

Welcome New Zontians!
by Deedee Boysen, OMC Chair for
Zonta Club of Laramie

"Welcome new Zontians!" is a phrase that Zonta Club of Laramie members have been singing out at club meetings, at fundraisers, and throughout the community this Fall. Since September, the Zonta Club of Laramie has welcomed 13 new members and is going strong to achieve its membership goal of 20 new members this year. Is this possible?? The club's OMC (Organization, Membership and Classification) committee says "Yes it is!"

Each year, the Zonta Club of Laramie sets a membership goal and develops a strategy to accomplish it. Traditionally, the club relies on its members to identify prospective Zontians and to invite them to club meetings. Over the past few years, the OMC committee has added one or more special membership events. These membership socials offer club members and guests an informal setting where conversation abounds and information is shared.

This year, the Zonta Club of Laramie's Membership Social took place in September. Over the summer, club members were asked to think about men and women in our community who they knew could meet Zonta's eligibility guidelines and to provide contact information for those prospective members to the OMC committee. Many community leaders were identified, and the list grew throughout the summer... Everyone knows someone who could be a fantastic Zontian!

The Membership Social was held at the Alice Hardy Stevens Center on a lovely Fall evening. The Center is centrally located in Laramie on the grounds of the Ivinson Mansion and the Laramie Plains Museum, and offers a commercial kitchen and a meeting space with a small stage. Zontian Mary Mountain, who is also the Executive Director of the museum, arranged the reservations and set up for the event. Women from our community were invited to the event by a formal invitation that was mailed to them in late August. The invitation also provided information about Zonta -- our mission and how we accomplish it locally, and included a flyer with a calendar of upcoming Fall club events. The response was out of this world, with 14 prospective members attending and many more responding that although they could not attend the Social, they would be interested in receiving additional information about the club and its activities.

The program was simple and allowed plenty of time for informal conversations between members and guests. As guests arrived, they checked in at the registration table and received a nametag and a big welcome from Zontian Wendy King. Guests were invited to sign an interest sheet and provide their name and e-mail address. Many did so. They were also invited to take handouts and brochures pertaining to club operations and activities.

The program kicked off with a welcome from club president Angela Ver Ploeg and a brief overview of the club's Fall activities. It was followed by a presentation by Past President Kim Frazier, who spoke about the Zonta organization. Key features of Kim's presentation included a discussion of the

international, district and local aspects of the club, and details about Zonta International and local service projects. She spoke briefly about club operations, our scholarship program, and our service projects. A skit entitled *Laramie Zonta Through the Years* was performed by club members. The skit described Laramie Zonta Club projects and activities through each decade since our formation in 1951. The Zonta Players, and perhaps the audience, got an extra kick out of the period hats and costumes worn by many of the players. Following the skit, each person in attendance introduced herself and told where she was employed and a little about her job. In addition, club members noted offices they held, and committees they served on. A brief question and answer session concluded the program. Many guests lingered after the program ended.

In the weeks and months that followed the Membership Social, OMC committee members actively recruited prospective members with e-mail greetings and information about club events and activities. E-mails specifically addressed club costs, such as dues and dinner cost; when and where Fall business meetings would be held, and general information about membership requirements such as completion of our New Member Questionnaire and attendance at a club meeting. E-mails also described various committees, Spring projects and events, and information about upcoming business meeting programs. Additional e-mails welcomed new members as they joined, and introduced them to the club.

The Zonta Club of Laramie's OMC committee is committed to retaining every one of our new members this year! A pot luck New Member Orientation is planned for January 2012, as is another Membership Social for community members who were unable to attend the September event and for all the new prospective members who have been recommended this Fall. We are counting on our new members to "make a difference" at this event.

PHOTOS FOLLOW



Laramie Zontians Tasha Bauman, Wendy King and Kathy Galster at the Registration Table



Past President Kim Frazier sets up her PowerPoint presentation.



Guests Effie Bader and Johnna French pose for photo with Zontians Becky Kosach and Maryalice Gulino following the Membership Social. Effie and Johnna have both recently joined Zonta.



Guests Erin Bohnet, Stephanie Schroeder and Amber McKee pose with Laramie Zontian Martha Reisch. Erin, Stephanie and Amber have joined the Zonta Club of Laramie this Fall.