

## **Brief History of the Zonta Club of Niagara Falls, New York, Inc.**

The Zonta Club of Niagara Falls, New York, boasted 24 members when it was initially organized under the helpful wing of the Zonta Club of Lockport, New York. Our first gathering was a luncheon meeting held on April 17, 1924. The Charter, dated May 14, 1924, certified that the Zonta Club of Niagara Falls, New York, had complied with all requirements necessary for membership. We became Club Number 29 of the Zonta Confederation. The Certificate of Acceptance for membership in the Confederation of Zonta Clubs, Inc., was signed on September 3, 1924, by Helen M. Broughton, our first President, and C. Helene Knudsen, our first Secretary.

We are proud of our Zonta heritage. The Zonta Club of Buffalo, New York, was organized in 1919, by Marian de Forest. A marker outside the Statler Hilton Hotel in downtown Buffalo commemorates this. By 1922, when the Articles of Incorporation were filed in New York State, there were nine chartered Clubs: Buffalo, Binghamton, Elmira, Ithaca, Rochester and Syracuse/Utica, New York; Detroit, Michigan and Erie, Pennsylvania.

The Niagara Falls Club was organized in 1924, with several members from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, making it an international club. When we organized the Toronto Club in 1927, Zonta became an International Organization.

When we acquired a sufficient number of executive women members from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, the Niagara Falls, Ontario Club was organized. That Club held its Charter presentation dinner on May 25, 1968.

We celebrated our Club's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on May 11, 1974, and we were incorporated on May 31, 1978. Our Club membership has ranged from 18 to 40. We currently have 35 members.

We hosted six District Conferences...1937, 1944, 1954, 1963, 1976, 1992, and several Area Workshops. We received the Area 3 Award for Best Club in 1987, 1988 and 1989; District Award for Best Club Brochure in 1998; Area 3 Award for biggest increase in Membership in 2007; Area 3 Award for Best Club Newsletter in 2011; and Area 3 Award for best PR/Newsletter in 2013.

We celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Women's Day in 2011, with an event sponsored by our Women's Advocacy Initiative Committee. The keynote speaker was Lilly Ledbetter, whose lawsuit against the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company resulted in the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, which was signed into law by President Obama in January 2009.

A Scholarship Award to a high school graduate was established in 1942, and continued for 20 years. In 1963, we created a revolving loan fund at Niagara County Community College. We seek qualified candidates for the Young Women in Public Affairs (YWPA) Scholarship.

From 1980 through 1984, the Cheryl Fell's School of Business full tuition scholarship for enrollment in a business curriculum was awarded to a worthy mature woman interested

in returning to the work force. Since 1985, a \$500 scholarship has been offered to non-traditional female students.

We presented a Steinway Grand Piano to the Earl Brydges Library at the dedication of its new building in 1974. We have donated to the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Mount St. Mary's Hospital, Oppenheim Zoo, The Salvation Army, Lelawala Girls Home at Community Mission, the YWCA, Girl Scouts, John Duke Senior Citizens Center, Niagara Hospice, Retired Senior Citizens Volunteer Literacy Group Program, Porta Niagara Girls Club, Domestic Violence Shelter of the Family and Children's Service of Niagara County, and Niagara County Hearing and Speech Clinic, Bead for Life, Headlamps for Health for women giving birth in Zambia and preparation and distribution of Birthing Kits.

We have conducted skin cancer and hearing clinics and many volunteer hours are given annually to community service. We have addressed a community forum on Child Care needs and educational seminars on Women's Issues.

In February, 2015, Family and Children's Service of Niagara recognized our Club with their Donor Award for our years of service with their Passage House Shelter for abused women and children.

Our Club has donated funds through Zonta International to the Amelia Earhart Fellowship, Anne Frank Village, the Ramallah Scholarship, the Grow Fund for the pediatric clinic project in Ghana, Eva Mowbray Hostess Fund, Sri Lanka well-water project, Christian Children's Fund, Zonta International World Headquarters Building Fund, Rose Fund, Jane M. Klausman Women in Business Scholarships, Young Women in Public Affairs (YWPA) Awards, Strategies to End Violence Against Women (ZISVAW), and Zonta Says NO Campaign.

Service funds have been raised through Murder Mystery Dinners, Lucky Numbers Luncheons and, our most recent, Rainbow of Hats Luncheons.

Zonta International's Vision: a world in which women's rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential. In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on an equal basis with men. In such a world, no woman lives in fear of violence.

We celebrated our Club's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary on May 14, 2014. As Zontians, we are proud of our history and what we have personally contributed to Zonta International.

Submitted by Polly Redanz

January 28, 2015

Committee: Daisy Waters and Janice Lewis