

ZONTA ZEST

Zonta Club of St. Louis

President's Message to the Club

Dear Zonta Sisters,

January was a fantastic start to 2026, and I'm so grateful for the dedication and passion each of you brings to our mission of empowering women and girls.

January Membership Meeting Highlights

Our January membership meeting, hosted by the STEM Committee at Maryville University, was truly inspiring. The event, "Data Driven Futures: Women Leading Innovation in AI and Engineering Systems," celebrated our 2025 Women in STEM Awardees, Victoria Lisson (1st Place) and Candace Weeden (2nd Place). We were honored to recognize these talented young women who are already making an impact in their fields.

The evening featured an engaging panel discussion with Dr. Beth Cudney and Dr. Akanksha Maurya from Maryville University, and Kelsey Brown from Shore Capital Partners, moderated by Rebecca Girresch. The panel explored how women are using AI to drive innovation, with practical examples of AI's transformative potential in healthcare and process improvement. We even had a fun discussion among members about how AI can assist with everyday tasks, like planning travel.

Service Opportunity at Alleluia Baskets

In January, we also had the opportunity to serve our community by volunteering at Alleluia Baskets. It was a heartwarming experience to connect with fellow Zontians while making a tangible difference for those in need. Service is at the heart of what we do, and it's always inspiring to see the impact we can make together.

Thank you for all that you do to support our mission and each other. I look forward to connecting with you at our February meeting or an upcoming service event.

With gratitude,

Stacy Donovan

President, Zonta Club of St. Louis

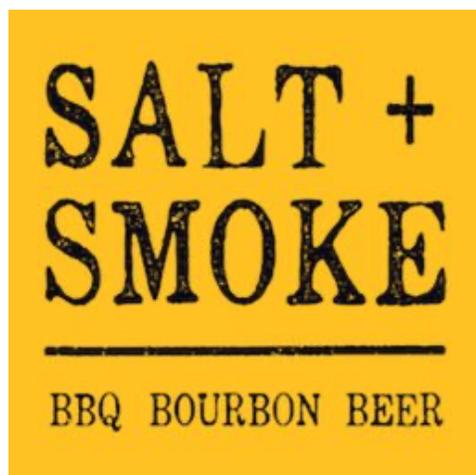




February Board Meeting Updates:

- The next membership meeting will be at the Salt and Smoke in south county and is hosted by the PR Committee - Dr. Leilani Carver will be our guest speaker.
- The Service Committee is meeting to identify additional service opportunities. We do have the Diaper Bank volunteer event scheduled for February 28th.
- The Charity Clothing Pickup Committee is working with Charity Clothing Pickup on a postcard campaign to increase donations.
- The Literacy Committee is seeking further information from the St. Louis Public Library which would allow us to display club history and information.
- The Award Committee is grading up for The upcoming award season. The Sharon Carmody award will be modified to be a one time award instead of an award spread over 2 years with a mentor. The Award Committee will have some discretion on how the funds will be awarded - currently we are budgeted to award \$4,000 annually.
- The WAC Committee is looking for help reviewing applicants. Contact [Debbie Redmond](#) if interested in joining their committee.

February Membership Meeting



Date: February 19, 2026

Time: 6:00-6:30 networking
6:30-7:30 meeting

Location: Salt and Smoke
4130 Rusty Road
St. Louis, MO 63128

Order from the [MENU](#) when you get there!

Unlock Your Network: Build Your Power Squad!

Join Zonta for an inspiring and interactive session as we welcome award winning keynote speaker [Dr. Leilani Carver](#) for our next monthly meeting! This month's topic, "Building Your Power Squad," is designed to empower women to strategically cultivate the personal and professional relationships that matter most.

What You'll Gain:

- Map Your Support Network: Learn how to identify and engage friends, mentors, mentees, peers, and allies to create diverse, well-rounded support systems.
- Relationship-Building Hacks: Discover practical, evidence-based strategies to initiate, nurture, and sustain powerful connections.
- Reciprocal Empowerment: Explore ways to both give and receive support, fostering a dynamic culture of empowerment and collective progress among women.

Why Attend? Whether you're seeking to expand your network, elevate your career, build friendships, or uplift others, this session will provide you with actionable tools and fresh perspectives to build your own power squads. Don't miss this opportunity to connect, learn, and grow with women leaders!

Celebrating Women in STEM at our January membership meeting...



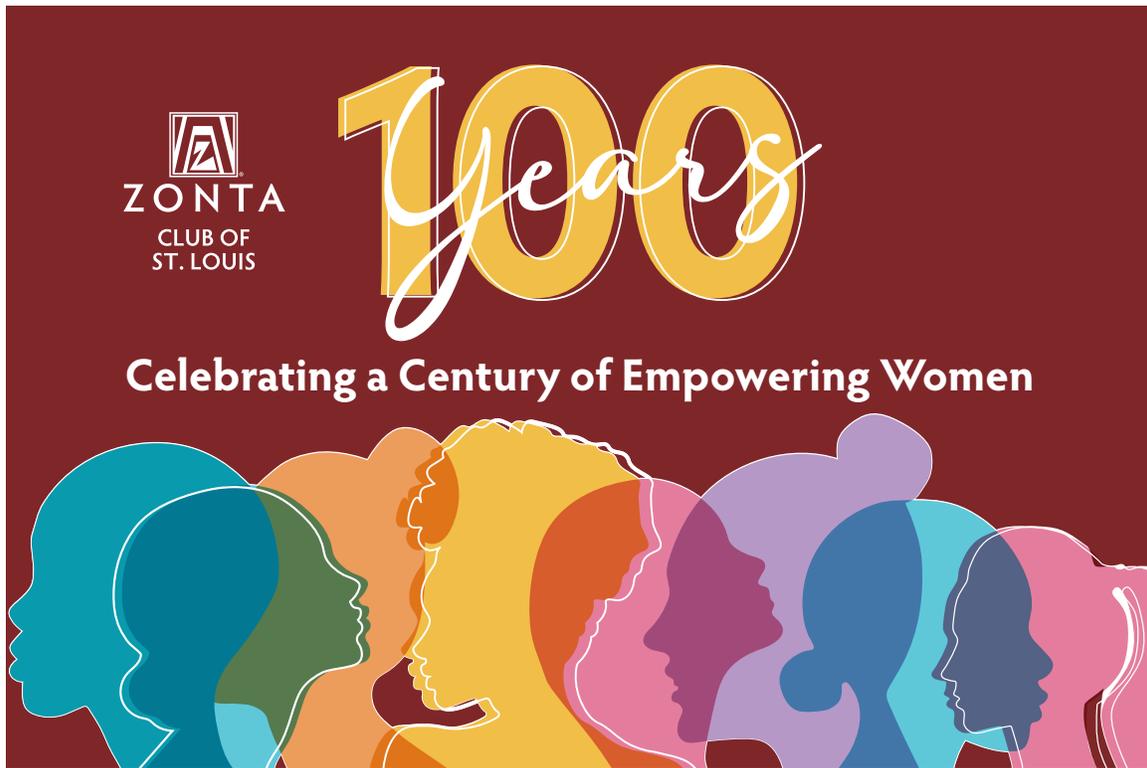
Speakers: Dr. Beth Cudney, Dr. Akanksha (pictured above with our president, Stacy Donovan) and Kelsey Brown gave wonderful presentations on Ai and how it is currently being used in their fields of expertise.

Women in STEM Award

The \$1000 Women in STEM Award was presented to Victoria Sisson - MS student at Washington University, St. Louis. She is working on her masters in Biomedical Engineering. Victoria's application was submitted for competition at the District and possibly the International Level.

The club also provided a \$500 award to Candace Weeden (from St. Louis). She is a junior at Tulane University and studying Neurobiology.

CONGRATULATIONS to both of you!



Charity Clothing Pickup would like to do a postcard mailing to boost donations on our behalf. The Charity Clothing Pickup Committee is working diligently to make this happen. We will be using the 100 Year Celebration advertising, created by Julie Quevreaux, as part of the campaign!

Charity Clothing Pickup will be mailing out the postcards, on our behalf, to the Festus metropolitan area.

Zontians in ACTION



Our January community service project was a hit! Several club members volunteered to fill Easter baskets which will be distributed at by various non-profit organizations.

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.
- Bring donations to the February Membership Meeting or [DONATE DIRECTLY](#) to the Diaper Bank. They can purchase diapers at a discount.

**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](#)

Zonta International

CSW70 CONVERSATION CIRCLES - ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATORY LAWS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

11 February 2026

Get ready for CSW70 with Pamela Morgan with a session on eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices.

REGISTER

FEB 11th
9:00am CT

REGISTER

FEB 11th
4:00pm CST

CSW70 CONVERSATION CIRCLES - ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

18 February 2026

Get ready for CSW70 with Pamela Morgan with a session on addressing structural barriers.

REGISTER

FEB 18th
9:00am CT

REGISTER

FEB 18th
4:00pm CT

WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

20 February 2026

The World Day of Social Justice recognizes the need to promote social justice, which includes efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, gender inequality, human rights and more.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AND ZONTA ROSE DAY

8 March 2026

Each year on 8 March, the global community celebrates International Women's Day, recognizing women for their achievements regardless of national, ethnic, linguistic, economic or political divisions. The Zonta International community also celebrates Zonta Rose Day on 8 March, a time to reflect and give tribute to the women who have empowered us.

Zonta International

CSW70

9-20 March 2026

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the largest annual gathering on women's rights worldwide, and is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. As an NGO with General Consultative Status, Zonta International is invited to participate in the annual CSW in New York.

Priority theme: Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers.

[JOIN THE CSW70 MAIL LIST](#)

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

19 March 2026

Are you new to Zonta? Join members of the Zonta Headquarters Team as we welcome you. We will provide a history of Zonta, highlights of the programs we support and tips for the resources available to you. This is also an opportunity to meet longtime members who serve on the International Membership Committee and other new members from around the world.

[REGISTER](#)

MAR 19th
9:00am CT

[REGISTER](#)

MAR 19th
6:00pm CT

ZONTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION



VANCOUVER
Zonta Convention 2026 

JULY 11th - 14th

* Early Bird Registration ends March 15th

[LEARN MORE...](#)



hac
HAITIAN AMERICAN CAUCUS

October 2025 Update

Dear Sponsors,

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know how your past support of the children in Haiti has evolved. In the fall of 2018, Zonta of Cape Girardeau took their last mission trip to the school in Croix des Bouquets. Growing gang activity in the capital had made travel dangerous. In December of 2023 gangs took over the school and stole or demolished the contents. This scattered our families in many directions. Since that time, HAC-Haiti has been working with Haitian refugees in the slums of the Dominican Republic. Samuel ran into Betharka Dorvilus, one of our sponsored girls, living in terrible conditions in the slums. Soles4Souls has continued to work along-side HAC-Haiti, helping to establish micro-businesses for women in the DR.

While the gangs have offered, for a fee, to allow the reopening of the Croix des Bouquets school, that is not an option. Therefore, two schools have been established in the south of Haiti in Les Cayes and Jeremie. Another school in Cap Haitien is also under HAC-Haiti's umbrella. There are several hundred students in the three schools. HAC also continues to support the OCAM orphan girls that were also forced to flee to the south to escape the gangs.

Recently Samuel Darguin, HAC-Haiti director, saw a second shipment of school supplies delivered from Miami to Haiti. (See the Miami news broadcast about this and more on my Facebook page, as well as other news on Facebook Haitian American Caucus-Haiti.)

Proof, that what was started in a school with 50 students in Croix des Bouquets years ago (eventually blooming to 650 students) has reaped a bountiful harvest, are the young Haitian men and women now graduating from university. This has been possible because of HAC-Haiti support. Several have pursued medical degrees, such as Nerlande Loriscate & Dorothy Adrien who were sponsored girls at the school. The school in Cap Haitien is run by the sister of one of our graduates. Dave Placide was also a sponsored student and is pursuing a law degree as well as helping his sister with the school. Erlah Rene graduated with a business degree. These are just a few success stories you have helped achieve.

We cannot let the gangs in Haiti destroy the seeds of hope that we instilled in the children of Haiti over the years and that are still being sown through education. Goods are extremely expensive in Haiti with gangs controlling so many of the port entrees. Therefore, feeding programs, along with education, continue in the schools. Currently, I want to send you a new student sponsorship picture and your yearly tax letter. I hope you can continue to sponsor in 2026. Please keep me notified of any contact information changes.

HAC-Haiti is a 501©3 non-profit with a 4 Star rating (highest possible) & a 100% Charity Navigator Score.

Blessings to you and yours,

Andrea Sachse, Haiti Volunteer since 2011

HAC-Haiti Sponsorship Coordinator since 2015

amsachse5@yahoo.com

573-579-8414

[LEARN MORE ABOUT HAC...](#)



214-15 113th Ave • Queens Village, NY 11429

Dear Zonta of St. Louis,

HAC-Haiti Mission Statement: The Haitian American Caucus-Haiti (HAC-Haiti) advances opportunity and improves the quality of life for the people of Haiti and all its descendants. HAC-Haiti strengthens the capacity of communities through education and comprehensive community development. HAC-Haiti promotes sustainable development in Haiti that eliminates extreme poverty through providing opportunities for education, health, and economic self-sufficiency.

HAC-Haiti Vision: Our vision is to improve the reputation and visibility of Haitians by breaking down barriers we face in Haiti. We are dedicated to educating the Haitian community and providing them with essential tools to ensure success in their personal and professional lives. HAC-Haiti believes that by educationally, economically, and socially empowering men, women, and their children, it can create strength that will build a better Haiti in the future.

While the current state of Haiti means achieving our goals in different ways for the foreseeable future, giving up on our mission and vision is not an option. We would not be able to impact the lives of so many without your support. We continue to be committed to strengthening Haiti, one life at a time, one day at a time. Because of our donors we are able not only to educate the children of Haiti, but also help fight famine and cholera, and protect those most vulnerable to gang violence.

On behalf of HAC-Haiti, I want to thank you for your support in 2025 in the amount of \$900.00 USD. I hope we can count on you in the future to help with this ongoing struggle for peace and equality in Haiti.

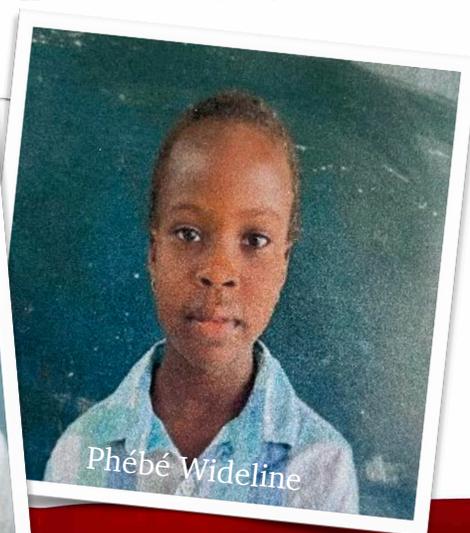
Sincerely,

Samuel Darguin, Exec
Haitian American Cau

No goods or se
The Haitian American C



Louise Paul



Phébé Wideline

The two students our club sponsors.



THE
COVERING HOUSE[®]
 SAFETY. DIGNITY. FREEDOM. COVER Care[™]

"I'm a client at The Covering House and I'm 17 years old.
 I'm grateful for the kindness, love and support that The Covering House gives to every person who walks through its doors. **I'm thankful for the safe environment it provides- a place where survivors can heal, rediscover their strength and know they are not alone.** I'm also grateful for the staff and volunteers who pour their hearts into helping others. Their patience, understanding, and encouragement make a lasting difference in so many lives.

The staff encourage me to stay focused on my education and helps me set realistic steps to reach my dreams. **They've given me the tools and support I need to plan for college,** manage time wisely, and stay motivated... They've helped me apply to college and I've even got accepted to 3... I want to dedicate my life to helping others through medicine. They are also helping me work toward getting my driver's license by teaching me responsibility and confidence in everyday life... **TCH is helping me prepare for these goals in so many ways.**

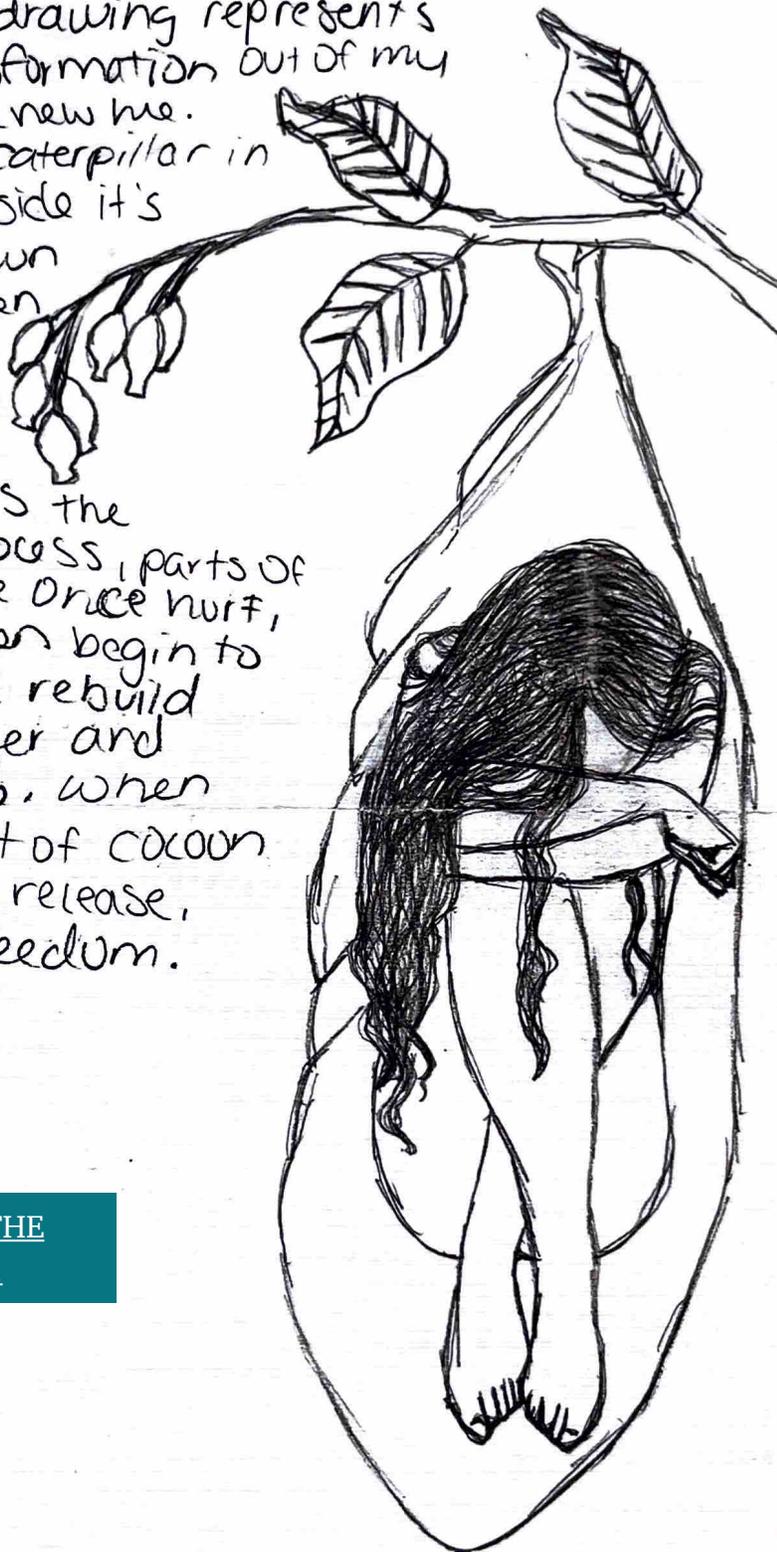
Most of all, I'm grateful for the hope The Covering House represents- hope for new beginnings, for freedom, and for a brighter future. It reminds me that healing is possible and that every life has value and purpose."



This artwork and letter were created **specifically for you** by one of the youth at The Covering House.
Thank you for your generosity.
 Without you, none of this would be possible.

TO me this drawing represents healing & transformation out of my past into the new me. It's like a caterpillar in a cocoon. Inside it's breaking down old parts, broken parts, to form something new and beautiful.

It describes the healing process, parts of us that were once hurt, lost or broken begin to reform and rebuild into stronger and more whole. When emerged out of cocoon it symbolises release, rebirth & freedom.



[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COVERING HOUSE...](#)

Artwork by one of the youth at
The Covering House



Dear Zonta Club of St. Louis,

We're excited to welcome a new Residential Scholar, **Wai Su**, a sophomore at Cor Jesu. Wai Su has been part of our Academy program for two years and officially moved into our residential program this month. She's already settling in beautifully and was thrilled to make the move. A talented violinist, she even auditioned for the orchestra last week!

Our scholars continue to excel academically as well. **Five Residential Scholars** earned spots on the honor roll (with a mix of first and second honors), including one scholar with an impressive **4.1 GPA**. In addition, **three Academy scholars** achieved a **4.0 GPA**, and **17 scholars** earned a **3.0 or higher**.

Beyond the classroom, our scholars are staying busy with soccer, basketball, baseball, theatre, chess, choir, community service projects, and more—along with plenty of staff carpooling to make it all happen!

These achievements and opportunities—and so many others—are made possible because of **you** and the many supporters who invest in our program and scholars year after year.

Thank **YOU** and hope 2026 is off to a great start for you and your family.

Jan Wacker
Major Gifts Officer
Hope Ignites

[LEARN MORE ABOUT HOPE
IGNITES...](#)



SHOUT OUTS

Valeda Keys - [Valeda's Hope](#) - has been busy delivering recliners in our community who have undergone a double mastectomy, hosting Mobile Mammogram Monday's, and advocating on the importance of getting mammograms.

Club Members... Reach out if you want to give a shout out - these can be 'big or small'; it's about uplifting our sister circle!!

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

February

- 4th Board Meeting
- 19th Membership Meeting
hosted by the PR Committee

March

- 5th Board Meeting
- 19th Membership Meeting
hosted by the Membership Committee

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

February

- 27th Sherri Brown

March

- 3rd Kit Whittington
- 4th Sandra Cornell
- 6th Linda White
- 28th Kathleen Braun

