

## **ZONTA CLUB OF ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA CHARTER #6 DISTRICT 4 AREA 5**

Zonta International, a global organization of professionals empowering women worldwide through service and advocacy.

The first Zonta Club was formed in Buffalo, New York, by five business women led by Marion de Forest, and inspired by the Kiwanis and Rotary for men. The women felt that with the passing of the Equal Suffrage amendment to the United States Constitution and the record for service by women during World War I, they should participate in a world in which women were rapidly growing in status and responsibility.

During the spring and summer months of 1919, clubs were established in New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan. The Zonta Club of Erie, Pennsylvania was the sixth charter of the "Original Nine". The original nine clubs, with a total membership of 600, formed their Confederation on that official Zonta Birthday... November 8, 1919. Anna Schrade was the first President of the Zonta Club of Erie, Pennsylvania in 1919.

Zonta Club of Erie members have been meeting on Tuesdays, since its inception. Board members meet every month on the second Tuesday of the month and a General member meeting on the third Tuesday of every month. Zonta members have always been active women in business and the professions who still find time for home, family and community service

In the early 1900's the club had been instrumental in providing equipment to the Blind Center; an Executone system (direct classroom- to- home Communication system) in the homes of a young students who because of a physical handicap could not attend school; and wheelchairs to nursing homes and hospitals.

For a number of years, the Zonta Club provided nursing scholarships for girls at the two local hospitals. Christmas baskets and organized birthday parties were given to the needy.

As the years progressed, donations of finance, products, and time provided help to the needs of the Cancer Center, abused children's needs at the Crime Victim Center, SafeNet, Food Banks, and Veterans Miracle Center.

We packaged and shipped Birthing Kits to Kenya and supported a local doctor with supplies and financial assistance for her mission to Africa.

On November 30, 1932, Zonta Club's Past-President of 1920-21, Helen Schluraff, accompanied Amelia Earhart, a distinguished Zontian, on her trip from Cleveland to Erie for a speaking engagement at Strong Vincent High School. They were met by a six-plane escort to land at what is now known as Tom Ridge Field.

Each year, the Zonta Erie club holds its Amelia Earhart Award Dinner to honor juniors in high school, both girls and boys, who have made outstanding contributions to their community. Two students from each high school in Erie are chosen to be honored at event, held at the Erie Maennerchor Club. Recipients are chosen for academic excellence, extracurricular activities and their work to make their school and community a better place. The Erie Club awards \$500 college scholarships to two of the students.

On March 8, Zonta Yellow Rose Day and International Women's Day, the Zonta Club of Erie presents yellow roses to women who have achieved a high level of service to the community.

At Christmastime, club members raise funds for their service projects through a gift-wrapping project. "Fun-raising" projects have been sustaining us for a century, from the early years of Fashion Shows, Bake Sales, Card Parties, Art Auctions, Cruise Raffles, and you name it... we did it.

The Erie, Pennsylvania Zonta Club is fulfilling the goals of Zonta's founders as it has for the past 100 years. President Karol Jaworek is leading the club in its mission of service and advocacy.