

GFWC

ideas, information, insight, and inspiration

CLUBWOMAN

MAGAZINE

Join the Movement: End
Domestic & Sexual Violence

Junior Club Leadership
Certification Now Available

Membership: Best Practices
and Retention

**LEADING WITH
VISION**



GFWC
est. 1890
GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

spring 2025 | volume 103 | issue 2

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The GFWC Executive Committee visited over a dozen Senate offices in one day during their visit to Washington, DC in March. They urged their respective Senators to support education and prevention and increased funding and program resources for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, and child sexual exploitation.



TAKE ACTION AND JOIN THE MOVEMENT

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GFWC

CLUBWOMAN

MAGAZINE

The magazine of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, whose members are dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service.

2024-2026 GFWC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Dear GFWC Members,

As I turn the pages of my calendar to the eleventh month at GFWC Headquarters, I reflect on the incredible opportunities that have strengthened the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Our national presence continues to grow through impactful connections with key influencers and organizations in Washington, DC.

Our partnerships with the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Women's Suffrage Monument Foundation, the Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services (FVPSA), the National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE), and the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and others have expanded GFWC's influence and advocacy efforts. At the invitation of President Joe Biden, attendance at the White House 30th Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act reaffirmed GFWC's longstanding commitment since its original signing.

On the international stage, attending the 90th anniversary of the GFWC Woman's Club of Aruba strengthened our global network. Reconnecting with existing clubs and welcoming new affiliates have broadened our international scope.

Our second GFWC National Day of Service was a major success, uniting nearly 1,000 clubs worldwide to address food insecurity. Registrations are rolling in for our 2025 GFWC International Day of Service when clubs will unite in our battle to end domestic and sexual violence. Our role as a Distinguished Partner of the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation highlights GFWC's commitment to honoring women's contributions in shaping our nation.

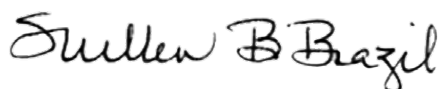
During our Executive Day on the Hill, GFWC Officers met with U.S. Senate policy staff to discuss 2025 Legislative Priorities, including Violence Against Women Act appropriations, anti-trafficking legislation, online safety, and child advocacy.

Membership growth is a priority, with an upward trend seen in new clubs and members. To sustain GFWC's future, we must continue expanding our reach. The new Membership Task Force is developing best practices—stay tuned!

We look forward to welcoming you to the 2025 GFWC Annual Convention in Atlanta, June 6-9, where we'll be *Spinning Vision into Reality!* Engage in dynamic sessions, networking, and signature Gala, including A Red Affair: Pulse of a Woman.

The months ahead are bursting with incredible opportunities as we unite to Educate, Engage, and Empower! Let's channel our collective energy and creativity to make a meaningful and lasting impact! The future is bright, and it's ours to shape—let's make it unforgettable!

Inspired by *Living the Volunteer Spirit*,



SUELLEN B. BRAZIL
GFWC International President



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF JUNIOR CLUBS

Happy Spring!

I have loved visiting several State Federations recently for their Annual Conventions. What a joy to spend time with GFWC members celebrating their accomplishments, learning about projects, enjoying new friends, and deepening existing relationships. Our members are passionate, hardworking, fun, and so welcoming!

Thank you to 450 Junior members who completed our survey in March. We collected valuable demographic and organizational information and great insights into how our members feel about the Junior level of GFWC membership. We are still processing the responses and will release more results, but a few initial concepts can be shared now.

Overall, Junior members LOVE their clubs and feel passionately about their value for convenient meeting times, many hands on service opportunities, and fun socials with fellow members in a similar stage of life. They acknowledge a need for help recruiting younger members and offering orientation and leadership training for their members. This training is important for member retention and building future leaders for their clubs and their Federation Junior organizations. Fortunately, assistance is planned in these areas in the Stronger Together Junior Initiative launched this administration. Stay tuned for more information!

The Junior Club Leadership Certification program for Junior and Juniorette clubs is ready to launch! The first webinar providing content for clubs to utilize will be Monday, May 19. You can register for the webinar series [here](#). More detailed information about the Junior Club Leadership Certification, including links to all four webinars, is in this edition of The GFWC Clubwoman magazine and in the GFWC Member Portal.

I hope to see you at the GFWC Convention in Atlanta in June. All Juniors should attend the Junior Business Session, and we hope to see all GFWC members at the Headphone Disco Fun Night!

In Junior Love,



SHANNON BAILEY
Director of Junior Clubs





NEWS FROM THE WHRC:

RENOVATIONS AND CONSERVATION

by **JOANNA CHURCH**, WOMEN'S HISTORY &
RESOURCE CENTER LIBRARIAN

For over 100 years, GFWC has been the owner and steward of our historic Washington, DC, Headquarters building. Our main building, 1734 N Street, was built in 1875 (yes, it turns 150 years old this fall) and we purchased it in 1922. We added two other 19th century rowhomes to Headquarters in the 1950s, and of course we've been collecting our organizational archives – including papers, photographs, artwork, and memorabilia – since our founding in 1890.

All of this history is a fantastic resource, true, but it is a resource we must care for thoughtfully and utilize best practices so that it can be maintained for the foreseeable future. To preserve these buildings and their precious contents (including the people who live, work, and visit here), our efforts encompass the entire envelope, both inside and outside, public-facing and behind-the-scenes. Is it a lot? Absolutely it is! Thankfully, GFWC leadership and Headquarters staff have you, our members, as our dedicated partners in this endeavor.

We have a few updates to share about current progress on our work to preserve and care for our historic resources. First, a look at the progress of the Art & Artifacts fundraising initiative: the beautiful Sydney Laurence painting, "Mt. McKinley National Park," donated by the Alaska Federation in 1923 and a centerpiece of the décor at Headquarters for over 100 years, has gone out for a much-needed conservation treatment. Professional art handlers removed this enormous work from its perch above the Music Room fireplace and transported it to a DC-based paintings conservator, who carefully removed the frame so that it, too, can

continued on next page

MT. MCKINLEY NATIONAL PARK

A team from Bonsai Fine Arts carefully deinstalls the 1923 Sydney Laurence painting from the Music Room wall, March 2025. After removing it, they packed it up for shipment to Page Conservation where it will be cleaned, stabilized, and conserved for another century.

be conserved by a colleague who specializes in gilded frames. Once these professionals have completed their work to clean, stabilize, and protect the art, Laurence's painting will return to Headquarters this summer and we'll turn our attention to other works that need expert care, using donations to the Art & Artifacts fund.

In even bigger news, we recently completed a grant-funded project called a Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP), administered by the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation through a cooperative agreement with the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The CAP program helps organizations like GFWC improve the care of their collections by providing support for a general conservation assessment of both collections and buildings. Through a two-day in-person visit last November, we worked with a team of preservation professionals to identify preventive conservation priorities. Dyani Feige, Director of Preservation Services, Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, focused on our collections, and Jessica Senker and Melanie Rodbert of J&M Preservation Studio addressed the buildings themselves. Their report confirms some things we already knew, points out a few issues we were unaware of, and gives us the tools to prioritize and address all of the above. We were very glad to learn, from these experts in their field, that "the buildings are sound and in good condition overall," but as with any nearly-150-year-old structure, there were plenty of concerns for us to work on going forward. Headquarters staff are developing plans to systematically address these issues. Thankfully, the CAP grant allows us to keep in touch with our consultants and follow up with a progress report in 2026.

The CAP assessment is a first step in allowing us to strategize our



COLLECTIONS ASSESSMENT FOR PRESERVATION (CAP)

Jessica Senker and Melanie Rodbert, our CAP building assessors, examine the upper levels of 1734 N Street with the assistance of Luis Estava of Bruno Clay Management, November 2024.

conservation and restoration work in the years ahead, and to seek additional expertise and funding to help us achieve our goals of a stable, accessible Headquarters for now and for the future. Though we are incredibly grateful to those who have stepped up to contribute to the WHRC Art & Artifacts and 1734 Façade Restoration and Beautification funds. But we know we can't rely entirely on the generosity of our members, as boundless as it may be! We are working to identify other sources to help us fulfil our goals. With your help, Headquarters—from the front to the back, attics to ground floor, pretty public rooms to boring, but necessary, systems – will be renovated and restored so it can stand tall for another 150 years.



STOCK THE WHRC SHELVES UPDATE: FILLING UP!

Last issue, we asked our readers to help Stock the Shelves in the WHRC Reference Library, hoping to have at least 40 new books by the end of May to close out the WHRC's 40th Anniversary Year. We're happy to report that we have recieved over 60 books from more than 30 different donors! If you haven't had a chance to help us celebrate (and, not incidentally, update and improve our valuable reference library) there are still books on the wish list...

Maybe we can get to 75 books by the end of our anniversary year? [Shop the Wishlist.](#)



SHOW YOUR TENDER LOVING CARE FOR GFWC HEADQUARTERS FAÇADE RESTORATION AND BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

Today, you can help restore and sustain GFWC's historic Headquarters into the future by donating to the GFWC Annual Giving Program's GFWC Headquarters Façade Restoration and Beautification Project Fund.

GFWC's white, limestone-clad Headquarters is one of the most recognizable and grand properties in DC's historic Dupont Circle neighborhood. GFWC's Headquarters owes its historical significance to its location and its connection with the General Federation of Women's Clubs' large scale contributions to national women's history. It stands tall as a testament to the strength, determination, and grace of GFWC club members.

Donations will go towards the restoration of the iconic white front facing exterior walls of GFWC's beloved Headquarters buildings. Over time, the brick and stonework that gives our Headquarters its grand and elegant

appearance has deteriorated and needs major repairs. The restoration work planned includes stripping existing paint, cleaning and sealing, mortar and stonework repair, repainting, and more. This restoration will not only enhance the beauty of our Headquarters, but it will also protect the historic interior spaces and collections and secure the buildings' long-term structural integrity. Your donations ensure that GFWC will be able to host and welcome club members, along with distinguished visitors, to the nation's capital for many decades to come.

Please help us preserve and protect GFWC's Headquarters for the next century of GFWC members. Support the Facade Restoration and Beautification Project by submitting a [donation form](#) or contributing [online](#).

If you're joining us in Atlanta, visit the Annual Giving table for a fun, interactive donation experience!



RIDE 4 A WOMAN - EMPOWERING AFRICAN WOMEN

by ANN LAUER, GFWC SIGNATURE PROGRAM & GFWC ARTS AND CULTURE HONORARY CHAIRMAN

In 2021 my husband Ron and I were on a trip to see the Great Migration in East Africa. Our trip began in Bwindi, Uganda where we were to trek to see gorillas. The first afternoon our Natural Habitat Adventures guide took us to Ride 4 a Woman (R4W).

R4W is an organization founded in 2009 that helps impoverished women and children in Bwindi. They began renting bicycles (thus the name) then added basket weaving using natural fibers and sewing clothing, bags, and quilts to sell to tourists. These sales along with donations are how they exist.

I design quilt fabric and patterns professionally and was amazed to see the beautiful quilts these women were making using treadle sewing machines and charcoal irons. Their tools were in terrible condition.

Evelyn, R4W founder & director, asked that I return the next 2 afternoons following our gorilla treks to work with the women. These women were making quilts from large squares and rectangles. They had never seen a quilt pattern so I taught them to make Half Square Triangles and to put them together into a design. As our trip continued to Kenya and Tanzania, Evelyn sent photos of quilts they were making using those techniques.

In 2023, we returned to R4W and 8 women made 9 quilts!

There is little electricity & no running water in the Bwindi area; the poverty is staggering! One room homes are mud or mud brick. R4W set up a water purification system so that women can fill containers of water.

Without private school, children have little hope for an education. Young girls who cannot attend school do hard labor in the fields with no hope of change. Therefore, some become sex workers or they get married and begin having babies. The average woman has 6 children and help from a husband is rare. Multiple wives are common. R4W conducts programs like Hope for a Girl Child



which counsels girls to delay marriage and provides birth control information, etc.

Annual Private School Sponsorship costs \$500. This includes classes, boarding, nutritious meals, teacher housing and salaries, medical services, uniforms, books, and shoes.

When an \$80 goat is donated to a family, the first kid goes to R4W. Then the goat belongs to the family. This becomes a safety net when funds are needed for an emergency such as sickness.

For \$200, R4W installs solar panels on homes and that family must invite the children in 5 homes to come study at night. Now children are helping each other.

This is the most compelling opportunity to assist impoverished women that I have encountered. Visit www.GrizzlyGulchGallery.com/African-quilters for more information & photos. Or [support R4W online](#). 100% of the proceeds go to Ride 4 a Woman.





SMASHING THE STIGMA AROUND MENTAL ILLNESS – ONE YELLOW TULIP BULB AT A TIME.

by **SUZANNE FOX**, GFWC JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM
& HEALTH AND WELLNESS HONORARY CHAIRMAN

It all started nine years ago with one Hope Garden in Portland, Maine. My daughter Julia and me, a mother-daughter duo with no experience in non-profit management, no experience in mental health training, just a fierce determination to make a difference and to remind young people that it is ok to not be ok and that there is help and hope out there. Julia, then a 15 year old high school sophomore, had just lost her two best friends to suicide within a four month period while suffering silently with her own depression and self-harm. Me, a mother, who like most mothers, just wanted my daughter to be healthy and happy, and yet somehow I missed the signs of her mental health distress. So there we were in the doldrums of despair, yet we knew we had to do something. We wanted to flip the script and rather than not talking about this hard but important topic, we wanted to talk about it all of the time, scream it from a tall mountain top so people know that they are not alone and that suicide should never be an option. Young people are suffering. They are feeling disconnected, they feel their voices don't matter and the anxiety, depression and suicide rates are surging globally among adolescents. ¹

In 2016 we had a simple yet hopeful plan of action: come together, plant a community Hope Garden, mobilize an army of youth ambassadors and adult allies to work together to destigmatize mental illness, and create resources and programs that were hopeful, scalable and accessible. Our call to action was simple, and perhaps because of this simplicity, we have spread to almost every state in the U.S. as well as globally. **Step one:** We knew that we could not do this work alone, so the very first thing that we did was create an ambassador program where young people could join our momentum and become part of a community of changemakers who are making a difference.

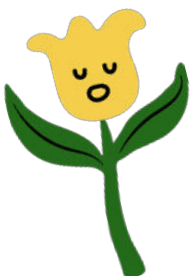
Step Two: Mobilize adult and community allies as it truly does "take a village" to bring change and no one can do this work alone. In this, we have

created resources and information for community members and educators to bring our message to where they are. **Step Three:** We wanted to introduce innovative approaches to addressing mental health and chose public art and storytelling as the most impactful and accessible way of spreading our message. We truly believe in the ripple effect and know how powerful it can be when one person shares their story. It can help them heal and help other people realize that they are not alone. In this, our photo exhibits and storytelling initiatives use out of the box art based methods to amplify our message and spread awareness and hope. *I Am More Facing Stigma* and *Young Men Moving Mountains* are two powerful interactive photoexhibits that challenge perceptions of what mental illness "looks" like and include QR codes where viewers can not only be moved by the images but listen to the model's stories. Each exhibit comes with discussion guides so that meaningful conversations about what we can do collectively to smash the stigma can unfold in communities across the country.

1 in 7
10 to 19 year olds
experience mental
health disorders

When we just got started, my daughter and I knew that overnight we couldn't change the global mental health crisis, but we knew we had to start somewhere and that place was that one simple Hope Garden in Portland, Maine. Now nine years later, my heart is so filled with hope and gratitude for the people who are getting involved and helping us spread our message of hope, community, and stigma reduction. I am so inspired by the people who care and who are getting their hands dirty from California to Maine and planting hope.

References: Mental Health of Adolescents, WHO, (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>)



GFWC JUNIOR CLUB LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATION

FOR JUNIOR & JUNIORETTE CLUBS

by SHANNON BAILEY, GFWC DIRECTOR OF JUNIOR CLUBS

One of the greatest benefits a club member can gain from membership in GFWC is leadership experience and personal development that can support the member in club work and in many other areas of life. The GFWC Leadership Toolkit provides a variety of materials and can be utilized to offer learning opportunities for clubs and club members, and a host of external resources are available to support leadership development.

I am proud to introduce to you the *Junior Club Leadership Certification* to provide a structured pathway for clubs to provide leadership and personal development. Completion of this program demonstrates a club's commitment to educating members on GFWC and supporting leadership and personal development for its individual members.

The Junior Club Leadership Certification is available to all GFWC Junior and Juniorette Clubs to provide a benefit in support of recruitment and retention. Clubs earning the Certification will be recognized at GFWC Convention, on the GFWC website, and on social media. They will have access to an exclusive graphic for use in club materials and on social media.

Each of the eight topics will be offered as a live webinar, with an

opportunity for Q&A and discussion. In this initial year of content offerings, two topics will be covered in each webinar. A recorded version of the topics will be released post-webinar, along with discussion questions to support on-demand learning. Additional resources and suggested reading lists will be provided for each topic. These resources will be available in the GFWC Member Portal. Additional topics will be covered in future Administrations.

To earn the Junior Club Leadership Certification for the 2024-2026 Administration, a club must complete an online form (available after the webinars have all been presented) by April 1, 2026, that will include the following:

Declaration that at least 50% of club members have taken part in the Zoom webinars or viewed the on-demand offerings, for all eight (8) topics.

- A short narrative explaining how your club promoted the content and encouraged member participation.
- Evaluation of the Certification program
- Once a club has earned the Leadership Certification, criteria will be established to retain Certification.

Online registration for these webinars will be found on the GFWC Member Portal prior to each webinar. Clubs can watch the webinars and complete the topics on their own schedule.

GFWC Junior Club Leadership Certification

20
25



WEBINAR SCHEDULE



GFWC Resources & Overview, Legislation

19 May 8 pm ET

16 June
8 pm

Personal Development Part 1
Leadership Development, Part 1

21 July
8 pm

Team Development
Effective Meetings

18 Aug
8 pm

Personal Development Part 2
Leadership Development, Part 2

Register at memberportal.gfwc.org/events



GFWC WELCOMES 2025 CHERRY BLOSSOM DELEGATES TO HEADQUARTERS

The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) proudly hosted the 2025 Cherry Blossom Delegates Luncheon at its historic Headquarters in Washington, D.C., welcoming over 60 exceptional young women representing every U.S. state, territory, and several international countries, along with the leadership of the National Cherry Blossom Program.

GFWC International President Suellen B. Brazil was honored to host this meaningful event, celebrating a new generation of emerging leaders. The luncheon featured keynote speaker Jude Mabone, former Miss District of Columbia with the Miss America Organization, who inspired the delegates by underscoring the power of showing up and using their individual talents to create meaningful change.

President Brazil commended the delegates for their dedication to civic, community, and global engagement, urging them to embrace service as a lifelong commitment. "At your age, you hold immense potential to transform your passion into impact. Seek

out every opportunity for personal growth and anchor your journey in service through volunteering," she said. She also affirmed GFWC's dedication to investing in the development of young leaders: "It is our responsibility to reach out to this generation, to nurture their leadership, and to support their growth—because these women are the changemakers of tomorrow."

The Cherry Blossom Program, presented annually by the National Conference of State Societies (NCSS) during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, offers cultural, educational, and professional enrichment to accomplished women ages 19 to 24. Delegates are selected for their academic excellence and leadership qualities, and spend a transformative week in Washington, D.C., engaging with national landmarks, government leaders, and international diplomats.



HONORARY CHAIRMAN & SPEAKER

Jude Mabone, former Miss District of Columbia for Miss America program, delivered an inspirational speech about leadership and the importance of showing up to offer your unique skills to others as well as the role every woman plays in building up one another.



June 6-9, 2025

We are so excited to celebrate with you in Atlanta this summer!

This is one of the most exciting events of the year at GFWC. Headquarters' staff are prepping behind the scenes, the Executive Committee members are preparing speeches and workshop materials, and attendees are excited about the many opportunities to learn about GFWC's programs, time to network, and for another memorable experience with their fellow Federation members.

For first-time attendees, you're wondering what to expect. The opening ceremony is one of pomp and circumstance with the "Flag Ceremony" for the 50 U.S. states and international affiliates. Thereafter, the 2025 GFWC Annual Convention officially convenes as initiated by Madam President Suellen B. Brazil.

Each day is power packed with fantastic speakers, engaging workshops to spark your passion for service, along with special receptions and a gala at the end to celebrate your work all the while enjoying time with your GFWC friends. The following pages highlight the annual workshops, the GFWC spirit gear available for purchase onsite, and much more.

GFWC looks forward to *Spinning Vision into Reality* with you!

DON'T FORGET

- Book your hotel room at the Omni Atlanta before May 12
- Pack your Hollywood best for GFWC Georgia's State Night Banquet
Friday, June 6
- Wear your 2025 GFWC Annual Convention Tshirt during your trip to the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Atlanta History Center
- Arrive early to the Saturday Opening Business Session to get the best seat to watch the Flag Processional
- Bring your dancing shoes for Saturday night's Headphone Disco!
- Register for the 2025 GFWC International Day of Service to be recognized at the "Empowerment Through Unity Luncheon"
Sunday, June 8
- Don't forget to bring your red dress for a night of glamour and fashion at "A Red Affair: Pulse of a Woman Gala"
Monday, June 9
- Tag GFWC in all your photos using #GFWC25AC



LEARN HOW TO SPIN VISION INTO REALITY AT THESE 2025 WORKSHOPS

UNITING OUR VOICES: ADVOCATING FOR THE VOICELESS TOGETHER

SIGNATURE PROGRAM: DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

Collaborating with domestic violence coalitions in your state enables subject matter experts to speak at your state, district, and club events. This workshop will empower members to connect with their state domestic violence specialists and work together to be the voice for those who have no voice. Many members are taking the next steps to support legislation and using their voices to make a difference. This workshop will guide participants in advocating for necessary changes to state laws that align with the Signature Program.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS IN A BRAND-NEW LIGHT

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

Spend time with the individual Community Service Program Chairmen to re-envision Community Impact projects to amplify the impact of projects and community awareness of your club. The focus will be on clever, new, and unique ideas that embrace collaboration and engagement of other community organizations and members. Participants will work in small groups to promote participation and consideration of individual ideas. The Chairmen will 'flip the switch,' but YOU will 'amp up the voltage' and increase the impact of your community projects!

WHAT DID YOU SAY? LET'S TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANT THINGS

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Let's explore the essentials of GFWC Communication tools, focusing on the What, Why, Who, When, and How of effective communication. Remember, communication goes beyond the tools; it is how we use them. We will delve into the most important communication tool - do you know what it is?

A crucial topic is protecting passwords for your social media accounts, websites, Google accounts, and more. How does tech security impact your club? Additionally, we'll consider the transition between administrations. There's much to discuss.

Effective communication connects our members and community. Let's examine the importance of public relations and how we can effectively market our clubs and initiatives. Learn how to write impactful press releases and why they matter. Together, we'll tackle tough questions and uncover valuable communication strategies.

EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF SUCCESS

LEADERSHIP

Gear up and grab your hard hat—it is time to build! Participants will step into the role of construction site leaders, learning how to design, construct and reinforce personal leadership skills. This interactive workshop helps experienced and emerging leaders identify key components in leadership building blocks to emerge as stronger and more confident leaders. Join us as we transform your insights into actions and help you reinforce your confidence and address accountability. You will examine what leadership means to you and be empowered with resources that can lead your way.

GET YOUR CRACKERJACK FUNDRAISERS HERE! FUNDRAISING

Don't you love opening a box of Cracker Jacks and finding the prize? Join us at the Fundraising Committee Concession Stand, where we'll share the ingredients for crackerjack fundraisers. Your team of Fundraising Committee members (the GFWC Gamechangers) will facilitate candid discussions about fundraising challenges and champs, from the strikeouts to the home runs. We want to equip members to find and enjoy the sweet success of implementing crackerjack fundraisers. There is a prize in every fundraiser, just waiting for you to find it. Just like with Cracker Jacks, the more fundraising success you have, the more you want! Join the GFWC Gamechangers and become a fan of fundraising.

WE'VE HEARD YOU; NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

MEMBERSHIP

The GFWC Membership Committee is excited to reveal the results of our 2025 Membership Satisfaction Survey during the Membership Workshop! We will discuss in detail both our strongest and weakest areas and focus on what we can do to improve our club culture and members' experiences. You'll hear from various members who are successful in membership retention as well as attracting new members and starting new clubs during our Membership Q&A panel. Our Juniorette Chairman will review how to start a Juniorette Club and outline ways to stay in touch with your graduating members so they stay connected to GFWC after leaving your club. So much to discuss and learn, so please join us to learn how you and your club can strengthen, grow, retain, and attract members!

HARNESSING THE POWER OF GRASSROOTS ACTION

LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

Learn how to enlist other organizations to facilitate action on bipartisan legislative priorities supported by GFWC Resolutions. The powerful workshop will: educate members in grassroots advocacy, help empower members within their own communities to support these issues, and discuss how members can engage with organizations to increase awareness, collaboration, and influence.

Representatives from Safe States Alliance, headquartered in Atlanta, a national non-profit professional association whose mission it is to strengthen the practice of injury and violence prevention, will discuss their strategies for engagement and advocacy as a national voice.

DO YOU WANT TO BE MY FRIEND? JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM

In today's digital age, children face many dangers online. Therefore, understanding cybersecurity has become a necessary life skill for their safety. Explore available resources and actions to educate parents and the community to empower our children to confidently say "NO" when asked online, "Do you want to be my friend?" Children are targets of multiple online threats, including cyberbullying, sexting, and human trafficking predators. Cybercrimes are a growing concern, but with awareness and proactive steps, we can better protect children from online threats.

NEW AT THE GFWC MARKETPLACE

CONVENTION ATTENDEES WILL BE THE FIRST TO SHOP THESE NEW ITEMS!

NEW V-NECK POLOS - \$40

Available in GFWC Red and Blue, S-4XL

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Women's History Month Celebration

The theme for Women's History Month 2025 is "Moving Forward Together," to honor the contributions of women who have dedicated their lives to education, mentorship, and leadership to shape the minds and futures of all generations.

Since the founding of GFWC in 1890 by Jane Cunningham Croly, the organization has endeavored to influence the minds of women of all age groups to make their local communities better through their leadership and participation.

On March 5, GFWC hosted its annual Women's History Month Celebration to honor the contributions and accomplishments of women.

Attendees learned about the "Women of Dupont-Kalorama" the neighborhood in which GFWC is located and heard from WHRC Librarian Joanna Church who presented about "The Many Lives of GFWC Headquarters."

The following pages are some photo highlights of this year's festivities. A special thank you to every that joined us in-person or via live stream to learn about the trailblazing women of Dupont Circle and GFWC.

As always, thank you for making a difference and living the volunteer spirit!



THE SCANDALOUS WOMEN OF DUPONT CIRCLE & EMBASSY ROW

Speaker Rebecca Grawl gave the audience a glimpse into the lives of women who lived in Dupont Circle 100 years ago. Women like Alice Roosevelt Longworth, President Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, who resided in Dupont Circle where she hosted a salon of scientists, authors, conservationists, diplomats, and politicians of all persuasions.



THE MANY LIVES OF GFWC HEADQUARTERS

Women's History & Resource Center Librarian Joanna Church shared the stories of the women working and residing in the buildings that later became GFWC Headquarters.



(l to r) GFWC International President Suellen B. Brazil with tour guide and speaker Rebecca Grawl, and Kaitlin Calogera, founder of "A Tour of Her Own," a tourism company focused on sharing women's history in Washington, DC.



MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT LIST

FOCUS ON: DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY-APRIL 2025

Clubs recognized added 3 or more members

GFWC The Woman's Club of Vista - 24
Vista, CA

GFWC Camden Woman's Club - 15
Camden, NC

GFWC Moultrie Federated Guild - 14
Moultrie, GA

GFWC Poultney Woman's Club - 13
Poultney, VT

GFWC Gainesville Woman's Club - 11
Gainesville, FL

GFWC North Pinellas Woman's Club - 11
Clearwater, FL

GFWC Homer Glen Juniors Women's Club - 10
Homer Glen, IL

GFWC Viera Woman's Club - 10
Viera, FL

GFWC Bradenton Woman's Club - 9
Bradenton, FL

The GFWC Lakeshore Woman's Club - 9
Jacksonville, FL

GFWC High Springs New Century Women's Club - 8
High Springs, FL

GFWC Marianna Woman's Club - 8
Marianna, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of Playa del Rey - 8
Playa del Rey, CA

GFWC Woman's Club of Sarasota - 8
Sarasota, FL

GFWC North Myrtle Beach Woman's Club - 7
North Myrtle, SC

GFWC Salem Area Women's Club - 7
Salem, NH

GFWC Tucson Woman's Club - 7
Tucson, AZ

GFWC Treasure Coast Women - 7
Vero Beach, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of Inverness - 7
Inverness, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of St. Matthews - 7
Louisville, KY

GFWC Cocoa Beach Woman's Club - 6
Cocoa Beach, FL

GFWC Coral Gables Woman's Club - 6
Coral Gables, FL

GFWC Fort Walton Beach Woman's Club Inc. - 6
Fort Walton Beach, FL

GFWC Queen Anne Civic Club - 6
Van Buren, MO

GFWC South Lake Junior Woman's Club, Inc. - 6
Clermont, FL

GFWC Village Improvement Association - 6
Rehoboth Beach, DE

GFWC Woman's Club of Sweetwater County - 6
Rock Springs, WY

GFWC Battle Ground - 5
Battle Ground, WA

GFWC Hollis Woman's Club - 5
Hollis, NH

GFWC Lake Wales Junior Woman's Club - 5
Lake Wales, FL

GFWC Lexington Woman's Club - 5
Lexington, SC

GFWC Montgomery Study Club - 5
Montgomery City, MO

GFWC Pinellas Seminole Woman's Club - 5
Seminole, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of Lakeside - 5
Lakeside, CA

GFWC Woman's League of the Lowcountry - 5
Bluffton, SC

GFWC Billings Junior Woman's Club - 4
Billings, MT

GFWC Nogales Woman's Club - 4
Nogales, AZ

GFWC Woman's Club of Palatka - 4
Palatka, FL

GFWC Zwaanendael Women's Club - 4
Lewes, DE

The GFWC Woman's Club of Charleston - 4
Charleston, SC

The GFWC Woman's Club of Colorado Springs - 4
Colorado Springs, CO

GFWC Atlanta Woman's Club - 3
Atlanta, GA

GFWC Brandon Service League, Inc. - 3
Brandon, FL

GFWC Clermont Woman's Club - 3
Clermont, FL

GFWC Dawson County Woman's Club - 3
Dawsonville, GA

GFWC Dover Area Woman's Club - 3
Dover, NH

GFWC Hartwell Service League - 3
Hartwell, GA

GFWC LaBelle Community Woman's Club - 3
LaBelle, FL

GFWC Murray Woman's Club - 3
Murray, KY

GFWC Odessa - 3
Odessa, DE

GFWC Orange Park Woman's Club - 3
Orange Park, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of New Tampa - 3
Tampa, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of Tallahassee, Inc. - 3
Tallahassee, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of Tarpon Springs - 3
Tarpon Springs, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of the Midlands - 3
Columbia, SC

TAKE ACTION AND JOIN THE MOVEMENT

GFWC INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE: SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

by **SUELLEN B. BRAZIL**, GFWC INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT

On September 27, 2025, GFWC members worldwide will unite on that singular day with one resolute focus: to eradicate domestic and sexual violence. The GFWC International Day of Service (IDS) transcends mere awareness—it embodies our unwavering commitment to effecting substantial change through action. By prioritizing the principles of Educate, Engage, and Empower, clubs can initiate real transformation and provide vital support to those affected.

Educate: Equip Communities with Knowledge

Action starts with education. To make an impact, clubs should go beyond spreading information and take concrete action to help communities recognize, prevent, and respond to domestic and sexual violence. Organize interactive workshops, hands-on training sessions, and speaker events with law enforcement or crisis counselors. Develop digital toolkits for local schools and community centers that offer clear steps for seeking help and supporting survivors. Partner with shelters to create community-wide self-defense or bystander intervention classes that give individuals the skills to act in crises.

Engage: Mobilize Resources and People

To truly make a difference, clubs must actively connect with local organizations, civic leaders, and law enforcement agencies. Establish hands-on volunteer initiatives with domestic violence shelters, offering services such as childcare, job preparation workshops, or home repairs for transitional housing. Use social media strategically—create video testimonials from survivors who are comfortable sharing their stories, highlighting how community action changed their lives.

Empower: Deliver Immediate Support

Empowerment comes from action. Instead of just advocating for change, implement projects that offer direct relief and long-term solutions. Organize supply drives for essential items like



GFWC
est. 1890
GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

**INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF SERVICE**
END DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

ACTION-ORIENTED SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

For clubs aiming for immediate and lasting impact, consider these hands-on initiatives:

- **Survivor Support Kits:** Assemble and distribute personalized care packages with essential hygiene items, clothing, and motivational notes.
- **Emergency Relocation Assistance:** Provide transportation, hotel stays, or security deposits for survivors escaping dangerous situations.
- **Home Restoration Projects:** Partner with local contractors to refurbish and furnish transitional housing for survivors and their families.
- **Legal Aid Support:** Coordinate an event with attorneys offering pro bono services to assist survivors in obtaining restraining orders, custody agreements, or financial restitution.
- **Children's Comfort Projects:** Stock shelters with backpacks filled with books, school supplies, and comfort items for children affected by domestic violence.
- **Pet Protection Initiative:** Arrange temporary foster care or donation drives for pet food and supplies to assist survivors who hesitate to leave due to concern for their animals.
- **Survivor Employment Assistance:** Set up job skills training workshops, resume-building sessions, and career coaching services for survivors re-entering the workforce.
- **Meal Prep for Shelters:** Organize a team to prepare and deliver healthy meals for shelters, ensuring residents have access to nutritious food.
- **Mobile Resource Units:** Arrange for mobile advocacy vans to travel to underserved areas, providing on-site counseling and legal resources.

personal hygiene products, professional attire, or prepaid cell phones for survivors in need. Set up mentorship programs that connect survivors with career coaches, financial advisors, and legal professionals to help them gain independence. Work with local shelters to create healing spaces by providing art therapy materials, meditation workshops, or self-care kits for residents rebuilding their lives.

Timing and Planning for Maximum Impact

The GFWC 2025 IDS takes place on September 27, 2025. We prefer that you undertake your IDS service project on September 27, but we understand that day may not work for your project. If necessary, you can choose another date between September 21-27, 2025.

To maximize success, consult the [GFWC Club Manual](#) through the Digital Library on the GFWC Member Portal for guidance and

project ideas as well as the 2025 IDS Resources.

Strength in Unity

By embracing education, engagement, and empowerment through direct action, members can provide immediate relief and long-term solutions for survivors. The GFWC International Day of Service is more than just a single day of volunteering—it is a catalyst for change. Through strategic service projects and collaborative efforts, we can bring hope, resources, and support to those affected by domestic and sexual violence.

Join GFWC volunteers on September 27, 2025, and make a difference that extends beyond one day—transforming awareness into life-changing action.



FOR EVERY CHILD

Your support of the Every Child Fund allows UNICEF to continue progressing toward a world where all children can reach their full potential. Your gift of flexible funding makes it possible.

To learn more, contact Marisa Ferguson at mferguson@unicefusa.org or visit unicefusa.org/GFWC.



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ADVOCATE & SHAPE TOMORROW

To encourage participation in the democratic process, this column aims to inform you about current legislation and programs reflective of the GFWC Resolutions. Through the Legislative Action Center, "GFWC Alerts" are distributed for members to act by reaching out to your respective senators and representatives.

Members of Congress returned to Washington, DC, the week of April 28 and are in session until the Memorial Day recess. In anticipation of bipartisan legislation moving forward, GFWC activated its Legislative Action Center to support anti-trafficking, online safety, and global vaccination programs. Additional alerts are forthcoming. If you have not joined the GFWC Legislative Action Center, please do so now.



GFWC 2025 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES (119TH CONGRESS, 2025 - 2026)

SIGNATURE PROGRAM: DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

VAWA Appropriations: GFWC urges Congress to provide increased federal funding for FY 2025 and FY 2026 to provide safety, access to services, and justice for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Survivors rely on federally funded direct services such as shelter, rape crisis response, legal assistance, and counseling. Communities rely on prevention programs, available 24-hour hotlines, and trauma-informed training for law enforcement.

Anti-trafficking: GFWC urges Congress to pass anti-trafficking and anti-exploitation bills reauthorizing essential programs to support survivors and combat human trafficking in all forms, both domestically and internationally. Proposed legislation, the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act, would provide federal criminal relief to survivors of human trafficking who committed a non-violent offense as a direct result of having been a victim of

trafficking. GFWC supports efforts to strengthen collaboration between federal, state, and local law enforcement, and improve resources available to survivors.

Victims of Crime Act: GFWC supports robust funding for the Crime Victims Fund authorized by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). The Fund is financed by criminal fines and penalties from convictions in federal court, not taxpayer dollars. The Office of Victims of Crime disburses money from this fund to states and other entities to support victim compensation and assistance programs, including domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, child advocacy centers, and other child sexual abuse treatment programs. Proposed bipartisan legislation, the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act, would redirect unobligated resources collected through the False Claim Act to the Crime Victims Fund for five years, while maintaining critical protection and compensation for whistleblowers.

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

Online Safety: GFWC supports efforts to prevent online sexual exploitation of children. Proposed legislation includes the TAKE IT DOWN Act which will criminalize the publication of nonconsensual intimate imagery, including AI-generated deepfakes, require social media and other websites to remove such images within 48 hours of receiving notice from the victim, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. The SHIELD Act would provide federal law enforcement with the tools they need to crack down on privacy violations, provide victims with legal protections, and hold exploiters accountable. Additional bills are expected.

ARTS AND CULTURE

GFWC supports increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts to enhance state and local programs that help transform communities into beautiful and resilient places through strategies that incorporate arts and culture.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

GFWC urges Congress to reauthorize the Older Americans Act and the Farm Bill, protecting funding and strengthening programs addressing hunger and food insecurity.

EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

GFWC supports federal funding for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programs; strong educational programs with challenging academic curricula for all students including those with learning, social, mental, and physical disabilities; and increased funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services to strengthen local community resources.

ENVIRONMENT

GFWC encourages balance between the interests of proper management of resources, adequate water supplies, protection of wildlife, and the interests of energy production, including more fuel-efficient and renewable energy sources.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Global Vaccinations: GFWC supports funding the CDC's polio eradication and measles elimination programs through the Health and Human Services appropriations bill, and funding through



GFWC ON THE HILL

The 2024–2026 GFWC Executive Committee during their visit to state senators on Capitol Hill.

the State Department/Foreign Operations appropriations bill for immunizations and improving global disease detection systems that enable other nations to effectively detect and efficiently respond to a range of other diseases. Preventing diseases at their source is the most cost-effective approach, saves the most lives, and makes the world more resilient to new viruses that could cause the next pandemic. Without coordination and rapid analysis of national and international public health data, private sector pharmaceutical manufacturers would not have the lead time required to roll out updated vaccines at scale and prevent deaths. The United States must remain the global leader in medical research and innovation.

Breast Cancer Screenings: GFWC urges Congress to require all health insurance plans to cover screenings, supplemental screenings, and diagnostic examinations at no cost to patients who are at greater risk for breast cancer. Beginning September 2024, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires radiology services to inform patients whether they have dense breasts.

For more information, contact: Debra Bryant, GFWC Federal Government Relations Consultant, debra.bryant@unified-solutions.us, 202-263-9902.

BEST PRACTICES: MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION



by KARYN M. CHARVAT, GFWC MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN (2024-2026)

Membership recruitment and retention are fundamental to the growth and sustainability of an organization, yet many face challenges in both areas. Effective strategies in these areas will not only help attract new members but also keep existing members engaged and committed.

Understanding how both strategies work together will ensure your club has a healthy membership for years to come!

1. Understand Your Audience

Before recruiting new members, it's important to have a clear understanding of the target audience. Who are you trying to attract? What needs, interests, and challenges do they face? Conducting surveys or holding focus groups with current members or potential new members can provide valuable insights. By better understanding what motivates

a potential new member, you can design your recruitment and retention strategies to address their needs.

2. Communicate Clear Value Propositions - What's In It for Them?

For potential members, the value of joining your club must be clear. This involves showcasing the benefits members will receive and making sure these benefits are communicated effectively. Use various channels such as social media, newsletters, or informational brochures to outline the advantages of membership. Having current members at events providing first-hand testimonials is always beneficial!

For retention, it's equally important to consistently remind current members of the value they receive by being

involved with GFWC. Regular updates on achievements can effectively demonstrate to members that their participation and support are crucial to the club's success.

3. Leverage Digital Marketing & Technology

Today, online marketing plays a central role in membership recruitment. Create a user-friendly website that clearly communicates who you are, what you do, and who you do



it for, as well as the benefits of membership. Incorporate call-to-action buttons throughout the site to guide website visitors to join your club.

Social media is an excellent tool for promoting events, sharing success stories, and creating a sense of community. Offering online webinars, virtual events, or highlighting videos or educational content can also be effective recruitment tools, showcasing the value of membership before potential members commit.

4. Personalized Recruitment and Engagement

Personalizing club communications can make a significant impact. For recruitment, this might mean sending targeted messages to potential members based on their interests or professional backgrounds. Personalized email campaigns, phone calls, or personal invitations to events go a long way in boosting engagement.

For retention, personalized communication is just as critical. Regular check-ins with members—whether through phone calls or personalized emails—can foster a stronger connection. Ask members about their experiences, challenges, and suggestions they might have for improving the club. Valuing their input and addressing their needs will foster a stronger connection among members.

5. Create a Welcoming Environment

First impressions matter! Whether someone is joining your club online or at an in-person event, ensuring that new members feel welcomed is crucial. A warm and inclusive club culture can be a deciding factor in whether someone continues to engage with the group or decides to leave.

A smooth onboarding process ensures new members feel valued and engaged right from the start! Provide clear instructions on how to get involved and where to find resources. Assign a member or a “board buddy” to help new members navigate club activities and policies, answering questions and making them feel welcome. By fostering a sense of belonging early on, you set the stage for long-term retention.

6. Encourage Member Involvement

Active engagement with your club is the key to retention! People are more likely to remain members if they feel connected and valued. Encourage members to get involved in committees, service project opportunities, and/or leadership roles. Offering opportunities for input in the club’s direction fosters a deeper sense of ownership and commitment.

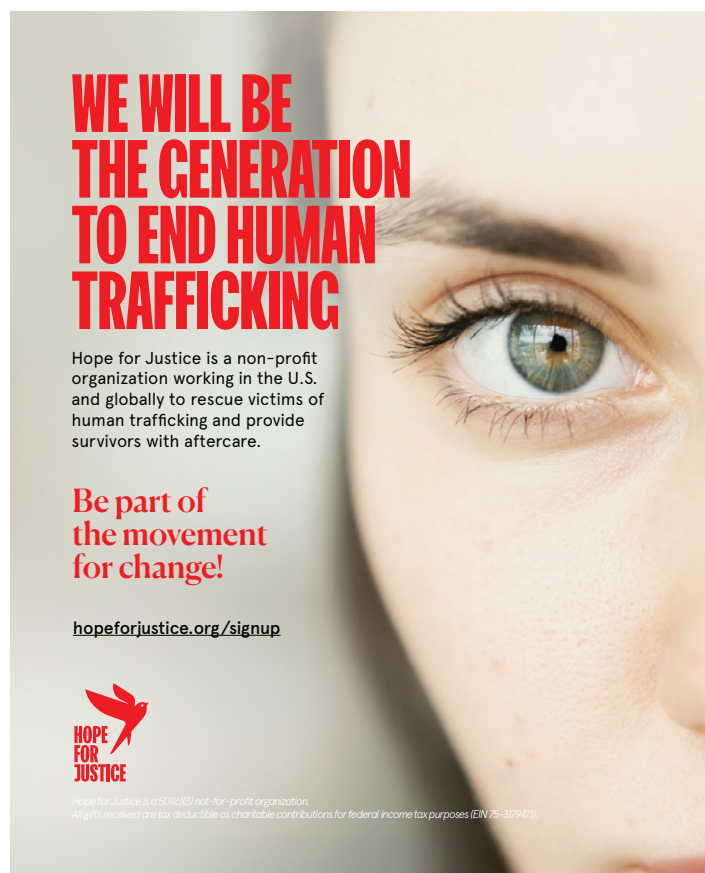
When members actively contribute, they also become advocates for your club, helping to recruit new members and enhancing a

sense of community. Creating a participatory culture can help retain members by making them feel like integral parts of the club’s success.

7. Regularly Assess and Adapt Your Strategies

Lastly, no recruitment or retention strategy is static. The most successful ones are very fluid, keeping your club open to change. Gather feedback from members, track recruitment and retention metrics, and evaluate what’s working and what needs adjustment. This will allow you to refine your strategies over time, ensuring they remain effective and aligned with your members’ needs.

In closing, recruiting and retaining members requires a thoughtful, strategic approach that emphasizes understanding your audience, provides a clear value to members, leverages technology, utilizes personalized communications, and fosters a welcoming and engaging club culture. Additionally, periodically surveying members, evaluating your strategies, and adjusting where necessary will help your club cultivate a loyal, engaged membership base that will sustain its growth for years to come!



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TO END HUMAN
TRAFFICKING**

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THE ART AND SCIENCE OF LEADERSHIP

by ANN LANDIS, GFWC LEADERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Leadership is both an art and a science. The art lies in vision, inspiration, and the ability to connect with and motivate people. The science is in the strategies, structures, and principles that make leadership effective. Great leaders master both, balancing intuition with knowledge and creativity with discipline. When art and science come together, leaders emerge and leadership becomes more than just a role; it becomes an engaging force for change. Good leaders engage, motivate, educate, and empower others as they seek to accomplish common goals.

We all recognize good leadership. It's the quality that causes people to willingly engage when needed, take initiative, encourage future leaders, direct action, and influence outcomes. Good management and good leadership are different. A person can be a good, even great, manager but not be a good leader. Good managers are people who get things done but only manage the status quo. While a manager is asking "how" and "when," a leader will be asking "what" and "why." Leaders think of the ideas, inspire members, and set a tone for the team. Managers execute the idea, guide members to succeed in a goal or project, and support the tone that has been created.

Good leaders thrive on change because it produces growth. They think of the next step and take the helm so they can steer. By taking charge, they empower their group, set a new focus, inspire everyone to work to achieve the goals and educate on how to accomplish them. When new goals are reached, the group feels part of the accomplishment; a true result of a good leader.

The science of leadership is workshops, development sessions, and webinars. Time and energy are spent identifying leadership styles, learning the steps in exercising leadership, (usually a version of vision, plan, execute, and evaluate) establishing a mentor/mentee program, or any number of currently trending ideas.

Without the art of leadership, rarely will that produce a leader who leads from influence rather than authority. Conversely, without the science of leadership, the art of leadership may flounder with little or no focus or impact. The art and science of leadership are a team

that must work together.

GFWC can and does provide future leaders with opportunities to engage and be empowered. Our LEADS curriculum is, arguably, our best example. We work at identifying and nurturing leaders. With the art and science of leadership, we shepherd our leaders to use influence to lead with the volunteer spirit.

How can clubs develop a pipeline to provide leadership continuity? One way we do this is through the training of officers. For instance, a president-elect, identified by her art of leadership, is given time to learn through the science of leadership. She will be ready to transition to the presidency when her term arrives. Another way clubs can develop leaders is to tap into previous leaders as scouts for potential leaders. Often done informally, formalizing that process with a Past Presidents Committee could ensure recognition and recruiting of promising leaders. Junior Clubs and

Juniorette Clubs serve as sources of leadership potential. These members should be invited and encouraged to seek leadership roles.

Two traits evident in good leaders are kindness and a sense of humor. A sense of humor makes engaging in challenges fun. Kindness will almost always elicit the best in everyone. They are free, need no budget line,

and are a limitless resource always available to help us get where we want to be.

One thing is certain, GFWC is lucky to have a large number of strong leaders, each with their special leadership style. Each officer, chairman, and member contribute to our overall education and growth while maturing and developing themselves. Through thoughtful and purposeful leadership, our members continue as exemplars of the volunteer spirit. Understanding the art and science of leadership helps develop a strong team of members who have mutual trust and who work well together.

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader,"
— John Quincy Adams



REACHING OUT TO HELP OTHERS

by **VICKY ANN TRIMMER**, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

It never ceases to amaze me that our members continue to come up with new ideas and projects. The old tried and true projects continue to work but inventive new projects get the volunteer juices flowing.

Citizenship is more than paying taxes and voting. Getting involved at the local government level is important. Some of these meetings are not the most engaging. Unless there is a crisis, few take the time to attend. Arrange to serve refreshments at one meeting a month. Rotate the kind of meeting from governing board, parks and recreation, sewer, water, etc. The municipality can advertise which meeting will have refreshments in its newsletter. Consider partnering with the local grocery store bakery for reduced cost refreshments.

Emergency preparedness remains important. Teachers and day care workers are trained in CPR and First Aid. What about all those who are providing private childcare or home schooling their children? Partner with your local fire and ambulance providers

to offer a one-day CPR and/or First Aid Class for caregivers and parents. Provide babysitting services during the class. The class might even be opened to the home-schooled children who are old enough to participate.

As part of a local leadership program for young professionals, I spent time visiting the homeless encampments in my town. Taking the time to get to know and understand this population opened my eyes to their needs. Many have pets they are taking care of, and this is one reason they do not want to go to a shelter or cannot rent an apartment. Consider working with a local pet store to sponsor a free vaccination clinic at a homeless encampment. Food and toys also are needed.

Finally, remember to continue to look for new ways to update old projects. Old can be new again!



Education and Libraries remain a focus for many of our club members. Members are actively involved in a wide array of projects. These initiatives range from supporting education and literacy to fostering community engagement.

Recognizing the importance of education, clubs continue to offer scholarships to students of all ages, provide grants to teachers for classroom resources, and support educational programs for individuals with special needs. Members engage in activities that promote lifelong learning and intellectual growth, such as organizing workshops and seminars on various topics.

A great community-based project that caught my attention was a costume party held for preschool through third-grade children, who dressed as characters from their favorite books. Snacks and games were provided at this engaging event. Many clubs are installing and supporting little lending libraries or bookshelves

of free books to be taken and housed at local laundromats. One club donates a bookcase full of books to new homes built in coordination with Habitat for Humanity. What a great welcome to a new home!

Several clubs shared that they have held writing contests for poetry and short stories. They have local winners and then submit those for GFWC Awards! What a boost for our students to potentially win a national competition. Providing backpacks full of school supplies continues to be a need in many communities and our club members are bridging that gap for those students.

Our GFWC ESO Book Club Facebook page is a great place to gain new book ideas to use in self-improvement through reading clubs and participation in ESO. The genre and topics vary by interest, but I enjoy seeing who has read something new and interesting.

RECYCLING FOR A POSITIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT

by **SHARON OLIPHANT**, GFWC ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

Recycling! It's not someone else's job; it is all of us. With the changing times of reusing and recycling, many companies and producers are using recyclable materials. This makes it harder to recycle. What are some of the items that are difficult to recycle? Bubble wrap or plastic film, Styrofoam, aerosol, and paint cans. GFWC clubs have found creative ways to recycle the most compostable items that we use daily. Bubble wrap and plastic film now have a new life! Several of our clubs have found NexTrex, a community engagement program. A recycled bench can be made from 1,000 pounds of plastic film, plastic wrap, and bubble wrap, as well as plastic bottle caps. Wood chips are mixed in to create composite lumber. This helps to recycle the hard to recycle and gives new purpose to those items. Benches are donated to community gardens, local parks, and schools. Also, many of our clubs recycle plastic grocery bags into mats for those experiencing homelessness, create reusable shopping bags, and make plastic strips to tie veggies and items together for food pantries.

Items you may have thought about recycling but weren't sure, such as shoes and socks, can be given to Second-Hand Socks, Smart Wool, and Soles 4 Soles. We have also been consistent in our collection of pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Millions of pounds have been recycled. Our clubs need to continue to check in our local communities on what can be recycled, and we can contact recyclers to schedule a day trip for shredding paper, collecting paint and aerosol cans, lightbulbs, batteries, and so much more. The financial burden to many cities is a lack of resources for recycling. Recycling is one of the easiest and most traditional ways to positively impact the environment and communities.

ART PROJECTS FOR CLUB MEMBERS

by **BILLIE WILLIAMS**, GFWC ARTS & CULTURE CHAIRMAN

Did I hear you say you didn't know what your club could do for your Arts & Culture Community Service Program (CSP)? Are you complaining that everything "fun" has already been done? Are you sad and blue and want to try something new? Well just hold the phone, sit down, and give me just a minute of your time. Have I got news for you.

The wonderful thing about art is that it is everywhere and just about anything you do can be considered art. Painting, music, cooking, photography, sewing, sculpture, ceramics, and even sandcastles may be considered art, and GFWC Clubs across the globe are working hard to advance Arts and Culture in their communities by exploring new and exciting projects.

For example...

From painting the whole town 'red' ... to making a quilt for a bed ... ART

Taking pictures of the scenery ... making wreaths with Christmas greenery ... ART

From sponsoring an art show ... to judging people made from snow ... ART

Listening or volunteering at the theater or symphony ... learning how to make a proper cup of tea ... ART

From folding paper cranes in origami ... to sponsoring a sandcastle contest by the sea ... ART

Dance classes can always be fun ... Or, maybe learning how thread is spun ... ART

From painting on ceramic tiles ... to developing a walking art mile ... ART

Just about anything you can think of could be developed into an Arts & Culture program or project for any size club in most communities. Start small and work your way up, partner with other organizations to get the job done, if necessary.

For other ideas be sure to check out the Top Ten Projects in Arts & Culture published after the GFWC Convention in Atlanta in June. See you there!

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

by **LYNN FOREMAN**, HEALTH AND WELLNESS CHAIRMAN

As I reflect on the 2024 State Health & Wellness Reports, I am inspired by the many projects that touch those in need in their communities as well as in third world countries. My heart especially goes out to those whose communities have suffered from 2024 natural disasters. The support of GFWC club members has been a beacon of hope and healing.



To volunteer, contact your local or regional Special Olympics office. For additional ideas on how to support mental and physical well being refer to the GFWC Club Manual for additional project ideas.

Or step out of the box, brainstorm, and create your own.

Together, through art, service, and connection, we can foster both physical and emotional wellness—for ourselves and the world around us.



Wellness is not solely defined by physical health—it also includes emotional balance and connection. I recently participated in a “Paint and Sip” event organized by my GFWC Madison Valley Woman’s Club at a local woman-owned artist’s Wellness Healing Center. Their mission is “to honor and support a unique path to well-being.” We brought our favorite beverages, shared snacks, and were guided through the process of creating art—whether seasoned or first-time painters. The evening was filled with laughter, conversation, and encouragement. Many of us left feeling lighter, emotionally recharged, and holding a unique piece of art—a reminder of the power of creative expression in maintaining emotional health, especially during a long, isolating winter.

This spring, consider engaging with organizations that embody both physical and emotional support. The Special Olympics is a prime example, offering opportunities for volunteers to uplift individuals with intellectual disabilities through sports. Whether as a partner athlete, coach, team assistant, or event volunteer, your involvement helps build confidence, community, and joy—for both participants and volunteers.



JOIN US FOR OUR UPCOMING EVENT!

Walk to End Alzheimer's® has the top-ranked National Teams program in the country, raising over \$120 million to date to accelerate the mission of the Alzheimer's Association®, while connecting their personal and professional networks to vital resources and support. In their workplaces, communities, and beyond, Walk National Teams are bringing us closer than ever to our vision of a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia.

We'd like to thank General Federation of Women's Clubs for your support and dedication as a National Team.

GFWC will continue its impact by forming teams and raising funds for Walks across the country. The funds raised will help fight Alzheimer's disease through vital research, advocacy efforts and essential support programs and services in your communities. Your team donations will play an important role in improving the lives of people living with Alzheimer's, their families and caregivers.

 **REGISTER**



alz.org/GFWC

**WALK TO END
ALZHEIMER'S**
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OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

THE BUILD A BETTER COMMUNITY AWARD

by **KATIE MOYDELL**, GFWC COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAM AWARD CHAIRMAN

SPUNKY
spunk-y
adjective informal
courageous and determined.
"a spunky performance"



The Community Impact Program (CIP) award originates from a contest sponsored by the Kroger Corporation called "The Build a Better Community Award." This contest, as well as the Sears Foundation sponsored Community Achievement Contest, was such a success that GFWC saw the benefit of implementing a permanent program that has transformed into our modern CIP.

In 1950 Jessie Ash Arndt, of the women owned Christian Science Monitor (CSM), reported on the project executed by GFWC Twentieth Century Club. This club is still federated in GFWC Mississippi. Besides bringing in doctors for medical services, school improvements, and town beautification, the ladies did what nobody thought they could. Members of the Twentieth Century Club had finally tired of the town's worst eyesore, the vacant lot behind Front Street that had become the de facto garbage dump. They were determined to clean up the dumping grounds despite being assured that more trash would re-appear the following week. The CSM quoted a portion of the club's report:

"A date was set. Practically every club member met with rakes and shovels. We got the city truck and began to load it. In a very short time, we had an audience, a big one. Men stood with their mouths open to see us clearing away that landmark. They said it would return tomorrow. Never again- the women vowed... A very old man stood in the crowd, a fisherman by trade. 'You girls got more spunk than anyone in luka' he said, inviting them all across the street for a cold drink."

At the time this newspaper article was published, the town was enjoying their new parking lot on Front Street. Club members reported that trash was no longer dropped off as it had been in the past. The club recognized a tangible issue and found a resolution where nobody expected it.

Certain considerations should be taken as clubs plan their CIP Program.

Jen Novak former state CIP Chairman said:

When reviewing a project for the Community Impact Program, these key questions should get you on the right path:

- Can you identify a specific problem in your community?
- How great will the impact be and how long will it last?
- As a judge, these are the answers that piqued my interest to keep reading.
- As the project progresses, how will the community be aware of its existence?
- Is the club planning to interact with other organizations or local officials?

As I continued to read about our inaugural winners and the advice from Jen Nowak, I was struck by a note in the administration report of Mrs. Hiram C. Houghton. "Repeatedly clubs reported that, for the first time, various groups in their towns were inspired to work together. One hundred and seventeen clubs found that the project undertaken required cooperation with local governments."

Our clubs continue to partner with organizations to make a greater impact on those around them. For example, Sharon Oliphant, former GFWC CIP Chairman, noted that clubs teamed up with the Boy Scouts, the Girls Scouts, and their City Chamber in effort to reach more people. Has your club thought of community associates that could benefit with a strong partnership?

Over the past 75 years, GFWC has continued to build better communities wherever we have clubs. It can be easy to continue successful events once you've mastered the execution, but some needs call for out-the-box thinking. I encourage you all to remember this story and the GFWC Twentieth Century club as you plan and execute your club events. Let's roll up our sleeves and get out there GFWC—we need to show the world just how spunky we are!



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**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**

**INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF SERVICE**

END DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

**WILL YOU BE PART
OF THE CHANGE?**

**REGISTER YOUR CLUB ON THE GFWC
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RESOURCES AVAILABLE

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- ▶ Statistics
- ▶ Social Media Images
- ▶ Logos and Letterhead

For More Information visit: www.GFWC.org/IDS