



PUBLIC ISSUES

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

 Visit www.GFWC.org/membership/club-manual/ for updates and more information.

CIVIC AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ARE KEY COMPONENTS IN OUR LIVES



The GFWC Public Issues Community Service Program is designed to actively connect members with effective projects and activities relating to civic and social responsibilities. This program focuses on the following areas:

Citizenship

- Educate club members and local communities on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Use resources, including GFWC Resolutions, to increase patriotism, pride in heritage, and active community involvement.
- Encourage active involvement in the legislation and regulation of issues that affect the world around you.

Military Personnel

- Educate club members and local communities on needs of military families.
- Advocate for legislation that supports active and veteran military personnel and their families.
- Support military personnel and veterans returning to community living.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

- Educate club members and local communities on disaster readiness, recovery, and relief.
- Work with law enforcement agencies and first responders to increase public awareness.
- Develop community programs and coalitions to address disaster recovery and relief.
- Work with local agencies to provide community training in disaster preparedness.

Safety and Crime Prevention

- Educate club members and local communities on home, transportation (including bicycles, rail, and air) and internet safety.
- Provide programs, tools, and training.
- Create safer homes and communities through crime prevention awareness.
- Encourage "Neighborhood Watch" groups within communities.

Consider projects that address issues such as running for office; voter registration; elections; democracy; disaster preparedness; road safety; and supporting our military personnel.

We have partnered with like-minded organizations that promote civic engagement. Refer to the Partnership section beginning on page 4 for activities designed especially for GFWC clubs.



2016-2018 PUBLIC ISSUES COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

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GFWC COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

GFWC Community Service Projects are projects that members initiate and participate in to serve their communities—they do not include projects that relate to GFWC partners. These projects are specifically related to the Public Issues Community Service Program and may involve other members of the community, other organizations, or the individual club or members.



Direct any questions regarding projects that do not involve GFWC partners to the Public Issues Community Service Program Chairman or GFWC Programs Department at Programs@GFWC.org.



"ARE YOU OK?" SENIOR REASSURANCE PROGRAM

In conjunction with the local fire department, the **Ridgefield Woman's Club** (CT) sponsored "Are You OK?" a senior reassurance program available to citizens over 60. Club members contact a list of 20-30 subscribers 365 days a year. If there is no response the volunteer contacts the subscriber's emergency contact and/or dispatches fire or police help.



RECOGNITION OF SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

In appreciation of their concern for the safety of its local school children, the **North Arlington Woman's Club** (NJ) recognized 16 local volunteer School Crossing Guards for enduring extreme winter cold. Club members honored the volunteers at a monthly club meeting. They were given printed certificates of appreciation and Dunkin' Donuts gift cards.



"PROUDLY OUR COLORS FLY" PROJECT

Pembroke Woman's Club (NH) arranges for 50 American flags to be flown on utility poles along the major road ways through town. The club sees to the maintenance and replacement of the flags and coordinates the "Proudly Our Colors Fly" project with the town administrator, utility company, fire department, and highway department.

IDEAS

Program ideas are endless. Below is a list of ideas on how clubs may support the Public Issues Community Service Program.

Citizenship

- Celebrate patriotism.
- Visit, volunteer, and help preserve historic sites, monuments, and homes.
- Promote classroom lessons on American heritage symbols.
- Take an active role in the election process. Encourage schools to engage future voters with innovative programs on elections.
- Participate in the legislative process by encouraging qualified women to seek elected or appointed office.
- Help someone study for the U.S. Citizenship Test. Visit www.USCitizenship.org.
- Create and support ways to observe the National Day of Remembrance and Moment of Remembrance at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day each year.
- Hold a National Issues Forum.
- Work to promote student volunteer service requirement in schools.
- Promote classroom and member education on American heritage symbols and flag etiquette.



Military Personnel

- Promote legislation in support of veterans' issues.
- Conduct programs and projects to recognize and honor all veterans.
- Seek volunteer opportunities at community veteran facilities.
- Provide resources to support military families.
- Assist and advocate for severely wounded, ill or injured soldiers, veterans and their families.
- Promote the hiring of returning veterans.
- Invite returning men and women who are serving overseas to speak at club meetings and community forums.
- Recognize their dedication and patriotism with a small token of appreciation.
- Work to promote jobs and health care benefits for Veterans.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

- Partner with local health organizations to sponsor First Aid and CPR classes and programs.
- Work with local agencies to provide community training programs on disaster preparedness. Educate communities on the need for preparedness provisions.
- Build a kit for disaster preparedness.
- Learn about opportunities to get involved and expand resources for first responders.
- Provide in-kind and financial assistance to disaster victims. Consider supporting the GFWC Disaster Relief-Library Replenishment Fund.

Safety and Crime Prevention

- Work with local fire departments to provide fire safety awareness. Establish an awareness campaign to remind community members to change batteries in smoke detectors when clocks change back between standard and daylight savings time.
- Sponsor community programs on home fire drills, safe storage of combustibles, and special safety concerns for children and older adults.
- Get involved with local National Night Out™ events. Register, at no charge, and receive the NNO resource kit.
- Work with local law enforcement officials, neighborhood coalitions, and civic groups on crime prevention programs.
- Promote vehicle safety. Work with local officials and schools to encourage driver training and safe driving seminars for young and mature drivers.
- Sponsor community programs on special safety and crime prevention concerns for young children and older adults.
- Develop programs for older adults on phone and internet scams that prey on the elderly.



POLICE TRADING CARDS SPONSORSHIP

In a unique project to support its local police, **Marlton Woman's Club** (NJ) sponsored a policeman for the "Township Police Trading Cards." 1000 trading cards for each of the town's 80 policemen are printed with the name, police department, phone number and picture of each policeman. The cards are distributed in the local elementary school and at community events. The first child to collect all 80 cards wins a bike donated by the local bike shop.

GFWC PARTNERSHIPS

GFWC partners are the organizations listed with whom GFWC has established a formal relationship and mutual understanding. Our partners offer unique and customized services: materials, speakers, kits, and/or additional information specifically designed for GFWC clubs. They are aware of GFWC clubs' specific needs, our organizational structure, and have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with GFWC. GFWC partners will assist in monitoring the donations generated by GFWC members.

To ensure that donations to GFWC partner organizations at the individual, club, district, or state level are reflected toward GFWC's collective impact, make sure to write GFWC in the memo line on your donation check.



Direct any questions regarding donations to GFWC partners to Public Issues Community Service Program Chairman or GFWC Programs Department at **Programs@GFWC.org**.



Sew Much Comfort

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The Mission of Sew Much Comfort is to provide free adaptive (velcro closures) clothing to support our wounded service members from all branches of the Military and National Guard. Many injuries require large fixators, prosthetics, or casts that are too bulky to fit under ordinary clothing. Without our adaptive clothing, wounded service members are limited to wearing hospital gowns during their recovery. Sew Much Comfort adaptive clothing allows them to wear normal looking adaptive clothing which enhances their comfort and dignity during their recovery process.

Sew Much Comfort is the only military support charity providing free adaptive clothing. We are honored to provide a product that enhances the comfort and dignity of our wounded as they recover from their injuries. Most of all, we are glad we can give them an alternative to a drafty hospital gown.

We are very proud of Sew Much Comfort's accomplishments over the last decade. From the very beginning, Sew Much Comfort's focus has been about providing free adaptive clothing to positively impact our wounded warriors. All our innovation and development has been driven by the desire to serve our wounded service members — "our Heroes".

To learn how your club can help visit our website www.sewmuchcomfort.org under "Volunteer" click "GFWC" in drop down menu. Here you will find suggestions on ways your club can support Sew Much Comfort. We also have printable information for you. Feel free to contact us with questions.

We salute all our Military and extend heartfelt thanks for your selfless service and sacrifice to our country. We also want to thank your families who have made sacrifices so that you can serve.





United Service Organizations (USO)

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Millions of times each year at hundreds of locations around the world, the USO lifts the spirits of America's troops and their families. A nonprofit, congressionally chartered, private organization, the USO relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations, and corporations to support its activities. The USO is not part of the U.S. government, but is recognized by the Department of Defense, Congress, and the President of the United States, who serves as Honorary Chairman of the USO. The following are some of the programs and ways you can support the USO:

- **United Through Reading's Military Program:** Deployed parents are videotaped reading a book to their child. The DVD and the book are then sent to the child back home so they can watch mom or dad read them a bedtime story. This service is available at many USO centers in airports, community locations, military medical facilities, and overseas bases. All recording equipment, books, and packing and shipping materials are supplied by the USO. In 2013, 30,000 books were recorded by deployed parents to their children. You can support this program with monetary donations or by hosting a book drive. Just \$10 gives a child a bedtime story from a deployed parent. When hosting a book drive, you must stick to the USO pre-approved children's book list and all donated books must be new. Clubs supporting this program are able to include note cards or bookmarks with personal messages to the families and the name of the club that made this possible.
- **Operation Phone Home:** The USO distributes phone cards to individual service members and offers a Private Telephone Network providing dedicated phone and Internet service at our centers in Afghanistan and Kuwait. In 2011, the USO shipped phone cards to more than 250 locations around the globe. In Southwest Asia alone, more than 28 million minutes were logged in free talk time for our service men and women in 2011. To date the USO has provided nearly 3.2 million free pre-paid international calling cards to troops stationed overseas. You can support this program by making a monetary donation. For \$25, 70 soldiers can call home using the satellite service.
- **USO2GO:** USO2GO delivers the USO's most popular services to troops in remote and restricted areas. Everything from beanbag chairs, snacks, coffee, and toiletries to phone cards, DVDs, Xbox® 360, PlayStation® 3, and Nintendo's Wii™. Musical instruments, art supplies, footballs, Frisbees, and horseshoes are also available. USO2GO bundles, weighing nearly one ton each, have been delivered to more than 700 remote forward operating bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, Egypt, Djibouti, and Kuwait, with 160 bundles delivered in 2013. You can sponsor USO2GO kits by raising money to support the kits. Kits range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 depending on what is sent and the size of the forward operating base.
- **Sesame Street/USO Experience:** All of your favorite Sesame Street characters deliver live performances to military children ages two to five. Last year's tour featured a new character named Katie, a military child dealing with the uncertainty of making friends after a family move. Launched in April, this tour will deliver 147 shows on 59 bases in the Pacific and Europe. Children also receive The Talk, Listen, Connect (TLC) DVD series to help them cope with the affects of deployment, multiple deployments, combat-related injuries, and, unfortunately, the loss of a loved one. You can support this program with monetary donations.
- **USO Warrior and Family Centers:** On June 27, 2011, the USO broke ground on the Warrior and Family Center at Fort Belvoir, Va, the first of two stateside centers to support healing heroes and their families. Later this year, we will break ground on the second at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Md. These centers offer a comprehensive array of specialized services and programs designed to meet the needs of recovering troops—and their families—in a supportive and home-like setting. The approximately 20,000 square-foot buildings will include movie theaters, classrooms, sports cafés, healing gardens, and more, all created expressly for wounded warriors and their families and caregivers. The USO has undertaken a \$100 million capital fundraising campaign to raise \$25 million to build two new centers, \$50 million to support ongoing programs,

and \$25 million to endow the centers. One hundred percent of all cash and cash-equivalent contributions will go to the initiative that supports wounded warriors. No funds will go to administration or overhead.

- **USO Centers:** There are more than 160 center locations around the world, including in the United States, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Germany, Italy, Japan, Guam, and Korea. In 2011, military members and their families visited centers nearly 8 million times. GFWC members can volunteer at these centers greeting and helping service members daily. Clubs can help collect needed items like salty snacks and water for the centers to provide to troops. Clubs can host service projects or events to support the many programs at USO Centers (programs vary with each center).

Contact the USO for more information on how you can participate in support of our troops and their families.



We are continually working to develop partnerships with organizations whose missions and scope of work are germane to GFWC. Look for updates from the Public Issues Community Service Program Chairman in *News & Notes*, *GFWC Clubwoman Magazine*, and online at www.GFWC.org.

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Public Issues Community Service Program projects and partnership projects, as follows:

- Certificate to one State Federation in each membership category
- \$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Awards Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry Cover Sheet and one Club Creativity Award Entry Cover Sheet for the Public Issues Community Service Program projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.

GFWC partners will recognize State Federations and clubs for their efforts. Contact the GFWC Programs Department for information.



Refer to the Awards section of the *Club Manual* for more information, including the Award Entry Cover Sheet guidelines.