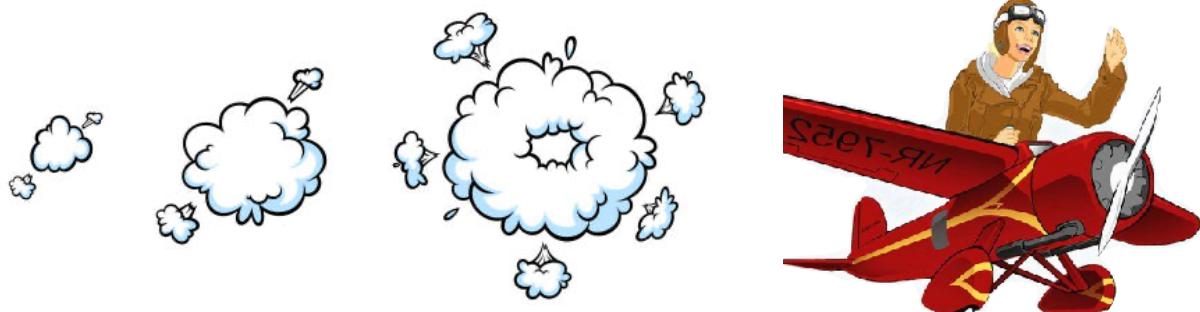


January Board Meeting Updates:

- President Stacy Donovan made appointments to fill vacancies and appointments were approved by the board.
 - Ellen Embry moving to Vice President position
 - Mary D'Angelo and Linda White moving to Membership committee co-chairs
 - Sue Ellbogen will remain with Service
- Kay Moss is working with Charity Clothing Pickup on a possible postcard mailing.
- The WAC committee is gearing up in preparation for selecting some new applicants
- Centennial Celebration committee met and still has some things to complete:
 - Centennial Celebration committee forming now to decide best use of funds raised.
- Laura Burton checking into partnering with St. Louis Libraries to display information about Zonta.
- Irene Geer funds will be utilized to help cover costs associated with subsidizing student tickets at Centennial Celebration. It had previously been approved to use up to \$10,000. The discussion was tabled until the event finance report is completed.
- Discussion on whether to donate part of our funds from the Centennial Celebration to ZI ensued. There was basically no profit from the event. There were donations made to the Centennial Scholarship fund which were separate.
- ZI's Women in Business Leadership Award's due date has been changed making us question whether it's moving to an every-other-year award. Peggy Gilbertson is awaiting answers from ZI.
- The board will be looking at the Sharon Carmody Award. Application criteria will be modified to narrow the applicant group. There's a possibility that it will change from a rolling award over 2 years with a mentor to a one time award.
- Women in STEM Awardees have been selected and the STEM committee asked to increase their award budget to award two women instead of one. Watch for the February ZEST featuring awardees!

Membership Meeting

Let's Celebrate Amelia Earhart and Women in STEM!



**ZONTA CLUB
OF ST. LOUIS**

**JANUARY 22, 2026
6:00 – 8:00 PM**

**AMELIA EARHART
EVENT**

**HYBRID (IN-PERSON &
ZOOM)**

RSVP BY JANUARY 15

EVENT CONTACT

**STACY DONOVAN
901-299-7759**

Program

6:00 pm CST Fellowship (optional)

6:30 pm Program Begins
Recognition of Victoria Lisson
(2025 Women in STEM Award Recipient)

6:35 pm Panel – Data Driven Futures
Moderated by: Bee Girresch
Dr. Beth Cudney (Maryville University)
Dr. Akanksha Maurya (Maryville University)
Kelsey Brown (Shore Capital, Chicago)

7:30 pm Adjourn

IN-PERSON LOCATION

Maryville University, Walker Hall, Room 150
(650 Maryville University Drive, St. Louis, MO, 63141)
[campus map with parking](#) Click for (park in lot 12)

ZOOM INFO

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84688903903?pwd=xfrEZiEJveMTO34b8K1XlJqDL6qyBM.1>

Passcode: zonta

Dial by your location
+1 646 931 3860 US
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
Meeting ID: 846 88903903
Passcode: 365451

January is Amelia Earhart Celebration Month!

Continue Celebrating by joining the
Amelia Earhart Book Club sponsored by the
STEM Committee!



Hidden Figures
by Margot Lee Shetterly.



We will have our next Book
Club Meeting:

January 19th

6:00pm

Linda White hosting
6518 Colleen Avenue
Affton, MO 63123

RSVP with Linda at

lindawhite.stl@gmail.com

Reading the book is highly
encouraged but not a
requirement to attend:)

Christmas at Judy's... and Zontians in ACTION!



Zonta holiday party hosted by Judy Jensen. Members collected socks, gloves, hats, and earmuffs that were donated to Grandma's Hands through Staycee Dixson.

Thank you Judy for hosting a wonderful get-together! Much fun was had by all!!

Meet Our Newest Club Member!

Staycee Dixson

Staycee Dixson has over 23 years of experience in early childhood education and 14 years serving foster youth, dedicating her career to advocacy, education, and community building.

In 2022, she graduated from Central Methodist University with a B.A. in Early Childhood & Elementary Education, a milestone made possible in part by the Woman's Another Chance Scholarship from the Zonta Club of St. Louis. This support allowed her to complete her degree and continue her mission of serving children and families.

Staycee is a Certified First Aid & CPR Instructor with the American Red Cross and a CDA Professional Specialist with the CDA Council. She is also a poet, organizer, activist, and church leader—serving as a Youth Leader, Greeter Leader, and Small Group Leader at Church on the Rock. She curates impactful events such as *Illuminating Hope: A Day Honoring Foster Care Champions* and the *Rise Up Youth Conference*, both reflecting her passion for equity, healing, and empowerment. She is excited to bring her experience and vision to the Zonta Club of St. Louis, the very organization that helped her reach this key milestone.



Zontians in *ACTION* - *Sign Up Opportunities*



Zonta Club of St. Louis - January Service Project

Our January service project turned into a February service project due to bad weather! Those interested in helping out can meet us at Alleluia Baskets headquarters this Monday. The Alleluia Baskets organization provides Easter Baskets for underprivileged families.

The website is www.alleluiabaskets.org

We will meet at their new headquarters:

**401 E. Wabash Street
O'Fallon, Missouri 63366**

**Thursday - January 29. 2026
10:00am - 11:00am**

We will be assembling baskets which will be distributed at Easter by various non-profit organizations. We can have up to 12 volunteers. There's the possibility of lunching together afterwards for those interested.

**Suggested Donations to Bring With You:
Boys Socks, Diaper Wipes, Teen Deodorant**

**Please contact Sue Ellbogen if you are interested in participating:
ssellbogen@gmail.com**

Zontians in *ACTION* - *Sign Up Opportunities*



FEBRUARY SERVICE PROJECT

On **Saturday, February 28th from 12:30-2:30** we will work to count/sort/package diapers and period kits to get them ready for their community sponsors at their warehouse,

6141 Etzel Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63133

To ensure we have an accurate headcount and liability waivers for everyone, all participants must register prior to the event using a link that will be provided

- A minimum of 7 volunteers is required to participate, with a maximum of 20. All 7 minimum volunteers must be registered using the link above no later than 5 days before your service date (by Tuesday, February 23, 2026).
- If your registered group size falls below the 7-person minimum by the deadline, we may have to reschedule
- Volunteers must be 13 years of age or older. For groups with volunteers aged 13–18, we ask for 3–4 adult chaperones to join the group.
- We should host a supply drive in conjunction with the day of service. This ensures more options for activities as well as seeing the full process at the warehouse.

**If you are interested in volunteering,
please contact Sue Ellbogen**

ssellbogen@gmail.com

Bring a friend!!

SAVE THE DATE

Bloody Mary Brunch 2026

Sunday, March 29, 2026
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m

Center of Creative Arts (COCA)
6880 Washington Ave., St. Louis, MO 63130

Did you miss out on the fun last year? Or maybe you're just ready for a refill?

Either way, get ready to raise a glass because our 6th Annual Bloody Mary Brunch is back—and bigger than ever. We are officially outgrowing the warehouse! This year, we're taking the party to the stunning COCA - Center of Creative Arts.

What could be better than a Sunday morning boozy brunch with friends while fighting to end period poverty in St. Louis? Take a look at the magic from 2025 to see what's in store!



[Purchase Ticket Here](#)

Centennial Celebration Video



Judy Jensen with Maryville student, Brett Belpulsi, recording voice over for the Centennial highlights reel in the podcast room at Maryville University.

[Link to video](#)

Centennial Scholarship Committee Forming!

A committee is being formed to plan the direction of the new Centennial scholarship that will be awarded as a result of the generous donations we received at the Centennial luncheon. We need to decide on the scholarship name, target group, application criteria, the amount, how many to award and over how many years, how to market it, etc.

Peggy Gilbertson and Sherri Brown will co-chair this committee. The earliest it will be made available for students to apply will most likely be Fall of 2026. If you are interested in being part of the committee, please reach out to Peggy at gilbertson.peggy@gmail.com.



Congratulations to
Cynthia Kirkpatrick!
for being honored in the *St. Louis - Small Business Monthly* magazine!
Read the article: "St. Louis' Most Admired Business Leaders - Learn How They Are Making St. Louis A Better Place".

(pg 25 - [STL SBM January 2026 - Powered by PageTurnPro.com](#)).

ZONTA International Convention

JULY 11th - 14th

Registration is OPEN!

* Early Bird Registration ends March 15th



[REGISTER](#)



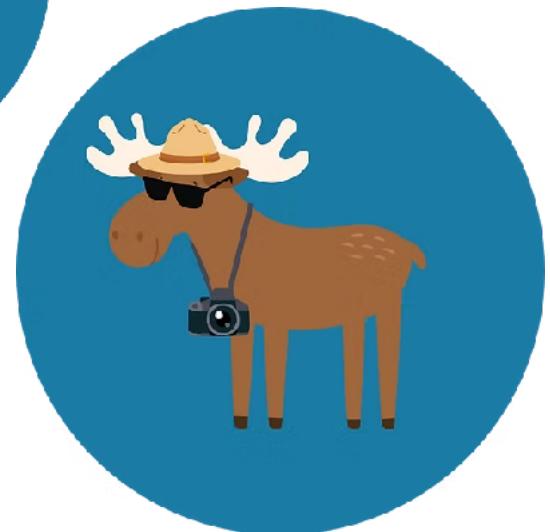
[DISCOUNTED AIR FARE](#)



[VOLUNTEER](#)



[CHECK OUT TICKETED EVENTS](#)



[EXPLORE DAILY TOURS](#)

Zonta International

AMELIA EARHART MONTH

1-31 January 2026

Each January, Zonta International celebrates the spirit and impact of legendary pilot Amelia Earhart, one of our most famous former members.

ZONTA SAYS NOW INTERCONTINENTAL THINK TANK

10 January 2026

All members are welcome to join the Zonta Says NOW to Gender-Equal Climate Action Intercontinental Think Tank. Come share your ideas and gather inspiration on how we can address Gender-Equal Climate Action NOW!



REGISTER

9:00pm CT

AMELIA EARHART DAY

11 January 2026

Zonta International celebrates Amelia Earhart Day, commemorating her historic solo flight across the Pacific Ocean from Hawaii to the United States mainland in 1935. This day also highlights the Amelia Earhart Fellowship, a program that supports women pursuing advanced studies in aerospace-related fields.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

15 January 2026

Are you new to Zonta? Join the Zonta Headquarters Membership Team on this meeting and let us welcome you. We will 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.

REGISTER

Option 1
9:00am CT

REGISTER

Option 2
6:00pm CT

Zonta International

CSW70 CONVERSATION CIRCLES - ENSURING AND STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

21 January 2026

Get ready for CSW70 with Pamela Morgan with a session on ensuring and strengthening access to justice for women and girls.

[REGISTER](#)

Option 1
9:00am CT

[REGISTER](#)

Option 2
4:00pm CT

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION

24 January 2026

The International Day of Education celebrates education's role in peace and development. Zonta International believes that education is essential, especially for women and girls.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN AMELIA EARHART FELLOW

26 January 2026

Join Zonta International as we hear from three past Amelia Earhart fellows about their journeys since receiving the prestigious fellowship.

[REGISTER](#)

11:00am CT

COFFEE CHATS WITH SALLA: GLOBAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DAY

28 January 2026

Join Zonta International for an open discussion on how we can engage in advocacy for change at the community level led by Advocacy Chair Helen Bowie.

[REGISTER](#)

1:00pm CT

Zonta International

CSW70 CONVERSATION CIRCLES -PROMOTING INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE LEGAL SYSTEMS

4 February 2026

Get ready for CSW70 with Pamela Morgan with a session on promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems.

REGISTER

9:00am CT

REGISTER

4:00pm CT





Dear Stacy,

Thank you! Every year, I am amazed by the generosity of our supporters.

Through your giving in 2025, you helped 18 children, teens, and young adults to begin healing from trafficking and exploitation. You ensured they received needed services like safe housing, therapy, and education. You provided an additional 11 youths at high-risk for exploitation with in-depth prevention training and case management to keep them safe.

The lives of these 29 young people were changed because of you and your generosity. Thank you!

As we kick off 2026, we recognize National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. For the third year in a row, we are hosting a panel discussion in conjunction with Maritz. Can we be real that the issue of trafficking is just plain overwhelming? Our goal for this event is to provide caregivers with practical tips to keep their kids safe, and ease the fears surrounding this issue. We hope you will join us either in person or virtually. We would love to see you there.

Warmly,

Dedee Lhamon
Founder and CEO

How to Keep your Kids Safe from Sex Trafficking, Exploitation, and Abuse

Wednesday, January 21 | 3:30-5pm
1355 North Highway Drive | Fenton, MO 63099

Virtual or In-Person

It's easy to feel overwhelmed or fearful about these issues. Our panel of experts will share practical tips and advice on how to keep the children in your life safe. You will leave feeling more at ease and most importantly, with the tools to better protect your children.

[Find Out More Here!](#)

Mildred Whitted (1929 - 2025)

With heavy hearts, we announce the death of Mildred Whitted who passed away on December 12, 2025 at the age of 96. Mildred was recognized in 2021 for 25 years of service in our club and was later recognized as an Emeritus Affiliate.

Mildred dedicated her life to both learning and teaching. She was the founder of the Professional Skills Institute which provided instruction and tutoring with the goal of motivating the desire to achieve. She taught at several colleges and universities in the St. Louis metropolitan area throughout her career.

Visitation will be held on Friday, January 9th 2026 from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM at the First Baptist Church of Chesterfield (17103 Wild Horse Creek Rd, Chesterfield, MO 63005). A funeral service will be held on Friday, January 9th 2026 at 10:30 AM at the same location.

[Serenity Memorial Chapel](#) has a very nice story of her life.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

January

- 8th Board Meeting
- 19th Amelia Earhart Book Club MTG
Linda White's House
- 22nd Membership Meeting
(hosted by the STEM Committee)
in person at Maryville and on ZOOM

February

- 5th Board Meeting
- 19th Membership Meeting

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

January

- 9th Nancy Schmich
- 16th Judy Jensen
- 30th Gloria Johnson
- 30th Miriam Schuchardt

February

- 27th Sherri Brown

