

Zonta kicks off '16 Days of Activism' against domestic violence

BY KAREN CARR KEEFE
Senior Contributing Writer

The month of November is a significant one for the Zonta Club of Grand Island.

The club – whose worldwide mission is to advocate for the rights of women – has declared its annual “16 Days of Activism.” The campaign (Nov. 25 to Dec. 10) is observed around the world and is supported by the United Nations.

The event promotes Zonta International’s “Say No to Violence Against Women” campaign.

Members of Zonta clubs worldwide are encouraged to take local, national and international actions to influence the making and implementation of laws, as well as changing gender-based attitudes and behaviors, to end violence against women.

Orange is the color the United Nations chose to commemorate “The 16 Days of Activism.”

Town Supervisor Peter Marston read a proclamation to the community about Zonta’s campaign at Monday night’s Town Board meeting.

The proclamation says, in part, that the Town of Grand Island encourages citizens to be aware that “domestic and gender-based violence are real issues in our community that we need to do our best to overcome.”

Grand Island Zonta President Heidi Travagline said, “We would like to strongly thank the community for your support. This is a very serious issue with gender-based violence toward women and girls. The United Nations has a campaign, ‘Orange the World,’ and so we have been ‘oranging’ the trees on the Town Commons now for three years, and more of our residents and businesses are requesting orange ribbons.”

“We are asking you, as an awareness campaign, to please reach out to us, with our Grand Island Zonta,” Travagline said. The club’s email is grandislandzonta@gmail.com.

She said Zonta is giving out the orange ribbons, which people can put on their mailboxes or trees to raise awareness about the fight against gender-based violence.

In fact, the issue has special significance for Grand Island. In 2016 and 2017, it was reported that Grand Island had the highest rate of domestic violence among the towns and villages in Erie County.

On the strength of that statistic, and the documented local need for intervention, the Family Justice Center (FJC) established its third satellite location on Grand Island. The other two sites are Buffalo and Orchard Park.

Family Justice Center Community Outreach Manager Kelly Gast also spoke at the close of the Town Board meeting on behalf of Zonta’s campaign against domestic and gender-based violence.

Gast held up a Zonta orange ribbon to show the members of the public who attended the meeting.

“We all understand, there’s a lot of students here, why these orange ribbons are so important – what this stands for,” Gast said. “At the Family Justice Center, we are a domestic violence agency that provides services and support to victims of domestic violence and their children. We have served nearly 10,000 women and children since March of 2020 (at the three centers).”

She detailed a sharp rise in strangulations experienced among the organization’s clients, as evidence of the life-threatening consequences of domestic violence.

Gast also said the Family Justice Center is the only domestic violence agency in New York state that has a forensic medical unit that allows the FJC to capture images of injuries that are not visible to the naked eye.

“We do really important work,” she said.

“I just want to recognize the Zontas, because they are steadfast allies with us in this work. They donate money, they donate their time and, most importantly, they help us spread awareness,” Gast said.

“Domestic violence does not discriminate based on age, race, gender, ethnicity, how you worship. It just doesn’t matter. It affects all of us and all families, and our data certainly shows that. So, if anybody needs help, we provide free, confidential services and support. You don’t even have to tell us who you are. But we are there. And we are also always in need of more allies and volunteers.”

Zonta is reaching out for more participants in its campaign against violence.

“We request Grand Island schools, business, organizations and homes ‘orange’ their site/tree. The orange ribbons are free,” Zonta President Heidi Travagline said.

Contact her at 716-773-0158 or grandislandzonta@gmail.com.



The Zonta Club of Grand Island inducted two new members on Nov. 12 at the Grand Island Welcome Center. From left, at the installation ceremony, are: Zonta Area 3/District 4 Director Peggy McGee-Smith; Zonta Club Membership Chair Donna Monaco; new members Michelle Mercurio, newly appointed assistant vice president of M&T Bank’s Grand Island Branch; and Jasmine Truax, chief experience officer at Island Ship Center; and Grand Island Zonta President Heidi Travagline. “Both new members bring a wealth of knowledge, talent and expertise to our organization,” Travagline said. “Together, with our community support, we will continue to create a better world for women and girls through service and advocacy.” To find out more about Zonta and how to help, contact the club at grandislandzonta@gmail.com. • On Nov. 16, several members of Grand Island Zonta began the United Nations and Zonta International worldwide awareness campaigns, “UNITE” and “The 16 Days of Activism,” by hanging orange ribbons on the Grand Island Town Commons. Orange is the color the United Nations chose to commemorate “The 16 Days of Activism.” From left: Grand Island Zonta members Sue Fleming Brusino, Sonja Miller and Donna Monaco. The campaign of “Oranging the Island” commemorates the United Nations declaration on Nov. 25, 1999, of the “Eliminate Violence Against Women Day” and ends with UN declaration on Dec. 10, of International Human Rights Day.



ADAMS
DOOR COMPANY INC.

232 Sawyer Ave.,
Tonawanda

716-895-9245

**Free Estimates on
New Installations**

**Expert Maintenance
& Repair Service**



Traditional




Contemporary



Commercial

WWW.ADAMSDOORCOMPANY.COM
INFO@ADAMSDOORCOMPANY.COM

Rotary
Club of
Grand Island, NY



JOIN US TO:

- Connect with other people of action
- Form new friendships and build your network
- Find creative ways to meet community needs
- Gain new skills and grow as a leader

 A drop of ink makes people think!

Weekly newspapers are by far, the medium in which advertising is wanted and welcomed.

716-773-7676

Weekly newspapers deliver the strongest audience; an audience that always includes the most powerful consumers, the most educated citizens, and the most involved business and government leaders.

ASK ABOUT OUR

Print & Web Ad Bundle Rates



Ask your Account Executive how to get a great deal on bundling your print ad with an ad on our website for more exposure!

NIAGARA FRONTIER PUBLICATIONS
wnypapers.com
1859 Whitehaven Road • Grand Island • 716-773-7676





SCAN ME

www.rotaryclubgi.org