

Three South Canterbury women recognised for community service at Zonta awards

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Zonta New Zealand 50 Women of Achievement award winners from left, Marina Charlton, Rachel Callander and Win Parkes with their certificates and roses given at a special breakfast on Tuesday morning.

Terminally ill woman Marina Charlton is at the end of her life journey but that didn't stop her from attending a presentation on Tuesday to accept a Zonta New Zealand 50 Women of Achievement award.

The hardworking spirited mother was joined by two other award winners, Timaru's Win Parkes and Rachel Callander.

The nationwide award, presented at a special Zonta Club of Timaru breakfast held on International Women's Day, recognises the contributions the women have made in helping to empower girls and women within New Zealand and the world.

Charlton, who runs the Teen Parent Study Group, gave an emotional acceptance speech which acknowledged the 45 individual young mums who over the years have participated in the educational programme at Timaru Girls' High School.

"Thank you so much for acknowledging teen mums and the fact they deserve a second chance. I accept this on their behalf."

Charlton said she was "only the captain of the ship".

"I'm at the end of my journey, so to get this award is pretty special."

Charlton, who has breast cancer, said she was honoured to be in the company of "other great women".

"When you read the list of women nominated it's an honour to be in their company - I also like the fact they recognised a teacher," she smiled.

For Callander, the award was a "massive honour".

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Callander is the driving force behind the Super Power Baby Project, sharing her life experiences of the birth, life and loss of her daughter Evie who was born with a rare chromosomal condition.

A photographer, Callander has been travelling the country and the world, promoting her book which features photographic portraits of children with chromosomal and genetic conditions.

"To feel my little [book] idea is doing things that people are recognising as important means the world to me."

Win Parkes, who over the years has been involved in health education, recreation, sport and the Women's Loan Fund in South Canterbury, said she was delighted to receive the award.

"It's just great and a recognition from the community that I've lived in for a long time."

The women each received a framed certificate and yellow roses.

- Stuff