



Zonta District 4 2026 Spring Summit

Areas 3 & 4

April 11, 2026

Buffalo Launch Club

503 E River Rd, Grand Island, NY 14072



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8:30-9:00 AM Registration, refreshments, networking

9:25 AM Welcome by Area Directors Peggy McGee-Smith and Heidi Salva
Housekeeping issues: Restrooms, Safety Exits, etc.

9:30 AM Our National Anthems (US & Canada)

District 4 Governor's Information & Updates- Governor Jane Newman
Membership- Faria Latif
Foundation- Sheena Poole/Janice Durmis
Risk Management- Nancy Peacock
D4 Advocacy- Heidi Travagline

10:30 AM Icebreaker: Creative Collaboration

10:45 AM USA Caucus – Bethany O'Hagan

12:00 PM Lunch and Shopping at Club Tables

1:00 PM Agency Collaboration- Sheri Scavone, WNY Women's Foundation

2:30 PM Panel of Scholarship & Service Project Recipients

Evaluations- (All paper) Each participant receives a ticket for a chance to win a lottery scratch-off when they submit their evaluation. (10 winners)

Summit ends at 3:00 PM



Bethany O'Hagan

USA Caucus

A personal message to you from Bethany.

Born and raised in Soldotna, Alaska, I have lived in Chautauqua County in Western New York for almost four years. Moving here from Portland, Oregon where I lived for over 20 years, and worked in the Sustainability field for over a decade doing waste minimization, composting, and recycling. I am pleased to now be working to help keep all the freshwater this area of the world is lucky to have, as the Wilds, Engagement & Stewardship Coordinator for Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy -which is a nationally accredited Land Trust located in Lakewood, NY. In my role, I take charge of all our nature preserves, easements, over 42 preserve stewards, as well as volunteer coordinating; I take great delight in being able to call these things my job. In my very little spare time, I am a member of the Chautauqua County Planning Board, I am the founding committee member and chair of the Sustainability Committee in my local chapter of Zonta, on the Zonta board, as well as am the US Caucus District Rep for Zonta Area 4. I also am the Jamestown District Rep for Southern Tier Girls Babe Ruth Softball, as well as the 8U Jamestown softball coach, and the Vice President of the league. I am captain of a Dragonboat team, a master recycler, a master gardener, member of Chautauqua County Beekeepers Association - with my own hive. A level one game logging chainsaw operator, fly fisher, bicyclist, annoying lover of playing board games, crazy native plant gardener, and avid composter that loves to throw and create pottery.

I adore living in this area with my two young daughters, my blue-eyed Husky, and my super rad husband who all keep me belly laughing when I am not busy double booking myself.



Sheri Scavone P.T., EHSA

CEO, WNY Women's Foundation

CEO, ElevateU Partners, LLC

Sheri Scavone is the CEO of the WNY Women's Foundation. In her role, Ms. Scavone utilizes Foundation research data to educate, convene, advocate, and forge collaborations with key community stakeholders to address gender inequities and other issues that prevent women from achieving economic self-sufficiency. She leads the Foundation to create opportunities for all women to learn, earn, lead, and thrive. As an extension of her passion to elevate women and a quest for continuous learning, Sheri earned certification as an Executive Coach and formed ElevateU Partners, LLC.

Sheri has over 45 years of experience leading and growing public and nonprofit organizations to achieve strategic goals through collaboration, communication, and connections. Ms. Scavone is a tireless advocate advancing policy and driving change towards greater acceptance and tolerance - particularly for women, families experiencing poverty, those living with mental illness, LGBTQ, and marginalized youth.

Ms. Scavone is a licensed physical therapist who earned an MS degree in Executive Leadership in Health Systems Administration and holds an advanced post-graduate certificate in Palliative Care. She is also a Certified Executive Coach through the University at Buffalo's Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and is currently completing a professional certificate as an End of Life Doula at the University of Vermont School of Medicine. Ms. Scavone is a Health Foundation of Western and Central NY Health Leader Fellow and a University at Buffalo Advanced Trauma-Informed Champion.

Sheri gives back to her community by sharing her time and resources on the Boards of Broadview Federal Credit Union and Niagara Lutheran Health Services. She is a Governor's appointee to the NYS Child Care Availability Task Force and Co-Chair of Senator Gillibrand's Child Care Innovation Committee. Ms. Scavone also serves on the University at Buffalo (UB) School of Social Work Dean's Advisory Council, UB Early Childhood Research Center Advisory Board, and the Charity Navigator Advisory Council. She provides thought leadership on numerous local, NYS, and national coalitions and organizations.

Ms. Scavone is passionate about harnessing the incredible resources of women to strengthen our communities!

How to Make a Difference: 10 Tips for Effective Advocacy

Our program explores how we can be better allies and advocates. This resource is a great start! It was taken from the following website

<https://angelajourdain.com/how-to-make-a-difference-10-tips-for-effective-advocacy>



Angela Jourdain is the Owner and Lead Therapist at Haven of Hope. She has been working in the field of therapy since 2012 with a specialization in Chemical Dependency Counseling. She is trained in Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), and fluent in a variety of therapeutic interventions for various age groups.

Advocacy plays a crucial role in shaping societal change. Whether you aim to support a cause, influence public policy, or rally for justice, effective advocacy strategies can amplify your impact. But how do you make a real difference through advocacy? The key is approaching it thoughtfully, staying committed, and using your influence wisely. Here are ten powerful tips to help you become an effective advocate and make a lasting impact.

Understand the Power of Advocacy

Effective advocacy starts with understanding its power and purpose. Advocacy is more than raising awareness; it's about mobilizing support, influencing decisions, and driving meaningful change. To succeed in this space, recognize that advocacy involves working with others who share your vision. Your voice becomes part of a larger movement, which can create lasting, positive impacts. The collective effort of advocates can sway decision-makers, inspire action, and bring attention to issues that would otherwise be ignored.

Know Your Cause Inside and Out

A solid understanding of the cause you're advocating for is essential. Before speaking on behalf of a cause, ensure you have in-depth knowledge about it. This includes knowing the key issues, statistics, and background information. Your arguments will be stronger when well-informed, and your advocacy efforts will resonate with your audience. People are more likely to support your cause if they can trust that you understand the nuances of the issue and the challenges it presents. This knowledge forms the foundation of your advocacy efforts and ensures you approach the cause in an informed and confident position.

Build Relationships with Key Stakeholders

Successful advocacy relies heavily on relationships. You must connect with key stakeholders, including decision-makers, community leaders, and organizations, to make a real difference.

Building strong relationships with these individuals will help you gain access to critical platforms, resources, and support for your cause. These connections can open doors, provide insights, and help you navigate challenges. By fostering trust and collaboration, you can align your advocacy efforts with those who have the power to create change. Remember, advocacy is not a solo effort—strong alliances can significantly amplify your voice and resources.

Know Your Audience and Tailor Your Message

Different audiences require different messaging strategies. Understanding who you're speaking to allows you to craft a message that resonates with their values and priorities. Whether you're talking to lawmakers, community groups, or the general public, tailoring your message to the audience increases the likelihood of engagement. For example, if you're advocating for [environmental policies](#), you might tailor your message differently when speaking to business leaders versus students or concerned citizens. Effective messaging involves identifying the motivations and concerns of your audience and then addressing those points with clear, relevant arguments.

Develop a Clear and Compelling Message

A strong, clear message is key to effective advocacy. People are more likely to support a cause when they understand what's at stake. Break down complex issues into simple, relatable points. Your message should be compelling and drive action, not just awareness. Use powerful language and focus on the outcomes you want to achieve. Advocate for tangible changes people can rally behind, and ensure your message is consistent across all platforms and communications. A message that is easy to understand and motivates people to act can be the difference between success and failure in advocacy efforts.

Use Data and Stories to Back Your Claims

Facts and statistics provide credibility to your advocacy efforts. However, compelling stories are just as powerful. Combining both helps to create an emotional and logical appeal. Data can make your message more persuasive, while stories help people connect emotionally with your cause. Numbers can present the severity of an issue, but stories help people relate to the human side of the cause. Combining both ensures that your audience understands the issue intellectually and emotionally. For example, using statistics about hunger and following it up with a story about a local family's struggle with food insecurity can have a far greater impact than just presenting numbers alone.

Leverage Social Media for Advocacy Success

In today's digital world, social media is an essential tool for advocacy. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram provide opportunities to raise awareness, mobilize supporters, and engage with key stakeholders. Use social media to share your message, connect with others, and generate momentum for your cause. Social media allows you to amplify your voice and reach a

larger, more diverse audience quickly and effectively. Don't just post content—engage with followers, respond to questions, and encourage them to take action. Consider using hashtags, running campaigns, or creating shareable content that makes it easy for others to spread the word about your cause.

Collaborate with Like-Minded Groups and Individuals

Collaboration increases your impact. Work with other advocates and organizations that share your cause. By joining forces, you amplify your reach, resources, and influence. Collaborative efforts are often more powerful than individual actions, and they foster a sense of unity and solidarity. Partnering with like-minded groups can also help pool resources and expertise, making your advocacy efforts more effective. Working together allows you to share strategies and learn from others' experiences. Collective advocacy efforts can create more opportunities for engagement and attract more support than if you were to act alone.

Be Persistent and Patient

Advocacy isn't always a quick process. Changing minds, influencing policy, and driving societal change can take time. It's essential to remain patient and persistent. Even when progress feels slow, remember that every action you take contributes to the larger movement. Consistent efforts over time are often what lead to lasting change. Advocacy is a marathon, not a sprint. Be prepared to face setbacks, and don't be discouraged by initial resistance. Celebrate the small victories along the way, and keep moving toward your ultimate goal. Persistence and patience are crucial qualities for any successful advocate.

Monitor and Evaluate Your Efforts

Advocacy is a dynamic process, and tracking your progress is important. Regularly evaluate your advocacy efforts to see what's working and what isn't. This will help you make adjustments, improve your strategies, and engage your audience meaningfully. By analyzing the impact of your actions, you can identify areas for improvement and ensure that your efforts stay focused and effective. Monitoring your advocacy allows you to refine your message, identify new opportunities, and overcome challenges as they arise. Regular evaluations ensure that your advocacy remains relevant and impactful.

Celebrate Successes and Keep the Momentum Going

When you achieve a milestone or make a breakthrough, celebrate it. Recognizing your success boosts morale and encourages others to stay engaged. At the same time, keep the momentum going by setting new goals and focusing on the next step in your [advocacy journey](#). Celebrating progress helps maintain energy levels and reminds people why they fight for the cause. Each success, no matter how small, can inspire continued efforts and energize others on the same path.

