

Formation of the Club

The Zonta Club of Olean was organized on June 9, 1928. The organizational meeting was held at 6:30pm at the Stratton Hotel which was located on South Barry St. The first officers elected were: Miss Jessie Hunt, president; Miss Marion Langworthy, vice president; Dr. Ruth Mountain, treasurer; and Miss Freda Kaiser, secretary. Thirty-eight members of the Jamestown, Buffalo, and Warren, PA Zonta Clubs attended the organizational meeting in Olean.

The dinner was served at 7pm and greetings were given by the presidents of the various clubs. Telegrams were read from clubs located in Hamilton and Toronto, ON, Erie, PA, and Lockport, Kenmore, and Niagara Falls, NY. The program for the night was carried out under the chairmanship of M. Asenath Johnson of the Intercity Committee, Zonta Club of Jamestown.

Ten members signed applications for a charter. These members served as the first Board of Directors. The first board members were Miss Nellie Austin, Miss Maude Brooks, Miss Freda Kaiser, Miss Mable Newman, Miss Marie Whipple, Dr. Ruth Mountain, Miss Jessie Hunt, Miss Charlotte Roberts, Miss Bernice Walton, and Mrs. Frances Larkin.

The first club meeting was held at noon on Wednesday June 13, 1928 at the Olean House.

In 1934 the Region A District III Conference was held at the Olean House. The speaker of the evening was Miss Agnes Campbell MacPhail of Ottawa, ON, a fellow Zontian and the only woman member of the Canadian Parliament. Miss MacPhail's address was entitled "Potpourri." In it she attacked the attitudes of Hitler and Mussolini towards women.

The earliest service/advocacy projects included providing four scholarships for girls at Westbrook's Academy, financing the musical education of a young man, contributing to the Community Chest enrollments, sending gifts to the girls at the Hudson Training School at Christmas time, furnishing toys and clothing for needy children at holiday time, and sending two girls to the Blue Bird Health Camp.

Meetings:

Dinner meetings are held once a month. The Board of Directors meets the week before the general meeting. Meetings usually have a different program each month and are located at restaurants in the Olean area. In the past they have been held at members' houses.

Organization:

Currently the Zonta Club of Olean has a President, 1st Vice- President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. There is also a six member Board of Directors.

Club Committees:

Standing committees include Awards, Finance/Fundraising/Attendance, Organization/Membership and Classification, Program, Status of Women/Legislature Awareness and Advocacy, Service, Publicity/Public Relations, Property/Archives/Bylaws, and Zontian of the Year. Committees meet as often as is necessary.

Fundraising:

Fundraisers have included Pecan Sale, Chinese auction, Go Go Gas Card raffle, Bon Ton Community Days, Pleasant Valley Greenhouse Gift Certificates, as well as a 50/50 raffle at each monthly meeting.

Service and Advocacy Projects:

- Birthing Kits – sent 1,000 kits to Peru in the spring of 2014.
- Breast Cancer BINGO since 2000. Money raised goes to Susan G. Komen, Mildred Milliman Radiation Center, and Cancer Services of Cattaraugus/Allegany Counties. Also provides an opportunity to raise awareness of breast cancer detection and treatment.
- Domestic Violence Walk
- Supporting Everywoman Opportunity Center, Genesis House, Olean Food Pantry, Warming House both financially and with donations of needed items.
- Salvation Army Bell Ringers
- March of Dimes Walk a Thon
- Providing financial support to the Cattaraugus County Community Action Safe House
- Yellow Rose Awards– recognizing outstanding women in the community.
- Scholarships for high school seniors as well as non-traditional students. (Our 2013 high school recipient, Soumitri Barua, Z Club president at Olean High School, won all 3 levels of Zonta scholarships and is attending Brown University.)

Membership:

The numbers of members have fluctuated over the years. Currently there are 22 members in the Zonta Club of Olean.

District Level:

The club has been well represented at District 4 conferences. Olean has been the host to District conferences several times. Olean has had several members serve as officers at the district level.

International Level:

Delegates have represented Olean at several International Conferences. Each year the Zonta Club of Olean sends financial support to Zonta International. Individual members have also sent additional financial support to ZI.

85th Anniversary:

In November of 2013 the Zonta Club of Olean celebrated their 85th Anniversary. Senator Cathy Young declared November 21, 2013 “Zonta Club of Olean Day.” Governor Lee Fogarty and Lt. Governor Joanne Raymond attended the celebration which was held at the Point Restaurant inside the Good Ties of Olean Complex. Sr. Margaret Carney, 20th President of St. Bonaventure University, was the guest speaker.