



JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM:

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” — HARRIET TUBMAN

GFWC Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children is designed to encourage all Woman's, Junior Woman's, Juniorette, and International Affiliate Clubs to make a difference in the life of a child by being an advocate. The program was envisioned as a way for clubwomen to provide a voice for children and to teach and encourage parents and other caregivers to advocate for children at the grassroots level.

The definition of child advocacy is “support for children who are in a vulnerable position in society or in a vulnerable situation.” We aim to honor our roots and be a voice for children.

Clubwomen can be an advocate by working to:

- Ensure that children are protected from harmful situations.
- Encourage healthy physical and emotional lifestyles.
- Impact policy to improve children's lives.

Children also depend on the advocacy of others, especially their parents and caregivers, to protect and promote their interests in an emergency or long-term health situation. First-rate children's healthcare should be available to everyone, and family voice and choice are essential in providing the best healthcare plan for each unique situation. Educate yourself and others about medical resources and organizations that will help you be the best advocate possible for children.

The Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children encourages advocacy and projects that will assist and protect children in crisis, including those experiencing:

- Child abuse
- Cyberbullying
- Depression and suicide
- Foster or residential care
- Homelessness
- Human trafficking
- Life-threatening illness
- Limits on screen time
- Poverty
- Texting while driving



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COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE: REFRESH AND REVIVE



As a club, work with a local shelter, youth center, social service office, or other emergency location to add a little “sparkle” to one or many of their rooms. Club members can come together to clean, paint, and add new items to the room to bring warmth and caring into the surroundings. Invite potential members to join and work with local merchants on donating supplies for the refresh. Get the word out to your community on what you are doing and maybe one room can turn into many rooms that will assist with making the situation more manageable for the child.

GFWC ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN WEEK

Sunday, October 23, to Saturday, October 29, 2022

Sunday, October 22, to Saturday, October 28, 2023

The emphasis for Advocates for Children Week will be to promote a collection of personal hygiene items, clothing, and blankets to local organizations for children removed from homes due to unsafe conditions.





PARTY IN A BOX

The GFWC F.J. Scott Woman's Club (TX) supports a Christmas Party each year to honor children within the Child Protective Services organization. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, they adapted to create the "Party in a Box." The box contained gifts, food, and non-food gift cards, and were assembled and distributed to the children.



BOOKS ON BIKES

The GFWC Junior Woman's Club of Hilton Village (VA) helped support a local elementary school with their "Books on Bikes" program. The club donated 340 books and, along with Yates Elementary staff, rode bikes and delivered a snack, book, and safely-distanced greeting to students from their beloved teachers and helpers.



SENSORY HALLWAY

GFWC Menominee Woman's Club (MI) created a sensory hallway to welcome students to school and to help students with emotions, excess energy, and positive imagery. Members and teachers placed decals on the floor as an obstacle course, then brightened the white walls by creating a mural that complemented the nature theme on the decals. Finally, colorful hands were painted at different levels on the walls where students could work off excess energy by doing hand push-ups.



PROJECT IDEAS

Be inspired by this list of how GFWC clubs can use local resources and creativity to be the voice for children. Find further information about organizations named here under Resources.

ADVOCACY EFFORTS

- Work with your city, county, or state to have the fourth week in October recognized as Advocates for Children Week. Send a copy of the proclamation to Juniors' Special Program Chairman Katie Robey at kdrobey@robeybaur.org.
- Advocate through your state legislature for bills that benefit children's physical and mental health.
- Advocate for law enforcement training on mental health awareness for children.
- Research and engage with advocacy groups in your area that support children's physical and/or mental health.
- Advocate for Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other programs that provide children with mentors and/or offer activities to help them develop positive social skills.
- Investigate grants, such as those available through the U.S. Department of Education, including the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants and the 21st Century Community Learning Center Funding.
- Visit the extremely comprehensive and informative Art Advocacy and Resources page of Incredible@rt Department for additional ideas on art advocacy.
- Advocate for support programs, such as Ronald McDonald House Charities, to establish a chapter in your community. Volunteer as a club or individuals to cook a meal at your local shelter or Ronald McDonald House.
- Juice Box Challenge: Challenge clubs to donate at least one juice box per member to their local Child Advocacy Centers (CAC). Juice boxes help CAC staff build rapport with children as they discuss difficult issues.
- Child Advocacy Ribbons: Create awareness ribbons in royal blue and attach to bookmarks or business cards to be left at local libraries, businesses, or healthcare centers with information about your local Child Advocacy Center and the services they provide.

SPONSOR A PROJECT

- Paint and decorate a room or rooms at a local shelter, youth center, or visitation room at the social service office.
- Sponsor a creative art activity, such as modeling with clay, that provides additional benefits for children with motor disabilities.
- Engage in art therapy projects with children in hospitals, shelters, and other facilities.
- Support an outdoor performance at a local park.
- Sponsor a library program featuring an author who focuses on outdoor activities for school-age children.
- Partner with a local school to build an outdoor classroom or school garden, using resources from Project Learning Tree such as *School Site Investigation* and *Creating an Outdoor Classroom*.
- Purchase mittens and beanies for Head Start and Preschool children to deliver in December.
- Pediatric Unit Playtime: Ask members to donate items such as coloring books, small jigsaw and cube puzzles, Play-Doh, and other small toys for hospitalized pediatric patients to enjoy during their stay in your local pediatric unit.

FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Use resources from Kids Health, a nonprofit organization that provides doctor-reviewed advice on hundreds of health issues, to present a club or community program that will give families the tools and confidence to make best-health choices. Augment the program with other information resources, such as those available from the National Institute for Children's Health Quality and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
- Learn from and inform new parents about HealthyChildren.org, sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics, for information on optimizing children's health, dealing with injuries and emergencies, and evaluating treatments for long-term health situations such as asthma, diabetes, autism, learning disabilities, and others.



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- Inform parents and other caregivers about NAMI, the nation's leading voice on mental health, and their resources and services, including the NAMI Helpline (1-800-950-NAMI or info@nami.org). Consider hosting a community program that specifically addresses depression and suicide in children and teens.
- Learn about and share information on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), such as information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and advocate for community education programs that create and sustain stable, safe, and nurturing relationships and environments for all children.
- Furniture Safety: Raise awareness in your community and help save a child's life by planning a program about the dangers of furniture tip overs and other hazards in the home. Distribute anchoring kits to help secure heavy furniture.
- Screen Time Awareness: In this age of digital media, children are being exposed to cell phones, tablets, and electronic screens as early as infancy. Too much screen time for children can lead to issues such as obesity, irregular sleep schedules and shorter duration of sleep, behavioral problems, loss of social skills, violence, and less time for play. Educate the members of your club about the new guidelines for screen time use for young children.
- Children's Choking Awareness: The Toilet Paper Roll Safety Project consists of attaching a decorated toilet paper roll to cardstock paper with the following statement: "Any toy or toy part that can pass through is a choking hazard for children less than three years of age."

WORK WITH SPECIAL NEEDS/FOSTER CARE

- Work with special needs children to create Vision Boards or Dream Boards using magazine cut-outs.
- Support Save the Children's HEART (Healing and Education through the Arts), a therapy program for children with serious and chronic stress.
- Learn about and promote Ecotherapy or Nature Therapy, which can help children with anxiety, depression, mental fatigue, eating disorders, feelings of isolation, and other emotional and mental illness.
- Volunteer with and/or support equine therapy programs.
- Undertake projects that provide a sense of security for children in foster care, such as making or customizing duffel bags for carrying their clothes and/or creating overnight kits with hygiene and comfort items.

PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Support local parks and recreation centers by volunteering or providing scholarships and/or supplies for summer camps and other programs.
- Partner with local businesses to sponsor a family day or family night at a sporting event or another activity in April for Child Abuse Awareness Month.
- Sponsor an international child through Save the Children to secure educational opportunities and health services.

CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

Undertake these and other projects with GFWC Affiliate Organizations that fit within the guidelines for the Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children.

MARCH OF DIMES

- The March for Babies is a fun event to raise funds to help support mothers and premature babies and raise awareness of the research needed to find solutions and advocate for policies that prioritize mom and baby health. March of Dimes provides instructions, guidance, and a web page to organize an event. www.marchforbabies.org/Home/SearchtoDonate

OPERATION SMILE

- Help Operation Smile provide the necessary equipment and medications to enable the delivery of the safest surgeries. <https://catalog.operationsmile.org/provide-medicines-supplies>



ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL

- The St. Jude Trike-A-Thon is a fun, service-learning program for daycares and preschools that teaches trike and riding toy safety while helping the children of St. Jude. Any advocate for children can make a difference with the St. Jude Trike-A-Thon. If you sign up to become a coordinator, St. Jude will provide everything you need to have a great event at a preschool or daycare in your area. Log on to www.stjude.org/get-involved to find out more.
- Waiting Room Fun Bags. Fill a sealed zippered plastic bag with fun things a child or teen can do as they wait to visit the doctor.

UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION SHOT@LIFE CAMPAIGN

- Promote World Immunization Week as an opportunity for the global health community to come together to urge our leaders to make #VaccinesWork for all.
- Encourage young people to enroll in Shot@Life's Student Advocacy Program. This program offers a great opportunity for students to build leadership skills and engage in global health issues to support vaccination efforts for children in developing countries. <https://shotatlife.org/champions>

UNICEF USA

- Host a "Trick or Treat for UNICEF" event, a long-time tradition in our country to collect donations for their general fund. At your October meeting decorate and include UNICEF Trick or Treat on each table for donations. www.unicefusa.org/trick-or-treat



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GFWC RESOURCES

Advocacy for Healthy Children Child Abuse <https://www.nationalcac.org/about-child-abuse/>

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America www.bbbs.org

Boys and Girls Clubs of America www.bgca.org

Boy Scouts of America www.scouting.org

Bureau of International Labor Affairs Dol.gov | Child Labor, Forced Labor & Human Trafficking | U.S. Department of Labor

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ACEs www.cdc.gov/violencepreventionchildabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html

Connect with a Crisis Counselor Crisis Text Line | Text HOME To 741741 free, 24/7 Crisis Counseling

Distracted Driving Distracted Driving | Motor Vehicle Safety | CDC Injury Center

Ending Distracted Driving is Everyone's Responsibility nsc.org | Distracted Driving - National Safety Council

4-H www.4-h.org

Girl Scouts of the USA www.girlscouts.org

HEART www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/global-programs/protection/healing-and-education-through-the-arts

Kids Online <https://www.kids-online.org/> | Kids Online | FTC Consumer Information

National Children's Alliance <https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/>

Net Cetera Chatting with Kids About Being Online Net Cetera: Chatting with Kids About Being Online | FTC Consumer Information

Parent Guides from ConnectSafely [https://www.connectsafely.org/parentguides/#:~:text=By%20parents%2C%20for%20parents%3A%20A,%2C%20please%20let%20us%20know\).](https://www.connectsafely.org/parentguides/#:~:text=By%20parents%2C%20for%20parents%3A%20A,%2C%20please%20let%20us%20know).) | Parent Guides from ConnectSafely - ConnectSafely

Prevent Child Abuse America <https://preventchildabuse.org/>

Project Learning Tree <https://www.plt.org/>

Save the Children <https://www.savethechildren.net/>

School Site Investigation www.plt.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/PLT-GreenSchools-School-SiteInvestigation-2018.pdf

Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants www.ed.gov/programs/ssae/index.html

Suicide Prevention Lifeline suicidepreventionlifeline.org | Youth: Lifeline

The Dangers of Distracted Driving fcc.gov | The Dangers of Distracted Driving | Federal Communications Commission

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 justice.gov | Key Legislation

21st Century Community Learning Center Funding www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/applicant.html

What Is Human Trafficking? dhs.gov | Homeland Security

Youth Suicide Warning Signs Youth.gov | Youth Suicide Warning Signs

Youth Mental Health Youth.gov | Risk and Protective Factors for Youth

SAMPLE ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN WEEK PROCLAMATION ATTACHED



AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children projects and Affiliate Organization 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 Award Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.



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

RESOLUTIONS

To be added after 2022 Annual Convention



SAMPLE GFWC ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN STATE PROCLAMATION



WHEREAS, the General Federation of Women's Clubs will celebrate its dedication to the awareness and promotion of the physical and emotional well-being of children on (INSERT DATE HERE); and

WHEREAS, GFWC is an organization of women from all walks of life that have the common goal of making the world a better place by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service; and

WHEREAS, GFWC has played a role in many national efforts including powerful advocacy for the physical and emotional well-being of children, including current affiliations with distinguished organizations such as St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and March of Dimes, and has historically worked for the passage of child labor laws and the Pure Food and Drug Act, supported public education, and was credited in 1933 with establishing 75% of US public libraries; and

WHEREAS, over the past 130 years, millions of GFWC clubwomen have given their time, talent, and resources to improve the lives of children, including women in the GFWC State Federation of (INSERT STATE HERE); and

AND WHEREAS, it would be a tremendous honor for GFWC to mark its dedication to the well-being of children with recognition from the nation's governors from across the country, therefore

RESOLVED, that the GFWC (INSERT STATE HERE) State Federation is honored and recognized on this milestone anniversary with a proclamation and declaration that (INSERT DATE HERE), will be known to all as GFWC Advocates for Children Week, in (INSERT STATE HERE).

