

## County celebrates Women's History Month

By Hector Flores

Charlotte County is celebrating Women's History Month this March and recognizing women's achievements and contributions to history, culture and society. The County Commission adopted a proclamation at its Feb. 27 meeting declaring March 8 as Zonta Yellow Rose Day. The date is also International Women's Day.

The proclamation cited Zonta International as a "leading global organization of professionals building a better world for women and girls through service, advocacy and funding. Zonta envisions a world in which women's rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential. In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on equal basis with men. In such a world, no woman lives in fear of violence."

County staff participated in several events highlighting and promoting professional development for women. On Tuesday, members of the county Lean In Circle held their regular meeting. The Lean In program is based on a management book by Facebook executive Sheryl Sandberg that encourages women to be more assertive in their workplace, take on leadership roles and advocate for career advancement opportunities for themselves and others.

The Tuesday meeting was different than the usual agenda. LeanIn.org held a Virtual International Women's Day Event. The theme was Let's #InspireInclusion: Debunking Four Myths Holding Women Back. The 60-minute session was hosted by Lean In's Editor in Chief and VP of Education Caroline Fairchild and covered key findings from Lean In's 2023 Women in the Workplace Report. The session also included an overview of Lean In's research-backed programs to help create more inclusive workplaces. Participants were encouraged to take action to inspire inclusion in their organization.

On Wednesday, administration hosted a SheLeadsGov Virtual Forum watch party. The forum was an opportunity to connect with women in local government and learn how their experiences have resulted in positive change as leaders in their organizations and communities. This year's theme was "Bold Women, Bold Changes," and was a call to action for women to be courageous and confident as a leader in any role and at any level. The panel discussion featured women who have made significant impacts in their careers and shared their insights with viewers.

As county administrator, I'm committed to being a champion for women in the workplace. Charlotte County offers many opportunities for women to build challenging and rewarding careers in public service. We proudly have women in numerous senior leadership positions, including facility, program and public relations managers, attorneys, division managers and department directors. My assistant county administrator and deputy county administrator are both women who advanced their careers thanks to leadership development programs and promotion opportunities the county offers.

I invite you to take a moment this month to appreciate the contributions of the women in your life, social circle and workplace.

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