GFWC
est. 1890
GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS
MASSACHUSETTS

Terry Rouvalis, President

ARTS AND CULTURE
Marisa Jablanski, Chairman
508.335.1007
mjabo115@yahoo.com

ARTS AND CULTURE

"The arts are not just a nice thing to have – they define who we are as a people and provide an account of our history for the next generation." – Michelle Obama

Arts and Culture bring people together, spark creativity, and preserve the stories and traditions that shape who we are. Arts ignite imagination, build self confidence in young people, foster empathy, and bring beauty into our everyday lives, whether through multi-media, music, dance, or theater. Culture is the thread that weaves communities together, it connects us to our roots, celebrates our diversity, and shapes our collective identity. Our members have always been strong in support of arts and culture in our communities, but it's important to not just support, but also participate! Help facilitate a love and appreciation for the arts across your communities.

The GFWC Arts and Culture Community Service Program encourages members to promote and support arts and culture programs in their clubs and communities, and to expand understanding on every level, from local and regional to national and international. Our goal is to create projects that include crafts, dance, drama, food, music and other manifestations of art and culture that develop skills, awareness, and appreciation. It is designed to inspire clubwomen and ignite within them a desire to make the world a more beautiful, thoughtful, and caring place.

Here are some ideas on how your club can support Arts and Culture:

Art:

- Host a craft time at the local library to make simple crafts with children. Coordinate with the library's story time and match the book theme.
- Identify members of your club with a talent for art and encourage them to share their knowledge and passion with other members.
- Donate art books, sketchbooks, coloring books, crayons, and other craft supplies to a local hospital or shelter.
- Make jewelry and cards for distribution to the homes of teen mothers or the wives and mothers of soldiers. Give them out on Mother's Day.

Music:

- Hold a Battle of the Bands in your neighborhood for the local teenagers.
- Hold a fundraiser to purchase sheet music or instruments for your local school's music department.
- Encourage and support Music Therapy programs for youth and seniors in your community.

Dance/Theater:

- Sponsor a trip to the theater for middle or high school students.
- Work with local theaters to sponsor free or discounted tickets for underserved audiences, especially students, veterans, or seniors who might not otherwise be able to attend.
- Arrange for a dance group to perform at a local senior center or long term care facilities.

GFWC
est. 1890
GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS
MASSACHUSETTS

Terry Rouvalis, President

ARTS AND CULTURE
Marisa Jablanski, Chairman
508.335.1007
mjabo115@yahoo.com

Culture:

- Hold cooking demonstrations during club meetings to introduce foods and customs from other cultures.
- Visit or hold a club meeting at an art gallery, museum, local cultural center, or tourist center.
- Celebrate international holidays, such as Chinese New Year, Oktoberfest, Cinco de Mayo, and Bastille Day, and learn more about the historical customs, food, and entertainment of those cultures.

Don't forget about our GFWC Affiliate Organizations! Here are some suggestions of ways to connect Arts and Culture with each of them.

Canine Companions:

- Invite local artists, students, and club members to create paintings, sculptures, or digital art celebrating the bond between people and service animals. Display the work in the library or community center.
- Host a 'Dogs with a Purpose' photo contest, inviting community members to submit portraits of their dogs, with entry fees benefiting Canine Companions.

Heifer International:

- Construct and decorate a parade float designed to promote Heifer International. Hand out brochures and Cow Tail candy along the parade route.
- Organize a craft fair where local artisans or club members produce items inspired by agricultural or rural life and tie it to Heifer's mission of empowering farmers and rural communities.

March of Dimes:

- Create blankets or baby hats for babies that can be donated to March of Dimes. Create a pattern just for your club.
- Participate in local March of Dimes walkathons. Design t-shirts or signs with inspirational messages on them.

Operation Smile:

- Host a 'Craft for a Cause' day, either for members or a community project with youth or seniors. Sew soft blankets, decorate tote bags, or create cheerful art for Smile Kits.
- Celebrate the diverse cultures served by Operation Smile through art, music, dance, and food through an event or presentation featuring performances, crafts, and food representing these countries.

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital:

- Create an art show featuring pieces inspired by love, courage, and children's strength, with proceeds benefiting St. Jude.
- Assemble and decorate individual art therapy kits for hospitalized children to use during their recovery. Include coloring books, sketchpads, crayons, markers, watercolor sets, stickers, or origami paper. Decorate the outside of each kit with cheerful designs and messages of encouragement.

ARTS AND CULTURE
Marisa Jablanski, Chairman
508.335.1007
mjabo115@yahoo.com

UNICEF USA:

- Create and sell handmade crafts (ornaments, jewelry, greeting cards, or textiles) themed around children, hope, and world friendship, with proceeds to UNICEF USA.
- Celebrate world cultures through music and dance performances, while raising funds and awareness for UNICEF's work in global child health and education.

Alzheimer's Association:

- Engage seniors in storytelling sessions where they share life memories, recorded or written down with club assistance. Share copies with families and caregivers.
- Partner with a local memory care facility or senior center to host guided painting or art making sessions for residents.

2026-2028 UNITY PROJECT
The Octopus Challenge "Stretch Your Reach"

GFWC encourages clubs to participate in a challenge encompassing all areas of the Arts and Culture service program area. The Octopus Challenge invites clubs to stretch their reach throughout all areas of Arts and Culture by *completing 2 projects in each of these 4 areas*:

1. Art
2. Music
3. Dance/Theater
4. Culture

But the octopus isn't finished yet! For ambitious clubs looking to expand their reach a little further, there is a bonus challenge. For bonus credit and special recognition, *complete 2 additional projects celebrating each of these special areas*:

1. Affiliate Organizations
2. Lesser-known cultural traditions such as Lei Day, Diwali, Dia de Los Muertos, Juneteenth, and more.

The Octopus Challenge Award Certificate will be given to any state or club that completes this project. Special Recognition will be given to those who have also completed the bonus projects. Recognition will be given at the Region Banquets during the GFWC Convention in 2028. Find the form for this challenge in the Digital Library on the Member Portal at gfwc.org

To see the full GFWC Manual page for the Arts and Culture Community Service Program, go to gfwcma.org > About GFWC > What We Do~GFWC Manual > Scroll to Arts and Culture