



Office of the Mayor

News Release

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Mayor honors Soroptimist member as Volunteer of the Month for lead role in raising awareness of human sex trafficking issue

MARYSVILLE – Mayor Jon Nehring is proud to honor Marysville resident Elaine Hanson as April Volunteer of the Month for her key role in raising awareness about human sex trafficking and its impacts on young women.

Hanson, retiring after a 30-year career teaching math, science and physical education in Marysville schools, became a member of Soroptimist International of Marysville in 2005. It was through her work with the service club focused on improving the lives of women that she became involved in efforts to educate others about the often well-hidden crime of teen sex trafficking.



“I congratulate Elaine for her hard work and leadership in calling attention to the serious issue of teen sex trafficking, her involvement in Soroptimist, and the many other ways that she is helping improve the lives of young women in our community,” Nehring said during an award presentation at the May 13 City Council meeting. Hanson was nominated by fellow Soroptimist and City Council member Donna Wright.

The Anchorage, Alaska-born Hanson has spent much of her life helping young people succeed. Hanson earned her bachelor’s degree in Education from Western Washington University and master’s degree in Educational Technology from City University.

She moved to the Marysville area in 1974 when she was hired a week before school started to be a math, science and PE teacher at Marysville Middle School. She later taught at Marysville Junior High (now Totem Middle School), and finished her career as a math teacher at Marysville-Pilchuck High School.

When Hanson joined Soroptimist, her affinity for numbers made her a natural for the position of Treasurer, an officer role she has held since. Soroptimist is one of Marysville’s most active service clubs, combining the talents of women of various ages and professions dedicated to sharing a passion for improving the lives of women in Marysville, and worldwide. The club provides scholarships to young women students, hosts its annual “Junktique” and other fundraisers, participates in food bank food drives, Relay For Life and many other local events and initiatives.

One of the initiatives that has taken on greater importance within Soroptimist is educating people about the very real social problem of teen sex trafficking, Nehring said.

Hanson became a fighter to end the teen sex trade after she and other Soroptimist members attended a Northwest Coalition Against Trafficking Conference in Portland in 2011.

Hanson called the conference a “shocking eye-opener. I knew that if I didn’t know anything about this kind of activity, then many others in Marysville didn’t either.”

The human sex trafficking issue has become a key initiative of Soroptimist. The Marysville chapter has hosted a public event each year since the Portland conference. The well-attended public awareness events have brought in law enforcement, health care experts, anti-trafficking advocates and teen outreach experts to frame the issue, tie it in at the local level, and share with parents and teen-agers the tricks and tactics used by recruiters to lure young teens.

“Elaine has taken a leading role in calling attention to teen sex trafficking, an issue that isn’t limited to other parts of the world and the Third World, but is very much an issue here at home,” Nehring said. “She is very proud of her club’s efforts to make our community more aware of the problem.”

Hanson also volunteers with Providence General Children’s Association (PGCA) working in Guild 8 and at the Twig Shop, the gift shop at the Colby campus. Guild 8 has been successful at raising funds for PGCA, and has been responsible for tray favors once a month for children in the Pediatric Wing at Providence.

While a teacher, Hanson went abroad during three teaching exchanges in England and Australia, said Nehring. The Australia exchanges led to hosting groups of Australian students in Marysville-Pilchuck high school student homes. With more personal travel time after retirement, she started working part time for Educational World Travel, an international student travel program.

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