

# NEWS & NOTES

LIVING THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT THROUGH GFWC

News & Notes - December 1, 2016



## Celebrating GFWC Florida's 100 Year History with Royal Palm State Park

On November 17, 2016 current GFWC Florida State President Mary Powell delivered an eloquent address at the rededication of the Royal Palm State Park to commemorate GFWC Florida's 100 year history with this conservation effort. President Powell recounted a story in which every clubwomen should take pride.

The lands, which would become Royal Palm State Park, were first studied by scientists in the late 19th century and revered for their "botanical diversity and spectacular hammock amongst the glades". Unfortunately, scientists were not the only ones taking an interest in the area. Railroad magnate, Henry Flagler, purchased the land with an eye to building a railroad throughout eastern Florida. The scientific community reacted by calling for the land to be set aside as a state park and the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, particularly Florida Federation State President May Mann Jennings (1914-1916), took up the cause.



GFWC — an international women's organization dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service

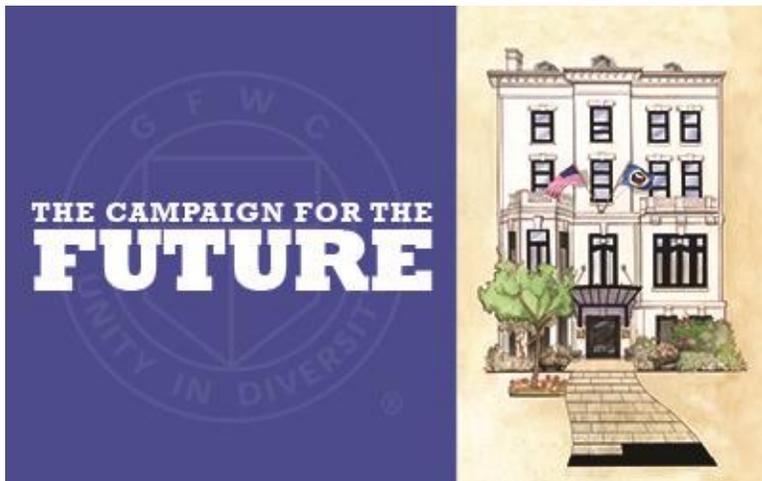
## Subscribe to *News & Notes*

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May Mann Jennings persuaded the Florida Legislature to deed 960 acres to create the park, matching the 960 acres already donated by Mrs. Henry Flagler. Through this legislation, the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs became the only Federation in the U.S. to own a state park. Florida Federation hired a park ranger, built a lodge, cut roads, and maintained the park for more than 30 years. In 1947, Royal Palm Park was deeded to the National Park Service and became the nucleus of Everglades National Park.

We celebrate the 100th anniversary of the park and the clubwomen who became Florida's first environmentalists at a time when they could not even vote. Please take a moment to [read President Powell's full remarks](#) from the rededication ceremony and learn more about this extraordinary story.

*Photography by Glenn Gardner, G2Photos*



## Celebrate the Season of Giving— Support the Campaign for the Future

Today is the first day of December, which means it's time to think about gifts, as well as end-of-year giving. As you begin your holiday shopping list, have you thought about what you will do to demonstrate your commitment to GFWC? Get your end-of-year annual gift giving out of the way by giving a gift that is truly meaningful. As the end of the year approaches, consider supporting the Campaign for the Future. This gift would be an investment in yourself as a GFWC clubwoman, as well as an investment in the future of GFWC. Your Annual Gift Giving can

Simply provide your name, mailing address, email, and club name to GFWC Membership Services Manager Kate Garlick at [kgarlick@gfwc.org](mailto:kgarlick@gfwc.org) and you're all set!

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## Cares & Concerns

We send our condolences to GFWC Washington State President Tina Bair on the loss of her mother, Audrey.

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## Join GFWC for December Events

Happy December! With several events coming up, this month is sure to be a fun and festive time for GFWC. We hope to see you at these exciting events scheduled in Washington, D.C. over the next couple of weeks.

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### Celebrate the Sounds of the Season with the Dartmouth Decibelles

Join us on Sunday, December 4 at GFWC Headquarters for a special performance from the Dartmouth Decibelles. This all-female a capella group is sure to get you into the holiday spirit. Music begins at approximately 7:45 p.m. with drinks and desserts served following the performance.

support GFWC in other ways as well, such as through the 1734 Society, Scholarships, Friends of WHRC, GFWC Signature Program Fund, and Disaster and Relief Funds. **GFWC Capital Campaign Committee Chairman Sandi Jones explains more about end-of-year giving and why the GFWC Campaign for the Future is a philanthropic gift to GFWC Volunteerism—past, present, and future—on the GFWC blog.** Visit <http://bit.ly/gfwc-year-end-gifting> to read more and learn about giving the best gift of all—the gift of GFWC. What could be better than ending the year having made an investment in an organization committed to improving the lives of others through volunteer service?

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## GFWC of Connecticut Aims to Empower Women

For our next State President's report, we travel to Connecticut and learn how **President Helen Barakauskas** aims to empower women through the Community Improvement Challenge.

GFWC of Connecticut has always focused on the needs of individual communities through its 40 plus locally based clubs. State President Barakauskas wants to capitalize on this tradition with her Community Improvement Challenge. The goals of the challenge are to increase membership, develop leadership skills, and create public awareness of individual clubs and the Federation.

Each club is currently assessing the needs of their community and designing a project to meet those needs. Once a project is selected, the clubs will notify the Challenge Chairman, Sarah Newell, of their project ideas and receive assistance in developing a plan to address timing, resources, finance, publicity, and possible partnerships. GFWC of Connecticut leaders will be actively engaged with each project until the Challenge end date of December 31, 2017. Once the projects are complete, the state will award three clubs with funds intended to continue their efforts.

The Challenge has an overarching theme of "Empowering Women." As President Barakauskas says, "Isn't that what we

## GFWC-sponsored screening of *Sold*

If you're already planning on coming to D.C. for the annual Holiday Open House on December 7, why not arrive a couple hours earlier and attend the GFWC-sponsored screening of *Sold*? Based on true stories, *Sold* aims to inspire people to rise up against child slavery. This event will begin at 11:30 at the AMC Loews Georgetown located at 3111 K Street NW. Make it a complete day in D.C. by attending the screening and then stopping by the GFWC Holiday Open House at 3:00 p.m. [Click here](#) to buy tickets to *Sold*.

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## Don't Miss Out on the Holiday Open House

The GFWC Annual Holiday Open House is just around the corner and we're looking forward to joining our Federation sisters in celebrating the season and the GFWC Spirit! The open house will take place at GFWC Headquarters, 1734 N Street NW, Washington DC 20036, on Wednesday, December 7 from 3 p.m. – 7 p.m.

If you haven't already – don't forget to RSVP to Grace Soriano, [gsoriano@GFWC.org](mailto:gsoriano@GFWC.org), or [click here](#) for more information and to register online. If your group is coming on a charter bus, please contact GFWC so that we can prepare accordingly.

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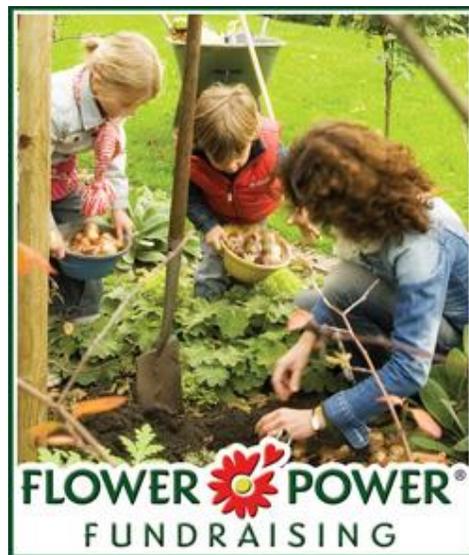
strive for within GFWC? Whether we support education, domestic violence awareness, women's health, or veterans, etc., our goal is to help women become stronger, more confident, and more skilled."

When asked what will be the measurement for success, President Barakauskas cited increased membership as the Challenge's leading indicator. Currently, GFWC -CT has just over 1,600 members and the hope is to increase that number to 2,000 by the conclusion of the administration. However, it is not only an increase in numbers that GFWC-CT is working to achieve but also a renewed interest in local clubwomen stepping into leadership positions within their clubs. The challenge will be a wonderful training ground for potential leaders.



## Honor our Heroes—Participate in Wreaths Across America

For the past several years, GFWC leaders, members, and staff have visited Arlington National Cemetery in December as part of Wreaths Across America. This annual event, at which wreaths are placed at every grave, aims to honor our nation's veterans and ensure they are remembered for their sacrifices. The mission of Wreaths Across America is to Remember, Honor, and Teach. Ceremonies will take place at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as over 1,100 locations across the country and around the world. Wreaths Across America encourages participants to say the name of each veteran aloud as they place wreaths on the graves. Last year, volunteers placed an



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## In The News

**Concord Contemporary Club** (New Hampshire) received media attention for

estimated 240,815 wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery. GFWC is proud to participate in this movement to remember and honor our nation's fallen heroes.

**We hope you will join us in our visit to Arlington National Cemetery on Saturday, December 17.** If you are able to attend, please email [gfwc@gfwc.org](mailto:gfwc@gfwc.org). If you can't make it, please consider attending one of the wreath laying ceremonies in your area. [Click here](#) to find a Wreaths Across America event near you.

Learn more about Wreaths Across America by reading a blog post by Jenn Nowak, a clubwoman from the GFWC Wilbraham Junior Woman's Club who traveled from Massachusetts to participate in last year's Wreaths Across America. [Click here](#) to read about Jenn's experience at Arlington National Cemetery.

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## Urge Congress to Fully Fund Domestic Violence Prevention Programming

Congress needs to complete action on FY 2017 appropriations bills to fund services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) programs which are cost-effective and lifesaving. [Click here](#) to contact your Senator and Representative today and encourage them to finalize the FY 2017 appropriations bills via the GFWC Legislative Action Center.

Over 12 million individuals experience domestic violence annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The National Domestic Violence Counts Census found that in just one day during September 2015, while more than 71,828 victims of domestic violence received services, over 12,000 requests for services went unmet due to lack of funding and resources. Of those unmet requests, 63 percent were for safe housing. Also in 2015, domestic violence programs laid off over 1,200 staff positions, in addition to 1,400 staff positions laid off in 2014. Most of the laid off positions were direct service staff, including counselors, advocates, and children's advocates. Given reduced funding and staff, local programs had to reduce or

their Mr. Concord Pageant. Eight candidates competed for the title of "top man in the city," while raising funds to support the Crisis Center of Central New Hampshire. The pageant included a talent show as well as a Question and Answer segment prior to judging. [Click here](#) to read more about this unique and fun event.

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completely eliminate countless services, including emergency shelter, legal advocacy, and counseling.

[Click here](#) to tell Congress to finalize FY 2017 funding for programs that address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

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### ***Living the Volunteer Spirit Button***

This popular button features the tagline *Living the Volunteer Spirit*. Measuring 2.5 inches in diameter, it includes the classic design with an updated twist. Wear this button

wherever you go to show others the difference you make in your local community and around the world. Available for \$3 each at the GFWC Marketplace. [Click here](#) to order yours today!

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#### **Our Contact Information**

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