



Dear Friend,

Hello from Southern California!

As advocates for the empowerment of women and girls, we all know the importance of supporting the education needs of the next generation. Whether helping a YWPA student to achieve her goals to work for human rights, helping students conduct service projects for those in need, or removing barriers to stay in school, any action to keep girls learning leads to a better future for everyone.

Below, I would like to introduce you to two amazing young women and one of our own student clubs who have started shining light on the issues of their generation and have a bright future ahead. I know we will be seeing a lot of amazing progress toward women's rights and I am glad to have you and them working with us.

Please read about our impact and watch the video. I am sure you will be as inspired as I am.

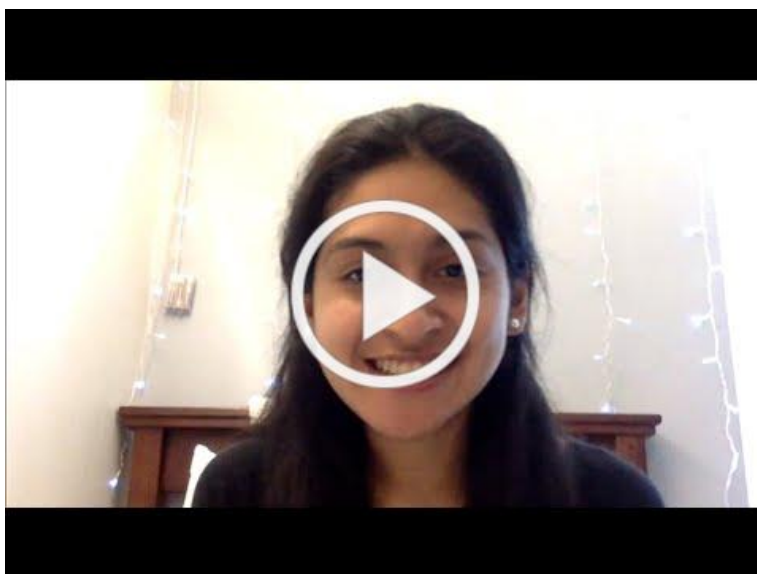
With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sharon'.

Sharon Langenbeck, Ph.D.  
President

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## Guadalupe Roman, 2020 YWPA Awardee shares her thoughts on equitable access to education



Guadalupe recently met with Gina Meeks, Zonta International Content Management Senior Coordinator to discuss the YWPA Award and the future of equity.

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## Colombo I Golden Z Club reaches women and girls with three-pronged mental health campaign



To make a lasting impact in the world and truly change the lives of women and girls for generations to come, we must invest in youth development and shape young leaders for gender equality. Through Zonta International's Z and Golden Z Club program, students around the world are carrying out Zonta's mission to empower women and girls through service and advocacy.

The Colombo I Golden Z Club, sponsored by the Zonta Club of Colombo I in Sri Lanka, won the first-place 2020 Emma L. Conlon Service Award for their outstanding service project, A Sound Mind.

The project, which aimed to improve the mental health of Sri Lankan women and children, contained three components: "Breaking Barriers," "Pursuit of Happiness" and "You Will Heal."

Stigma, which is a barrier to people with mental illness seeking treatment, is often associated with mental health not only in Sri Lanka but globally. Programs that promote mental health awareness, such as A Sound Mind, have proven effective in reducing stigma.

Read more about the student club's work by clicking:  
[Golden Z Club in Action](#)

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## Zonta Project Update: Girls' club rescues adolescents from marriage in rural Ethiopia

*Zonta International is supporting efforts to end child marriage in 12 countries with the highest rates of child marriage through the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage. Each country has specific strategies that respond to the context and factors that lead girls into early marriage. Read on for a story about the power of girls' clubs in preventing child marriage in Ethiopia.*



“I went to the police station when my parents told me that I was getting married,” says Mestawet Mekuria, 14, a seventh grader at Ayti Primary School, in northern Ethiopia’s Amhara region. Mestawet is one of 20 girl pupils at the school who have been rescued from marriage.

“I had learned about child marriage and its consequences in our school’s girls’ club. I told my parents that I did not want to get married. But they refused, and that is when I ran to the police station.” Mestawet went to the police, assuming that her parents would only receive a stern warning. But the consequences were to prove far more serious. Her mother and father were arrested and imprisoned for two weeks for violating the law. “I was sad when they were arrested, but they refused to listen to me.”

Child marriage – a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18 – is common across all regions of Ethiopia. Prevalence of the practice has declined significantly in the past decade, but still 40 percent of all girls in the country are married before they turn 18.

Although Mestawet’s parents were angry about what happened to them, they later made peace with their daughter through mediation led by village elders. “My parents now understand about child marriage and its consequences. They are no longer angry with me,” says Mestawet.

Girls’ clubs are established with the aim of preventing and mitigating school- and community-based barriers to girls’ education. The clubs are making a real difference in reducing child marriage, by empowering girls through life skills training. There is a special focus on engaging with girls in Grades 5 through 8, since this is the age group most commonly affected by child marriage.

Read more about Mestawet's goals for the future by clicking:  
[Rescuing Adolescents from Marriage.](#)

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Support girls clubs and adolescent girls like Mestawet in ending child marriage with a donation to the Zonta International Service Fund.

[Donate](#)

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**Are you ready for the challenge?**

Learn more about the Every Member Every November District Challenge by clicking the button below.



Every Member Every November

Keep your network informed on how Zonta International is putting our mission to work by sharing this message to your social feeds.



[www.zonta.org](http://www.zonta.org)

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