

## 2022-2024 GFWC COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVES



The 2022-2024 Community Connection Initiatives are projects that make a visual, physical, or emotional impact at the grassroots level. They are projects that bring awareness to what GFWC volunteering is all about. A Community Connection Initiative brings the shimmer, the glitter, and the shine to being a member of a GFWC club into your local community.

Below are the Community Connection Initiatives for each of the Special Programs and the Community Service Programs for your club to participate in during the administration. Public relations and media play a large part in a Community Connection Initiative. Be sure to share your “sparkle” through internet, newspaper articles, social media, blog posts, radio, and television. Make an impact that will ensure your community members want to be a part of such a passionate group of women making good things happen at the grassroots level.

### **SIGNATURE PROGRAM: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION**

#### **COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:**

#### **RAISE AWARENESS TO HOPE AND HELP**

Human trafficking is a horrific crime that affects an estimated 14,500 to 17,500 in the Nation according to the U.S. Department of State, involving 16,658 individual victims. Your club’s involvement will be critical to our educating communities and offering avenues of assistance. To raise awareness among employees, community and industry partners, and the public, we encourage clubs to provide the following materials in communities:

- Information cards recognizing signs of human trafficking for all DOT vehicles.
- Wallet cards that include details on what to look for and how to report suspected trafficking.
- Large posters for restaurants, gas stations, and other public areas.
- Restroom stall signs for roadside rest areas and Travel Information Centers surrounding communities.

These materials raise public awareness and provide victims of human trafficking with critical information on how to reach out for help. Partner with DOT, local business, and other Human Trafficking Advocacy groups in the community to provide information cards and install bathroom stickers, large signage, and hotline information throughout your community.

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

### **JUNIORS SPECIAL PROGRAM: ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN**

#### **COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE: REFRESH AND REVIVE**

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 children’s 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.

## ARTS AND CULTURE

### COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE: COMMUNITY HISTORICAL GEMS

What historical gems does your community hold; what is the *sparkle* that makes your community special? GFWC encourages clubs to take an active role in creating and enhancing their community by partnering with the local City Hall and Chamber of Commerce to create a digital or printed brochure of where visitors and families may go to experience the Art and Culture of the community.

Examples include trails for walking, jogging, and biking; concerts; historical buildings and architecture; companies that founded their area; sculptures, stores that sell local artist wares; Farmer's Market days and location; dog parks; library; City Hall; clubhouses; theatres, and movie houses...let your ideas flow and don't forget to brand your brochure with your club's name and meeting dates. Let your brochure show that your town does indeed welcome both residents and visitors to *Dream Big, Sparkle More, and Shine Bright*.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

### COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

#### A LITTLE THANKS GOES A LONG WAY

Civic engagement is the process of connecting individuals in society with one another, to share common interests and work for the common good. (study.com) GFWC clubs are encouraged to focus efforts on giving thanks and advocating for the essential workers in the community. Essential workers in the community include many fields of work not only medical care providers and first responders, but also the many 911 dispatchers, teachers, civil service employees, farmers, truckers, utility workers, pharmacy providers, bank employees, delivery services, sanitation employees, and military personnel as examples. To be involved is to care about your community and working with others to make it a more positive place to live, work, and socialize.

Ways in which you can advocate for their efforts on behalf of your community:

- Present a Proclamation for "Essential Workers Week"
- Deliver food to their place of business on a regular basis
- Distribute care packages the first of every month
- Display GFWC "Essential Workers - Keep Our Country Moving Forward" on car windows and mailboxes
- Throw a neighborhood or community parade and showcase essential workers of all fields
- Highlight an essential worker in your club's newsletter and partner with local PR to ensure that the community is aware of these individuals
- Create signage for your Main Street to highlight the companies and/or individuals who were working to make your community a better place

## EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

### COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

#### BRING THE SPARKLE TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

GFWC clubs are encouraged to establish a working relationship with a local librarian to plan beneficial services, programs, and activities. Libraries bring people together. Engage your members to participate with their ideas, talent, and time. Bring cohesion to the Education and Libraries by helping people learn and grow by offering training classes for all ages: computer skills, lunch and learn workshops, GED, ESL, literacy, current topics for seniors and more.

Collaborate activities with your schools to enhance enthusiasm for students to use the library for reading and resources. Create programs for teens with an emphasis on issues they face daily using library resources.

Is there a need for a book delivery service for shut-ins or the books on tape for the visually impaired? Sponsor a contest to name a library mascot or to design a button or bookmark. Be creative and enthusiastic.

#### **Other Ideas:**

- Advocate for local and state funding for your library
- Volunteer at your local library
- Donate books to public libraries including STEM and STEM careers; teach a class
- Honor your librarian on National Librarian Day April 16, 2023 and April 16, 2024
- Celebrate 'Library' recognition days (see calendar at ala.org) with social media posts
- Partner with daycares and summer camps with reading activities for children.
- Establish reading programs at veteran and senior facilities.
- Partner with businesses and civic groups to purchase books related to their work.
- Sponsor a Book Festival with local authors, a book character parade for children with prizes and library inspired activities for all ages.

## ENVIRONMENT

### COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

#### COMMUNITY GARDENS - SPARKLING SEEDS, BRILLIANT BUTTERFLIES, GLAMOROUS GARDEN GLOVES!

Community gardens provide green spaces in urban areas, give growers without land of their own a place to work, and promote a real sense of community. Enrich your community by partnering with local businesses, other community groups, and/or schools to plan, develop, and grow a community garden. Look toward local gardening companies to help sponsor or donate. Enlist the help of master gardeners, landscape architects, or garden clubs to assist with designing the best garden for your community using native plants, including the needs of pollinators, and providing water and shelter.

Use your community garden as an outdoor garden learning center and teach students about the benefits of gardening. Work with local nursing homes and assisted living facilities to bring some sunshine into the lives of our more experienced generations.

Gardens can be as large or as small as your space allows. Don those gloves to help your seeds sprout into a community garden that brings benefits to many. Check out the Community Garden Fundraising link in Resources.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

### COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE: *PHYSICAL FITNESS - GIVE THAT GLIMMER AND GLOW*

Regular physical activity – aerobic, muscle strengthening and balance training - is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Regardless of age, abilities, ethnicity, shape, or size everyone can experience the benefits of physical activity.

Considering the facts provided, GFWC clubs are encouraged to plan a year-long project that will promote physical activity for any age group.

- Partner with a home improvement store and other service organizations such as a Lions Club or Boy Scouts to purchase and build playground equipment for a shelter or special needs facility.
- Partner with a sports store to provide fitness apparatus for a senior center or nursing home and sponsor classes in their use.
- Plan a fitness trail in your community.
- Partner with a shopping mall to sponsor walking clubs which include weekly or monthly physical fitness and nutrition presentations.
- Work with local schools to implement the Presidential Youth Fitness Program in their curriculum.

So, let's **Get Fit Within** our **Communities**. Give and get that glimmer and glow that a physical fitness activity will add to life.