GFWC Juniors’ Special Program:

Advocates for Children

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Volume Five – March & April 2023 Newsletter

Have you sent me your state’s Awards entries?

Remember they are due by March 15th. I can’t wait to see you all in Louisville; are you registered for GFWC Convention 2023 yet?



Ideas to Sparkle and Shine as

*Advocates for Children* during…

* + **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**-Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have a number of materials for its “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” program at <https://tinyurl.com/45skk6ap>
* **National Trisomy Awareness Month**-While most people have 23 pairs of chromosomes, some have a condition that causes extra partial or full chromosomes in their cells. Those extra chromosomes can cause a range of health problems, learning difficulties, as well as delays in physical development. Down Syndrome is known as Trisomy 21 as those individuals are born with an extra copy of chromosome 21. Volunteer at Special Olympics events or with your school’s unified program.
* **National Nutrition Month**-is a campaign focusing on significance of physical fitness and eating nourishing meals. You can donate healthy snacks and fruits to your local food pantry and share healthy recipes with your club members. You can support the US Department of Agriculture’s proposed rule - [Child Nutrition Programs: Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-020723) - is the next step in an [ongoing effort](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/strengthening-school-meals-healthier-kids) toward healthier school meals that USDA and the broader school meals community have been partnering on for well over a decade.
* **National Women’s History Month & International Woman’s Day on March 8th**-share GFWC’s history with your club as well as your own state and local club’s history.
* **Red Cross Month & Red Cross Giving Day March 23**-first designated in 1943, Red Cross Month to raise awareness of the organization and its humanitarian mission. Share American Red Cross founder, Clara Barton’s history, volunteer at a blood drive, donate blood and or platelets at your local Red Cross.



The birthstone for April is a diamond; you don’t have to be born during this month to Sparkle and Shine as *Advocates for Children during…*

* **National Child Abuse Prevention Month & Go Blue Day, April 7**-the GFWC Club Manual pages for this special program lists advocacy efforts, ideas to sponsor a project, ideas for scholarships, and so much more for clubs during this month. You can also find ideas in the Child Abuse section of the GFWC Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention pages of the GFWC Club Manual.
* **National Autism Awareness Month**-help promote public awareness and acceptance, celebrate the differences and be more inclusive towards autistic individuals.
* **National Canine Fitness Month**-GFWC Affiliate Organization Canine Companions understands the importance of canine fitness. You can volunteer at one of the centers or donate items for dogs to use as they play.
* **National Volunteer Month**- Did you know National Volunteer Month is an extension of National Volunteer Week, first held in Canada in 1943 to honor women’s contributions during WWII. GFWC clubwomen definitely sparkle and shine as volunteers, so give yourselves a pat on the back and don’t forget to offer a thank you to other volunteers in your community.
* **National Poetry Month**-first celebrated in 1996, poetry traces back to 2100 B.C. with the first written piece of poetry “Epic of Gilgamesh.” Encourage your clubwomen to write a poem, write one yourself , or organize a poetry contest for K-12 grade in your community. GFWC Writing Contest chairman Donna Shibley would love to see those poems submitted next year.



People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in,

their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

GFWC Affiliate Organizations Focus

GFWC offered *Power Up: Partners Toward Progress* during the month of February. Did you sign up for the webinar series? If not, they will soon be on the GFWC member portal. I encourage all clubwomen to watch the webinars and learn how you can be *An Advocate for Children* through our Affiliate Organizations.

**Shot@Life** aims to ensure that children around the world have access to lifesaving vaccines. GFWC clubwomen can learn to use your voice to help children across the globe at Shot@Life’s upcoming training webinar to be held March 22, 2023 @ 1 PM ET and April 5, 2023 @ 1 PM ET.

**March of Dimes**-help advance its mission through public policies, programs, and funding. Learn more here-<https://www.marchofdimes.org/our-work/policy-advocacy>.

**unicefUSA** has an Action Center and says, “When you speak up for children, legislators will listen.” You can urge Congress to support funding for unicef, prioritize mental health for children & youth in the United States, and help end child marriage in the United States. Learn more at <http://unicefusa.org/> and click on How to Help and then Advocate.

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“Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardour and diligence.”  *~* Abagail Adams

Mark your calendars for *GFWC Learning Gateways*, a new program to begin during Women’s History Month and continue through April. These programs will offer an opportunity to learn from our 2022-2024 GFWC Honorary Chairmen.

* ***March 22 @ 7 PM ET- Advocacy Challenges: Overcoming Roadblocks and Building Coalition Support*** with Juniors’ Special Program Honorary Chairman Stephenie Foster, Speaker, Author, Women’s Advocate, and Co-Founder of Smash Strategies
* ***April 18 @ 7 PM-The Power of Personal Behaviors in Health and Wellness*** with Health and Wellness Honorary Chairman Nagi Kumar, Ph.D. Director of Cancer Chemoprevention at Moffitt Cancer Center
* ***April 25 @ 7 PM ET-Drawing Connections: Prevention Demands Equity*** with GFWC Signature Program Honorary Chairman Monika Johnson Hostler, President of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

Kathy Lewis, GFWC Michigan President received an email from a Michigan clubwoman, Carolyn Bailey. Kathy shared the email with me. Now, with permission from them both, I am sharing this with you. Whatever state you live in, I’m sure that a school or after-school program would be happy to have you volunteer as *An Advocate for Children*…

As you know GFWC has a history of making huge changes in our society that has helped many people over many, many years.

Over the past two and a half years we have all been affected by Covid and the shutdowns in one way or another, but most of all our children. With schools shut down children have fallen behind on all subjects but most of all in reading and math.

Thinking of all the impact GFWC members have had on so many people's lives over the years I would love to see all Club members nationwide take on this challenge for all the school age kids.

If just a part of every club could work with their local schools and other community groups like United Way or other child advocacy groups to mentor children who are falling behind, there would be an impact.  Working in classrooms helping teachers or after school tutoring may make a difference to children. Help them get caught up. The ideal would be for them to advance enough that they could be moved up to the grades they should be in age wise. Even if only 50% were to obtain that goal, it would still have a huge impact on our communities and society in general. And just imagine our kids could graduate and move onto college at the age they had planned on.

I'm sure a lot of club members are teachers or retired teachers and maybe they could help put together a plan for all the other clubs in their area, even other women’s groups, or community groups, to band together and get our children up to date and back in school.

I am going to be helping a teacher in one of our Flint schools with math, and so excited to start. This will be with the Valley Area Agency on Aging. I have been a volunteer with them for about five or six years but of course not for the past couple of years because of Covid. If you'd like more info just google VAAA and it should pull right up. They are located in Flint and service three counties in the area.

That's all Kathy. Thank you for listening. If you need anything else or need me to verify any actual statistics about how far behind our school children are, let me know.

I just feel that instead of the news media and others complaining about how far behind kids are and that they will never get caught up because of the pandemic, someone should do something to change that outcome.