

ZONTA ZEST

Zonta Club of St. Louis

President's Message to the Club

Dear Zonta Sisters,

As I wrapped up my teaching responsibilities this past week, I had some time to pause and reflect on my first year serving as club president. It has been a true pleasure to get to know all of you better and to create memories I will always cherish as we worked together to serve our community. I am incredibly grateful for everyone's support, grace, and guidance throughout our journey and look forward to our time together as I begin year two. Thank you for being such a wonderful team; your dedication makes **all** the difference!



As you will see in this issue of the Zest that highlights recipients our of scholarship and awards and community grants, we have some remarkable women and organizations in our community. Of course, none of this would be possible without our Zonta Sisters! A very big thank you to:

Peggy Gilbertson and members of the Awards Committee for their diligence to review applications for the Zonta Young Women in Leadership and Zonta Women in Business Leadership awards, and The Sharon Carmody Award for Challenged Individuals.

Debbie Redmond and members of the Women's Another Chance Committee for their careful review of applications for the Women's Another Chance Scholarships.

Sherry Brown and members of the Community Grants and Partnerships Committee for their thorough review of applications to identify meaningful projects that align with our mission.

Together, we continue to make a positive difference!

I look forward to seeing you at the May membership meeting and celebrating the induction of our newest Zonta sister, Robin!

With deep gratitude,

Stacy Donovan

President, Zonta Club of St. Louis



May Board Meeting Updates:

- Various meeting locations were discussed. [Ellen Embry](#) is seeking recommendations on new meeting sites for the upcoming year.
- Robin Reece-Hlava will be inducted at the meeting this month.
- Three new WAC Students have been through the interview process and on their way to meet their educational Goals.
- The WAC Committee is looking for mentors. Please contact [Debbie Redmond](#) if interested in being involved or mentoring.
- The St. Louis Community College has three scholarships tied to our club. There is a \$25K endowment, a New Traditions Scholarship (balance of \$5,999.82) and a Women's Another Chance Scholarship (balance of \$1,284.12). Peggy Gilbertson is checking into options:
 - Roll the New Traditions Scholarship into the endowment and take back the Women's Another Chance scholarship balance to benefit our program.
 - Roll both scholarships into the endowment.
- We are looking at getting some club t-shirts. Stacy presented some ideas and pricing. See possible logo below. More to come!



May Membership Meeting



May 21st

6:00 Cocktails & Fellowship

Meeting starts at 6:30

*Restaurant ends service by 8:45

Mimi's Cafe

17240 Chesterfield Airport Rd.

Chesterfield, MO 63005

636-530-4510

6:00 - 6:30 (Sisterhood Time!)

6:30 - 8:00 (Business Meeting)

- Board Installation
- New Member Induction
- New Award Winners Announced
- June Picnic Honoring Award Winners
- Committee Sign-Ups

Kindly RSVP (yes or no) by Monday, May 18th: <https://www.easy-rsvp.com/yNuE5q-zonta-may-membership-meeting-may-21-6-8-pm>

Zontians in Action!



Ready for some outdoor FUN and help
RUNG for Women in the process!

For those of you that like “hands on” opportunities,
join us at:

RUNG for Women
2717 Sidney Street
St. Louis, MO 63104

May 21st from 11 am to 12 pm

Contact [Sue Ellbogen](#) if you can attend... there’s
some really good lunch places in the area!

VOLUNTEER to
help with the
Annual Award’s
Luncheon...

Also known as the
AWARDS PICNIC:)

Contact
[Debbie Redmond](#)
if you can help
out.



Zonta Women in Business Award



Elsa Nilson Hurtig is the recipient of this year's award. Although there are no International awards this year, the chapter voted to still award a local award. Elsa is graduate student at Maryville pursuing a graduate degree in Business Administration. She is an international student from Sweden, currently working as a graduate assistant and has a Presidential fellowship, the first student worker in Maryville University office of the President. Throughout her time in St. Louis she has been deeply involved with the community, with a particular focus on youth empowerment, equality, inclusion and community service. She served as a Marketing Volunteer for Girls In the Know, a non profit organization focused on empowering young women. In this role, she contributed to content strategy, digital storytelling and campaign development. She was a Volunteer Mentor for Tjejzonen, a Swedish non-profit organization supporting young girls' mental health.

Alongside her team in the Maryville University President's Office, they are co-building the Saints Service Collective, a nonprofit-oriented initiative that connects students with local community organizations to address community needs while also giving students hands-on experience and helping them on their path to becoming engaged citizens that strengthens communities (a university mission). As a co-lead, she currently supports the processes in strategic planning, partnership development and the creation of a sustainable model for the structure of student coordinators and recruiters.

Elsa has received many scholastic and athletic awards (soccer) during her undergraduate and graduate years at Maryville.

According to Elsa, "My academic and professional goals stem from a simple but persistent mission I carry with me: in a world that so often prioritizes self-interest, I want to be its opposite. Growing up in Sweden and later moving to the United States to study showed me how power lives in institutions, systems, and organizations—and how easy it seems to leave people out of them. That is why I chose to study business, communication, and global studies. To learn how to build structures that actually serve people in real life. My long-term goal is to found a nonprofit centered on youth empowerment and community leadership. We ask young people to inherit the future, but we rarely invite them into the rooms where that future is shaped. There are students full of heart, passion and ideas for change, but too few spaces where they are taken seriously. I do not believe youth are "leaders of tomorrow." We are leaders now—we are just not always treated that way."

Young Women in Business Leadership Awards

We had TWO winners this year!



Elsa Muellersman is our first recipient of the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award whose application has been sent on to consideration at the District level. Elsa is a senior at Festus High School who plans on attending Murray State University and building a career in public service with the goal of working in state government.

While a student at Festus High School, Elsa was Student body president, State Secretary Missouri Association of Student Councils, State Advisory Board Member Missouri Association of Student Councils, Southeast District President Missouri Association of Student Councils, Winter Wonderland Founder/Coordinator, Varsity Captain Festus High School Girls Track and Field, Festus High School Yearbook Editor.

Through the National Association of Student Councils she was Missouri's sole delegate to the National Education Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C. where she met with Congressional offices to advocate for educational policy funding.

Elsa has also volunteered with Special Olympics, worked with Jefferson County foster families, volunteered at Ozark food pantry and cooked and served dinner at Ronald McDonald house.

According to Elsa, "The most rewarding part of my leadership journey has been the opportunity to serve others. I do not view leadership roles as just another box to check off or something to do for personal benefit, rather I have grown a passion for advocating, encouraging, and building up others. I have made the most of my leadership positions by advocating for educational funding on Capitol Hill, founding a community carnival that has raised over \$9000 for my high school's clubs, facilitating a book drive that collected over 900 books, and more. Additionally, my experience with the National Student Council has deepened my global understanding by allowing me to engage with peers whose backgrounds and experiences differ from my own."

Young Women in Business Leadership Awards

Our second winner is....



Kennedy Bailey was also chosen to receive a \$1,000 award from us although her application will not be sent on to district but she has an amazing resume as well. Kennedy is a senior at Hazelwood East High School who plans on pursuing a double major in Political Science/ Economics at the University of Memphis, where she has been accepted into the Honors College. Her long term goal is to attend law school and pursue a career in public service.

She currently serves on the Mayor's Youth Cabinet for the City of St. Louis and Congressman Wesley Bell's Youth Council. In these roles, she contributes youth perspectives to discussions on public policy, education, and community development. In addition, Kennedy founded a nonprofit, Beyond Now, in which she has worked to create a space where young students, particularly girls, are encouraged to recognize their potential, strengthen their academic confidence, and envision futures beyond their current circumstances. She presented Beyond Now at the DECA District Competition, and earned first place.

Kennedy is also active in student tutoring and mentoring, works with providing meals for homeless shelters, and actively volunteers on initiatives focused on youth empowerment, community support and civic engagement.

According to Kennedy, "What I find most rewarding about these experiences is the opportunity to create tangible impact. Whether advocating in civic spaces or mentoring students through my nonprofit, I value knowing that my efforts contribute to opportunities beyond myself. Leadership has shown me that meaningful change begins with initiative, but it grows through service, collaboration, and a genuine commitment to uplifting others."

Sharon Carmody Award for Challenged Individuals

The Sharon Carmody Award for Challenged Individuals is provided by the Zonta Club of St. Louis. This scholarship is for students with a disability (including physical, mental, and learning).

Three individuals were selected, however, due to HIPPA, we are not sharing their personal information. They will each receive \$1000 toward their educational goals.



Zonta Club of St. Louis' St. Louis University Endowed Scholarship

One of the endowed scholarships set up in past years is the **Zonta Club of St. Louis Scholarship for Women in Science** at St. Louis University. This year's recipient is Yewon Kim, a neurobiology major who received a scholarship of \$2,611. Sherri Brown, our STEM chair, was able to attend the Scholarship Banquet at SLU on April 23rd and meet Yewon.

Below is Yewon's thank you email to Sherri:

"It was a pleasure meeting you today at the SLU Scholarship Dinner. I am truly honored to receive the generous support from Zonta Club of St. Louis and I would love to stay in touch and keep your club updated on my journey. I truly enjoyed our conversation and you are truly inspiring as women in STEM who supports and uplifts other women. I hope to follow a similar path one day by helping and empowering others as you do. It was also wonderful to hear about the impactful work Zonta of St. Louis does, not only within St. Louis community but also internationally such as in Haiti expanding support."

We also have endowed scholarships at UMSL, Washington University, Maryville University, Goldfarb School of Nursing and through the St. Louis Community College Foundation. All of these were set up years ago.



ZONTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Meet Your Club Delegates for the Zonta International Convention!



Judy Jensen
Delegate #1



Linda White
Delegate #2



Kay Moss
Alternate Delegate

Voting at Zonta International Conventions is conducted by registered delegates representing clubs, past international presidents, and current board members, with a primary focus on electing leaders and amending governing documents. Each club is entitled to one vote, with additional votes for clubs exceeding 30 members. Our club is entitled to 2 votes!

Online voting for the 2026-2028 Zonta International and Zonta Foundation for Women Boards took place **27 April to 1 May 2026**.

See the final Election Results on the next page...



Zonta International Election 2026 Results

Start: 2026-04-27 08:00:00 America/Chicago

End: 2026-05-01 12:42:42 America/Chicago

Turnout: 1117 (94.2%) out of 1186 delegates voted in this ballot.

Note: 1298 (94.5%) out of 1374 weighted votes were cast in this ballot.

President-Elect (1 to be elected)	Votes Cast
Sandra Venn-Brown	857
Ina Waesslerling	430
Abstain	11
Vice President (1 to be elected)	
Sally Bean	510
Reneé Coppock	776
Abstain	12
International Treasurer/ Secretary (1 to be elected)	
Monika Geise	1012
Barbara Crabtree	279
Abstain	7

At Large (4 to be elected)	Votes Cast
Ofelia (lia) Bautista	856
Margaret (Maggie) Calica	485
Christine Dersch	858
Dorte Oleson	831
Michelle (Shelly) Schultz	609
Salla Tuominen	1159
Abstain	9

International Directors (7 to be Elected)	Votes Cast
Angela Brokmann	362
Lisa Burton	560
Bernardine Guy	620
Margot Hoffman	538
Cherie Johnson	246
Deb Lal	325
Kathrin Laubacher	735
Ria Matthijssens	713
Jennet (Jen) McKinlay-Birkin	688
Opeibea Omaboe	792
Sheena Poole	759
Shreejana Rana	749
Jutta Taube	703
Errick Elavia	537
Abstain	5

International Nominating Committee	Votes Cast
Africa (1 to be elected)	
Margaret Mercy Akofio-Sowah	1137
Abstain	161
Asia (1 to be elected)	
Primitiva (Baby) Sison	1173
Abstain	125
Australia & New Zealand (1 to be elected)	
Lynne Foley, OAM	1166
Abstain	132
Europe (1 to be elected)	
Ruta Jasioniene	616
Ivana Sarotti	583
Abstain	99
North, Central & South America (1 to be elected)	
Lorene (Lori) Robinson	1154
Abstain	144



ZONTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Which of the proposed projects should our club vote on to support?

Zonta International is passionate about providing life-changing opportunities for women and girls through international service. By partnering with agencies of the United Nations and other recognized non-governmental organizations, Zonta has improved women's health, provided better economic opportunities and prevented gender-based violence in over 87 countries. Since our first service project, Zonta has contributed more than US\$39 million to our international service projects.

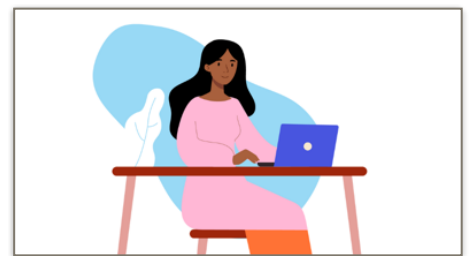
Current International Service Projects



[Climate Empower](#)



[Ending Child Marriage](#)



[Laaha](#)

Proposed 2026-2028 International Project Descriptions. Which service projects would you vote for?

- Global Programme to End Child Marriage | [PDF](#)
- Gender Transformative Mechanism in Climate Adaptation (GTM): Placing gender equality at the heart of climate action | [PDF](#)
- Laaha: A Virtual Safe Space for Women and Girls | [PDF](#)
- Standing with Afghan Women: Expanding Community-Led Solutions to End Gender-Based Violence (Delegates' Choice) | [PDF](#)
- Global Feminist Tech & Innovation Lab, ACT to end violence against women and girls (Delegates' Choice) | [PDF](#)

Zonta International

ZONTA SAYS NOW INTERCONTINENTAL THINK TANK

10 May 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](#)

May 10th - 5:00am CT

COUNCIL OF EUROPE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2024-2029

KEY ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE DE FACTO GENDER EQUALITY WEBINAR

18 May 2026

Gender equality is an integral part of human rights and a fundamental element of democracy, it is a transversal matter and touching all spheres of life. For the Council of Europe (CoE) gender equality is central to the protection of women's rights and an important policy goal.

The effective realization of gender equality is highlighted in the CoE Gender Equality Strategy, a framework of six objectives for the organization's role and action in the area of gender equality.

The CoE Committee invites all Zonta members, as well as outgoing and incoming Zonta leaders, to learn more about this comprehensive document and the impact of gender equality instruments at the CoE.

A special focus will be taken on objective No.5: "Ensuring women's empowerment and gender equality in relation to global and geopolitical challenges."

[Register](#)

May 18th - 11:00am CT

Zonta International

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

21 May 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](#)

May 21st - 9:00am CT

[Register](#)

May 21st - 6:00pm CT

ZONTA ADVOCACY SERIES: CYBERSECURITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

26 May 2026

Mark your calendar for May 26 for the final Zonta Advocacy Series webinar, which will be on CyberSecurity for Women and Girls.

[Register](#)

May 26th - 12:00pm CT





Congratulations Aslihan and family!!
Baby Timur was born on April 4th. Both doing well!



UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS & EVENTS

May

- 7th Board Meeting
- 21st Membership Meeting

June

- 4th Board Meeting
- 20th Awards Picnic

UPCOMING CLUB BIRTHDAYS

May

- 3rd Cheryl Bielema
- 11th Stacy Donovan
- 14th Shima Rostami

June

- 5th Sherry Brooks
- 17th Norma Nisbet
- 18th Valeda Keys

