

## **Zonta District 16 Project – Sophie Elliot Foundation**

Zonta Club of Hibiscus coast Hosted a very successful Sophie Elliot foundation information evening. Lesley Elliot and Bill O'Brien flew up from Dunedin to speak about the foundation which included the new book 'Loves me Not' that district 16 is sponsoring for the school programmes.

Ninety five people of all ages came from Whangarei, Mangawhai to South Auckland and Janette Irvine came and was very pleased to actually meet Lesley Elliot and Bill O'Brien after many emails and discussion over the district project.

Lesley who describes herself as a nurse and a mother has set up the programme as a legacy to her daughter Sophie, who was brutally murdered by her boyfriend. Lesley has talked to many high schools retelling Sophies story, and her demise, warning both young men and women of what is not acceptable behaviour in a relationship, recognising signs of abuse and how to cope. Lesley said that she wished she had known the warning signs of danger.

Bill, a retired policeman, now author, describes himself as just 'a grizzly old cop'. Since retiring he has written many books one of which being 'Sophie's Story'. Bill has supported Lesley in setting up the foundation and presenting the 'Loves me not' programme in schools. He had a copy of the book 'hot off the press' that will be given to each pupil attending the course. He said that this work is the most rewarding of his career

They are both very passionate about the cause and put in many hours voluntarily planning and delivering programmes. Lesley is still working two days a week as a nurse. They plan to come north in the near future delivering their message into Rodney schools. It was indeed a pleasure to meet and listen to them and learn more in depth about their programme.

