

Zonta Club of Grand Rapids
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Zonta NewZ



Helping improve the legal, political, economic, health, education and professional status of women and girls locally and internationally.

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Pulitzer prize winner details discrimination against women by Denise Cheng ([dennetmint](#)) on Tuesday Sep 27th, 2011 in [NEWS](#) – The Rapiidian

Grand Rapids Community College kicked off its 17th [Diversity Lecture Series](#) last night, welcoming [New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof](#) to the podium at Fountain Street Church (24 Fountain Street NE). Kristof, who has twice won the Pulitzer Prize, is a co-author with his wife of [Half The Sky](#), which details and tackles three major abuses in the world against women: sex trafficking, gender-based violence and maternal mortality.

"In any 10-year period, in any decade, you have more girls who are discriminated against to death because of their gender than all of the people who died and in all of the genocides in the 20th century," he said. But there's another side of this. Putting aside the injustices, if you want to bring about change on so many of the issues we care about—whether it is global poverty, whether it's the kind of insecurity that racks Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, whether it's climate change, so many of the issues that we face—there are no quick fixes, no silver bullets. But one of the most cost-effective ways of making a difference is to educate girls, to bring those educated women into the formal labor force, and to see precisely the kind of virtuous cycle unfold as has happened in China. Put it another way: Women and girls aren't the problem, they're the solution to so many of these issues."

Kristof's passion around women's rights began to rise exponentially when he and wife [Sheryl WuDunn](#) lived in China, where "women hold up half the sky" is a common expression.

"When we were in China, we began to see both the injustices that often afflict women in particular and girls but also what happens when you invest in women."

While traveling to and from the Hu Bei province, Kristof met the brightest student in school, a girl by the name of Dai Manju who had to drop out of school shortly after because her family could not afford the fees. Kristof framed her as the poster child for girls' education in China [in a Times article](#) that garnered many \$13 checks as well as a \$10,000 wire. Kristof reported back to the donor, sharing with him how far \$10,000 goes in rural China.

"I only sent \$100!" blurted the dumbfounded donor. It turned out to be a bank error, and Kristof assumed the role of an advocate.

"This is not something you'll have learned to do in journalism class," quipped Kristof, who wrote a [follow-up article](#). "I called up the chief spokesman for the bank, who I knew, and I told him, truthfully, exactly what had happened ... 'Now just one question, on the record: Are you planning to try to get the \$9,900 back and force all these girls to drop out of school?' He didn't miss a beat. He said, 'on the record, under the circumstances, we're delighted to make a donation of the difference.'" Dai Manju went on to college, became an accountant and later an entrepreneur who has added jobs to the economy.

In his career, Kristof has traveled around the world and reported about what he has come to believe are the three most salient issues: human trafficking, reproductive health and investing in women's education. Kristof also emphasized that it is not a war between the genders. "It's so much more complicated than that. So many of the bad things that happen to girls happen at the hands of women," said Kristof, who bought two girls from a female brothel owner in order to reunite them with their families.

In Ethiopia, [he had met Mahabouba Mohammed](#), who was married off at 12 to a man four times her age. She became pregnant, gave birth alone and her child died. She suffered from an [obstetric fistula](#) which can happen when girls' hips are not fully formed for sexual reproduction. Waste would dribble between her legs, and she could not walk because the nerves in her leg muscles had been damaged.

"We're not only talking about tragedies but we're also talking about opportunities," Kristof said.

With a stench floating around Mahabouba, the village was convinced that she had been cursed and exiled her to a hut at the edge of the village, ripped off the door and hoped the hyenas would get her. All night, she waved a stick at the hyenas and at dawn, began crawling the 30 miles to the nearest American physician, who brought her to a hospital that fixed the fistula with a \$350 surgery. Mahabouba is now a nurse at that hospital.

Prior to his presentation at Fountain Street Church, Kristof had spent the day lecturing at Aquinas College, where someone had asked how he keeps from being depressed by what he sees. He often thinks of the story of a boy who throws starfish one by one into the ocean when someone points out that there are thousands of beached starfish. "It sure made a difference to that one," the boy said.

"In contrast, what is depressing is to talk to young people here for whom there is no greater expression of humanity than to have a hot car or the latest cell phone. That is truly depressing," Kristof said. To have any moral authority on the international scene, Kristof believes that Americans must start at home, where there are many runaway girls who are forced into prostitution.

"People are always a little bit puzzled about why it is a New York Times columnist, and a man to boot, should be writing so much about women's rights around the world," Kristof said. "The Holocaust wasn't just a Jewish issue, civil rights weren't just a black issue, and when you have 50-120 million women missing around the world because of discrimination, it's not just a women's issue. It's a vast human rights issue that everybody, I think, has a responsibility to try to address."

Check out the upcoming events hosted by Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council—they have very interesting programs lined up for local author appearances as well as a GR inductee in the Women's Hall of Fame.

Service and Advocacy Committee

After discussion with the service committee, we have decided to forgo the Degage Bingo evening that was scheduled for Nov 10th. We could not see a continuing service project there that would impact the future lives of those using Degage.

Instead, the Service Committee has decided to establish

a "Service Home" for this coming year at St John's Home. I have spoken with Tricia who is the social worker for one of the homes for young women and have a meeting set with her and the director for Nov 2nd.

We hope to have many evening events (baking cookies, making Christmas orna-

ments, Helping the women with scrapbooks, ballet, sewing both pillows and pads, invite the women to the Girls day in May, and include them in the FOCUS 2012 event. Our first event will probably be December 8th with details of activity to follow soon.

Membership Committee

The membership committee has met in October and come up with a wonderful idea for group members to bring many guests at one time to one special evening. This Open House event will provide information for possible new members. This idea was brought up at last weeks Zonta business meeting, and was received quite well. It was discussed the membership committee will be doing all the work as far as setting up tables regarding Zonta international, historical events that we have done as a group locally, our current sew-

ing events, also a table for fundraisers including the poker tournaments and our wine auction and art auction, girls days. We also plan to have a membership table for any questions for these guests regarding what they hear in hopes to become a new member. The membership committee only asks for members of other committees to man their station at that evening so as to give the expertise in that area when questions arise.

We do hope to have this open house in February 2012. This will also allow for a social event during our March gathering, prior to one more business meeting in April. We do hope this evening is a success and it sounds as though the full Zonta group is as excited about this as the membership committee. We thank you for your suggestions and helping make this evening a wonderful night for all.

Ways & Means Committee

Poker Nights: Our next Poker fundraiser will be at TJ's (6211 S. Division) on Sunday, October 30-Wednesday, November 2. Allison will be sending out an email for volunteer sign up.

Branded Merchandise: We grossed just shy of \$525 at the Zonta Store at the recent District 15 conference in Dearborn. Our wrapping paper was a hit but it was recommended that we sell it \$2 per sheet or 3 sheets for \$5,

instead of only by the sheet. In addition, for shipping purposes on the website we listed it as 3 sheets for \$5 plus \$6 shipping so it makes sense to adopt the suggestion.



President's Message

I am sending this from the beautiful city of Boulder, CO. It is beautiful fall weather here with stunning color.



We had a very engaging meeting this month with Mary Ellen and Maggie hosting a wonderful meal. Thank you for a great evening.

bership and defining the mission of our club. And I'm thrilled about the new and great ideas that have been surfacing. The committees have been meeting and are beginning to schedule dates for events. The membership committee presented plans for an Open House to take place in February. The Endowment committee is up and running with dates to begin the campaign. In fact, on October 27th, a small group will meet at Lisa's house to conduct a dry run for the presentation with the first "real" dinner scheduled for the first of December.

We also had a lively discussion about where we want to take the service work. Kate and other members will be

meeting to hopefully plan one of many events with the girls residing at St. John's Home. This first event will occur in December.

I am excited that we are off to a great year ahead... Although there will not be a business meeting until January, please watch for the calendar and newsletter, along with emails, as we communicate other scheduled events. I encourage all of our members to communicate with me about your ideas and opinions as we figure out the best way to use our talents and energies together.

-Vicki

As we concluded at our September meeting, this Zonta year is about growing our mem-

Endowment Exploratory Committee

The endowment exploratory committee is off and running. Our next brainstorming meeting is being held at the home of Lisa Rios on October 27th. The next step in the process is to solicit feedback from long time and alumni members. Sometimes the best way to know where you should head next is to take a look at where you've been and with our 90th anniversary approaching in 2012 we want to take an expansive look at both. More details and a full report will be available at the next club meeting.

International/UN Committee



- 3 women take home the 2011 Nobel Peace prize for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work:
 - Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Africa's 1st democratically elected female president as Pres of Liberia)
 - Leymah Gbowee (Executive Dir. Of the Women, Peace and security Network-Africa)
 - Tawakkul Karman (Journalist who founded Women Journalists Without Chains in 2005 in Yeman.)
- Congratulations to the Zonta International Marathon team that ran the Chicago Marathon to raise awareness of Zonta's International Program. \$6,000 was raised.
- The 66th General Debate of the UN General Assembly closed in September with firm commitments to gender equality coming from many world leaders.
 - This was the first debate since the formation of UN Women in January 2011.
 - And another first...the session was opened by a woman, H.E Pres. Dilma Rousseff of Brazil.
 - Several world leaders spoke of the need to empower women economically. The United Arab Emirates pledged 5 million to UN Women.



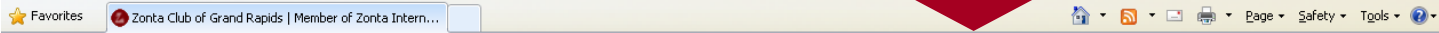
Zonta Club of Grand Rapids

Member of Zonta International

Advancing the Status of Women Worldwide

2011 – 2012 Zonta Calendar Year

OCTOBER 2011	27 th – 5:30 Endowment dinner (dry run) at Lisa Rios for committee members 30 th thru Nov 1 st - Poker fundraiser
NOVEMBER 2011	
DECEMBER 2011	1 st – Endowment donor dinner (committee) 8 th – Service/Atnoz event at St. John’s Home
JANUARY 2012	12 th – Business Meeting 5:30 @ Mangiamos
FEBRUARY 2010	9 th – Membership open House Last two weekends (1 evening) – ATNOZ event @ Middleville community theater
MARCH 2011	
APRIL 2012	12 th – Business Meeting
MAY	10 th – Girl’s Day (Tentative)
JUNE	14 th – Business Meeting



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Special thanks to Shannon and Darcie for giving up their weekend to attend GiveCamp 2011. But, we couldn't have done it without the help of Bryce, Eric and Lucasz, our development team. We owe them our gratitude for volunteering their skills and making our site spectacular! We plan on applying for 2012 to complete Phase II: a members only portal.

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