**Biennial Report for Zonta District 4 Advocacy Chair US 2012-2014**

Presented May 10, 2014, Irene Majchrzak

**Advocating for Zontians in US**

* Encouraged participation of NF President, Kathryn Bunyon-McClendendon to audition and present her “Table of 6” using the women of influence and Marian De Forest, Founder of Zonta to highlight her presentation. She did it and made all Zontians proud!
* I suggested Zonta Tonawanda member Pati Guzinski to the District Conference Committee. Her Power Point on CEDAW was a great presentation and was well-received by the participants. Pati has been invited to speak at the Rochester Club meeting on Cedaw again this year.

**2013 Spring Workshops**: Presented this spring at Warren and Niagara Falls. The Workshops had great content AND there was great conversation over lunch, at the **Advocacy tables**, with the Club president’s and their advocacy chairs.

As a result of these workshops I was invited to other meetings. President’s meeting in Bemus Point. (Almost every club in Area 5 has an Advocacy chair.)Niagara Falls, Ontario club: to speak on Advocacy and the District Project. President Louise Rolfe and members were very welcoming and had great ideas about the Zonta Says No to VAW project.

**2013: November 25th –Dec 10th 2013 Sixteen Days of Activism campaign:**

Buffalo Zontians gathered other Zontians from Area Clubs to meet at the Peace Bridge which was painted orange for the first day of Activism. It will be again painted Orange on December 10th, the 16th day. The attending clubs were Kenmore, Hamburg/OP, Buffalo, Amherst . We brought our banners, we invited United Hands for Hope House charity to join us, with their volunteers and their signs; we wore orange shirts for VAWA and wore Orange ribbons, made by local Girl Scout troops.

Many clubs are still trying to get used to the events of 16 Days of Activism and Pati Guzinski started a list of very simple ideas that could help the clubs become involved in this District-wide event very quickly. She presented these on our go-to-meeting program.

Zonta Club of Rochester, NY was the first club in Area 4 to put their articles on FaceBook for 16 Days. They counted the number of hits they received; and also gathered some new members from the event. We were all very impressed with this idea and with the use of technology for increasing the visibility of Zonta.

**Biennial Advocacy Activities:**

CEDAW, Zonta Says NO, and the Sixteen Days campaign were featured at the District 4 Conference held in September, 2013. This was an important conference because the District Project was voted on with the membership. We jointly chose the same project for Service and Advocacy to work on within our separate focus. This will be another great idea and meets some of the guideline ideas generated by International. The 2014 year will see the rollout of ideas to clarify the project.

**2014: Spring Workshops**: 2014 Advocacy Chair was invited to speak to two other Area Clubs; February in Jamestown, NY and Bradford PA, scheduled for May 14. The Presentations gave me a great idea for bragging about the presentations that are being done in other areas of the District. Using slides to depict what the events were, the District Advocacy Chairs, bragged about the types of activities such as inter-club Councils, Women’s History month programs, Book Club programs and many others. The slides will be placed on the Advocacy Website for easy access by District Clubs

The 2014 workshops also gave Connie and me the opportunity to present the **District Project,** similar to behind Closed Doors project, to multiple club members.

* We stressed the process of Service and Advocacy working together to achieve the results of a joint project and most of all inspire the members of the club to get involved.
* We presented the steps clubs will take to get started, by identifying the focal point of the Violence against women projects.

1. We helped by suggesting areas of VAW they may want to identify,
2. To look at organizations that might be interested in helping Zonta with their project.
3. We talked about Vetting the organizations,
4. suggested ideas on what the organizations might want to know about Zonta,
5. suggestions for descriptions of what the template for the posters could contain.

**Go-To-Meeting**: During the biennium at least 6 meetings were set up on Go-to-meeting for the US District 4. These were Face to Face computer meetings for up to 25 Advocacy chairs, Area Directors, presidents especially with clubs without Advocacy chairs.

* Meetings set with time constraints to move the agenda along and stay focused
* Rationale is to have members interact with chairs from different areas, getting to know them, teaching them about what your clubs are doing, learning about their ideas which may differ from your own.

This program was set up and used for meetings and discussions with the entire US Areas of District 4. An Agenda was always set up and an invitation was sent to all of the known Advocacy chairs, AD’s, and Presidents of the clubs. The participation started out slowly but as we gained momentum in the programs and the ideas more advocacy chairs were appointed in the clubs and more became active in the Go-To meetings.

**Other Go-To-Meeting Events:**

Go-to-meetings were used to work and interact with other Zontians from other Districts and included Diane Lindsley, US Representative ZI, when the discussion involved working in tandem with Women Thrive. This meeting increased the momentum for working with other organizations, helping them to achieve what they needed by our getting involved and understanding their focus.

As a result, letters were written to Congressman Christopher Collins to assure he understood that the Bill coming out of the house was important to the women of Zonta. We met with his Aides and had letters from our club members sent individually to bring attention to I-VAWA.

ZI Advocacy Chair Kay Meyers also sent items of interest for the Go-To-Meeting regarding this issue. She asked us to definitely find out why there is opposition to the Bill and also to concentrate on what is in and not in the Bill. This will help us clearly understand some of the reasons why the Republican Representatives aren’t supporting the Bill.

**AND on April 28th:** We heard from Theodore Alexander, Foreign Legislative Aide to Senator Chris Collins, that Mr. Collins has become the newest co-sponsor of HR3571, the I-VAWA bill to come out of the House of Representatives. We know we had some impact with all we did but more, what a great opportunity to begin partnering with other women’s to advocate for their important issues as well. Accolades for District 4 were received from Kay Meyer, ZI Advocacy Chair. She was as exuberant as I was when this occurred. What a great moment to recognize all that District 4, US did to help achieve this moment. A huge thank you goes to Diane Lindsley, AD Area 4 Mary K Yunker Carol Spedding, Zonta Club of Lockport, Diane Hart, President of Aurora Club, and most of all, Chrissy Hart, Women Thrive who gave us the opportunity to support their efforts for this Bill. Thank you also to Helping Hands for Hope House and Crisis Services for writing letters in support of our request.

**New Advocacy ideas:**

Recently, the Zonta Club of Buffalo used the Go-To-Meeting idea to discuss the potential partnership with Crisis Services. They are looking to partner across WNY with the Area Zonta Clubs. Further discussions will take place in May.