JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

2026-2028 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

"THERE IS NO TRUST MORE SACRED THAN THE ONE THE WORLD HOLDS WITH CHILDREN. THERE IS NO DUTY MORE IMPORTANT THAN ENSURING THAT THEIR RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED, THAT THEIR WELFARE IS PROTECTED, THAT THEIR LIVES ARE FREE FROM FEAR AND WANT AND THAT THEY CAN GROW UP IN PEACE." — KOFI ANNAN

CHANGE MAKERS FOR CHILDREN

GFWC Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children is designed to encourage all Woman's, Junior, 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.

GFWC members 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 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
- Housing instability
- Human trafficking
- Life-threatening illness
- Cyber predators
- Poverty

The Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children supports initiatives such as:

- Limiting screen time
- No texting while driving

GFWC est. 1890 GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

2026-2028
JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM

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Direct any questions regarding projects that do not involve GFWC Affiliate Organizations to the Juniors' Special Program Chairman or GFWC Programs Department at Programs@GFWC.org.

2026-2028 UNITY PROJECT

BEING A UNIFIED FORCE FOR CHILDREN

Encourage clubs to work with your local child-care facilities. Many child-care facilities partner with St. Jude for their Trike-A-Thon, they work with local churches and school systems to provide Christmas gifts for families in need, and they have various activities throughout the year where volunteers could be needed. All of these activities require parent participation to be successful, but sometimes that falls short. Within this partnership, don't hesitate to offer new ideas, such as working with the Safe Surfin' Foundation by using their free materials to support internet safety education for children and families at these centers. Your club could organize a workshop for online safety or hold a parent tech night support event. Find a facility in your area where your club might have the greatest impact.

GFWC ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN WEEK

Sunday, October 25, to Saturday, October 31, 2026

Sunday, October 24, to Saturday, October 30, 2027

During Advocates for Children Week, clubs and members are encouraged to contact their local child care facilities to identify their needs for children or families during the holiday season. Clubs could collect canned foods or toys for a holiday drive. In addition, there are volunteer opportunities like leading a holiday themed cooking demonstration, reading a holiday classic to a class, offering handyman and holiday beautification assistance around the building, or making internet activity safety kits for families to hand out during the holidays when students tend to spend more time at home.

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FEATURED PROJECTS

COMFORT ROOM

GFWC Muskego Woman's Club (WI) members joined forces with their local police department to create a safe and comfortable space for those in crisis. Members planned, created a budget, painted, built, and handcrafted items to remodel a room at the police station for families facing difficult times. Club members purchased child-friendly furniture, toys, books, and sensory wall hangings along with soundproofing panels. This club has also made a long-term commitment to maintain this space.

SCHOOL CLOSET

GFWC Les Amies Juniorettes of Purvis (MS) secured locations in the high school and middle school to stock an area for students to browse clothing and shop for free. Children then feel a better sense of belonging and confidence, ensuring they can focus better on their education and not worry about how they look. These Juniorettes donated trendy and age-appropriate clothing from their own closets to ensure a well-stocked and appealing shopping experience.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK SALE

GFWC Woman's Club of Enfield (CT) members donated funds to three elementary schools for children in grades 3 through 5. The money donated was earmarked for students who were unable to purchase books on their own during the Scholastic book fair at their school. Children were able to choose and enjoy their book without worrying about prices.

FINGERPRINT CHILDREN

GFWC Woman's Club of Cotulla (TX) worked with local law enforcement to fingerprint kindergarten students in their district, ensuring that in the case of a missing child, law enforcement has quick access to the fingerprints. Parents must give their permission to have their child fingerprinted. Afterwards, fingerprint cards are sent home to parents to keep on file in the event of a crisis. These Texas women have found a unique way to add to the community's child safety.

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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

Check the Legislative Action Center. There are current bills that affect children. Work with your city, county, or state to have the fourth week in October recognized as GFWC Advocates for Children Week. Send a copy of the proclamation to Juniors' Special Program Chairman Nicole Braun, nbraungfwc@gmail.com

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 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. Check your local Ronald McDonald House or other shelters for specific food preparation guidelines.
- 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.
- Advocate for cyber support programs, such as Safe Surfin' Foundation, Inc., to establish a Cyber S.W.A.T. Program in local schools. Donations can also be made to assist with providing online resources to parents, schools, and educators, and should be marked as GFWC for tracking purposes.

COLLABORATE ON A PROJECT

- Paint and decorate a room(s) 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 in-school and after-school food programs.
- Support summer food programs for school children and have club members volunteer at the distribution sites.
- Build Little Libraries and encourage reading programs. Build a neighborhood Little Library and keep it stocked with children's books or commit to keeping a local Little Library stocked

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- Volunteer at libraries and bookstores to read to children. Reach out to schools and sponsor a reading incentive program.
- 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 to deliver in December for Head Start and Preschool children.
- 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. Be sure to check with the Hospital Pediatric Unit for suggestions of what is preferred and needed.
- Facilitate a parent training/informational session about AI and cyber risks for children

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 the 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.
- Inform parents and other caregivers about National Alliance of Mental Illness (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 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), 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 exposed to cell phones, tablets, and electronic screens as early as infancy. Too much screen time for children can lead

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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. Educate children on the dangers of internet predators and cyberbullying.

- 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 illnesses.
- 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 duffle 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.

SAFE SURFIN' FOUNDATION

- Cyber S.W.A.T is a peer-to-peer program designed to educate youth about online safety. Program facilitators use the provided curriculum and activities to help facilitate tough conversations about bullying, online predators, and other online risks. The peer mentors then

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reach out to other school-aged students to share what they've learned and present projects they have created to tell real stories about online safety and online risks. www.safesurfin.org/cyber-swat/

MARCH OF DIMES

- The March for Babies is a fun event to raise funds to help support mothers and premature babies, 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. www.operationsmile.org

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.
- Create Waiting Room Fun Bags by filling sealed zippered plastic bags 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. www.shotatlife.org/champions

UNICEF USA

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

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

- For $275 clubs can send a girl to school for a year. In some countries, girls are often denied the opportunity to go to school because resources are limited, and education for girls is not considered important. www.heifer.org/gift-catalog/womens-empowerment/send-a-girl-to-school.html

CANINE COMPANIONS

- Children with special needs can benefit from a service dog. www.canine.org

HOPE FOR JUSTICE

- Children make up 27% of all human trafficking victims worldwide. Learn how to make a big impact. www.hopeforjustice.org

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GFWC RESOURCES

Advocacy for Healthy Children/Child Abuse www.nationalcac.org

AI and Child Online Safety www.safecareparenting.com/understanding-the-dangers-of-ai-keeping-your-children-safe-online/

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/violenceprevention/aces/index.html

National Child ID Program ChildIDprogram.com

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

Distracted Driving www.cdc.gov/distracted-driving/site.html

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

EZ ID KITS www.ezchilid.com/about/

4-H www.4-h.org

Girl Scouts of the USA www.girlscouts.org

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

Kids Online www.kids-online.org/ | Kids Online | FTC Consumer Information

National Children's Alliance www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/

Net Cetera Chatting with Kids About Being Online www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/net-ceteraachatting-kids-about-being-online

Parent Guides from ConnectSafely www.connectsafely.org/parentguides/

Prevent Child Abuse America preventchildabuse.org/

Project Learning Tree www.plt.org/

Save the Children www.savethechildren.net/

School Site Investigation www.plt.org/greenschools

Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants www.ed.gov

Suicide Prevention Lifeline www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

The Dangers of Distracted Driving fcc.gov/consumers/guides/dangers-texting-while-driving

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 justice.gov/humantrafficking/key-legislation

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21st Century Community Learning Center Funding
www.ed.gov/ grants-and-programs/formula-grants/school-improvement-grants/nita-m-lowey-21st-century-community-learning-centers-title-iv-part-b

What Is Human Trafficking? dhs.gov/medialibrary/assets/video/21829

Youth Suicide Warning Signs Youth.gov

Youth Mental Health Youth.gov

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State/District of Columbia 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/District of Columbia Federations 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/District of Columbia Federations may submit one State/District of Columbia Federation Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children projects. **Entries should be submitted to the State/District of Columbia Federation Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children Chairman.** Forms are accessible to the State/District of Columbia Federation Presidents in the Member Portal.

Note: Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC or GFWC Chairmen.

Refer to the Deadlines for GFWC Awards and Contests sections of the Club Manual for more information.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions adopted by GFWC are the foundation of our organization. They guide our call to action and are the basis of all programming and advocacy. Current Resolutions for the **Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children** are listed here by number and title. Refer to the complete text in the GFWC Resolutions document, filed under "Governance" in the Digital Library on the Member Portal. Resolutions are an important and integral part of GFWC Programs.

120-010	Child Foster Care
120-020	Keeping Children Safe
120-030	Sexual Exploitation of Children
120-040	Youth Suicide Prevention

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