
ZONTA

 CLUB OF
CHEYENNE

MEMBER OF ZONTA INTERNATIONAL

 EMPOWERING WOMEN
THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

May 2025

Zephyr

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Message from the President

As my term as President of the Zonta Club of Cheyenne comes to a close, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for making this past year so special. It has been an honor to serve alongside such dedicated, passionate, and inspiring women.



I've truly enjoyed the journey—seeing our projects succeed, watching new members get involved, and feeling the strength of our shared mission. I hope each of you continues to find joy and purpose in the work we do to-

gether. There's a place for everyone in Zonta, and I encourage you to stay active and explore the roles and opportunities that speak to you.

Please join me in welcoming our new President, Betty Abernethy, and our incoming board. I'm excited to see the direction they will

take us and the fresh energy they bring to our club.

Here's to another great year!

Warmly,

Belinda

For our new Board members:

We will hold a Board meeting

Thursday, May 15th

@ 5:30 pm

Paris West—1719 Central Ave

See you there!

A very special

Thank You

from all the members to the outgoing officers and board members. Thanks for all of your hard work and dedication to our club and our community!



www.cheyennezonta.org

Making an impact right here at home



On April 22nd, Pam and Belinda had the honor of presenting a check from our successful fundraiser, Cancel Out, to Safehouse of Cheyenne, allocating \$9000 towards security cameras and some grounds renovations.

Zontian recognized during National Public Health Week

Cheyenne Zonta member and Laramie County Coroner, Becki Reid, was recently recognized for her commitment and contributions during National Public Health Week. Following is an interview with Becki.

Q: Can you share your name, title, and the organization you work for?

A: Rebecca Reid The Coroner for Laramie County

Q: What is your role in public health, and what does your day-to-day work look like?

A: My day to day looks very different every day. As the coroner we deal with deaths each day. We could have a death at the Hospital, nursing care facility or even a home death. We just never know what our day will look like. When dealing with public health we may have a deceased person who has been dead for weeks or days or just passed. Each call has proper precautions that include wearing gloves and knowing circumstance and decedent's medical history to determine if masks or further PPE is needed to take the decedent into our care safely. Our office does follow proper procedure including National Standards and Guidelines through CDC.

Q: How did you first become interested in public health?

A: When my Grandfather died, he was out in the elements of Arizona including high temperatures. I was allowed to view him before he was buried. Although he was a loved one it piqued my interest in the profession to determine cause and manner of death and how nature changes a body.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about your work in public health?

A: In some decedent's cases where there is an infectious disease that does not allow the family to view their loved ones, like Covid-19, my staff and I were able to describe on scene details and ensure we were with their loved one. A lot of decedents died during Covid-19 without any family interactions due to the strict rules of facilities or out of precaution at home. This is also true in other communicable diseases or viruses. My office also keeps statistics of each cause of death to keep better track of data and it has helped our community with the start of the Suicide Fatality Board and Overdose Fatality Board. This has helped to keep the citizens of Laramie County informed and shown different strategies to train key groups or citizens in Suicide prevention.

Q: What is one public health initiative or project you've worked on that you're especially proud of?

A: When I became Coroner, I started the Laramie County Grief Support Group. Our County only had Suicide support

for grief through another entity at that time. Grief is one of the hardest things we all go through in life, and I believe everyone grieving the loss of a loved one deserves support. Through this group we have helped families with biohazard clean up, staying in a hotel overnight while their residence is being cleaned from biohazard material after a death, providing a meal, helping with the start of counseling services and towing of vehicles from a death. We also have the Grief Support Group meeting and the loss of a Suicide Grief Support Group meeting

twice a month to help provide support in a group setting with other people through loss. One of the biggest risk factors for suicide is the recent loss of a loved one. Prevention and Postvention helps lower the suicides in our county by providing this support.

Q: What's one thing you wish more people understood about public health?

A: Coroners are not just a transport company. My staff and I are trained to determine cause and manner of death. Our training and position

help contain and track different types of death to include disease or viruses. We had several flu cases at the beginning of this year. Each case had to be documented, the decedent was tested for flu and which strand of flu. Part of our information gathering during our investigation on each case does include any symptoms of illness in the last 72 hours prior to death and any contagious diseases or viruses with results.

Thank you to Rebecca for her dedication and contributions to public health in Wyoming! And the Zonta Club of Cheyenne thanks you as well!



Denise and Rick recognized by Scouts

Special adult awards are rare at the Top Scouts Recognition Banquet. This year, there were two. Lion Rick Walsh, who coordinates the Eagle Scout Program for Scout Frontier District, was presented the Lions Clubs International's Scouting Service Award, and his wife, Denise Parrish, was presented with the Scouter's Wife Award.

April Club Meeting Minutes

The April Zonta Club of Cheyenne meeting was held on April 10, 2025, at The Office Bar & Grill.

Meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by President Belinda Sawyer.

Member Highlights: Denise Parrish first learned of Zonta when her husband told her about it. She decided to join because she wanted an activity outside of work and the international aspect of Zonta excited her. She has met some amazing women through Zonta. There are too many women who have inspired her to choose just one. Denise's advice for young women: pick something that interests you and learn about it. Her hobby is volunteerism, together with reading John Grisham's books and old movies. A surprising fact about Denise is that she loves trash TV, the trashier the better! If she could have a super power it would be to bring civility and kindness back to our conversations.

Special Guest Speaker: Julie Fogg of the Unaccompanied Students Initiative (USI) - *Please see page 5 for a re-cap of Julie's presentation.*

Minutes of the last meeting: There was no business meeting during the month of March. Minutes of the February meeting have yet to be approved by membership. Due to lack of a quorum, action has been deferred until a future meeting.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer's report was previously included in the Zephyr. There being no questions or discussion, the Treasurer's report was placed on file for audit.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Advocacy & Service:

Art is needed for the Art Contest. One item has been submitted to date.

An inventory of Hope Bag items will be done on April 26, 10:00am – 4:00pm at Cubby Hole Club House (4500 Haunted Road).

The next committee meeting will be April 24 at Jennica Fournier's house (5516B Townsend Place), 5:30pm.

Membership and Communications:

The Membership committee helped with the set up and operation of Cancel Out. Betty Abernethy put together the Zonta Basket for the registration for a year's free membership. Char Madden, Assistant County Coroner, has applied for that membership.

We are in need of someone to maintain the club's

web page and provide social media assistance.

A new member reception will be held on April 23 at Cheyenne Country Club to welcome and provide information to anyone who is interested in joining the club following Cancel Out. Invitations have been sent to 18 people. Please invite others if you know someone who may be interested. Let Betty Abernethy know if others will be attending as she needs a head count both for the Country Club and also to make sure hand-outs are available for all. Several current members have agreed to attend and speak briefly about their activities as committee members.

A special meeting has been scheduled at Applebee's on Wednesday, April 16, as soon after 5pm as possible. The purpose of this meeting is to finish planning the new member reception.

The next committee meeting will be April 28, 5:15pm, at Betty's house (814 E. Jefferson Road) to start planning for the 2025/2026 year. There will be food and beverages.

Cancel Out: Approximately 250 people attended this year's event. Attendance was down slightly from last year, but we were competing against three other fundraisers on the same night. Information about proceeds and distribution of proceeds has been provided in the Zephyr.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers: We do not yet have a complete proposed slate of officers, nor is there a quorum of members at the meeting. Therefore, we cannot do a vote for new officers tonight. Three current officers are stepping down one year into their terms of office because of increased demands on their time. Volunteers have offered to be placed on the ballot to fill the remaining term for each of those positions:

Betty Abernethy will be on the ballot to complete the remainder of Belinda Sawyer's term as President.

Jennica Fournier will be on the ballot to complete the remainder of Pam Pafford's term as Vice-President.

Michelle Huff will be on the ballot to complete the remainder of Laura Gorny's term as Secretary.

Please email Belinda Sawyer and/or Melissa Martin with nominees or volunteers for open Board positions. We will vote electronically and/or by Zoom meeting later in April.

The meeting concluded at 7:30pm.

Submitted by Laura Gorny, Secretary.

USI helping unaccompanied students in Wyoming

Our guest speaker for the April meeting was Julie Fogg of the Unaccompanied Students Initiative (USI). Julie first share about her organization which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Their mission is providing a safe and stable home to develop sustainable independence for students ages 16-20 experiencing homelessness. Their vision is to end the intergenerational cycles of homelessness. Their values include youth empowerment, innovation, well-being, and community commitment. They serve students in Cheyenne, Casper and Laramie.

Per the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the term “homeless children and youths” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and includes

- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Julie shared the shocking statistic that 2,424 pre-kindergarten to grade 12 students were identified as homeless in Wyoming during the 2023-2024 school year, 700 more than the previous school year. USI serves students aged 16 through 20. The organization is funded by donations, foundations, and federal grants. USI currently has three active locations in Cheyenne, Casper, and Laramie.

USI provides housing, life skills training, and personalized support to help students succeed in academics, employment, and personal growth. House Supervisors help

the students with homework, applying for jobs, writing a resume, and maintaining a schedule to achieve their goals. The USI program also helps students learn how to do laundry, cook, clean, grocery shop, budget, and other life skills they would traditionally learn at home. Program coordinators work with students individually to set goals and create a path to achieve those goals.

She shared that there are lots of ways to get involved with this organization, including providing dinners. She also shared that their budget doesn't allow for snacks, something the kids love!

To learn more, go to [Unaccompanied Students Initiative](#).



Julie Fogg, Network Director of Unaccompanied Student Initiative shared about her organization during our April meeting.

Announcements

May Club Meeting

Please join us!

May 8th @ Cheyenne Country Club

Meeting starts at 6:00 pm

**(Deadline to RSVP for dinner
was April 30.)**

Advocacy & Service

Committee Meeting

May 13th at 5:30 pm

Jennica's house—5516 B Townsend Place

All are welcome!

Our May Zunco event
has been moved to June 6th,
but the Membership Committee has a
Zappy Hour planned, so keep an eye
out for an announcement email from
ZontaFun@gmail.com!

Membership & Communications

Committee Meeting

Date, time and location TBA

Please watch your email

COME HELP US PLAN FOR THE SUMMER!

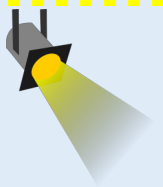
2025 Cancel Out Reception a huge success

By Betty Abernethy

The Cancel Out New Member Reception went very well. There were 10 Zonta members present, and 15 guests attended. We provided refreshments at the Cheyenne Country Club, and kept the budget under the \$600 allot-

ted from the Cancel Out funds. We gave out 18 packets of information and as a result, we have seven new member applications approved by the Membership/Communications Committee and submitted to the Board for final approval.





Zonta Club of Cheyenne Member Spotlight:

Denise Parrish

What is your name?

My name is Denise Kay Parrish – it is my birth name and the only name I have ever used.

How did you hear about Zonta Club of Cheyenne?

I heard about Zonta from my husband who, by the way, was a big fan of the Antique Show. When I was looking for a different non-work-related group to join, he described Zonta as the 800-lb gorilla of women's groups in Cheyenne (in other words, the one I should look to join.)

Why did you decide to join Zonta?

I had been very active in my church and it was where I spent most of my free time and energy. However, things changed when I found out that church politics can be very ugly. I needed a change and somewhere to spend a bit of my time other than work. Zonta was appealing to me because of its international aspect. I was starting to travel overseas for some volunteer projects related to my profession, and was starting to get a more worldly view of life.

What are you most excited about as a Zonta Member?

I love the camaraderie of Zonta. I have met so many interesting people. I now have a circle of acquaintances and friends that I never would have imagined.

Is there a specific Zonta project or initiative you're particularly interested in?

Currently, my passion is about finding ways to make a dent in ending violence against women. Raising awareness is important, but it is only the first step. We must take the next step of trying to stop it from happening.

Who is a woman (famous or personal) who has in-

spired you in your life, and why?

I struggle with answering this question. I have known and know of so many inspiring women. However, I don't know that any one of them changed my life in anyway. I grew up in the 1960's and 1970's – women's liberation, anti-establishmentism, NOW, Ms. Magazine, the ERA. By the time I was 16 and 17, I was taking on women empowerment issues. It was just something engrained in me.



What advice would you give to young women who want to make a difference in their community?

Pick an issue that interests you and learn about it. Become conversant in it. Whenever my enthusiasm for "changing the world" begins to wane, I start doing some research – reading, watching video clips, googling – and I start to get my pep back. It gives me some-

thing to talk about to then try to engage others.

Tell us a little about your hobbies and interests.

Hobbies – what are those? My primary hobby is volunteerism. Many years ago, I used to crochet, needlepoint, and do crafts but then I got married and life got busy. I still have a half-done throw / blanket from when my nephew was born. (He is now in high school.) When I can, which is rare, I grab a bit of time to watch an old movie or read a John Grisham book.

What is a fun fact about you that most people don't know?

Trash TV is mind candy for me. The less redeeming value a show has, the better. I watch it to simply vegetate and relax. It is like staring into space with background noise.

If you could have a super power, what would it be?

To bring civility and thoughtfulness back to conversations Americans have with each other.

Stark reality of ending visas for trafficking victims

This article was sent in by Dr. Michelle Aldrich.

The Human Cost of Ending T and U Visas or Trafficking Victims

Compiled by: Ami Carpenter, PhD

Human trafficking is a pervasive and devastating crime that affects millions of people worldwide, including thousands within the United States. Victims of trafficking endure extreme physical, psychological, and financial abuse at the hands of their traffickers, and for many, the opportunity to escape their situation is rare. The U.S. government has historically provided certain protections, including T and U visas, to trafficking survivors and other victims of serious crimes. However, the proposal to terminate these visas as suggested in Project 2025 could have profound and harmful consequences for victims seeking safety and justice.

Understanding T and U Visas:

The T visa was established in 2000 under the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act to provide relief for survivors of human trafficking who assist law enforcement in investigating their traffickers. Similarly, the U visa was created to protect victims of other serious crimes, including domestic violence and sexual assault, who cooperate with authorities.

Both visas offer temporary legal status and a path to permanent residency, allowing victims to rebuild their lives free from the fear of deportation and retaliation from their abusers. “Even the act of filing an application provides vital protection, triggering an internal government alert that prevents abusers from attempting to have their victims deported, a well-known coercion tactic.”

The Consequences of Ending These Protections:

If the T and U visa programs were eliminated, the effects on human trafficking victims would be severe, including:

1. Increased Fear of Reporting Crimes

Victims of human trafficking are often controlled through threats of deportation, especially those who lack legal status. T and U visas offer a legal incentive for victims to come forward and seek help. Without these protections, many victims may remain silent, allowing traffickers to continue their abuse without fear of consequences. Law enforcement agencies have long relied on these visas to encourage victim cooperation in dismantling trafficking networks.

2. Greater Vulnerability to Retrafficking

Survivors who are denied legal protections are at high risk of

being retrafficked. Many trafficking victims have no safe home to return to, especially if they were trafficked from another country. Without legal status, they may face homelessness, poverty, and the inability to work, making them prime targets for further exploitation.

3. Hindering Law Enforcement Efforts

T and U visas play a critical role in enabling law enforcement to prosecute traffickers. Victims who feel safe and supported are far more likely to provide testimony and assist in investigations. Without these protections, human traffickers would have a much easier time avoiding prosecution, making it harder to combat these crimes effectively.

4. Psychological and Emotional Toll on Survivors

Many trafficking survivors suffer from severe trauma, including PTSD, anxiety, and depression. The prospect of deportation or continued legal uncertainty can exacerbate these conditions, making recovery far more difficult. T and U visas provide a sense of security, allowing survivors to access medical care, counseling, and stable employment—critical factors in their healing process.

5. A Step Backward in Anti-Trafficking Efforts

The United States has been a global leader in combating human trafficking, and the T and U visa programs are seen as key elements of that effort. Removing these protections would not only harm victims but also weaken the country’s standing in the international fight against human trafficking. Other nations may be less inclined to cooperate with U.S. anti-trafficking initiatives if victim protections are rolled back.

Conclusion:

The termination of T and U visas would represent a devastating setback for human trafficking victims, leaving them more vulnerable to exploitation, retrafficking, and legal uncertainty. These visas serve not only as a lifeline for survivors but also as an essential tool for law enforcement in dismantling trafficking networks. Without them, the fight against human trafficking would become significantly harder, and countless victims would be left without the hope of justice or recovery.

If the goal is to combat human trafficking effectively, then preserving and strengthening victim protections should remain a top priority.

Reference:

Lakhani, Zain (2024, October 22). Project 2025 Is Dangerous for Migrant Women. Women’s Refugee Commission. <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/blog/project-2025-is-dangerous-for-migrant-women/>

2024 Club Officers And Board

President: Belinda Sawyer

belindawyohomes@gmail.com

Vice President: Pam Pafford

pamwyohomes@gmail.com

Secretary: Laura Gorny

lgorny@bresnan.net

Treasurer: Dasa Robertson

Dasagwen@yahoo.com

Immediate Past Pres: Dr Michelle Aldrich

Board Directors:

Betty Abernethy

Kathy Orr

Rebecca Reid

Michelle Huff

Darcey Harris

Tracy Myers

Nominating Committee

Ann Erdmann

Melissa Martin

(Vacancy)

Committee Chairs

Advocacy/Service: Jennica Fournier

Finance: Kathy Cathcart

Membership/Communication: Betty Abernethy

Zonta International Foundation for Women

Ambassador: Mary Walker

Club Historian: Linda Bogart



Denise Parrish 5/20

Cassandra Stith 5/21

Mary Walker 5/22

Melissa Martin 5/28

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

Zonta Club Meeting

May 8 @5:15 (if you ordered dinner)

Meeting at 6:00 pm—Cheyenne Country Club

Advocacy & Service Committee Meeting

May 13th @ 5:30 pm

Jennica's house—5516B Townsend Place

Zonta Board Meeting

May 15 @ 5:30 pm

Paris West —1719 Central Ave

Membership/Communications Committee Meeting

Date, time and
location TBA—watch email for details!

Zappy Hour

Watch your inbox
for emails from ZontaFun@gmail.com!

Zonta Foundation :

Ann Erdmann, President
Linda Bogart, Vice President
Melissa Martin, Treasurer
Denise Parrish, Secretary
Vickie Ingerle, Director